

∴ has become almost impossible to separate education from politics, and very petty politics at that.

The curse of party politics is that one who seeks to take an effective part in civic life must take sides, and stick to his own side through thick and thin. The two opposing parties are divided like the sheep and the goats at the last judgment; both parties are agreed that on one side are the sinners, on the other, the saints; they differ only on the point whether it is the sinners or the saints that have been adjudged worthy respectively of the heaven of office, and what are euphemistically called the cool shades of opposition. And so we find one party vehemently attacking the Education Department and blindly refusing to recognize that it has its good points and has done good work; and the other party as vehemently defending it, and as blindly refusing to recognize that it has also its weak points and has sometimes done bad work.

The result is that the teacher exclaims, "a plague on both your houses!" and finding himself unable to sympathize fully with either side and also unable to influence either side, he tends to become not apathetic but hopeless and discontented, or sometimes even cynical and pessimistic; and many a teacher who votes for the Liberal party at election times feels no stronger approval of the Government's educational policy than such as springs from the feeling that "it is better to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of."

So to-day, while I shall criticise certain features of the Education Department's policy, I wish to avoid the falsehood of extremes, and readily acknowledge that the Minister of Education is not as black as some people paint him, that we owe much to him; and, to come to particulars in one respect at least, let me say, as emphatically as I can, that the oft-re-

peated charge that he has bribed the teachers to silence by the Departmental Examination fund is utterly baseless. The opposition's charge was, I believe, as short-sighted and impolitic as it was false. To be sure, it is a charge that one hears less seldom now, but it has never been retracted, that I know of, by a single opposition speaker or journal that ever made it. If some journals had ever during the last few years been as interested in reporting the discussions at these High School masters' meetings as they are in reporting many utterly trivial and transient affairs, they would speedily have discovered that the teachers' mouths have not been closed, and perhaps they might also have discovered some more forcible objections to the Department's policy than many of those they have evolved out of their own inner consciousness.

Now this has been perhaps too long a series of preliminary remarks, but when one proposes to deal with so ticklish a matter, he may well be allowed more than the usual prelude of humming and hawing.

I readily admit at the outset that my criticism rests in great part upon an assumption which I do not intend to spend any time in proving or supporting. Whoever undertakes to examine into the causes and connection of unsatisfactory conditions assumes the existence of unsatisfactory conditions, and I am going to assume that dissatisfaction and unrest exist in connection with our school system. I do not mean among the general public, for apologists for the Department might ascribe dissatisfaction of this sort to politics or ignorance or some other such cause, and that is a matter I am not now concerned with. No, what I mean is that dissatisfaction and unrest of a deplorable character exist to a deplorable extent among the High School and College teachers of this province.