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THE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF THE
SEDFIELD UNION.

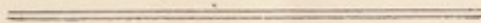


Annual Report

OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE


Year Ended December 31st, 1903.



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*To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District
Council of the Sedgfield Union.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in submitting to you my Sixth Annual Report on the health and sanitary state of the Sedgfield Rural District, for the year ending December 31st, 1903, and in doing so it is necessary for me to remind you that although the Durham County Asylum is part of your District, the vital statistics of the same are not dealt with in this report, as it is a separate Public Institution where patients are brought from all parts of the county, and to include it would be manifestly unfair and misleading as to the general health of your district.

POPULATION.—The estimated population of your Sanitary Districts differ from the total population of your Union (21,530) by the exclusion of Low Spennymoor (Incorporated with Spennymoor Urban District 1895) and the Durham County Asylum; and is based upon the rate of increase of the population during the decennium 1891—1901, and amounts to 19,337, to the middle of 1904.

THE MORTALITY, or number of deaths, from all causes and at all ages in the past year reached a total of 347, being an increase of 49 compared with the record for the year 1902; but that year has the distinction of having the lowest mortality rate for the past twenty-five years.

The total comprises 186 males and 161 females, and, I regret to state, is largely made up of those of tender years, no less than 181 deaths of children under five years making up that number, or more than half of all the deaths registered.

THE RATE OF MORTALITY is 17·4 per 1000 of the estimated population, being a little higher than last year, but comparing favourably with the average of the last ten years for your District, and with that of the County for this year, the respective rates being 17·8 and 17·7.

The Death-rate, considering the unprecedented rainfall, the undue prevalence of fog, and the almost minus quantity of sunshine during the past year, is much better than I anticipated, and considerably more favourable than might reasonably have been expected.

BIRTHS registered during the year were returned as 736, and of this number 405 were males and 331 females, being an increase of 30 compared with the total for the year 1902.

The Birth-rate shews an improvement upon the last year, being 38 per 1000 of the estimated population, whereas in 1902 it was 36·9; both rates comparing very favourably with 35·6, the County rate for this year.

INFANT MORTALITY (that is the deaths of children under one year of age).—This is one of the largest factors in your death-rate, amounting to no less than 142, with a death-rate per 1000 births of 192·7; whilst infant mortality has always been a very marked feature in your district, and never compares favourably with the same rate for the County, which for this year is 161, it is with much regret I have to state that a higher infant mortality rate than the present one has not been known for the past twenty-five years.

Climatic conditions before referred to no doubt contribute something to the explanation of this deplorable state of affairs; but there are so many causes at work, such as early and improvident marriages, child life insurance, over-crowding, and the persistence of ignorance and foolish prejudice in the feeding and clothing of infants, that, notwithstanding all the efforts of education, the pride of ignorance is so great as to form a barrier, neutralizing the best efforts of those who seek to remedy this evil. Much good could be effected by teaching the main principles of hygiene in our schools, and so preparing the way for an intelligent interest, instead of as now leaving to chance the rearing of children, upon which the very foundation of our national existence depends.

ZYMOTIC DEATH-RATE (that is the total number of deaths due to the seven principal zymotic diseases, viz.:—Measles, Small-pox, Scarlet Fever (Enteric Fever, Typhus Fever, and other doubtful forms of Continued Fever), Diphtheria, Whooping Cough and Diarrhœa).—The deaths from the above causes numbered 27, being proportioned as follows:—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	3 cases.
Diphtheria...	...	...	6 „
Enteric Fever	...	...	2 „
Measles	...	...	12 „
Whooping Cough	...	...	2 „
Diarrhœa	...	...	2 „
<hr/>			
Total			27 cases.

The death-rate per 1000 of the estimated population being 1·3, a most satisfactory state of affairs when compared with the zymotic rate of the County of 2·01.

It is worthy of remark that the diseases which are quite rightly regarded as being the more serious disorders, such as Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria, and Enteric Fever, claim the least number of victims; whilst Measles, which is too frequently treated as a trivial disease, caused more deaths than the three more virulent ones put together. It is pleasing to be able to report that the number of deaths from Enteric Fever and Diarrhœa again this year, as last, only occupy a minor place in the list, two from each disease being recorded, the result of a cold wet summer and autumn, the only legacy for which we can be grateful to them for.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE notified during the year.—It is satisfactory to be able to report a decline of 152 in the number of notifications received, 269 cases being reported as against 421 in 1902.

The following list in the order of their numerical frequency denotes their prevalence in the two years 1902 and 1903.

	1902.	1903.
Scarlet Fever ...	310 cases.	182 cases.
Erysipelas ...	58 „	46 „
Continued Fever ...	20 „	11 „
Diphtheria ...	15 „	13 „
Enteric Fever ...	13 „	11 „
Membranous Croup ...	2 „	3 „
Puerperal Fever ...	2 „	3 „
Relapsing Fever ...	1 „	<i>Nil</i>
Total	421 cases.	269 cases.

SCARLET FEVER showed a satisfactory decline of 128 of the number of cases notified in the year 1903, as against three of 1902.

This disease, as is now almost invariably the case, was of a mild nature, only three deaths being attributed to it, and was chiefly remarked in the townships of Ferryhill with 55 cases, Trimdon with 58, and Cornforth with 65 cases.

DIPHTHERIA & MEMBRANOUS CROUP.—The incidence of these deadly disorders has been most marked this year, not only throughout the County, but also in most parts of the United Kingdom, so that it is with a sense of thankfulness that I can report your district as having had only 16 cases (Diphtheria 13, Membranous Croup 3) notified, with six deaths; a slight improvement upon last year's record of seven deaths and 15 cases, and a decided contrast to one district in this County, where, with a population of half that of your district, no less than 42 cases were reported.

The distribution of the cases of Diphtheria was as follows :—

Sedgefield Township	...	...	2 cases.
Bradbury	...	...	2 „
Mordon	...	...	3 „
Ferryhill	...	...	2 „
Cornforth	...	...	4 „

Regarding these cases of Diphtheria, I have very little doubt that the exceptional wet season, coupled with the undue prevalence of fog, was a factor in their marked prominence, though structural defects of drainage and errors of sanitation were found and remedied in nearly all the cases notified; and further, the excellent resolution of your Council in supplying Diphtheria Anti-toxin free of charge had a most gratifying result in checking the spread of the disease.

In support of my observation of dampness and fog being a predisposing cause of the disease, no less than seven of the 13 cases of Diphtheria notified occurred on the border of the large tract of boggy and undrained land, which was frequently flooded, lying between Nunstainton on the north and Mordon on the south, so that this district suffers exceptionally from dampness and fog.

ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER.—The notifications of this disorder this year reached the lowest total ever yet recorded since your Council adopted the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act, only 11 cases being reported as against 13 in 1902, and a splendid contrast to 1901 when 69 cases were reported.

There can be very little doubt that the reduction in the number of these cases is due to climatic conditions before referred to when discussing Zymotic Diseases, and if ever again we see summer and warm autumn weather, these cases will increase, for there still remains many insanitary conditions conducive to Typhoid, which I am sure your Council will do your utmost to abate; and one of the most pressing is to forward the question of Urban Powers to deal with the streets of Trimdon and Cornforth.

CONTINUED FEVER.—The number of notifications of this disease also have declined in a most satisfactory manner, 96 being recorded in 1901, 20 in 1902, and only 11 being returned for 1903, Trimdon having the distinction of claiming all these cases.

MEASLES have been very prevalent in practically all parts of your district, an unusual feature being that quite a large number of adults who have had the disease

before were again attacked. Owing to the severity of the disease, it became necessary to close the schools at Trimdon and Sedgfield.

WHOOPING COUGH has fortunately not been at all marked during the past year, only two deaths, one each at Cornforth and Trimdon, being attributed to it.

ERYSIPELAS, as usual, swells the total of notifications received, but there is some improvement to notice in this respect, 46 cases having been notified, as against 58 in 1902.

INFLUENZA.—This disease has not been very prominent during the year, three deaths only being credited to it.

PHTHISIS PULMONALIS.—The deaths from this disease, unfortunately, shew an increase upon the record of the past two years, 17 being returned for 1903; the figures for 1901 and 1902 being respectively 13 and 11.

RESPIRATORY DISEASES.—Bronchitis, Pleurisy and Pneumonia caused 33 deaths, being an improvement on the previous year's total of 45, and gives a death-rate of 1·7 per 1000 of the estimated population.

INJURIES reach quite a formidable total of 17, compared with the nine deaths attributed to these causes in 1902. This fact is significant in showing how the character of your district is changing from a rural into a manufacturing or industrial one; the death-rate in the purely rural districts of Bishopton and Sedgfield being 12 per 1000, and that of the industrial areas of Cornforth, Ferryhill and Trimdon being 19 per 1000 of the estimated population.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSPITAL.—Very slow progress in the completion of this important matter has been made in the past year; but for this your Council are certainly not to blame, as you have done your utmost to urge the Contractor forward, and upon him the onus in the matter certainly rests.

SMALL-POX HOSPITAL.—This matter has been most satisfactorily arranged by the conjoint scheme with the Easington Union for the permanent provision of any of these cases, from which your district has been most fortunate in escaping during the past ten years.

THE GENERAL SANITATION of your district continues to improve; many old midden privies have been abolished and ash closets substituted, also cesspools filled in and the houses connected by drains with the main sewer. Much, however, remains to be done, but with your increased and able staff of Inspectors, and when Urban Powers are obtained, a further marked improvement can confidently be looked forward to.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACT, 1901.—In accordance with the new duties involved by this Act, the various Factories, Work-shops and Work-places have been visited and found satisfactory with one exception, when there was insufficient privy accommodation; a notice was served, and the defect is now remedied.

INSPECTORS' REPORT TO MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR YEAR 1903.

NUISANCES.—*Northern District:*

Informal Notices served by Inspector... 840

Statutory Notices by Local Authority 100

Southern District: Informal Notices served by Inspector 40

Nuisances abated ... 980

COMMON LODGING-HOUSE situate at West Cornforth, has been inspected on 51 occasions, and 14 notices served during the year for cleansing and reporting lodgers. Average per night, 11.

Sedgefield Lodging-House frequently inspected ; three notices served.

COW-SHEDS AND DAIRIES have been frequently inspected during the year, and 23 notices have been served.

HOUSES ERECTED AND RE-CONSTRUCTED.—

Township.	Erected.	Re-Constructed.
Cornforth	24	2
Ferryhill	123	—
Chilton	23	22
Trimdon	18	2
Mordon	1	—
Woodham	1	—

SCAVENGING.—During the year the scavenging has been carried out more systematically, and only few complaints have been received.

SEWERS.—During the year 650 yards of new sewers have been put down ; 450 yards of sewer taken up and relaid.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT.—

Formal Notices served	...	...	30
Dwellings dealt with	...	...	30
Dwellings made habitable	...	...	26
Closing Orders applied for	...	...	2
Closing Orders granted	...	...	2
Dwellings closed	...	...	4

SAMPLES OF WATER.—Two samples of water were taken, one at Mordon, and one at Nunstainton ; both were found to be satisfactory.

SEWERAGE WORKS.—It is proposed to extend the existing sewer at Ferryhill Village, and also to put down small works to deal with the sewerage from the south side of the village.

The whole of the irrigation areas are now being trenched.

URBAN POWERS.—The Council has decided to adopt same in the townships of Trimdon and Cornforth, with regard to the making up of private streets.

DENE BRIDGE, &c.—Disposal works will shortly have to be constructed to deal with the sewage from Dene Bridge, Chilton Buildings and Windlestone Row.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all the medical gentlemen practising in your district, the County Medical Officer, and your Surveyor and Inspectors, for their courteous assistance rendered to me in the execution of my duties.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

FREDERICK HUNTON, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

SEDGEFIELD,

February, 1904.

TABLE OF DEATHS during the Years 1878 to 1903 inclusive, in the Rural Sanitary District of Sedgfield.

^a Incorporation of Low Spangmoor with the Spangmoor Urban District, with an area of 100 acres, and a population of 2048.

* Explosion of "free damp" at Trindon George Colliery, 66 killed.

TABLE OF THE YEARS 1878 TO 1901

YEAR	BIRTHS	DEATHS	Mortality from all causes at single ages			
			Under 1 Year			
			1 Year	2-12	13-24	25-65
1878	15660	1784	103	56	36	19
1879	15882	1832	103	56	36	19
1880	16104	1881	103	56	36	19
1881	16326	1930	103	56	36	19
1882	16332	1932	103	56	36	19
1883	16524	1932	103	56	36	19
1884	16836	1932	103	56	36	19
1885	17038	1932	103	56	36	19
1886	17238	1932	103	56	36	19
1887	17440	1932	103	56	36	19
1888	17642	1932	103	56	36	19
1889	17844	1932	103	56	36	19
1890	18046	1932	103	56	36	19
1891	18248	1932	103	56	36	19
1892	18450	1932	103	56	36	19
1893	18652	1932	103	56	36	19
1894	18854	1932	103	56	36	19
1895	19056	1932	103	56	36	19
1896	19258	1932	103	56	36	19
1897	19460	1932	103	56	36	19
1898	19662	1932	103	56	36	19
1899	19864	1932	103	56	36	19
1900	20066	1932	103	56	36	19
1901	20268	1932	103	56	36	19
1902	20470	1932	103	56	36	19
1903	20672	1932	103	56	36	19

† Incorporation of Low Spennymoor with the Spennymoor Urban District, with an area