

[Report 1885] / Medical Officer of Health, Isle of Wight Rural District Council.

Contributors

Isle of Wight (England). Rural District Council. n 83204987

Publication/Creation

1885

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1885.

ANNUAL REPORT

On the Health

OF THE

RURAL SANITARY DISTRICT

OF THE

ISLE OF WIGHT.


BY

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Newport, Isle of Wight :

W. H. UPWARD, PRINTER, HIGH STREET.



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ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE HEALTH OF THE RURAL SANITARY DISTRICT OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

For the Year 1885.

*To the Members of the Isle of Wight Rural Sanitary
Authority.*

GENTLEMEN,

The report of the health of your District during the year 1885, which I have the honour to submit to you, will include the Vital Statistics of the year, its Sanitary History, and an account of the Sanitary Condition of the District at the close of the year.

I.—VITAL STATISTICS.

The population of the District in the middle of the year is estimated to have been 28,213, of whom 14,513 are estimated to have been males and 13,700 females.

Population.

769 births and 439 deaths were registered during the year ending December 31st, 1885. Of the births 400 were males and 369 females. Of the deaths 230 were male and 209 female.

Births and Deaths

Assuming the estimate of population to be approximately correct, the birth-rate was equal to 27·2, and the death-rate to 15·4 per 1,000 persons living. 54 deaths occurred within the District among persons not belonging to it, however, and if these be deducted the death-rate was equal to 13·6 per 1,000 of persons living. The birth-rate in England and Wales in 1885 was equal to 32·5 and the death-rate to 19·0 per 1,000 persons estimated to be living in the middle of the year. The birth-rate was lower than in any previous year since 1848, and was 2·2 below the mean annual rate in the ten years 1875-1884. The death-rates of the past five years have been lower than in any previous year since 1837 when civil registration was enacted. The mean death-rate was 19·3, which is 2·1 below the mean

Birth-rate and
Death-rate.

rate in the preceding ten years, 1871-80. Had the mean rate from 1881-86 continued to be what it was from 1871-80, 281,000 persons would have died who have survived the past five years.

The birth-rate in the Isle of Wight Rural Sanitary District was as much as 5.3 below the very low birth-rate of England and Wales, and the death-rate was 3.6 below the average death-rate, or deducting the deaths among persons not belonging to the District, 5.4 below the average. As compared with the death-rate in small towns and country parishes the death-rate was 2.1 below the average, and 3.9 below the average if we deduct the deaths of persons not belonging to the District who died within it.

The death-rate of males at all ages was 15.8 and of females 15.2 per 1,000.

Infant Mortality

The rate of infant mortality measured by the proportion of deaths under one year of age to registered births was equal to 89 per 1000, the corresponding rate for England and Wales being 138. 104 children or 23.6 per cent of the deaths died under five years, and 156 persons or 35.5 per cent of the deaths died at or over 60. 103 persons or 23.4 per cent of the deaths died at or over 70, of whom 62 were between 70 and 80, 35 between 80 and 90, and 6 were at or over 90, the greatest age attained having been 93.

Mortality of the Aged.

54 persons died within the District who did not belong to it.

Deaths by Violence.

15 persons died a violent death—3 by drowning, 2 by falls, 3 by being run over, 2 on the railway, 1 was burnt to death, 2 were suffocated, and 2 were cases of suicide, one by hanging, and the other by strychnine poisoning. With the exception of this latter and the death of a female child who was burnt, all the persons who died by violence were males. The deaths by violence were equal to 3.4 per cent of the deaths from all causes, which is higher than the percentage—3.1—for England and Wales. The death-rate from violence in the Isle of Wight Rural Sanitary District was .53 per 1,000, and that for England and Wales .60.

Mortality from certain Diseases.

Zymotic Diseases.

The 439 deaths from all causes included

	2	attributed to measles
10	„	„ diphtheria
9	„	„ whooping-cough
4	„	„ fever
6	„	„ diarrhoea

—
31

The 31 deaths referred to these principal zymotic diseases was equal to a rate of 1.09 per 1,000. The rate for England and Wales was 2.10 per 1,000, and the mean death-rate for the first five years of the present decennium 2.4 per 1,000.

66 persons died from consumption, 17 of whom did not belong to the Island. This would be equivalent to a death-rate from phthisis of 2·3 per 1,000, or, deducting the 17 cases above referred to, of 1·7 per 1,000. The mean annual death-rate from phthisis in England and Wales is 2·4 per 1,000 of persons living

Phthisis.

62 persons died from other forms of lung disease, of whom 3 did not belong to the District. This would be equivalent to a death-rate of 2·1 per 1,000, or, deducting 3, of 2·0 per 1,000, the mean death-rate for England and Wales from these diseases being 3·3 per 1,000.

Lung Diseases

39 persons died from heart disease, which would be equal to a death-rate of 1·3 per 1,000, and this is the mean death-rate from heart disease in England and Wales. Deducting 3 deaths of persons not belonging to the District the death-rate is reduced to 1·2 per 1,000.

Heart Disease.

25 persons died of cancer, equivalent to a death-rate of ·88 per 1,000. The mean death-rate from cancer in England and Wales is ·38.

Cancer.

Scrofula and tuberculosis caused 16 deaths, which is equivalent to the death-rate of ·56 per 1,000, the mean death-rate from scrofula in England and Wales being ·78 per 1,000.

Scrofula.

The mortality from these special diseases, with the exception of cancer, is below the mortality for England and Wales if we deduct the deaths which occurred among persons not belonging to the District. Had it not been for the deaths from diphtheria the zymotic death-rate of your District would have been reduced to ·74 per 1,000. I am not as yet prepared to explain the comparatively high mortality from cancer in the Isle of Wight. The fact of its occurrence in the aged must be taken into account, but I think there is no doubt diseases of a degenerative type, as insanity and scrofula, prevail among the natives of the Isle of Wight. The members of some of the old Island families have, by heredity, a tendency to cancer which is one of the diseases the causes of which must be sought, probably, in the habits and conditions of life of generations back, and in intermarriage among kinspeople.

Mortality from
Cancer.

(A) Table of deaths during the Year 1885, in the Rural Sanitary District and showing also the Population of such Localities.

Names of Localities adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		Registered Births.	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES.							
	Census 1881.	Estimated to middle of 1885.		At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 60	60 and upwards	
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
NEWPORT.			163	40	4	3	2	1	14	16	Under 5. 5 upwds.
WORKHOUSE.	405			54	5	1		5	12	31	Under 5. 5 upwds.
PARKHURST PRISON.	1159			11	3		1		6	1	Under 5. 5 upwds.
PARKHURST BARRACKS.	618			5	1	1			3		Under 5. 5 upwds.
COWES.			87	37	11	6	6		5	9	Under 5. 5 upwds.
RYDE.			177	103	12	8	8	9	30	36	Under 5. 5 upwds.
GODSHILL.			155	78	12	6	4	7	20	29	Under 5. 5 upwds.
CONSUMPTION HOSPITAL.	126			19	1			3	14	1	Under 5. 5 upwds.
CALBOURNE.			187	92	20	10	11	2	16	33	Under 5. 5 upwds.
TOTALS	28008	28213	769	439	69	35	32	27	120	156	Under 5. 5 upwds.
The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the mortality of this Division of the Sanitary District.											
Deaths occurring within the division or district among persons belonging thereto ..											Under 5. 5 upwds.
Deaths occurring within the division or district among persons not belonging thereto				54	5			6	27	16	Under 5. 5 upwds.

LE OF WIGHT, Classified according to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES,
rths therein during the Year.

MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER
FIVE YEARS OF AGE.

	Diphtheria	Croup (not "Spasmodic.")	Whooping Cough.	Cont. Fevers.			Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Cholera	Rheumatic Fever.	Erysipelas.	Pyæmia	Puerperal Fever	Ague	Phthisis	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease	Injuries	All other Diseases.
5.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.	30.	31.	32.	33.
			I												3			3
									I					7	8	4	2	11
															I			5
										I		I		3	2	6	I	34
																		3
										I	I			2	I	I	I	I
															I			I
														2				I
		I	3												5		I	7
4														3	4	4		5
					I										7			10
					2									13	10	10	6	42
2							2								3			11
2	I				I							2		10	7	9	2	26
														17				2
	I	5					3							I	4			16
2	I						I							8	6	5	2	37
2	2	9			I		5							I	24		I	56
8	2				3		I		I	2	I	3		65	38	39	14	159
																		5
					2							I		17	3	4		22

2.—THE SANITARY HISTORY OF THE YEAR.

Zymotic Diseases.

The sanitary history of the year under review must necessarily include both an account of the diseases known as zymotic which were prevalent in your District, and of the measures taken in connection with them.

Measles.

Measles prevailed in the East Medene in the autumn. There were some 30 cases in Brading, two of whom died, and about 40 in the neighbourhood of Sandown and Shanklin. The origin of the outbreak could not be traced. The schools at Brading and at Gatten were closed for a month and the epidemic quickly subsided.

Scarlatina

Scarlatina, which was wide spread in 1883 and 1884, gradually died out. There were cases at Haylands at the beginning of the year, and several persons were affected about the same time at Knighton. Its embers rekindled once or twice during the year as at a house in Chale which adjoined one in which there had been scarlatina in 1884. An imported case occurred, also, at a house in Tinpit Lane, Newport. As a result of the precautions taken the disease did not extend beyond the houses in which it appeared. The Isle of Wight as a health resort will always be liable to the introduction of the poison of scarlatina, but we ought not to be afflicted with such a severe epidemic as we have recently known if the presence of the disease were notified to the medical officer of health in every instance.

Diphtheria,

There would appear to exist some peculiar connection, the nature of which is not clear, between diphtheria and scarlatina, epidemics of the latter disease being accompanied and followed by cases of the former not infrequently, more especially when the general sanitary conditions are bad, and in damp confined places. Diphtheria raged in Northwood and Whitwell in 1885 as an epidemic, and one of the most painful features in the Sanitary history of the year is that people died of diphtheria who apparently need not have died if the sanitary arrangements of your District had been what they might be.

Northwood

I have detailed to you the origin and course of diphtheria at Northwood in reports made to you from time to time and in a special report made to you for the information of the Local Government Board. The first case occurred in July, 1884, at the "Horse Shoe" in a family who had had scarlatina during the previous year. In a field immediately behind the "Horse Shoe," on Furzy Hurst Farm, were large deposits of town refuse placed near one of the paths to the Northwood Parochial Schools. The surface of these heaps was being constantly disturbed by the pigs which lived upon them. In the Spring of 1885 a committee appointed to investigate an outbreak of swine fever at Northwood found it originated among the pigs which fed upon heaps

of town refuse brought from Cowes, and they attributed the disease to this cause. In July 1885, diphtheria appeared at Somerton farm house the insanitary surroundings of which were appalling. Within 100 feet of the house and at the same distance from the pond from which the people drank and the dairy was supplied, was a large rubbish heap containing 200 loads of town refuse, and within 15 feet of the house the carcasses of 56 pigs which had been affected with swine fever were buried in a shallow pit from which there was a great stench. I may remark the dairy produce of this farm was sold regularly in Cowes. The last case of diphtheria in Northwood occurred at Pallance Farm in November. There were in all 39 cases in 9 families of which I had personal knowledge, but I have reason to believe there were several other cases. Of those affected 5 persons died. With two exceptions in which there was communication, the disease did not spread from any family affected. With the exception of the residence of a school teacher, who apparently contracted the disease from a pupil, the sanitary state of the dwellings was bad, either there were heaps of town refuse or of slaughterhouse offal from Cowes, or foul closets or drains near the houses, or there was serious overcrowding, or the water was bad.

I may say that for the most part the positions of the dwellings was very high and exposed, but the subsoil is clay and in some of the situations the alluvial clay covers the surface.

In September a case of diphtheria was fatal at Whitwell. There was a foul closet near the house and the well from which the people drank was polluted by a soak from an old brick drain which ran close to it. There is now reason to suppose a child attending the day school, who had come into contact with members of the family in which the death occurred, died from diphtheria in October, and that his brother died of the same disease in November. Towards the end of November there was a sudden outbreak of the disease. Up to the close of the year there were in all 10 families affected and about 25 persons of whom I had knowledge, including the two cases referred to whose deaths were attributed to another cause. 6 persons died. One of these was the child of a labourer, all of whose children were affected, residing at Southford Farm in a damp house unfit for human habitation. A foul closet emptied into a ditch which carried its contents to the stream. The people drank from a well near Southford Mill which is evidently supplied by a soak from the polluted Whitwell stream. Another house in which diphtheria occurred was overcrowded.

Whitwell.

Whitwell is situated on the Gault, a clay formation. Its position is exposed. It stands at the head of a broad open

valley. The majority of the few wells of the place are, or have been recently, polluted by cess-pits or by surface soakage, and many of the inhabitants drink from the stream which is contaminated almost to its source.

Freshwater.

Two persons, one of whom died, were affected with diphtheria in Victoria Road, Freshwater, in September. The closet, which was without water supply, was within the house. At the time of my first visit it was, judging by the stench, untrapped, and neither the soil pipe nor the cesspit, into which the next house also drained, was ventilated. An overflow pipe from the cess-pit was carried into a covered drain in Victoria Road, which eventually discharges into the stream. When water was poured down the sink in the adjoining house sewage flooded the back yard, there being no drain to carry off the storm water from the high ground behind. These houses were very damp.

Porchfield.

In October I visited four persons affected with diphtheria at Porchfield. The disease was imported from Cowes by a daughter in service there. Under the same roof was a dairy the produce of which was being sold in Cowes and other places. They obtained their drinking water either from a foul rain-water butt or from a pond used by cattle in a neighbouring field, which is the source of water supply in that part of Porchfield.

Apse Heath.

There have been a few very mild cases of diphtheria at Apse Heath, where scarlatina prevailed in the previous year. Apse Heath has a porous subsoil. It is an open situation on the Lower Greensand.

Diphtheria at Northwood, Whitwell, and Apse Heath followed scarlatina. At Northwood and Whitwell, on clay soils, the mortality was great. At Northwood it was not spread by communication, but the sanitary conditions were bad, and the air was polluted by refuse from the town. At Whitwell there was communication during a period when watchfulness was suspended, this period being followed by a sudden outburst of the disease. The sanitary conditions were not generally bad as at Northwood. At Freshwater the house was damp and the people virtually lived over a cess-pool. Most of the cases occurred in the late summer and autumn.

Enteric Fever.

Enteric fever caused 4 deaths. Two of these cases were imported, one from Oxfordshire the other from West Cowes.

Another case was that of a child who was supposed to have drunk water from a polluted well at Binstead. The other fatal case was that of a young man who probably drank polluted water at Chale while working in the harvest field.

Among the cases of enteric fever which recovered were three at Wroxall in two semi-detached houses placed on

plots of land which the buildings almost covered. The filthy state of the unventilated closets which drained into a leaky cess-pit, also unventilated and situated close to the back door of one of the houses, was sufficient to account for the disease, but the drinking water was the probable source of it. This was obtained from the pipe which drained a railway embankment in which it was said there was a large leaky cess-pit. In an adjoining house supplied from the same source a woman died from puerperal fever while her neighbours were suffering from enteric fever.

My attention was called by the Surgeon Major at Parkhurst Barracks to a case of enteric fever imported from East Cowes, the man having been on guard there. About the same time I saw a case of the same disease at Whippingham just outside the East Cowes Local Board District. Apparently the disease was not contracted at the patient's home. Another case at a farm house at Whippingham was due, probably, to an untrapped drain in the dairy. A case at the Newport Waterworks at Carisbrooke was evidently caused by the open sewer with which an untrapped drain in the Superintendent's house communicated.

Whooping cough caused 9 deaths, one at Wootton, one at Fairlee, one at Whippingham, one at Northwood, one at Freshwater, and five at Yarmouth, two of which occurred in one family residing in the Square there.

Whooping Cough.

Every effort was made by the inspector and myself to discover the presence of zymotic disease, but in such a wide district it is impossible to become acquainted with every case, especially if people consider it their interest to conceal its existence. I do not hesitate to say that those who seek to baffle the medical officer of health in this matter are acting in direct antagonism to the public well-being and are enemies of the public good. When a death from zymotic disease is registered the district registrars promptly inform me, and in obedience to your instructions some of the district medical officers send me word if cases occur among their parish patients. Some of the clergy and primary school-masters have been good enough to aid me with information on several occasions.

Discovery and
notification of Zymotic
Disease.

If a case of catching disease has come under my notice I have endeavoured to prevent its spread particularly by cautioning the neighbours to avoid contact with those affected, this being the only available plan of isolation in your District. At the proper time the inspectors see to the disinfection of rooms and clothing, and when they superintend the process it is done effectually. In this connection I beg to point out to you that you do not possess a disinfection chamber or apparatus. This is a want that should be at once supplied.

Spreading Zymotic
Disease.

Disinfection.

Disinfection Chamber

Isolation Hospital.

I have previously urged upon you the necessity of providing an isolation hospital for non-pauper patients, and I have suggested to you the desirability of combining for this purpose with the other Sanitary Authorities of the Isle of Wight. There would be, in many directions, a distinct advantage in combination between the ten Sanitary Authorities of the Island, more especially were cholera to visit it. It has been said that acting as a Board of Guardians you have provided at considerable outlay an isolation hospital for pauper patients and that this hospital has been rarely used. After discussing the question you have decided not to combine with the Urban Authorities to build another hospital. Undoubtedly an isolation hospital apart from the Workhouse, especially if it were known by some other name than that of "Hospital," would be more generally used, and your object as a Sanitary Authority is to have such a place made use of as freely as possible; but having regard to your decision I beg to advise you very strongly, if there be no regulation to the contrary, to avail yourselves of Sec: 131 P.H.A. 1875, to contract with the Poor Law Authority, that is to say with yourselves, to make use of the "place of reception" you have provided as a Board of Guardians, call it an infectious hospital, or an isolation ward of the Workhouse, or what you will. And assuming this hospital is available to you as a Sanitary Authority, I presume it would also be available for the use of the other Sanitary Authorities of the Island, their constituents having contributed to its erection. The advantages of combination between the various Sanitary Authorities would in this manner be secured.

Interdependence of
the Rural Sanitary
District and the Towns
of the
Isle of Wight.

I have been more than ever impressed during the past year by the fact of the mutual interdependence of the Rural Sanitary District, and the towns of the Isle of Wight. Parts of the towns are under the jurisdiction of the Rural Sanitary Authority, and houses in these and in other places in your District are supplied with water by the town Authorities. The towns obtain their food supplies from the country, and the country receives the refuse of the towns. There has been a serious outbreak of diphtheria in your District, and although the origin of this disease is somewhat obscure, I have a strong opinion the heaps of town refuse at Northwood had a good deal to do with the existence of diphtheria there. I think there is a little doubt that notwithstanding the precautions taken, milk and butter were sent from houses, both at Northwood and elsewhere, to Cowes and other towns, while persons were suffering from diphtheria in them. At the same time diphtheria existed in Cowes, I believe, before a case occurred in the Rural District, and it is reasonable to suppose the sweepings of

the sick room, and, possibly, articles of use in it were transferred to the Rural District from the dust holes of Cowes.

It is prejudicial to the public health that you do not pass byelaws regulating the disposal of town refuse. During 1885 you found accumulations of rubbish, not only from Cowes, but also from Ryde and Sandown, a difficulty and a danger. It is to be regretted the orders for the removal of the heaps at Furzy Hurst in September, 1884, were not enforced, and that they were not spread over the surface of the land until October, 1885.

Town Refuse.

It became my duty in April, under Sec : 116 P.H.A 1875, to condemn at Furzy Hurst a quantity of pork, the carcasses of animals killed while suffering from swine fever. I was informed a similar quantity had already been sent to the London market and that this lot was about to follow.

Unsound Meat.

During the past year, and previously, you have had reported to you the serious nuisance arising from the irrigation works connected with the disposal of the sewage of Parkhurst Prison and Barracks, and that arising from a stream into which pass the washings produced in making gas, which is in contravention of Sec : 68, P.H A., 1875.

Parkhurst Prison.

A great improvement has been effected at Carisbrooke by closing in the offensive sewer outfall near the Waterworks which has been so frequently reported to you.

Carisbrooke Sewer.

As in former years, my attention has been particularly directed to the water supply of your District. I have examined a large number of samples of water many of which contained evidence of contamination by surface soakage and soakage from cess-pits. There was a great dearth of water in the summer, more especially north of the Chalk, and the people were driven to the streams and other impure sources of supply. This dearth was accentuated in the parish of Northwood by the pumping operations in Ruffins Copse for the supply of Cowes. I have endeavoured to persuade the owners of new wells to protect them with clay puddle and cement, and have urged upon them the necessity of making their cess-pits water-tight, or of using pail closets. In cases where wells were contaminated by soakage from cess-pits they have been closed and new wells sunk, or the cesspits have been filled in and pails substituted. In the West Medene 21 wells have been sunk and improved supplies of water obtained. 6 pumps have been provided in the West Medene and 1 in the East Medene—an important matter.

Water Supply.

It is very gratifying, and the credit is largely due to the recommendation of the inspectors, that in the West Medene 37 privies have been put upon the pail system, and in the East Medene 20. In the East Medene 6 connections with the sewer, chiefly at Brading, have been made, and 19 at

Pail Closets.

Yarmouth in the West Medene.

Legal Proceedings.

The year was characterised by an increased number of legal proceedings taken chiefly under Sec : P.H.(W)A. 1878. In several cases of new houses I was unable to report to you favorably of the water supply, and some of them were occupied without the certificate. The most notable of these cases of illegal occupation was one at Wroxall in which a new house was supplied with water from a source much used by the inhabitants of the place for drinking. It is brought in ordinary agricultural drain pipes beneath a meadow in which a large cess-pit receives the sewage of several houses in the Ventnor Road. An overflow pipe discharges the sewage on to the meadow and it flows over the site of the pipes. The water is in large volume but occasionally its contamination is detectable. The owner of the house subsequently applied to the County Justices under the same Sec : 6 P.H.(W)A., 1878, and they granted the certificate. A committee of your Authority afterwards visited the premises and satisfied themselves, I believe, that you were justified in withholding the certificate. It is a most serious reflection that in such a case as this you have no power to protect the public health.

Visit of an Inspector of the Local Government Board.

One of the chief incidents of the year was the visit of an Inspector of the Local Government Board, Mr. Spear, whose object was to ascertain how far the Isle of Wight was prepared to withstand an invasion of cholera. After making a thorough inspection of your District Mr. Spear offered you a series of very important and valuable recommendations and suggestions, some of which I will refer to when speaking of the state of the District at the close of the year, the sanitary condition of the Island being much what it was when he was here.

Inspection Work.

The inspectors have furnished me with the following summary of their work:—

	WEST MEDENE.	EAST MEDENE.
Number of nuisances reported ...	78	73
Number of nuisances abated without final notice ...	65	52
Number of notices served ...	38	34
Houses reported unfit for habitation	8	1
Houses placed in habitable repair ...	3	1
Houses cleaned and disinfected ...	24	22
Houses closed by order ...	1	...
Legal proceedings under Sec. 126, P.H.A. ...	1	...
Cases of overcrowding reported ...	9	4
Cases of overcrowding abated ...	9	4
Privy cesspools provided and properly constructed ...	12	5
Privies put on the pail system ...	37	20
Wells sunk and improved supplies of water obtained ...	21	...

Wells cleaned	...	...	6	6
Wells closed	...	...	...	...
Defective pumps repaired	...	...	2	4
Pumps provided	...	...	16	1
House drains reconstructed and connected with the sewer...			19	6
Meat destroyed (Pork)	...	about lbs.	500	...
Ships inspected	...	...	1	...
Legal proceedings under Sec. 6, P.H. (W.) A....	...	...	4	...

HOUSES BUILT AND OCCUPIED IN 1885.

WEST MEDENE.			EAST MEDENE.		
	With Certificate.	Without Certificate.		With Certificate.	Without Certificate.
Brighstone ...	1		Brading ...	2	
Brooke ...	1		Gatten ...	1	
Carisbrooke ...	11		Littletown...	1	
Chale ...	1		Niton ...	3	
Freshwater ...	10		Wroxall ...		1
Northwood ...	4	5			
Shalfleet ...	3	2			
	31	7		7	1

I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. E. W. Watts, M.A., for the following record of his observations of the temperature and rainfall of 1885, made at the Grammar School, Newport, 44 feet above the sea level.

Temperature and Rainfall.

MONTH.	Maximum Temperature of Month.	Minimum Temperature of Month.	Mean of Daily Maximum.	Mean of Daily Minimum.	Mean Temperature.	Amount of Rain in inches.	Days of Rain.
Jan.	51.5	26.0	42.9	34.7	38.8	2.39	15
Feb.	55.4	25.0	49.1	39.5	44.3	3.70	19
Mar.	57.9	23.8	48.4	33.9	41.1	1.74	8
April	70.7	24.0	56.1	38.5	47.3	1.41	11
May	67.0	30.6	57.3	40.7	49.0	3.56	19
June	80.0	38.3	67.6	49.2	58.4	1.89	11
July	89.5	39.0	72.7	50.8	61.76	0.64	6
Aug.	77.8	40.0	69.5	49.0	59.2	0.41	8
Sept.	71.7	31.0	63.4	48.1	55.7	4.58	16
Oct.	59.1	31.5	53.6	41.1	47.4	3.93	18
Nov.	55.3	29.9	49.2	40.8	45.0	3.25	15
Dec.	51.3	19.0	44.8	33.7	39.3	1.82	13

3.—THE SANITARY STATE OF THE DISTRICT GENERALLY AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

Health of the
District.

The continuance of diphtheria at Whitwell and its appearance at Sheepwash, between Whitwell and Godshill, in a low lying cottage on the Greensand through the garden of which a rivulet flows, characterised the close of the year. There was an absence of zymotic disease in other parts of the District.

Health resorts in
their relation to
catching disorders.

The presence of catching disorders is an important factor in the material prosperity of the Isle of Wight as a great health resort, because there is, undoubtedly, an increasing anxiety in the public mind, and a growing distrust, with reference to the freedom from these diseases of sea-side watering places and health resorts generally. In a higher sense the relation of health resorts to catching disorders, more especially to such diseases as scarlatina and enteric fever, is of peculiar interest. If it be true as affirmed that persons going to one of these resorts for pleasure or health runs a greater risk of his life from disease than he would do if he remained at home or went elsewhere, or if persons going from health resorts to their homes are more likely to take away with them, and scatter broadcast through the land, the seeds of disease, than if they had been visiting some commercial centre, then a very serious question affecting the interests of the public health arises which must, and ought to, influence public polity. I believe in the main the affirmation is true, and I think three principal causes operate to make it so:—

Causes which tend to
the prevalence of
catching disorders in
health resorts.

First, convalescents go away from home for change too soon in many cases, and in other cases attacks of zymotic disease, not excepting enteric fever, are sometimes so slight they are not recognised, and persons who appear to suffer simply from malaise are sent to a health resort to recruit. The hotel or lodging-house keeper has no protection, and disease is spread before precautions can be taken.

Second, there is a most baneful disposition in places which owe much of their wealth to visitors to conceal the existence of zymotic disease.

Third, Rural Sanitary Authorities, in whose districts many health resorts are situated, do not possess powers adequate for the protection of the public health if they have not urban powers.

Their remedies.

I am unable to propose any plan likely to prove workable for fully meeting the first of these causes of the prevalence of catching disorders in places of health resort, but I think the omission of the word "wilfully" in sec. 129 C. I. P.H.A. 1875, would aid in checking the evil by inducing greater care. The second cause would be met

by notification. As regards the third cause I am of opinion all Rural Sanitary Authorities should obtain urban powers for watering places and other sections of their district regularly visited by invalids. In the absence of such powers Rural Sanitary Authorities should first do their utmost to limit the spread of disease when it appears, and secondly they should see to it that their districts are as free as may be from conditions favorable to the development of disease.

Taking your own District and considering the year 1885 alone, we have evidence of the introduction into it from outside the Isle of Wight, of both scarlatina and enteric fever. I have knowledge that in two cases, at least, enteric fever was contracted by visitors in the Isle of Wight—I fear in the Rural District—and imported into Worcestershire. The Isle of Wight, therefore, formed no exception, and the remarks made apply as forcibly to your District as to any other.

The question as
applied to the Isle of
Wight.

I will proceed, then, to consider the question in relation to the Isle of Wight Rural Sanitary District, and in doing so I shall be able to refer to the state of your district at the close of the year, and to Mr. Spear's valuable memorandum. Several of the suggestions contained in this memorandum are similar to recommendations made by me in a previous annual report which a Committee of your Board considered. The courtesy was not done me of furnishing me with a copy of the report of your committee and I am ignorant of the conclusions at which they arrived, but, so far as I am aware, no practical result has followed their deliberations.

As one of the Rural Sanitary Authorities not possessing Urban powers your duty is, as I have said, to use the powers you possess to limit the spread of disease when it appears, and the most important of these powers is that of isolation.

Without the power of isolation notification is of comparatively little service. I have already referred to the subject of an isolation hospital. If cholera or smallpox should be introduced into your District, what is to be done? This is a question of the greatest gravity which may demand an answer at any moment. Supposing the attention of the medical officer of health were called to a person, not of the pauper class, suffering from small pox, say in a crowded lodging house, at Freshwater, or Bembridge, or Gurnard, or elsewhere on the day after the meeting of your Authority, must he wait a fortnight before taking action? if so you may have to contend with an epidemic. Should cholera visit the Island there must be a first case, and that case will have to be dealt with, or

Isolation.

valuable lives will be lost and the expenditure of large sums of money will be necessary. If you had, common to the whole Island, at Parkhurst some place, even a hut which would cost about £50, to which the first cases could be sent, hundreds of pounds may be saved and human life be preserved. There would be much economy in combination. If cholera spread, temporary hospitals must be provided by the Urban Authorities in the neighbourhood of each town for the treatment of those affected in that portion of the town which is under Urban jurisdiction; and as it would be impossible to move all the cholera patients with safety across the Island to Parkhurst, you must also erect a temporary hospital in the neighbourhood of each town for the treatment of those affected in that portion of the town which is under Rural jurisdiction—if at Ventnor you must provide for Bonchurch, Lowtherville, and St. Lawrence; at Shanklin and Sandown for Gatten and Lake; at Ryde for Haylands and Binstead; then you would have to provide, as Mr. Spear points out, for the temporary medical supervision of the inmates of the infected house, and that could only be done properly from the town itself. Mr. Spear's excellent suggestion that the services of trained nurses should be employed, if carried out, would involve a double costly staff of nurses at each place. It would be absurd to increase the public outlay by all the unnecessary expense of double hospitals and double administration. It is wise to insure life and property, but it is scarcely worth while to pay double premiums if you are not compelled to do so. The most important consideration in favor of combination is, however, that it would afford greater protection to the public health.

Your second duty as a Sanitary Authority administering a district frequented as a health resort is to see to it that your District is as free as may be from conditions favorable to the development of disease. These conditions are to be found more particularly in connection with water, drainage, collections of filth, and ill constructed, ill ventilated houses.

Drinking Water.

The water supply of your District may be considered as it exists to the south of the Chalk and north of it.

South of the Chalk.

Speaking generally the water to the south of the Chalk is abundant, but the soil being porous the unprotected wells become contaminated either from leaky cesspits or from the surface. The majority of the wells in your District both south and north of the Chalk being "dip" wells, many of the new houses having no other, the risk of contamination is increased. The Lower Greensand waters are often very hard as they contain iron, some of the waters of the Gault are offensive to taste and smell, so

the people go to streams for their drinking water, as at Brighstone, Whitely Bank, Whitwell, and elsewhere, although they have wells in their gardens. The water of these streams is, in most cases, contaminated almost to their source, and are unfit for drinking. The Eastern Yar is contaminated at Niton, Whitwell, Bridgecourt, Wroxall, and throughout its course. Much has been done and is being done to prevent human excrement from entering the streams, but they pass through arable land and near farm yards and it would seem to be hopeless to expect they will ever be safe sources of supply for drinking. A great deal may be done at little expense, and with much benefit to the land, to divert farmyard drainage from the streams and to turn it into irrigation channels across meadows, and the amount of sewage may be lessened, in many cases, by guttering the roofs of farm buildings and collecting the water in reservoirs from which cattle may drink, the supply of pure water to cattle being a matter of considerable sanitary and economic importance; but the drainage of manured land must still find its way to the stream. I have suggested that water be brought from the sources of streams to supply villages in which the existing supply is bad.

By the munificence of a gentleman living in the neighbourhood who has earned for himself the very highest and proudest title attainable by the citizen of any State, that of public benefactor, the people of Whitwell and their friends have been enabled to set about supplying that village with good water from the head of a stream which issues from the Upper Greensand at Berelay, the water and land having been most generously given by the owner. At Wroxall, where considerable risks are run from drinking unwholesome water, as it seems difficult to properly protect the existing sources of supply, and to render them universally available, it is proposed to form a special drainage district of that part of the parish of Newchurch in which the village of Wroxall lies. A supply of excellent water is stored in the Upper Greensand behind the village, and there are disused waterworks at the summit of the Down capable of supplying a much wider district from this source, but the simpler method of serving the village would probably be by driving a heading into the hill just above the Gault, but not too near it. I think I am in a position to state that but for a difficulty about water rights, a public spirited landed proprietor, resident in the west of the Island, would afford the same generous aid to the people of Brighstone which has been so nobly given to the people of Whitwell. Bembridge is badly supplied with water, which is stored only in small pockets of sand and gravel in the alluvium. With such magnificent prospects as

Whitwell.

Wroxall.

Brighstone.

Bembridge.

Bembridge has, the north well is wholly inadequate. Its prosperity must necessarily be prejudiced if an independent water supply is not soon obtained. I believe a boring at the edge of the chalk would afford the best prospect of success, and I think the water would be found at no great depth there. The water supply of Brading is unsatisfactory and inadequate. Some of the disused public wells to the west of the town may be opened and cleansed, but I believe the better plan would be to bring water from the hill behind it. I have from time to time called your attention to the water supply of Adgestone. Many of the houses have no water whatever. The majority of the inhabitants resort to a well by the road side, known as "Mew's well." If this were deepened, reconstructed and properly protected, a pump being fixed, it would be of great benefit to the people of Adgestone. Another well, known as "Jenny Deal's" well, on the moor supplies several houses. It is on private property and is not sufficiently protected. The part of Adgestone on the hill, situated on the Upper Greensand, has only one—a private—well, which is 50ft. deep, this well is not available for the use of the other 14 or 15 houses there. Cesspit drainage and non-protection of the wells situated in manured gardens are causes of the danger to the public health which exists in the water supply of Niton. The remedy may be found by leading water in pipes from springs on the hill-side, which is done to supply some houses in Niton already. This may be accomplished far more conveniently and inexpensively than at Whitwell, but it appears possible Niton will be indebted to the people of Whitwell and their benefactors for its water supply by a branch from the Whitwell main at Kingates. In this, as in many other instances, the private rights of the individual, which have forced Whitwell to go out of its district for its water, override the public good, although those ancient rights would suffer no real detriment if their owners were large hearted enough to minister to the well-being of the community.

North of the Chalk, more especially in certain sections, the water supply is wholly inadequate to the wants of the people. The Upper Bembridge marls and clays are at the surface over the greater part of the north of the Isle of Wight, covered, however, in many places by alluvial deposits. Water is obtained from pockets filled with gravel and sand in the alluvial clay, or from the surface soil of gardens heavily dressed with night soil and pig manure, by collecting it in soak wells. As a rule no means whatever are used to protect the water in these wells from contamination, and in hot weather it runs out of them as the land becomes dry, almost as quickly as it runs into

them in wet weather. But even this source of supply fails when the clay is actually at the surface, so, on the east bank of the Medina, from Newport to Cowes, where the Osborne beds have been brought up by a fault, water is very scarce; and on the west of the Medina there is scarcely any water at Horsebridge Hill, Tinker's Lane, Porchfield, Gunville, and the surrounding districts.

At Gurnard, which has in it the elements of an important watering place and which is growing, the scanty water is obtained from the roofs of the houses and by making soakwells in a gravel bed. I may say here that in spite of advice to the contrary, some people in Gurnard and in other parts persist in running rainwater into their soakwells, from which it will disappear as soon as the ground about them dries.

Gurnard.

At Tinker's Lane, with the exception of one or two wells at the bottom of the hamlet and a few rainwater tanks in which the water is badly collected and is unfit to drink, there is no water supply. The people fetch their water from the turbid brook at the foot of the hill for both cleansing and drinking purposes, but a gentleman of Cowes kindly permits them to draw water for drinking if they choose from the soakwells on his premises, which, however, become dry in seasons of drought.

Tinker's Lane.

At Horsebridge Hill they use either wretched stagnant puddles or rainwater, but some of the prison warders who reside there, no doubt avail themselves for drinking of the excellent water of Parkhurst Prison, supplied by the Corporation of Newport.

Horsebridge Hill.

The water supply of Parkhurst Barracks is by no means good, and it seems false economy on the part of the Military Authorities, therefore, to refuse to avail themselves for drinking, at least, of the pure water from the Chalk which flows past the Barracks gates.

Parkhurst Barracks.

At Upper Carisbrooke and Gunville the people use two shallow unprotected bricked diphoses by the roadside, into which soaks the drainage from a field divided into allotment gardens. The occupier of a cottage in the garden of which is a spring of beautiful water from beneath the Bembridge Limestone, sells it at so much a "turn," but many of the inhabitants are poor and they prefer to resort to the roadside wells although they are at a considerable distance, and when they become dry they go to the stream at Carisbrooke, which is nearly a mile off.

Gunville.

At Porchfield they drink from a pond used by cattle and from a stream also used by cattle which foul it, and which is dry in the summer.

Porchfield,

At Shalfleet the polluted Calbourne stream is almost universally made use of, and although there are a few wells

Shalfleet.

Newbridge. more or less contaminated at Newbridge, many of the people drink from the same stream, as do those living on its banks throughout its course.

Ningwood. At Ningwood they use the small rivulet to the west of it, when it is not dry, and ponds ; but the owner of Ningwood House most generously permits his neighbours to obtain their drinking water from a deep well on his premises which is carried beneath the Bembridge Limestone. But for the kindness of this gentleman Ningwood would be as badly off for water as any place upon the Island. I am indebted to the Rev. Mr. Cottell for the following particulars of his well, which are very important, seeing that it is supplied from the only easily accessible deep water supply on the north of the Chalk. It is 92ft. deep. On July 13th, 1863, the water was 20ft. from the surface. There were, therefore, 72ft. of water in the well, which it was calculated contained at that time 8,500 gallons. On May 24th, 1883, there were 83ft. of water in the well.

Wellow and Thorley. At Wellow and Thorley there are two or three good wells which appear to pierce the Limestone, but the majority are supplied by surface soakage.

Yarmouth and Freshwater. At Yarmouth and Freshwater there is abundant water, but owing chiefly to present cesspit drainage at Freshwater and to former cesspit drainage at Yarmouth, much of the well water is unsafe.

Totland. At Totland there is a good independent water supply for the service of the houses on the Totland Bay Estate. Apart from the cesspit system of drainage adopted there, it would have been well for its prosperity if other places on the coast and in the centre of the Isle of Wight had developed under such enlightened control as has been exercised at Totland Bay.

Wootton. At Wootton, in the East Medene, the wells are chiefly soakwells and are unprotected, but there is a public well of good water which probably comes from beneath the Limestones. The well at Wootton Common, carried down to the Bagshot Beds, is little used by those for whom it was intended. A very considerable supply could probably be obtained from it.

Fishbourne. At Fishbourne the public well, which derives its supply from the same source as the public well, at Wootton, suffices to supply the place.

Haven Street. At Haven Street the water is of the same unsatisfactory character as in other parts of your District, sample after sample affording evidence of contamination by soakage. A public spirited gentleman who has already conferred great benefits on the village, is sinking a well to the Bagshot Sands for the supply of his house. It is to be hoped he may see his way to some mode of supplying

water for drinking to the villagers.

Binstead, a suburb of Ryde, requires an independent water supply for the safety of the inhabitants and to flush its sewer.

Binstead.

In this brief sketch of the water supply of your District I trust I have made it clear to you that while amelioration is taking place in certain directions much remains to be done. I hope you may be impressed by the fact that as a Sanitary Authority it is your paramount duty to concern yourselves in the future more than has been done in the past with the question, how the people of the Isle of Wight, more especially those living north of the Chalk Downs, are to be provided with that prime necessity of existence wholesome water.

The town of Newport possesses, in the very centre of the Island, a supply of water ample for a wide area, which its enterprising Governing Body could make available for the districts round about it, adding, by so doing, both to the safety and to the income of their town. From the high level reservoir on Alvington Down the Corporation may readily supply Gunville and Horsebridge Hill, as they already supply parts of Carisbrooke. It is quite possible private enterprise in connection with the Newport and Freshwater Railway may give Thorley, Wellow, Ningwood, Shalfleet, and Newbridge, as well as Freshwater and Yarmouth, a supply from the Chalk at Freshwater Gate. A rapidly growing place like Gurnard should have water laid on, and it must have an independent water supply if it is to be kept free from disease in the future. Both Tinker's Lane and Gurnard, as well as the farm houses in that district, may be supplied from Ruffins Copse. The boring machine is too little known in the Isle of Wight. By its means the Bembridge Limestone may be pierced at Porchfield, Shalfleet, Newbridge, Tinker's Lane, and Gunville, in each of which places there should be at least a public pump. The supply obtained may not be very great, but it would be more than sufficient for drinking. The Calbourne District, including Calbourne, Newbridge, Shalfleet, and Ningwood, could be supplied from a reservoir under the Down. In some places in the East Medene, as at Wootton, a better supply for new houses may be obtained by sinking deeper wells.

Means of improving
the water supply.

Failing other means, rainwater may be more generally stored for drinking. During the past three years a large number of rainwater tanks have been constructed with proper filters, to the great benefit of the public health. Filters made of galvanised iron may now be obtained at little cost. The size of the roofs of small or moderately sized houses, however, does not admit of sufficient water being collected

Rainwater.

for the house supply, and it is most necessary, therefore, that the tanks should be as large as possible.

Wholesome Water.

Whatever may be the *legal* definition of wholesome water, in a *sanitary* sense water is not wholesome if it is liable to dangerous contamination by soakage from a leaky cess-pit or from the surface. Houses have been certified for occupation since I have been your medical officer of health the water supplies of which have already become polluted, as at Gatten, and great risk has been run before the pollution was detectable by taste or smell. Either a definition of wholesome water in strict accordance with sanitary common sense should be appended to Sec: 6, P.H.(W)A. 1878, or Sec: 47 C. 3 of the P.H.A. 1875, which forbids leaky cesspits, should be made universally applicable; and it should be obligatory, also, to make wells watertight on the surface and for a certain distance beneath it. The public health ought not to be dependent upon the uncertainties of legal process.

Drainage.

The question of the disposal of sewage is one of the most difficult which can engage the attention of a Sanitary Authority. I can add nothing to Mr. Spear's recommendations that where sewers exist water closets should be used with proper flushing apparatus; the connections with the sewer, both of closets and house drains, should be properly made, a matter not sufficiently attended to in some parts of your District; there should be a complete severance of direct pipe communication between the interior of the house and the sewer; there should be free ventilation; and effective traps should be provided, but not the inefficient bell-trap which is so universally used in the Isle of Wight. When sewers do not exist then box or pail closets should be used. All cess-pits should be water-tight. I regret to say that apart from waterclosets proper, I know scarcely an example in your District of a pan closet with a proper flushing apparatus. As complete severance of pipe communication between the sewer and the interior of the house cannot be enforced, apparently, I have been compelled in some cases to advise that premises be not connected with the sewer. Unless the owner of a new house is going to live in it himself it is most difficult, and almost impossible, to obtain severance of direct pipe communication between a cess-pit and the interior of the house, or to get the cess-pit and drains properly ventilated. It is the exception and not the rule to find cess-pits watertight in your District.

Sewers.

Your five sewers—not counting the Wootton and short Carisbrooke sewers—at Yarmouth, Binstead, Haylands, Brading, Bembridge, and Upper Ventnor, have one defect in common, they are not sufficiently flushed. The automatic flushing arrangement at Brading is effective for one

branch of the sewer, but there should be one or more similar flushing boxes, into which water may be led, placed on the other side of the valley. I know there are difficulties in the absence of an independent water supply at Yarmouth, Binstead, Brading, and Bembridge, but to some extent they may be overcome. At Haylands and at Ventnor flushing could be easily arranged. At Yarmouth a water cart would be better than nothing. This is the plan adopted at Bembridge, but it should be more frequently used. Since the street ventilators were closed at Yarmouth, with the effect of forcing sewer gas into the houses and back yards, a great improvement has taken place by the erection of ventilating shafts. The number of shafts at Brading and Bembridge may be increased with benefit, and shafts should be erected at Haylands and Ventnor. I have found sewer gas at these places issuing from rain-water stack pipes near the doors and windows of houses. At Binstead it would seem to be desirable to have the sewer, in the whole course of it, under your own control.

I agree with Mr. Spear that the sewers should be fully made use of, but, as I have intimated, I would make exception in those cases in which pipe disconnection, free ventilation, and the use of proper traps cannot be secured, and these precautions for the protection of the public health you cannot enforce, I believe, under existing circumstances.

Under present conditions I fear I cannot wholly endorse Mr. Spear's recommendation that Carisbrooke, Wroxall, and Freshwater should be sewered. Indeed, to some extent I share the horror of the very word "sewer" which exists in the Rural Sanitary District of the Isle of Wight. In my opinion no place should be sewered until it has first an independent water supply available for flushing, and the mistake made in the Rural Sanitary District has been the providing sewers before the means of flushing them had been obtained. To sewer Carisbrooke and Freshwater effectually considerable outlay would be incurred by districts unable to sustain it, and engineering difficulties would have to be surmounted. Unless Carisbrooke could connect with the Newport system the question of the disposal of the sewage must be settled. The same question must be considered both at Freshwater and Wroxall. I am of opinion that what we take from the land should be restored to it. Perhaps the best plan is to provide subsidence tanks at the sewer outfall and either to run the overflow over the land by gravitation or pump it to a higher level where it may be disposed of by means of irrigation channels. When this is not practicable the sewage should be purified by treatment with porous carbon or in some other manner. The provision of sewers for Freshwater and Wroxall,

and particularly for Lowtherville and Carisbrooke, will be forced upon you sooner or later, and the inhabitants of these places will have to pay for them. This will be one result of the apathy shown in permitting houses to be built, free from all regulation, upon little plots of land having no proper provision for the disposal of sewage and house refuse. If communities permit the individual to prejudice the general well-being and to enrich himself to the public detriment they must expect to have to pay for sewage and waterworks and even for allotment gardens. If the making more sewers in the Rural Sanitary District is to be postponed, it can only be by the exercise of more vigilance than has hitherto been shown in preventing the causes which occasion the necessity for sewers.

Cess-pits.

The drainage of houses into leaky cess-pits is one of the worst sanitary features of your District, and one to which it seems almost impossible to arouse attention. I have previously pointed out to you that at Lowtherville a deep cess-pit was constructed to carry sewage down into the hill from which Ventnor draws its drinking water; that at Lake a deep cess-pit discharges its sewage into the water-bearing stratum from which wells in the neighbourhood are supplied; and that at Carisbrooke cess-pit drainage is universal, notwithstanding the wells have been lowered since water has been pumped from the Chalk for the supply of Newport. One finds it difficult to suppress one's indignation when one considers how the interests of the community have been prejudiced by land and building speculations at Carisbrooke. The sewage discharged into the Chalk at Clatterford must inevitably destroy, in time, the wells on adjoining properties. It is not correct to say Rural Sanitary Authorities have no power in such matters. They have power if they choose to use it under sec. 276 P.H.A., 1875.

Filth.

Collections of filth accumulate near houses with little or no garden ground, in ditches and road gutters into which house slops are thrown and cesspits overflow, and at places where the refuse of towns is deposited. Mr. Spear recommends the Authority to provide for the removal of house refuse and for the emptying of privies in the more populous villages. This should be done, but I fear the rate-payers who have large gardens would raise objections, forgetting that by protecting the public health they protect themselves. Periodic from house to house inspection would no doubt lessen the evil. The road gutter nuisance is perennial and it is impossible to keep it down in the absence of bye-laws, but the condition of your district in this respect is, perhaps, better than it has hitherto been. The old ditch nuisance in Lock's Lane, Bembridge, remained in its original condition at the close of the year, but it has at last

been remedied. The condition of the ditch near the withey bed at Brading is from year to year slowly improving as the house connections are cut off from the Highway Commissioners' drain constructed to carry away storm water. The road gutter at Carisbrooke, too, is somewhat less offensive, but several house drains connect with it, and not only slop water but human sewage passes down it constituting a disgusting nuisance of which the inhabitants bitterly complain. The overflow pipes from cess-pits in the New Road, Freshwater, are a growing evil. The bed of the stream in School Green is still most offensive in dry weather, it being nothing less than an open sewer, and the gutter nuisance near the Star Inn continues. The deposit of refuse from the towns is a constant menace to the health of your District. It is chiefly of two kinds, town scavenger's refuse and the offal from slaughterhouses deposited in the fields for pigs and cattle to feed upon. Northwood, from its proximity to Cowes, suffers more from this cause than any other part of the District. Representations should be made to the Authorities of the towns, who ought to be called upon to destroy the offensive part of their refuse.

It is my duty to point out that your mode of procedure in abating nuisances is exceedingly and dangerously slow. You take six or eight weeks to deal with a nuisance constituting a danger to the public health which an Urban Authority may obviate in less than thirty six hours. Not only may this delay imperil health and life, but it also occasions serious loss of time to the inspectors, your Authority, and myself.

Procedure.

Some of the most potent of the conditions which favor the development of disease are to be found in connection with ill constructed badly ventilated houses. I will not enlarge upon this subject which is a delicate one in a district in which houses are built to sell and in which persons engage in building operations with insufficient capital. In too many instances, for these reasons, the expenditure on a house is reduced to a minimum. The bricks and mortar, therefore, are bad, the walls are often thin and porous, there may be no damp course or air space beneath the floor, the roof may be unguttered and the drains unventilated and badly constructed. It often happens that mistakes are made even by honest builders, who I need scarcely say are in large majority, because they have no bye-laws or regulations to guide them; and even the lamentable results of the negligence of workmen would be less frequently seen if the importance of care were impressed upon them by having constantly to work by rule.

House construction.

A subject of supreme moment to the welfare of your District, brought to your notice by Mr. Spear, is that of

Inspection.

inspection. Inspection should be regularly and systematically done, as Mr. Spear points out. Soon after I took office the inspectors commenced a regular from house to house inspection in order to obtain a census of the people and a record of the conditions of each house for their use and my own. This has never been completed. The duty of the sanitary inspector is to discover himself conditions injurious to health, and this can only be done by going from house to house. However devoted he may be it is quite impossible for him at present in the time he occupies in inspection work to do much systematic inspection. The inspectors do their best but they cannot do what it is beyond their power to do. In wet weather or when the roads are bad for his tricycle the inspector must use sparingly the railway and other modes of conveyance over a wide district, because he already spends much more in getting about than the sum allotted to him for that purpose. Moreover, the delay in procedure necessitates his going considerable distances often, between Board day and Board day, simply to see how a nuisance which has been long on his books is getting on.

Inspection of
Dairies.

Bye-laws.

Sanitary Committee.

I would point out to you the importance of the effective application in your District of the Dairies and Milk Shops Acts ; and I would again refer to the necessity of bye-laws, and to the desirability of the appointment by your Authority of a Sanitary Committee.

In conclusion I would remind you the sacred interests confided to your trust demand more than mere routine administration. It is incumbent upon you to require of the individual the performance of his duty, but it is no less incumbent upon you to keep constantly in view those large interests of the community which stretch far into the future, and to devise measures to secure them. By so doing you will perform worthily the duty which the law of the land imposes on you, and at the same time you will promote the material welfare of the important district you have the honour to administer, for the health of the Isle of Wight is a matter not only of national but also of cosmopolitan interest.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. GROVES.

Carisbrooke.