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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF
HYGIENE AND DEMOGRAPHY :

PROGRESS REPORT.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF HYGIENE AND
DEMOGRAPHY, HELD IN LONDON IN AUGUST, 1891.

PROGRESS REPORT.

The Honourable the Chief Secretary.

SIR,

1. I HAVE the honour to report to you that, in accordance with your instructions, I left Hobart on the 27th June for the purpose of attending the meetings of the Seventh International Congress of Hygiene and Demography. In passing through Melbourne I waited on the Chairmen and principal officers of the Health Department and of the Metropolitan Board of Works with relation to the communication you had made to the Government of Victoria on the subject of my visit to England, and I have promised to forward to them copies of any reports I may make in connection with my delegation to the Congress, particularly in regard to matters mentioned at our interview. I acted in like manner at Adelaide.

2. I arrived in London on the 3rd of August current. The Agent-General of Tasmania at once placed me in communication with the Organising Committee of the Congress; and I also called on the officials of the Section of Engineering in relation to Hygiene. I am greatly indebted to Sir E. Braddon and to the other gentlemen with whom I have come into contact for their continual courtesy and for much valuable help.

3. The Congress was opened by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on the 10th instant, and the final business meeting took place on the 17th. I attended all the general meetings and all the meetings of the Section of Engineering. It is the almost universal opinion that the Congress has been a great success. At no former one have there been so large a number of distinguished delegates attending, so many important papers read and offered, or subjects of equal interest discussed.

4. In fact, such was the wealth of material offered that sufficient time was not available for its due consideration. But as it was impracticable to prolong the session of the Congress, an increase in the number of sections and sectional meetings took place. This had the unfortunate result of having what are really cognate matters separately considered in different sections at meetings held at the same hour. This not only prevented one from hearing the reading of some important papers, but also from taking part in the discussion of the principles treated of in them,—and these discussions were often still more important and instructive than the papers that gave rise to them. I thought it best to attend regularly the meetings of the Engineering Section as, on the whole, best fulfilling the object of my visit, though often, coincidentally with these meetings, others were being held at which papers relating to the sanitation of towns and houses were being considered. I shall in due course obtain copies of these papers, and in many cases have the opportunity of discussing their contents with the authors and in the places to which they refer.

5. There were forty-two papers prepared for the Engineering Section; but as long discussions took place on many of them, many others had to be taken as read. The more important papers read treated of the General Sanitation of Towns; the Disposal of Sewage, especially with regard to River Pollution on the one hand, and Utilization for Agricultural purposes on the other; Sewer Construction; Sewer Ventilation; Collection and Disposal of the solid portion of Town Refuse; Water Supply, Filtration, and Distribution; and many other related subjects. In connection with such of the papers as described works in or near London, expeditions were organized to visit them and test the efficiency of the systems adopted.

6. The paper I prepared, and of which I left with you a copy, was read at the first meeting of the Section, and gave rise to an interesting discussion, especially on the use of iron pipes for drainage purposes; instances being given of such pipes having been in successful use for more than forty years.

7. About 2700 Delegates attended the Meetings, coming from all parts of the world. Fortunately for me, the more important discussions were conducted almost exclusively in English or French. Among the Delegates were engineers and sanitary authorities who have carried out extensive works in various places, and from many of them I have received much courtesy and offers of every facility to inspect and form a judgment upon the real value of the systems they have adopted; this I take to be of even still greater importance with relation to my mission than the more general work of the Congress. At the Congress we had perforce to discuss sanitary principles more or less theoretically; but it gave us the opportunity of learning where various principles were being practically applied, and of making arrangements for seeing such practical application.

8. I am preparing a detailed Report of such parts of the work of the Congress as relate to that of my department; and will add thereto such further information as I may gather in my proposed visits. Until these are made, I am purposely refraining from expressing any judgment, as I wish to keep my mind open to the reception of any truth that may present itself. As my time is very fully taken up, this further Report will not be ready till my return.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your faithful Servant,

A. MAULT,

Engineering Inspector of the Central Board of Health, one of the Delegates of the Government of Tasmania to the Congress, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Engineering Section of the Congress.

London, 20th August, 1891.