

tion, Washington, proposes to diffuse knowledge among men.*

The particular object of this paper, notwithstanding this seeming digression, has reference to one special department of statistics only :—Sanitary or Vital Statistics, in their relation to “preventable” diseases, and the “public health.” They hold precisely the same relation to life and health, that general statistics do to political economy, and the wealth of nations, —wealth having an inseparable co-relation to health.

Sanitary statistics of a general or reliable nature, have hitherto been quite ignored by Canadian Legislators, but fortunately, a change seems to have come over the vision of their dream, Dr. Brouse, the member for Prescott, in the Commons of Canada, having succeeded on the 20th of March last, in obtaining the appointment of a Select Committee to enquire into and report on the expediency of asking for legislation on the subject. The results which are summed up in the following report of the Sanitary Committee of the House, was presented on Friday the 7th instant, having been unanimously adopted.

“That your Committee in order to obtain information on the subject have invited suggestions from W. Marsden, M.D. of Quebec, Edward Playter, M.D., editor of the Sanitary Journal, Toronto, and George A. Barynes, M.D., editor of the Public Health Magazine, Montreal, all of whom have given much attention and study to the question of sanitary legislation, and their report to your Committee is submitted herewith. That in the opinion of your Committee no such legislation would be effective that did not contemplate the establishment of a complete system for the collection of sanitary statistics. That at the present time no such information appears to be at the command of the Canadian Government, although it is obvious that to the Federal authority alone the country must look for the collection and compilation of statistics relating to the whole dominion. That the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, have severally legislated with a view of obtaining returns of vital statistics. That the Canadian Medical Association and the Ontario Medical Council have urged respectfully upon the attention of the public the vast importance of such statistics. That in Great Britain, France, the United States and other countries, the most satisfactory results have ensued from the enforcement of sanitary reforms, founded upon accurate statistical information. That a very large reduction in the death rate has been directly traceable to energetic sanitary means in Calcutta, London and other great centres of population, the decrease having been nearly 50 per cent in the case of the two cities above mentioned. That high

*American Cyclopædia, verb : Statistics.