

what is perhaps the most scathing sarcastic letter of Canadian public life. Dr. Ryerson withdrew his proffered resignation, and things remained *in statu quo*; but this year was one of great annoyance to the head of the Education Department. He could ill brook the close scrutiny which the Government put upon the expenses of his administration. The coolness, if not the opposition of the Government; the violent criticism of the principal newspaper of the Province; the unrest of the leading educationists, and their demand for some sort of representation of educational interests in the administration of educational affairs, must have harassed the venerable Chief not inconsiderably. Much of his embarrassment might have been avoided, had Dr. Ryerson conducted the defence of himself and his system with more prudence; and with a juster regard for the strictly neutral position of his office. But, unfortunately, such was his volubility of utterance, that he always appeared to be more vehement than perhaps he really meant to be. The *status quo* continued a year or two longer, until the Act of '74.

(3) *From the passing of the School Act of '74 to that of '76—two years.* The Act of '74 was intended to remedy many of the defects of the previous administration, but it dealt with one cause of dissatisfaction merely, and with that not effectually. By this Act, the Chief Superintendent was deprived of many of the powers which he had previously possessed, and these were transferred to the Council of Public Instruction. But this body was not to remain as it had been, its members nominated by the Superintendent, to continue in office for life; it was now, by the method of election and appointment adopted, to represent educational interests; its members were to have regular terms of office, and to the Council were assigned very definite, important duties.

Yet the exclusion of the professional element from its membership was fatal to its success; and a still greater hindrance to its usefulness was the want of confidence on the part of its members in the permanence of the Council, owing to their knowledge that the Chief Superintendent had set his heart upon another scheme of administration, which the Ministry were likely to adopt, and which, before the Council had been much more than a year in active operation, it was well known they really intended to adopt.

(4) *From the Act of '76 to the present time—seven years.* I entered so fully into the history of this period in my previous address that I need say little concerning it now. This present system has been attacked on many grounds: for purely party purposes; from a conviction that a political administration of the school system, administered, as it always must be, by a party Government, is dangerous to public interest; and from a conviction that, however upright and well-intentioned the Minister of Education may be, neither he nor any single individual can administer the system so as to keep it steadily progressive and constantly adapted to the varying needs of an intellectual people, and a rapidly developing country.

I trust that neither you nor I shall discuss this question for partisan purposes, or with party feelings. I confess myself, however, a firm believer in the baneful effects of a political administration of educational affairs; but, although I cannot see that the present administration has to any large degree abused its trust, yet abuse of trust has been frequently imputed to it. It has been accused of using its educational patronage to further party interests, and of deflecting from the straight path of duty to favour party friends, or to escape political combinations against it; and whether