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Contributors

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Axbridge Union Rural District Council.

DR. A. V. LECHE,
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

To the Editor of *The British Medical Journal*
Elmcroft,
Axbridge R.D.O.
Somerset.

Dear Sir

I beg to present a copy
of my annual report. With compliments,
I am your obedient servant,
A. V. Leche.

27 Feb 1906

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT.

The Medical Officer of Health (Dr. A. V. Leche), presented his annual report which was as follows:

Area, 98,252 acres, population, 23,125 (census 1901). Inhabited houses, 5,379, average number of persons per house 6, birth rate per 1,000 living in 1905, 20.8; death rate, 14.91; zymotic rate, .7; infant mortality, 55.7. *Water Supply*.—Generally from wells and streams. The South Marsh water supply continues satisfactory, both in quality and quantity. The Winscombe water supply has been turbid of late, owing to engineering operations at the spring head. It will doubtless soon be clear and good as heretofore. Cheddar, Axbridge and Bladon are being supplied from Black Down. A Local Government Board Inquiry on the water supply and drainage of Worle, was held in 1905. *Sewerage*.—The sewerage system of Wrington is being radically improved. Privies and cesspits in general use, numerous drains cleared and repaired and new ones laid, scavenging executed individually. *Prevalence of disease*.—Cases notified, 305; scarlatina, 145; diphtheria, 129; erysipelas, 33; enteric fever, 5. *Diphtheria*.—An outbreak of diphtheria occurred around Allerton early in the year with one death and the schools were closed, also at Axbridge in August, in a crowded locality near the slaughter-houses. Two deaths occurred. An outbreak occurred at Congresbury with two deaths. The schools were closed. A few scattered cases were reported at Worle and Bient. A very serious epidemic visited Wrington and Bladon. A commodious villa was rented and converted into a temporary infectious hospital with trained nurses and an efficient visiting staff of lady inspectors and doctors. Scarlatina also broke out at the same time, and three tents were procured and erected in the grounds of the villa. This system was of the greatest value in checking the disease and keeping them under control, all working smoothly and most effectually. Eighty-one cases of diphtheria were reported in the Bladon district (which includes Wrington) and 60 cases of scarlatina. Several patients had both diseases. Between 60 and 70 cases were treated in the Isolation Hospital during the six months of occupation, the epidemic being effectually stamped out. The schools at Wrington were closed, all books burnt, slates and pencils boiled and other precautions taken. The epidemic was evidently caused by importation of a mild latent case, spreading it probably at school. The milk supplies were varied and numerous, well-regulated and bore no relation to the disease. All suspected throats were examined by bacteriological examination, which was of immense service in checking the disease, especially in mild unsuspected cases. An outbreak of scarlatina occurred at Mark and Churchill early in the year and schools closed. The epidemic continued at Banwell with intervals, so an isolated cottage was taken as a temporary hospital, with a hut annexed, to which the patients were taken, in whose homes it was impossible to isolate. The epidemic in Banwell seems to be practically at an end. An outbreak occurred in Axbridge with three deaths. The schools were closed. Congresbury School was closed for measles. One case of enteric at Cheddar, imported from Milbank, died. Two mild cases were reported at Redhill and one at Worle. One case, a tramp, developed in Axbridge Workhouse. Measles caused one death, scarlatina five, diphtheria nine, enteric one, diarrhoea one, phthisis 41, cancer 21. *Isolation Hospital*.—None, but one is desirable. Cowsheds inspected and improvements made. Slaughter-houses frequently inspected. Some are faulty in construction, but they are, as a rule, kept clean and white-washed periodically. Bakelhouses clean, well-ordered and lime-washed periodically. There are no underground bakelhouses. *Factories and Workshops*.—The large laundries and factories at Cheddar and Worle are satisfactory as regards floors, ventilation and sanitary arrangements. The small laundries and millinery workshops and other small work places and breweries are well conducted. Two cases of overcrowding abated and one house closed as unfit for habitation. Bye-laws all in force for the parishes of Axbridge, Banwell, Bladon, Cheddar, Worle, Winscombe, Wrington and Uphill relating to slaughter-houses, cleansing of footways, privies and ashpits and cesspools, and removal of house refuse.

I am, your obedient servant,

A. V. LECHE.

