

admitted by them to be so much less objectionable as to warrant its adoption, in principle at least, if not in all its details. From the autumn of 1844 to the beginning of 1876, at the head of the school system of the province was an executive officer styled the Superintendent of Education. It was not too much to say that Dr. Ryerson founded the system which he administered; that he planted the tree which he afterwards watched and tended till all might enjoy its blossoming and partake of its fruit. This system was essentially the work of one man's hands, and necessarily so. The country was new, its resources undeveloped, and the people were engrossed in constructing out of its material wealth homes for themselves and children. Just as the fabric of its political constitution was designed by one discerning mind its educational system was planned and built, adapted to the growing and changing needs of the country, and made more efficient, by the skill and wisdom of Dr. Ryerson. The paper then proceeded to refer to the Council of Public Instruction organized in 1846, and re-constituted in 1874. During one year of active work much good was done. It then became known that the chief superintendent was advising the Government to take the administration of the Department into their own hands by the appointment of a Minister, and this proved to be the case, for in February, 1876, the Minister was appointed. When he entered office he found himself vested with powers and responsibilities such as belonged to no other member of the public service of the province, if indeed, of the Dominion. Possessing no special training for his position and no intimacy with its concerns he had to exercise all the executive authority which during thirty years' service the energetic head of the Department had become possessed of, and

all the advisory and legislative power which the experience of the past two years had shown to be sufficient to utilize the judgment and wisdom of fifteen or eighteen gentlemen. Was it any wonder then that he found himself not equal to this position? As a lawyer he could comprehend and interpret the laws relating to public instruction. As a business man he could direct the working of the departmental officers; but the mechanism of the system, outside his own office, was something beyond his knowledge and attainment. He took steps to avail himself of the advice of the Committee then existing, consisting of the three High School Inspectors and one other. Immediately after accepting office two Public School Inspectors were added, and later on in the year two other Inspectors. The purely arbitrary appointment of this Committee provoked unmeasured hostile criticism, its constitution being anomalous and its authority really irresponsible. It was also unfortunate that the same men should be required to act in such distinct capacities as the examiners of candidates and the counsellors of the Minister. The unsatisfactoriness and the absurdity of the existing state of affairs soon became manifest—to the Minister, who began to realize that his power was really absolute, his knowledge greater, and his means of obtaining information not necessarily confined to one set of men, and to the members of the Committee themselves, who saw that while the public held them responsible for every regulation relating to educational economy, they in truth were having but little real authority in the matter, every finding of theirs being subject to the revision of one whose will was absolute, and, as it was sometimes thought, capricious. Other changes in the constitution of the Committee took place until it reached its present