

TORONTO'S GERRYMANDER.

The new disclosure of Premier Whitney's scheme to insure caucus representation in Toronto shows that he is not satisfied with even the straight dishonesty of linking constituencies in pairs. That piece of political trickery has been made worse by a new proposal to hand out two ballots instead of one to every voter. Instead of marking his two votes on one ballot, the elector will mark one vote on each ballot, and the two ballots will be regarded as applying to two distinct elections. If this were merely a scheme to hide the shame of linking the constituencies for gerrymander purposes it could be treated with indifference and even welcomed as a sign of possible repentance. But it is designed to avoid even the remote contingency of a doubtful result through "plumping" for a favorite, or through dividing the vote with a Labor representative, or with any candidate deserving support through prominence in public service.

The Labor party have nominated four candidates. They thought that many would divide their votes between the Labor nominees and their party favorites. A voter with Labor sympathies cannot do this under the new scheme unless his party favorite and the Labor nominee are on different ballots. It is quite possible for both the candidates of a party to be nominated for both ballots in any of the linked constituencies. Each would be named as a candidate on "ballot A" and "ballot B," if that designation were adopted. With the election machinery in hand they could practise trickery in arranging their retirements, thus choosing the opponents against whom they would be pitted. A Labor candidate, for example, on ballot A could be offset by putting on that ballot a party man popular with trades unionists. For a fair test of strength the Labor party or Prohibitionist party will now find it necessary to nominate eight instead of four candidates. The Government have succeeded in removing the least possible chance of uncertainty, and consequently have deprived the city of the least possible chance of securing a representative under a political obligation to defend her interests.
