

secutive, except in cases of extreme poverty, or where the child has equal advantages in a private or home school, or is physically or mentally incapacitated from attending school. There are also stringent laws which the towns are required to enforce in order to secure attendance of all children at schools, and prevent youthful vagrancy.

*Distribution of the School Fund—Abolition of School districts.*—The law provides for the distribution of one half the school fund to the public schools, and the other half to "other educational purposes"—such as superintendence of schools, printing reports, &c. The distribution of the fund to the cities and towns in aid of public schools has been made on two conditions:

1. That schools in such city or town shall have been kept open six months of the year. 2. That such city or town shall have raised by tax, a sum equal to *three dollars* for each resident child between five and fifteen years of age. The distribution amounted to from twenty to twenty-five cents per child. But in 1866, an act was passed containing the following important provision.

"In the distribution of the income of the school fund, for the benefit of the public schools of the state, *every city and town complying with all the laws* in force relating to the distribution of the same, shall annually receive *seventy-five dollars*; and the residue of said moiety shall annually be apportioned among the several cities and towns in proportion to the number of children in each, between the ages of five and fifteen years: *provided*, that after the distribution of the said moiety of income in the year eighteen hundred and sixty nine, *no city or town in which the district system [our school section system] exists, shall receive the seventy-five dollars herein specifically appropriated.*"

By the law as heretofore existing, the town (our township) could be divided into as many school districts or sections, as the selectmen or elected Council, might determine, and a Committee of three Trustees be elected for each district. The same provision existed in regard to cities, the wards of which might constitute so many separate school divisions. A law was passed many years since authorizing the union of these districts in both towns and cities into one school corporation. The City of Boston and many townships availed themselves of this provision, and thus centralized their township, and city school operations; but in many cases they adhered to the idea and practice of little local independent school divisions. The law of 1866 provides, that no city or township retaining the sub-divisions of school districts or sections, shall receive the seventy-five dollars from the income of the school fund after 1869. This is the strongest practical testimony of the longest experience in America, against school sections and in favour of township school organizations. The Secretary of the State Board of Education, referring to this provision of the law and to the evil of the subdivision of township and cities into small school sections, remarks:

"This new provision is alike just and wise, and liberal in its policy. It will do something towards alleviating the burdens which the support of their Public Schools imposes upon the town of limited population but extended territory, and will doubtless encourage still nobler efforts. In not a few the territory is so