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The School Question Relating to the Distribution of State Aid.

In the report of the State Superintendent of public instruction for the year ending June 1st, 1891 we find it recommended. "If any feel that even the increase in the appropriation does not enable them to lengthen the term and at the same time to improve the schools in other respects as they desire, they will do well to consider the propriety of securing a change in the basis of the distribution of the State appropriation."

Now this is very good advice, as far as it goes; but I suggest that every tax payer examine the tabular statement of the various counties, and see for themselves just how the old basis has operated; and then determine whether we should not have a very radical change instead of a partial one as is suggested by the State Superintendent.

The plan he suggests is "to appropriate to each district laying a tax of at least ten mills for school purposes, a fixed sum, one hundred dollars for instance for each teacher employed for not less than six months at not less than twenty five dollars per month, and distributing the balance upon the present basis." To illustrate the working of the basis suggested by him, he cites Cameron and Allegheny counties.

Cameron county with the increased appropriation upon the old basis of distribution, would receive five thousand three hundred and fifty dollars, but upon the basis suggested would receive seven thousand three hundred and eighty-four dollars. An increase of two thousand and thirty-four dollars by the change of basis.

Allegheny county upon the old basis, would receive about two hundred and ninety thousand dollars, but upon the basis suggested would receive three hundred and two thousand dollars. An increase of twelve thousand dollars by the change of basis.

I have taken the above figures from the State Superintendent's report for the above named years. If they are not correct, it is no fault of mine.

I confess that I am at a loss to see why Allegheny county with only three districts representing twenty-three schools laying a ten mill tax should receive an increase of nearly ten thousand dollars more than Cameron county with seven districts representing forty-five schools, and laying from ten to thirteen mills tax for school purposes.

I do not mean to insinuate, that the Superintendent's figuring is incorrect. But if it is correct, it looks to me like increasing the oats to the fat horse.

Now, I propose pointing out what seems to me the unfairness of the distribution of the State appropriation upon the old basis, and shall try to show, that the basis suggested by the State Superintendent falls far short of being a remedy for the evil.

I shall confine myself principally to the two counties above named, not because there is more inequality or unfairness manifested in them than elsewhere, but because they have been already cited. I shall take as a basis for my figuring the report of 1891.

Cameron county upon the old basis of distribution, with a less appropriation from the State than now, received fifty-five dollars and fifty-five cents per school on an average. One district receiving one hundred and fifteen dollars, and another receiving the paltry sum of twenty-six dollars per school.

Allegheny county at the same time received an average of one hundred and sixty dollars per school, almost double that of Cameron. One district receiving one hundred and seventy-seven dollars, and another receiving thirty-five dollars per school.

I quote from Dr. Waller's report, when I say that the children of those districts receiving the smaller amount, "upon every principle underlying public instruction, are entitled to as good teachers and as long a term as are those in the cities." I would add, that upon every principle of justice and equality, they are entitled to this without paying a double rate of taxation.

Cameron county with an average rate of nearly eleven mills tax, kept their schools open a little over six months.

Allegheny county with an average rate of about four and one fourth mills tax, kept their schools open a little over nine months. Now let us look at the situation after the change of basis suggested by the State Superintendent. Cameron county would receive one hundred and sixty dollars per school, and Allegheny county would receive one hundred and eighty-two dollars per school. Twenty-two dollars or about sixty-six bushel of oats in favor of the fat horse.

This same report suggests, that Cameron county can with this increase of appropriation and the same rate of taxation keep their school open eight months each year.

I will add, that Allegheny county can keep their schools open over nine on an average, and reduce their aggregate taxation (which is already less than half the rate of Cameron county) a little more than one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. And if the amount of salary is any criterion by which to judge the qualification of the teachers, they may have the better teachers.

The same inequality that I have mentioned exists to a greater or less extent throughout the State. A person has to but glance over the tabular statement of the various counties to see that one district is required to pay one mill tax, another thirteen. One district receives over one hundred dollars of State aid, another less than thirty, this before the large increase in the State aid, but the increase will not of itself change the inequality.

Now if any person can see any fairness in the old mode of distribution or the one suggested by the State Superintendent, I should feel like addressing to him the question once addressed to a boy by an old gentleman who was trying to beat some common sense idea into his head, viz. Whether has thine understanding fled, my child?

I am free to admit that Dr. Waller's suggestion is a step in the right direction, but it is too short a step, it does not even approximately overcome the injustice or inequality.

In fact equality can not be reached by any plan which incorporates as a part of it the old basis of distribution. Some entirely new basis or plan must be adopted, or we must continue to feed the fat horse at the expense of the lean one.

I am aware that it is difficult perhaps impossible to arrive at any perfectly equitable plan to raise money to keep up our public schools; but I do think, that some plan might be adopted, that would come nearer equal and exact justice to all, than any yet adopted or suggested.

It never seemed to me quite right for any man to indulge in criticizing what others are doing, without suggesting something which (in his judgment at least) is "a more excellent way." It may look like presumption for me to attempt anything of that kind. But having no financial reputation to either win or lose, I shall venture a suggestion.

If the State Legislature is going to assume the paternal role and dictate to its masters how long they must keep their school open for the benefit of their children, they should by all means divide the expenses as nearly equal as is practicable, among those who are to be benefited or burdened by the arrangement. Hence the plan I suggest is, that our State Legislature pass a law fixing a uniform rate of taxation throughout the State, and a uniform number of months to keep the school open. And I advise that the number of months be not so great, that a portion of the time must be wasted in some districts, so far as the children of the district are concerned.

It is an incontrovertible fact, that in many parts of our State children who have arrived at an age to be benefited by a long term of school cannot be spared for a long time from work necessary to secure a decent livelihood. It would be manifestly unjust to tax such districts in order to give more steady employment to the teachers who would be the only real beneficiary of the arrangement.

This plan would not hinder any district having the means and disposition to do so, from adding a few mills to their tax rate, and keep their schools open for a longer term than that required by law.

If children in certain districts have nothing to do, or not disposed to do anything, and their parents desire to send them to school most of the time to get them out of the way, or to keep them out of mischief, we will raise no objections. They may even build gymnasiums in which to give them physical exercise, if they do not wish their children to be humiliated by taking up some healthy, useful and honorable employment, and we will not interfere.

But every principle of justice and fair dealing forbids that such tax should be levied upon those who have to work themselves and require their children to work the greater part of the year, in order to make the buckle reach the strap.

I for one am not disposed to envy my more favored or ease taking neighbor. Our own situation is not without certain redeeming features. I will mention a few although not exactly germane to the subject in

hand. The exercise which necessity compels us to take to secure a livelihood, or the plainness of our diet, or the two combined, tend to increase the brain power, to strengthen and develop the physical man and beautify the countenance. But we are unwilling to pay unnecessary tax on account of these advantages.

In conclusion I wish to say to every body and every body's relations and all the rest of mankind, that I am not opposed to education, nor to any honorable and fair means of securing it. I do not believe that it makes thieves or rogues though it may help them to positions where they can ply their craft to better advantage. I have sometimes thought that there was a class of people who had a hereditary tendency to dishonest practices. They seem to have started in life with an unorthodox kink in their moral make up. In fact I have heard of young children so depraved that they would steal the pins out of their mother's dress while they were nursing. Never having been an eye witness to such an early manifestation of total depravity, I cannot vouch for its truth, but if it is true, schools are not to blame for it. I wish to say further that while I am a friend of education and am ready at all times to defend it when in my judgment it is unjustly assailed; I do not believe, that a mastery of all the arts and sciences "is the chief end of man."

This last theory may be the result of certain catechetical training which I received in my boyhood days.

With the most fraternal regard for all true lovers of education I now close this communication, expecting at no distant day to take up a different phase of the same subject.

JAMES I. CAMPBELL.

P. S. We have had a grand old fashioned snow storm in our neighborhood. Some of you have perhaps heard of it, but may not have heard of the idea which it suggested to my mind. It looked just a little to me as though it might have been distributed by the same parties who distribute the State appropriation, as it varied in depth from two or three inches to about three feet. We are not complaining this time. We got our full share. We are not chronic grumblers. We never complain, when fairly dealt with.

J. I. C.

LIGHT STREET.

A surprise party from town numbering about forty spent Friday evening at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Strauser.

Rev. F. E. Shaffer of the Evangelical Church spent the past week at conference; returning on Tuesday evening. We learn that he leaves us going to Ranson near Pittston.

Miss Anna Heacock of Greenwood is visiting at H. E. Heacock's.

H. W. Terwilliger of Jerseytown spent Sunday with his parents.

G. P. Reighard has so far recovered from his recent attack of paralysis of the throat as to be out again.

The sale of G. M. Lockard's was well attended. Next thing to the fair.

Jos. Fausey who is addicted to getting drunk met with an accident by being run over on Tuesday.

B. W. Drake moved into his new home last week.

D. J. Brown returned from his Southern trip last week leaving his son Jay in Florida.

Mrs. G. P. Reighard and Mrs. E. E. Shaffer attended the Evangelical conference at Milton a few days.

An oyster supper was given to a few invited guests on Tuesday evening by Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Gerard at their residence.

B. W. White who has been sick most of the winter is now able to be out again.

There is a great effort being made to form a new county out of portions of Luzerne and Schuylkill counties, with the county seat at Hazleton. The bill has been reported favorably. Prominent politicians and business men from Wilkes-Barre are opposing the measure, just as they did when Scranton was cut off from Luzerne county and the new county of Lackawanna formed. At present it requires nearly a half day to travel by rail from Hazleton to Wilkes-Barre; and upon this argument of inconvenience, it looks now as if a new county would be formed.

A wild cat skin hangs in one of Lowenberg's show windows. The animal was killed near Stillwater, one day last week. It is seldom they are found in this region nowadays.

Easter novelties have appeared in the windows of Phillips' Bakery.

CENTRAL.

A few days since a party of tax payers happened to meet at the Post Office, and was talking on or about public roads. Well, to say they are about snowed up in many places would be about the facts.

Concerning roads and a good many other articles a man in one instance, that came under the view of the crowd, was so inconsistent as to ask the supervisor to open a piece of road so that he could haul some brick to make a chimney next summer, when the same place one could get to by going through a field a short distance. Perhaps he is like some that want the roads dug out in the center at a heavy expense with pick and shovel.

Messrs. Fritz and Sutliff have started the butchering business at the old stand occupied by J. M. DeWitt, in Jamison City. This firm means business.

Mr. Perry has had his fire loss adjusted and expects to build soon as weather permits. The expectations of many that make it a point to stop at that pleasant resort, will probably not have Mrs. Perry to get their elegant meals and fried trout, as the season for catching the speckled beauties will be here before they can get their new hotel in working order.

Mrs. Tony Bush, son and sister Ella, have arrived from the Clearfield section, preparatory to moving to Beach Creek on or about April 1st.

About twenty five went to Elk Grove to attend an oyster supper, evening of 3rd inst., benefit of P. O. S. of A. at that place, and it is said to have been a success. L. C.

MILLVILLE.

Ida, wife of Edward McHenry, gave birth recently to a pair of twins, which are doing nicely, but the mother is in a very critical condition.

Several of our citizens attended the funeral of John Hendershott of Eversgrove, last Saturday at one o'clock. He died in Michigan, and his remains were brought home by his daughter, Ella Merical, who lives at that place. He was nearly 91 years old. Interment at Jerseytown.

Cyrus Demott was in attendance at the inauguration of President Cleveland on the 4th inst.

D. H. Burrell gave us quite a talk Sunday afternoon at the L. T. L. meeting. He also gave a lecture in the Free Church at night.

The Silver Lake quartette have come and gone and they were certainly immense. Those who failed to hear them missed something grand.

Sarah, oldest daughter of William and Jane Williams, died last Monday at 1:30 o'clock; funeral Wednesday at 10 o'clock. Interment at Jerseytown.

Mary P. Eves, employee at Swarthmore College, spent a few days in town this week.

The question is now, will Ben make a good railroader or Louis a good blacksmith?

Forgiven.

Mr. Fredrick Bryton and his company of capable people who will produce "Forgiven" at the Opera House this evening, arrived here from Shamokin this afternoon. At Shamokin they gave one of the best, and most finished performances of the season, and were received most enthusiastically. The editor of the *Telegram* was one of the audience who saw the play, and has no hesitancy in giving it his personal endorsement, assuring the people of Ashland that there is a treat in store for them that they will appreciate. Mr. Bryton has been suffering from a severe cold for the past week, and at Pottsville could not appear, but he has so far recovered as to be able to appear this evening. We bespeak for Mr. Bryton and his company a crowded house, and we know they will deserve it.—*Ashland Telegram*.

This play will be presented at the Bloomsburg Opera House on Saturday evening, 11th inst.

One of the finest pieces of workmanship that we have seen for a long time is a table in the new store room of J. R. Townsend. It was made at the Mears Manufacturing Company. It is a large cutting table, the bottom being of southern poplar—clear and dry, while the top is made of cherry and maple. The cherry and maple are of inch to two and one-half inches—each alternating, being nailed and glued together, the edges of the strips appearing upon the face of the table. It was built for a substantial as well as ornamental piece, and will no doubt fulfill the requirements.

ENTERTAINMENT OF EXCELSIOR SOCIETY.

The Excelsior Society gave an entertainment at the High School building Saturday evening, March 4th. The following was the programme: Music by the orchestra, consisting of Carl Caswell, pianist; James Stamm, cornet; Dan Butler and Ed Holmes, violins; Harry Barton, bass viol. Recitation "Patty's Courting," Miss Nellie Ent. Essay, "Progress of the United States, Francis Drinker. Recitation, "The Burning Prairie," May Evans. Music, Lillie Keller and Anna Savage. Dialogue, "Exchanged Baggage"—this was a very interesting play in four acts, concluding with a tableau. A second selection was rendered by the orchestra. Recitation, "Gone Some where," Caroline Kashner. Debate, subject "Compulsory Education of no use to Pennsylvania—Affirmative, Carl Caswell, Harry Achenbach, Mazie Kunkle; Negative—Harry Barton, Josephine Purcell, Charles Kesty. The negative side produced the better arguments, and certainly sustained their side of the question. Recitation "Too utterly, utter," Bertha Shoemaker. Instrumental solo by Lillie Keller. Recitation "A School Girl's Time," Anna Savage. Declamation, "A School Boy's Time," Cloyde Workheiser. Duet by Nellie Ent and Anna Savage. Recitation, "Only the Brakemen," Clara Kunkel. The entertainment concluded with a very amusing dialogue entitled "Siamese Twins," rendered by the following; Reber Mears, Howard Traub, Daniel Butler, Art Workheiser, James Saltzer.

At the beginning of the entertainment Principal Sterner announced that he had selected three of the School Directors, viz: J. R. Townsend, R. R. Little and J. K. Bittenbender, to act as judges, who should select the three best in recitations and the three best in debate. He also stated that in three or four weeks the Lyceum would give an entertainment when the other three members of the School Board would be invited to act as judges and select the three best in recitations and the three best in debate. A final contest would be given in April, when only those selected would take part, and when another committee would be selected to decide upon the three best in both contests. The committee gave their decision in favor of May Evans, Anna Savage, and Bertha Shoemaker in recitations, and Charles Kesty, Josephine Purcell and Carl Caswell in debate.

The young gentlemen of the Philologist Society gave an excellent entertainment in the Normal School Auditorium last Saturday evening. The exercises were begun with music by the Normal Orchestra under the leadership of Prof. Butts, followed by an address by the president Mr. H. Crow, an oration "The U. S. in 1893" by Mr. J. K. Krout, declamations and music.

The program throughout was very well rendered and showed careful preparation, as well as ability for such work. But the most prominent feature of the evening was the ceremony of inaugurating the President of the United States. While Cleveland's march was being played the procession composed of the President-elect, President Harrison, cabinet officers, the diplomatic corps, and distinguished senators, governors and congressmen marched to the platform where the President-elect Mr. I. A. DeWitt took the oath of office and afterwards delivered his address in which he enumerated the needs of our country. The address was excellent in every particular and would have been worthy of Cleveland himself.

THE CONCERT.

It is quite evident that the people of this community are not burning up with enthusiasm over the proposition to mark the sites of the forts in Indian times. If they were, the Opera House would have been better filled on Tuesday night, to hear what was in every particular a delightful concert. The singing of the Philadelphia Quartette was very fine; Miss Annie Ent presided at the piano with great skill and grace; Mr. Chas. P. Elwell rendered his violin solo with great tenderness and expression, and Miss Deamer of Williamsport played a piano solo very nicely. The playing of the orchestra was especially enjoyable, and it is to be hoped that this excellent organization will keep up their good work, as they have the material for a first class orchestra. The members are Charles Elwell, W. H. Butts, C. H. Stauffer, Alex. Cohen, Harry Houck, Harry Eshleman, O. W. Ent, Frank Miller, Edward Searles, William Knorr, William Metherell.

The proceeds were about \$100.

PERSONAL.

Mrs. Rose Ladd of Towanda is visiting at Judge Elwell's.

Mrs. T. R. Jordan of Sayre spent Sunday in town with friends.

Mrs. H. W. Sloan is visiting relatives in Washington, D. C.

Miss Lizzie Gorton is spending the week at home with her parents, near Rohrsburg.

Senator Grant Herring and wife of Bloomsburg and Peter A. Evans of Montour were at Washington to witness the inauguration of President Cleveland.

Rev. T. H. Cullen of Freehold, N. J. formerly rector of St. Paul's Church, has just recovered from an attack of pneumonia that confined him to the house for several weeks.

Rev. P. A. Heilman, pastor of the Lutheran church, will deliver expository sermons from the Gospel of St. John during the month of March. Week day services will be held on Wednesday and Friday of each week, until the last week in March when services will be held every evening except Saturday. Every Thursday evening he will meet with the Senior Catechetical class.

Evangelist Davidson closed his revival meetings in Bloomsburg, Thursday evening of last week. About two hundred and fifty have experienced a change of heart, and resolved from this time forward to lead a better life.

It has been one of the greatest revivals in our county. Mr. Davidson won the respect and admiration of our good people at the beginning of the services, and as a result the large Opera House was crowded with anxious hearers every evening.

The following letters are held at the Bloomsburg, Pa., post office and will be sent to the dead letter office March 21st, 1893.

Miss Emma Bell, Leresa Crawford, Mrs. Mary Corliss, Miss Retta Cox, Miss Ella Gorton, Mr. William E. Jones and Mr. William Willer.

Persons calling for these letters will please say they were advertised March 7, 1893. One cent will be charged on each letter advertised.

A. B. CATHCART, P. M.

The Wilkes-Barre and Western railroad Company has called a meeting at their office in Watsonstown, Pa., on Tuesday of next week, March 14th, to consider the question of consolidation of the Wilkes-Barre and Western, the Orangeville and Lehigh Valley and the Turbotville and Williamsport roads. With this consolidation a through line would be made from Williamsport to Wilkes-Barre connecting the anthracite coal fields and the West Branch lumber districts.

The "coon" is a failure. The 2nd of February is always watched closely by those who are fortune tellers, as an indication of warm or cold weather for the succeeding six weeks. If the "coon" sees his shadow, we can look for cold weather, if not, we can expect mild weather. February 2nd was a cloudy day and all looked forward to a mild six weeks, but the extreme cold weather during the whole month of February proves that the "coon" has nothing to do with it. Our old time winters have returned and we must be prepared with large coal bins to meet them.

A few days ago a lady of Mr. Carmel named Mrs. Bridget Haverty dropped a five dollar note in the back yard. A "nanny" goat picked it up for grass, and had nearly devoured it when discovered by the owner. She reserved a fragment of the bill and sent it to the United State treasury for redemption. In reply she was told to make affidavit to the destruction of the money, before a justice of the peace or Notary Public and the government would redeem its promise. The affidavit was made and the lady is anxiously looking for a return of the five dollars.

TOWNSEND'S OPENING.

On Saturday last, John R. Townsend opened his new store in the room recently occupied by G. W. Bertsch in the First National Bank building. He has a fine stock of hats, caps, neckwear, gents' furnishing goods and has just received an extensive line of the latest spring styles for pants, suits, and light overcoats. The opening day was marked by a rush of orders for clothing, as his reputation as a cutter and fitter, and his excellent taste in the selection of goods has been well known and recognized in this community for the past twenty three years.