

# The Great Public Health Congress

By MADGE MACBETH

Snapshots by the Author

THE Conservation of Public Health Congress, which met recently in Montreal under Royal patronage, was a most remarkable gathering. Both professional people and laymen from all over the Dominion met to consider questions pertaining to the public welfare, to try to discover the most practical means of helping those who know not how, or have not the power to help themselves. And every one, from His Royal Highness, who opened the Congress at a brilliant reception Wednesday evening in the Royal Victoria College, to the humblest assistant—every one worked with a will. That seemed to be a feature of the Convention. No one attended merely to enjoy himself in the ordinary lazy acceptance of the term. Words of suggestion and advice were accompanied by proof that active work had led to their utterance. Statistics covering every aspect of Public Health, from "Military problems of Sanitation" to "Dust as a factor in Disease," were placed before the Congress with practical remedies for minimizing fatal results.

ONE impressive feature of the Convention was the important part taken by women in this great movement toward better living. Without belittling the work done by all of the men whose unflagging efforts and energy made the Convention



SIR JAMES GRANT

Honorary President Public Health Congress.

against poverty, illness and early death, against wholesale deterioration of the race, it is women who need assistance. And it is women who can give it!

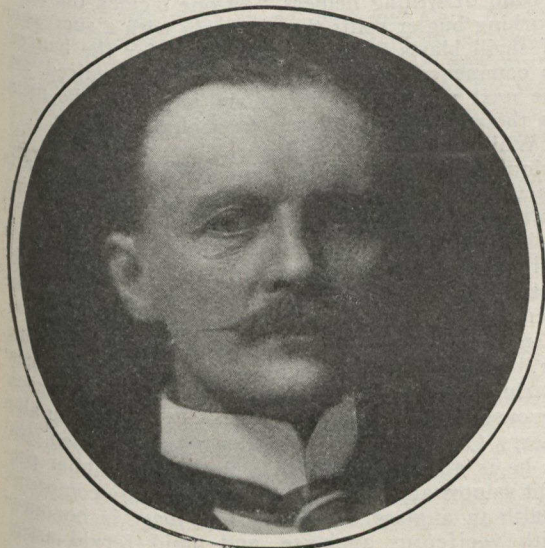
His Royal Highness, the Duke of Connaught, said that the vast inanimate resources of Canada—her forests, her rivers, her fields, her mines—were of no value without animate resources to work them. It is woman's right and privilege to give sturdy sons and daughters to her land, and in a country as young as Canada this can be done—it must be done! Do your part! Help ever so little and some one else will not require to do so much! The mere name—The CONSERVATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, can accomplish nothing!

IN reply to Colonel Jones' paper treating of Military Sanitation, Dr. Bryce said that he had been impressed by the manner in which Cuba handled her people. Cuba is the only country he knew of which had a Minister of Public Health. Cuba has stamped out leprosy, yellow fever, and malaria. By rigid inspection of construction camps, by thorough treatment of breeding places of the mosquito and fly, and by instant fumigation wherever a contagious disease occurs, Cuba is reducing disease among her people to a minimum. Dr. Page dwelt upon an important subject—that of allowing diseased immigrants to come into the country. He said that "Corporations had no souls," and that the practice of allowing incompetent men to take the positions of ships surgeons was responsible for much of our trouble with immigrants. He cited the case of one company which had three surgeons in one year, and when asked why they did not pay the men more (the average salary is from \$35 to \$50 a month) he was answered that there was no need to pay men more—there were always more applications for the position than could be filled! It is well known that physicians often from reasons of health (their own)

or love of travel, take the post of ships surgeons without being specially fitted for it. The country which is the destination of the immigrants suffers. The quarantine officers are also responsible for allowing questionable immigrants to pass through.

IN close connection with this subject Dr. Seymour, the only Health Commissioner in Canada, had some forceful remarks to make. The large number of tuberculosis patients in Saskatchewan, the doctor said, was a disgrace to a new and uncrowded province. But they were, in almost every case, people who had escaped the quarantine restrictions, or ones from the eastern provinces who had been sent west to recover! He said that there was nothing like sufficient accommodation for these patients and advised that every hospital receiving a government grant should be forced to reserve a certain amount of its accommodation for tuberculosis patients. This suggestion did not meet with unqualified approval. The "Tag Day" system is successful as a means for raising money throughout the Province, and Dr. Seymour paid high tribute to the women who had been instrumental in assisting him.

From the far east, came a cry for assistance in fighting the White Plague; Dr. McDonald, of Cape Breton, told of the ineffectual struggles his district was making. The lack of funds was certainly a



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possible, it must be stated that women effect reforms; women discover needs which men would not see, and women take the initiative—bringing to Public notice conditions which require complete alteration. Without their assistance men would be powerless to reach the root of the matter. Every paper read at the Convention (there may have been one or two technical exceptions) consciously or otherwise, bore out the truth of this statement. Women had raised money for this and that; women had given their services for this or that! women had taken statistics—had invaded homes for this purpose, where men would not have been admitted. In this great campaign against immorality and vice,



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Medical Advisor of Commission of Conservation.

serious drawback, but those which were raised might have been spent to better advantage—if the writer might be allowed an opinion. The May Court Club has done fine work amongst tuberculosis patients.

COLD storage, town planning, laboratory work, sanitary engineering and architecture, sewerage and garbage disposal, and many more papers bearing upon these subjects were presented. A word about the first before going on. Sir James Grant voiced a part of popular sentiment when he replied to Dr. Bryce's interesting review of the cold storage and refrigeration question. Sir James asked if the food thus preserved did not lose much of its nutri-



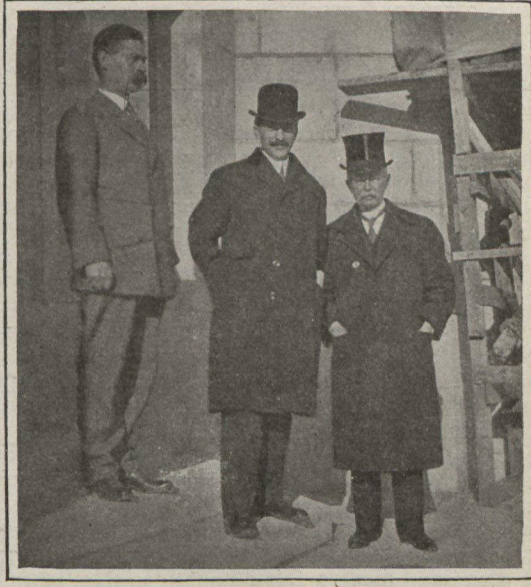
MAJOR LORNE DRUM and  
MR. T. AIRD MURRAY



DR. MAURICE SEYMOUR  
Regina



MISS ELLEN BABBITT, DR. GRACE ENGLAND  
MISS DERRICK and MRS. C. SMILLIE



DR. AMYOT, DR. McCULLOUGH and  
DR. ADAM WRIGHT