

CANADA HEALTH JOURNAL.

A Monthly Record of Sanitary Progress.

VOL. XIII.

JUNE, 1891.

No. 6

SIR JOHN MACDONALD'S LAST LESSON.

THE sudden and greatly lamented death of Sir John Macdonald, when but the other day he appeared to be full of both physical and mental vigor, when still, from his constitution and general condition, not an aged man, should teach a lesson to many another politician, as well as to others, in other walks of life. When men reach seventy, or even sixty, years of age, although they may feel well and vigorous, they must ever bear in mind that they cannot stand the strain, nor nearly that, of earlier or middle life, although they may, in many cases, with care, live on for many years in comfort and usefulness.

Had Sir John not attempted the exertion, a few months ago, of a political campaign, he would in all likelihood be alive to-day, as almost everybody knowing the circumstances will probably concede—alive to day and able to continue to advise in affairs of state for many years yet to come. Had he made only half the effort he did during the election, it probably would not have seriously affected him; or had he even taken longer and more complete rest after his return to the capital, he would, quite possibly, be alive still and able to assist in the legislation of the Dominion.

On several occasions we have drawn attention to the high mortality amongst the members of the Commons of Canada, which has now long prevailed,—three or four times higher, for example, than among men in the armies of Europe. It is sad, and a great loss to the country, that it is so. Past warnings had not it seems been enough. The relentless desolator has now in the present parliament commenced early and struck a blow that may, notwithstanding the age of the chief stricken down, well cause the living, older and younger than he was, if they value their life for what they can accomplish in it, to pause and consider their position; to measure, even under skilled medical advice, their physical ability, and act in judicious accordance therewith. It is doubtless well we do not know who will be the next member of the House to succumb,—to end his career, but we may be sure that it will be he who takes the least care to husband his physical resources and capabilities and attempts to do all he desires to do perhaps regardless of his remaining powers,—he, in short, who takes the least proportionate care of himself.