

VITAL STATISTICS AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

The quarterly returns of births and deaths, from eighteen of the largest cities and towns in Ontario, for the three months ending 30th September, 1879, are given on another page. The total number of deaths from the 18 places show a death-rate, per annum, per 1000 living, of estimated population, of only about 11.5. Either these localities, or most of them, must be highly favorable to longevity, or the returns must be very incomplete. The latter would probably be the most correct inference. The actual death-rate in these places is probably not much less than 20 per 1000; or say 18 per 1000, which is about as low as any country can show. It would appear then that only about, or less than, two-thirds of the deaths are registered. But when we look at the returns of deaths from one or two of these places we find them less than one-third, and from many of them, only a little over half of the estimated number. For example, Lindsay returns about 5 deaths per 1000 of population (per annum), Ottawa 6 per 1000. There is no possible reason why the death-rate in these two places should be lower than in Toronto, which returns over 21 per 1000.

It is really too bad that the returns from most municipalities are so very incomplete as they evidently are. Some people think, or appear to think, it is very hard to be fined for neglecting their duty in this work, but what else can they look for. Complete returns of deaths are indispensable, and must be obtained. If those whose duty it is to see that all deaths are registered, do not do their duty, they must be made to do it, or be so punished that they will not fail in it again.

Much, doubtless, depends on the division registrars being active and looking after deaths which occur, as well as after those who neglect to register them. Many of these, it appears, think their pay is altogether inadequate for the work they are expected to do. Reeves and Councillors should see to this. The small sum required to pay well for having this work well done, which will be of great future benefit to the Province, will not be felt by the municipality. Councilmen should be able to explain the importance of the work to their constituents.

It is probable that some improvements or amendments may be required in the Registration Act; and we trust this will receive consideration from the Government. Possibly something more strin-