REPORT

ON

THE SYSTEM OF POPULAR EDUCATION

IN

THE CITY OF NEW YORK;

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MAY 28, 1851.

NEW YORK:
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1851.
Report of the Special Committee on the System of Popular Education in the City of New York, especially in reference to its Economy and Expense, presented by Mr. Bradish, adopted by the Board, and ordered to be printed with the Annual Report of the Board, and ten thousand extra copies as a separate document.

ALBERT GILBERT,
Clerk.
No. 9.

BOARD OF EDUCATION,

May 28th, 1851.

Mr. Bradish, from the Special Committee appointed to prepare and present to the Board a Report on the System of Popular Education in the City of New York, especially in reference to its economy and expense, submitted the following Report; which, having been read, was adopted by the Board, and ordered to be printed with the Annual Report of the Board, and ten thousand extra copies, as a separate document.

ALBERT GILBERT,
Clerk.

REPORT.

At a meeting of the Board of Education, held on the 8th of January last, the President called the attention of the Board to that part of the Mayor's inaugural message, to the Common Council, relating to the department of Common Schools in this city; when, after deliberation upon the subject, on motion, it was

Resolved, "That a Special Committee be appointed to prepare and present to the Board a Report on the System of Popular Education in the city of New York, especially in reference to its Economy and Expense."
The Committee, appointed under this resolution, in performance of the duty thus devolved upon them, now beg leave respectfully to submit the following Report:

Whatever regards the subject of Popular Education is, in any community, and especially in such a one as that of the city of New York, matter of the deepest public interest. It was, therefore, natural and fitting that the Chief Magistrate of the city, in entering on the discharge of the important duties of his office, should, in his inaugural message, in presenting to the consideration of the Common Council the great interests of the city, as proper subjects for their deliberation and action, have called their attention to the department of Common Schools. The terms, in which His Honor the Mayor, has been pleased to do this, are of the gravest import, and well calculated to lead to the most serious reflections. He says:—"I find, in looking over the estimates of appropriations to be provided for the current year, that, of the total amount to be raised by tax ($2,887,597,) no less than the sum of $1,441,000 is for the support of three departments, viz.: Police, School, and Alms-House; and, over the two latter, the Corporation of the city of New York has no control whatever; but is compelled, by the laws of the State, to raise, by taxation, whatever sums the organizations controlling them may see fit to require. I trust that the amount demanded for School purposes ($531,000) will have the effect of directing to this subject the attention of those who contribute this sum, and, unless action is had with reference to placing in the municipal authorities some control over the expenses of this institution, they will increase from year to year, until, in the end, there may be a revulsion of feeling against an organization so enormously expensive,—which may result in serious injury to the noblest cause that ever commanded the attention of philanthropists, viz., that of Universal Education."

It will thus be perceived, that this part of His Honor the Mayor's message is as comprehensive in its scope, as it is grave in its suggestions, and gloomy in its foreboding of evil in final results. It involves not only the economical administration of our present system of Popular Education, but the wisdom of the system itself, and of the organization adopted for carrying it into effect; and
predicts, as a result of both, without change, "a revulsion of feeling against an organization so enormously expensive," that may seriously injure the great cause of Universal Education.

This, in any aspect in which it may be considered, is matter of the deepest public interest; and, if these views of this inaugural message be well founded, and its predictions justified; if our system of popular Education be as unsound in its principle, unwise in its organization, extravagant and "enormously expensive" in its administration, and as ruinous in its tendency, as it is here presented to us, then it is, indeed, matter of just alarm, calling loudly for the immediate interference of the people, and the prompt application of needed and effectual reform.

But if, on the contrary, careful investigation shall show that our present system of popular Education has worked well; that not only in the quality and degree of the instruction it has imparted, has it fully answered all just expectations; but that, assuming general population, taxable property, or educational wants as the basis of estimate, and comparing our own with the systems in operation in other cities of the union, and in the rural districts of our own State, and with our own Private Schools, it shall also be found to be relatively economical; and that, while its expense has, from year to year, with the population and resources of the city, increased in amount, yet, compared with either or all of the above assumed bases of estimate, it has relatively diminished, instead of our system, its organization, or its administration being either in their principles, operation, or results, cause of uneasiness or alarm, it is, in all these particulars, matter of just congratulation and encouragement to philanthropists generally, and the friends of popular Education in particular, to go on perseveringly until they shall have extended the inestimable blessings of this system to every child within our borders, whether high, or humbly born.

But this is a matter of too great importance, and of too deep individual and public concernment to be permitted to remain in any doubt, or admit of any question. It becomes material, therefore, to inquire,
1. What has been the actual working of our present system of Popular Education, so far as its great object, popular instruction, is concerned?

2. What its actual expense? and

3. What its relative expense, compared

1. With general population;
2. With valuation of real and personal property;
3. With educational population;
4. With the number annually instructed;
5. With the average number daily instructed throughout the year;
6. With the expense of popular education in other cities of the Union;
7. With the expense of the same in the rural districts of our own State; and
8. With that of our own Private Schools.

1. Upon the first point then, assuming a period of seven years, it will be readily conceded by all, that popular education in our city has, during this period, not only been greatly extended, but has undergone very great and manifest improvement; that its standard has become more elevated, and instruction more various, extensive and thorough. In these important particulars then, its quality and degree of instruction, our present system has been eminently successful; and that too in regard merely to the Common Schools proper, irrespective of that new and interesting feature, which, during this period, has been engrafted upon, and is the crowning excellence of our popular system, The Free Academy. But when, in addition to the improvement in our Common Schools, we take into view the advantages for a higher and more perfect education, gratuitously offered in The Free Academy, to the pupil of the Common Schools,—advantages equal to those furnished by any educational institution of the country, of whatever age or grade it must be admitted that our present system, so far as its great objects, the education of the popular mind, and the means of accomplishing that object are concerned, it is liberal in its outline, abounding in its provisions, and has been entirely successful in its operation.
2. What has been annually, during the above period of seven years, the *actual* expense of a system of popular education fraught with, and dispensing so many blessings not only to its immediate recipients, but to the public generally, will appear in table A, appended to, and made part of this report.

3. What has been the *relative* expense of this system during the same period, compared,

1. With general population,
2. With valuation of real and personal property,
3. With educational population,
4. With the number annually instructed, and
5. With the average number daily instructed throughout the year,

will appear in Table B, appended to this report.

**Subdivision 6.**

In order to ascertain the relative expense of our own system of popular education, compared with that of the other cities of the union, the Committee early addressed circulars to those cities, asking the requisite information upon several points presented in the circulars. Considerable time was necessarily occupied in collecting and communicating the desired information; and this has necessarily occasioned a corresponding delay in preparing and presenting this report. But after the lapse of some time, the Committee received from most of the cities addressed, answers communicating, if not all the information asked, yet much that was valuable, and which has enabled the Committee to construct the table hereto appended, marked C. This table will be found to present,

1. The name of the city,
2. General population,
3. Valuation,
1. Of real estate,
2. Of personal property, and
3. Aggregate of both.

4. Educational population,
5. Registered attendance in the Common Schools,
6. Average daily attendance in ditto,
7. Current expenses of Common School Education,

1. Aggregate,
2. For teacher’s salaries,
3. Books and stationery, and
4. Fuel,

8. Yearly expense of erecting school buildings,
9. Yearly repairs of ditto,
10. Cost of school sites during the year,
11. The branches taught,
12. High Schools or Free Academy,

1. Number,
2. Branches taught,
3. Number of pupils,
4. Aggregate yearly expense, and
5. Yearly expense per scholar.

13. Evening Schools,

1. Number,
2. How long kept,
3. Attendance,
4. Aggregate yearly expense, and
5. Yearly expense per scholar.

14. Schools, free or otherwise,
15. If not free, what part of the expense borne by the individual,
16. Do parents or public supply books and stationery,
17. New schools organized during the year,
18. Ratio of expense of Common School Education, on,
1. General population,
2. Valuation of real and personal property,
3. Educational population,
4. Registered attendance in Common Schools, and,
5. Average daily do. in do. and,

19. Ratio of attendance in Common Schools on Educational Population,

1. Of registered attendance, and,
2. Of average daily do.

From the foregoing table, it appears that whether we take, as a basis of estimate and comparison, General Population, Valuation of Real and Personal Property, Educational Population, Registered attendance in the Common Schools, or the average daily attendance in the same, both the annual aggregate expense, and the expense per scholar, under our present system of popular education, is relatively less than the same in almost every other city in the Union. For example, while in Boston the ratio of aggregate annual expense of Common School education on general population is $1.752, that of New York is only $0.533, less than one-third of the former; on valuation of real and personal property in Boston, it is $0.00133, in New York $0.00096; on registered attendance in Common Schools in Boston $11 07, in New York $2.523; and on average daily attendance, which is the true expense per scholar, in Boston it is $14.36, while in New York it is only $6.86, less than half the former.

Even if, in the two cities, we add to the aggregate annual expense of supporting the Common Schools, every other item of expense involved in our present greatly extended and highly improved system of popular education, except only the interest on the capital invested in school buildings and their appurtenances, we shall arrive at nearly the same results. For example, if in
New York, to the annual expense of the Common Schools, say.......................... $274,794 59
we add the yearly expense of erecting new
school buildings............................. 32,000 00
repairs of school buildings.................. 18,663 54
sites for school buildings.................... 41,680 00
expense of evening schools.................. 16,621 06
and expense of Free Academy................ 16,269 48
we shall have an aggregate of................ $400,028 67

The ratio of this aggregate expense on population is $0.776; on valuation of property, $0.00139; and on average attendance in the schools, or per scholar is $0.905.

Now, if in Boston, to the annual expense of the Common Schools, say
we add the annual expense of erecting new
school buildings............................. 20,000 00
repairs of school buildings.................. 15,000 00
estimated value of sites, the city owning the land......................... 13,860 00
High Schools.................................. 13,800 00
and books and stationery at $1 00 per scholar on the average attendance, the parents in Boston furnishing these, while the public do it in New York... 16,706 00
we shall have an aggregate of............... $319,366 00

The ratio of this aggregate expense on population is $2.345, on valuation of property, $0.00178, and on average attendance in the schools, or per scholar, $18.573.

Recapitulation.
Aggregate annual expense in New York $400,028 67
“ “ Boston, 319,366 00

Ratio of expense in New York, on popu-
lation, $ 0.776
Boston, “ “ 2.345
New York, on valuation, &c. 0·00139
Boston, " " 0·00178

New York, on average attendance or per scholar 9·905
Boston, " " 18·573;

a result very similar to that before presented, simply on the comparative expense of supporting the Common Schools in the two cities, respectively, but still more favorable to the economy of our own system.

How far our system may, in its practical application, be expanded; and how much, in addition to its present arrangements and results, it may be made to accomplish, before it shall rise, either in relative degree or expense, to the liberal ideas and actual system of our enlightened neighbors of Boston, has been forcibly presented in the recent able and interesting Annual Report of this Board.

A comparison with Philadelphia and Baltimore, would exhibit results similar to those presented in that with Boston; for example, the ratio of the expense of the Common Schools on general population, valuation of taxable property, and on average daily attendance in the schools, or per scholar, is, 1, on general population, in Philadelphia, $0·811, and in Baltimore $0·443; 2, on valuation of taxable property, in Philadelphia $0·00238, and in Baltimore $0·00091; and 3, on average daily attendance, or per scholar, in Philadelphia $8 11, and in Baltimore $12 20: so that the comparison of those cities with New York would be as follows:

1. On general population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>$0·533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>0·811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>0·443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. On valuation of taxable property:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>$0·00096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>0·00238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>0·00091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. On average daily attendance, or per scholar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Expense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>$6 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>8 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>12 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A similar comparison with other cities of the Union, while it would exhibit some diversities, on the several bases of estimate and comparison, would, however, present the same general result, and go to establish the same general truth, viz.: that the expense of popular education, both in the aggregate and per scholar, is relatively less in the city of New York, than generally elsewhere; and this, too, irrespective of the comparative quality or degree of that education—a truth as gratifying to every honest New York feeling, as it should be encouraging to the friends of popular education among us, and tranquillizing to any excited alarms of the tax payers of our city.

But, if the result of a comparison with the principal cities of the Union, taken separately, be so favorable to New York, the result of a similar comparison with these cities collectively, taking in the several items of comparison a general average, will be found to be no less favorable. For example, the aggregate population of the cities, embraced in table C, is 1,416,437; the valuation of property $744,263,192; the daily attendance in the schools 131,001; and the aggregate annual expense of supporting the schools $1,184,350.

Now, if we take the ratio of this aggregate expense, on the several aggregate items, we shall find it to be:

1. On population........................... $0.846
2. " valuation............................ 0.00146, and
3. " daily attendance or per scholar ...... $9.04.
The comparison then with New York will be as follows:

1. **On Population.**

   New York.......................... $0.533  
   Average of the other cities collectively,...... 0.846

2. **On Valuation, &c.**

   New York.......................... $0.00096,  
   Average of the other cities collectively,...... 0.00146

3. **On Daily Attendance, or per Scholar.**

   New York.......................... $6 86,  
   Average of the other cities collectively,...... 9 04

   It will thus be seen that, upon all these bases of estimate and comparison, New York in expense, is greatly below the general average, as she is in this regard below the other principal cities individually. So that, whether the comparison be made of our system with that of the other cities of the Union, taken either *separately or collectively*, that is, the expense of the individual city, or the general average of the whole, the result, in either case, is alike favorable to the economy of our own system, and should be satisfactory to those who are more immediately interested therein, and who contribute to its support.

   The committee believe that much of the error, which seems to have existed, in regard to this matter, has arisen either from a want of full and accurate information upon its several details, or from not duly considering it in all its relations. In the views ordinarily taken of this subject, attention has been generally confined to the *actual* expenses of our system of popular education, and its gradual increase from year to year, entirely overlooking,
or not sufficiently regarding the fact, that general population, taxable property, and educational population have, during the same time, increased still more rapidly, and of course in more than a corresponding degree; so that while the aggregate expense has, from year to year, seemed to increase, and, with a single exception, has actually done so; yet, compared with population, valuation of property, and educational wants, it has relatively diminished, and thus reduced the annual expense per scholar. For example: in 1845, with a general population of 371,223; a valuation of $239,995,527; a school population of 70,003; and an average daily attendance in the schools of 24,350; the aggregate annual expense of supporting the common schools was $200,973 66, and the expense per scholar $8 25; while, in 1851, with a general population of 515,343; a valuation of $286,085,416 74; an educational population of 114,571; an average daily attendance of 40,055, we have an aggregate annual expense of $274,794 59, and an expense per scholar of $6 86.

It will thus be perceived that while the general population has, since 1845, increased 144,120; valuation $46,089,889 74; educational population, 44,568; average daily attendance, 15,705; and aggregate annual expense, $73,820; the ratio of expense on population has, in the same time, fallen from $0.541 to $0.533; on educational population from $2.87 to $2.39; and an average daily attendance, as per scholar, from $8 25 to $6 86.

Subdivision 7.

The difficulty of obtaining, in season, reliable statistics of the Common Schools in the several counties of the State, out of the city of New York, has prevented the Committee from presenting, as they intended, a comparison between the relative expense of the schools in the city and in the rural districts of our own State. Enough however has been ascertained to warrant the conclusion, that such comparison would have been favorable to the economy of the system in operation in the city, and it present management.
But there is another test to which the comparative economy of our Common Schools, under their present system and management, may be brought, which addresses itself more particularly to the actual experience of many of our citizens, that is, a comparison with our own Private Schools.

The Committee have taken some pains to obtain from other sources of information, as well as to inquire of citizens who have withdrawn their children from the excellent Private Schools, which abound in our city, to place them in the Common Schools, and we have been gratified to find, and are now happy in being able to state that, in the quality of instruction and the progress of the pupils, the schools established by law, independent and free, at least do not suffer in a comparison with the schools dependent on private patronage. The sense of public duty in the teachers and their responsibility to the popular sovereignty, in the one case, seem to be as great incentives to exertion and faithfulness, as the spur of private interest and the dependence on individual favor are in the other. And on the part of the pupils it is equally apparent that the large numbers in our Common Schools induce a sort of public opinion, a gregarious sympathy and conformity of purpose and effort, which produce the best effects on the minds and habits of the young, at that early period of life when imitation, example, and emulation furnish such powerful incentives to activity, zeal, and good conduct.

Let us, however, compare the Common Schools with the Private Schools, in respect to their relative expense; and, in doing so, we shall readily discover why so many have transferred their children from the latter to the former.

We have taken thirteen Private Schools in various parts of the city, in which the aggregate number of pupils is 1282; and the amount actually paid for their tuition alone is $15,187 per quarter, which is equal to $60,548 annually, or $47 22 a year for each scholar, besides the expense for books, stationery, and extras of other kinds. That this comparative estimate may be sustained
by the experience of our citizens, as clearly within bounds, we will assume $40 a year as the average price per scholar in the Private Schools.

Now, under our present system of popular education, the whole cost per scholar, including books, stationery, fuel, and all other supplies, is $6 86 a year, less than one sixth of the cost in the Private Schools. When viewed in the aggregate, although the relative proportions are similar, the result of the comparison will be still more striking.

The average number of pupils daily taught in the Common Schools, during the past year, as shown by the Annual Report of this Board, just made, is 40,055, and the actual expense of their instruction, including books, stationery, and fuel, $274,794 59. The expense of the same number of scholars, for tuition alone, in the Private Schools, would, at the rate we have assumed, have amounted to $1,602,200, showing a difference and saving in favor of the relative economy of the Common Schools, of $1,327,405 41, annually; a saving equal to almost five times the entire expense of supporting the Common Schools.

Whether, therefore, we compare our system of popular education and its present management with our own experience of the past, with the systems in operation in other cities of the Union, or our own excellent Private Schools, we find abundant reason for the gratifying conclusion, that our system, while it has been elevated in its character and extended in its application, has also been, in a remarkable degree, economical; a conclusion as gratifying to the friends of the system and of the schools, as it should be satisfactory to those who sustain them.

But while realizing these gratifying financial results, both intrinsic and comparative, it should also ever be constantly borne in mind that the educational wants of our city, arising from the very rapid increase of educational population since the Board of Education has been in operation, have also greatly increased; that these wants have been supplied with means of instruction, in
every respect, superior to those which our schools heretofore enjoyed; that our entire system of popular education, in all its departments, has been much improved and greatly extended; that we have engrafted upon it Evening Schools, in which elementary instruction has been given to near 8000 scholars, of a peculiar class, who, without these schools, would have remained wholly destitute of education;—Three Normal Schools, in which between two and three hundred young persons of both sexes are preparing for usefulness as teachers, in the Common Schools; and, lastly, the Free Academy, in which upwards of 300 students, who have been distinguished in the Common Schools for good conduct and good scholarship, are enjoying gratuitously the means of a higher, classical, scientific and practical education, at least equal to those furnished by any educational institution in the country, of whatever age or grade: When we take into consideration all these things, with the recollection of the fact, that this improved system, which is thus diffusing its countless blessings upon our youth and the public, giving elevation and increased usefulness to individual character, additional value and security to property, and higher respectability and safety to our city, imposes no increased burden upon the individual citizen, nor any materially higher ratio of taxation upon capital, we find, in these gratifying truths, matter rather of congratulation than alarm; and of encouragement to perseverance in our present system, rather than of uneasiness and a restless, undefined desire of change.

Among the various improvements of late introduced into our system of popular education, none is more novel or peculiar in its character, or more interesting in its object and results, than the last, The Free Academy. Such an institution had long been felt, by those familiar with, and who had watched the progress of our system, to be not only a great desideratum in the system, but absolutely essential to its perfection. The Free Academy, therefore, may well be viewed as the crowning excellence of our system of popular education.

There may, however, still be some who have not made themselves fully acquainted with the character and objects of this young institution, or who have not had an opportunity of personally observing its operation, or witnessing its results, upon whose minds
there may yet linger some doubts of the wisdom of this establish-
ment, or of the quality and economy of the education it is in-
tended to, and does actually impart.

In regard to the quality and extent of the education, except
professional, to be obtained in this new institution, they are not
only intended, but believed, to be fully equal to any furnished by
any educational institution in the country, of whatever grade or
however richly endowed. But, besides the quality and degree of
education furnished by this institution, it is material to the citi-
zens of New York to know, not only at what actual, but at what
comparative expense this education is thus furnished in their own
Free Academy.

With this view, the Committee early addressed circulars to the
several Colleges in the Union, asking information upon several
important points. Answers have been returned, although at a
very late date, from fifty-five Colleges and Universities, presenting
a mass of very interesting information, which the Committee has
embodied in an extended table, marked D, and appended to this
report.

This table presents:

1. The name of the institution;
2. Its location;
3. How long it has been in operation;
4. The estimated value of its funds and property, in-
   cluding lands, buildings, library, apparatus, cabi-
   nets, endowments, charity funds, &c. ;
5. Number of volumes in its library;
6. Number of teachers;
7. Annual compensation of teachers;
8. Length of term time;
9. Number of students;
10. Annual charge per scholar for tuition, room rent,
    use of library, and other incidental expenses;
11. The same, together with the average per scholar
    of interest on the College endowment or pro-
    perty;
12. Whole number of persons educated, in whole or
    in part in the institution.
From this table it will be perceived, that making a due allowance for those institutions, an estimate of whose property is either wholly or partially omitted, the aggregate endowments or property of the fifty-five Colleges and Universities, embraced in the table, is about ten millions of dollars. This amount is believed to be rather below than above the reality. The yearly interest on this sum, at six per cent. per annum, is $600,000. The amount of charges for tuition, &c., in the same institutions, appears to be $390,292 annually; and the aggregate number of students, 6,429. Now, if we add, to the interest on the capital invested, the charge, for tuition, &c., and divide the amount, say, $990,292 by 6,429, the whole number of students, we shall have, as the average annual cost, per student, for education in the Colleges $154.03, besides books, stationery, and other incidental expenses.

In the purchase of the site for our Free Academy, the erection of the building, fitting up of the same, and for its library and apparatus, there has been expended $91,372 33. The yearly interest on this sum, at 6 per cent. per annum, is $5,483; to this, add $16,269, the current expenses of the Academy for the last year, and we have an amount of $21,752. Divide this amount by three hundred and thirty, the number of students, and it gives, as the average per scholar, $65.91, including books, stationery, &c., which, being deducted at the rate of $7.67 the scholar, the actual cost for the last year, the average of general expense per scholar is reduced to $58.24, being less than two-fifths of the average per scholar in the Colleges. Increase the number of students to six hundred, which it will probably reach in the course of the next year; and extend also the current expenses to the limit of the statute, say $20,000; and the amount, with the interest on investments, will be $25,483. Divide this amount by six hundred, and it gives an average per scholar of $42.47, including books, stationery &c., as above; at eight hundred scholars, the average would be $31.85, per scholar; and extend the number of scholars to one thousand, and the average per scholar would be reduced to $25.48. This average must, of course, be varied and increased by any necessary increase in the current expenses, for additional instructors and supplies; but it must ever fall far below the corresponding averages in the Colleges.
Pupils of the requisite age, of at least one year's standing in the Common Schools, and of the necessary proficiency in the required elementary studies, have free access to this last and highest institution in our system of popular education. The course of studies in this institution is as liberal in its outline, as minute in its details, various in its subjects, thorough and efficient in its instruction, as in the higher, older, and more richly endowed colleges. The scholar here enjoys gratuitously ample means of as high, classical, scientific, and practical an education, as is furnished by the higher and older institutions; and, what to the tax paying public, who support all our free institutions, it is material to know, all these ample means of an elevated education are furnished, in the Free Academy, at a public expense, not amounting to one-half of that of a corresponding education in the colleges and universities of the country: so that whatever may heretofore have been the doubts entertained in any quarter, as to either the kind or the economy of the education to be furnished by this young institution, those doubts should cease to have a lodgment in any mind. This is no longer a problem to be solved. The experiment has been made, and the result has established the success, the economy, and the wisdom of this last peculiar feature, and crowning excellence of our system of popular education.

The Committee are aware that in this view of the comparative expense of education in the colleges, and in our Free Academy, the former are charged with much that may be considered, and undoubtedly is, dead or unproductive capital—capital, that has merely an associate, historical, or scientific, but no ascertainable pecuniary value—and that estimating the interest on the whole endowment, or entire property of the colleges, as an item in their current annual expenses, would, in most cases, swell those expenses much beyond the actual expense to the scholar. This is undoubtedly true; and yet the entire endowment or property of the colleges is so much capital, which has been either contributed by individuals, or granted by the public, and has gone to create those institutions, such as they are, with their present accommodations and means of instruction. That this capital, thus contributed or granted, where not given in kind, may not always have been favorably invested with reference to its object and its efficiency, may be true;
but it has nevertheless been so invested, and forms part of the capital of the country devoted to this species of education, and must therefore be charged to its account.

Besides, the question here, is not what is the comparative expense of education to the scholar in the colleges and our Free Academy, (for in the latter it is wholly free;) but what is the cost of furnishing the means of such education in those institutions respectively. The inquiry is not in reference to the individual scholar, but to a general system; and for the purposes of the present inquiry, it will be sufficient if, in the comparison instituted, and the solution of the interesting questions involved therein, the citizens of New York shall, as it is confidently believed they will, find abundant reason to be satisfied with both the kind of education furnished in their Free Academy, and the cost at which such education is so furnished. But in this view it should especially be borne in mind, that in the comparison of the Free Academy with the colleges, the Academy is taken out of its proper position as an integral part of our system of popular education; and for the purposes of the comparison merely, considered in the aspect of a collegiate institution; while, in its appropriate character, and in connection with the Common Schools, it has already been shown, that the average annual expense of its instruction per scholar, is only $9.905, including books, stationery, drawing materials, &c.

In the comparison thus instituted between the Free Academy of New York, and the colleges of the country, with the relative quality and expense of the education furnished by them respectively, the committee would not willingly be misunderstood as to their motives and aim: the object of the committee, in this comparison, has been merely to vindicate the former, and not to disparage the latter. They have desired simply to answer objections, and remove doubts honestly, but as they believe, erroneously entertained, in regard to their own young institution; but in no respect, to assail those higher and more venerable temples of science, literature, and the arts, which have grown with our growth, become identified with our character, and deeply seated in our veneration and affections. The committee trust that these ancient fountains of knowledge, of virtue, and a higher civilisation may, with in-
creased means and favor, continue to send forth their pure and refreshing streams to bless, refine, and elevate our country. They are the true guardians of the sacred fires. In their custody are the principles of true science, and the literary character of the country. It is theirs, also, to shed a genial, purifying, and invigorating influence upon the subordinate institutions and Common Schools of the country; and thus promote and preserve, throughout the whole, a sound and wholesome system of general education.

The Free Academy of New York has a more circumscribed sphere of action, and a much humbler mission. While it is the keystone in the arch of our system of popular education, it is intended especially to foster and encourage remarkable talent developed in the Common Schools, by furnishing gratuitously to such talent, without distinction, those means of a higher, classical, scientific, and practical education, of which it would otherwise have been wholly deprived. As such, this young Institution constitutes a novel and interesting feature in our general system; and both in its character and operation, fully deserves all the popular favor and encouragement it now so liberally enjoys.

The same cautious public opinion, which has very naturally been exercised in regard to this last distinguishing feature, and crowning excellence of our general system, has also extended to other less prominent, if not less important parts of the system. Indeed, it is quite natural, and as necessary as natural, that an interest so great in its magnitude, so universal in its extent, and so deeply interesting to all, as that of popular education, should, in all its departments and operation, be observed with the utmost care; and, in its changes and professed reforms, be guarded with the strictest vigilance and scrutiny. But this vigilance should be a conservative, and not a destructive principle. It should be both intelligent and liberal in regard to the great object of the system itself; and, therefore, should ever be exercised in furtherance, and not in defeat or hindrance of that object.

These general observations have been induced by the fact that it has, of late, been a matter of somewhat reproachful remark, with
individuals not well acquainted with, or not maturely considering the subject, that the Common School Houses, more recently erected in the city, have been considerably larger, and more expensive than those earlier built; and this has been alleged as evidence of the unduly increasing expense of our system, and of the growing extravagance of its present administration.

A few facts, with their due consideration, will place this matter in its true light. In the cases where school houses, of the larger and more expensive class have been recently erected, the larger houses have been adopted in preference to the smaller, among other considerations, as a measure of economy; and a slight personal observation, or practical acquaintance with the subject, cannot fail to satisfy every candid inquirer of the wisdom of the late policy of this Board in this regard, so far, at least, as mere expense, or economy is concerned.

The Committee are well aware of, but need not here advert to the fact, that other causes than the size and cost of school houses influence the attendance of scholars, and the expense of instruction. It is nevertheless proper that the relation of the actual cost of school houses, to the number of scholars they accommodate, and the expense of instruction therein, should be presented, in order simply to show that the expenses of our system have not been, in this respect, increased. It is in this view exclusively, and to answer objections, that the Committee present this subject; and not for the purpose of instituting a comparison between the relative advantages of the smaller and larger school houses, or of establishing it as a wise general policy, to adopt the latter in preference to the former. This must ever depend upon, and should always be governed by the peculiar circumstances of each individual case. No general and exclusive rule would be either practicable or wise.

Taking then, for our present purpose, eleven school houses of the lowest cost, we have an average cost, including fitting up, of $11,597; and the average attendance in them, is 668 scholars each; being a ratio of $17 36 on each scholar; while in nine school houses of the highest cost, we have an average cost, including the fitting up, of $17,055, and an average attendance in them, of
1,119 scholars each, being a ratio of $15 24 on each scholar, showing a difference of $2 12 per scholar, in favor of the economy of the larger and more expensive houses.

If, omitting the houses of medium cost, the extremes only be taken, the difference will be much more striking; or if the relative cost of instruction alone, or the whole expense of sustaining the schools, be respectively compared in the same manner, the difference will be still more in favor of the economy of the larger schools. So that in this respect, at least, the expenses of our present system of popular education have not been increased.

His Honor, the Mayor, in his inaugural message, has associated the department of Common Schools with those of the Alms House and Police. On first impression, the ardent and sensitive friends of education may not perhaps feel flattered by, or like this association; but, upon more mature reflection, they will, I think, be led to the conclusion that in this the Mayor has done well, for there are naturally and necessarily very near and interesting relations existing between these several departments. So intimate, indeed, are these relations, and so immediate and strong are the reciprocal influences springing out of them, that the more you cherish and sustain the one, the more you relieve the others; the more liberal and diffusive your system of education, and the more you contribute for its improvement and extension, the less you will have to pay for the maintenance of the other two departments. The more that, in an improved and extended system of popular education, you subject all to the elevating, refining, and conservatory influences of a wholesome moral, intellectual, and industrial training, the more you relieve your Alms House and Police. Extend education, and you diminish pauperism and crime. Increase the number of scholars, and you diminish, in more than a corresponding degree, the number of those who are otherwise to become the recipients of your charity, or the subjects of your penal code. Between these alternatives you must decide. Can the choice, in a civilized and Christian community, be either difficult or doubtful, I will not say to the philanthropist merely, but even to the tax-payer? That choice our City has already made; and it is now, in our improved and extended educational institutions, receiving its successful de-
velopement. Its fruits and final result the future only can fully disclose; but the promises of the present fill that future with encouragement and hope.

His Honor, the Mayor, in his inaugural message, has also been pleased, in a special and very marked manner, to call attention to another view of this subject of the deepest interest—a view involving the wisdom of our educational system, and of the present organization and powers of this Board, as its principal agency. The main objection presented in the message, to the system now in operation, seems to be that the great interest of popular education is placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of this Board; and that the Corporation of the City has no control over either the system itself, or this Board in regard to it; and the message goes on to predict that "unless action is had with reference to placing in the municipal authorities, some control over the expenses of this institution, they will increase, from year to year, until in the end, there may be a revulsion of feeling against an organization so enormously expensive, which may result in a serious injury to the noblest cause that ever commanded the attention of philanthropists, viz: Universal Education."

The suggestions here presented are as full of significance as the prediction that follows them is of alarm. Both are matters for grave consideration; and neither from their character, nor their source, may they be permitted to pass unheeded or in silence.—The Committee, therefore, cannot conclude this report without respectfully noticing both the one and the other.

When, some years since, following the example of several other States most distinguished for their appreciation of popular education, and their intelligence, liberality, and efforts in its promotion, New York withdrew its system of such education from its former political connection, constituted it a separate and independent department, and placed it under the jurisdiction of a body organized expressly for that purpose, it was hailed by the friends of education as an important step in advance, in regard to this great public interest. Have the intelligent friends of education, and our enlightened legislators been premature in their judgment, and mis
taken in this matter? Is there anything either in the constitution of this new system, or in the experience of its actual working, to impeach its wisdom, or disparage its anticipated usefulness, or promised results? In a satisfactory solution of these two important inquiries, the people of this city have a deep interest. In attempting such solution, the Committee beg to be understood as in no respect instituting any personal comparison whatever; but simply as discussing the relative merits of the actual and the proposed systems.

In the first place then, it would seem that the Board having charge of the administration and execution of the present system of popular education in this city, could hardly be more judiciously or more favorably constituted, either for carrying that system into effect, or for accomplishing its great and beneficent purposes. It is composed of two representatives from each of the Wards of the city. They are elected, not exclusively from political or party considerations, but with reference mainly to their supposed personal qualifications, and special fitness for the office they are to fill, and the duties they are to perform. Coming up to the deliberations of the general Board from the several Wards of the city, they must be supposed to be well acquainted with their respective interests and wants, to participate in all their sympathies, and faithfully to reflect their opinions and wishes. Together with the municipal authorities of the city, they are elected by, and are responsible to, the same common constituency, the people. Are they likely to be less patriotic, less regardful of, or less devoted to, the interests of that people; less careful of the people's money, or less intelligent and faithful in its application to the legitimate objects to which it has been appropriated by law? If then, in the discharge of their peculiar, and appropriate duties, they are likely to be as intelligent, honest, and faithful as others, it cannot well be perceived, in what respect, our present system is unwisely constituted; or how that system would be improved either by a transfer, or subjection, of the powers and functions of its present administrative and executive Board, to political municipal Bodies already overburdened with their own. In such transfer or subjection of the powers of this Board to the municipal authorities of the city, instead of wise change and judi-
cious reform, the Committee can see only a return to that central-
ization, which it was the policy and aim of the law establishing
the present system, to avoid; and a breaking up of that just divi-
sion of labor, intended to be introduced, and which, in all things,
is essential to its perfection.

But, in the second place, if, in the constitution of our present
system of popular education, there be found no good and sufficient
reasons for change, especially such change as is proposed, do the
practical working, and actual results of that system furnish such
reasons?

What has been the working, and what the practical results of
our present system of popular education, has been already shown;
and the Committee indulge the hope, that the facts and views
presented in this Report may not only satisfy the public mind upon
these important points, but may also have the effect of tranquillizing
any alarms, which the message of His Honor, the Mayor, is well
calculated to excite; and even to allay those which induced that
message. The Committee also trust, that when the people of
New York shall rise to a full consciousness and just appreciation of
the rapid increase in their own numbers, wealth, and educational
wants, although the expense of supplying those wants may, and
necessarily must, from year to year, actually increase, yet they
will be satisfied that such increased expense is not disproportioned
either to its increased necessity, or the means of supplying it.

Nor can the Committee bring their minds to believe that, so
long as the people shall continue to feel the benefits of an im-
proved and extended system of popular education, without any
additional burden upon the individual citizen, or materially higher
ratio of taxation upon property, but even at a less comparative
expense than in almost any other city of the Union, there is
any danger of such "a revulsion of feeling" in regard to this
system, or the organization which is faithfully carrying it into
effect, as will put in jeopardy the great cause of "Universal
Education." Those who enjoy this blessing, in its present im-
proved and extended form, know too well both its necessary cost
and its value, to render any such result possible. On the contrary,
what the people have long demanded and at length obtained, they will cherish with warm and generous attachment, and abandon with reluctance. It is confidently believed that our present system of popular education is as firmly established in the judgment and affections of the people, as it is essential to their well-being; and that there is little danger of those well settled convictions of reason and those ardent feelings of attachment being alienated from a system, so abounding and diffusive in its acknowledged blessings; and which, both in its character and its results, should be as much a subject of just pride to ourselves, as it is of admiration to others.

All which is respectfully submitted.

New York, May 28, 1851.

Wm. D. Murphy,
J. E. Cary,
L. Bradish,
Hugh Sweeney,
J. H. Hobart Haws,
John De Russ,
E. C. Benedict.

Committee.
Table A.

Exhibiting the actual annual expense of The Common Schools in the city of New York, during a period of seven years.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>EXPENSE</th>
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<td>194,034 17</td>
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<td>1851</td>
<td>274,794 59</td>
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Table B.

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FOURTH DEPARTMENT.

Drawing.


FIFTH DEPARTMENT.

Natural and Experimental Philosophy.

Natural Philosophy, including Statics, Dynamics, Hydrostatics, Hydrodynamics, Pneumatics, Acoustics, Optics and Astronomy.

SIXTH DEPARTMENT.

Chemistry and Physics.

Chemistry, Natural History, Physics, including Magnetism, Electricity, Heat and Experimental Optics.

SEVENTH DEPARTMENT.

Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene.

EIGHTH DEPARTMENT.

Civil Engineering.

Civil Engineering, including the construction of Canals and Railroads, Mechanic Arts and Civil and Naval Architecture.

NINTH DEPARTMENT.

Moral and Intellectual Philosophy.

Moral Philosophy, Intellectual Philosophy, including Logic and the Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed.

TENTH DEPARTMENT.

Law, Political Economy and Statistics.