

large number of deaths from zymotic diseases might be prevented, as well as deaths from consumption—the latter disease being aggravated and made more fatal from living in damp and unventilated houses. He also spoke of the necessity of the Dominion having a Sanitary Board to carry into effect those powers over which it had control, particularly in relation to immigrants, with whom a great deal of disease was imported into the country; also to the necessity of a Factory Act. There was much, he said, to be done by the joint action of the provincial and municipal governments, particularly in relation to sewerage, and the draining of malarial surroundings of cities. He contended that there should be local Boards of Health in every province, with complete organization, to put into effect any sanitary suggestions made. He trusted that the outcome of the Convention would be to strengthen the hands of those who were endeavouring to bring about reforms that would effect a saving of life throughout the province.

The first paper read was by Dr. Canniff, Medical Officer of Health, Toronto, on the

SANITARY EDUCATION OF THE MASSES, AS CONDUCTED IN THE CITY OF TORONTO DURING A PERIOD OF FOUR MONTHS.

We give the full contents of this paper with a few observations, as an example to other Boards of Health at present existing, and to those that may hereafter be established, should the Health Bill now before the Provincial Parliament of Ontario to enforce the formation of Boards of Health, become law.† If so much can be done by an energetic physician in so short a time, let it be a caution to municipalities never to appoint a medical officer, who is an incompetent man, to an office of such great importance, in which he, to a great extent, holds life and death in his hands. To appoint any incompetent physician to such an important office, merely to give him the means of living, is sacrificing human lives to his ignorance and inactivity.

DR. CANNIFF'S PAPER.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

Wishing to contribute something to further the object of your Convention at this time, I have thought it might be well to lay before you two short reports* respecting the sanitary work done in the City of Toronto during last summer, or, speaking more accurately, during the

months of August, September, October and November; and, with these reports, some account of the inauguration and prosecution of the work.

I think there are some features of this work worthy of the attention of Sanitarists generally, and I have reason to believe that the sanitary condition of Toronto, as reported, is not altogether singular; also that the remarks contained in the report will largely apply to other places.

It is hardly necessary to make the statement that the public are woefully ignorant about sanitary requirements in connection with their homes; that municipal bodies are as a common thing, quite indifferent, or are averse to availing themselves of the services of medical men who, from their professional education, are able to give salutary aid on such matters. This indifference, or aversion—this unwillingness to spend money for the preservation of the health and lives of the public, is doubtless due to a want of knowledge of the subject, or pre-conceived opinions. Sanitation as applied to municipalities, as well as to private and public places, is of so recent growth that its importance and power for good is too generally unknown. It is the duty of those engaged in sanitary work to avail themselves of every possible means to carry information into the homes of every municipality. It is true we have laws, provincial and municipal, by which certain sanitary evils may be overcome, abated, or prevented; and in a certain way, very efficient laws they are; but this mode of treating insidious evils by legal steps I venture to assert is not the best; at least, law should be a *denier resort*. If we take it for granted that many transgress at once the laws of health and the municipal law through ignorance, it is obvious that the evil should be first treated by persuasion and education rather than by coercion. This is the point which I desire to make, in bringing the subject before this Convention.

Allow me to relate some portion of my experience as Medical Health Officer for Toronto during last year.

I may say the office of Medical Officer for Toronto was created at the beginning of 1883. I was appointed to the office on the 13th March. There had been a very efficient City Commissioner for many years, who was also health officer, though not a medical man. I am very efficient, in fact few, if any, non-professional persons could, to so great an extent, have attended to the sanitary requirements of the city as did City Commissioner Coatsworth. Therefore, when a medical officer was appointed it was not thought necessary, if indeed thought of at all, to relieve that officer of any of his work as health officer, which, however efficient the officer might be, could not be done on the same principles as would be done by a medical man. More than that, the Commissioner had other and pressing duties to attend to as Commissioner of Works; besides numerous matters constantly referred to him as an executive officer. Still more, the City of Toronto has, during the last few years, grown very rapidly and assumed the characteristics of a great metropolis. The result had been that the private premises of many citizens were in a condition far from satisfactory from a sanitary standpoint. As the summer advanced I became painfully aware of the fact that

† This Bill has since become law.

* For one of these reports see page 44.