

tion and educational affairs. We are ourselves attached to no party, and have no personal quarrel with the Minister, nor have we any motive, save that of sincere and hearty interest in the profession and its work, in directing public attention to what we consider grave and increasing evils in connection with the educational administration of the Province. This, once for all, we think it necessary to say. To deny the existence of these evils, at the same time, or to affirm that the Department of Education is at present in good and competent hands, is to strain courtesy and to mislead the public. But this our contemporary is careful not to do. It has no defence to make for the Minister, and it wisely does not attempt one. Its conductors know very well that it would be difficult to make a heroic figure of Mr. Crooks, and they themselves acknowledge that they are "often compelled to differ from the Minister on matters of policy." This, however, is but what everyone is saying, and it is no more than our own position, shorn of the outspokenness which independence permits. But we go further than our contemporary, and ask to be informed what is *really* the Minister's policy? Does anyone know it, and if it is known, can one be sure of what it will be next week? What, for instance, is his line with respect to the Normal Schools, Upper Canada College, or Superannuation? Can anyone tell? It may be answered, it matters little, if one is a good politician and on the favoured side, what the Minister's attitude is or will be in regard to any educational question. But suppose one is neither a politician nor a henchman of party, what then? Must the Minister's policy, on so many subjects of importance to education and the profession, be as shiftless as politics, and take its colour from the party badge? Let the *School Journal* answer. Meantime we shall continue to protest against the Minister's management of his office on the political, and there is reason to fear also on the sectarian, lines which party predilection or party pressure has shaped for him. In the broadest interests, also, we shall continue to raise our voice against the Minister's

vacillation and ineptitude, and in denunciation of the wretched habit he has fallen into, of issuing Departmental edicts as feelers of professional and public opinion, to be subsequently cancelled if adversely criticised. There is no surer evidence of a weak man than this; and to allow the Minister to indulge the habit is to impair his authority and to bewilder and harass the profession. Until Mr. Crooks's régime we have had little occasion to notice how much the value of an office depends on its incumbent. Need it, then, be wondered at if we ask whether, in maintaining a political head to the Department of Education, the public service is benefited, or should there not, as we pointed out last month, be a return to a Chief Superintendency, with the discreet and impartial direction of a Council of Public Instruction? However this question may be settled, and whatever the *School Journal* may say, we have yet to meet with anyone who has confidence in Mr. Crooks's judgment, or who feels that the interests of education are safe in his hands.

"THE MOST CORRECT (!) MANUAL OF SPELLING."

If any one is curious to see how far educational journalism is becoming a sweet and tender calling, we would advise him to read the last issue of the *Canada School Journal*. The space occupied in the number with complimentary references to this magazine will surprise one. While we acknowledge these courtesies, we must add that it is confessedly difficult to please our friends, Messrs. Gage & Co. If we express an adverse judgment on any book issued by that estimable firm of publishers, a literary torpedo is instantly exploded under us. If our review is favourable, we have no better luck. How the firm can reconcile these inconsistencies is a riddle to us. Some eight months ago we reviewed, with considerable labour and carefulness, a veracious little manual entitled "Gage's Practical Speller." For our pains we were abused like a pickpocket. Last month, with like frankness and justice,