

to introduce the tip of one finger, whereas originally five fingers could readily be thrust into it. A drainage tube of rubber was then introduced into the cavity between the rectum and the sacrum, and the wound leading backward from the anus to the coccyx was closed by numerous shotted wire sutures, carried deeply by means of a strong and curved cervix uteri needle.

## THE Canadian Practitioner

A SEMI-MONTHLY REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS  
OF THE MEDICAL SCIENCES.

*Contributions of various descriptions are invited. We shall be glad to receive from our friends everywhere current medical news of general interest.*

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TORONTO, NOVEMBER 17, 1890.

### THE MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER FOR TORONTO.

The interest manifested by the citizens of Toronto in the appointment of a medical health officer is, in some respects, very satisfactory. It is unfortunate, however, that many of the discussions and comments on the various phases of the question have been very acrimonious. Although we hear of many candidates, the contest appears to lie at present between two whose names have been brought forward by their friends during the last few weeks. There was a strong feeling that the medical profession of the city should have something to say about the choice. The Council have shown their willingness to act in accordance with such wishes, and have appointed a committee of physicians to consider the capabilities of the various candidates.

As far as we understand the matter, it was expected that this committee would carefully conduct a competitive examination, and report the result of such examination to the Council. There is a fear in the minds of some that such examination will degenerate into a mere farce, and bring a certain amount of ridicule upon the whole profession. The criticisms respecting the fitness of the board appointed for such work by the daily press of the city have been harsh in the extreme. We may say with reference to this committee that it is scarcely one which can be

considered representative from a sanitarian point of view; but, after all, it is one which, in spite of its weak spots, is likely to command considerable respect. There are many who think that a certain amount of variety in such a committee is a very good thing, in consideration of the fact that a certain proportion of sanitarians invariably become cranks. We have enough confidence in the ability and judgment of the members of the committee to believe that they will be able to reach certain conclusions, which will materially assist the Council in filling the position. To hold simply a competitive examination, and to report the results in marks or percentages, would be rather a school boy way of doing business, and, from a professional point of view, an exceedingly undignified method. From what we can learn of the feeling of the profession in Toronto, we think there is a general desire that this committee shall view the question in all its aspects. In the first place, is the salary offered (\$2500) sufficient? We are told that the health officer will be required to give all his time to the city's work. In looking for official officers from other professions, such as law and engineering, sums of four or five thousand dollars per annum are offered. Why such a difference? Is the health of the citizens only half as important as the construction of by-laws or roadways, or can the men best qualified for the position be obtained from the medical profession at half price?

Will the new health officer be endowed with authority, or will he be merely an acting foreman and statistical book-keeper for some all-wise aldermanic committee? Should the new health officer be purely a laboratory bacteriologist and analyst, or should he combine the practical with the scientific, and possess a spinal column as stiff as that of Engineer Jennings?

What the committee may accomplish, we know not. It ought to be in a position to bring in a report which will materially aid the Council. We believe its members, individually and collectively, are working conscientiously in that direction. Under the circumstances, we believe they are fairly entitled to the sympathy and assistance of the profession as a whole. Any suggestions made in a kindly spirit are likely to receive respectful and careful consideration. Adverse criticisms and cynical sneers cannot possibly do any good.