

the oath to all witnesses, should be adhered to. The members of the Government, on the other hand, no less than eight of whom appeared in the Committee when the question was first discussed there, contended that it was sufficient that the oath should be administered when a *prima facie* case of fraud had been made out or, at least, when some member of the Committee was willing to take the responsibility of saying that he believed something was wrong in the particular case before the Committee which required a solemn investigation. After an animated debate the Government view of course prevailed, but not until the Premier had promised to facilitate the use of the oath, when asked for, to an extent which covered nearly or quite all that the Opposition had asked. This being conceded, it is hard to say why the Government should have placed themselves in a false position and have given the Opposition the advantage of being able to say that their efforts to make the inquiries of the Public Accounts Committee searching and thorough had been obstructed. The public will note further proceedings with sharpened interest. There is force in the plea that it is undesirable to make the use of the oath too common and thus by familiarity endanger its effect upon the minds of witnesses. It is, in fact, a deep reproach to our civilization that any such extraneous influence should be necessary to enhance the sacred obligation which every man should feel to tell the truth under all circumstances. But, on the other hand, it is worthy of consideration whether weak consciences may not be equally endangered by seeing a distinction habitually made between testimony under oath and testimony without its sanction, and be tempted to feel that the exact truth is not rigidly expected in the latter case.

A subject of lively controversy in pedagogical circles for some time past has been that of the utility of written examinations as tests of efficiency. The written examination has been employed perhaps more freely in connection with the educational system of Ontario than in most other countries, though there is at present a somewhat marked tendency to discount if not to deny the value of such examinations. One of the strongest objections, from the teacher's point of view, which has been urged against the system which makes the academic success of the student depend upon the results of an examination conducted by examiners other than his teachers, is that the dread of the coming examination interferes with the proper freedom of the teacher in teaching and of the student in studying. The shadow of the coming ordeal hangs over all the work of the class-room. It compels both teacher and student to devote their time and strength to the preparation of the latter to answer such questions as the examiner may be supposed likely to put, rather

than to true educational work. In order to get material for making the best possible guess much time is often devoted to looking up the examiner's record, studying his idiosyncrasies, and preparing to anticipate his questions. If the papers set by the given examiner for half-a-dozen previous years upon the same subject can be found, teacher and student are happy. It is urged, not without much force, on the other hand, that this objection lies not against the examination *per se*, but against an improper and unskilful mode of examination. Be that as it may, it is rather amusing to observe how unwittingly the Minister of Education, in defending himself the other day in the Legislature against the charge of disloyalty, which has been pressed against him on the paltry ground of his having for a time omitted British history from the subjects of certain examinations, put ammunition into the hands of the opponents of the examination system. He is reported to have said that "the history had not been removed from the schools; it had never been proposed to do more than to remove it from examination and to teach it orally. History could be taught in a more picturesque and more *effective* manner in this way." The italics are ours. The reasoning is very suggestive.

Complaint is often made of the political solidarity supposed to exist between the Ontario Government and its adherents, and the Ottawa Opposition. From certain facts which have recently been published in the *Globe* it is evident that this identity of views and interests cannot extend to the tariff policy. On the contrary the Minister of Education, at least, appears to be a more ardent protectionist than Mr. Foster himself. Consider the following statements:

"In 1883, 34 different text-books used in the Public Schools were of foreign or non-Canadian authorship; now every text-book in the Public Schools is the product of a Canadian author and a Canadian teacher. At the same date, 101 text books were used in High Schools, the product of foreign or non-Canadian authors. Ten years ago six of the text-books used in the Public Schools and 81 of the text-books used in High Schools were imported already manufactured, and two were imported in sheets; now only one High School text-book is imported already manufactured, and one imported in sheets. The Canadian author, the Canadian printer and the Canadian bookbinder have almost entirely displaced the foreigner in the production of school books. Who shall say that such a policy is not in the public interest? What better evidence could be given of a thoroughly Canadian policy in the administration of any department?"

This is surely out-heroding Herod in high protectionism. The Dominion Government contents itself with putting the foreign producer at great disadvantage by a heavy tax, and then allowing him to compete, provided he can overcome that disadvantage.

The Ontario Government goes further and simply pre-empt the field for the Canadian producer, barring out all foreign productions. It would not require a very brave man to say that such a policy can hardly "be in the public interests" unless it can be safely assumed that among the few teachers in Canada likely to undertake the making of text-books are to be found the peers of any in the English-speaking world, and that the Minister of Education may be relied on to select one of those off-hand, to produce any needed text-book to order. It might be supposed that in the matter of text-books for the use of the schools, when so much depends upon getting the very best, the absurdity of assuming that the best will in every instance be produced by shutting off the competition of the world's best educators, would be sufficiently obvious to give pause to even the most ardent educational protectionist. But even this might not be so bad were some means adopted by which competition could be permitted and stimulated amongst Ontario educators. Minister Ross, however, goes much further. Protection to the point of absolute prohibition against foreign educational works is not sufficient. Without even for such protection to work out its inevitable sequence of monopoly, he establishes the monopoly at once by choosing the individuals who are best fitted to write or compile the books needed, thus escaping any embarrassment which might result from home competition. No only so, but the same policy is extended to the business of printing, binding, etc., the productions of the chosen author. Thus to the literary know-nothingism which arbitrarily rules out English and American productions from competition on their merits, is added a method which really reduces the chance of the schools being supplied with the best that Canadian talent can produce to a question of the infallibility of the Minister in selecting from the eight or nine thousand educators of the Province, not one in a hundred of whom can be known to him personally, the best man for the particular work in hand. We will venture to affirm that no such educational autocracy exists in any other constitutionally governed country in Christendom.

From the latest statistics furnished by the Minister of Education it appears that while the whole number of teachers employed in the public schools of Ontario has increased, during the last twenty five years, from 4,890 to 8,480, the number of male teachers has actually decreased within that period. In 1867 it was 2,849; in 1892, 2,770. The small proportion of men now employed in the schools of Toronto, as compared with the number of women, has given rise to a good deal of discussion. Certain members of the School Board strenuously urge that it is desirable, for the moulding of the coming men of the country, that this