

not the boards in the position of a lot of branches without a trunk? Dead branches without a stem. For the most part these remarks do not apply to the cities.

What the local boards require to render them useful, as they might be, is a *Provincial Board*, a centre, a trunk. A properly organized Provincial Board, which would meet, say, once in three months, should at once place itself in direct communication with every local board in the province, awaken each to a knowledge of its powers, objects and duties, and induce it to appoint a medical officer in connection therewith, for obvious reasons, and to report, even briefly, at least once a year, in reference to its work, to the Provincial Board. I could point to many ways in which local boards might thus be induced to do most valuable work in lessening disease in their several localities with trifling trouble and expense.

Besides securing a better organization of local boards, and getting them interested in their work, a provincial board in Ontario could do a vast amount of other good work. It could investigate the prominent causes of disease; investigate the public health acts of other countries, and advise in reference to those most suitable to this country, as this country must soon have a more complete and effectual code of health laws. The action of the Massachusetts State Board has been almost entirely instrumental in having an abattoir established for Boston, and the city and suburbs have been freed from slaughter-houses. The cities of Ontario would be fair fields for the work in this behalf of a Provincial Board. The water supply, drainage, and, in short, a hundred other matters too, would properly interest and give important work for a Provincial Board of Health in Ontario.

SEWER GAS.*

BY R. BARNES AUSTIN, C.E.

I am about to say a few words on that arch enemy of the human race—sewer gas. As I proceed I will endeavour to illustrate my remarks by some simple mechanical experiments, and I hope I shall be able to convince you that by the exercise practically of a little care and common scientific sense the presence of sewer gas and its concomitant evils within any house may be prevented. In the first place, I would remark that 'sewer gas,' as the *Sanitary Record* of July 27 well says, is a popular rather than a scientific term, and is not one definite gas, but several. Indeed there is hardly a gas known to chemists that may not be found in sewer gas at one time or the other. Nor is this complexity of composition at all to be wondered at when we consider the complex character of sewage itself. In sewage may be found in one form or other almost every known chemical element, not even excluding the precious metals

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