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THE
RURAL DISTRICT OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year

1954

by

K. S. MAURICE - SMITH,

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF

HEALTH FOR 1954

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 1954.

1. STATISTICS:

During 1954 the usual statistics have been kept and are available.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES:

- (a) Ambulances.— Two ambulances are stationed at Ely both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council. One is for infectious diseases and the other for non-infectious diseases.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. Its fine record, on which I have commented in previous reports, remains unbroken, and it renders a great service not only in the Rural Area but in adjoining areas also. The splendid record of the members of the Littleport St. John Ambulance Divisions, who man the Littleport Ambulance, and those of the Ely St. John Ambulance Divisions, who man the Ely Ambulance, deserve the highest praise, and I would wish to draw the attention of the Council to the grand service given cheerfully to the community by these volunteers.

- (b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements.— These are the same as for previous years. The District Nurses continue to maintain their fine record of service.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES (Contd.):

(c) Hospitals.--

- (i) Tower Hospital for Chronic Sick
- (ii) The Isolation Hospital
- (iii) The Grange Maternity Home

These hospitals are under the control of the Regional Hospital Board.

3. WATER:

- (a) (i) The supply for the district is drawn from two chalk wells at West Row. During 1954 water supplies of adequate quantity and quality have been maintained.
- (ii) There have been no major breakdowns during the year.
- (b) (i) The Chloramine Plant has been in use continually and has proved satisfactory. The chloramine process permits of the treatment of the water at the source.
- (ii) The usual chemical and bacteriological examinations were made during the year and proved satisfactory. In addition, all new mains are sampled and no connections are made until the reports on these samples are found satisfactory.
- (iii) Referring to the contamination of one borehole at the Waterworks in May 1953, I am glad to report that no repercussions have been experienced during the year under review.
- (iv) That portion of the pumping main passing through the gault bed near Soham continues to give me anxiety on account of the corrosive action of the gault on the pipes. I hope that no major breakdown in the supply will arise here, but no one can be sure, and the Water Engineer continues to watch carefully this length of main. However, I am afraid there may well be trouble in the near future in this area.

3. WATER (Contd.):

- (b) (v) The most urgent problem which I consider confronts the Council so far as water supplies are concerned is the provision of greatly increased water storage facilities. Under present circumstances a maximum of 12 hours supply, and then only under the most favourable conditions, is available for the area from existing storage sources.

This, in my opinion, is perilously near danger point and it makes both the Water Engineer and myself seriously concerned.

From the water supply point of view I maintain that greatly increased water storage capacity is the most essential thing required at present.

(vi) The water has no plumbo-solvent action.


(vii) Referring to the general supply of water to houses in the area, it is estimated that between 98 - 99% of houses are covered.

I am of the opinion that conditions compare most favourably with those of other Rural Local Authorities in England and should afford the Council much satisfaction.

During the year Ministry consent was given to water extensions to a number of outlying properties in various areas in the District, and before the end of the year all these extensions - amounting to some 15 miles of water main - were completed.

4. SEWAGE:

- (a) The grave problem of sewage disposal remains in my opinion quite unchanged. Each year new houses are built with baths, flush W.C.'s etc. and these definitely increase the size of the general problem.



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4. SEWAGE (Contd.):

- (a) It is not that the Council is unwilling to tackle this problem of which it is well aware. On the contrary, given adequate opportunity and funds, the Council could and would implement at the earliest possible date those schemes which it has prepared already for the various Parishes for which it is responsible.

I should be failing in my duty, nevertheless, if I failed to put on record yet once again my continued, and indeed, increased misgivings and sense of disgust at the conditions existing generally in the district.

- (b) This year's "glimmer in the general gloom," to which I referred in my Annual Report for 1953, is that during 1954 Ministerial Authorization was given to the Council to go to tender for the Brook Area Scheme in Sutton. This is a step in the right direction, without doubt, but it must be emphasised that these plans do not solve anything like completely the Sutton Sewage problem which continues to be one of the District's "Sewage Black Spots."

This partial scheme for Sutton is the only concession given to the Council during 1954.

5. HOUSING:

Permanent Housing:

<u>Sites:</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Acres</u>
In hand and not under development at 1/1/54	3	19.229
Acquired during 1954	3	4.310
	<u>6</u>	<u>23.539</u>
Taken into development during 1954	4	7.902
In hand and not under development at 31/12/54	2	15.637
	<u>2</u>	<u>15.637</u>

5. HOUSING (Contd.):

Dwellings:

No. covered by contracts placed - but not in course of erection - at 1/1/54	34
No. covered by contracts placed during 1954	<u>52</u> <u>86</u>
No. under construction as at 1/1/54	143
No commenced during 1954	<u>78</u> <u>221</u>

	<u>Bungalows</u> <u>2-bedrooms</u>	<u>Houses</u> <u>2-bedrooms</u>	<u>Houses</u> <u>3-bedrooms</u>	<u>Total</u>
No. completed during 1954	16	18	102	136
No. under construction at 31/12/54				
Stage of Completion %				
76 to 99	10	-	21	
51 to 75	2	2	16	
26 to 50	-	-	-	
To 25	<u>2</u> <u>14</u>	<u>6</u> <u>8</u>	<u>26</u> <u>63</u>	<u>85</u> <u>221</u>

No. not commenced as at 31/12/54 8

No. let during 1954 to members of Agricultural Population 41

Total number of permanent houses provided under Housing Acts to 31/12/54 (including one additional dwelling provided by conversion of one house into two during 1954) 1374

Temporary Housing

Total number of converted ex-service huts occupied as at 31/12/54 75

5. HOUSING (Contd.):

Private Enterprise

New Permanent Houses

No. of unfinished dwellings licensed or approved at 1/1/54 22

No. licensed or approved during 1954 21
43

No. completed during 1954 26

No. in course of erection at 31/12/54 15

No. not commenced at 31/12/54 2
43

No. of dwellings completed since 1st April 1954 187

Provision and Improvement of Dwellings with aid of Improvement Grants under Housing Act 1949

No. of schemes approved for Grant and No. of dwellings to be improved - 30 schemes 34 dwellings

Amount of Grant involved by approved schemes - £8,481: 8: 0

No. of schemes completed and No. of dwellings improved by 31/12/54 - 8 schemes 10 dwellings

Amount of Grant paid by 31/12/54 - £2,167: 5: 5.

6. SCHOOLS:

I will refer to my previous reports. No additional comments appear necessary at present.

7. MILK:

During the year it has not been necessary for me to put "Stop Orders" on any supplies, I am pleased to say.

I must re-iterate the warnings in my 1953 report, referring to the sale of loose undesignated milk in the District. Although this may be relatively only small in bulk, it must be remembered that a bad sample can cause wide-spread damage in a district under certain circumstances. I hope that the practice of selling this type of milk will cease in the very near future.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASE:

- (a) 110 notifications of infectious disease were received.

The total of 110 cases is made up as follows :-

Whooping Cough	53
Measles	1
Erysipelas	2
Scarlet Fever	39
Pneumonia	8
Infective Hepatitis	2
Anterio Poliomyelitis	2
Dysentery	1
Food Poisoning	2
	<u>110</u>

A comparison of the above figures with those for 1953 shews two interesting features :-

- (i) The almost complete absence of measles in the District in 1954, following the fairly heavy outbreak in 1953.
- (ii) The definite increase in the number of Scarlet Fever cases. Personally, I am confident that there would have been a much greater number of cases had there been no adequate isolation of those cases which did occur.
- (b) There have been no cases of Diphtheria in the District during the year, thank God.
- I am afraid that this grand record will not be maintained for many more years unless every child is inoculated against this disease during his or her early months. I am confident that the Council will continue to impress on all parents that it is their bounden duty to have this simple procedure carried out either by their family doctor or at the County Council Clinics.
- (c) Disinfection of premises etc. is regularly carried out in cases of notifiable disease; also when infection is reported or requests are received for any special reasons.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASE (Contd.):

(d) Tuberculosis:

10 new cases were notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustments there are the following numbers on the Register :-

<u>Respiratory</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory</u>	
Male	33	Male	11
Female	24	Female	8

Compared with 1953, the figures shew an increase of 1 case.

9. FOOD:

- (a) There have been two reports of cases of food-poisoning in the District during the year. These were cases of infection by *Salmonella typhi-murium*. After careful investigations it was not found possible to ascertain the origin of the infection.
- (b) Both the Sanitary Inspector and I kept careful watch on eating places and shops - especially food shops. I have many opportunities of making what are apparently casual inspections in these premises during the daily carrying out of my normal duties. Action has been taken as a result in the past, and I propose to take more drastic action in the future where offenders are spotted. The co-operation of members of the public will be greatly welcomed, where unsatisfactory premises come to their notice.
- (c) Once again, I would acknowledge publicly, with grateful thanks, the efforts of those traders and their assistants who are making material efforts to improve and to maintain the standard of hygiene, personal and general, in the premises for which they are responsible.

I do emphasise, however, that the public have the remedy in their own hands, as they can always withdraw their custom from those shops which are not satisfactory - and this action is the most efficient and powerful protest possible.

9. FOOD (Contd.):

- (d) The eradication of flies and vermin from premises dealing with food is one of the paramount duties of the occupiers. No one really knows how much disease and death is spread annually by flies. The Officers of the Council are always willing to give any assistance which lies in their power.
- (e) The gospel of food hygiene can be summed up, in brief, as hot water - soap - clean towels - strict personal hygiene - covering food exposed for sale and the eradication of flies and vermin.

10. MISCELLANEOUS:

- (a) Rodent Control. - During the year the Sanitary Inspector and the Rodent Officer have done 1,256 inspections and have carried out some 900 treatments (which include 623 in dwelling houses, 18 in agricultural premises and 246 in non-agricultural premises).
- (b) Moveable Dwellings. - As has already been stated, existing legislation referring to moveable dwellings (caravans etc.) is from all practical points of view useless in dealing with this problem, which at times gives me much anxiety.

In my opinion, the time is long overdue when legislation should be revised and greatly strengthened.

- (c) Factories Act. - There is no great problem here as only one factory of any size exists in the District. The position generally is reviewed, however, from time to time.
- (d) Slaughter-houses. - In June 1954 the Ministry of Food issued Circular MF.10/54: (Public Health (Meat Regulations 1924-52. Slaughtering and Meat Inspection) reminding the Council that as from 2nd July 1954 the Ministry would cease to be responsible for the slaughter of animals and that private slaughtering would recommence as from that date.

10. MISCELLANEOUS (Contd.):

(d) Slaughter-houses

As a result of this decision it became necessary for the Council to issue licences under the Food & Drugs Act 1938/Section 57 to the owners of those slaughter-houses which it considered were satisfactory. Ten applications for licences were made to the Council and your Clerk, Sanitary Inspector and I made detailed personal inspections of each of the premises concerned. In all but two cases the premises proved to be totally unsuitable for the proposed purpose: some of them because of bad siting, some because of poor construction, others because of lack of essential requirements, e.g., washing facilities. In one or two cases their unsuitability came under all the reasons given.

The Council, on the recommendations submitted, decided to grant licences to the two premises mentioned, provided certain minor alterations were carried out, and these in fact were done by the owners and licences were issued.

I have no doubt personally of the propriety of the Council's action.

11. PERSONAL:

Once again it is a very pleasant duty for me to place on record my sincerest thanks to my colleagues - and friends the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Engineer & Surveyor, Sanitary Inspector and Water Engineer, for their very welcome, freely given, assistance and co-operation.

I have the honour to be,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Rural District Council.

