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Contributors

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BRACKLEY,

12th February, 1911.

To the Brackley Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Eighteenth Annual Report as to the sanitary condition of my district. If some parts of it appear to be repetitions of previous reports I would point out that it is the desire of the Local Government Board that every report should be a complete record of all the features affecting the health of the district as well as those incidents which have occurred during the year.

Physical
features
Occupations
House
Accommod-
ation
New
Buildings

The district is purely agricultural and rural, its physical features are fairly constant and the inhabitants live under practically identical conditions. Their occupations are mainly agricultural and no manufactures are carried on in the district. As I have previously reported the accommodation in the matter of houses, especially for the working classes, is adequate, indeed, the population being apparently decreasing, it would appear more than that as a number of cottages have been allowed to fall into a state of ruin during the last ten years. There is supervision over the erection of new houses—plans in all cases having to be submitted to the Council.

Water
Supply

The water supply of the district, which is derived from shallow wells, has been adequate in quantity and the continued absence of water-borne disease testifies as to its quality, although the danger of pollution from soakage and rain water must always be present. No suspicion has arisen in any individual case as to this having occurred and it has not been necessary to have any samples analysed. If occasion should arise this course will be taken in accordance with your instructions. The provision of pumps over the open village wells at Sulgrave is under consideration as it would appear that a danger of pollution exists there.

Milk
Supply

The milk supply in the larger villages is good but there is often great difficulty in obtaining it in the smaller, as a very large proportion of the production is sent away—mostly to London. I have not received any complaint whatever regarding milk, and as that sent to town is very closely scrutinized it may be assumed that it has been perfectly wholesome. All the dairies and cowsheds have been inspected and they are in a satisfactory state both structurally and as regards cleanliness, a very great improvement having been secured in both conditions during late years. In all cases the cows lie out, and during the greater part of the year entirely, only being brought into the sheds to be milked. One cow was discovered to be suffering from Tuberculosis and this was disposed of.

Unsound
Food

Slaughter
Houses

My attention has not been required to be called to any unsound food exposed for sale and no action under the Food and Drugs Act has been needed. The Inspector has at various times examined meat exposed for sale and the slaughter houses have been inspected and found to be in very good condition as regards structure and cleanliness. I attended at a meeting of the Council in connection with a discussion regarding a slaughter house where Dr. Fletcher in his report on the state of the district stated that animals were "*actually* (the italics are mine) slaughtered in the shop." I consider the qualification which accompanied this statement to be quite uncalled for, as the objection is a purely sentimental one; it has had the effect of causing great injury to the butcher. As a matter of fact, the premises, whenever I have seen them, have always been a model of cleanliness.

Sewerage and
Drainage

A great deal of work has been done during the past year in regard to improving the sewerage and drainage, particularly at Kings Sutton, Aynhoe, Croughton, Evenley, Whitfield, Syresham, Helmdon, &c. The tanks at Kings Sutton have now been kept cleansed and the stream into which they drain has also been cleaned out. The alteration at the bottom of the village of Culworth, mentioned in my last report, has been made and the conditions are more satisfactory. New tanks have been made in several villages and much improvement all round has been made. There is an open drain still at Moreton Pinkney and you are considering propositions for dealing with the nuisance it causes.

Excrement
Disposal

The excrement disposal is practically entirely by middens, and there is still much room for improvement in these in many cases, but the work is being steadily carried on by the Inspector. Water closets with cesspools exist in connection with the larger houses, but they are all well attended to by the occupiers.

Nuisances	A large number of nuisances have been dealt with by the Inspector in the course of his work, both on his own initiation and also at my instigation.
Lodgings, Offensive Trades, &c.	There are no lodging-houses in the district nor is any offensive trade carried on.
Public Elementary Schools.	The sanitary condition of the Public Elementary Schools is satisfactory. Their water supply is derived from the shallow wells above mentioned, and the excrement is disposed of by means of middens, which are kept in good order. In the case of infectious disease the children are isolated at home.
School Closure	On the appearance of important infectious disease when there is a likelihood of other children having been infected, I advise the closure of the school for the period of the incubation of the disease in order that it may become manifest in them and permit of their isolation. If this fails I have not hitherto seen any advantage result from school closures. The schools are inspected by a whole-time officer appointed by the County Council.
Infectious Diseases Supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin	I have visited the premises notified in the case of infectious diseases of which there have been during the year only 15, viz.: Erysipelas 5, Scarlet Fever 4, Diphtheria 4, Puerperal Fever 2. With regard to Diphtheria you decided, in February, acting on my advice, to supply antitoxin in necessitous cases, and pay for bacteriological examination. It is interesting to note in regard to the latter that in four of the cases where this examination was made the diagnosis was <i>not</i> confirmed. The other case occurred before the resolution was passed and was not so examined. Since then the Local Government Board have issued an order on the subject. Scarlet fever cases have occurred in fewer number than for a very long time past, but a very uncontrollable epidemic has appeared in the Urban District of Brackley and I fear that owing to the want of proper means of disinfection and isolation it must inevitably spread to the neighbouring villages. I advised you to prosecute under the Public Health Act a man who had exposed himself in the highway whilst suffering from scarlet fever in spite of previous warning. A conviction was obtained and it will probably have a salutary effect in the district. I would again suggest that the district authorities at Brackley and Middleton Cheney be approached with regard to the provision of a Joint Isolation Hospital and an efficient steam disinfecting apparatus.
Tuberculosis	Only cases of Phthisis occurring among those in receipt of medical relief are notified and I have not received information of any such. Three deaths have occurred. The district is particularly free from this disease and the number of deaths is very unusual.
Midwives Act	Two cases of Puerperal Fever have been notified. I reported specially to the County Council on one of these which occurred in the practice of a midwife at Helradon. A careful investigation of the facts and an examination of the premises failed to reveal the cause. The other case, a fatal one, occurred at Croughton. The poor still appear to have great difficulty in obtaining assistance in labour owing to the restrictions of the Midwives Act. In one case a woman was without help for nearly two hours after delivery, when the child was found to be dead. A coroner's enquiry was held.
Infant Mortality Notification of Births Act	There were 14 deaths of infants under one year and 169 births—a rate of 82·8 per 1000, which is still very low. The Notification of Births Act is not in force in the district and, as I have remarked before, so long as it imposes a penalty on members of the medical profession for the non-performance of a duty for which they are not paid, I cannot advise its adoption.
Vital Statistics	The population of the district amounts to 7181, the deaths registered were 71—a rate of 9·8 per 1000, the lowest in ten years. The births were 169 in number giving a rate of 23·1 per 1000, the highest since 1906. The deaths include Whooping Cough 3, Phthisis 3, other tubercular diseases 4, Cancer 3.
Bakehouses and Workshops	I have inspected the Bakehouses and have found them satisfactory. I have been able to obtain very considerable improvements of late years in the matter of general cleanliness, and there is now hardly a bad floor in the district. The only workshop on the register has been duly inspected and found to comply with the regulations.
Over-crowding	No case of overcrowding has required my own attention but in 5 cases the nuisance was abated on the action of the Sanitary Inspector.

I have made the usual systematic inspections of the district, both alone and in company with the Inspector, and a particular examination of the buildings under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations 1910, is being made by the latter with my assistance and acting under my direction and supervision. The defects are mainly those caused by small nuisances such as bad drainage and traps, want of spouting, &c. Some very bad dwellings in Kings Sutton, which I have reported frequently, have been at last taken in hand.

For the abatement of nuisances and contravention of Bye-Laws, the Sanitary Inspector has issued 478 warning notices and verbal cautions, together with 21 formal notices served after the usual monthly reports. In no single case was it necessary to apply to the Justices. All rooms where infectious diseases have occurred, have been disinfected by him, acting on my instructions. He reports that generally throughout the district offending property owners have readily complied with his suggestions or demands.

The following table shows the work done by the Inspector during the year:—

DWELLING HOUSES.			
Inspections made during the year	...	...	753
Houses reported as unfit for habitation	...	...	7
Cases of overcrowding abated	...	...	5
Houses cleansed throughout	...	...	17
New closets provided	...	...	21
Dilapidated closets repaired	...	...	18
New floors to closets	...	...	17
Insufficient accommodation	...	...	5
New coverings to wells	...	...	4
Spoutings repaired or renewed	...	...	8
DRAINAGE, &c.			
Obstructed drains opened and cleansed	...	...	31
Glazed earthenware gulleys fixed	...	...	57
Houses connected to public sewers	...	...	11
Sewer interceptors fixed	...	...	8
Disconnecting and inspection chambers constructed	...	...	10
New cesspools constructed	...	...	7
Cesspools cleansed	...	...	9
New yard pavings provided	...	...	16
MISCELLANEOUS.			
Slaughterhouses limewashed	...	...	14
New floors and drains to slaughterhouses	...	...	6
Bakehouses limewashed	...	...	14
New floors to bakehouse	...	...	2
Cowsheds limewashed	...	...	27
Notification of Tuberculosis in cow	...	...	1
Cases of infectious disease notified	...	...	15

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed), G. Nicholson Stathers,

D.P.H., Camb.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

