

have to be made in order to carry into effect the decision of the Assembly in that case. It is to be hoped that the Government will take advantage of the occasion to correct, to some extent, the glaring inequalities which now exist and which were pointed out by different members during the debate. And it is even more desirable that the opportunity should be seized to wipe from the statute book the stains which have been put upon it by the gerrymandering features of the present distribution. The Mail forcibly urges Sir Oliver Mowat to imitate the notable and just example set by Mr. Gladstone, by giving the work of distribution into the hands of a committee impartially chosen from both sides of the House. We have on former occasions urged this example upon the attention of the Dominion Government. Why should not our local knight set the knights at Ottawa a noble example, if, indeed, it is not a misuse of the term "noble" to apply it to what is, after all, but a matter of the simplest justice and fairplay.

A very interesting experiment to test the working of the short day system is, it is said, being now tried by the proprietors of the Salford Iron Works, Manchester, England. It seems that they are making the work time in their establishment forty-eight hours per week instead of fifty-three as heretofore, and without any reduction in wages. The forty-eight hours are obtained by five days of eight and three-quarter hours and by one day (Saturday) of four and one quarter. The day is shortened at the beginning, so that the men begin work at a quarter to eight and have ample time for breakfast at home with their families. The manufacturers promise to give the plan a fair trial; if at the end of one year the plans prove unsuccessful from a pecuniary point of view, the manufacturers will hold themselves free to revert to the old system. They hope, however, to avoid loss by the greater energy, care, and promptness of the men. The men are said to be greatly interested, as well they may be, in the experiment, and anxious to make it successful. This is not, we believe, absolutely the first case in which the plan has been tried. Other instances we have seen quoted in which it has been adopted with absolute success, though we are unable at the moment to give particulars, which have escaped our memory, or even to verify the facts so far as recollected. It is obvious that the chances of workmen being able to make up by increased diligence and alertness for the loss of several hours per week must be much greater in some occupations than in others, but no one who has observed the way in which the ordinary day-labourer goes about his task can doubt the possibility of compressing the work usually done in fifty-three hours into forty-eight. One would suppose that the comfort of a leisurely breakfast at home with his family would be sufficient inducement to most workmen to put a good

deal of increased energy into their movements during the shorter work-day. The result of the Salford experiment will be awaited with interest, not only by workmen of the same class, but by all who are interested in the great industrial problems which are just now up for solution.

The only part of Mr. Simpson's letter which particularly concerns us is that in which he, with quite unnecessary heat, accuses us of having said or implied that he had stated that which was not true. We should, we trust, be very sorry to be guilty of such rudeness and injustice in reference to any gentleman occupying a position of respectability and trust. But a moment's cool consideration will make it clear that Mr. Simpson has put a rather strained and violent interpretation upon our words. We were at the moment between Scylla and Charybdis, since to have accepted Mr. Simpson's figures without qualification or hesitation, might have been interpreted to mean that Mr. Edgar, another gentleman occupying a position of respectability and trust, had stated that which was not true. We used a form of expression intended to avoid discourtesy to either. So far as we can recollect, the explanation which suggested itself to our mind was that, as so often occurs in discussions of the kind, Mr. Edgar might have had in his mind, e.g. the gross value of the output, and Mr. Simpson another, the net value. Most certainly we did not for a moment suppose either gentleman capable of wilful mis-statement. As for the rest, Mr. Edgar may safely be left to defend his own cause, if he cares to do so. It is hardly necessary to add that we have no quarrel with either the proprietors or the managers of the combines which it occasionally becomes our duty to criticise. Our quarrel is with the unjust and oppressive laws which compel us poor consumers of their goods to pay tribute for their enrichment, thus robbing us of our freedom to purchase what we need where we choose. Mr. Simpson, as an English Radical, should have no difficulty in understanding a Canadian's strong prejudice in favour of commercial freedom, personal and national. He must perceive, too, that those who enjoy special privileges as the result of tariff legislation, at the public expense, must not be surprised if the public take a special interest in their business and, in the absence of full and definite information, such as no business firm cares to give in regard to what it deems its own affairs, proceeds to reason from such sources of information as are the best available.

Sir Oliver Mowat has distinctly announced that his Government will not support Mr. Marter's Bill for prohibiting the retail sale of intoxicating liquors in the Province of Ontario. It is impossible to blame the Premier seriously for refusing to aid in putting upon the statute book a

law which he believes to be beyond the jurisdiction of the Legislature. It must have required some courage on his part to make this statement in response to the request of an influential and enthusiastic body, composed largely of his own admirers and followers, however his modest hesitancy in this case may have seemed to some to contrast with the alacrity with which he came to the defence of the widest interpretation of Provincial powers on previous occasions. But it is not a little strange that so many of the advocates of prohibitory legislation should shut their eyes to the stern, hard facts of the situation, and persuade themselves that the victory will be won if they can but by some means secure a majority in the Legislature in favour of a prohibitory measure. They heed not the obvious facts that no prohibitory law will enforce itself, that a prohibitory law unenforced would mean a liquor deluge, that the same result would follow pending the decision which would have to be obtained by a tedious process on the appeal which would be sure to be taken from the first conviction. They lose sight, too, of the absurdity of making criminal the sale of a beverage whose manufacture is permitted. They pay no heed to the fact that the liquors, the sale of which they declare it a sin even to regulate, are the daily beverages of thousands who regard their use as not only innocent but beneficial. These persons may be in error—privately we believe they are—but they are free citizens, and as such have a right to have their views taken into the account. We do not say that when the question is one of eradicating an evil which works such deplorable results as the use of intoxicants, the people cannot proceed to prohibitory measures until perfect unanimity shall have been obtained. But we do say that the advocates of prohibition should not shrink from testing the views of the electorate upon the question, and should clearly recognize the fact that until a large majority of the people shall have pronounced distinctly in favour of prohibition, it would be worse than useless to pass a prohibitory law.

Herein is a marvellous thing—a profound economic mystery:

"Ontario possesses vast stores of valuable ores; they are easily worked; some of them are now quite accessible, and others of them could be cheaply and easily marketed by the expenditure of certain sums of money in extending our railroad facilities; material for charcoal is abundant and contiguous to the most desirable locations for blast furnaces; unlimited supplies of limestone are in close proximity to such locations; there is a steady and reliable demand for all the charcoal pig iron that is likely to be produced for a number of years under the most advantageous circumstances. Existing railroad facilities are such that where it is desired to manufacture coke iron, the fuel can be laid down at furnace quite as cheaply as at many of the most successful furnaces in the United States, and cheaper in some in-