

marriages and deaths, but it is impossible as yet to secure correct returns of natality. The hands of our health-officers, our statisticians and our Government, are at present tied for want of a perfect municipal, provincial, and national system of collecting and comparing our vital and social statistical returns. It is only by the possession of such true returns that we can compare our social and national conditions with those of Europe and the United States, where evidences of approaching national decline are only too plain when mortuary and natal statistical returns are compared.

The population of the United States is rapidly increased by the steady flow of immigration; but according to the opinion of men who have investigated, the death rate in the native population is rapidly approaching the birth-rate.

This is alarming in a new country like America; but what shall be the story when the nation has reached the age of France, where it is stated that it is only due to the primitive virtue of some of the mining, manufacturing, agricultural and pastoral departments, such as, Le Nord, Le Pas-de-Calais, Le Morbihan, La Lozère, La Finistère, Les Côtes-du-Nord, La Vendée and others, that the death rate has not exceeded the natality rate.

Our young Dominion, as far as our imperfect statistics show, is not so censurable as many of the older countries of the Continent, in encouraging or practising those evils that are the worms that gnaw at the root of social and national vitality. But vice, like disease, travels fast, and already we are alarmed at the symptoms of encroaching infection, which, if permitted to spread, shall soon run riot through the arteries of our national life. The only remedy in the experience of the world is that of a sound, moral and scientific education. In the great campaign of self-protection, the quiet spread of scientific knowledge and truth has done, and shall yet do, more than the threatening ramparts of legislation.

To this holy task of leavening society with knowledge, the promoters of this Association have given themselves, in the hope of receiving that due patronage and confidence from the intelligent people of this Dominion, of which the cause is