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Contributors

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BOROUGH OF MORPETH.

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORTS OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, AND THE SANITARY INSPECTOR AND SURVEYOR FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 31st, 1897.

MEDICAL REPORT.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,—

During the year 1897 the births registered within the borough of Morpeth have been—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Jan. 1st to June 30th	49	42	91
July 1st to Dec. 31st.....	43	41	84
Yearly totals	92	83	175

Birth-rate per 1,000 of the population 32

Population at census of 1891..... 5,219

" Estimated to June 30, 1896 5,369

" " " 1897 5,446

Deaths registered within the year—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Jan. 1st to June 30th	26	27	53
July 1st to Dec. 31st.....	25	25	50
Total	51	52	103

Excluding deaths of strangers in Morpeth Workhouse } 10 2 12

1897 death-rate per 1,000 of the population..... 18

1896 " " " 19

Infant mortality—number of deaths under 1

year of age 16

(Of these 11 were under 1 month, compared with 17 last year out of 32.)

Infant mortality per 1,000 births 91

The number of deaths under 1 year of age is 1 less than half the average number of the previous 4 years, and the infant mortality per 1,000 births shews a very marked decrease, being 70 below the average of the last 8 years.

Deaths from 1 to 65 years of age 76

" 65 and upwards 25

Number of deaths from phthisis 17

Death-rate from phthisis in 1897 3.2

" " 1896..... 3.0

INFANT MORTALITY.

Date.	Place.	Age under 1 year.	
Jan. 1	Bullers Grn.	5 days	Congenital debility
" 21	Spring Gds.	3 hours	Premature birth
" 30	Stanley Tce.	3 days	do.
Feb. 10	George and Dragon Yd.	2 days	Catarrhal pneumonia
Mar. 31	Oldgate St.	6 hours	Malformation of heart
April 17	King's Head Yard	4 mths.	Convulsions
May 27	Wellway	1 month	Congenital syphilis
June 1	Bilton's Yd.	10 mths.	Convulsions
July 16	Back Riggs	4 mths.	Pneumonia
Aug. 17	Newgate St.	23 days	Diarrhoea
" 18	Forrest Yd.	1 month	Gastro enteritis
" "	Workhouse	6 mths.	Convulsions
Sept. 9	Corporation Yard	3 days	Congenital defects
Nov. 14	Newgate St.	1 hour	Premature birth
Dec. 3	Manchr. St.	4 mths.	Marasmus
Dec. 12	Beeswing Yd	9 days	Premature birth
Number of deaths from zymotic disease			1
Death-rate from zymotic disease			18

During the year 1897 there has been no serious outbreak of epidemic disease, with the exception of measles, which was prevalent during the months of January, February, and March, attended, however, by a fatal result in one case only. The elementary schools were closed for three weeks with beneficial results, and were disinfected and cleansed. Scarlet fever was notified in isolated cases in January and February, and again in November and December. Cases of influenza occurred in the first three months of the year, and reappeared in the late autumn. Five isolated cases of enteric fever also occurred, without any further spread of the disease. It is a matter of congratulation that the death-rate has been lowered 1 per 1,000, and has reached a point 3 per 1,000 below the average of the last ten years. The infant mortality also shews a very satisfactory decrease, being 91 per 1,000 births, as compared with 179 per 1,000 births in 1896. The bye-laws of the borough of Morpeth having been completed,

and having received the sanction of the Local Government Board, are now available for enforcing penalties for default in carrying out necessary sanitary reforms in all departments. Those relating to the cleansing and whitewashing of entries to tenement properties have been advised with good effect, but it is a matter of regret that more progress should not have been made with regard to paving and draining of yards owing to the opposition of persons interested in this class of property. Inspection has been made of dairies and cowsheds under the orders for the purpose, and as a rule the regulations as to lighting and air space are complied with, and this is a most important matter in connection with the health of the animals and the purity of the milk supplied to the community.

WATER SUPPLY.—The town has been well supplied with pure water sufficient for drinking purposes by means of steam-pumping at Tranwell during the progress of the new waterworks, which are now rapidly approaching their completion. By the formation of a second storage and settling reservoir, the deepening of the old reservoir, and the addition of two filter-beds, a service-tank of large capacity, and the drift pipe which allows the flow of water from the borehole springs into the immediate supply well from which it gravitates to the town, the water supply will be more than doubled, and a storage has been arranged from which all purposes of drinking, baths, trade requirements, and public necessities of street watering, and drain flushing will be met for many years to come. It is expected that the works will be completed in about a month's time from date of this report.

SEWERAGE AND RIVER POLLUTION.—Much time and thought has been devoted to this subject

by the Council during the past year. With the hope of avoiding the enormous expense which would be entailed upon the town by either of the proposed schemes for carrying the sewage into the tidal waters of the River Wansbeck, the Council has made, and is still making, inquiries into the working of the septic and bacterial methods of sewage disposal, and for this purpose they deputed their Sanitary Inspector (Mr. Curry) to visit Exeter, Yeovil, and the works at Sutton and Hendon. Mr. Balfour, C.E., who has been called upon to advise the Council in this matter, is still awaiting further developments of the question of the above-mentioned treatment of sewage, more especially as to the possibility of the Local Government Board sanctioning such system in places where, as in Morpeth, it is impossible to obtain the amount of land now required by the Board for land filtration.

SCAVENGING AND ROAD REPAIRS.—The whole of the streets which had lapsed into bad repair owing to the prolonged dispute with the Earl of Carlisle as to his liability to contribute to their maintenance, have now been very carefully and effectually repaired, and well rolled in with the steam road roller. The scavenging has been well carried out, and extensive improvements have been made to the local footpaths by the laying of tar asphalt and renewing of the street pavements where necessary. A considerable amount of building has been progressing in the North Fields and on the Thorp Estate, as well as in the neighbourhood of the High Stanners.

FRED. W. SKRIMSHIRE,

Fell. Royal Instit. Public Health, &c.

Morpeth, March 8, 1898.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Steady progress has been made in the sanitation of the town, especially in the matter of the cleansing of tenement properties, the bye-laws having imposed duties on the landlords, as well as the tenants, which has resulted in a much cleaner and consequently much healthier state of affairs. Increased attention has been given to the requirements of the bye-laws relating to slaughter houses, dairies and cowsheds, for in every case where food such as milk and meat is being stored, or prepared for sale, too much care cannot be taken to guard against taint or infection. A common lodging house in Manchester Street has been licensed, the accommodation being clean and wholesome, each bed being single and having a wire-woven spring mattress. 68 nuisances from spouting, animals improperly kept, choked drains, paving of yards, lime-washing of staircases and passages, slaughter houses and cowsheds, and horse manure heaps, have been satisfactorily dealt with. Notices of intention to commence building

operations and laying of drains have in every case been forwarded to me, as required by the new streets and building bye-laws, and inspection of foundations and drains has been made accordingly. Plans for 10 new buildings and 13 for alterations have been submitted to and approved by you. There is still a steady demand for houses, especially of the tenement class, and these are being built, and sold almost as soon as built, on the Thorp estate. The works of water supply at Tranwell are approaching completion, and with a plentiful supply of water a more regular flushing of the sewers will be carried out, and the streets will be watered with pure water from the mains, instead of that from the Tanners' Burn. The method of sewage disposal is not yet fully determined, the Local Government Board (being careful that no errors may arise through hasty or ill-considered action) not being yet in a position to sanction the treatment of sewage without land filtration. It is, however, very necessary that an attempt be made by the Council to carry out that

portion of the sewage scheme, which relates to the collection of the various outfall into the river, into the one main sewer at the Low Stanners. This portion of the work, whatever scheme of disposal is ultimately adopted, is and must be common to all schemes, and if application is made to the Local Government Board for a loan for this purpose they would probably sanction the application, especially as this Council has agreed to a decision requiring them to cease the pollution of

the river within a period of (at the present) two years. Sanction being obtained for a loan for this purpose, the work could at once be proceeded with, and the disposal works deferred another 12 months. In the event of the Local Government Board refusing to sanction a loan, the inquiry would at least satisfy the County Council that this authority had endeavoured to come to a practical solution of the difficulty, and to carry out their obligations.

W. F. CURRY.

