

HOUSE.....No. 54.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 23, 1836.

The Committee on Education, to whom was referred "so much of His Excellency the Governor's Address as relates to Education and the School Fund," and who were directed by the Order of the House of Representatives, passed Jan. 20, 1836, "to inquire into the expediency of establishing by law, one or more seminaries for the education of school teachers;" and to whom was also referred "the Memorial of the American Institute of Instruction, praying for the appointment of a Superintendent of Common Schools," have considered the several subjects, and respectfully

REPORT:

That they recognize the principle laid down by His Excellency the Governor, that "we have laid the corner stone of the social edifice on the intelligence of the People." And they hence derive the right, which this government have always exercised, of holding all property responsible for the education of all people, without regard to the question, of whether he, who contributes of his

abundance to the support of free schools, has children to be educated in them or not. It is to be hoped the time is far distant, when the descendants of the Pilgrims will cease to reverence, or practically to enforce this great principle in political science, which was struck out and applied with such happy effects, in the earliest history of this Commonwealth. Universal education, is, indeed, the only "solid basis of true equality; the most effectual instrument of redressing the hardships of fortune."

The project of a seminary for the professional education of school teachers, is not a new one, or now, for the first time, presented for consideration. Ten years ago, a plan was presented to this Legislature, and entertained by them with great favor. Since which time, essentially the same plan has been partially adopted in several states of the Union, and the friends and advocates of popular education throughout the country, regard the measure as one of vital importance to the character of the teachers and the progress and efficiency of the schools. Although Massachusetts has not stepped forward, in this great improvement in the means of education, with that bold and determined step, which would have become her character, yet experience is accumulating upon the subject. The practicability and expediency of the measure is no longer doubtful. The problem has been solved. Its happy effects have been demonstrated. Even from Prussia, light shines in upon us. And it cannot be long before Massachusetts, with her abundant resources, and patriotic spirit, will meet the just expectations of the friends of popular education throughout the country.

Several of your Committee would have been happy, to have presented to the Legislature, a plan of a seminary

for the education of school teachers, and urged it upon their favorable consideration, as the most efficient means of elevating the characters and qualifications of the teachers, and thus of elevating the character of the schools which they teach. But, viewed in connexion with the “memorial of the American Institute of Instruction, praying for the appointment of a superintendent of common schools,” it was deemed expedient by a majority, and acquiesced in by all your Committee, to forbear to press the subject of a seminary upon the consideration of the Legislature at this time, and direct their attention to the appointment of a superintendent.

The advantages and the necessity of such an officer, to explore the means of popular education, and minutely to examine the condition and efficiency of the common schools, to diffuse information of improvements in the principles of education, and the best modes of applying the liberal appropriations of the government and the people, to that vital interest of the community, and above all, to collect the facts of the case in detail, and arrange the rich and ample materials for the inspection of the Legislature, as the basis of future legislative action, are so succinctly and clearly stated in the memorial of the American Institute of Instruction, that your Committee would deem it superfluous to enlarge upon the several topics in this report. The memorial is among the printed documents, and your Committee beg leave to refer to it, and commend it to the attention of the house, as briefly and clearly setting forth the principal reasons, which have induced them to report the accompanying Bill.

For the Committee.

JAMES G. CARTER, *Chairman.*

REPORT ON EDUCATION, March, 1836.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred
and Thirty-Six.

AN ACT

To establish a Superintendent of Common Schools.

BE it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :

1 SEC. 1. The Governor of the Commonwealth is
2 hereby authorized, by and with the advice and consent
3 of the Council, to appoint a superintendent of common
4 schools, whose term of office shall be three years, un-
5 less sooner removed, for good cause, by the Governor,
6 by and with the advice and consent of the Council
7 aforesaid.

1 SEC. 2. The said superintendent shall receive an
2 annual salary of two thousand dollars, with the inci-
3 dental expenses of his office, payable quarter yearly,
4 at the treasury, on a warrant signed by the Governor.

1 SEC. 3. It shall be the duty of the said superin-
 2 tendent, to visit the several parts of the Common-
 3 wealth, and to take such other means as he may deem
 4 expedient, to obtain accurate information relating to
 5 the state and efficiency of the common schools, and
 6 other means of popular education therein.

7 And it shall also be the duty of the said superin-
 8 tendent, to make an annual report to his Excellency
 9 the Governor, on or before the twentieth day of De-
 10 cember, to be by him laid before the Legislature, of
 11 all the facts and information obtained by said superin-
 12 tendent, in the discharge of his duty, with his opinion
 13 of the defects in the present system of education in
 14 this Commonwealth; and, also, his opinion of the best
 15 means of correcting those defects, and of improving the
 16 system of popular education, to the end that all the
 17 children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon
 18 common schools for instruction, may have the best
 19 education which such schools can be made to impart.

