

YARMOUTH COUNTY.

G. J. FARISH, Inspector.

SIR,—

The close of another year brings with it my duty of reporting to you on the present state of the Schools in the County of Yarmouth, and the progress, if any, that has been made in education during the year that has passed.

So far as regards the number of schools open, teachers employed, and pupils attending, we have certainly nothing to boast of, over the previous year,—we have rather lost ground; but in every other respect we can make a good record. We have better qualified teachers in the upper grades, the schools were kept open a longer time than ever before, we have added one new section to our previous list, we have built or purchased six new school-houses at an average cost of one thousand dollars each, and our financial condition generally was never so prosperous. Only five sections owe more than one hundred dollars each. The amount assessed from off the sections has exceeded the previous year by \$2,922; the amount expended for school purposes by \$5,316; and the value of school property by \$6,360. The total value of school property in the County is now put down at \$91,120, but this is too low; \$100,000 would be nearer the mark. This will give an average of \$1,470 for each of the 68 sections in the County.

In school work I find an improvement. The poorer teachers are being weeded out, and those more capable, although not always of a higher grade, are filling their places. Still there are a few who cling to us like burrs, and cannot be shaken off. Time, I hope, will gradually work the desired change. The Registers are more correctly and neatly kept than formerly; the examinations more regularly held; greater attention given to black-board work; a better style of writing adopted, and more interest shown in the schools by both teachers and pupils. All these are changes in the right direction.

From the larger number of schools which have been opened this winter term, I look for an accession to the general attendance; and I believe that in school statistics we shall more than make up the loss of the past year, and again take our stand as a Progressive County. The stringency of the times has had an injurious effect upon us, as upon all commercial communities. Only give our 136,000 tons of shipping profitable employment, and we shall in schools, as in other lines of business, rapidly advance.

The late changes in the Act meet with the approval of all who speak of them. What is now asked for is a compulsory clause; but however much I believe it to be desirable, I do not see how it can be effectually carried out. In many cases I think it would be a dead letter. The trustees and secretaries cannot now be induced to attend to the easy and pleasant duty of visiting the schools and being gratified by the improvement of the pupils under an efficient teacher; how much less will they be willing to perform the difficult and unpleasant work of looking after all the truants and absentees of their section, and the still more odious duty of fining, the parents and guardians. I wish such a law could be properly and effectually enforced.

It is very seldom that I hear anything but approval of the general features of the school act; a grumbler is a rare bird; and as for the open opponent of the system, the character has either died out, or like a bear has retired to his den, there to brood over "the ruin of his country" in silence. Twelve years have worked wonders in public opinion regarding educational affairs.

One of the most pleasing features of the past year is the improvement in