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PROROGATION OF QUEBEC LEGISLATURE.

THE Quebec Legislature has been prorogued after passing 133 bills. Of these all but about a score are private bills. Although many of the others are not altogether destitute of public interest, they are mainly of a local character. Some of them are so essentially local, that it is difficult to imagine that the majority of the members of the Legislature have any special qualifications for dealing with them, other than dense ignorance of the issues and interests involved. Altogether the list makes a strong case for the development of the principle of local government in such important centres of population as Montreal. The strongest argument against any extension of Montreal's autonomy, is, of course, to be found in the constant display of unfitness for legislative responsibilities shown by many of the members of the City Council.

ANTHRACITE INVESTIGATION.

THE Interstate Commerce Commission never instituted an investigation more popular than that now in progress regarding the anthracite mining and railway companies. Suffering from the coal shortage and high prices of coal is general and acute. All the companies have been notified to file statements showing how much coal is mined, cost of mining, high and low selling prices, whether or not the stocks of coal companies are owned by the railroad companies and all other business information. These notices have been served on a score of railroads and coal mining companies.

The present situation regarding the coal supply is really very serious for the public already and there is every probability of its getting worse before the winter is far advanced. In many places the worst feature is not the high prices or the bad quality of the coal, but the impossibility of getting adequate supplies at any cost.

ATTEMPT TO MURDER LORD HARDINGE.

THE escape of the murderers who tried to kill the Viceroy of India and Lady Hardinge and did kill one of their attendants is much to be regretted, because it leaves the motive for the crime in

doubt. The fact that the bomb was thrown from a house containing about a hundred and fifty people and that the murderers got away in safety suggests that they had many sympathisers. One theory is that the assassins were Mohammedans who took this means of expressing the Moslem resentment at the British occupation of Delhi, the ancient Mohammedan capital of India. This idea seems far-fetched, apart from the disturbing thought that the Mohammedan subjects of the King resent the attitude of Great Britain towards the Sultan of Turkey in the Balkan crisis. As the vast majority of Mohammedans throughout the world are either British subjects, or residents in British protectorates, there are vast possibilities for mischief in the existence of any such general feeling of hostility against the British power. It is matter for hearty satisfaction that Lord and Lady Hardinge escaped with so little hurt.

BRITISH MORTALITY STATISTICS.

ACCORDING to the annual report made to the British Local Government Board by Dr. Newsholme, its medical officer, the returns show a marked improvement in the death rates up to the middle period of life, but not beyond. Figures show for males, between the periods of 1841-5 and 1906-10 respectively, a reduction of mortality which reaches a maximum of 64 per cent. between the ages of five and ten, and gradually declines to 3 per cent. between forty-five and fifty-five, changing in the next two decades of life to a rate increased by 9 and 8 per cent. respectively. For females the figures are somewhat better, the decrease of deathrate between the ages of forty-five and fifty-five being still equal to 15 per cent., and a very small decrease continuing until eighty-five is reached, but the gain being greatly less than in the earlier decades.

The chief causes of the maintenance of the high death rate at the more advanced ages are thought to be the rapidly increasing aggregation of the population in towns and the associated industrial conditions. "Associated industrial conditions" is, we assume, short for overcrowding and poverty. Both among men and women diseases of the heart and blood vessels were the registered causes of about one-third of the total deaths in the age period fifty-five—sixty-five, and diseases of the respiratory system, including pneumonia, cause in men about one-sixth, in women about one-seventh of the total deaths at these ages.