# MARSHLAND RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

## Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for 1900.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of Marshland.*

GENTLEMEN,

At the commencement of a new Century, and in obedience to a Memorandum issued by the Local Government Board, it is necessary for me to alter and extend the Report it is my duty to make to you yearly, and to append thereto four new tables of Vital Statistics. If, in the following Report, I refer to conditions of the District well known to you all, and apparently unnecessary to mention, my excuse must be that it is information requested and appreciated by the Local Government Board, who necessarily are not acquainted with our local conditions.

As you are aware the old combined District of Wisbech was divided into the Rural Districts of Wisbech and Marshland on the passing of the Local Government Act of 1894, in order that each should be within its County's limits, and consequently I am unable to go further back than 1895 with the Statistics required in the new Tables I. and II.

You will also observe that I have, right through the last decade, adhered to the amount of population recorded at the Census of 1891, for each Sub-District, instead of estimating an increase or decrease, based on the result of the inter-censual period 1881—1891, as recommended by the Registrar-General. I have done this as I feel that, owing to the great agricultural depression so long prevalent amongst us, and there being no evidence in the Vital Statistics of marked alteration, there will be very little difference between the figures of the 1891 Census, and those of the Census this year when recorded.

The following is my Report for 1900:—

THE DISTRICT consists of twelve parishes in the County of Norfolk, situated on the North and North East of Wisbech, and having the general characteristic of Fen country geology, viz.:—A deposition of peat and silt on sand and gravel, which in turn rests on boulder clay. The configuration of the District is distinctly flat—no part rising many feet above sea-level. It is essentially rural in character, the density of population being one person to every 4½ acres. The chief occupation followed is agriculture, which has now for many years been in a depressed condition.

VITAL STATISTICS.—Tables of Statistics are appended hereto, viz.:—The new Tables I. to IV. required by the Local Government Board.

BIRTHS.—281 Births were registered during the year, of these 147 were males and 134 females. The birth-rate was 24·4 per 1,000 as compared with 22·9 in 1899, and the natural increase, *i.e.*, the excess of births over deaths, 113.

DEATHS.—168 Deaths were registered, giving a crude death-rate of 14·6 per 1,000. This is only ·2 above the average of the last five years.

AGE MORTALITY.—62 children under 5 years of age and 65 old people over 65 years died during the year. These figures show the mortality at the extremes of life.

THE INFANT DEATH-RATE.—46 infants under 1 year of age died, giving a death-rate of 163·7 per 1,000 registered births, and 4·0 per 1,000 living.

ZYMOTIC DEATHS.—11 deaths are recorded as occurring from the seven principal Zymotic Diseases, viz.:—(1) Small Pox, (2) Scarlet Fever, (3) Diphtheria, (4) Fevers—including Typhus, Enteric or Tyhoid, and other Continued Fevers, (5) Measles, (6) Whooping Cough, and (7) Diarrhœa.

THE ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE derived from the above-mentioned diseases was ·95 per 1,000 living.

# WISBECH RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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As you are aware the old combined District of Wisbech was divided into the Rural Districts of Wisbech and Marshland on the passing of the Local Government Act of 1894, in order that each should be within its County's limits, and consequently I am unable to go further back than 1895 with the Statistics required in the new Tables I. and II.

You will also observe that I have, right through the last decade, adhered to the amount of population recorded at the Census of 1891, for each Sub-District, instead of estimating an increase or decrease, based on the result of the inter-censual period 1881—1891, as recommended by the Registrar-General. I have done this as I feel that, owing to the great agricultural depression so long prevalent amongst us, and there being no evidence in the Vital Statistics of marked alteration, there will be very little difference between the figures of the 1891 Census, and those of the Census this year when recorded.

The following is my Report for 1900:—

THE DISTRICT consists of eight parishes in the Isle of Ely situated to the North, South and West of Wisbech, and having the general characteristic of Fen country geology, viz.:—A deposition of peat and silt on sand and gravel, which in turn rests on boulder clay. The configuration of the District is distinctly flat—no part rising many feet above sea-level. It is essentially rural in character, the density of population being one person to every five acres. The chief occupation followed is agriculture, which has now for many years been in a depressed condition.

VITAL STATISTICS.—Tables of Statistics are appended hereto, viz.:—The new Tables I. to IV. required by the Local Government Board.

BIRTHS.—252 Births were registered during the year, of these 120 were males and 132 females. The birth-rate was 29·4 per 1,000 as compared with 25·0 in 1899, and the natural increase, *i.e.*, the excess of births over deaths, 115.

DEATHS.—137 Deaths were registered, giving a crude death-rate of 16·0 per 1,000. This is 3·9 above the rate for 1899, and 2·5 above the average for the last five years.

AGE MORTALITY.—43 children under 5 years of age and 54 old people over 65 years died during the year. These figures show the mortality at the extremes of life.

THE INFANT DEATH-RATE.—37 infants under 1 year of age died, giving a death-rate of 146·8 per 1,000 registered births, and 4·3 per 1,000 living.

ZYMOTIC DEATHS.—8 deaths are recorded as occurring from the seven principal Zymotic Diseases, viz.:—(1) Small Pox, (2) Scarlet Fever, (3) Diphtheria, (4) Fevers—including Typhus, Enteric or Tyhoid, and other Continued Fevers, (5) Measles, (6) Whooping Cough, and (7) Diarrhœa.

THE ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE derived from the above-mentioned diseases was ·93 per 1,000 living.

## NOTIFIABLE ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

The Diseases notified in this District are those enumerated in the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, viz.:—Small Pox, Cholera, Diphtheria, Membranous Croup, Erysipelas, the disease known as Scarlatina or Scarlet Fever, and the Fevers known by any of the following names:—Typhus, Typhoid, Enteric, Relapsing, Continued or Puerperal; and by a recent Order of the Local Government Board to these are added Plague. The Act has been in force in the District since September, 1897.

SCARLET FEVER.—Only 1 case was notified, as compared with 27 in 1899. The case recovered.

DIPHTHERIA.—6 cases were notified, as compared with 10 in 1899. All the cases recovered.

ENTERIC FEVER.—4 cases were notified, with 1 death, as compared with 3 in 1899, all of which recovered.

ERYSIPELAS.—2 cases were notified, 1 of which proved fatal, as compared with 7 non-fatal cases in 1899.

DISINFECTION.—The houses of all notified cases are visited by the Inspector, disinfectants freely distributed, and on recovery the house is disinfected by the Inspector with Sulphureous Acid fumigation.

## NON-NOTIFIABLE ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

MEASLES.—This disease was prevalent to a slight extent in the Sub-District of Leverington, and caused 2 deaths.

WHOOPING COUGH was also prevalent in the same Sub-District, and 1 death was registered.

DIARRHŒA.—4 deaths occurred as compared with 2 in 1899.

## OTHER DISEASES.

CANCER caused 10 deaths, as compared with 14 in 1899.

INFLUENZA.—A severe wave of Epidemic Influenza passed over the country in the first quarter of the year, and this District did not escape; 12 deaths occurred, chiefly old people who succumbed to lung complications.

PHTHISIS or Consumption caused 10 deaths, while 3 more were registered from "other Tubercular Diseases," thus making 13 deaths from *Tuberculosis*, giving a death-rate of 1·5 per 1,000 living, and 94 per 1,000 of the total deaths.

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THE WATER SUPPLY.—A small number of the inhabitants derive their water supply from town mains, the water of which is obtained from the chalk formation; it is excellent in quality and abundant in quantity, being on the constant system. The vast majority of the people, however, have to depend on rain water for their domestic supply, as the sub-soil water is grossly polluted by the necessary agricultural operations, and in places is even brackish. The rainfall is collected in water-tight cisterns, safeguarded as far as possible from contamination.

THE SEWERAGE OF THE DISTRICT.—There is no system of Sewage Disposal in the District, the houses for the most part being drained to cesspools. Some, however, still drain into the nearest dyke, but these are gradually being remedied. The excrement disposal is by means of deep privy middens, one of the most frequent sources of nuisance in the District, and which, I have advocated for many years now, should be converted into pail closets. There is no public scavenging, the house refuse being applied to the land by the occupiers.

THE DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS, as well as the SLAUGHTER HOUSES in the District, have been inspected by the Inspector and myself, and generally are in a clean and satisfactory condition.

Finally, I have made systematic inspections of the District, in company with the Inspectors, besides attending to any complaints received and frequent inspections made when on my professional rounds.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

**EDWARD C. BURY, M.D.**

*Wisbech, February 14th, 1901.*

## NOTIFIABLE ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

The Diseases notified in this District are those enumerated in the Infectious Disease (Notification) Act, 1889, viz.:—Small Pox, Cholera, Diphtheria, Membranous Croup, Erysipelas, the disease known as Scarlatina or Scarlet Fever, and the Fevers known by any of the following names:—Typhus, Typhoid Enteric, Relapsing, Continued or Puerperal; and by a recent Order of the Local Government Board to these are added Plague. The Act has been in force since June, 1896.

SCARLET FEVER.—6 cases was notified, as compared with 22 in 1899. None of the cases proved fatal.

DIPHTHERIA.—18 cases were notified with two deaths, as compared with 18 cases and three deaths in 1899.

ENTERIC FEVER.—7 cases were notified, as compared with 11 in 1899. There was no fatal case.

ERYSIPELAS.—Only 3 cases were notified, and all recovered.

DISINFECTION.—The houses of all notified cases are visited by the Inspector, disinfectants freely distributed, and on recovery the house is disinfected by the Inspector with Sulphureous Acid fumigation.

## NON-NOTIFIABLE ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

MEASLES.—This disease was prevalent to a slight extent in the Sub-District of Emneth, and 1 death was registered.

WHOOPING COUGH.—This was very prevalent in the Sub-District of Walpole in the first quarter of the year, and 5 deaths were recorded.

DIARRHŒA.—3 deaths only were registered as compared with 6 in 1899.

## OTHER DISEASES.

CANCER caused 12 deaths, as compared with 16 in 1899.

INFLUENZA.—A severe wave of Epidemic Influenza passed over the district in the earlier months of the year, and claimed six victims, chiefly elderly people, who succumbed to lung complications.

PHTHISIS or Consumption caused 8 deaths, while 6 more were registered from "other Tubercular Diseases," thus making 14 deaths from *Tuberculosis*, giving a death-rate of 1·2 per 1,000 living, and 83 per 1,000 of the total deaths.

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THE WATER SUPPLY.—A small number of the inhabitants derive their water supply from town mains, the water of which is obtained from the chalk formation; it is excellent in quality and abundant in quantity, being on the constant system. The vast majority of the people, however, have to depend on rain water for their domestic supply, as the sub-soil water is grossly polluted by the necessary agricultural operations, and in places is even brackish. The rainfall is collected in water-tight cisterns, safeguarded as far as possible from contamination.

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THE DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS, as well as the SLAUGHTER HOUSES in the District, have been inspected by the Inspectors and myself, and generally are in a clean and satisfactory condition.

Finally, I have made systematic inspections of the District, in company with the Inspectors, besides attending to any complaints received and frequent inspections made when on my professional rounds.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

**EDWARD C. BURY, M.D.**

*Wisbech, February 21st, 1901.*