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INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CONGRESS.

DR. FARRELL'S REPORT.

HONORABLE W. S. FIELDING,

Provincial Secretary.

SIR:—In accordance with instructions from the Honorable the Executive Council I proceeded to the meeting of the Seventh International Congress of Hygiene and Demography, held in London in the month of August, 1891.

The object of this large and widely representative association is simply to make a universal crusade against preventable diseases.

It is only within the past quarter of a century that Sanitary Science has taken its present prominent position as a department of medicine, and it is within a much shorter period that governments have begun to recognize its importance—the importance of avoiding disease and preventing unnecessary death. The vast cost of disease to the people, and the immense loss which unnecessary mortality causes not only to the family but to the State, is almost incalculable. It remains yet for the future to place Hygiene among the departments of government with the same executive power that obtains in other branches of the public service. In these days, when all the discoveries of modern science are quickly utilized to minister to the comfort and convenience of the people, it must be but a very short time before progressive governments will recognize the true position of sanitary science, and have a Minister of Public Health, as they have now a Minister of Justice or a Minister of Public Works.

The first of these Health Congresses was held in Brussels in 1876. This was followed by the meeting in Paris in 1878, which was such a brilliant success that the International Health Congress became a permanent institution. Then came subsequent meetings at Turin, Geneva, the Hague, and Vienna, each one more successful than its predecessor, both in the interest and value of its discussions and in the number of countries represented.

It is a pleasure to note that Canada was ahead of many older countries in her recognition of the importance of sanitary progress, as will be seen by the following extract from the account of the second Congress held in Geneva in 1882, in the London *Lancet* of that year:

"The Board of Health of Ontario (Canada) was represented by Dr. C. W. Covernton, but not a single English town or administration sent a representative."

I might also point with pride to the fact that in 1876, the year the first congress was held in Europe, the House of Assembly in our own Province had a special committee on public health, the result of whose