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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Physical Protection of Youth.

A sound mind in a sound body ought to be the primary object of the school system of every country. Of the mind it may be said that its health depends entirely on the health of the body. It may be freely admitted, at the same time, that this is acknowledged by the Education Department, which bases its system on the fact. There is, however, a condition precedent to be attended to. It is that before the body can be kept well, it must first be well. The Teachers' Institute has long since appreciated the point, and there have been here and there examinations not of the general order, but particular, such as those for dentistry purposes. Here is the germ of an excellent system. Why not have all the schools of the Dominion visited once a day by the various members of the medical profession in their neighbourhood? It would not be a detailed examination such as the miners objected to the other day so strenuously. The children would just pass in file before the examiners, and these would simply mark those who seemed to them off colour in any way. At the close of the examination these suspects would be questioned; and if the examiner came to the conclusion that there was disease or trouble of any kind, he would state the case and the school authority would notify the parents. The suspect could then be, if necessary, laid up

for treatment either by the family doctor, or the examiner, or any one else the parents might fancy. The great thing would be that every ailment would be taken in time, and the probability is that most of the mischiefs of childhood would be obviated. Another advantage of the daily expert visit would be that all the points of sanitation would come under review of competent authority every day—cubic air contents of rooms, ventilation arrangements, drainage, water supply, all these important things would be systematically regulated, and nothing going amiss would be missed. Under such a system the well-being of the school children would be materially increased, and, therefore, the same mind in the same body would be a more perfect reality than it is now. The work would be honorary, of course. It would we feel sure, be a labour of love to medical men fond of their profession and taking a pride in it. In fact, the profession which supplies the hospitals with honorary physicians and surgeons has demonstrated its readiness to supply the schools with honorary inspectors. Lastly, the concentration in the schools would give the best opportunity for inspection, and the work would be done disinterestedly and impartially, as well as ably.

Industries and Commerce.

The Minister who holds the portfolio of Industries and Commerce is also the Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts. There is, of course, nothing special to connect these two departments one with the other, except it might be the fact that the two offices were created about the same time. But that is more coincidence than reason. We note that the Minister holding these two portfolios is very busy with the business of the Tourist Department, planning tracks and devising excursions which seem destined to develop into alarms in the Treasury. Which is all well, no doubt, from the Tourist point of view. If it is, this will not be the only occasion on which the Tourist side of the portfolio has received applause. But the other department has not yet been quite so fortunate. What can be done? In one respect we can see the opening for a good new thing. At present the Dominion is unable to get a thorough survey of its industries until the quinquennial census comes round, the compiling work being part of the general statistical work of the Dominion in the hands of the Registrar General. Why cannot the In-

dustries and Commerce Department attend to this matter? The Labour Department attends to the factories, giving the public valuable information every year, it is true. But the subject is quite beyond the scope of a Labour Department, the duties of which are to compile the statistics of labour, not of production, or exchange, or export, or distribution within the Dominion. We have a Department of Industries, and we have a right to expect from that department the fullest classified information about everything that happens during the year to the industries of the country. The annual returns of this department ought to be as full as are the quinquennial returns of the Registrar-general.

Phormium Tenax.

The head of the flax-grading department has just issued a report which ought to make all interested in this industry weep bitter tears. The tremendous output of Manila of last year is going to be repeated this; there is no hope for the Dominion's phormium unless the millers either reduce the cost of production or improve the quality of the fibre. This was said forty years ago by all the experts and all the Commissions, expensive and otherwise, if there were any that could be classed as otherwise. Since then thousands of tons have been exported and millions of pounds sterling have passed through the flax industry. There comes a check, the old enemy appears on the scene, and lo! it is discovered that we have nothing but the old weapons to cope with him. Now the improvements in the methods of the old enemy being the results of the peace which comes of a strong administration, these methods are come to stay. Therefore the choice between improving quality, or reducing price, or bursting, is looking permanent. The industry is preparing a deputation for the Minister, to get him to do something. We advise them to ask for a Royal Commission, whose order of reference will bar the past, of which we have records enough, and to spare, confining itself to the future; a future big with rewards for invention of efficient methods of dealing with what ought to be the most profitable product of the Dominion's soil. PROGRESS has for years advocated this course, and feels elated naturally at the approach of some attempt to get away from the bad old traditions which have done so much to throttle the industry.