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Contributors

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REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1947

The Minister of Health has directed that the Report for 1947 shall again be abbreviated and confined to information concerning essential and exceptional matters. It is to be presented but not included in the Report. The Minister desires it to include remarks on the progress of infectious immunisation, poliomyelitis, and certain notifiable diseases.

General Health Statistics

These indicate that the health of the population continued good during 1947. The widespread epidemic of poliomyelitis which affected the whole country in the latter half of the year caused a considerable increase in the death rate. There was no other undue prevalence of infectious diseases. There is a general impression that stomach and bowel disorders, including diarrhoea and indigestion, were mainly prevalent, but no localisation of this was to be found in the figures of notified diseases. For instance, there were no notifications of dysentery, food poisoning, or any of the enteric fevers, and only one death from infantile diarrhoea. The death rate was even higher than the high figure recorded in 1946, being 27.4 per 1000 of population as compared with 24.0 in 1946 and a national birth rate of 22.5 for 1947. The death rate was 15.9 per 1000 as compared with 14.5 in 1946 and a national death rate of 14.0 for 1947. The decrease of old age accounted for the great majority of the deaths.

Immunisation against Infectious Diseases

It is estimated that at the end of 1947 45.5% of the child population aged 0 to 5 were immunised and 75.1% of those aged 5 to 15. These figures are somewhat lower than those of previous years and it is a fact that the response of parents to the immunisation campaign is not so good as it might be and not so good as it is in the surrounding areas. Nevertheless the effect of the immunisation carried on for the last three years has been to reduce the incidence of diphtheria to vanishing point. The last case in the Borough was notified in 1944.

Water Supply

In November 1947 the Borough Council exercised its option to purchase the water works situated belonging to the Mansford Water Works Company and the town's water supply is now a municipal undertaking. The source is a chalk well which yields a very pure, if rather hard, water and has never failed to meet all requirements as regards quantity. Bacteriological examinations of the water going into supply have found none harmful, and of the raw water occasionally. Chemical analyses have been made quarterly. The results have been uniformly good. Though every house in the town has a piped water within reach some of the older dwellings have no internal supply and depend on stand-pipes. All houses are so supplied, while 83% have water laid on internally. The total number of people supplied in these two ways are 504 and 2750 respectively.

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