

forces in case of emergency. The committee will report upon the possibility of recruiting for both the army and naval reserves in Canada, and also upon how far the general interchange of Canadian with the imperial troops for service outside the Dominion in other parts of the British Empire is advisable. The committee will be assisted by a committee of the cabinet. Major-General Leach, President of the committee, was, we believe, formerly stationed at Halifax as a colonel of engineers, and, early in his military career, won the Victoria cross. He and his colleagues on this commission have arrived from England and are soon to commence their work at Ottawa. While the points left to the consideration of these gentlemen have been made known to the people through the press, no information has been given as to the composition of the committee of the Canadian cabinet appointed to assist the officers in their deliberations. Without knowing aught of the plan of proceedings, we venture to think that, for the purpose of obtaining reliable information upon the matters named in their commission, Major-General Leach and his companions cannot do better than make a tour of observation, and, during their visit to the principal cities, consult with the officers of our very efficient militia. The information thus obtained will probably be more valuable than that obtained from a committee of the cabinet, however well selected.

**The Water Supply Failed.** The disastrous fire in Sunderland, Eng., to which reference was made in our last issue, is still being discussed by interested fire insurance authorities. In defence of the Sunderland Fire Brigade, to whose supposed incapacity and poor equipment the great loss has been attributed, a correspondent of the *Policy-Holder* claims that the firemen of Sunderland are gallant fellows, who rendered all the service possible with an insufficient supply of water. It seems that the water supply of Sunderland is in the hands of a company with whom the corporation of Sunderland have been fighting for the past five years for larger mains and other much-needed reforms in the service. Upon this subject of water supply, the feeling favours Parliamentary compulsion of the company to secure what is necessary, and the *Policy-Holder* adds:—

"Every intelligent citizen in England should be an advocate of the municipalisation of the water supply of all our great towns. And no better object lesson than the Sunderland fire is needed by way of exhibiting the wickedness of a system which places in jeopardy the lives and property of the population of an important industrial community like Sunderland. Englishmen, it is admitted, are slow and illogical in their methods. It is our way. Sometimes it is necessary to tear down Hyde Park railings in order to induce reform. At other times, perhaps, a great fire and the consequent loss of property and risk of life are needed to spur us on to action. Let us hope that the Sunderland fire has not been in vain, and that it may open the eyes of the people of that thriving town to

the folly of allowing to continue for one moment longer than they can help the hateful anomaly of the water supply of the place being in the hands of a private monopoly. The water supply is first of all the necessities of life which should be controlled by the community. When men are more enlightened on this subject they will realise that it is as infamous for the water supply of a city to be in the hands of a private monopoly as for the air they breathe to be under similar control. They are both the source and fountain of health, safety and life itself, and as such should be administered by the community for the community—by all for all."

Slow and illogical in their methods! Englishmen may thus regard themselves; and we in Montreal are in danger of becoming equally apathetic and indifferent about that which ought to be of paramount interest to "an important industrial community"—the government of its affairs. Let us wake up and make the metropolis of Canada a model for every municipality in the Dominion. We have an excellent water supply and a capital fire brigade, and everything should and could be in keeping therewith.

**The Brain and Longevity.** In endeavouring to discover the secret of longevity, how to live to a ripe old age in the full enjoyment of all the senses—feeling, sight, hearing, smell and taste, mankind eagerly devours everything written by the known great and the great unknown. Recently, the British Blue Book furnished statistics designed to show that the total abstainer is a plum for insurance companies, whereas it is claimed by equally good authorities, and proved by examples that the man who drinks "the usual loyal and patriotic toasts," even in port of ancient vintage, is an equally good risk, and is not by an occasional obeisance to Bacchus courting an early death from cirrhosis of the liver. Total abstinence as a means of prolonging life seemed to be beyond question, although the appearance of its votaries does not always commend them to medical examiners, until another writer on longevity declared "the use of cold water to any great extent is bad."

Now we are confronted with another difficulty in the road to a proper understanding of how to live without upsetting some of the cherished beliefs of those who prepare mortality tables or without shattering the statistics submitted annually by those who classify the causes of death. Sir James Crichton-Browne has stated in a lecture that medical men, "adapting themselves to the needs of the time" (how charmingly pliant the physician can be in humouring his patients) had felt it incumbent on them to insist mainly on the *misuse* of the brain and the excessive strain too often put on it; but, he added, that there were also great evils attendant upon the *disuse* of the brain. He, Sir James Crichton-Browne, knew no surer way of inducing mental decay than for a man of active habits to retire and do nothing when just past the zenith of life; and, on the other hand, he knew no safer road to a green old age than to keep on working at something till the close.