

however, when the vacancy occurred—the necessity for which, by the way, we were far from seeing—both propriety and policy ought to have suggested that it be filled from the ranks from which the previous incumbent was drawn, and whose professional qualifications best fit its members for filling the responsible post of head of such an institution. It is with no desire to reflect upon the appointee of the Government that we say that his nomination was a mistake, and betrays on the part of the Administration that failing which is the crying evil of all party Governments—their proneness to use the patronage of their office for political purposes and not for that which will best subserve the interests of the State. The gentleman who has succeeded Principal Hunter, no doubt, has good claims upon the Government, which his industry and ability strengthen; but for the position, as the head of an educational as well as an eleemosynary institution, we are sure he himself will agree with us, it was more fit that an appointment should have been made from the ranks of the teaching profession. The Minister of Education, we trust, will take care that, in any future preferment of the kind, the hard-working and deserving masters of our Institutes and High Schools are not again passed over, but that the prizes which the profession legitimately look forward to as their own, shall be filled by those of their order. Political exigency, we are aware, is as imperious as it is embarrassing; but the head of our educational system should know nothing of this.

A CONTEMPORARY ON MATHEMATICAL STUDIES, AND MESSRS. BUCHAN AND MARLING'S REPORT.

A VERY pretty, though, as far as arguments and honesty go, rather one-sided controversy, has arisen out of the reports of High School Inspectors Buchan and Marling, to be found in the Educational Blue-book for 1879. These gentlemen, giving voice, we are sure, to the opinion of a majority of the intelligent people of the country, expressed

to the Minister of Education their conviction, based upon minute personal observation and the statements of the heads of educational institutions, that undue attention has been paid for some time back to the subject of mathematics in our schools. Thereupon a contemporary, ever on the alert when the sale of the publications of its proprietor is concerned, challenged the statements of the Inspectors, and from the abundance of its contributor's knowledge and the richness of his inner consciousness demonstrated to its own satisfaction that the Inspectors did not understand the full force of what they affirmed, and that there was nothing to be said on the subject save what the consulting mathematician of the house and the journal chose to say or would permit to be said. Our contemporary, with that characteristic disingenuousness which makes it *sui generis* amongst educational journals, studiously ignored Mr. Buchan's report and strove to represent Mr. Marling as singular in his views upon the problem craze, ascribing to him, moreover, narrowness, exaggeration, ignorance of the facts of the case and especially of the views of John Stuart Mill. To this misrepresentation of his report and aspersion of his aims, carefully concocted and sedulously distributed by the proprietors of the journal, Mr. Marling replied in the following communication—a fine specimen, by the way, of controversial letter writing:—

To the Editor of the Canada School Journal:

SIR,—In your critique on my official report for 1879, as given in the March number of the *School Journal*, there are certain expressions and statements of which I feel I have a right to complain. I would gladly be silent, but as my silence might be misinterpreted, I ask room in your next issue for a few words by way of clearance and denial. I will not trouble you again on the subject.

First. "Attack on Mathematics." I made no such attack.

Second. "Unsupported assertion that the study of Mathematics has proved and is proving injurious to the intellectual life of the rising generation."

Nowhere have I written, never have I thought of, such a grotesque absurdity. I am amazed to find it attributed to me in an edu-