

stances. . . There is no better fuel for iron smelting than natural gas and crude oil, and Ontario has a supply of both in considerable quantities."

For two or three elementary forms of iron the Province is paying annually from two to two-and-a-half millions of dollars, showing that there is no lack of a market for the products of a blast furnace. There is a tariff of four dollars a ton by way of protection to Canadian producers of the article, and this is supplemented by the Dominion Government with a cash gift from the people's purse of two dollars for every ton produced. And yet the Manufacturers' Association send a very influential deputation to assure the Ontario Government that capital is so conservative and timid that they cannot hope to see it invested in blast furnaces and steel plants in Canada save under the stimulus of an additional cash bonus of \$2 a ton from the Provincial chest, and an engagement that this handsome gratuity shall be given annually for a period of ten years. What will happen when the ten years have expired we are left to guess. We are mystified indeed. There must be something wrong. The conclusion does not seem to fit the premises. Can the deputation by some blunder have got hold of the wrong arguments? Why are English, American and Canadian capitalists, including the gentlemen of the Manufacturers' Association, so blind to one of the finest chances for investment that this or any other country can offer? Can nothing but spectacles with two gold dollars for lenses enable them to see the handsome margin of profit that must reward the investor for every ton of pig iron he can produce under circumstances so exceptionally favourable as those indicated by the above extracts from the Memorial of the Manufacturers' Association

MINORITY REPRESENTATION.

The "experiment" of minority representation has been tried in the City of Toronto and has failed, and is consequently to be abolished. Such is the conclusion reached by Sir Oliver Mowat and his colleagues, as announced last week in the Assembly. There are probably very few electors in the Province, on either side in politics, who do not heartily approve the conclusion, though many may fail to see the force of the reasons assigned for it by the Government and its followers.

What was the object of the experiment and wherein has it failed? The object of minority representation is of course to give representation to the minority. This object is fair and even praiseworthy. In 1885, when the Franchise and Representation Act was passed, about one-third of the electors of the City were probably supporters of the Government. Had the City been divided into three constituencies, all three would almost certainly have returned supporters of the Opposition, and thus one-third of the electors would have been unrepresented in the Assembly. This seems undesirable and unfair and any scheme by

which the members elected could be made more fairly representative of the political views of the whole body of electors should commend itself to the sense of fairness of all reasonable men, unless for some reason it contained features more objectionable than the evil it was designed to remedy. The plan for minority representation adopted by the Government had the intended effect, and a representative of the minority was returned.

Why then does the Government which devised and adopted the scheme by which this result was reached, now confess their scheme a failure and call upon their supporters to vote for its abolition? Two reasons were given by Sir Oliver Mowat in his speech in support of the motion for repeal: first, that they had found that the scheme involved an enormous increase in the labour of the candidate and his friends; second, that experience had proved that it was very inconvenient in the case of bye-elections. But, as he himself observed, the first of these consequences might have been anticipated. It seems impossible that it should not have been anticipated, though Sir Oliver added that there were reasons for supposing that such might not be the result. It is hard to conceive of such reasons. Every election in such a constituency would be sure to be contested and under the system each candidate and his supporters would have the whole City as the constituency to be consulted. And then ought not the Government to be more solicitous to do justice to the people than to consult the convenience of candidates? As to the second consideration, the difference in point either of convenience or of expense between a bye-election for a smaller and a larger constituency cannot surely be so great as to counterbalance the obligation to do justice to the minority. Moreover, it would be in the highest degree unlikely that so sad a concurrence of events as that which made the two bye-elections necessary in the same constituency during a single Parliamentary term, would take place again for many years. Evidently, if the experiment was worth trying in the first place, there can scarcely have been any unexpected difficulties in its working to justify its sudden and ignominious abandonment.

But there was another reason. The Premier agreed with Mr. Clarke that if the scheme were to be continued it must be extended. This is just what the Opposition have been contending all along. Can it be that the Government failed to perceive so obvious a moral consequence from the first? Did it require seven or eight years of "experiment" in the City to show them that the conditions in the counties were so different that it would be difficult to apply the scheme to them? If an experiment were necessary in the City why was not another equally necessary in a county? What a pity that the experiment had not been tried at the same time in one of the counties in which the result would have

been to enable an Opposition minority to return a representative, thus preserving the balance of parties and saving the Government from the suspicion of a partisan purpose! As it is, the net result of the experiment has been that the Government has been strengthened by an additional supporter, making a difference of two on a division, during all these years. Can its opponents be blamed if they put the most obvious interpretation upon the facts?

But why is the "experiment" now abandoned? Mr. Meredith described the Government as forced to abandon an unjust and anomalous position, without having the courage or manliness to admit the injustice. Certainly, as we have seen, the feebleness of the reasons given for the abandonment give colour to the accusation. But, it may be asked, how were they forced? It can hardly be hoped that the supporters of the Government had suddenly developed a sense of justice, or a tenderness of conscience, which would have overcome their party loyalty had the Government obstinately refused to make any concession. There was, so far as we can judge, no reason to fear that the Government would be defeated on Mr. Clarke's motion, or that their supporters in the constituencies had become so convinced of the iniquity of the "experiment" and so tender of conscience in regard to it, that large numbers of them would have voted against the Government at the next election, had they neglected to remove the obnoxious measure from the statute book. Where, then, was the compulsion?

So far as we are able to see—and this is the most encouraging feature of the business—the force operating must have been a moral force in the bosoms of Sir Oliver Mowat and some at least of his colleagues. They could no longer face the Opposition in the legislature and the better classes of their supporters in the country, with the consciousness that, had the proportions of the adherents of the respective parties in the City been the reverse of what they were, their "experiment" in minority representation would never have been tried, or even thought of. True, if this be the real explanation, it is a pity that the act of repentance was not made a little more thorough and graceful by an open confession. Yet, even as it is, it is a good thing when governments or individuals begin to grow ashamed of their evil-doings. Some occurrences of a very similar character at Ottawa, during the recent session, e. g., the quiet announcement of the Government that henceforth the public money shall not be expended in the erection of buildings or other public works in any constituency, save on grounds of obvious or demonstrable public necessity or utility, give reason to hope that the tendency of our public morality is at length distinctly upward. If we are fairly on the up-grade, who knows what progress we may make in a few years?

Nevertheless, the present method of representation is clearly unfair, apart from