

1891

Annual Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Skowhegan, For The Year Ending February 20, 1891

Skowhegan (Me.)

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ANNUAL REPORTS
OF THE
TOWN OFFICERS
OF THE
TOWN OF
SKOWHEGAN,
FOR THE
YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 20, 1891.

SKOWHEGAN:
J. O. SMITH & CO., PRINTERS.
—1891—

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—1891—

Town Officers.

TOWN CLERK:

George S. Webb.

SELECTMEN:

Isaac Dyer, Horace Eaton, Llewellyn Goodwin.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

R. B. Shepard, E. P. Coffin, A. J. Rackliff.

TOWN PHYSICIAN:

John N. Merrill.

BOARD OF HEALTH.

George Cushing, S. A. Patten, S. A. Bickford.

CONSTABLES:

S. A. Bickford, Wm. Paine, D. W. Lewis,
Joseph H. Lacase.

TOWN AGENT:

Edward N. Merrill.

AUDITOR:

S. W. Gould.

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Skowhegan:

We herewith submit the sixty seventh annual report of the financial standing of the town.

The year has been one of uncommon severity in several particulars. In the autumn there were heavy rains which caused very much damage to the highways and bridges and culverts in some localities, and the extra expense required to repair them has been considerable.

The poor bill for the town, owing to the severe winter weather, has been considerably increased. It is a pretty difficult matter to get along with our foreign population, as there seems to be a disposition on the part of many to locate in our village, it being understood that in some way food and shelter will be furnished. Quite a number left in the fall, after learning that it might not be as pleasant for them to stay as they had anticipated.

An iron bridge has been built across the stream at "Malbon's Mills," which is giving good satisfaction, and we trust will prove a good investment for the town in future.

New bridges and culverts have been constructed at various points in the south part of the town in such a manner, we trust, as will stand the strain that they will be subjected to for many years.

We have had some granite hauled from the quarry and deposited on the vacant lot on North St. for future use, as it has been found economical to have stone easy of access in the summer season, when it cannot be so readily moved as in the winter months.

Drainage has been a theme upon which many have found time to condemn and many to approve the action of the Selectmen, but for the want of some definite system they have done what seemed to them the proper thing to do, trusting that the good sense of the town will sustain their action.

The trustees of the Town Library have procured two bronze tablets for the memorial room in the library building, upon which are inscribed two hundred and eighty names of those who were and are citizens of the town who served in the war of 1861-5. They are beautiful specimens of workmanship and will doubtless be objects of interest for future generations to look upon. The memorial room is being utilized, as was anticipated, for a reading room, and many are spending their leisure hours in storing their minds with useful knowledge that may be of use to themselves and the world in future years. The Library is being patronized beyond the higher anticipation of the most visionary, and we have reason to believe that the town will be benefited financially as well as in a literary point of view by this new addition to its mental attractions.

Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Kimball should be honorably mentioned for the extra good care they have taken of the aged people at the farm, no one having escaped their vigilant notice, and the wants of those under their supervision have been fully and promptly attended to, as the inmates so declare.

SELECTMEN.

Selectmen's Report.

ASSESSMENTS.

Highways.....	\$6,000 00	
Bridges and Culverts..	2,000 00	
Snow Roads.....	1,000 00	
Town Expenses and Support of Poor.....	5,500 00	
Schools.....	6,000 00	
School Books.....	500 00	
Memorial Day.....	100 00	
Balance unpaid for Sewers in 1888.....	1,450 81	
Interest.....	806 66	
Borrowed Money.....	3,333 33	
County Tax.....	2,285 16	
State Tax.....	4,631 24	
	<hr/>	\$33,607.20
Overlayings.....		1,643.61
		<hr/>
		\$35,250.81

VALUATION.

Real Estate.....	\$1,805,195 00	
Personal.....	1,099,879 00	
	<hr/>	
	2,905,074 00	
Real Supplemental.....	2,750 00	
Personal Supplemental.....	7,455 00	
	<hr/>	
Total Valuation.....		\$2,915,279 00

TAX.

Rate \$11 per \$1,000, on \$2,905,074.....	\$31,955 81	
1,318 Polls at \$2.50.....	3,295 00	
	<hr/>	\$35,250.81
43 Polls supplemental.....		107.50
Real and Personal supplemental.....		112.26
168 Dogs.....		168.00
		<hr/>
		\$35,638.57

RECEIPTS.

Cash on hand February 20, 1890,	\$ 5,553 37	
Three years interest on two Maine Central R. R. 7 per cent bonds, Nos. 248 and 249, (owned by town)	\$ 42 00	
Money hired,	1,450 00	
Liquor Agency,	445 33	
Sales from Town Farm,	136 12	
S. E. Morrill, toward son's support,	20 00	
J. A. Hill, pasturing in unoccupied Cemetery lot,	6 00	
Roscoe Dunbar, bridge money, (overdrawn)	2 00	
Henry A. Varney, highway " "	75	
Three Orders " "	96	
City Park grass,	12 00	
Victualler's license,	1 00	
R. S. Hillman, Auctioneer's license,	2 00	
Two circuses, "	20 00	
Town of Norridgewock, for tuition,	28 76	
" " Thorndike refunds poor account,	84 57	
" " Belgrade " " "	45 00	
" " Athens " " "	97 20	
" " Fairfield " " "	24 00	
Estate Hannah Hilton " " "	43 25	
School books sold,	25 29	
Non-resident taxes of 1889,	245 80	
Court St. Sewer, paid by abutters, (\$117 more due).	364 20	
S. A. Bickford, collector, 1890-1,	34,541 73	
State Treasurer, High School Fund,	250 00	
" " School Fund and Mill Tax,	2,821 22	
" " R. R. and Tel. Tax,	873 36	
State refunds amount paid pensioners,	384 00	
" " " " for bounties,	21 90	
	<hr/>	\$42,363.44
Town Order, No. 202 of 1890 unpaid	13 45	
" " " 231	3 25	
" " " 328	21 00	
" " " 499	2 15	
" " " 508	1 50	
" " " 547	25 16	
" " " 549	4 00	
" " " 571	75 00	
" " " 572	67 00	
" " " 575	100 00	
	<hr/>	312 51
		<hr/>
		\$48,229 32

EXPENDITURES.

Support of poor off the farm.....	} \$2,125 18	
Due from other towns.....	\$83.00 }	
Expenses on Town farm, repainting house, insurance, etc. 1,091 51		
Overseer \$400 salary, and due in 1889 bal. of \$127.50. 527 50		
	—————	\$3,744 19
Insane Asylum.....		491 91
Reform School.....		26 00
Tramps.....		17 00
Armory \$200 to Jan. 1, 1891 (\$100 to be refunded by State).....		200 00
Rent of Target Ground.....		10 00
School Teachers, Janitors, Heat, etc.....	9,719 98	
“ Books.....	1,787 45	
“ Tuition, Town of Canaan.....	14 00	
	—————	11,521 43
Highways.....		6,143 01
Expense Court Street sewer, part refunded (see Receipts opposite)...		634 43
Bridges and Culverts.....		3,758 30
Snow Bills.....		904 90
Electric Light on Long Bridge, 1890.....		55 00
Memorial Day.....		100 00
Loan paid.....		2,000 00
Interest paid.....		880 00
Town Officers' bills, etc. (see detailed statement).....		1,521 55
Disinfection—diphtheria.....		15 00
Sundry Damages.....		70 95
Sewer Acct., Bal. unpaid for 1888, with interest, voted by town....		1,520 67
Stationery, Janitor and incidental expenses.....		123 61
J. O. Smith & Co., printing report 1889-90.....		44 30
Eight State Pensioners (refunded by State).....		384 00
Bounty on 119 Crows and 2 Bears (refunded by State).....		21 90
Abatements and Overtaxation, 1890-1.....		852 70
State Tax.....		4,631 24
County Tax.....		2,285 16
Cash on hand Feb. 20, 1891.....		6,272 07
		—————
		\$48,229 32

TOWN OFFICERS, ETC.

Isaac Dyer, Selectman.....	\$450 00	
Horace Eaton, Selectman.....	200 00	
Llewellyn Goodwin, Selectman,.....	175 00	
Dr. J. N. Merrill, Physician for poor.....	50 00	
D. D. Stewart, Legal services.....	121 82	
Merrill & Coffin, " ".....	41 75	
Geo. S. Webb, Town Clerk, recording births and deaths..	6 72	
Geo. Cushing Treasurer.....	40 00	
" " Board of Health.....	10 00	
Dr. S. A. Patten " ".....	10 00	
S. A. Bickford " ".....	10 00	
" " posting Town Warrants.....	5 00	
" " collector.....	373 26	
G. A. Flye, Truant Officer.....	20 00	
F. A. Nolin, auditing 1889-90.....	8 00	
	<hr/>	\$1,521.55

LIQUOR AGENCY.

Received from sales,.....		\$2,746.03
Paid State Liquor Commissioner.....	\$1,796 65	
" Agent's salary,.....	315 00	
" Freight, Packages, Heating, etc.....	121 11	
" Rent to March, 10, 1891, less sub-lease,....	67 94	
" Town Treasurer.....	445 33	
	<hr/>	\$2,746.03
Stock, etc., on hand Feb'y. 20, 1890.....	\$143 74	
" " " " Feb'y. 20, 1891.....	68 66	

SUPPORT OF POOR.

FARM ACCOUNT.

Stock and supplies on hand Feb. 20, 1890.....	\$780 75	
Overseer's salary.....	400 00	
Supplies and expenses 1891-1.....	1,001 51	
	<hr/>	\$2,182.26
Sales from farm ..	\$ 136 12	
Stock etc., on hand Feb'y. 20, '91.....	731 35	
755 weeks board of inmates and Overseer's family at 1.74 1-7 per week,.....	1,314 79	
	<hr/>	\$2,182.26

Insurance four years, re-painting house and new shingles on part, extra dressing, and extra paid Overseer, make the average board appear high this year.

POOR OFF FARM.

Buck, John.....	\$ 8 00
Blanchett, Mrs. Peter.....	195 31
Clukey, Maurice.....	39 75
Clukey, Mrs. John.....	82 46
Clukey, Amelia.....	37 67
Clark, James.....	54 38
Clark, Horace.....	14 00
Cary, Mrs. Moses.....	51 00
Dickinson, Geo.....	1 35
Dore, Joseph.....	64 95
Dolloff, Geo.....	26 00
Fornier, Napoleon.....	6 32
Fortier, Widow.....	83 45
Foster, John C. (insane).....	182 60
French family to Canada.....	13 00
Frenchman.....	3 36
Getchell, John.....	78 00
Getchell, Mrs. Simeon.....	9 85
Gerald, Annie, Child.....	6 00
Groder, Levi.....	46 88
Groder, John.....	21 31
Latulippe, Louis.....	26 72
Lombard, Mr.....	26 50
Lapoint, Aubain.....	19 25
Murray, Philip.....	95 08
Murray, Dan.....	5 50
McCormick, Mrs.....	2 40
Morrill, Edward P, (insane).....	170 73
McMann, John.....	24 00
McMann, Mrs. John.....	24 00
Pooler, John.....	20 75
Parks, Kate.....	33 10
Sawtelle, O. E.....	23 80
Rowe, Samuel.....	35 00
Smith, Mrs.....	19 93
Trucotte, Thomas (insane).....	136 50
Trucotte, Mrs. Thomas.....	142 00
Taylor, William.....	27 00
Varney, Mrs.....	81 00
Vigue, Thomas.....	11 91
Vigue, Lucy.....	102 14
Others.....	72 17

HIGHWAYS.

Amount assessed.....	\$6,000 00	
“ overdrawn.....	777 44	
	<u> </u>	
“ expended.....		\$6,777.44
“ stock on hand inventoried at.....		1,129.25

BRIDGES AND CULVERTS.

Amount assessed.....	\$2,000 00	
“ overdrawn.....	1,758 30	
	<u> </u>	
“ expended.....		\$3,758.30
“ stock on hand inventoried at.....		180.00

SNOW ROADS.

Amount assessed.....	\$1,000 00	
“ expended.....	904 90	
	<u> </u>	
“ unexpended.....		\$95.10

SCHOOL BOOKS.

Amount assessed.....	\$ 500 00	
“ borrowed subsequently, vote of Town.....	1,400 00	
	<u> </u>	1900 00
“ expended.....		1,787 45
	<u> </u>	
“ unexpended.....		\$112.55

SCHOOLS

Amount assessed.....	\$6,000 00	
School Fund and Mill Tax.....	2,821 22	
High School Fund.....	250 00	
Tuition received from Norridgewock.....	28 76	
Unexpended balance last year.....	902 59	
	<u> </u>	\$10,002.57
Paid Teachers, Janitors, Heat, etc.....	\$9,719.98	
Tuition paid Town of Canaan.....	14 00	
	<u> </u>	\$9,733.98
	<u> </u>	
Unexpended balance this year.....		\$268.59

LIABILITIES OF TOWN.

For borrowed money.....	\$20,850 00	
Maine Insane Hospital, estimated.....	115 00	
State Reform School, ".....	26 00	
Support of Geo. Dolloff.....	26 00	
" " Oscar E. Sawtelle.....	17 00	
Accrued Interest.....	300 00	
L. W. Weston Receiving Tomb.....	15 00	
R. E. Lyon Cemetery Deposit.....	100 00	
Unexpended balance due Schools.....	268 59	

\$21,717 59

RESOURCES.

Town Farm, valued at.....	\$2,700 00	
Austin farm, on Canaan road, valued at.....	300 00	
Due from Starks in 1888 (liability acknowledged).....	49 00	
" " Norridgewock in 1880.....	28 00	
" " Athens.....	6 00	
" " Horace K. Parkman.....	42 00	
Two 7 per cent. Bonds M. C. R. R., par value.....	200 00	
Non-Resident 1890 Taxes uncollected, not yet turned over to town by Collector.....	1,006 89	
Cash in Treasurer's hands.....	6,272 07	\$10,693 96
Net Liabilities of Town.....		\$11,113 63

ESTIMATES FOR 1891-2.

Interest.....	\$952 00
Second payment on \$16,000, loan.....	3,200 00
Loan due.....	950 00
Bridges and Culverts.....	500 00
Highways.....	7,000 00
Snow Roads.....	2,000 00
Support of Poor and Town Expenses.....	5,500 00
Schools—see report of School Committee.	

First Payment on \$16,000 bonds due May 1, 1891, assessed last year
 Second Payment due May 1892.

Respectfully Submitted,

ISAAC DYER,	} Selectmen of Skowhegan.
HORACE EATON,	
LLEWELLYN GOODWIN,	

AUDITOR'S REPORT.

I have examined the receipts and expenditures of the Selectmen for the year ending February 20, 1891, and find them correct and all orders properly vouched for.

Feb. 24, 1891.

S. W. GOULD, Auditor.

Coburn Charity Bequest.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

RECEIPTS.

1890.			
March 2,	Cash on hand as per last Report,		\$ 49 50
April 1,	Interest on \$10,000 Me. Central R. R. Bonds,		350 00
May 1,	Div. on 25 Shares, Skowhegan Hall Pref. Stock,		75 00
July 1,	" " 16 " S. & L. Bank, Auburn,		56 00
July 1,	" " 24 " First National Bank, Fairfield,		84 00
July 1,	" " 4 " First National Bank, Portland,		12 00
Oct. 1,	Interest on \$10,000 Me. Central R. R. Bonds,		350 00
Nov. 1,	Div. on 25 Shares, Skowhegan Hall Preferred Stock,		75 00
1891.			
Jan. 1,	Div. on 24 Shares, First National Bank, Fairfield,		84 00
Jan. 1,	" " 16 " S. & L. Bank, Auburn,		56 00
Jan. 1,	" " 5 " First National Bank, Portland,		15 00
			<u>\$1,206 50</u>

PAYMENTS.

1890.			
April 1,	Treasurer, Woman's Aid Society,		\$ 250 00
July 1,	" " " " "		250 00
July 1,	One share, First National Bank, Portland,		100 50
Oct. 1,	Treasurer, Woman's Aid Society,		250 00
Nov. 1,	One share, First National Bank, Portland,		100 50
1891.			
Jan. 1,	Treasurer, Woman's Aid Society,		250 00
March 2,	Cash on hand,		5 50
			<u>\$1,206 50</u>

INVESTMENT ACCOUNT, MARCH 2, 1891.

DESCRIPTION OF SECURITY.	PAR VALUE.	COST	CARRIED AT.
Me. Cent. R. R. Bonds, registered, 7s,	\$10,000 00	\$13,200 00	\$12,328 00
S. & L. Bank, Auburn, 16 shares,	1,600 00	1,840 00	1,840 00
First National Bank, Fairfield, 24 shares,	2,400 00	2,832 00	2,832 00
Skowhegan Hall Association, 25 shares,	2,500 00	2,500 00	2,500 00
First National Bank, Portland, 5 shares,	500 00	502 50	500 00
	<u>\$17,000 00</u>	<u>\$20,874 50</u>	<u>\$20,000 00</u>

Woman's Aid Society.

REPORT OF SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 20, 1891.

Number of meetings of the Executive Board,	26
“ “ families aided,	75
“ “ money orders voted by the Executive Board and signed by the President and Secretary.	135
“ “ families aided with money, (amounting to \$370.00)	24
“ “ “ “ “ wood, (11½ cords)	9
“ “ “ “ “ boots and rubbers, (39 prs.)	13
“ “ “ “ “ dry goods and groceries,	29

We have paid the board of one person the full year, and house rent of one family the full year.

Articles of second-hand clothing contributed by residents of the town, have been distributed as follows :

Suits of clothes,	11	Dresses,	43
Overcoats,	4	Cloaks,	15
Shirts,	15	Boots and rubbers, (pairs)	35
Quilts and Comforters,	5	Hose, (pairs)	46
Sheets and pillow cases,	12	Skirts,	25
Undervests,	17	Hats and hoods,	27
Drawers,	45	Night dresses,	6

MARY E. PAGE, Secretary.

Woman's Aid Society.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 27, 1891.

By cash of Trustees of Coburn Fund,	\$1,000 00	
“ “ from old accounts,	173 95	
	<u> </u>	\$1,173 95
To 135 orders paid by vote of society,	\$918 58	
“ Cash on hand,	255 37	
	<u> </u>	\$1,173 95

THE ABOVE SUM DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS :

To 9 orders given between Feb. 20 and March 22, 1890	\$ 65 68	
To cash to various persons,	234 00	
“ “ expended by members of the Execu- tive Board, to be expended at their discre- tion for needy families,	171 00	
To wood and coal,	24 09	
“ Dry Goods,	49 37	
“ Boots and Shoes,	42 55	
“ Board,	120 00	
“ Groceries,	58 26	
“ Rent,	95 00	
“ Nursing,	30 43	
“ Medicine,	6 00	
“ Labor,	4 00	
“ Clothing,	11 70	
“ Sundries,	6 50	
	<u> </u>	\$918 58

C. W. STEWARD, Treas.

February 25, 1891.

Coburn Library Fund.

TREASURER'S REPORT, MARCH 2, 1891.

RECEIPTS.

Legacy No. 14, Hon. Abner Coburn's will,	\$30,000 00
Interest received on above legacy,	2,931 75
Received of the town of Skowhegan,	5,000 00
" from interest on investments.	1,392 25
" " Skowhegan Library Association,	235 00
" " Woman's Aid Society, rent,	25 00
Bank account, over-drawn,	239 40
	<hr/>
	\$39,823 40

EXPENDITURES.

Amos F. Parlin, lot,	\$ 3,375 00
E. E. Lewis, Architect,	477 50
Knight & Chaney, erecting and finishing building,	14,243 73
Forrest & Dow, steam heating,	1,175 00
Forrest & Dow, plumbing,	187 20
John W. Berry, frescoing,	937 00
Electric Light, wiring and fixtures,	250 63
Griffin & Wentworth, insurance,	135 00
Skowhegan Water Co., service pipe and water,	32 07
Grading and seeding grounds,	91 75
Furniture,	293 76
Fuel,	293 56
Library supplies,	89 27
Books and Magazines,	283 02
Services of Librarian,	180 00
Services of Janitor,	34 22
Soldier's Tablets,	425 00
Sundries,	34 69
Investments, as shown on following page,	17,285 00
	<hr/>
	\$39,823 40

COBURN LIBRARY FUND.

INVESTMENTS, MARCH 2, 1891.

	PAR VALUE.	COST.
St. Paul S. & T. F. R. R. bonds, 7s, due 1908, . . .	\$7,450 00	\$8,940 00
Maine Central R. R. Debenture, 6s, " 1905, . . .	2,000 00	2,100 00
Mexican Central R. R., 4s, " 1911, . . .	3,000 00	2,000 00
Little Rock & F. S. R. R., 7s, " 1905, . . .	2,000 00	2,000 00
First National Bank, Portland, 20 shares, . . .	2,000 00	2,010 00
Deposit, in Skowhegan Savings Bank, . . .	235 00	235 00
	\$16,685 00	\$17,285 00

The annual income of the fund as invested amounts to \$1,021.50. There should be reserved from this income a small sum each year to pay the premiums on the bonds. Fifty dollars a year will be sufficient. The balance will be available for the support of the Free Public Library.

PER ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Superintending School
Committee

OF THE

TOWN OF SKOWHEGAN,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 21, 1891.

REPORT OF S. S. COMMITTEE.

One year ago a new and radical departure was made from the old method of school management in this town. It was made at the instance of leading citizens, after full public discussion of school matters in open meetings of the Board of Trade. For several years the feeling had been gaining ground that the old system of school supervision was inadequate for the successful management of our schools, taking into account their increased number, the larger attendance and the wider scope and improved methods of modern education. The practical difficulty that faced those who desired to improve the condition of our public schools was, that no one man could be found to act as Supervisor, no three men to act as Committee, competent to fill these places, who could afford to devote the necessary amount of time to school supervision, for the trifling compensation paid. In fact, no man having ability to fill a place on the school board acceptably could be expected to neglect his private affairs to the extent he would be obliged to if a member of the school committee, at any price.

Accordingly, at the annual March meeting in 1890, a committee of six was chosen, three of whom constituted the legal school board, while the others were called advisory members; with the understanding that all were to share equally, as far as practicable, in the labor and responsibility; and with the further understanding that by the opening of the Fall term they were to employ a competent person to perform the duties of a Superintendent of schools.

One of the members of the legal committee, E. F. Goodwin, Esq., was compelled to resign, on account of unforeseen absence from Skowhegan, and never served with the committee. Rev. A. J. Rackliff, one of the advisory members chosen by the town, was appointed to fill Mr. Goodwin's place. The board as thus constituted have attended to their duties, and respectfully submit the following report :

TEXT-BOOKS AND APPLIANCES.

One of the earliest tasks to which we addressed ourselves, was the selection of text-books with which to equip our schools. By a statute passed in 1889, towns were peremptorily required to furnish text-books, whereas before the enactment of that law it had been optional with the several towns, to do so or not. Skowhegan had been for several years prior to this time, furnishing the principal part of the books used in all grades below the High School; but to carry out the provisions of the law of 1889 the sum of five hundred dollars was

voted at our last annual meeting. But when we called in the books in use, it was quickly apparent that the appropriation was far too small. The books in use were found to be, for the most part, in a very dilapidated condition. Some of them,—more particularly reading-books and arithmetics,—were of a very unsatisfactory grade, and quite unfit to be retained in use. Consequently, almost an entirely new outfit of text-books had to be procured. Fortunately, on account of the sharp competition among rival publishers, very low prices were obtained, and extremely advantageous rates of exchange for our old and nearly worthless books on hand. Nevertheless, the expenses of purchasing a new outfit of books was so great that it was found necessary, at a town meeting held in September last, to raise the further sum of thirteen hundred dollars, "to purchase text-books, maps, globes and other apparatus." It will be seen from our financial statement that practically the whole eighteen hundred dollars has been expended.

When the present committee took charge of the schools, there were no records to show how many and what books the town owned, or their distribution. Some books were marked as the property of the town, and some were not; and they were not numbered. We have had all books owned by the town plainly marked in two places, and every book bears a number by which it can be identified. We have adopted a system of records by means of which the number of books of each sort owned by the town and the whereabouts of every book can be determined at any time. It consists of: 1st. A record kept by the committee, showing the number of books of each kind, the price, and their net cost to the town. 2d. A record kept by the Superintendent, in which the books are charged off to each school, the kind of book and its distinguishing number being both specified. 3d. A record kept by the several teachers, showing what books (kind and number) have been delivered to each pupil, and their condition when delivered, and when returned. Thus the responsibility can be readily fixed in case books are lost, injured, or destroyed.

We regret to say that in some cases pupils have not taken that degree of care of the books that they ought. Still, such cases have occurred for the most part in the lowest grades, and in general the books are in good condition. But we recommend that the rule, that parents of children injuring or destroying books pay for the damage, be adopted and rigidly enforced.

We found the schools practically destitute of maps or globes. To supply this deficiency we have furnished the four principal school buildings in the village with such maps as were most needed; and have purchased for each of the rural schools a map of the hemispheres and one of the United States, and one set of maps of Europe, Asia, Africa, etc., which can be carried from one school to another as they may be needed. All these maps are conveniently mounted

on spring rollers. Every school in town, not already supplied, (except primaries) has been furnished with an excellent terrestrial globe.

COURSES OF STUDY.

During the past summer, your committee, at the expense of a great deal of time and labor, revised the course of study for our graded schools. A great deal of confusion had crept in, and the printed course of study, prepared many years ago, was not followed, and was in great need of revision. In fact, no course of study, properly speaking, was being followed in our schools, and frequently teachers of the same grade were doing quite different work. So complete was the revision we made, that in effect the result of our labors was a new course of study throughout. It went into operation at the beginning of the Fall term, and the teachers have been following it since that time. It was at one time our intention to publish this course of study with our present report, but experience has shown that some modifications are necessary, and it has been thought best to defer its publication until it has met the practical test of a full year's work. We therefore recommend that the course of study, together with such rules and regulations as may be adopted, be published in convenient pamphlet form at some time during the ensuing year.

In this connection we wish to remark that, while music and drawing are very properly a part of the established course of study, instruction in these branches by the average school teacher, who is frequently not skilled in either branch and has enough to do beside, is very unsatisfactory. We therefore recommend that, as soon as it can be brought about, a competent person be secured to give instruction in music and drawing in the various schools where they are required to be taught. This may or may not be practicable within the ensuing year, but at all events, it should not be long delayed.

GRADING.

Some attempt has been made during the past year to improve the grading of our village schools. Much confusion had crept in, through lack of system, and it has been no small labor to undo the mischief that had ensued. The true object of grading is to bring pupils of substantially the same attainments together, thus lessening the number of recitations in a single school, and enabling the teacher to do better and more thorough work. The ideal school is one in which all the pupils belong to the same grade,—have the same recitations. Such an ideal state of things is not yet practicable with us, perhaps never will be, but we have so arranged the classes that a teacher in a graded school shall have only two grades, or classes, under her care. Heretofore there have been three grades in each primary school,—a chart-class, a "B" class, and an "A" class, so called. Early in the Fall term the primary pupils on the

North Side were so graded that each teacher has only two grades, a chart-class and one other. And when by reason of the diminished numbers it was found practicable to discontinue the West Front Street primary school for the Winter term, the same improvement in grading was introduced into the primary schools on the South Side. In one of the two remaining primaries on that side of the river, there has been a chart-class and all the pupils of the second year (the "B" class), and in the other a chart-class and all the third-year, or "A"-class pupils. The result of thus relieving these teachers of an extra class has been a surprising improvement in the character of the work done; and this notwithstanding the fact that before the changes were made these same schools had been under the care of excellent teachers.

RURAL SCHOOLS.

A great deal of time and thought has been expended upon the rural schools, with a view to increase their efficiency. It has been the aim of your committee during the past year to secure the best teachers for those schools that could be obtained for the money available, and to continue the successful teachers in the same school as long as possible. The length of the school year in the country schools has been increased from twenty-six to twenty-eight weeks. Nevertheless, we are aware that in some cases these schools have not been what we would have desired. And we may say in general that our rural schools are, and we fear will always be the most unsatisfactory part of our school system. Owing to the small and diminishing number of pupils in the rural portions of our town, but few can be got together, even by the union of two of the old districts. Within the limits of what was once a district, are now found, in many cases, only six or eight children who wish to attend school, and sometimes even a less number. On the ground of expense alone, it is therefore out of the question to maintain a school in every schoolhouse in town. Take, for example, a school in which there is an average attendance of only seven pupils,—and we have had several such schools during the year. No teacher who is fit to be placed at the head of a school can be secured for less than \$6.50 per week. For a term of ten weeks her wages would amount to \$65. Fuel would cost about \$5, and the care of the schoolhouse, \$2.50. Add to these items the wear and tear of school books and other property, and the total cost for the ten weeks will be at least \$77, or \$11 for each and every pupil! For the year of twenty-eight weeks, the cost for each pupil actually attending school will be \$30.80. Compare these figures with the rates in our graded schools, and the contrast is startling. In no graded school in town (except the High School) does the cost per pupil exceed \$8 for the school year, or \$2.85 per pupil for a term of ten weeks; and in one of the village schools (Second Primary, South Side), the cost of the term of ten weeks, just

closed, has not exceeded \$1.70 per each pupil actually attending. In other words, the cost of this school has been about *seventeen cents* per week per pupil, as compared with *one dollar and ten cents* in the rural school. Or, to make the comparison in the fairest possible way, the schooling of a single pupil in the most expensive village school costs about twenty-eight cents and five mills per week, while in the most expensive rural school it costs at least one dollar and ten cents; in the least expensive village school it costs about seventeen cents per week, and in the least expensive rural school it costs more than forty-eight cents per week. We have taken as an instance the smallest rural school we had during the last term, but at an earlier time there have been schools where the average attendance was less than seven. Obviously, the town cannot afford to educate children in any such wasteful manner.

Then the efficiency of such small schools bears even a smaller ratio to that of larger ones than does the number of pupils. Every one knows that with pupils in a small school, where there is of necessity little competition, interest and enthusiasm are reduced to their lowest terms, and the time drags heavily for teacher and pupils alike.

The remedy for this state of things is to transport pupils from as large an area as is practicable, and thus get together a sufficient number to reduce the cost per scholar to a reasonable figure, and promote the efficiency of the schools. But when we seek to carry out this plan, we are met by very grave difficulties. In some cases it has been almost impossible to find anyone who would transport children for any price we could afford to pay. In other cases parents have refused to allow their children to be transported, or to carry them into another district themselves. Petitions have been presented for schools where it was plain they could only be run at very heavy cost per scholar, a rate the town would not approve. Now, in relation to this subject, there are certain things which we wish to impress upon the people of our town, and which they must learn before any efforts to raise the standard of the rural schools will be of much avail. First, that they can get more and better schooling under the town system than under the old district system, if they will co-operate with the committee in their efforts to conduct the rural schools prudently and economically. Under the present system we give nearly every pupil in town twenty-eight weeks of schooling. In one of the smallest of the old districts (and one in which the most dissatisfaction has been expressed and co-operation has been least hearty) eighteen weeks of school have been held, at an expense of \$140, and for ten weeks during the autumn the pupils were transported to another school. There are within the limits of what once made up that district, but twelve children who would draw school money, and their share of the school money of the town would be about \$66. Secondly, that

small schools, of from five to ten pupils, are unprofitable to the pupils and wastefully expensive to the town and should be done away with as far as possible. Thirdly, that in order for their children to obtain the advantages of attending larger schools and for longer terms, our citizens must manifest an accommodating spirit and hold themselves ready to make some concessions and some sacrifices of personal convenience for their own and the common good. The idea seems to prevail in some quarters, that the people in each district are entitled to a school in their schoolhouse the year round. It should be remembered that there are no districts now. They have been abolished and the whole town is one district; and the simple question is, where we shall hold the sessions so as best to accommodate the public, and secure the best working results.

We therefore recommend that the rural schools be consolidated to the greatest possible extent; and that in every instance parents transporting their own children to school be required to make arrangements beforehand as a condition to receiving pay for their services.

GRADED SCHOOLS.

We believe that a careful comparison of the present condition of our graded schools with their condition a year ago, will show a marked improvement within the time. There had been a general lack of thoroughness, brought about by an attempt to cover too much ground, especially in the lower and middle grades. We have endeavored to have this evil remedied, and have insisted on thoroughness as a first requisite. In revising the course of study and in the selection of text-books, we kept in view the same thing, and endeavored to so arrange matters that pupils should not be pushed forward at the expense of thoroughness, and that text-books should not be placed in their hands difficult beyond their capacity. New methods of instruction have been introduced during the year, especially in the Primary grades. A general toning up of the whole system has been observed by all visitors to our graded schools. A very large part of the improvement in the condition of these schools is due to the able and faithful supervision of Mr. Whitney, whose efforts have been enthusiastically seconded by the teachers.

On the South Side a saving in expense was effected and the efficiency of the primary schools increased, by the discontinuance of the West Front Street school during the Winter term. The cost of that school was \$75 per term, and upwards. Not only was this sum of money saved for the Winter term, but we were enabled to better classify the Primary pupils on the South Side, as was stated in an earlier part of this report. We regret to say that some dissatisfaction with this change has been expressed by a few persons, on the ground that under the new arrangement their children were required to travel

a greater distance than before. This was unavoidable, and we feel that the few should be willing to undergo a little inconvenience for the general good; especially, as their own children are gainers by the improved grading, and as none of them have been called upon to travel further than do many primary pupils on the North Side. If we can get into our schools the children who should be there, doubtless it will soon be found necessary to re-open the West Front St. school; but we trust that there will be no thought of going back to the old method of grading.

HIGH SCHOOL.

The work done in our High School is of such a nature that it may properly be considered separately; for it is not only the highest in grade of all our schools, but also a fitting school, and furnishes instruction in the sciences and ancient classics not attempted in the lower grades.

We feel that we are justified in speaking in very high terms of the character of the work done in that school by the present board of instruction. Mr. Ernest G. Walker, a young man of scholarly acquirements and a good teacher, resigned the Principalship at the end of the Spring term, to enter upon a special course in Harvard University. We were fortunate in securing as his successor, Mr. Dana W. Hall, a graduate of Colby University and a teacher of considerable experience. Miss Fannie E. Hoyt, who had served with marked ability as assistant, under Mr. Walker, was retained in the same position; and during the Winter term, Miss Eva B. Judkins, who had very acceptably filled several positions in our public schools, has acted as second assistant in the High School, at the same time hearing certain recitations in the First Grammar School. Under their instruction the school has made excellent progress. The attendance has been large, the school numbering eighty pupils, and the interest has been well sustained. The chemical laboratory connected with the school has been entirely refitted under Mr. Hall's direction, or more properly has been created anew by him, the chemicals and apparatus being furnished by the Trustees of Bloomfield Academy, from the fund of that institution, and is a credit to the school. As evidence of Mr. Hall's standing in educational circles, we may state the fact that since he came here he has refused an advantageous offer from the school authorities of a Massachusetts city, preferring to keep his contract with us and to continue the excellent work he had begun in this place. Altogether, we congratulate the town upon the present flourishing condition of our High School.

DISCIPLINE.

Discipline is one of the most difficult and delicate matters that those in charge of schools have to deal with. The chief difficulty lies in the attitude sometimes taken by parents in this matter. We do not need to say that good

order is essential to the success of schools, and proper discipline absolutely essential to the right education of a boy or girl. These truths are generally recognized. And yet when it comes to their own children, some people seem to suddenly forget these well-recognized principles. Scarcely anything can be a greater injury to a boy than for his parents, without investigation, to take his part against the teacher, and precipitate themselves into an undignified quarrel with the school authorities. The very fundamental principles of parental government are violated by such a course, and the lesson the boy gets is one that years of training may not be able to efface. We urge upon parents the duty of exercising great care in this matter. Mistakes may occasionally be made: in rare cases undue punishment may be inflicted. But it is not likely that, with a disinterested board to appeal to, serious or long continued abuses will be possible. Complaints should be made in every instance to the Superintendent or Committee, and if this course is promptly taken, the cases will be extremely rare where substantial justice will not be done.

SCHOOL SUPERVISION.

In view of the fact that a new method of school supervision has been on trial during the past few months, it seems proper for us to give the results of our observation and experience in relation to this subject.

School supervision has come to be as much a profession as teaching. In a small town, with a few mixed schools, the old system of supervision (or, more properly, lack of supervision) may answer fairly well. But in a town like ours, where there are fourteen graded and ten or eleven ungraded schools in simultaneous sessions, there is imperative need of a man of special training, who can give his whole time and thought to directing the teachers and looking out for the multifarious details of school management. This is a matter that long ago ceased to be one of theory. In the cities of this and other States, the practical work of supervision is performed by a Superintendent, the committee acting chiefly in an advisory capacity, and without compensation. Many of the large towns of our State are enjoying the benefits of the same plan, having procured special legislation for the purpose. Everywhere the plan has been tried, it has given the best of satisfaction. Nor can it any longer be said to be a theoretical plan in our own town. Since the opening of the Fall terms, Mr. M. A. Whitney, a gentleman who had taught in school of various grades, and had given considerable study to the subject of school supervision, has performed the duties of Superintendent, under our direction. We are able to speak in terms of unqualified commendation of this plan and of Mr. Whitney's work during these two terms. No one can be more enthusiastic in praise of this system than are the teachers themselves. Where before they struggled along as best they might, with but little counsel or assistance, they now have the benefit of his study, experience and observation. The outcome has been an

immeasurable advance in methods of instruction, uniformity of results and general efficiency.

We trust there will be no thought of taking a backward step in this respect. A law prepared under the direction of this committee is now on its passage through the Legislature, and will undoubtedly be approved by the Governor and become operative before the March meeting. It provides that the town may, at its option, elect, instead of a Superintending School Committee of three, or a supervisor, a school Committee of five, who shall serve without compensation. This committee shall elect a Superintendent, who shall act under their direction and exercise such of their powers as they may from time to time delegate to him. For the reasons above stated, we urge upon the town the importance of accepting the provisions of this act, thereby insuring the continuance of the system of supervision that has done so much for our schools during the past few months.

EVENING SCHOOLS.

There are large numbers of our population, needing the benefits of education, who cannot conveniently attend our day schools. The necessities of existence compel them to labor during the day. A comparison of our last school census with the registers kept by our teachers reveals the startling fact that there are about five hundred youths, between the ages of 15 and 21, who do not attend school at all. Then there are many of adult age who would be glad of the opportunity to get the rudiments of an education. Such an opportunity is afforded by evening schools, and to meet the wants of the classes above named we earnestly recommend the establishment of such schools as soon as may be. The expense will be comparatively slight. The services of a portion, at least, of the teaching force needed for such schools will be cheerfully furnished gratuitously. Evening schools have been successfully carried on for a considerable time in the neighboring city of Waterville. There is no reason why we cannot maintain them here, and thus give the operatives in our numerous manufacturing establishments an opportunity for schooling. The amount of good that can be done in this way is almost incalculable, and we commend this sort of philanthropic effort as one that will cost but little, and will yield quick and large returns.

TITLE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY.

Attention has already been publicly called to the strange confusion in which we find the title to the school property in town. At the annual March meeting, in 1887, the school districts were legally abolished by a vote of the town. The law provides that when such action is taken the town shall forthwith take possession of all the schoolhouses, lands, apparatus, and other property owned and used for school purposes, which districts might lawfully convey

cause it to be appraised, levy a tax upon the whole town equal to the whole amount of such appraisal, and remit to the tax payers of each district the appraised value of its property thus taken. The effect of these proceedings is that the town purchases the school property from the several districts and pays them for it. But our citizens undertook to accomplish the same thing by voting, at the same meeting, that the school property of the various districts should become the property of the town, without any further action. This vote was plainly inoperative, for the town could not constitutionally deprive the districts of their property without their consent, or without making them due compensation. The result is that, while the districts are legally abolished, yet the town does not own the school property. The districts have never been divested of their title, and the town can only gain title to this property by following the steps prescribed by statute, or by the voluntary action of the districts themselves. A special act is now on its passage through the Legislature authorizing this town to make the appraisal, levy the tax and remit to the tax payers in the several districts hereafter, with the same force and effect as though done in 1887. We hope the town will not be obliged to avail itself of this law. To do so would result in the payment to the tax payers of the village district (No. 1) of a large sum (said by those who have made the computation to be about \$5,000) by the rural districts. This would not be equitable or right, and the people of district No. 1 do not desire it to be done. The best and shortest way out of this difficulty is for each of the districts to re-organize sufficiently for the purpose and convey their school property to the town, without the payment of any money by one district to another. This course is authorized by a provision of the general law, which permits the difference in value of the property of the several districts to be "adjusted in any other manner agreed upon by the parties in interest;" and this provision is also found in the special act above referred to. We recommend that this course be followed during the ensuing year, and thus the trouble and expense of the appraisal, levy of tax, etc., be avoided. All conveyances can be deposited with some responsible person after they are executed, with the agreement that none of them shall be delivered to the town until all the districts have come into the arrangement.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

RECEIPTS.

Unexpended balance last year,	\$ 654 83
Appropriated by the Town for Common Schools.....	5,500 00
Received from State School Fund and State Mill Tax....	2,821 22
Appropriated by Town for Free High School.....	500 00
Received from State on account Free High School.....	250 00
Appropriated by Trustees of Bloomfield Academy,.....	908 78
Tuitions of Scholars from other Towns,.....	28 76
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\$10,663.59

EXPENDITURES.

Amount paid to teachers,.....	\$7,556	30
“ “ for fuel.....	1,025	00
“ “ care of school houses.....	520	03
“ “ carrying pupils.....	391	12
“ “ repairs.....	322	65
“ “ furniture and fixtures.....	135	45
“ “ school supplies.....	130	73
“ “ apparatus and chemicals.....	108	78
“ “ cleaning houses.....	58	08
“ “ rent of office.....	33	50
“ “ sundries.....	69	20
Unexpended balance	312	75

 \$10,663.59

SCHOOL BOOK ACCOUNT.

RECEIPTS.

Appropriated by the Town.....	\$1,800	00
Received for books sold to other Towns.....	25	29

 \$1,825 29

EXPENDITURES

990 Reading books, various grades, less exchanges.....	\$234	79
867 Arithmetics, Wentworth's and Colburn's, less exchange.	256	70
383 Butler's Elem. and Complete Geographies' " "	117	34
384 Hyde's Language Lessons, Part I and II " "	127	90
100 English Grammars, less exchange	36	00
25 Messervey's Book-keeping	15	00
600 Day-Books, Cash-Books and Ledgers,.....	43	99
82 Histories, U. S.....	74	64
36 Civics for Young Americans	11	12
132 Dozen Writing Books.....	90	25
15 Globes, 6 and 10 inch.....	47	31
41 Maps.....	118	50
7½ Doz. 6x9 Slates	7	63
5 Doz. 7x11 Peeress Ruled Slates	5	46
2 Doz. Teacher's Record.....	10	00
2 Gross Pencils.....	5	00
2½ Doz. Pointers.....	5	00
Text-Books for High School.....	599	84
Freight on Books, Maps, etc.....	6	27
Unexpended balance.....	12	55

 \$1,825.29

We recommend that for the ensuing year the town raise the following sums for school purposes:

For Common Schools.....	\$5,500 00
“ Free High School.....	500 00
“ Evening Schools.....	300 00
“ Text Books.....	500 00

R. B. SHEPHERD,	} Superintending School Committee.
E. P. COFFIN,	
A. J. RACKLIFF,	

L. L. WALTON,	} Advisory Committee.
S. A. BICKFORD,	

M. A. WHITNEY'S REPORT.

To the Superintending School Committee of the Town of Skowhegan:

GENTLEMEN:—I herewith submit the following report of the Public Schools for the year 1890-91.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

I. POPULATION.

Population of Skowhegan by the census of 1890, 5,168.

Number of children in town between four and twenty-one years of age, May 1, 1890, 1,510.

II. SCHOOLS.

1 High School, with three separate rooms.

3 Grammar Schools.

2 Intermediate Schools.

8 Primary Schools.

10 Rural Schools.

III. TEACHERS.

Number of teachers in High School.....	3
“ “ “ “ Grammar Schools.....	4
“ “ “ “ Intermediate Schools.....	2
“ “ “ “ Primary Schools.....	8
“ “ “ “ District Schools.....	10
Whole number of teachers.....	27
Number of teachers who have attended Normal Schools.....	7

IV. PUPILS.

Attendance at all schools for the three terms from April, 1890, to Feb., 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	846	684	80.8
Fall,	819	689	84.1
Winter,	774	639	82.5

Attendance at the High School April, 1890, to March, 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	68	57	83.8
Fall,	82	79	96.8
Winter,	77	72	94.0

Attendance at the First Grammar School from April, 1890, to March, 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	49	43	87.7
Fall,	71	57	80.3
Winter,	70	63	90.0

Attendance at the Second Grammar Schools from April, 1890, to Mar., 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	85	72	84.7
Fall,	67	60	89.5
Winter,	72	64	90.1

Attendance at the Intermediate Schools from April, 1890, to March, 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	82	72	87.8
Fall,	106	92	86.8
Winter,	107	84	77.6

Attendance at the Second Primary Schools from April, 1890, to March, 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	118	90	76.2
Fall,	124	105	84.7
Winter,	123	108	89.8

Attendance at the First Primary Schools from April, 1890, to March, 1891.

Term	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	284	222	78.1
Fall,	221	175	79.2
Winter,	200	147	73.5

Attendance at the District Schools from April, 1890, to March, 1891.

Term.	Number of Pupils Registered.	Average Daily Attendance.	Per Cent of Attendance.
Spring,	160	128	80.0
Fall,	148	121	81.8
Winter,	125	101	80.8

V. SUMMARY OF SCHOOL CENSUS.

Number of children in town four years old or more, but less than fifteen,	898
“ “ “ “ “ four years old or more, but less than six,	200
“ “ “ “ “ six years or more, but less than fifteen,	698
“ “ “ “ “ 15 years old or more, but less than 21,	612
“ “ pupils in school 15 years old or more, but less than 21,	110
“ “ “ “ “ six years old or more, but less than fifteen,	580
“ “ “ “ “ four years old or more, but less than six,	70
“ “ “ “ “ below the High School 15 years old or more,	50
“ “ “ in all the schools in town, average for the year,	813

These statistics are taken mostly from the reports of the schools for the Fall term of 1890. From them it will be seen that there are 118 pupils between the ages of six and fifteen years who are not registered in any of the schools. Besides these there are 130 pupils between the ages of four and six years old who do not attend school.

It is reasonable to conclude that nearly all these 250 pupils belong in the primary and intermediate schools. At least one half of these pupils ought to be in school. If they should attend, the question arises, what shall we do with them? The Intermediate and Second Primary schools now number at least fifty pupils more than ought to be enrolled in those schools. One of those schools has registered during the past term sixty-seven pupils. Fifty pupils ought to be the maximum for any one teacher, and it is difficult to secure teachers who can successfully carry on the work with more than forty. To be

sure, the average attendance in some of these schools is not especially large, but the work of the teacher does not depend wholly upon the number present each day. A pupil who attends only one or two days out of each week lowers the average attendance of the school, but makes about twice as much work for the teacher as the regular attendant.

The First Primary Schools are, with two exceptions, as large as they ought to be, and these two exceptions can not be made to accommodate more than twenty-five more pupils. The West Front Street School can, and probably will be re-opened. This will accommodate about forty pupils, if it is possible to bring them together in that section. During the fall term the school numbered less than twenty pupils, and the majority of those were compelled to go from Main Street and vicinity. It is not probable that more than twenty-five pupils at most can be assigned to that school, if it be again opened.

What shall be done with the other two hundred pupils, or the part of that number which ought certainly to be in school, and with the overplus from the now too large Second Primary and Intermediate Schools? There seems to be but one answer to that question: The two rooms in the Park School are needed.

Again, it may be well to call attention to the fact that many of the children who do not attend school are in the vicinity of the railroad and of Keeneville. It is difficult to secure the attendance of pupils, if a school is not near at hand. This fact has been well illustrated recently by the non-attendance of a few pupils in the vicinity of the West Front Street School, at the other schools, after that school was closed.

Opening more room in the Park School will convenience all the pupils in that vicinity, and I have no doubt be the means of securing the attendance of many pupils who do not now attend school.

ATTENDANCE.

The attendance in nearly all grades during the past year has not been all that could be desired. The reason for this lies, I think, mostly with the parents. With too many school is of secondary importance; the children of many families have been sent to school only when they were not wanted at home. Only by the co-operation of the parents can the attendance be improved, only when parents can understand that of all things, save only the health of the child, school is of the most importance during the child's school life; when children no longer have the sanction of parents for being upon the streets,—then can we secure more regular attendance.

The law in reference to children of school age should be enforced. Better even for a town to cloth poor children, who remain away from school on

account of lack of suitable clothing, and educate them, than in the future, to support them at the poor-house.

Teachers are expected to make their schools pleasant and attractive, so that, if possible, children will prefer to be present rather than upon the street.

I would recommend that, in order to secure better attendance, no pupil, whose percentage of attendance falls below a certain fixed standard for the year, be promoted, except by a special examination to be given by the Superintendent, unless such pupil has been absent on account of illness, or for some equally good reason.

DISCIPLINE.

There have been thus far this year but few cases of corporal punishment; indeed, I believe the cases are rare where some other method of discipline is not more effective than the much abused custom of whipping. I would recommend that a rule be adopted by the Committee forbidding teachers to inflict corporal punishment upon any pupil in the presence of other pupils, and requiring that all corporal punishments shall be inflicted either in the presence of another teacher or of the Superintendent. In this manner all hasty action on the part of the teachers would be avoided, and pupils would understand that they were not simply the victims of a passionate teacher.

METHOD OF PROMOTION.

Some method of promotion of pupils from one grade to another should, I think, be adopted by the Committee before promotion takes place at the close of this year. I have the following plan to propose: That each teacher, with the co-operation of the Superintendent of schools, divide the pupils of each class into three divisions. The first division to contain all about whom there is no doubt. These are to be promoted upon the recommendation of the teacher and Superintendent.

The second division to contain those concerning whom the teacher has some doubt of their ability to do the work in the next grade. All such are to be examined by the Superintendent or Committee, and, if found worthy, promoted, if not, they are to remain where they have been.

The third division to contain all those concerning whom the teacher has *no doubt*. All such are not to be promoted.

Promotions are to be made at any time during the year, on the recommendation of the teacher, to the Superintendent after he has satisfied himself of the ability of the pupil to do the work of a higher grade. In the same manner pupils are to be transferred from a higher to a lower grade.

RULES AND REGULATIONS.

A complete course of Study should be published as soon as practicable. There should also be published rules and regulations, so that teachers, pupils, janitors and all others in any way connected with the schools, may understand their respective duties. No little annoyance has been given during the year by misunderstanding, arising from the fact that teachers and others did not know, or did not remember, what was expected of them. All this may and should be avoided by placing in the hands of teachers and pupils a copy of rules and regulations.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

I wish to call your attention to the need of placing books of reference in the Intermediate, Grammar and High Schools. A Lippincott's Gazetteer is almost as indispensable in the schoolroom as a Webster's Dictionary. Books on geography and history can profitably be used in all grades where these branches are taught. In fact, geography can not be taught simply from one book. The text-book should be used only as a book of reference. Some one of the several valuable series of Geographical Readers should be found in every schoolroom. The introduction of a few books of this kind will incur but little expense and the benefit to be derived therefrom will be incalculable. If any are disposed to question the value of such books, I should be pleased to show any such a school where the work in a certain branch has been carried on almost wholly by the use of such books, supplied by the teacher and pupils.

CARE OF BOOKS.

On the whole the books have been well cared for. Teachers are required to report at the end of each term the number of books on hand and the condition of the same. All books badly soiled or torn are reported to me with the name of the pupil who has used them. Much depends upon the teacher in caring for the books. As a rule those teachers who are most successful in other things are most successful in inducing the pupils to take proper care of the books. Thus we have another argument, based upon dollars and cents, in favor of careful, thoughtful teachers.

RURAL SCHOOLS.

The Rural School problem always has been, and always will be, a difficult one to solve. Many supervisors and committees have given up its solution, and left these schools practically to care for themselves. The greatest difficulty in our district schools has been, and is to a great extent at present, that the teachers, working without any definite course of study, have been left too much to follow their own inclinations. The only ambition of too many teachers in

both ungraded and graded schools, is to cover the greatest number of pages possible, no matter how well the work passed over is understood. Such a method of working is not only useless, but it is a positive injury to the pupils. To obviate this and like errors, a course of study for the rural schools should be adopted as early as possible. I believe such a course of study is not only desirable but practicable.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

It has been supposed by many that almost any person can teach a primary school; but those who are the most careful observers of work in the lowest grade school will be forced to conclude that only a few persons are really adapted to this work. Only the best teachers should have charge of the children for the first five years of their school life. It is a mistake to put unskilled and poorly paid teachers into the primary schools, and to promote them as soon as they give evidence of efficiency. If we must have poor teachers, let us put them where they can do less harm.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR.

During the past year the schools have continued but twenty-eight weeks. An effort should be made to increase the length of the schools four or six weeks at least. A few hundred dollars more to apply to teachers' salaries would be about the only additional expense, since the other expenses would not be materially increased by the change.

TEACHERS.

Good teachers only can make good schools. Hence, it should be the aim of every school committee to secure the best teachers possible. As a rule graduates of Normal schools prove the most successful teachers. But not all graduates of Normal schools are successful. The qualities of a real teacher are not all acquired. More teachers fail from a lack of executive ability than from any other cause, or all other causes combined.

Some teachers meet with flattering success in a small school, but in a large school, where more executive ability is demanded, they are a failure.

A few teachers have been dropped during the past year, in most if not in all cases, because they were not found capable of disciplining their schools. Order is the first thing to be sought in the school room; if this cannot be maintained by the teacher, a change should be made as soon as practicable. A calm and systematic teacher will make a calm and thoughtful school; a nervous and indefinite teacher will likewise impart her characteristics to the school.

One thing should ever be considered by all who have our schools in charge—and I believe it has been during the past year—our schools are for the

children and not for the teachers. Therefore it is never policy to sacrifice the interest of fifty or more pupils to the interests of one teacher. I believe in just and fair treatment of every teacher; I do not favor frequent changes; but the shorter time a poor and unsuccessful teacher is employed the better. No teacher should be unwise enough to insist upon retaining her position when, either from ill health, or from any other cause, she is incapacitated to carry on her work successfully.

One of my duties, as I consider it, is to call the attention of the Superintending School Committees to teachers who are not proving successful. This has always been done with the kindest feelings towards the teachers. The causes of failure have been, both to the teachers and the committee. Teachers are expected to receive all suggestions in a kindly spirit, and, as far as is in their power, to act upon them. When it is found that a teacher cannot improve, or will not make an effort to carry out suggestions, only one thing remains to be done—the school must make a change of teachers.

The one weak point in our school system has been the employment of too many inexperienced teachers. I would recommend that hereafter all inexperienced teachers who have not received training in a Normal or Training School be required to serve an apprenticeship in some of our best schools before they are given a place as regular teachers. In this manner we may be enabled to judge something of their fitness for the work, and in many cases prevent a failure on the part of the teacher.

IN GENERAL.

It may not here be out of place to state briefly the work I have attempted to do since entering upon my duties last September. Many of the teachers who began their work at that time were inexperienced, especially in graded schools. The best methods of work, particularly in the Primary schools, were understood by very few of those teachers. New methods of work have been adopted, and it has been necessary to give much instruction to teachers. This has been accomplished in part by frequent teachers' meetings, and in part by actual work by myself with the pupils in the presence of the teachers. During the first term I spent the greater part of my time in the Primary schools; my object was to lay the foundation properly and then to build a structure thereon. I have but one thing to say in defense of the methods adopted in all schools—they are successful. If children can be taught more in a given time by one method than by another, the successful method is the one to pursue. But with most teachers who are left too much to themselves it is not so much the use of a wrong method as it is the lack of method. My purpose has been to know just what was being done in every schoolroom in town, and the manner in which it was being done. By doing this I have been enabled to make sug-

gestions in regard both to the character of the work and the methods I wished to be pursued. In nearly all cases the teachers have been willing to receive and act upon suggestions as far as it was in their power to do so. No teacher who cares anything for success will refuse to take advice from another, especially from one whose business it is to advise and suggest.

In addition to advising and suggesting methods of work, I have conducted frequent examinations in the schools for the purpose of aiding the teachers to understand what the pupils were expected to know, and suggesting methods of questioning and imparting instruction. My aim thus far has been to make the work practical, to teach the pupils to think for themselves and to search out information for themselves.

Up to this time I have given but little attention to the work in the High School. Needed work in the other schools has occupied the most of my time, and I was aware that the school is in charge of a competent principal, so, for the most part, I have left the work to his direction.

There is one thing which I wish to urge upon the people of Skowhegan: that they interest themselves personally in the work being done in our schools. The teachers need your help, as well as your criticism. If our methods will not stand the test of actual investigation, we need to know it; if they will, it is sometimes pleasant, at least, to know that. What I want to ask of you is, that you pass judgment upon us not from what you see and hear from the outside, but from what you actually can see and hear by frequent visits to the school-room where your children are.

I wish, finally, to express my most sincere thanks to you, gentlemen of the School Committees for your assistance in every direction, and for the confidence you have placed in me, as shown by your readiness to adopt my suggestions, thereby enabling me to carry on my work more successfully.

Respectfully submitted,

M. A. WHITNEY.