

these things be true or not, the very credence which they obtain is an evidence that the people lack confidence in a political administration of school affairs. But my objections to the present system are based upon my belief in its manifested inefficiency, arising, not from incompetency on the part of the administrators, but from defect of constitution.

The Minister of Education has entrusted to him powers and authorities too numerous and too important to be entrusted to any one man. The School Act is, and must necessarily remain, largely indefinite and incomplete in its provisions. The selection and discontinuance of text-books, the arrangement of courses of study, the classification and promotion of pupils, the conduct of provincial examinations, the assignment of studies and the apportionment of percentages therefor, the grading and certification of teachers, the appointment of examiners and inspectors, and the determination of their qualifications and rules for their guidance, are matters which never can be fixed by the Legislature, but must always remain in the province of the Executive. It has been asserted that the Legislature, which represents the people and grants the people's money, must retain the entire management of all these affairs: which means, of course, that the Government, which is responsible to the Legislature, must retain the management. But these are matters about which a Government, composed of professional politicians, cannot know anything more than what is common to every ordinarily intelligent person in the country. These are matters requiring the technical knowledge of the professional educator—a knowledge which a long experience in the management and conduct of schools and the education of pupils, the training of teachers, and the practical use of text-books, alone can give. Not only

this, but they are matters which require constant attention, regulation, correction, improvement, change—not an arbitrary and ill-advised interference, but a delicate treatment; inasmuch as it is the happiness, health, and intellectual well-being of all the young people of our country—nearly half a million—as well as the interests of the subordinate officers of the system—nearly four thousand—that are concerned.

Now, let us ask, how are these matters dealt with under the present system, and the answer is one that ought certainly to startle any friend of representative institutions. They are practically under the uncontrolled and unadvised absolute authority of one man—the Minister of Education for the time being. He has but one limitation to his authority, that is, the certainty that, should he act badly enough, the people might, by some convulsive effort, depose him. But so long as his acts do not greatly excite the prejudices or passions of the people, and so long as the Ministry to which he belongs retain the majority in the Legislature, then so long are all general matters which come under those heads specified above as absolutely under his control as if the entire school population, with its teachers and inspectors, were in Russia, and he were the Czar.

It has been said by critics, who, in my opinion, can have studied this subject but little, that the Minister has advisers upon all educational matters, whose advice he takes, and who are responsible for what advice they give, viz.: the present Central Committee. In answer to this, it must be said in the first place that this Committee, as an advisory body, has no legal existence; in the second place, that therefore the public can in no way hold it responsible, for the public has had nothing to do with its creation; but that it is the mere creature of the