

with a strange and a mortifying consciousness of inaptitude and uncertainty, which prompt him to be wisely silent. And yet, sir, on this occasion and in this presence, I feel that silence on my part might be misconstrued. I bow to the inevitable, and am quite content to be regarded as an old young man, or if you so prefer it, as a young old man, but I am not content to be regarded as having yet arrived at that stage of senility when a man becomes all retrospect and is no longer anything better than what Horace terms "*Laudator temporis acti*." Nor am I disposed to lay myself open to the imputation of being either so ungenerous as to withhold my poor meed of praise from, or too generous to frankly express my disapproval of, whatever in the newer educational dispensation may, to my judgment, appear to merit the one or the other.

Progressive Regulations.

It appears to me that no particular pertaining to the departmental evolution of the past twenty-five years more obtrusively challenges comment from one who has been out of harness for that length of time than the fluent character of both the legal enactments and the departmental regulations that now conjointly determine the educational "*modus agendi*" of the Province. The more or less rigid conservatism of former years seems to have given place, not only to a more prompt adoption of obvious improvements and needed reforms, but to what may, perhaps, in some instances, be termed a tentative groping after better things. At first view I was inclined to look upon this want of fixity in enactment and administration as a defect in the system. More careful consideration, however, leads me to regard it as an evidence of vitality and progress rather than of weakness or vacillation. It may, I think, be accepted as showing how quickly amenable the department is to public opinion when conveyed to it through legitimate channels. The community influences the educational executive in many ways, but chiefly through the press, the Legislature and the inspectorate. It is gratifying to know that, upon the whole, the press has given the department a generous support. Except at periods of political excitement, it rises superior to party proclivities, and during the past fifty years, and especially during the past twenty-five years, it has done noble work for the furtherance of the educational interests of the Province. The leading newspapers of the day may be only self-appointed educational assessors, but they are none the less valuable or influential on that account, and, as a rule, they have not