

THE STORY OF THE "MINNIE M"

At the trial of the election petition against C. N. Smith, the sitting member for Sault Ste. Marie, evidence was given to show that a steamer called the "Minnie M." was used to carry a number of persons to the polls at Michipicoten and Helen Mine. Owing to suspension of the Soo industries, the greater number of the men at these two places had left to seek employment elsewhere, and the object of the expedition of the "Minnie M." was evidently to bring to the polls a number of personators for the absentee votes. On the evening of the Saturday before the election, the Hon. Mr. Gibson and the Hon. Mr. Harcourt addressed a meeting at Sault Ste. Marie, in the interests of the Liberal candidate. While the meeting was in progress, a letter was placed in Mr. Gibson's hands informing him that the "Minnie M." was about to sail for the places mentioned with a number of men whose avowed object was to personate absent voters on behalf of the Liberal candidate. The letter was received by derisive laughter by the meeting, and the Liberals on the platform denounced it as a Tory rorback, trumped up to affect the election. The project seemed so absurd and was so vehemently denied, that Mr. Gibson attached no importance to the letter, declaring that he was not a policeman; but this was not all he said, but went on for some time to point out the provisions of the law in such cases, the heavy penalties for such acts, and warned his hearers of any such attempts as those alleged. At the close of the meeting he spoke in a similar way to Mr. Smith and his friends, and was given to understand and really believed that the story was baseless. Even if he had believed the story he could not have prevented a steamer leaving an American port—for the "Minnie M." had left from the American side of the river—to go wherever she pleased. Even if information had been laid before the police magistrate in regular way, he would be powerless, and the Attorney-General has less authority in connection with criminal offences than an ordinary justice of the peace. The "Minnie M." was under orders from Mr. Coyne, an American citizen, who was at the time in charge of that branch of the Soo industries, and all the arrangements for the alleged personation on the American side were made, as far as the evidence shows, by one Patrick Galvin, then resident at the Soo. The Attorney-General was accordingly as powerless to stop the "Minnie M." as he would have been to stop the sailing of the Baltic Fleet.