

organization. It was a perfectly legal body, appointed by virtue of a statute, and as long as it was employed in examining candidates it was exercising legitimate functions. By an Order-in-Council, of January, 1882, it was made a board of reference and consultation to which the Minister might refer all matters of an educational nature; but he did not, however, by this order agree to bind himself, nor in practice did it seem that he intended to bind himself, by any of its findings. It was this use to which the Committee was put, not contemplated by the statute that authorised its existence, which had been objected to all along, and which raised such a storm of opposition against the Committee of 1876. This use, he contended, was illegal, misleading, unfair to the great body of educators in the province, and derogatory to the dignity itself. It covered up an arbitrary authority on the part of one who by reason of his position could not be acquainted with the details of the system which he manipulated, with the understood endorsement of a body of educational experts. He (Mr. Bryant) disclaimed any attack upon the Minister himself. He criticised the faulty system over which the Minister found himself placed, and which forced him to act irresponsibly and unadvisedly. If this Committee were to have any real consultative authority, it should have the power of coming to final decisions upon all matters referred to it, and should be responsible in some way or other for these decisions to the public. It should not be subjected to the indignity of giving the weight of its wisdom and its experience to a decision, only to see its advice rejected for that of others. After carefully considering the subject, he (Mr. Bryant) could not believe that the present system of administering the school law by a party chief was the best system that

could be found. It necessitated every few years the placing at the head of the educational system—a system so complex that none but a trained expert could understand it—one whose political eminence precluded the possibility of his being such an educational expert. It necessitated the support of the acts of this gentleman as a matter of course by his political party friends and the public journals which favoured the Administration to which he belonged, as also the hostile criticism and oftentimes downright condemnation of these same acts by his political opponents. It necessitated the erection and continuance of a perfectly irresponsible and arbitrary authority over our educational system, or else the bringing of every petty regulation in regard to the internal economy of the school system to the arbitrament of a direct party vote in the Legislature. It necessitated the Minister in making a choice of suitable occupants for positions of emolument within his gift—positions requiring professional reputation, experience, and judgment in their incumbents—to be submitted to all sorts of party wirepulling and intrigue; and it inflicted upon successful candidates for such positions, who perhaps were perfectly guiltless of any such unworthy canvassing, the stigma of party servility. It tended to create in the public mind a suspicion that in the authorization of certain text-books rather than others the Minister was guided by the political faith and allegiance of the authors and publishers rather than by the suitability of the books authorized. It tended to create, too, the suspicion that political influence was a weightier argument to convince the Ministers' judgment than principle or reasonableness. It gave to party journals an opportunity to magnify every little act of Ministerial common sense and judgment into a matter of