

"There are still ten days left in which the Legislature can work. No harm has been done yet to the schools, and matters look hopeful. * * * Owing to the shortness of the time, it is hoped that if anything adverse to the interests of the schools passes one House it can be defeated in the other."

The *New York School Journal* of March 8th heads an article on School Legislation, "MEDDLING WITH OUR SCHOOLS." The true friends of education in Ontario are being forced to the conclusion that the above heading fairly expresses the unstatesmanlike method of dealing with the School Law exhibited in our own Legislature. It is always a matter of great anxiety to Inspectors, Teachers, and Trustees to learn that a new School Bill is to be introduced into the House. Their anxiety does not arise from opposition to change. They are willing, nay desirous, to have needful reforms made. They are proud of their school system, and they know that it can only maintain its honorable position by keeping up with the progress made in other lands. Oh, no! It is not reforms that they fear, it is "meddling" or tampering that makes them tremble.

It is to the credit of both political parties that they approach a School Bill without partizan spirit. We hope it may be so always; but there is great danger even in this, praiseworthy as it may appear. The Minister of Education, knowing that educational questions are to be discussed in a non-party spirit, comes to the House with immature plans, and almost without policy. He throws down annually an educational football, and every member feels himself at liberty to kick it in whatever direction he chooses. Then begins the great promiscuous game. Of course every member can take a part in discussing educational questions! No great amount of ability or knowledge is needed in dealing with such a subject! Technical information may be requisite in speaking on the black knot, or snake fences, or street railroads, or gas companies, but not so with education! Oh, certainly not! The highest temporal interests of the human race are bound up in it, and it deals with the mightiest problems which man's intelligence can grasp; but what of that? Every member has at least seen a school house, and at any rate had to pay extra taxes, and therefore he must be competent to kick the educational football! If he has paid one school bill, he surely may be allowed to discuss another.

Seriously, however, the situation in Ontario is such as to cause the people to be alarmed. They love their school system, and will not long permit any man or body of men to try petty experiments with their rights. Unfortunately, the gleeful song of the *Indiana* journal above quoted has no force here. Hopeful when the Legislature has only ten days to live! Oh! for the *Indiana* safeguards against hasty and ill-judged law making. Two days amply suffice in Ontario to remove the keystone of our noble system.

One of two courses should be adopted. The Minister of Education should be the guardian of the School Law, and permit no one to meddle with it except when he introduced measures himself; or School Bills should be submitted to a special committee of the Legislature at the beginning of each session. It would be better in most cases to let the Bill stand as a notice of motion until a future session.

It would not then be necessary to substitute a second Bill in any session to conceal the mutilations of the first.

THE "TWENTY-NINTH" CLAUSE.

Of course there can be no danger to the school system in that remarkable 29th clause of the new School Act. Certainly not! Every man in the country is thoroughly in sympathy with the Public and High Schools! The following classes especially are burning with zeal in their favor:

1. Those who look upon Public Schools as "pauper schools" very good for the "vulgar herd."
2. Those who believe that it is "dangerous to the State, and productive of communistic views, to give the children of the poor too much education."
3. Those who say, "I done fustrate wi' no eddication, wy shouldn't the childer?"
4. Those who say, "Joggerfy don't help no boy to drive a yoke o' oxen."
5. Those who are rich, niggardly, and have no children to go to school.

These are the men who will put their shoulders to the wheel of the stately car of education, and under the able guidance of a Minister of ability, intelligence, and above all of breadth of view and decision of character, (?) will move it onward to — we cannot solve the puzzling problem!

The worst feature of the case is that the foes of the schools are alert and vigorous. Their friends are satisfied to see them progress, and willing to pay their taxes, but they prefer to have the real work done by a few.

The Minister of Education ought to know that there are many men in the country who, as Herbert Spencer says, "take much more interest in the development of their farm animals than in the education of their children."

There is one consolation for the friends of education, however. Ontario was privileged to have for over thirty years a Ryerson at the helm of her educational ship. During that time he pursued such an enlightened course that the country is now dotted over with good school houses. It is scarcely likely that a clause will be introduced providing that they be demolished. There is hope for the country yet, therefore, and the "twenty-ninth clause" can not be retro-active. Had it passed in 1850, log shanties would still have graced a thousand "corner lots" instead of the fine brick buildings that have long since supplanted them.

Dr. Ryerson has more noble monuments erected to perpetuate his memory and his grand work, even while he lives, than any other of Ontario's sons. He may rest assured that he will long live in the loving hearts of a grateful people. Others may check for a time the progress of his work; they can never undo it.

PROFESSIONAL COURSE IN NORMAL SCHOOLS.

We have on several occasions called attention to the fact that while the system of training teachers in Ontario is one of the most