

# THE CANADA MEDICAL RECORD,

A Monthly Journal of Medicine and Surgery.

EDITORS:

FRANCIS W. CAMPBELL, M.A., M.D., L.R.C.P., LOND.

R. A. KENNEDY, M.A., M.D.

JAMES C. CAMERON, M.D., M.R.C.P.I.

SUBSCRIPTION TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM.

All communications and Exchanges must be addressed to the Editors, Drawer 356, Post Office, Montreal.

MONTREAL, DECEMBER, 1882.

## VITAL STATISTICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

The Board of Health of the City of Montreal is deserving of much praise for the persistency with which (under the direction of Dr. Larocque, their health officer, and Alderman Mooney, their chairman) it has followed up the question of Vital Statistics and Public Health. During the past year it held several conferences with the Medical Societies of Montreal, and at the last session of the Quebec Legislature a Health Bill, the result of their efforts, was introduced and reported by Committee, but, as the House was about to close, it did not advance further. In the meantime the Hon. Mr. Chapleau handed over the reins of government to the Hon. Mr. Mousseau, who, in November last, received at the Government offices in Montreal a deputation on health matters. It did not seem to be very clear to the mind of the Premier of the Province of Quebec what powers in such matters were, by the Act of Confederation, relegated to the Local Government. It was accordingly arranged that the deputation should on a certain date proceed to Ottawa and interview the Hon. Minister of Agriculture on the subject; the Hon. Mr. Mousseau, in the meantime, coming to an understanding with the Dominion Government as to its jurisdiction and that of the Local Governments. On the 7th of November the Hon. Mr. Mousseau met the deputation in Ottawa, and informed it that the question of Vital Statistics belonged to the Federal authorities, and matters of Public Health to the Local Parliaments. He subsequently accompanied the deputation to the Hon. Mr. Pope, Minister of Agriculture, who, after hearing their opinions, stated his own very great interest in the subject, and promised to do something to meet their views at the approach-

ing meeting of the Dominion Parliament. In the meantime the Montreal Board of Health put itself in communication with Charlottetown, P.E.I., St. John, N.B., Halifax, N.S., Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, and, after exchange of correspondence between these points and the Government, the latter asked that a deputation from these various centres should, at its expense, proceed to Ottawa, and, after conference, lay the result of their united deliberations before them. The deputation assembled in Ottawa on the 7th of December last, to the number of about fifty, and held two long sessions in the Russell House, the chair being occupied by Alderman Mooney, chairman of the Montreal Health Board, the result being the adoption of the following resolutions:

*Resolved.*—That, in the opinion of the meeting, in order the better to prevent disease and preserve human life, it is advisable that the Dominion Government should organize and sustain a uniform system of vital statistics for the Dominion.

*Resolved.*—That, as immediate action is necessary, the Federal Government be invited to initiate at once a system of vital statistics, where organized Local Boards of Health are established, so that the statistical information may be utilized by these bodies.

*Resolved.*—That, as Provincial legislative action is necessary, it is suggested to the Federal Government that it communicate with and secure the co-operation of the Provincial Government to pass such legislation as will harmonize with and obtain the object of the preceding resolutions.

*Resolved.*—That it is desirable that a central bureau of statistics be established, and, if found to be within the province of the Federal Government, a comprehensive system of health returns.

The following day, December 8th, the deputation proceeded to the Railway Committee room in the Parliament buildings, and met the Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, M.D., who, after reading the resolutions, stated that in his opinion they were to be commended for their very moderate tone. He then said that when he left London, just previous to the passing of the British North America Act, he was fully of the impression that matters of public health, like Quarantine, Vital Statistics, and kindred subjects, had been assigned to the Dominion Government. When the Bill passed, and he received a copy of it, no one was more surprised than he was to learn that Public Health matters have been relegated to the Local Houses. He said he had no hesitation in saying that, in his opinion, this was