

PUBLIC HEALTH.

We recently received a circular from the Secretary of the Provincial Board of Public Health of Ontario, desiring to be informed as to the present status of public health organization in Prince Edward Island; also, what legislation exists with regard to the protection of the public. We are sorry to admit that our organization and laws are very inferior and imperfect. In 1851 an Act was passed constituting boards of health throughout the Province. These Boards were appointed by the Lieut.-Governor and Council, and consisted of laymen and a health officer, but as the power of the Board was limited in finances, they could do but little in the way of fighting an epidemic, unless the Government of the day provided funds. During the small-pox epidemic of 1885-86, this statute was still further limited in its financial powers, and the whole statute was re-enacted with slight modifications. The civic corporation of Charlottetown constitutes the Board of Health for the city, and we believe Dr. Richard Johnson was, until recently, the sanitary officer—a very competent and painstaking officer, who has been poorly rewarded for his service.

The treatment which medical men received in this province at the hands of boards of health and the Provincial Government, during the last small-pox epidemic, was disgracefully mean and contemptible. Our individual experience justifies us in using stronger language. In matters of contract of this nature the high-souled and very honourable (?) Attorney-General of the day refused us a fiat to sue the Government, and had to submit to the treatment thus meted out to us. Should small-pox again invade our shores, as it will, the medical men should be very careful how they act until their fees are first guaranteed, and that in writing, endorsed by the Attorney-General for the time being. It is quite an absurdity to have laymen making health laws. New laws are required, and the time has arrived for a Public Health Department at Ottawa, with the provinces as auxiliary departments or branches, and the previous legislative enactments in this province are of very little use and need to be replaced by new and different legislation to suit the advanced requirements of sanitary science.

Original Communications.

INHERITED SYPHILIS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EYE AND EAR DISEASE.*

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,--It is a time-honoured custom of medical etiquette, and this society, when one is about to read a paper, to begin it with an apology. I feel that it would take several good and cleverly couched apologies to excuse me for having the boldness to venture any remarks on this very difficult subject. It is one in which I have long been interested, and if my enthusiasm should make me appear somewhat dogmatic, I hope you will excuse me.

The many and variously expressed views on it in the past, and also happily to a much less extent held at present, indicate that there is much about its evolutions that as yet are not rightly understood.

During the past twenty years more definite knowledge of it has been acquired than all that was previously known which has tended much to simplify it. There is no subject in medical literature which is more fascinating and leads one on in such pleasant though difficult paths of thought, till unfortunately he is frequently lost in the intricacies of this truly wonderful disease. Of recent years, since my attention has been occupied in special lines of practice which afford increased opportunities both of meeting and studying it, I am convinced that it prevails amongst us more than is generally thought. We might ask, what is inherited syphilis? We do not know what the agent causing either the acquired or congenital form of syphilis is. We do know that in the acquired it is some poison communicated usually in one way; though the definite organism, "the germ," if you will, on which it depends has not yet been discovered, though it many times has been said to have been.

Syphilis resembles the specific fevers, the exanthemata, excepting that they are acute, and run their course in a few days or weeks, whereas syphilis takes months or years. In both there is

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