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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, 1942.

In accordance with the instruction contained in Circular 2773 of the Ministry of Health, this report is prepared on the lines indicated in Circular 2604, dated the 24th March, 1942.

In spite of war conditions the work of the Department, as indicated in previous Reports, has been carried out in full, and additional work, deemed to be of vital importance during war time, has also received attention.

General Health of the Community.

The health of the people during the year has been good. With the exception of measles, which persisted from the middle of the year and became epidemic in the last month, there was no undue incidence of infectious diseases, although a number of cases of Cerebro-spinal Fever, Dysentery and Malaria, definitely attributable, in my opinion, to war time conditions, were reported.

VITAL STATISTICS.

(a) Birth Rate.

There was an appreciable increase in the number of births over the previous year, and the rate per 1,000 of the population was higher than for a considerable number of years.

(b) Death Rate.

This was much lower than for the past 13 years.

(c) Infantile Mortality.

The comparatively low rate over recent years has been maintained.

(d) Maternal Mortality.

This was the lowest locally recorded.

Cancer.

This rate showed a decline on recent years.

Tuberculosis.

The death rate from pulmonary tuberculosis was slightly above the average of previous years. All preventive measures included in the Council's Scheme were adhered to during the year for the treatment of the disease, these including the provision of Sanatorium and Hospital treatment, X-Ray examinations, extra nourishment, etc. The attendance of patients and contacts at the Dispensary was good, and co-operation between the Clinical Medical Officer and the General Medical Practitioners was satisfactory. Certain difficulties were encountered owing to the calling up of the Clinical Tuberculosis Officer and it was some time before a temporary substitute was found.

The actual number of new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis notified shows a slight decrease over the previous year.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

(a) Municipal Midwives.

This service continues to meet a popular demand. During the year the Municipal Midwives - either in the capacity of Midwives or Maternity Nurses - attended 80% of the domiciliary cases undertaken by Midwives, and 39.2% of the total births occurring in the Borough. Co-operation with the Obstetric Specialist at the Ante-natal Clinic is resulting in a much improved technique on the part of the Midwives.

(b) Municipal Maternity Hospital.

The number of patients delivered in the Hospital was increased by 25% over the year 1941, which, as reported last year, was a much larger number than ever before, and worked out at 42.7 of the total registered births. The number of admissions to the Hospital also greatly exceeded those of former years. There were no maternal deaths in the Hospital.

The following tables show figures for the Maternity Hospital since the Obstetric Consultant was appointed (1940 to 1942). The figures show a marked increase in the total admissions to the Hospital and the beneficial affect it has had on the infantile and maternal mortality. The statistics for the attendances at the Ante-natal and Post-natal, gynaecological and endocrine clinics show a substantial increase, and the latter Clinics were new ventures in the Maternity service.

(a) Deliveries in the Hospital.

	1940.	1941.	1942.
Number of beds available	22	26	30
Total admissions to the Hospital	318	580	724
Number of Deliveries	274	417	524
Number of ante-natal patients treated as in-patients	60	163	260
Cases delivered by Midwives	179	292	383
Cases delivered by doctors (a) G.P.'s.	68	55	34
(b) Obstetrician	27	70	107
Cases in which medical assistance was summoned (a) G. P.'s.	34	23	35
(b) Obstetrician	81	129	126
INFANTS - Still-born	8	13	9
Died	9	8	18
Maternal Deaths	-	-	-

(b) CLINICS.

Ante-natal Clinics.

	1940.	1941.	1942.
Number of individuals who attended	224	400	664
Total attendances made	955	2644	4972

Post-natal, Gynaecological and Endocrine Clinics.

	1940.	1941.	1942.
Number of Sessions held	42	47	50
Number of individuals who attended	78	200	553
Total attendances made	147	598	2062
Average attendance per session	3.5	12.7	41.24
Number of post-natal cases	30	140	270
Number of gynaecological cases	48	23	208
Number of Endocrine cases	-	36	75

(c) Emergency Maternity Hospital.

During the year, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and the Westmorland County Council, an emergency Maternity Home was established at 'Trerose', Arnside, with accommodation for 10 maternity cases. The scheme originally is for the evacuation of pregnant women from Barrow, and, after delivery, it was intended that they would be billeted in the Westmorland area. Owing to the lull in air raids, however, most of the cases returned to Barrow after delivery. These pregnant women are offered facilities in the Home as an alternative to Risedale Maternity Hospital, and each patient is assessed in accordance with the Corporation Scale relating to Risedale Maternity Hospital. The patients are conveyed by train and accompanied by a Municipal Midwife. Dependent children of these women up to the age of five years can also be evacuated under the Scheme to St. John's Vicarage, Windermere, until such time as their mother returns home.

(d) Gas Air Analgesia.

Arrangements were made with the Walton Maternity Hospital, Liverpool, whereby the Midwives at Risedale Maternity Hospital and the Municipal Midwives attended for lectures whilst receiving their practical instruction in the use of the apparatus, under the supervision of the Obstetric Consultant and the Matron at Risedale Maternity Hospital.

At the end of the course the candidates sit for an examination at Liverpool and receive a certificate, which is approved by the Central Midwives Board, for the administration of Gas Air Analgesia.

(e) Welfare Centre.

The work at this Centre has again increased during the year, and over 80% of mothers with children under one year of age attend the Clinic, which of course deals with all children up to 5 years of age. Owing to war conditions, the Medical Staff, however, had to be reduced, and therefore medical advice could not be given at each session as formerly. The basis of the scheme is that each baby should be weighed at monthly intervals, and more often if required, and advice regarding infant feeding and welfare is given by the Health Visitors and the Medical Officer. The scheme for the supply of dried milk and certain vitaminised foods was continued, together with the Ministry of Food Scheme for the distribution of national dried milk, fruit juices and cod liver oil, as also was the scheme for the issue of supplementary clothing coupons for expectant mothers.

(f) Orthopaedic Clinic.

The quarterly Orthopaedic Clinic was conducted by the Orthopaedic Surgeon from Ethel Hedley Hospital, Windermere, and 42 children under 5 years of age made 66 attendances for advice and treatment.

(g) Ultra Violet Clinic.

Special sessions were held for the treatment of children under 5 years of age, and 91 children made 779 attendances. The treatment was found to be particularly beneficial to children who had recovered from infectious diseases and marasmodic children.

(h) War-time Nursery.

In accordance with the Ministry of Health scheme for the provision of nurseries for children whose mothers are engaged on war work, a war-time nursery, with accommodation for 45 children by day and 15 children by night was established in the Borough. The Council decided that only children between the ages of 2 - 5 years should be admitted, as it was felt that in the case of mothers with children under 2 years of age, their primary duty was in the home, as this is the critical age for a child when it should have personal attention from its mother. During the year the number on the Register was up to capacity, but owing to various factors, such as sickness and absenteeism, for which there was no apparent cause, the actual number in residence was below the maximum. The only infectious disease which caused a marked reduction in the attendance was measles. The children were regularly medically examined and minor ailments were treated in the Nursery. The general health was very much improved, and the nursery life and the instruction they received was most beneficial.

Venereal Diseases.

The new clinic for the treatment of venereal diseases was established in a temporary building in the grounds of Devonshire Road Hospital. One of the Clinical Venereal Diseases Officers was called for His Majesty's Forces and the work has had to be carried on by the remaining General Practitioner. A full-time male attendant was appointed and the Clinic for females was attended by the two Sisters of the Isolation Hospital.

The Statistics do not show an increase in the number of new cases of venereal disease which were dealt with during the year, and the total attendance was also reduced. The latter figure, however, would be reduced owing to the modern method of the treatment of gonorrhoea. The present legislation does not provide for the compulsory attendance of patients until they are cured, and apart from persuasion there are no means whereby these offenders can be compelled to complete their treatment.

Scabies.

With the introduction of the Scabies Order, 1941, immediate steps were taken to cope with the large number of scabies which occurred in the Borough. A special Clinic, with facilities for treatment, was commenced at the Welfare Centre for the treatment of children, and a female cleanser was appointed. Cases of infected children were picked up by the Health Visitors and the School Nurses and followed up in their homes, and all other members of the family were persuaded, or in certain cases directed, under the Scabies Order, to attend for treatment.

In order to cope with the number of adults the Gas Cleansing facilities of the First Aid Posts were thrown open, and the treatment carried out by the full-time staffs of the Posts. The Medical Practitioners of the area were notified of the facilities which were being provided, and their co-operation enlisted in the detection and treatment of all cases.

During the year 1454 cases received treatment either at the Clinic or at a First Aid Post. The high incidence of this condition, in my opinion, was due to the continual movement of the population and the difficulties encountered regarding housing, and to a certain inherent apathy on the part of the individual to request treatment.

Immunisation Against Diphtheria.

Although the scheme for Immunisation against Diphtheria has been a regular feature in recent years of the Public Health Service, a renewed drive was carried out to co-ordinate with the national drive. The scheme was intensified by the special efforts of the Health Visitors and the School Nurses to secure, as far as possible, the immunisation of all children under five years of age. The method adopted is the 'two-shot' method of Alum Precipitated Toxoid at four-weekly intervals. In order to cope with the increased numbers, additional clinics were established at the Welfare Centre and the First Aid Posts so as to cover all areas in the town.

The total number of children in the Borough who were immunised up to the end of the year was 9,768, and the percentage works out at about 70.2 % of the child population. The number of children immunised during the last twelve months was 3,167. Of these 988 were under five years of age, and 2,179 were above five years of age.

Ambulance Service.

The town's Ambulance Service continued to be run by the Health Committee, the personnel employed being full-time Civil Defence ambulance drivers with full-time Civil Defence First Aid Party personnel acting as Attendants.

The number of cases dealt with during the year was as follows :-

Accident cases	502
Illness, etc.	1701

The scheme was further extended to provide for the removal of patients to Hospitals outside the Borough.

Blood Transfusion Scheme.

The Blood Bank at the North Lonsdale Hospital carried on their good work during the year, and practical assistance was given by the Public Health Staff and also by the Department in recruiting and registering blood donors and providing transport to facilitate the attendance of the donors and convey the blood to the depot at High Carley Sanatorium.

Survey of Hospital Services.

In connection with the Ministry of Health post-war policy, a hospital survey in the North Western area was carried out by Mr. E. Rock Carling and Dr. T.S. McIntosh. The deputation surveyed the facilities in the Hospitals under the control of the Local Authority and visited the North Lonsdale Voluntary Hospital for the same purpose. Discussions took place and every facility was given to the deputation.

General Sanitary Matters.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector (Mr. J. Butterworth) retired on pension during the year after 40 years valuable service, and his efforts in this connection were acknowledged by the Council.

Mr. J. Shanks was appointed as his successor.

Several of the Staff have been called up for national service, but the general sanitary work has been carried out as far as present conditions allow.

Special efforts have been made to ensure the regular sampling of the milk supply, together with other foodstuffs.

One of the essential duties which has been regularly carried out is the work in connection with the Port Health Authority.

A special report was submitted to the Health Committee in connection with rat menace, and copies of the report were sent to the Ministries of Health, Food and Home Security, in order to bring to their notice the danger of contamination and destruction of food, and in order to try to obtain powers to remove damaged property which was providing rat harbourage.

The Health Committee appointed a full-time Rat Catcher, who works under the supervision of the Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Abattoirs.

The Abattoirs are still administered by the Health Committee, on behalf of the Ministry of Food, but negotiations are taking place for the transfer of the control of the Abattoirs, and certain of the Staff, to the Ministry of Food.

Some difficulties were experienced in the removal of manure through the loss of Staff, by reason of National Service demands, and the difficulty of the usual contractors obtaining transport, but this matter has been dealt with as far as circumstances will allow.

A.R. Lovest.

6th April, 1943.

Medical Officer of Health.