

abused their power, or been heedless of their responsibilities, or deaf to the call of duty. Their appraisements of school laws and regulations and methods and results are, except when obviously warped by party bias or written with party intent, of great service in keeping the administration in close touch with the people. Their suggestions, often acted on, are frequently of much practical value. Not always so, however, and the fact that inspiration derived from this source is not uniformly plenary in kind, may, perhaps explain why, in some instances, enactment has been followed by repeal. Even the adverse criticisms of the party press, sometimes rather free and always quite pointed, may not be an unmixed evil, if, indeed, they be an evil at all. In my opinion they are not an evil but a necessary and valuable feature of the system as it now exists. If newspapers in this way dispense more strychnine than sugar, they administer it only in small doses, and, though bitter in taste, it exerts an excellent tonic effect. When the strictures thus made touch real evils or suggest real improvements, reform or adoption, sooner or later, inevitably follows, and when they are *vox et præterea nihil* they probably serve the Minister as an unfailing antidote against the malady called "swelled head," which occasionally attacks those that live on the mountain tops and who are too exclusively fed on party exhilarants. By the joint efforts of the two sections of the press the Minister of Education certainly enjoys the unique privilege of being the best painted man in the Dominion. He is painted from every conceivable and from every inconceivable standpoint, and in every known and every unknown shade of color. If the artists of one political camp dip their brushes only in rose-pink and sky-blue, those of the other camp only use plain black and white, and especially black. He is not likely to ever pine and grow thin from stress of repeating Burns' ardent inspiration:—

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as others see us,
It wad frae mony a blunder free us."

He has probably long ago lost his own identity and forgotten how he ever looked to himself through his own eyes. The very freedom with which such adverse criticisms are hurled at him may possibly serve to keep the departmental atmosphere strongly charged with tensional electricity or patriotic thinking, and high resolve, and heroic doing, since it constantly reminds him and his subordinates that:—

"If there's a hole in a' your coats
I rede you tent it;
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
And, faith he'll prent it."