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Contributors

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1941.

In accordance with the indications in Circular 2604 and previous Circulars of the Ministry, this Report has been prepared on the lines of general statements only, and all details, and vital and other statistics are being carefully preserved.

The full programme of work, as detailed in previous Reports, has operated during the year in spite of actual war conditions, and the following observations will prove the work to have been more than ordinarily successful, and would have been highly creditable even under normal conditions.

General Health of the Community.

No widespread epidemic occurred during the year, and the health of the people, generally speaking, was satisfactory. There were few cases of Scarlet Fever, and Diphtheria was not abnormal. A few sporadic cases of Whooping Cough were reported, whilst Measles was fairly prevalent during the first six months, completely disappearing towards the end of the year. A larger number than usual of cases of Cerebro-spinal Fever, Dysentery and Malaria were notified, which can definitely be assigned, in my opinion, to War-time conditions. Towards the end of the year a number of cases of Scabies came to our notice, and steps were immediately taken to prevent the outbreak from becoming serious by the immediate provision of treatment at the Clinic, First Aid Posts and Roose Infirmary.

Mortality Rates.

These are extraordinarily remarkable bearing in mind the adversities, due to the War, endured by the town during the year.

Despite a number of deaths due to enemy action, the general death rate showed a decline, as also did the death rate from Cancer and Phthisis. The Infant Mortality rate was the lowest but one on record, whilst on only three occasions over a period of 40 years has the Maternal Mortality rate been so low. There was a decrease in the birth rate, but even this approximated to the average of the last 10 years.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

(a) Municipal Midwives.

This service has now become established, and but for several weeks interruption, due to the War, the Midwives dealt with a fair proportion of cases who desired delivery in their own homes. Co-operation with the Gynaecological Specialist at the Ante-Natal Clinic is having increasingly satisfactory results on the work of the Midwives.

(b) Municipal Maternity Home.

A larger number of patients than ever before were dealt with, and the number of deliveries was increased by 50% on the previous year. Excellent all-round work is now being carried out at this Home, which is becoming increasingly appreciated by the mothers of the town and district. There were no maternal deaths during the year.

(c) Clinic.

The interest in this Clinic by mothers was maintained, and the attendances again showed an increase over previous years. The scheme for the supply of Milk (Dried) and Other Foods was continued, and co-operation with the Ministry of Food in connection with the scheme for the distribution of Fruit Juices and Cod Liver Oil was undertaken; as also was the Ministry's scheme regarding the issue of Clothing Coupons for expectant mothers.

(d) Survey.

In the early part of the year a survey of the Authority's arrangements for maternity and child welfare was carried out by Dr. Elliott of the Ministry of Health, and the subsequent recommendations - so far as present circumstances will permit - are receiving due attention.

Tuberculosis.

The scheme as outlined in previous Reports, including the provision of Sanatorium and Hospital treatment, X-Ray examinations, etc., was adhered to during the year. There was an increase in the incidence of tuberculosis, although the death rate was slightly below that of the previous year. The attendance of patients at the Dispensary was satisfactory, and co-operation between the Clinical Medical Officer and the General Medical Practitioners is a feature of the scheme.

Treatment of Venereal Diseases.

Owing to the termination of the arrangements by which this work was conducted at the local General Hospital, temporary arrangements were completed for the Clinic to be transferred to the Corporation Dispensary, 64 School Street, pending the acquisition of more permanent premises at the Devonshire Road Isolation Hospital. The change over was effected with no interruption of the work.

Blood Transfusion Scheme.

Co-operation was effected with the local General Hospital in connection with the establishment of a Blood Bank, both by registration of applicants and practical assistance by the Authority's Medical Staff at the special sessions.

Transfer of Ambulance Service.

As from 1st October, 1941, the Town Ambulance service was transferred, on the re-organisation of the National Fire Service, to the Civil Defence Ambulance Service.

Food and Drugs.

Regular sampling of milk and other foodstuffs continued, and special vigilance was exercised on food, or food preparations, offered for sale. In this connection there was co-operation between the Public Health Department and the local Food Office. One notified case of food poisoning was investigated.

Meat Inspection: Dairies and Dairy Farms.

Meat brought into the Public Abattoir and offered for sale in shops, has been subject to regular inspection.

Dairies and dairy farms have been regularly visited and necessary improvements recommended.

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

Regular sessions have been held for this purpose, and every opportunity taken to impress upon parents the necessity for immunisation. Upwards of 60% of the child population have now been immunised.

My thanks are due to the Chairman of the Health Committee, the Chairman of the Maternity and Child Welfare Sub-Committee and to the members of my Staff for their valuable support during a very difficult and arduous year.

A.R. Lamb.

Medical Officer of Health.

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