

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS AND THE INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION.

BY A HEAD MASTER.

HELD for the first time in June, 1876, the "Intermediate" has now been long enough in operation to justify us in accepting the results as at least an indication of the influence it is likely to have on education. We by no means under-estimate the good it has accomplished: the spirit of competition it has engendered amongst our High Schools and the dread of ignominious failure which haunts the less ambitious of the Masters, have, no doubt, had a telling effect on the *quantity* of the work done since its introduction; but, making all allowances for the interruptions its development has met with in the various efforts of the Department to rectify its defects, we by no means look upon it as an unalloyed blessing. It is a remarkable fact that the opinion of the Teaching Profession is almost unanimously against this "inspectional examination," even in the case of those who, for a few years past, have had, in addition to other advantages, a free semi-annual advertisement in the Toronto dailies. One would think that the consensus of the masters would have had before now some weight with the Minister of Education; it is unfortunately too much to expect most of his advisers to give it the consideration it deserves. We willingly give Mr. Crooks credit for having, in most matters that concern his Department, a sincere desire to benefit education and to prove himself no unworthy successor of his predecessor in office; and, if political

associations occasionally fetter his freedom of action, it must be regarded as one of the unfortunate necessities of his position. The frequent changes made by the Department in the conduct of the Intermediate show also that a doubt as to its advisability sometimes occurs to the mind of the Minister. But no such thoughts trouble those to whose discrimination and sagacity he has a right to look for a reliable opinion, and it cannot but be regarded as a misfortune that educational matters have so long been virtually under the control of men who, on the showing of their official superiors, are more remarkable for obstinate self-assertion than sound judgment.

We propose to reproduce some of the opinions expressed by the High School Inspectors in reference to the Intermediate in the last Annual Report. They discuss with characteristic modesty the main objections that have been raised, and, though they by no means do its opponents justice, we shall take their statement of the case:

"Another objection is that the intermediate examination causes the work of both pupils and masters to be done under too great a pressure. As through the diminution of the pecuniary value of Upper School pupils, and through the operation of other causes, the pressure is gradually lessening, this objection is by degrees losing any force it may once have had. It will, of course, always be the case that in consequence of differences of temper-