1856 Bridgewater Annual Town Report

The Town of Bridgewater

Follow this and additional works at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/town_reports

Recommended Citation

Available at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/town_reports/9

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Selectmen & Overseers of the Poor,
OF THE
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER,
FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEB'Y 28, 1857.

Printed by Vote of the Town, passed April 4, 1853.

ALSO, THE
Annual Report of the School Committee,
FOR 1856, '57.

BOSTON,
PRINTED BY I. R. BUTTS,
1857.
REPORT.

In accordance with the vote of the Town, passed April 4th, 1853, the Selectmen and Overseers of the Poor present their Annual Financial Report of Receipts and Expenditures of the Town of Bridgewater, for the year ending February 28, 1857.

At a meeting held March 10, 1856, the town passed the following votes, viz.:

Voted, To raise the sum of three thousand dollars for the support of Schools for the ensuing year.

Voted, To raise two thousand dollars for the repairs of Highways; fifteen hundred dollars in labor, and five hundred in money.

Voted, To raise two thousand dollars for the present Indebtedness of the Town.

Voted, To raise five hundred dollars for the support of the Poor for the year ensuing.

Voted, To raise three hundred dollars for building the Road near Willard W. Fobes's dwelling house.

Voted, To raise one thousand dollars for incidental Expenses for the year ensuing.

RECAPITULATION.

Support of Schools, $3000.00
Highways, two thousand dollars (one fourth in money), 500.00
Indebtedness, 2000.00
Support of Poor, 500.00
Building Road, 300.00
Incidental Expenses, 1000.00

$7300.00
LABOR TAX.

Highways, — Two Thousand Dollars.

Three-fourths in labor, $1500.00
One-fourth in money,  500.00

$2000.00

Voted, To raise and assess into a tax upon the Polls and Estates in town, according to law, the sum of seven thousand three hundred dollars.

SCHOOLS, 1856, '57.

Town grant, $3000.00
Received from State Fund,  116.50
Interest on Edson fund (two years),  37.08

Total, $3153.58

Number of Districts, 13
" " Scholars,  626

No. of Scholars, 181.

SUMMER TERM.

Paid Miss Sarah F. Taft, teaching Grammar School, 20 weeks, including board, $140.00
" " Elvira Wood, teaching Intermediate School 20 weeks, including board, 110.00
" " Laura D. Holmes, teaching Primary School 20 weeks, including board, 100.00

WINTER TERM.

Paid Miss Sarah F. Taft, teaching 10 weeks, 70.00
" " " " " one-half week's board, 1.25
" " Elvira Wood, teaching 10 weeks, 60.00
" " " " " 1 week’s board, 2.25
Paid Miss Laura D. Holmes, teaching 10 weeks, $55.00
  "  "  "  1 week’s board, 2.25
  " Lafayette Keith for wood, chalk, ink, charcoal, &c., 19.75
  " Lafayette Keith, for hard coal, 51.04

Dist. No. 2. — Lewis Bryant, Prud. Com.
No. of Scholars, 35.

SUMMER TERM.
Paid Miss Mary K. Alden, teaching 20 weeks, $105.00

WINTER TERM.
Paid Miss Helen Shaw, teaching 10 weeks, 70.00
  "  "  1 week’s board, 2.00
  " Lewis Bryant, for fuel, &c., 16.00
  " Albert Harden, making fire 10 weeks, 3.00

$196.00

Dist. No. 3. — Snow W. Munroe, Prud. Com.
No. of Scholars, 77.

SUMMER TERM.
Paid Miss Sarah Crane, teaching 18 weeks, $144.00
  "  " Susan Alden (assistant teacher), 18 weeks, 36.00

WINTER TERM.
Paid Miss Sarah Crane, teaching, 12 weeks, 96.00
  "  "  "  board, 1 week, 2.50
  "  " Susan Alden (assistant teacher), 12 weeks, 24.00
  "  "  "  board, 1 week, 2.50
  "  "  " Snow W. Munroe, for fuel, &c., 23.05

$331.05
No. of Scholars, 29.

**SUMMER TERM.**
Paid Miss Ellen E. Shedd, teaching, 20 weeks, $100.00

**WINTER TERM.**
Paid Miss Ellen E. Shedd, teaching, 10 weeks, $55.00
" " " " board, 2 weeks, 4.00
" John Holmes, for fuel, &c., 7.77

166.77

No. of Scholars, 17.

**SUMMER TERM.**
Paid Mrs. Lydia W. Benson, teaching, 20 weeks, $100.00

**WINTER TERM.**
Paid Mrs. Lydia W. Benson, teaching, 10 weeks, 50.00
" " " " board, one week, 2.00
" Martin Leonard, for fuel, &c., 9.87

$161.87

No. of Scholars, 38.

**SUMMER TERM.**
Paid Miss Sarah Leach, teaching 20 weeks, $100.00

**WINTER TERM.**
Paid Miss Sarah Leach, teaching, 10 weeks, 60.00
" " " " board, one week, 2.25
" Simeon W. Leonard, for fuel, &c., 6.50

$168.75
### Dist. No. 7.—Lewis Wentworth, Prud. Com.

No. of Scholars, 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUMMER TERM</strong></td>
<td>Paid Miss Olive F. Wentworth, teaching, 20 weeks,</td>
<td>$80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WINTER TERM</strong></td>
<td>Paid Miss Olive F. Wentworth, teaching, 10 weeks,</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; board, 1 week,</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; Boy making fire, 10 weeks,</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; Lewis Wentworth, for fuel, &amp;c.,</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$152.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dist. No. 8.—James M. Leonard, Prud. Com.

No. of Scholars, 59.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUMMER TERM</strong></td>
<td>Paid Miss Eliza A. Hodges, teaching, 20 weeks,</td>
<td>$110.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WINTER TERM</strong></td>
<td>Paid Miss Eliza A. Hodges, teaching, 10 weeks,</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; James M. Leonard, for fuel, &amp;c.,</td>
<td>23.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; Elijah A. Alden, making fire, 10 weeks,</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$199.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dist. No. 9.—Thomas Keith, Prud. Com.

No. of Scholars, 65.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUMMER TERM</strong></td>
<td>Paid Miss Ann E. Greene, teaching 20 weeks,</td>
<td>$140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; Mrs. Mary Edson, teaching, 20 weeks,</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WINTER TERM</strong></td>
<td>Paid Philander D. Leonard, teaching, 10 weeks,</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; Miss Mary Perkins, teaching, 10 weeks,</td>
<td>45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot; Thomas Keith, for fuel, &amp;c.,</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$390.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No. of Scholars, 19.

SUMMER TERM.
Paid Miss Sarah W. King, teaching, 20 weeks, $80.00

WINTER TERM.
Paid Miss Sarah W. King, teaching, 10 weeks, 60.00
" " " " " board, 2 weeks, 4.00
" George King, for fuel, &c., 7.50

$151.50

Dist. No. 11. — Zephaniah Keith, Jr., Prud. Com.
No. of Scholars, 30.

SUMMER TERM.
Paid Miss Mary A. Hayward, teaching, 20 weeks, $100.00

WINTER TERM.
Paid Nathaniel B. Hodsdon, teaching, 10 weeks, 100.00
" Zephaniah Keith, Jr., for fuel, &c., 9.78

$209.78

No. of Scholars, 14.

SUMMER TERM.
Paid Miss Harriet L. Alden, teaching, 20 weeks, $90.00

WINTER TERM.
Paid Francis Hodges, teaching, 10 weeks, 65.00

$155.00

No. of Scholars, 46.

SUMMER TERM.
Paid Miss Abbie A. Keith, teaching, 20 weeks, $110.00
WINTER TERM.

Paid G. F. Ellis, teaching, 10 weeks, $115.00
" Abiel Bassett, for fuel, &c., 8.59

$233.59

RECAPITULATION OF SCHOOLS.

Expended in District Number 1, $611.54

2, 196.00
3, 331.05
4, 166.77
5, 161.87
6, 168.75
7, 152.75
8, 199.75
9, 390.00
10, 151.50
11, 209.78
12, 155.00
13, 233.59

$3128.35

Voted, That the School Committee be instructed to secure the same length of time for schooling in every district in town, and to divide Schools, when the same may be advisable or necessary.

There is due to the several School Districts, from money raised, and apportioned in the year 1855, not expended, the following sums; namely:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Number</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>99.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>105.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>76.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>63.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dist. No. 8, overdrawn</td>
<td>$108.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>35.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>55.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>85.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>51.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>60.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount due School Dists., March 1, 1857</td>
<td>$680.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### HIGHWAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town grant in labor</td>
<td>$1500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlay on the same</td>
<td>$46.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town grant in money</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total amount for Highways</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2046.75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Dist. No. 1 East. — Mitchel Hooper, Surveyor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Bills</td>
<td>$326.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overworked above bills</td>
<td>$360.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed by Auditors</td>
<td>33.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed,</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Dist. No. 1 West. — Eli Washburn, Surveyor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Bills</td>
<td>$199.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abated</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$198.66</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of labor done</td>
<td>$231.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overworked above bills</td>
<td>33.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed by Auditors</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed,</td>
<td>23.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Dist. No. 2. — Benjamin F. Winslow, Surveyor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Bills</td>
<td>$63.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money appropriation</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$123.73</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abated</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$122.68</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of labor done</td>
<td>$126.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overworked</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dist. No. 3. — Cromwell Alden, Surveyor.
Amount of Bills, $37.30
Money appropriation, 35.00

$ 72.30

Amount of labor done, $ 75.98
Overworked, 3.68

Dist. No. 4. — Henry C. Lyon, Surveyor.
Amount of Bills, $41.67
Money appropriation, 35.00

$ 76.67

Amount of labor done, $ 77.47
Overworked, 80

Dist. No. 5. — Floyd Robinson, Surveyor.
Amount of Bills, $51.98
Money appropriation, 45.00

$ 96.98

Amount of labor done, $ 96.99

Dist. No. 6. — George W. Holmes, Surveyor.
Amount of Bills, 71.20
Money appropriation, 60.00

$131.20

Amount of labor done, $ 139.44
Overworked, 8.24

Amount of Bills, $41.93
Money appropriation, 30.00

$ 71.93

Amount of labor done, 68.81

Unexpended, $ 3.12
Amount of Bills, $76.96
Money appropriation, 35.00

$ 111.96
Amount of labor done, 111.28

Unexpended, .68

Amount of Bills, $381.32
Amount of labor done, $439.42
Overworked above bills, 58.10
Allowed by Auditors, 10.00

Not allowed, $48.10

Dist. No. 10. — Oliver C. Wilbar, Surveyor.
Amount of Bills, 42.30
Money appropriation, 60.00

$102.30
Amount of labor done, $106.50
Overworked, 4.20

Dist. No. 11. — Vassel Keith, Surveyor.
Amount of Bills, $86.28
Money appropriation, 60.00

$146.28
Amount of labor done, $149.65
Overworked, 3.37

Amount of Bills, $34.31
Money appropriation, 30.00

$ 64.31
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Labor done,</th>
<th>$65.06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overworked,</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Bills,</th>
<th>$92.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money appropriation,</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Appropriated for Highways,</th>
<th>$2046.75</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abated,</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Whole amount worked out,         | 2197.60 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overworked,</th>
<th>$153.50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allowed,</td>
<td>$58.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not allowed,</td>
<td>94.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BRIDGES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New planking Alden's Bridge,</th>
<th>$12.08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New planking Pratt's Bridge,</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs on Pope's &quot;</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Hayward's &quot;</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Oak Street &quot;</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| $35.02 |
STREETS.

Spring Hill Avenue (new location), Town Grant, $300.00
Galen Conant, building section 1, $100.00
E. H. Leonard, " 2, 75.00
James Boucher, land and fencing, 28.00

* Oliver Place, (new location.)
Caleb Hayward, land and fencing, $55.00
H. & V. Ames, " 2.00

$203.00

Titicut Street.
Darius Dunbar, for raising 35 rods of causeway, under the direction of the Selectmen, by vote of the town, $205.00

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

Town Grant, including Town Officers, $1000.00
Paid printing Town Reports for 1855, $48.00
" Stationery and blank books, 8.79
" Printing Tax Receipts, Warrants, &c., 12.40
" Ira Conant, labor & stones, near Gibb's place, 27.50
" Eli Washburn, stones for culverts, near Dr. Washburn's and Academy, 28.90
" Eli Washburn, breaking and moving stones on Crescent Street, 36.02
" James Harlow, injuries received on Plymouth Street, 35.00
" Town Raynham, one-half expense of three stone posts on county line, 1.63
" Repairs on road scraper, 2.01

* No expense to the town for building said location.
Paid Stone posts and setting on Spring Hill Avenue, 1.25
" Cromwell Alden, stones for culvert, Hayward St., 4.00
" Calvin H. Wilbar, stable hire, 12.74
" Mitchell Hooper, stones for culverts, Plym. St., 13.59
" William Mitchell, abatement of tax, 4.00
" Theodore C. Wilbar, " " 2.40
" Trunk for Treasurer, 1.25
" Bridgewater Cemetery, use of hearse house, 6.00
" Eli Washburn, care of hearse, 6.00
" " " repairs on hearse, .50
" Abram Washburn, repairs on pick, .58
" Key for safe, 1.00

$ 253.86

TOWN OFFICERS.

Paid Van R. Swift, Selectman and Assessor, $ 102.00
" " " horse and carriage, 2.50
" Spencer Leonard, Jr., Selectman and Assessor, 71.25
" " " horse and carriage, 12.50
" Elbridge Keith, Selectman and Assessor, 22.50
" Van R. Swift, Overseer of Poor, 21.00
" " " horse and carriage, .50
" Spencer Leonard, Jr., Overseer of the Poor, 12.75
" " " horse and carriage, 10.50
" Elbridge Keith, Overseer of Poor, 1.50
" J. E. Crane, Treasurer, 25.00
" " " Town Clerk, recording births, 15.60
" " " " " deaths, 7.20
" " " " " marriages, 2.30
" " " " " militia roll, 2.50
" " " " " road locations, 2.80
" " " " " distributing laws & resolves & expen. 3.00

" Lewis Leonard, School Committee, 69.31
" E. C. Hewett, " " 35.34
" T. P. Rodman, " " 32.97
Paid David Brigham, School Committee, $13.50
" Leander A. Darling, " 7.50
" Calvin H. Wilbar, constable, 17.50
" J. L. Bassett, collector, 102.78
" Williams Latham, auditor, 4.15
" Eli Washburn, " 3.75
" Isaac S. Wilbar, " 3.00

$ 601.45

TOWN COMMITTEES.

Paid Van R. Swift, roads and bridges, $6.75
" Spencer Leonard, Jr., roads and bridges, 6.00
" Cromwell Alden, " .63
" Elbridge Keith, " 6.00

$ 19.38

OLD BILLS OF 1855, AND PREVIOUS.

Paid Asa P. Keith, shovelling snow, $2.18
" Elbridge Keith, " 2.50
" Lewis Leonard, balance School Committee bill '55, 13.13
" Solomon Alden, Committee on D. Mitchell's case, 4.00
" " " on road, 1.00
" Lazell, Perkins, & Co., abatement on tax 1855, .90
" Darius Dunbar, overwork on highway bills, 1855, 6.18
" " " removing snow, 1855, 6.45
" J. L. Bassett, " 1.31
" John Parker, " .62
" Kenelm Winslow, gravel used on Plymouth St., 1855, .75
" Soranus Wentworth, storing lumber from 1852 to 1857, 4.50
" Bates, Hyde, & Co., 2½ gross screws, 1852, .75
Paid Levi Walker, damage received on Centre Street, 1854, $6.37
$ 50.64

IMPROVEMENTS AT ALMS HOUSE, 1856.

Paid Henry F. Braman, painting buildings, $98.55
" Elbridge Keith, door and express, 3.50
" Lloyd Keith, one day's work on house, 1.50

$103.55

SNOW BILLS, 1856.

Paid Mitchell Hooper, Dist. No. 1 West, $78.81
" Eli Washburn, " 1 East, 86.80
" Benj. F. Winslow, " 2, 94.87
" Cromwell Alden, " 3, 62.50
" Henry Lyon, " 4, 128.11
" Floyd Robinson, " 5, 78.82
" Geo. W. Holmes, " 6, 92.19
" Virgil Ames, " 7, 52.40
" Isaac N. Cushman, " 8, 113.30
" Philip Crapo, " 9, 146.73
" Oliver C. Wilbar, " 10, 126.03
" Vassel Keith, " 11, 59.62
" Darius Dunbar, " 12, 42.69
" George King, " 13, 86.68

$ 1249.55
ALMS HOUSE ACCOUNT.

Town Grant, $500.00

Dr.

Inventory, March 1, 1856, $796.10
L. Holmes, for supplies, 88.59
Elbridge Keith, " 28.79
J. E. Crane, " 14.86
Interest on farm, 150.00
Do. on Stock and furniture, 40.00
Superintendent's salary, 155.00
Physician's " 23.00
Cow, bought of J. F. Leach, 31.00
Due from individuals March 1, 1856, 52.78
Use of cow, 4.00
Cash on hand, " 17.50

$1401.62

Cr.

Inventory, March 1, 1857, $769.62
Cash on hand, " 13.92
Due from individuals, " 41.52

$825.06

$576.56

Average number of paupers, 4¼.
Cost per week for support at the house, $2.59.

Paid support of Theodore Hooker (hospital), $145.30
" Town of Sandwich, for Mrs. Leonora Washburn, 12.00
" State Alms House, Tewksbury, N. B. Washburn, 16.00
" Expenses removing " 5.35
Paid town of Pepperell, for C. H. Ashport, $1.50
" Expenses removing " 8.25
" West Bridgewater, for Eunice Ashport, 11.75
" Hannah Ashport, for wood, 4.25
" Leander Fobes, " 7.00
" Burial of Mrs. T. Fuller, 9.00
" Misses Fuller, wood and money, 21.41
" Dr. S. Alden, medical aid, Misses Fuller, 5.90
" I. A. Prouty, keeping travelling paupers, 2.75
" Town of Norton, J. S. Washburn and family, 12.50
$ 262.96

RECAPITULATION OF EXPENDITURES.
Expended for Schools from March 1, '56, to M'ch 1, '57, $ 3128.35
" " Highways, above labor tax, 558.62
" " Bridges, 35.02
" " Streets (new locations), 260.00
" " Miscellaneous expenses, 253.86
" " Town Officers and Committees, 624.33
" " Clearing streets of snow, 1249.55
" " Causeway on Titicut Street, 205.00
" " Support of the Poor, 576.56
" " Old bills, 1855, 50.64
" " Improvements at Alms House, 103.55
" " Pauper Expense out of the house, 262.96
$ 7308.44
The Selectmen further report, that they have examined the Treasurer's account, which stands as follows:

**Dr.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To cash on hand March 15th, 1856,</td>
<td>$18.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received of Selectmen for old measures sold</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee to settle with Bonds of D. Mitchell</td>
<td>939.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From State School Fund</td>
<td>116.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horace Ames, collector, 1855</td>
<td>37.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Washburn, for timber Town Farm</td>
<td>102.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest on Edson Fund</td>
<td>45.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseers for labor done by N. Ashport</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. L. Bassett, Collector, 1856</td>
<td>8640.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town House Committee</td>
<td>28.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money hired of sundry persons</td>
<td>450.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$10,385.65**

**Cr.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By paid miscellaneous orders</td>
<td>$1547.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>3141.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway and snow orders</td>
<td>1812.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alms House</td>
<td>600.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Tax</td>
<td>1290.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centennial Celebration</td>
<td>339.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Dunbar, note and interest</td>
<td>113.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Washburn, on note</td>
<td>169.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest, on money hired</td>
<td>85.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounty on Crows</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage bill</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps for School Districts</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash on hand March 1, 1857</td>
<td>1234.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**$10,385.65**
We also find that the Treasurer owes the following sums:—

To Deborah L. Hale, note and interest, $1187.27
" Lucy Hale, " " 346.85
" A Hale, guardian, " " 155.25
" Philo Hooper, " " 159.00
" Betsey Hooper, " " 212.00
" Mary Washburn, " " 312.00
" Eli Washburn, " " 318.00
" School Districts, money raised, 1855, 680.79
" Schools not closed, March 1, 1857, 460.00
Unsettled accounts, estimated, 200.00
Outstanding Order, 2.75

$ 4033.91

Available means of the Treasurer for paying above Amount.

Cash on hand March 1, 1857, $1234.53
Due from J. L. Bassett, Collector, 111.58
" " School Districts No. 8 and 9, money overdrawn, 143.98

1490.09

Balance against the town March 1, 1857, $2543.82

The following sums have been paid by the Town, for which there was no appropriation nor estimate:—

Paid for removing snow, $1249.55
" for causeway on Titicut Street, 205.00
" William Dunbar, note and interest, 113.80
" for Centennial Celebration, 339.82
" " bounty on Crows, 31.25
" " Overwork on highways 55.62
Paid for land and fencing Oliver Place, $57.00
" " discount on taxes paid before October 1st, 272.52
" " abatement of taxes, 45.51
" " maps for school districts, 16.00

All of which is respectfully submitted,

VAN R. SWIFT,
SPENCER LEONARD, JR.,
ELBRIDGE KEITH,

Selectmen of Bridgewater.

ASSESSORS' DEPARTMENT.
Amount of Real Estate assessed May 1, 1856, $1,170,864
" Personal " " " " " " " 658,616

Total, $1,829,480

Per cent. on true value, five mills on the dollar for State, County, and Town Taxes.

No. of Polls, 754. Poll Tax, $1.50
Town Grant (combined), $7300.00
County Tax, 1215.07
State " 1290.00

$9805.07

Overlayings, 473.48

Total amount assessed and committed, $10,278.55

Town Grant for Highways (labor and money), $2000.00
Overlay, 45.04

Total amount for Highways, $2045.04

Per cent. on Highway Grant, seven-tenths of a mill on the dollar. Poll Tax, $0.35.
Number of Insurance, Bank, Railroad, and other incorporated shares returned May 1, 1856, to wit: —

1565 Insurance and Bank shares value, $143,389
892 Railroad " " 62,982
533 Other Incorporated " " 142,598

$348,969

VAN R. SWIFT, Assessors
SPENCER LEONARD, JR., of
ELBRIDGE KEITH, Bridgewater.

March 1, 1857.

REPORT OF TOWN HOUSE COMMITTEE.

Cash receipts for year ending March 1, 1857, $121.00
Amount due for use of Hall, 9.50
Balance from last year's account, 7.00

$138.10

Paid for washing, &c., $7.00
" J. E. Crane's Bill, 10.38
" L. Holmes's " 31.52
" Hilman Robinson, 32.70
" Perkins & Hobart, 4.24

$85.84

$52.26

Paid Dura Wadsworth, for erecting stage, 24.00

Balance paid into the Treasury, $28.26

J. E. CRANE, Town House
P. D. KINGMAN, Committee.
LIQUOR AGENCY.

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER TO M. KEITH.

1857.

February 27. To Spirits on hand, $54.51
Cash “ “ 16.96
Bottles and Fixtures, 15.96

$ 87.43

Balance to N. A. 24.20

$ 111.63

1856.

Cr.
June 15. By Spirits and Fixtures, $71.63
Cash, 40.00

111.63

February 27. To Balance, $24.20

E. E. MITCHELL KEITH, Agent.

DEATHS IN BRIDGEWATER,

From Jan. 1, 1856, to Jan. 1, 1857.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age yrs. mos. days</th>
<th>Disease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Melind S. Holmes</td>
<td>24 7</td>
<td>Dropsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30. Sena Dean</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Dropsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>6. Richard Church</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Austin B. Wilbar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Hemorrhage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. William Pratt</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Disease of Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>6. Lucia P. Cole</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Nicholas Tillinghast</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>22. Alonzo Thomas</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Charles L. Pease</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Drowned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anna Perkins</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 Dropsy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eunice Hunt</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Margaret W. Alger</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Drowned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orlando B. Taylor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caroline Leonard</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarence Hayward</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 Enlargement Heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abigail Copeland</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Old Age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eliza Jane Lee</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Frederick M. Johnson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israel J. Fearing</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eliza Alger</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tabatha Fuller</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Serofulous Humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Hooper</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Old Age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esther B. Wing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Congestion of Brain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah Jane Harden</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Martha W. Keith</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 16 Fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keziah M. Keith</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cyrus Hayward</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elizabeth W. Potter</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lucy Reed Crane</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diarrhoea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bethiah Lovell</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elvira K. Keith</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Franklin Burton Robbins</td>
<td>9 23</td>
<td>Diseased Liver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Myra Bump</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Scarlet Fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wales Bump</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Hannah Packard</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Old Age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harriet Carver Alger</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Horatio Bump</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Scarlet Fever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eugene Wilbar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 Dropsy on Brain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas W. Copeland</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Kicked by a horse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zephaniah Andrews</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry Washburn Hooper</td>
<td>3 6</td>
<td>Scarlet Fever.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MARRIAGES IN BRIDGEWATER,

From January 1, 1856, to January 1, 1857.

February 8. Isaac Bates of North Bridgewater, and Mary Boul­dry of Bridgewater.


March 23. Benjamin N. Hodges, and Abigail E. Phelps, both of Bridgewater.

April 6. Henry A. Hazleton, and Abby T. Hall, both of Middleboro'.

April 13. Daniel Keif, and Margaret Murphy, both of Bridge­water.

April 26. John Conovan, and Johanna Sheean, both of Bridgewater.

June 1. William H. Leonard, and Mary Glenn, both of Middleboro'.

June 3. John C. Bosworth, and Maria E. Howe, both of Abington.

June 3. Warren Wood and Julia M. Caswell, both of Middleboro'.

June 8. John V. Dyke, and Louisa K. Washburn, both of Bridgewater.

June 15. Foster Bates of Cohasset, and Susan S. Staples of West Bridgewater.

June 22. John Herrin, and Betsy Madden, both of East Bridgewater.

August 10. Samuel Lord of Manchester, and Caroline N. Carpenter of Pawtucket.


September 13. Charles H. Jewett, and Harriet M. Keith, both of Bridgewater.

September 14. James Waters, and Ann Monnan, both of Bridgewater.


November 8. Thomas Geyon, and Margaret Goodwin, both of North Bridgewater.

November 20. Joshua S. Ramsdell, and Mary S. Fuller, both of Bridgewater.

December 25. William McNeeland, and Mary Moore, both of Bridgewater.
REPORT.

OF THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE.
On the day of the Annual Town Meeting of this town in March, 1856, Lewis Leonard, Levi L. Goodspeed, and Edwin C. Hewett, were elected members of the School Committee for the ensuing year.

It was voted on the same day that the school terms should be of the same length in all the School Districts.

The duty of contracting with the teachers of the schools, and of having full oversight of the schools, was assigned by a special vote to the School Committee, on whom the duty would have devolved if the town had omitted to pass any vote whatever respecting the matter.

The last named, unexpected action of the town has been followed by unpleasant consequences. Many who were in favor of it at first have changed their minds; and their second thoughts have been accompanied by excited feelings. They have expressed these feelings in bitter words; and these words, spoken in the presence of pupils of the schools, have had much to do with a disorderly spirit in the schools themselves. It has been well known that the teachers in some instances were not agreeable to the voters in the Districts, not because they were worthy of dislike, but because they were not selected by the usual officer, the Prudential-Committee-Man. The feelings of dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the town became feelings of opposition to the Committee, and to the teachers selected by them. These feelings in some of the Districts were expressed in murmurs loud enough for pupils to hear, but not indecently violent; and in some Districts they were expressed by the detention of pupils at
home in considerable numbers; and in one District they were expressed in the most open disregard of the laws of the Commonwealth, the inhabitants holding a meeting and voting to close the school-house against the teacher appointed by the Committee.

It was unwise, in our judgment, to authorize the School Committee to make contracts with teachers and to have the full oversight of the schools, without first making over to the town all property in the school-houses; the result shows that if not unwise, it was unfortunate. We trust that at some future time a well considered and entire reconstruction of our school system will be effected, a reconstruction of which the measures of last spring will form only a part.

In accordance with the vote of the town to make the school terms in all the Districts equal, the Committee divided the school year into three parts. They provided that schools should commence at the usual time in the Spring and continue ten weeks; that then a vacation of five weeks should follow; that after the vacation they should commence and continue ten weeks; and that a vacation should follow until after Thanksgiving in November; that then the Winter Schools should commence at the usual time, and continue ten weeks.

Some necessary variations from this order were made to meet exigencies arising from the inability of some of the teachers to commence school at the proposed times. In some cases we waited for the teacher to be ready; in some, it was at length necessary to look for a teacher to fill a vacant place. In one case a highly valued teacher was released from her engagement, to accept an appointment to an honorable and permanent place, as a teacher in a school for teachers, the State Normal School in Westfield.

A new set of Reading Books has been recommended this year. The excellence of these books must be apparent to all who give them even a slight examination. The interesting selections in all of them, the valuable instructions in the art of reading which are continued through the series; the large fund of information contained in the glossarial notes; and the attractiveness which distinguishes the volumes designed for beginners, all combine to make these reading-books worthy of a place in our school-rooms.
We mean the series of reading-books prepared by Epes Sargent, entitled the Standard Series.

A new arithmetic has been recommended; and with good reason. For a long time the most intelligent of our teachers, from all quarters, as well those from other institutions, and from the class of self-taught teachers, as from the Normal Schools, have been becoming familiar with rational and expeditious methods of working arithmetical problems, and of teaching the science of Arithmetic. These methods when collected make an excellent system. But few teachers know them all. The new book that we have introduced, besides displaying a collection of these methods, presents the teacher with new matter which is fairly entitled to be called original. The old books in the hands of the best teachers have long been used only as collections of examples, and instruction in Arithmetic has been chiefly oral. By the use of this book, pupils can read things to which they have hitherto only listened; and for some scholars, the written lesson is necessary, while for all, it is profitable. Arithmetic and its Applications, by Dana P. Colburn, is the title of the new Arithmetic that we have recommended to be used in the schools of this town. When Greenleaf's Arithmetic was introduced, several years ago, by a Committee of which some of the present Committee were members, a new supply of books was actually needed; the books then in use being almost all of them worn out by long usage; it was thought well to introduce a new book, containing a greater variety of examples than was contained in the old books. We now offer another new book for the reasons that we have assigned.

We now proceed to give the details of the several schools as far as we are able; we cannot give them perfectly because the original members of the Committee have all retired from office; and because some of the schools are still in session, interruptions having been made in some of them by the extremely inclement weather of the past season. We have not seen all the schools from their beginning; and we have not yet followed some of them to their close. Mr. Goodspeed resigned in May; Mr. Leonard resigned in November; and Mr. Hewett in November.
The First School in District No. 1, was taught in all its sessions by Sarah F. Taft. What the visitor says of this school in the Winter Term, is according to the observation of other members of the Committee in other parts of the year. The visitor says: "While this school has been perhaps, better taught, and has made improvement beyond the average of our schools, we think that a little more energy and decision and care on the part of the teacher would have tended to keep the school-room cleaner and to secure more neatness in the writing-books, and more prompt obedience and action from the pupils.

The Second School in this District was taught throughout the year by Elvira Wood. The teacher has been long favorably known in this District. It is to be hoped that in her future course she will become still more systematic, more energetic, and contrive to keep her pupils more constantly employed. We have no doubt that she will act successfully on the suggestions that we have made.

The Third School in this District was taught all the year by Laura D. Holmes. She is in all respects a first rate Primary School teacher; and her school at all times presented the pleasing effects of ingenuity, systematic activity, wise kindness and perseverance in a good purpose. We anticipate for this admirable young teacher a long career of happy usefulness.

The School in District No. 2, was taught in the Spring and Summer by Mary K. Alden. She is a pains-taking teacher. Her school ought to have had a Primary department. If she had had an assistant to relieve her of the care of those who ought to have been in such a department, she would have had less excuse for the comparative inefficiency which marked her closing labors in the school where, at first, two or three years ago, she gave general satisfaction.

Miss Helen Shaw has done well as the teacher of the Winter school, in this District.

A commodious and well furnished new school house was opened at the commencement of the Spring Term in District No. 2. It resembles the one erected a few years ago in District No. 3.

The School in District No. 3, was taught all the year by Sarah Crane. "No school," says the visitor, stands higher than this in
the excellence of its discipline, the thoroughness of its instruction, and its general improvement. If there be an exception to this statement it is in regard to the article of reading, which is not equal to that in some of the other schools, and not what it should be. Some of the parents and others in this District have manifested a want of confidence in this teacher which we think almost wholly undeserved. Susan Alden is Miss Crane's assistant—a modest and promising young teacher. The visitor of last Summer, not now on the Committee, thinks "that a large portion of the trouble in this District originated in the change in the method of employing teachers." It might have been much mitigated if the teacher's suavity had been equal to her energy and perseverance, but the perfect union of such qualities is very rare.

The School in District No. 4, was taught all the year by Ellen Shedd. She is energetic and ingenious; and some of her pupils have profited by her good instructions. But some of the large boys and girls need an older and more experienced teacher to rule them as well as to guide them. In a fair school she would have gained more reputation by her first essay in teaching. This school needs man-service in Winter.

The School in District No. 5, was taught by Lydia W. Benson. It is a good school, generally well-behaved, and steadily improving. Mrs. Benson teaches well and governs well; but there are large boys and girls there, who need a male teacher.

The School in District No. 6 was taught all the year by Sarah Leach. It is a quiet, orderly school. The teacher has large experience, and though long habituated to the school-room, keeps up with the times. By far the greater portion of the pupils are still of suitable age to be under a female teacher; but some, even of the girls, would gain advantage from being taught by a man. In looking over such a school as this we see plainly that the town needs a High School.

The School in District No. 7, was taught all the year by Olive F. Wentworth. The visitor says: "This school has kept on the even tenor of its way, without anything special to notice. The teacher appears to have been faithful, and the pupils diligent. But in so small a school enthusiasm appears to be out of the question." In a right arrangement of school-houses this school
would become a good deal larger, and, so far as numbers are condu
cive to animation, better.

The School in District No. 8, was taught all the year by Eliza A. Hodges. The visitor says: "The instruction in Grammar seemed somewhat superficial; the reading was in general too rapid, and, as a consequence, the enunciation was too indistinct. The order in this school has been good, and the improvement commendable in most of the branches taught. We have noticed universal neatness and marked improvement in penmanship, in the manuscripts exhibited."

The school in District No. 9 was taught in the Spring and Summer by Ann E. Green. The visitor of last Summer, not now on the Committee, speaks of "want of energy in her manner, and want of carefulness in her instruction."

The Winter term commenced in a new two storied school house, commodiously arranged and handsomely furnished. The opening of the school was delayed by waiting for the completion of this fine structure. The school is yet in session under the care of an able and efficient instructor, Philander Leonard.

The Primary School, which in the Spring and Summer was prosperous under the care of Mrs. Mary Edson, is now kept by Mary Perkins. Miss Perkins is making her first attempt, and the visitor has reasonable hopes that the end of her labors may be crowned with success.

The school in District No. 10 was taught all the year by Sarah W. King. The visitor this winter considers it a profitable school, but agrees with the visitor last summer, not now on the Committee, that if the teacher should enjoy a little more professional training she would learn better methods of teaching. This school, with a better arrangement of school houses, might become larger, and consequently better, so far as want of animation is now owing to insufficient numbers.

The school in District No. 11, was taught in Spring and Summer by Mary Hayward. Of her school the visitor of last Summer, not now on the Committee, says: "The Committee were unfortunate, and perhaps to blame, the school was not valuable nor instructive." What habits remained unchanged under her administration may be inferred from what is said by
the visitor of the Winter school, kept by Nathaniel B. Hodsdon. He says: "At the commencement of the school every thing appeared wrong. There was a general disposition to whisper among the pupils; they were inattentive to the teacher, and to the lesson during recitation; the reading was dull and mechanical. The educator seemed to have failed to educe thought from the pupils generally. There were some pleasant exceptions. Towards the close of the term the school appeared better, but in a state quite unsatisfactory to the teacher and to the Committee.

The school in District No. 12 was taught in Spring and Summer by Harriet Alden. She is a native of the District. The small school, with its familiar faces, turned to her familiar face, gained little from her instruction and discipline. This Winter, Francis D. Hodges is teaching the school and doing a good deal to improve it. Mr. Hodges loves his work and endeavors to increase his qualifications for it with growing success.

The school in District No. 13 was taught in Spring and Summer by Abby A. F. Keith. She persevered through difficulties, and tried with more success than could be expected to be profitable to a crowded school, in which too many of the scholars were disposed to hinder her in her work. This Winter, F. C. Ellis is teaching; he is a favorite teacher in the District, and maintains a tolerable degree of good order and diligence; but his modes of teaching are not such as to quicken the minds of his pupils; the routine that he follows is not altogether useless, but a livelier way would be more effectively useful. This is the opinion of the visitor and of all the members of the Committee who have seen the school.

We present to the citizens of the town a letter from the Secretary of the Board of Education, prefacing it with a brief statement of the occasion of its being written.

We have already intimated that there was open opposition to the Committee in one of our school districts, and action contrary to law. That district is District No. 3. Before the Winter school opened, a number of the inhabitants presented a petition to the Committee, requesting the appointment of a male teacher. A majority of the Committee were of opinion that the request ought not to be granted. During the term another petition was
presented requesting the removal of the present teacher. The Committee could find no just cause for complying with this request. There was plenty of complaint from some persons, but others gave testimony to show that the trouble was not so much in school as out of school. The Committee knew that there was good instruction, and that there were good recitations and other exercises, and fair deportment in school. The request was not granted.

A School District Meeting was called, and a vote to close the school house was passed. This occurred on the eighteenth day of February.

A member of the School Committee asked the Prudential Committee for the keys of the house, reminding him that the action of the District was unauthorized by law. He refused to give them up. The school was then removed to an apartment in a neighboring dwelling house. It was attended until its regular close, by thirty pupils, a number equal to about half the usual number in daily attendance while the school was kept in the school house, about seventy different scholars having been members of the school.

A member of the Committee thinking that a statute ought to be provided bearing directly upon such a case as this, preventive of such interruption of a school, addressed a letter on the subject to the Secretary of the Board of Education, and received the following reply:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD
OF EDUCATION, BOSTON, Feb. 20, 1857.

REV. THOMAS P. RODMAN,—My Dear Sir:—I can readily comprehend the nature of the difficulty to which you have called my attention in your note of the 19th instant, but there does not appear to be any necessity for additional legislation. The Prudential Committee and the District are alike powerless to close the school or the school house. The teacher cannot enter the school house as a teacher, until the approval of the Superintending Committee has been given, and the power of removing is also vested exclusively in them; and no difference arises from
the fact that the contract may have been made by the Prudential Committee.

When a district has provided a house and the Prudential Committee has furnished a teacher acceptable to the Superintending Committee, the powers of Prudential Committee and District are exhausted: This is believed to be the law now, as held by the Supreme Court; and additional legislation would be attended with some danger, and at best, if my view is correct, could produce no good. An opinion of the court, which binds the court by its own authorities, is better than a new statute, which must have life breathed into it by the interpretation of the judicial tribunals. From your statement I am of opinion that the position of the District is untenable.

Very truly,

GEO. S. BOUTWELL.

The statement in the letter to which the foregoing is a reply, was substantially the same as that made in the preface to the Secretary's letter.

Notwithstanding the unpleasant things that we have felt bound to report, we believe that the schools have been useful. We trust in the good sense and good feelings of the majority of our citizens, and look forward in hope of better things to come. We look forward to a time when the duties of School Visitors shall be better understood by the public, and when the complaint that a visitation is an occasion of embarrassment to a school will be heard no more; when we shall no more hear it said that the teacher is disconcerted by the presence of the Committee, and the pupils overawed. A teacher who has a conscientious assurance of being well qualified for the work and an honest purpose to be faithful in the work, will always be self-possessed in the presence of the official visitor, neither defiant nor abashed; and to all well disposed pupils the visitation will be an occasion of encouragement in good conduct and studious perseverance in the attainment of knowledge, and to all the ill-disposed, the idle, the insubordinate, and the vicious, it ought to be the occasion of open
rebuke; and if the public spirit in a school is right, the commendations and rebukes will become exponents of the public opinion in the school, and boys and girls, and men and women too, will have a practical belief in the truth that "the child is father of the man," and that the formation of character and the basis of reputation are begun in early life; and teachers will feel that to "give satisfaction" to the District may be a small thing, for the inhabitants may be ignorant or thoughtless, or too much taken up with other things to mind the school; that to win the approval of the School Committee may be a small thing, for they may have favorite whims, in the gratification of which the great purposes of the school may be overlooked; but that it is a great thing so to teach and so to govern, that when the boys and girls shall have become thoughtful men and women, they may be "satisfied," with what was done for them in the school house.

DAVID BRIGHAM,
THOMAS P. RODMAN,
LEANDER DARLING.