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BOROUGH OF REIGATE.



Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

A. E. PORTER, M.A., M.D., D.P.H.

TOGETHER WITH

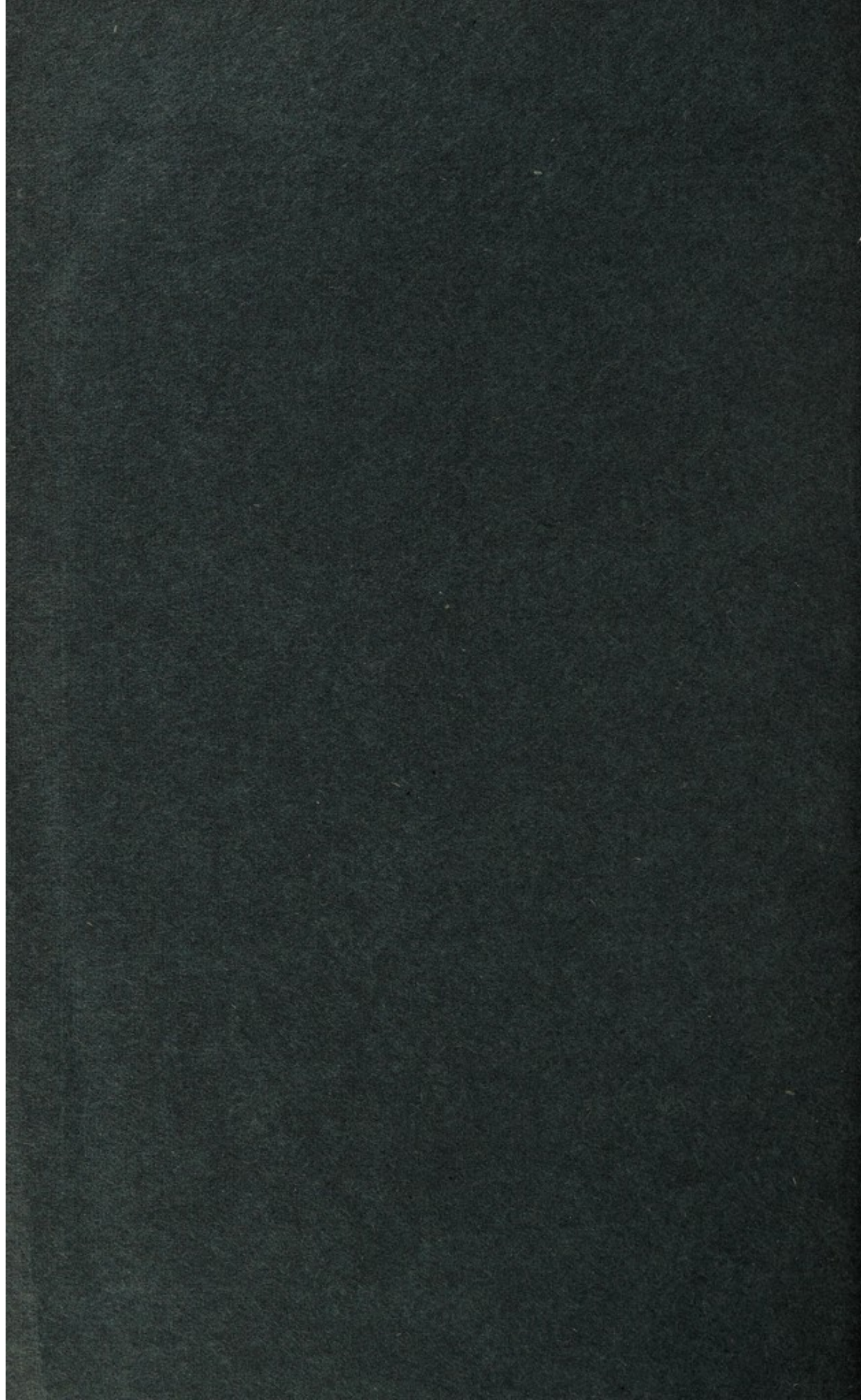
THE ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SANITARY INSPECTOR,

J. P. HUMPHERY, M.S.I.A.

1917.



BOROUGH OF REIGATE.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1917.

**To the Chairman and Members of the
Sanitary Committee.**

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Report for the year 1917, the twelfth of its series.

For reasons which are familiar, it is principally confined to accounts of the more important vital statistics, the prevalence of infectious disease, and the work done in connection with maternal and child welfare.

A certain amount of general sanitary work has been carried out, but under great difficulties. The disinfecting officer joined the Colours in the summer of 1917, the Borough Council having decided not to appeal to the Tribunal. This left the Sanitary Inspector with only one assistant, who has had to give the greater part of his time to disinfecting work. Many of the duties connected with food control were delegated to the Sanitary Inspector, and it is not surprising that routine inspections were perforce abandoned, and that even urgent nuisances did not receive their usual prompt attention. It is clear that the existing staff is insufficient for the minimum civilian requirements of the town, while the desirable margin of safety to meet either emergencies or illness is non-existent. Attempts to obtain the services of a suitable assistant, not liable to military service, were unsuccessful.

The Sanitary Inspector's brief appended report refers to the work done for troops stationed in the Borough. This was almost exclusively carried out in the early months of the year, before the disinfecting officer was called up. When he joined the Forces I felt it my duty to communicate with the Eastern Command, and indicate that we could not again render these services, should it be intended to station troops in the Borough during the autumn and winter. Possibly in consequence of this intimation, only a small force of non-combatant troops was sent to the Borough for a comparatively brief period, in place of the customary brigade or thereabouts that have hitherto been billeted each autumn for about eight months.

On only rare occasions since the summer have we been able to comply with the repeated requests of officers commanding the units, permanently stationed in the Borough, to carry out the disinfections they have considered desirable.

The civilian work has been especially heavy during the latter half of the year, apart from the question of food control, owing to the influx of families living in districts which have been subject to air-raids, and to the infectious disease which has been thereby introduced.

Speaking generally, there has been so far no evidence of grave deterioration of the health of the inhabitants as the result of the prolonged hostilities, though there has been an indication of a slightly increased death rate during 1917. The principal results that come under the notice of a medical officer of health have been the very marked fall in the birth rate, especially during 1917, and the excessive prevalence of infectious disease during each of the years 1915, '16 and '17. This prevalence is chiefly due to the movements of troops, individually and collectively, the interchange of visits among the civil inhabitants, and the influx of families for

the reasons referred to from localities where such diseases are permanently established. A bright feature is the steady decrease in infant mortality, which has so far manifested itself.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR E. PORTER

(Medical Officer of Health).

REIGATE,

16th April, 1918.

SECTION I.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Population.—The Registrar-General credits the Borough with a population of 26,397 for purposes of calculating the birth rate, and 23,680 for the death rate, the latter being 2,500 below the corresponding estimated population for 1916, and nearly 5,000 below the population at the census of 1911. How far either of these estimates may be approximately correct is a matter for conjecture. It can probably be safely said that the birth and death rates calculated therefrom are decidedly unreliable. There has been an excess of births over deaths amounting to 714 between Jan. 1914 and Dec. 1916, and there has been appreciable immigration of a permanent or semi-permanent nature during 1917. A considerable influx occurred during the latter half of 1917, though, in the case of temporary visitors, probably forming the majority, births and deaths that arise among them are mostly credited to the districts where their permanent homes are situated, and they are not properly included in the local population.

The applications for sugar tickets at the end of the year corresponded to a population of about 26,000, including inmates of public institutions, and the presence of men and women engaged on Government work must have compensated partially for men who have joined the Services.

Births.—Three hundred and fifty seven births were actually registered in 1917, the number, when corrected for births of Reigate babies occurring elsewhere, and of babies born in the Borough properly belonging to other localities, being 358. Of these 178 were males and 180 females, a somewhat unusual proportion. Among them were 34 illegitimate births, a higher proportion than has previously been recorded. The number 358 compares with 466 in 1916, and a mean of 462 for the five years 1912-16. There

was a marked falling off during the third and fourth quarters. Calculated on the population, the birth rate was 13·6 per 1,000 as against 16·4 in 1916, and a mean of 16·0 for the five years 1912-16.

Deaths.—The nett deaths were 315 as against 309 in 1916, and a mean of 307 for the five years 1912-16. Of the deaths 51 per cent. were among persons of 65 years and upwards, 18 per cent. among persons of 80 and upwards, and 3 per cent. among those over 90. These proportions do not differ essentially from those of 1916, and do not greatly exceed those of the earlier years of the war. There was an appreciable increase of deaths from malignant disease, otherwise there is nothing of significance to record.

The nett death rate, calculated on the population estimated by the Registrar-General, was 13·3 per 1,000. This is a figure which has not been approached since 1899, the rate having progressively fallen since 1876-80, when it was 14·0, to between 10 and 11 during the ten years preceding the war. It is, however, impossible to draw reliable deductions from the figures of a single year, especially when the population is so uncertain. The death rate calculated for 1916 was 11·8, and the mean for the five years 1912-16 was 11·0.

Of greater significance is the fact that the births only exceeded the deaths by 62, a far smaller margin than has hitherto been recorded. It may be that this margin will be still smaller in the course of 1918.

Infant Mortality.—There were 16 deaths of infants under one year of age, as against 26 in 1916, and a mean of 30 during the five years 1912-16. The infant mortality was 45 per 1000 births, as against 56 in 1916 and a mean of 65 for the five years 1912-16. The steady fall in this figure is satisfactory and gratifying. The measures taken by the Council to conserve infant life are described at some length in a later section. It would be presumptuous to attribute

to these measures the whole of the fall in the mortality which has taken place.

Of the 16 deaths 6 were due to "Congenital debility and malformation including premature birth," 3 to pneumonia, 2 to digestive trouble, and 1 to injury at birth. Among the legitimate children the mortality was at the rate of 34, and among the illegitimate 147 per 1000 births.

Both the deaths from diarrhœa occurred in the same street, one in August and the other in November. The mothers were hopelessly thriftless, and apparently incapable of following the advice given them.

The infant mortality in England and Wales during 1917 was 97, and in the 148 smaller towns (Census populations between 20,000 and 50,000) it was 93.

SECTION II.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

1. THE NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Scarlet Fever.—Nineteen cases were notified by doctors, and one case was found by myself, through the supervision of absentees from school. They occurred in 18 different houses, and all but one were removed to hospital. There were no deaths. Over half of them were notified in the first quarter of the year, and there was no epidemic. No return cases occurred. All the patients on admission to hospital had their throats and noses examined bacteriologically, and six were found to be harbouring the diphtheria bacillus, three in the throat, two in the nose, and one in both throat and nose. Suitable precautions were taken, and they were re-examined at home after discharge. In addition to these civilian patients, seven cases of scarlet fever occurred among troops stationed in the Borough, and were dealt with by the Military Authorities.

Diphtheria.—Thirty-four cases were notified by medical practitioners, 3 were found by myself in the course of visiting absentees from school, 4 were found in school, and 8 in the course of enquiries at infected houses. The total of 49 occurred in 23 houses, and 47 were removed to hospital. In five instances the infection was confined to the nose. Although the type of disease was frequently severe, only two deaths occurred. The number of attacks was largely swollen by the incidence of the disease in two large families. In one, consisting of father, mother and 12 children, all except the father and mother were attacked at short intervals, and a further daughter working elsewhere failed with the disease during a home visit. In another family, consisting of mother and eight children, five of the latter were attacked.

With the exception of one case in January, the Borough was absolutely free from diphtheria till August. From that month onward the incidence manifested itself partly as a sharp and definite outbreak at the Reigate end of the town, and partly as an indefinite outbreak in the Redhill and Earlswood neighbourhoods.

The outbreak in Reigate, consisting of 24 cases and 5 carriers in 8 houses, ostensibly opened with an attack on the 3rd September, followed by another on the 9th, with a further sequence connected with attendance at the Infant Department of St. Mark's School, but it was not until the 30th September that the source of the infection was discovered. This was a boy (E. H.), aged 5, who not only infected several children in the school referred to, but also others with whom he came in contact out of school. The history was that he visited relations at Holmwood, from the 12th to the 17th August, where two of the inmates were attacked by diphtheria, one of them fatally. After his return to Reigate he had a discharge from the nose. I had seen him in school, in the course of a systematic examination of all

the children on the 21st September, but his nose and throat were perfectly healthy in appearance. In view of the history subsequently obtained, I examined him bacteriologically on the 30th, and found the diphtheria bacillus present in both throat and nose. His sister, aged 2, had discharges from both nose and ear, dating, according to the mother, from an attack of measles at Whitsuntide (*i.e.*, the end of May). The discharge from the nose was of a diphtheritic nature; that from the ear was not examined, but cleared up in hospital. Other small outbreaks of diphtheria in Caterham and Goudhurst (Kent) appear to have been connected directly or indirectly with this family.

The less definite outbreak, occurring during the last four months of the year in the Redhill and Earlswood neighbourhood, was unconnected with school attendance, and appears to have been associated largely with the influx of families from London, which occurred in the late summer. The disease had been especially prevalent in those parts of London from which they were mainly derived.

In spite of the repeated bacteriological examination of convalescents before discharge from hospital, I found six to be still infectious after return home. Some went back to hospital, while others remained under supervision at home until negative results were obtained. There were two "return" cases, an unusual occurrence in connection with diphtheria. The new patients and the infecting cases were taken to hospital.

Carriers.—Of 49 healthy inmates of infected houses, 7 were found to be infectious, making with one school contact 8 carriers, all of whom were removed to hospital. Four were infectious in the throat alone, 1 in the nose alone, and 3 in both throat and nose.

Chronic Infection.—Only two instances were met with during the year. One was a child who remained infectious from the 25th September, 1916, till the 29th January, 1917;

the other from the 18th September, 1916, till the 14th May, 1917, a period of 8 months.

Military Cases.—One officer home on leave was attacked, and was removed to a military hospital.

Measles and German Measles.—These diseases were present in epidemic form during the spring and summer, 306 notifications of the former (54 by parents) and 204 of the latter (1 by a parent) being received. Ten of the measles cases notified by parents were second or third attacks in the same household. In addition, 142 unnotified cases of measles were reported from the schools, and the diagnosis verified. There was necessarily some degree of confusion between the two diseases, but speaking generally, the incidence of notified cases of measles was mainly among children between the ages of 5 and 15, while that of German measles chiefly occurred between the ages of 15 and 25. It will be understood that, so far as doctors are concerned, only the first case in a house or public institution is notifiable, though apparently parents or guardians are expected to notify subsequent attacks. The total 652 cases definitely heard of falls far short of the total number of patients attacked. Nevertheless, only one death was attributed to the diseases—a boy of 10, the inmate of a boarding preparatory school, succumbing in March.

Both diseases were present in the Borough at the beginning of the year, measles reaching its maximum prevalence in July (116 notifications), while the maximum number of cases of German measles occurred in April (64). Both fell off rapidly from these points.

Visits were paid by the Health Visitor, so far as was practicable, to all cases of these diseases in working-class families containing young children, and were repeated when necessary. The Borough Council agreed to take selected cases into hospital for treatment, but parents failed to avail themselves of this facility. The consent of the Local

Government Board was obtained to supply milk to patients under the age of 5 in necessitous cases, but this proved to be unnecessary. All cases of any severity were under the charge of doctors, as is usual in this neighbourhood.

The clerical work involved by the notification of measles during an epidemic has to be experienced in order to be realised, and the diversion of the time of the Health Visitor from the supervision of young babies is very appreciable. During a period like the present one, when sufficient assistance both of a nursing and clerical nature is unobtainable at short notice, it is a question whether the results are commensurate with the labour involved, and whether, in a neighbourhood where medical advice is usually sought, a suitable fee to doctors for notifying severe cases, requiring removal to hospital or nursing assistance, would not reasonably meet requirements. No one seriously suggests that notification is of any appreciable assistance in limiting the spread of the disease.

The following schools were closed in the course of the outbreak :—St. Matthew's Infants', St. John's Infants', National Infants', St. Mark's Infants', Frenches Road Infants', Cromwell Road Infants'.

Among the military population 28 cases of German measles were notified.

Erysipelas.—Two cases among the civilian and two among the military population were notified.

Cerebro-Spinal Fever.—No cases occurred in the civilian population, but two were notified among the troops stationed in the Borough.

Ophthalmic Neonatorum.—A baby brought up to the Health Centre in May was found to be suffering from this disease. The midwife attending the confinement had failed to notify, and was censured by the Council. The attack was moderately severe, but the condition quickly improved under local treatment carried out by the Health Visitor. **A**

second notification was received in November, the baby having been born in the Union Infirmary. After leaving the institution, treatment was carried out at home under the direction of the Health Visitor.

Enteric Fever.—An adult of 60 was attacked with fever and indefinite symptoms in July, and, as his blood gave a good positive re-action against a culture of typhoid bacilli, he was removed to hospital. The course of the disease, however, somewhat negatived the diagnosis. He had not been inoculated, but may possibly have suffered from an unrecognised attack in the past. The one death recorded from this disease was that of a boy, whose parents belonged to Reigate, but who was residing temporarily in London.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis.—Forty-eight cases were notified in 46 different dwellings, and a few further cases were reported among discharged soldiers, who were not officially notified. A few contacts were examined at the County Tuberculosis Dispensary, and as no arrangements for systematic domiciliary visits have been made by the County Council, these have been paid by the Borough Health Visitor.

Five of the patients were inmates of Netherne Asylum, derived from the Borough. Eight of the cases were visitors to the town. During the year 19 died, and 3 left Reigate permanently.

Other Forms of Tuberculosis.—Seventeen cases were notified, the organs involved being the hip in four instances, glands of the neck in 3, abdominal glands in 2, the larynx, ribs, fingers, glands of arm, face, brain, chest, and anus in one instance each.

2. THE NON-NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Whooping Cough was somewhat prevalent in South Park at the end of the year, and St. Luke's School was closed

in consequence. There was one death in January, in another part of Reigate.

Mumps was the non-notifiable disease that gave us the most trouble. It had been prevalent in Reigate in 1916, and was spreading to Redhill towards the end of that year. In 1917 the following schools required closing in consequence: St. John's (all departments), Cromwell Road (all departments), Frenches Road (all departments). There were 417 cases reported from the various schools, and visited for the purpose of diagnosis, as compared with 519 in 1916. These numbers fall very far short of the actual attacks.

Chicken Pox.—There were 214 cases reported from the schools, and these were spread over the greater part of the Borough.

SECTION III.

CHILD WELFARE.

The domiciliary visits to houses containing young infants were somewhat interrupted by the epidemic of measles, and by changes in the staff. Miss Mark, who entered upon her duties in December, 1916, left on the 26th May, 1917. Her successor, Miss Gilders, commenced on the 7th August. During the interval Mrs. Clarke, of Surbiton House, kindly placed at our disposal Nurse Hutchinson, who entered whole-heartedly into the work, which was entirely novel to her. The measles outbreak involved 345 visits.

In all, 318 primary and 1779 subsequent visits were paid to houses where infants had recently been born. The houses visited for the first time included all of the working-class type, and some of a larger character. In a few instances the parents indicated a desire that no further visits should be paid, and in a few more instances similar requests were made at subsequent visits. Domiciliary supervision of

infants became somewhat less effective towards the end of the year than formerly, from the frequency with which mothers were not at home, through work or difficulties in procuring food supplies.

Breast feeding has been fairly satisfactorily maintained, and mothers have been encouraged to persevere by gifts of milk from the Voluntary Committee. It would be still further promoted by better facilities for dental treatment prior to confinement than now exists, and perhaps by the provision of nutritious dinners. The inauguration of better dental facilities both for expectant mothers and for children of school age is a subject which should receive the attention of the Council. It has been clearly shown that there is a distinct relationship between the condition of the teeth and the quantity and quality of maternal milk.

When artificial feeding was resorted to, milk has frequently been provided by the Voluntary Committee, and two brands of dried milk are stocked at the Health Centre, and sold at cost price.

In a few instances the bottle used for artificial feeding has been the long tube pattern. It is to be regretted that this type is still purchasable in the Borough, and still more that its sale is not made illegal. In the instances met with, the firms of chemists who sold the abominations were communicated with, and one of them (a large multiple shop firm in Redhill) undertook not to stock any more. No reply was received from any of the other chemists. Cheap bottles of a suitable pattern are stocked at the Centre.

Great assistance has been afforded by the local Inspector of the N. S. P. C. C. and by the Guardians' Infant Life Inspector.

Health Centre.—Much difficulty was experienced in finding a house of suitable size and convenient situation for use as a clinic for mothers and infants, but towards the end of 1916 a detached house, in a road leading off the main

thoroughfare between Reigate and Redhill, was obtained. With the reservation that no one Centre can be sufficiently accessible for parents from all portions of a town with so large an area as Reigate, the premises are admirably adapted for the purpose. In addition to three rooms allocated to the Health Visitor, who acts as Caretaker, there are on the ground floor a large waiting room, the Health Visitor's office, and the Doctor's consulting room. On the first floor is a nursery, while a second room on this floor serves as an office for the School Nurse. The consulting room is used also for the purposes of a school clinic. It is worth considering if this room might not be utilized for a dental clinic as well, the need for which has been referred to already. There is a good kitchen, and ample storage accommodation.

Infant consultations are held on Thursday afternoons. Teas are provided for the mothers by the Voluntary Committee, and "Health Talks" are given. Dried milk and other foods, together with drugs ordered by the doctor, are stocked and sold at favourable prices. A stock of sugar was obtained through the Royal Commission on the sugar supply.

The first consultation was held on the 19th April, and the only subsequent Thursday in the year missed was the 27th December.

On the 36 occasions, 261 individual children attended, making 826 attendances. Of these 14 were children from adjoining rural parishes (21 attendances) by arrangement with the County Council. Children up to the age of 5 are accepted.

Since the 23rd October the Centre has also been open on six Tuesday afternoons for needlework and boot-mending classes. Mothers bring their babies, who are weighed, and receive advice from the Health Visitor. Teas are provided. There were 20 individual mothers attending the needlework classes (36 attendances), while 9 attended a boot-mending

demonstration. Forty-three attendances by 36 babies were made on these afternoons.

In the latter half of the year the Council had under consideration the provision of a trained nurse to act as midwife or monthly nurse. There are several practical objections to the direct engagement of a midwife by a comparatively small local authority, and the Child Welfare Sub-Committee were asked to deal with the subject and report thereon. After considering the desirability of forming a District Nursing Association, the Sub-Committee, recommended that the Council should enter into an arrangement with Mrs. Clarke to provide a trained midwife, Mrs. Clarke undertaking to deal with the bookings, taking of fees, etc., and to pay over any sums so received to the Borough Treasurer, the Council to pay Mrs. Clarke at the rate of £100 a year. The Council adopted this recommendation, and it was agreed that the arrangement should be in force, in the first instance for an experimental period of six months. The fee for the services of the nurse as midwife was fixed at 17/6, and as monthly nurse at 15/-, these being the rates accepted by the unqualified midwives practising in the district. Interviews with prospective patients take place at the Health Centre. It was also agreed that the nurse should be available for the nursing of non-infectious illness among mothers and young children, when her maternity work permits, the fee per visit being 3d. This arrangement received the approval of the Local Government Board, and Nurse Varvell commenced her duties on the 1st January, 1918. Owing to the serious fall in the birth rate, it can safely be anticipated that the fees received will fall far short of the cost of the arrangement, but the deficit will be thoroughly justified. The unqualified midwives are as efficient as can be expected of their type, but their ideas on infant feeding and clothing are hopelessly out of date, and the effect of the injudicious advice they

give the mothers is difficult and often impossible to counter-act after they have ceased to attend. In addition, there will be a fair chance of useful advice being given to expectant mothers, and of medical assistance being obtained when necessary.

Provision has been made for the payment of fees to doctors called in by Nurse Varvell, when acting as midwife, where the mother is unable to do so, according to a scale approved by both the Local Government Board and the local medical profession.

Ante-natal work.—Up to the present it has not been practicable to initiate this valuable portion of a scheme for maternity and child welfare. All the midwives practising in the Borough were invited to attend the Health Centre and bring with them any of their clients requiring medical advice, but there was no response. Now that a trained midwife is available, a beginning is possible. One of the most obvious needs is the provision of better facilities for dental treatment than now exists.

It is also hoped to make some investigations into the causation of still births when suitable opportunities offer themselves. It is probably common knowledge that venereal disease plays a very important part in this matter.

Notifications of Births.—The births actually occurring in the Borough in 1917 were 361. Of these 320 were duly notified. Of the 41 not notified 22 occurred in large houses. In two of the remainder unqualified nurses attended the confinements without doctors. All cases attended by registered midwives were duly notified.

Nine still births were notified during the year.

Voluntary Agencies.—I mentioned in my report for 1916 that the Child Welfare Sub-Committee consists principally of a committee of ladies who were formerly a sub-committee of the local War Distress Committee; they then concerned themselves solely with the wives of men serving with the

Forces, the assistance given being derived from the funds placed at their disposal by that Committee. When they extended their functions to the wives of civilians, they raised a further fund to supply mothers with milk and other necessaries. Towards the end of 1917, however, the distinction and the grants from the Distress Committee disappeared, and one fund serves the wives of soldiers, sailors and civilians.

It is impossible to speak too highly of the value of the work carried out by this Sub-Committee. Not only do they provide for the wants of needy mothers, but their help at the Health Centre is invaluable on the afternoons when consultations are held. It is they who maintain the stock of foods and drugs and provide the teas. The report of their Chairman for the year 1917 showed that 315 mothers had been visited, that 154 had been assisted, chiefly by gifts of milk, but also by assistance in the house, and that 45 parcels of infant clothing had been given, these being derived from the same source as was referred to in my report for 1916.

In spite of some initial setbacks and sources of discouragement, the infant consultations and meetings for the mothers have undoubtedly become popular during the eight months they have been held, a result very largely due to the untiring efforts of these ladies.

A very successful Baby Show was organised by this Sub-Committee in the summer, and, although the time at their disposal for making the arrangements was scanty, and although the weather on the day selected was the reverse of propitious, the attendance of mothers and babies was surprisingly good.

Valuable help at the weekly infant consultations has also been given by Mrs. Comper, the Health Visitor formerly of the Reigate Rural District Council, and now of the Surrey County Council, and, while Mrs. Gilders receives and weighs the babies in her office, Mrs. Comper assists the doctor in the consulting room.

SECTION IV.

Laboratory Work.--Owing to the prevalence of diphtheria in the last quarter of the year, 57 swabs from contacts with patients were sent to the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine. Adding these to the specimens examined by myself, the results were as follows :—

	Diph- theria bacillus found.	Diph- theria bacillus not found.	Hof- mann's bacillus found.
Suspected diphtheria	31	89	18
Contacts	9	89	15
Convalescent diphtheria patients ...	15	44	9
„ scarlet fever patients...	1	8	1
Total	56	230	43

Eighteen specimens of sputum were examined; the tubercle bacillus was present in 4.

Three specimens of spinal fluid yielded the specific organism on one occasion.

One sample of blood from a suspected case of typhoid fever gave a positive Widal reaction.

A few miscellaneous specimens of urine, sputum, swabs from throats, etc. were sent me from the Redhill War Hospital.

Veterinary Inspection of Cows.—Mr. Squair, M.R.C.V.S. carried out his usual quarterly inspection of cows kept within the Borough, the numbers being 201, 208, 220, and 235 respectively. During the first three quarters there were 14, and during the fourth quarter 15 cowkeepers. Several of the herds are private ones. All cows were found to be healthy in the first, second and fourth quarterly inspections. During the quarter ending the 30th September two were considered suspicious. One was in generally poor condition, and another had an indurated udder. Both passed the tuberculin test.

*Sanitary Department,
Municipal Buildings,
Reigate,*

April 16th, 1918.

To the Chairman and Members of the Sanitary Committee.

GENTLEMEN,

ANNUAL REPORT.

In accordance with the suggestion of the Local Government Board that only matters outside the general routine of the department should be reported on, I beg to present my report as follows for the year 1917, the twenty-first of its series.

Three of the staff are in the army, consequently only urgent matters can receive attention. The Disinfecting Officer joined the Army in July, and it has been impossible to obtain a capable substitute, with the result we have had to refuse both to disinfect large numbers of horse rugs from the Remount Depôt, and also to comply with repeated requests to cleanse soldiers infested with vermin.

It is impossible to estimate the number of troops that have been billeted in the Borough during the year, as movements of troops have repeatedly taken place of which no official notice has been given.

Upwards of 100 empty houses have been more or less in use during the year as billets, and in addition large numbers of troops have been billeted on the inhabitants, as also is the personnel of the Redhill Remount Depôt.

The houses so occupied have been inspected as far as possible, in many instances at the request of the Military, to whom reports have been sent, 970 visits of inspection having been made. Four lists of houses that should be avoided in billeting troops have been supplied to the Police, each list containing an average of 200 houses.

40 temporary earth closets with necessary screens and roofs have been erected, 40 urine pails provided, 100 feet run of ablution benches fixed and 30 wash hand bowls provided.

The night soil from the temporary earth closets is cleared daily, and the refuse from the houses solely occupied by troops is removed 3 times a week. This work is done by direct labour employed by the Town Council, the Military undertaking to pay the usual departmental charges plus 10% for supervision and establishment charges.

50 Men attacked with Vermin, or Scabies have been dealt with at the disinfecting station, the men being bathed and suitably treated while their clothes, and kit and equipment is disinfected.

The following articles have also been treated at the disinfecting station 1,622 horse rugs, 1,173 army blankets, 222 mattresses, 189 bolsters, 5 pillows, 233 pieces of wearing apparel, 36 kits and equipments.

39 rooms, from which infectious cases of illness have been removed, have been disinfected.

All shops that supply food stuffs to the Army have been inspected as to the quality of the supply and sanitary conditions of the premises. 235 such inspections have been made.

It will be understood that nearly all this work was carried out prior to the calling up of the Disinfecting Officer. Since his departure we have been obliged to practically abandon work for the military authorities.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. P. HUMPHERY,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

