

AN IMPERATIVE DUTY.

The letter of Mr. Drury, who has had Death as a near neighbour for many long days, during a severe illness from one of the most loathsome diseases known to mankind, imposes upon every official who has the slightest connection with or interest in the public health a duty which must not be avoided or evaded. For the past two years, THE CHRONICLE has, at intervals, directed attention to the occasional symptoms of the presence of small-pox in our midst, and, without any desire to create alarm, has pointed to the danger of an outbreak, and the necessity of being in a constant state of preparedness. Now we have a plain tale of what befell a stranger within our gates, who, stricken with small-pox, was conveyed to the hospital.

We are accustomed, if not quite reconciled, to having many of the charges and complaints levelled at our city officials treated with apathetic indifference. But in this case, the first and only consideration must be the public health. We have in Mr. Drury's unpleasant narrative of neglect and suffering, couched apparently in the calm and convincing language of truth, revelations so shocking, that no citizen could read same without a blush for the system which makes such a state of affairs possible.

To work! gentlemen of the Health Committee and the Board of Health. Let nothing stand in the way of your imperative duty.

An immediate and thorough examination into civic arrangements for grappling with plague and pestilence is the only way of convincing your fellow-citizens that you realize what this exposure means. You can neither avoid or evade action in this matter, and if, after the frequent warnings received, the hospital accommodation is found faulty and insufficient, you will be held strictly accountable for your neglect of duty.

GLEANINGS FROM A BATCH OF DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

Were the recipients of the Blue books annually issued put under examination, the great majority of them would, we suspect, have to confess that they never perused these documents. A business man may well be excused such neglect, for through all contain matter of great interest in relation to the country's welfare and progress, they are so crowded with details of comparatively small significance as to render it a very tedious task to cull what is important. Even professional politicians confine their studies of departmental reports to the few from which ammunition can be gathered for party warfare. We propose to make a brief synopsis of a number of these official Blue books, with whatever statistics, financial or otherwise they contain of public interest, and, as far as possible, a statement of the cost of each service on whose work they report.

The bulkiest of these documents relates to Indian

affairs. Had the public at large studied these returns prior to 1885, the rebellion which broke out on 26th March in that year would probably have been averted. The Indians are the wards of Canada. The Dominion owns 499,000 acres of lands which were surrendered by aborigines, for various considerations. In the public balance sheet we find \$3,725,746 at credit of Indian Fund, made up of moneys accrued from annuities secured the Indians under treaty. The salaries of officials in department of Indian affairs amount to \$57,400 yearly. The yearly cost of the service averages \$950,000, of which the North-West takes 74 per cent., Ontario and Quebec 10 per cent., British Columbia 10 per cent, and the Maritime Provinces the balance of 6 per cent. The grant is about \$10.40 per head of the Indians, who number close upon 100,000. Last year a further concession of lands in the extreme North was made by Indians by treaty, the consideration being annuities and grants of seed, implements, cattle, and ammunition. The sum of \$26,972 was spent in securing this treaty, gratuities, etc., being given to 2,217 Cree and Chipewyan bands. Out of the annual grant last year there was \$196,558 devoted to supplies for destitute and working Indians, in Manitoba and the North-West, \$292,348 for schools, \$167,150 for annuities, \$27,170 for cattle, seeds and implements. Canada protects her wards from their own improvidence; provides them medical care; instructs their children; does all that is possible to make them self-supporting and self-respecting. Hence, though costly, they are peaceable and contented.

An allied service to Indian affairs is the Department of the Interior, which has charge of the public lands, immigration, surveys, and foreign agencies. The revenue and expenditure of this service for 1898-99 and previous year were as follows:—

	1899.	1898.
	\$	\$
Sale of Lands.....	1,637,928	1,084,691
Fees, &c, &c.....	37,031	27,403
Total Revenue.....	1,674,959	1,112,094
EXPENDITURE		
Minister and Staff.....	104,215	108,792
Contingencies.....	19,586	17,881
Dominion Land charges.....	92,913	91,296
Total Expenses.....	216,714	217,969
	1899.	1898.
	No. Acres.	No. Acres.
Homesteads.....	6,689 1,070,240	4,948 775,680
Sales..... 45,502 47,186

The number of homesteads entered and completed was the largest of any year on record. Out of 6,689 only 213 were cancelled, whereas in previous years the cancellations ranged from 12 to 77 per cent. of the total, in 1899 the percentage being only 3 per cent. The homesteaders last year were, 2,134 Canadians, 1,169 Americans, Austrians, 1,114; British, 870, and the balance very mixed. The report gives 67,000 as the number of cattle exported from Man-