

the Ministers were supported now broke up. The Government was defeated by nineteen (44-25), and on such occasions the division list is generally an inadequate measure of the disaster.

The large number of seats vacant in proportion to the total number of the House formed the ruling feature of the situation and must be regarded as the key, throughout, to the conduct of the Ministers. Such conjunctures are so likely to occur under the new election law in the case of a small Assembly that it would seem desirable to agree to deal with them by some settled mode.

The debate, though not unrelieved by vigorous and effective speeches, was on the whole somewhat rambling and inconclusive; members travelling over the whole case for or against the Government, as though they had been on the hustings, with little regard to the specific question before them or to the successive phases of the situation. This was in favour of the Opposition, whose policy it was, under cover of a censure upon the Railway Act, to make a general attack on the Government, and against the interest of the Ministers, whose aim it should have been to pin the Opposition to the only issue which it had ventured to raise, and on which the Ministers had it in their power to make a conclusive reply. A victory in debate is far from ensuring a victory on the division; but a victory in debate is worth having, and it appeared to be eminently so on this occasion.

The debate at times grew somewhat personal, but on the whole, during the main discussion, good humour and courtesy were well preserved, considering that the occasion was most exciting and that few of the members had undergone such a Parliamentary seasoning as has been undergone by a large proportion of the members of the British House of Commons, which, nevertheless, on similar occasions is not free from heated language and clamorous demonstrations. In the sequel, however, a scene of

lamentable violence occurred. There can be no hesitation in saying that the Speaker erred in attempting to make a personal explanation from the Chair. But, on the other hand, the right course was not to stop his mouth, but to wait till he had disclosed the nature of his intended communication and then to call his attention to the rule. The error was merely one of form, involving no practical injustice, while the occasion was one of a kind which appeals to the sympathies of all right-minded men. The charge against the Speaker's character, which he desired to repel, being anonymous, might well have been left unnoticed. It ought to be universally understood that an anonymous accusation can affect no man's honour, and that if he notices it at all it is only because he regards the repression of calumny as a duty owed to the public. But at the same time this age, in which we all contend so anxiously for position and notoriety, is becoming a little indifferent to questions of honour.

Scenes of violence are especially to be deplored in the case of a young legislature. The immemorial majesty of the British Parliament is comparatively little affected by occasional escapades, the discredit of which falls more on the members who are guilty of them, than on the institution. But the Parliament of Ontario has not yet had time to take root in the reverence of the people, nor will it ever take root, if it fails to cultivate the self-control which alone can entitle it to popular respect.

On this occasion, and indeed throughout the crisis, the want was sensibly felt of one or two independent members, invested by their character and experience with authority to mediate between parties in the extremity of conflict and to enforce a paramount regard for the public service. But when the tenure of public life is so short, such members can hardly find a place.

In addition to the generally electric state of the Parliamentary atmosphere after such