

THE CENSUS OF 1861.

UPON the appearance of the first volume of the Census of Canada, I undertook an examination of it, with a view of ascertaining whether I could extract from it any useful results with respect to the vital statistics of this country; and especially with relation to the natural increase of the two sections of the Province. Before commencing the work, I had reason to entertain serious doubts as to the trustworthiness of the figures with which I had to deal, and at each successive step of the investigation, I only became the more convinced, that some of the figures given were manifestly wrong, and that much caution must be exercised in assuming the truth of anything that was to be found there. This was not a very satisfactory basis upon which to found any conclusions, and, in point of fact, I found that a large amount of rather laborious calculations had been entirely thrown away, from the evident worthlessness of the foundation on which they had been based. I persevered, however, because it is only from a minute analysis that any judgment can be formed of the extent to which some portions of the work may be relied upon; and I am induced to offer this paper to the Society, partly with the object of showing what results may be considered as at least approximately correct, and partly to warn others from wasting as much time as I have done on those parts which can do nothing but mislead.

It may be desirable, as a preliminary, to explain the nature of the work performed by the enumerators. In their lists the name