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Contributors

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STEVENAGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1910.

To the Members of the Stevenage Urban District Council.

Stevenage, Herts., January 27, 1911.

Gentlemen,-

For the year 1910, the general health of your district has been good. Last year I was able to report a very low death rate, namely, 9.53. This year, although the rate is somewhat higher, namely, 13.25, it is below the general average for England. There has been no marked epidemic of infectious disease, but there have been two mild epidemics of mumps and whooping cough. Under the heading of "Schools" I give a full report on the new County Council school for boys. This year there is again a marked decline of deaths among children under the age of one year. Owing to the climatic conditions of last summer, namely, absence of sunshine and excessive rainfalls, there was no epidemic of summer diarrhosa, which usually is the chief cause in preducing a high infantile mortality.

Under their proper headings, I will now summarise my report, namely:-

THE DEATH-RATE.

There were 57 deaths notified to me, seven of which occurred at Hitchin. The death-rate per thousand of estimated population for the year 1910 is, as before stated, 13.25. For the three previous years the rate was as follows:—1907, 12.00; 1908, 13.25; 1909, 9.53.

The various ages at which the notified deaths occurred appear as follows:—Under one year, 5; between one and five years, 5; five and fifteen, 2; 15 and 25, 3; 25 and 65, 24; 65 and

over, 18; total, 57.

Of the 18 deaths which occurred over the age of 65 years, three were between 65 and 70; nine between 70 and 80; six between 80 and 90; total, 18.

The infantile mortality per thousand births registered is 34.16, being a marked decrease from the previous years, namely:—1907, 66.14; 1908, 78.47; 1909, 55.4.

This marked decrease of infantile mortality is most satisfactory, and is due to the cause suggested above namely, an absence of summer diarrhoa and to the supplying of parents with the cards under the Midwives Act, 1908, giving the necessary instructions in regard to feeding, cleanliness, &c. These cards I consider to be most efficacious, especially so in those cases where the infant is artificially fed.

There were four deaths in the district due to tubercular disease, three of which were pulmonary tubercular.

THE BIRTH-RATE.

One hundred and twenty-six births were registered during this year, of which 64 were females and 62 males. This is an increase of 17 on last year, and the figures for the three previous years are given hereunder:—1907, 121; 1908, 117; 1909, 109.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

There were 22 cases notified to me in your district, namely:—Chicken-pox, 10; measles, 7: erysipelas, 5: total, 22.

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There was no death from infectious diseases and no cases notified to me under the Public Health (Tuberculosis) Reuglations 1908. There was no case of scarlet fever or diphtheria notified to me this year. Last year one case of scarlet fever was notified.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

An inquiry was held by the Medical Officer of Health for the County, Dr F. E. Fremantle, in the Council-room on September 30, 1910, in regard to the action that you are taking in the matter of providing this district with a suitable isolation hospital. The Hitchin Joint Hospital Board has been dissolved, and it is now necessary for this district to make tis own provision for the treatment of infectious cases. The site that you are taking steps to obtain is a most suitable one, and can be connected with the town water supply, and there are no inhabited houses in its immediate neighbourhood. Plans for an isolation hospital I hope to submit to you shortly.

WATER SUPPLY.

The new reservoir, which was started in September, 1909, was completed and in use in June, 1910. Its capacity is 300,000 gallons, which, with the old supply, gives a total capacity of 365,000 gallons. No complaints have been received during the last year as regards the condition of the water. The supply has been constant.

NUISANCES.

There was one case of marked overcrowding in a cottage in your district, and it was only after proceedings had been taken that the nuisance was abated. The other nuisances which were reported to me have, in every case, been abated.

PREMISES UNDER INSPECTION.

With your inspector I have visited all the dairies, cowsheds, bakehouses, slaughter-houses, &c. All workshops have been periodically inspected by us and found in good sanitary condition and conforming with the regulations of the Factory Act, 1901. A new cowshed at Fairlands farm has been added to our list. The leaflets published by the Pure Milk Society have been adopted in this district.

SCHOOLS.

The County Council school for boys in Letchmore Green-road referred to in my last report has been in use for the greater part of the year. There are certain slight defects as regards sanitation and lavatory accommodation to which I have already drawn the attention of the Medical Officer of Health for the county. It is to be regretted that when the new school was built no suitable room was provided for the medical inspection of school children. The Church of England schools on the Bury-mead are now used only for girls and infants. During this last year it was not necessary to close either of the schools.

SEWAGE FARM, &C.

As in my last year's and previous reports, I would again point out the desirability of an efficient storm water drainage system. The working of the sewage farm during the past year has been most satisfactory.

The usual statistics are appended,

I am. Gentlemen.

Your obedient servant,
PETER R. TARBET,
Medical Officer of Health.