

panacea to the Government chemist who, by an analysis, would find out the real nature of the medicine, would compare the result of his own examination with the formula furnished to him, and might then give his certificate, with a duty represented by a stamp on each vial, which would be a source of revenue to the Government and would be a protection for us, as the chemist would have authority to examine new samples at any time or place, and to find out whether the preparations which are sold are identical to that which had been originally submitted to him, that he might give his first certificate; and in case of falsification, he should carry out the law in all its stringency. It is, perhaps, somewhat late now to insert this clause, but like all human things, this Bill is liable to be modified, and I hope that we will supply this want next year. Before concluding these remarks, which are already too long, I must congratulate the Minister on his work, which is already very large and very complete, and I hope and trust that this measure will meet the hearty approval of all the hon. members of this House, and that from year to year we will improve it by supplying the wants and filling the voids which it may contain, the whole in the interest of public honesty, in the interest of the protection to health, in the interest of the life of our children. It is high time that the solicitude of the Government and of the legislators should be extended for a moment on this immense wound which requires a radical treatment, and that by putting all together our shoulder to the wheel we may one day deserve the name of benefactors, protectors, and even saviours of our countrymen. I cannot conclude, however, without saying a word of a certain newspaper, which is to be started in Montreal, and which is to be called *Le Journal d'Hygiène*. The Hygienic Society of the Province of Quebec publishes a programme or circular from which I cannot resist the desire of reading you an extract, although my speech has been very long, which extract is of great importance with reference to the question I have just dealt with. As the hon. leader of the Opposition has enquired lately about the mode of application of the \$20,000 subsidy which we have voted towards the establishment of a Board of Vital and Mortuary Statistics, I think I may say that with respect to that there is yet much to be done; this Board will be established to gather not only mortuary statistics, but also vital statistics and to start a hygienic newspaper. It is in dealing with this question that the Hygienic Society has published the following circular-programme:—

" FALSIFICATION OF ARTICLES OF FOOD.

" Modern industry, that Briarean, with the hundred hands, has deeply modified the conditions of our existence; not only have the articles of the first necessity, but articles of commodity, even luxuries, have been multiplied while prices have been constantly decreased and comfort has come down little by little till it has reached the home of the labourer and the peasant. But alongside of this radical transformation which economical production, scientifically carried on, has produced, a growing evil has been developed. The manufacturer who sold cheaply wished to sell cheaper still while realizing the same profit. This was not possible unless false labels were put on inferior articles. Deception as to quality was practised. Hygiene has nothing to do with this state of things, which is essentially human; the evil is not there. The evil lies in the following facts. The manufacturer has not only put on the market inferior or falsified products, but very often, in a multitude of circumstances, these falsifications have been obtained directly or indirectly by the aid of unwholesome and even poisonous matters.

" We do not propose to cry shame on the manufacturer; it is not always his fault; he has to struggle unceasingly against competition; he has to imitate his opponents in the business; he must adopt their processes and try to beat them in the contest for low prices, for the buyer goes in for cheap articles. The manufacturer and trader, in quite a number of cases, will poison you openly and with good faith, so that they will submit without difficulty to a control which would be the general rule.

" THOSE WHO SUFFER

" Are mostly the labouring man, the small trader, the employee, the small land owner, the peasant; in a word the people are the victims of this state of things. It is they who consume, instead of tea, plum-tree leaves colored with Prussian blue; it is they who drink, instead of coffee, succory, which has itself been made out of saw dust. It is they who think they are drinking chocolate while absorbing British gum. Poor deluded

Mr. LESAGE.

people, who imagine they eat sardines put up in olive oil, while crunching small herrings preserved in cotton seed oil. They pepper with queer sorts of dust the meat they cook in vessels which have been tinned with lead. They buy preserves made out of sea-weed and fucus jelly, sweetened with glucose and flavoured with nitro-benzine. Their vinegar only owes its strength and preservation to the sulphuric acid which it contains, and this sulphuric acid invariably contains arsenical acid. The white bread which they think they are getting cheap, has been made out of damaged flour, to which alum has given back tone and body.

" We might indefinitely multiply the instances, but such is not our purpose. We only wish to call attention to the sad features of the state of things to which we refer. It is precisely the working men, those who are absorbed all day long in their labours, who suffer most. They buy from day to day and have neither the time nor the necessary means of verifying the value of the articles of food.

" ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS.

" With this question of the falsification of alimentary substances, that of alcoholic liquors is closely connected. If there is a thing worthy of remark it is the development of alcoholism; its rapid and baleful effects are not at all to be compared to what existed formerly. In olden times intemperance only had recourse to liquors which were very natural and which were obtained by very simple processes. To give one single instance, in times of yore rum was distilled from the molasses of sugar cane, while now it is fabricated outright with badly rectified alcohols which consequently contain certain substances which have very sad effects on the economy. These alcohols are coloured, flavoured, and the taste of rum is given to them by means of (we beg the reader's pardon for using these barbarous expressions) formiate of ethyle. The same thing may be said of all alcoholic liquors, without exception; they are all artificially obtained, because they cost less. The most common are naturally the most poisonous, and we should not be astonished when we see the most sturdy men fast sinking under the influence of drink, when they engulf not alcohol but poisonous liquids. We might say very queer things about sherry, ports, white and red wines, common champagne, ales and beers.

" POISONS IN INDUSTRY.

" But articles of food and drink are only a branch in the immense field of industrial falsification and poison trade. We may even add that the most condemnable of things are not found in that branch, for the human stomach, however badly used, at last rebels when the thing is carried too far: unless he becomes dyspeptic, the consumer of alum bread at last begins to think that it is not as good as that of his neighbour, and the consumer of sardines put up in cotton seed oil, finding them indigestible, does not eat any more of them.

" There is no criterion for a man who poisons himself slowly, in a room whose walls are covered with tinted paper badly pasted, or simply painted in distemper without varnish. The venomous colouring dust loosens itself little by little, accumulates on the carpet and every morning the broom raises it conscientiously. The smoker absorbs lead with the yellow wick with which he lights his pipe or cigar. The yellow cloth which covers Chicago and Cincinnati hams largely furnishes the same substance, chromate of lead. The tinning of copper plates and dishes does not protect us in any way whatever, for the tin used in trade is falsified with lead which weighs more and costs less. Our socks, undershirts and drawers, so brilliantly colored, cause us to absorb, whenever we perspire in the least, the colours with aniline base, all venomous, and so true is this that acute cases of poisonings are reported as being due to this cause. Even the very bands of leather which are inside of our new hats, the silk and satin lining of our caps are steeped in these colouring matters derived from aniline, with which they are cheaply and handsomely dyed. We must not omit perfumery, which, under the guise of scents, tinctorial lotions, cosmetics and various pomades, hold out to us a choice of chemical products which are most always dangerous.

" ABSORPTION OF POISONS.

" Try and find out the cause of your headaches, sudden dizziness, obstinate neuralgias, rheumatic pains, slowly developed palsies, which came in little by little; find out the cause of aedemas, dropsies, wens, distentions, ganglionaries, eruptions of the skin, ringworms; ask yourselves from whence come these sudden saturnine cholics. We will be greatly astonished if you think of your headdress, shoes, or underclothing, of your tinned plates and dishes, or of the walls of your room. Of course, we do not pretend to ascribe to these causes all the ailments that human flesh is heir to, but it is likely that they play an important part in their genesis.

" COMPLEX TASK OF THE SOCIETY.

" This struggle which our society proposes to undertake against the invasion of poison is evidently only one task among many others. We shall briefly enumerate the principal questions with which the Hygienic Society of the Province of Quebec intends to deal in their meetings, on which we desire to call the attention of the public and of the legislators and to which we intend to give the greatest publicity."

I beg your pardon for having detained the House so long on this question, which is somewhat dry, but which is of material importance, especially at this moment, when the hon. Minister of the Interior is introducing a measure which, although not entirely new, offers, by reason of its object, an altogether new interest, because it tends to con-