

sound. It is when we try to apply the principle to what is known to be the practice at Washington, and, we may add, at Ottawa and other capitals, that it takes on the tinge of irony. "Since 1861," says *The Nation*, commenting on Senator Hoar's letter, "there have been twenty-six changes made in the tariff, all increases. Now, nearly every one of these changes was made, not at the request of 65,000,000 people, but of small parties of men, sometimes solitary individuals, sometimes of delegations representing one industry. Every one of them Senator Hoar approved of, etc." Every reader knows how accurately these words describe the process which has been going on at Ottawa ever since the Budget was announced, and which is still going on. No one will suspect us of admiring the Coxeyite way of attempting to equalize matters or control national legislation. But if a few hundreds or thousands of Canadian farmers and other consumers, who felt that their interests were being overlooked in the absence of special delegations at Ottawa, while the Government and members are constantly made to feel the influence of the deputations from the few whose interests they might believe to be opposed to their own, should resolve to appear and urge their views upon the Government and Commons in person, on what ground could the right be denied them?

On what principle can a Government give repeated audience to the few and deny it to the many? Is it that the larger number is suggestive of intimidation? Is not the other equally capable of using intimidation of another kind? One has but to recall certain statements which were boldly made in the *Canadian Manufacturer*, a year or two ago, in order to find a suggestive answer to the question. Of course the farmers and other law-abiding citizens of Canada are not likely to have either the inclination or the time to go in large bodies to Ottawa, to lay their views before the Government while Parliament is in session. But, assuming that there is a conflict or divergence of views and interests between them and the proprietors of the various industries whose representatives are so much in evidence at the Capital, and keeping in mind the great advantage which the latter consequently have for impressing their opinions upon the law-makers, it seems a fair question whether the inequality should not be corrected by a strict adherence to the principle that the elected representatives of the people are the only proper medium of communication between the Government and the people, at least while Parliament is in session. If it is maintained, on the other hand, that it is the right of the proprietors of every industry to have access to the responsible heads of departments, for the purpose of giving information and urging their own views, personally

or through the medium of chosen agents, why should it not be equally the right of the farmers, tradesmen, etc., to do the same. If a dozen, or fifty, proprietors or managers may have their cause pleaded by three or four delegates, why may not ten or a hundred thousand laborers be represented in like proportion by a few hundreds or thousands of their own class? This is a question which is likely to be warmly discussed across the border in the near future.

The last debate on the Registration Bill in the Ontario Legislature, afforded two curious illustrations of the effect of party predilections in warping the logic and dulling the moral perceptions of even those who are, apart from questions which appeal strongly to party feeling, fair and broad-minded men. The first case was that of Mr. Meredith, who, by the way, as Sir Oliver Mowat observed, has fallen this session into the habit of applying unusually strong epithets to his opponents, and has lost something in dignity and, we venture to think, in power, by the change. His judicial fairness has always seemed to us hitherto to be one of his chief sources of strength. The change may probably be accounted for by the near approach of the elections. But that is by the way. The point to which we refer appears when we place side by side two parts of his speech. In the first he says, with great truth and force, that "it is unfair that a Government supported in the whole country by a majority of from 3,000 to 10,000, should have two-thirds of the members of the House." The unfairness is so obvious that it is hard to see why a Government and party containing many good men are not ashamed of it. Of course, the old answer, which is really no answer at all, that the same unfairness exists to a much greater degree in the Dominion House, will be on the lips of all the Government's supporters. But while we are in full and hearty sympathy with Mr. Meredith in his denunciation of this grave abuse, we are taken back immediately by his denouncing, in still stronger language, the means by which the Government secured a supporter in Toronto, under the "minority" system, now abandoned. If it is unfair that in the whole country the Government should have a majority of supporters out of all proportion to its majority of electors, it is surely unfair that a city containing so large a Liberal contingent as Toronto should be compelled to leave that large body of its citizens absolutely without representation in Parliament.

Perhaps a still more marked instance of dulness of moral vision in a party leader is contained in the following extract from the *Globe's* report of Sir Oliver Mowat's reply to Mr. Meredith's complaint of gerrymandering, above referred to: "If a Government or party, in arranging con-

stituencies, working in this way, found itself confronted by two arrangements, which, party considerations apart, were equally good, he did not see why the Government should not select that arrangement which appeared to be most in its favor. The Government had not done so always, but he knew of no reason why it should not have done so." That has at least the merit of frankness. Let us suppose a parallel case between individuals. It falls to the lot, let us assume, of a man to divide between himself and a business rival certain sums of money or parcels of property, of unequal values. It is possible for him to so arrange the division that the chances of each to obtain the more valuable parcels will be equal. It is also possible for him to so arrange it, in the exercise of his prerogative, that by far the greater share of the property will fall to himself. What should we think of the man who should deliberately adopt the latter course, saying that if a man had an opportunity thus legally to get for himself the better side of a bargain, he knew no reason why he should not do so? Would not a high-minded and magnanimous man rather feel that the circumstances were such as appealed most powerfully to his sense of honour, and take every care to see that the distribution was made with the strictest impartiality? Surely the confession, for such we must deem it, of the venerable Premier, constitutes the strongest reason why all such arrangements should be taken out of the hands of the party Government and entrusted to an impartial tribunal.

If there were no law and no courts for collection of debts, we do not suppose that there would be an end of all business transactions on credit, but they would certainly be very much rarer than under present conditions, by which the most effective machinery is provided for the collection of debts of every size, from a few cents up to hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the absence of such machinery, credit would be given only when there was full confidence in the personal integrity of the person asking it. No amount of property would enable a man to obtain goods without payment, from a merchant or other business man, unless the reputation of the buyer for honorable dealing were well established. As things now are, confidence in the buyer's or borrower's integrity counts for a good deal, but probably in most cases for much less than confidence in his financial strength and business capacity. The dealer knows that, under ordinary circumstances, if his debtor fails to keep his engagements, he can recover his own by process of law. Now, would it be for the good of all concerned were all legal provision for the collection of debts done away with and the whole business carried on, so far as carried on at all, on the basis of trust in the financial ability and the personal integrity of the receiver