

# The Canada School Journal.

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## HON. ADAM CROOKS.

Although Mr. Crooks has been Minister of Education for only a few months, his name has already become familiar as a household word to all who have anything to do with the work of practical education in Ontario. When the resignation of the late Chief Superintendent of Public Instruction was accepted by the Government, it was fortunate that there happened to be in the Cabinet a Minister so capable as Mr. Crooks has shown himself to be of becoming a worthy successor of the founder and organizer of our school system. During his still brief term of office as Minister of Education, he has made himself so thoroughly acquainted with the working of the school system, and introduced so many improvements, that any fears which the change in the relation of the Department to the Government may have aroused must by this time be completely allayed. That change was an important juncture in the educational history of the Province, and the country is to be congratulated on the manner in which it has been effected. Now that the educational machinery is running smoothly in the new way, the personal character and ability of the Minister become matters of less importance; but while making this admission, we trust that however much incompetence may, as the result of political exigencies, abound in other Departments of State, the Education Office will never have inflicted upon it an incompetent head.

Mr. Crooks is a native of the Province of whose Legislature and Executive Council he has for several years been a member. He was born in

1827, in the County of Wentworth, near Hamilton. Previous to the union of the two Canadas in 1841, his father, the Hon. James Crooks, was a member of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada, and from the union till his death, in 1860, he was a member of the Legislative Council of Canada. The subject of this sketch received an excellent educational training at Upper Canada College, from which school he passed to the University of Toronto. He took his degree in Arts in 1850, carrying off at his final examination the University gold medal in the department of classics, and the highest medals given in the department of metaphysics and ethics. Having turned his attention to law as a profession, he was called to the bar of Upper Canada at the early age of twenty-four, and soon afterwards took the degree of LL.B. in Toronto

University. His professional career, which has been a singularly successful one, can only be noticed very briefly here. Having adopted Equity in preference to Common Law as a field of operations, he soon acquired an extensive and lucrative practice at the Chancery bar, where his services were in great demand, until his virtual retirement from active professional work to devote his energies to the public service. In the Law Society, of which he is now an *ex officio* Benchler, he has held more than one important and responsible appointment as lecturer and examiner; and he has always taken an active interest in the work of the Society, and the promotion of the interest of his profession. He was created a Q.C. in 1863.

Although frequently urged to enter political life, Mr. Crooks never gave his consent till 1867, when he contested unsuccessfully the Western division of the city of Toronto. At the next general election, held in 1871, he was fortunate enough to be elected for the same constituency, and when a change of administration took place during the first session thereafter, he was induced to accept the position of Attorney-General, which he shortly afterwards relinquished for that of Treasurer. During his tenure of the latter office he has been a prominent member of both the Ministry and the Legislature, and a great many of the most useful measures which have been engrafted on the Statute books have passed through the Assembly under his guidance. A mere list—and that only a partial one—of these Acts must suffice. The Railway Aid Measure of 1875, the License Acts of 1876 and 1877, the Consolidated Municipal and Assessment Acts, the Act regulating the issue of Insur-

ance Policies, the Mechanics' Lien Law, and Married Women's Property Act, are a few of the measures which the country owes to his industry and intelligence as a legislator.

But it is with his services in the cause of education that we have most to do at present. These services have been unremitting for very many years. As a Benchler, lecturer, and examiner of the Law Society, he was constantly aiding in the great work; as Vice-Chancellor of the Provincial University, and a member of its Senate, he has rendered the cause of higher education most zealous and efficient service; and as Minister of Education it has been his fortune to assume office just at a time when important changes were demanded, and to prove himself fully equal to the emergency. One of the greatest benefits he has conferred on the



(From a Photograph by Notman & Fraser.)