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ON THE HIGH DEATH RATE IN CANADA AND ITS PREVENTION.

AN ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF CANADA.

LAST year I took the liberty of addressing you in relation to the desirability of some special means being taken for the prevention of the excessive loss of human life in Canada from year to year from preventable diseases, as compared with the mortality in England. As it appears to me to be a subject of very grave importance, and one which most naturally concerns the members of the highest parliament of Canada, I feel constrained to venture to again address you upon it.

During the year that has since past, the rate of mortality in the twenty odd Canadian cities and towns which have made now for the last three or four years regular monthly reports of their deaths to the Department of Agriculture in Ottawa, has continued to exceed by 20 per cent. or more the mortality in the chief cities in the mother country. If, as seems reasonable to suppose from reasons given below, the same rate of mortality that is recorded in these Canadian cities and towns prevails throughout the Dominion, this implies a loss in Canada every year of at least twenty thousand human lives, over and above what it would be were the mortality in Canada not proportionably greater than it is in England.

Twenty of the chief Canadian cities and towns which made these monthly reports during last year (1886) com-

prised an average population for the year, I assume, of not more than 640,000. In order not to understate the population of these cities and towns, I have estimated on the basis that the rate of increase during the five preceding years, 1882 to 1886, inclusive, was the same proportionately as it was during the decennial period between 1871 and 1881, according to the census in each of the last named years, and then added 50,000 more to allow for any possible increase over and above this estimation. These twenty cities, with their 640,000 people, reported to the Department of Agriculture here a total for the year of 16,018 deaths, or a mortality at the rate of 25 per 1,000 of population. If there were any errors or defects in the mortality returns from these cities and towns, they would be those of omission; and indeed, it is not unlikely that, at this early period of the registration of mortuary statistics in this country, a number of deaths remained unrecorded: if so, the rate of mortality, I need hardly write, was still greater than this.

In the twenty-eight largest cities or "towns" in England, with an estimated population of over 9,000,000, there were recorded, during the same year (1886), 189,610 deaths, as shown by the Registrar-General's weekly reports; equal to an annual death rate of