

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL INSPECTOR WEST MIDDLESEX.

To the Warden and Municipal Council of the County of Middlesex:

GENTLEMEN,—The last time I had the honor of reporting the status of the schools in West Middlesex, it was deemed advisable, considering I had held office only a few months, to deal in generalities which, if made public, would scarcely irritate the sensibilities even of those localities prominent in my mind when penning the report. The County Council honored me with a vote of thanks, consigned the report, I fancy to the pigeon holes of obscurity; no person felt its influence and, consequently, as a stimulant, it proved worthless in reprobating what was deficient, or applauding what was excellent. The Chairman of the Education Committee and myself have several times recently discussed the advisability of approaching more closely a detailed report, if not of particular schools, at least of townships. Of course, the risk of getting contrary to public opinion had to be considered—and you well understand its potent influence on the actions of most men—at the same time, justice demands that meritorious efforts should receive re-

cognition, while abuses are often without correction or mitigation, because they are not fully recognized by those having power to control them.

We are accustomed to hear our school system boasted as producing marvellous results, compared with some other countries its pre-eminence scarcely admits of doubt; yet, close investigation will reveal the unpleasant fact that after thirty years' experience our children are not so proficient in the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic as we would have ourselves believe. This defection need not be attributed to the system any more than indifferent performance on a good musical instrument need be attributed to the instrument. Our system is sufficient to the end required, but laxity in its administration produces discord and prevents those benefits possible from its excellencies.

In many sections, trustees feel justified in securing teachers at the lowest possible salaries; they say, "they are good enough for our schools," consequently the children's interests are