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Contributors

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INTERIM REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE URBAN DISTRICT OF MARKET DRAYTON FOR THE YEAR 1940.

The Ministry of Health has again ordered that the Annual Return shall be made by summarising the health administration of the District in the form of an Interim Report.

During the year little complaint could be made as to the health of the town. There were few reports of cases of infective illness and with this a reflection of the general state of hygiene it can be hoped that this standard of freedom will be maintained.

Any concern which may have been felt was directed to the deficiency, and in some instances, to the absence of drainage and sanitation. This appears to be mainly confined to a particular quarter and without doubt should receive early attention. With emergency measures competing for attention with the functioning of normal services the most that can be expected is that the standard of hygiene reached in the late thirties may be preserved. Nevertheless, during this interval opportunity might be taken to plan such improvements as may be required and be prepared to put them in hand at the earliest time that conditions will permit.

POPULATION. The original controlled evacuation scheme under which two groups viz:- mothers with young children and school-children, were transferred to the town did not give rise, in many instances, to more than temporary settlement; this particularly with regard to the former group. Despite the gradual return of these evacuees the resident population has again been augmented by other incomers. This new group has been gathered from many quarters: school children, voluntary or uncontrolled evacuees, some coming to areas of greater security and others by reason of the loss of their homes through enemy action, agricultural workers and labourers and dependents of Service personnel who are stationed close to hand. The resultant has been an increase in residents of some 15%.

In consequence of this influx, more attention has been paid to cleanliness in the homes and as a result of inspections, cases of scabies have been brought to notice from time to time. These have received the necessary treatment and bedding and clothing has been disinfected or destroyed as required.

The town-centre, providing as it does, facilities for shopping recreation and amusement, continues to attract a large daily population from the surrounds.

EMERGENCY LABORATORY FACILITIES. No demand has had to be made on the Laboratory established at Wellington as a War measure. The convenience of Harper Adams College may be made use of in the matter of investigation of food contamination.

AMBULANCE. The transfer of infectious cases to the local hospital by the means available, has not given rise to any difficulty during the year.

SHELTERS. There are three basement, one surface and one trench, together with twenty-six entry shelters available for the protection of the local inhabitants from enemy action. These are under the control of the Sanitary Inspector who is responsible for maintenance and cleanliness. In addition shelter protection is provided for children at the schools by the County Education Authority.

SWIMMING BATHS. These continue to be well patronised. Samples of the water for analyses were taken at mid-summer and the report, while generally satisfactory, advised additional chlorination.

WATER SUPPLIES. The town's supply is still provided by the local Water Company. Samples for analyses are taken at regular intervals, either through the Sanitary Department or by the Water Company's Officials. The results obtained from these have been satisfactory. The installation of machinery for chlorination - to meet the requirements of the Order of the Ministry of Health - has not taken place. It is hoped that little time will be lost in providing this second means of protection to the consumer, particularly when the possibility of contamination from extraneous sources has to be guarded against.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL & DRAINAGE. Considerable attention has again had to be given to this department. To improve conditions in the Bentley's Road section, a rider sewer has been installed which will partially meet the difficulties of this area, but there are still properties where it is necessary to provide improved sanitation and drainage.

In the Newtown district, difficulty was experienced as the result of seepage of sub soil water into the sewer by way of the joints which were defective. This was corrected as far as possible.

Flooding near the town centre as the result of excessive storm flow has engaged the attention of the Surveyor and it is hoped that this will be able to be remedied early in 1941.

New sewer connections have been made to the military estate at Dalelands and at the Great Western Railway yard. From time to time minor matters in connection with local choking of house connection have required attention.

No alterations in the sewage disposal plant have been made.

SCAVENGING. A weekly collection is aimed at in the town and this is carried out by means of a horse drawn vehicle provided with ample covering. Tipping at the two sites is controlled, as required, and the disposal of rats is, by arrangement, in the hands of the County Rat-catcher.

MORTUARY ACCOMMODATION. Premises in Great Hales Street have been earmarked to meet War emergency provisions. While water supplies are available on the premises, the Sanitary Inspector reports that he is unable to carry out necessary reconditioning pending the sanction of the Ministry of Health.

HOUSING. The Council has not undertaken the building of any new property during the year, but the estate of some one hundred houses erected to meet the needs of local service personnel has been completed and is in occupation.

Regular inspections of property are made by the Sanitary Inspector and such repairs and reconditioning as will maintain a good standard of hygiene, without entailing extensive reconstruction with the use of much material have been put in hand.

While notice has been taken of the Ministry of Health's recommendations as to the licencing of condemned property it has not been found necessary to apply for license in any case.

While a degree of overcrowding is inevitable in these times, no case has been brought to notice which has required action to be taken. Again, the question of the charging of extortionate rents to persons taking temporary accommodation in the town has given rise to no complaints.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that generally the care of Council property is satisfactory, although there are a few cases where strict supervision is required.

The two lodging-houses are reported to be well patronised.

MEAT & FOOD PRODUCTION. The supply of meat for rationing purposes still continues to come from the central abattoir at Whitchurch and is controlled locally by your Officer. Owing to lack of supply, no prepared food production is being made on local premises.

The market still provides opportunity for distribution of home-grown produce and unrationed foodstuffs and this is appreciated, particularly by the neighbouring Pottery towns.

To meet the demands of the Services, canteens under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. and the Salvation Army, are available.

MILK & DAIRIES. Little change has been made during the Year. At present there are two accredited suppliers and of the remaining seven, one has ceased to carry on his business. Inspections have been made from time to time by your Officer.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES. From a study of the notification returns made for the twelve months, it can be seen that not only has there been a comparative freedom from such disease but also that the small numbers notified have been confined to a very few disease groups.

Scarlet Fever heads the list. For this there were sixteen cases compared with seven in 1939, and fifteen of the patients were nursed in the local hospital.

Apart from the above, no other disease merits attention. One case of Diphtheria occurred early in the year and this, again, was treated in the hospital.

Measles and Whooping Cough, from the returns, appeared to be completely absent from the District: an unusual condition.

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INFECTIOUS DISEASES (cont.)

Diseases commonly associated with war and emergency conditions were completely absent.

The Tuberculosis Register shows little change from the preceding year: the number of cases totalling two more than in 1939.

Over the country generally, there has been a rise in the incidence of contagious skin disease and while no material returns have been made from your Area the possibility of increase and the necessity to make provision for treatment may devolve on the local Authority. At present the school clinic attends to children who are the most frequent cause of spread, and it is hoped that the County Authority will be able to provide accommodation, possibly at the local Institution, where all members of the Community will be able to receive attention which in more favourable times would have been able to have been carried out in their homes.

W.A.M.STEWART.

20/8/41.