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**Contributors**

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# WARMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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## Medical Officer's Report for 1909.

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WARMINSTER, JANUARY 26th, 1910.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

Another period has arrived for me to present to you my Annual Report as to the health and sanitary condition of the district.

My information as to the existing condition of the district, and particularly of certain parts that I know require extra supervision, has been obtained by regular inspection, the result of which is reported to you at your monthly meetings. In these inspections particular attention has been paid to the condition of the dairies and cowsheds, and various defects and insanitary conditions have been pointed out, all of which are promptly attended to.

### DEATH RATE.

During the year the number of deaths registered in the district was 80, equal to a death-rate of 13·3 per 1,000. Eleven deaths occurred in the Warminster Cottage Hospital, Workhouse Infirmary, and County Asylum, of persons belonging to the district, which increases the death-rate to 15·1 per 1,000. The ages of death ranged from 19 days to 96 years, and the deaths of persons over 80 years of age numbered 13, two of which were aged respectively 93 and 96 years. The deaths of children under one year of age numbered four. No death occurred from infectious disease. Three deaths occurred from Phthisis, and two from Cancer.

### BIRTH RATE.

The births numbered 128, equal to a birth-rate of 21·3 per 1,000.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

I will now refer to the presence of infectious diseases during the year. Only twelve cases were reported to me, viz. : ten cases of Scarlet Fever, six of which occurred in the parish of Imber, one case of Diphtheria, and one of Puerperal Fever.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The district is well supplied with water. Natural springs are particularly noticeable in the parishes of Horningsham, Corsley, and Sherrington. In these parishes the springs are continuous, but in the villages of Imber, Chitterne, and Corton, the springs only rise in winter and are dependent on the rainfall, and fail more or less, and sometimes entirely during the summer and winter. Heytesbury, Norton Bavant, Corsley, Chapmanslade, Stockton, and Bishopstrow, have proper water supplies, the latter village being supplied from the Warminster mains.

## DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.

Special attention has been paid to the condition of the dairies and cowsheds. I think I have visited every dairy in the district at least once during the year, and the Inspector of Nuisances has made a second visit to most of them. I have nothing to complain of as regards the condition of the dairies, and our regular inspection of the cowsheds have made the owners more careful as to the state of the roofs, and the cleanliness of the walls. I do not think there is any cowshed in the district that boasts of the full 800 cubic feet space for each cow, nor do I think in a rural district like this, where the cows are only brought in for milking purposes during three parts of the year, and with very few exceptions are not wholly confined to the sheds at any time during the year, that such a space is necessary, plenty of light and ventilation, particularly roof ventilation, with regular bi-annual limewashing, are in my opinion much more essential. When inspecting dairies you cannot do more than inquire as to the amount of cleanliness prevalent with the milkers, and impress upon them the necessity of clean hands, clean udders, and clean milking cans. The principal cowkeepers send their milk to London and other large towns in the South of England.

## COTTAGE ACCOMMODATION.

Systematic inspection of all the villages have been made in company with the Sanitary Officer. The state of the villages is much the same as has been reported by me on various occasions during the last decade; with a shrinking population the older cottages become void and are pulled down, in many cases two adjacent cottages have been converted into one, and as all cottages invariably have a fair-sized plot of garden land, this means also the addition of more land at a slightly increased rent. Some of the cottages on the south side of Bidden Lane, Chitterne, are of inferior quality and badly situated, but they are occupied by a much better class of tenant than formerly, and consequently are cleaner and better kept.

## FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT.

The only factories or workshops that could come under the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, are two woolstaplers' workshops at Sutton Veny and Codford, employing about ten or twelve hands, and the estate works and steam saw mills at Heytesbury. There are blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops in all the principal villages, two plumbers at Chapmanslade and Codford, and a few harness makers working on their own account; there are also a few flour mills mostly worked by water power. There are a number of out-workers in the parishes of Corsley,

Upton Scudamore, and Horningsham, working for a firm of glovers at Westbury. Lists of these out-workers are now regularly forwarded to me.

### INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

There are three slaughterhouses in the district which are all satisfactorily kept. No arrangements are made for the inspection of meat, nor are the slaughterhouses visited at times of slaughtering, there is no inspector appointed. No diseased meat was detected during the year. The bakehouses are regularly inspected ; there is one registered underground bakehouse at Sutton Veny.

No part of the district is supplied with public sewers, and the sewage disposal is that common in most agricultural districts.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

**FREDERICK I. FLOWER,**

*Medical Officer of Health to the  
Warminster Rural District Council.*

WARMINSTER

**Rural District Council.**



Medical Officer's

**REPORT**

For 1909.

January 20th, 1910.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

It is again my duty to present to you my annual Report as to the health and sanitary condition of the town during the past year.

The deaths of 75 persons have been registered in the district, equal to a death-rate of 13·5 per 1,000. This number is considerably less than the average for the last decade, viz., 86. Eleven deaths occurred in the Workhouse, of which six were non-residents; and nine deaths in the Cottage Hospital, six of which were also non-residents. Two deaths occurred in the County Asylum of residents of the town. These returns reduce the number of deaths to 65, equal to a death-rate of 11·2 per 1,000. Six deaths occurred from phthisis and five from cancer. The deaths of children under one year of age numbered seven, two of which were due to whooping cough and three to premature birth.

The births numbered 77, equal to a birth rate of 13·8 per 1,000. This rate is the lowest recorded in my recollection. The steady decrease in the number of births during the last decade shows no indication of abating, and the birth-rate of 13·8 per 1,000 compares unfavourably with the average for the last ten years of 21·5 per 1,000.

We have had a very favourable year as regards the prevalence of infectious diseases. Only four cases of Diphtheria were notified to me, and these in the early part of the year; since then the town has been perfectly free from that disease. No case of Scarlet Fever was reported to me until July, when a case occurred in a family just returned from the sea-side. This was followed by three other cases in the same household, followed by seven other cases in different parts of the town. Three of these cases occurred in one household and two in another. All the Scarlet Fever cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital for treatment.

Home isolation of infectious cases, particularly Scarlet Fever, must be very imperfect, consequently you are never certain when the danger of infection is over. We always keep the patients in the Hospital till desquamation has ceased, but in certain cases it is quite justifiable to discharge a patient before complete desquamation has taken place, provided there is no nasal or aural discharge, which is a grave source of infection. My experience is that the inunction of all cases with disinfectant oils is almost a specific against the spread of infection, and a much greater safeguard than the use of disinfectants about the house.

Regular inspections are made, in company with the Sanitary Officer, of all parts of the town, and reports on the condition of the locality inspected are made at the monthly meetings of the Council; and whereas formerly it was usual to find various insanitary conditions in every street, the condition of the houses now is so much improved that beyond a case of overcrowding occasionally, we find it difficult to detect anything sufficiently insanitary to bring to the notice of the Council. I am quite aware that there are still a few unsatisfactory spots in the town.

The slaughter-houses number seven, four of which are used for the killing of pigs only. All have been regularly inspected during the year, and found in a satisfactory condition. No arrangements are made by the Council for the inspection of meat, nor are the slaughter-houses visited at times of slaughtering; there is no Inspector with a special certificate in meat inspection. No diseased meat was detected during the year.

The bakehouses continue in a satisfactory state, but notice to limewash has been given in a few instances. Three of the bakehouses are of most modern construction.

The water supply, which has been a source of anxiety for the past two or three years, owing to the shrinkage of the springs during the summer months, has now been satisfactorily dealt with, the yield of the additional supply being about 8,000 gallons per hour, so that I cannot think there can be any danger of a shortage of water in the future.

The working of the new Sewage Farm is quite successful, and there have been no complaints of any nuisance arising from it.

The dairies, very few of which are used for the storage of milk, have been inspected and found in a satisfactory state. In consequence of a letter from the Local Government Board, inquiring what action the Council were taking as regards my report as to the state of some of the cowsheds in the district, the General Purposes and Sanitary Committee were deputed, in conjunction with myself and the Sanitary Officer, to visit and report on the condition of what were considered unsatisfactory cowsheds in the district. The result of the inspection was that the owners had notice to make certain improvements in the flooring, lighting, drainage, and ventilation of the sheds. I have within the last few weeks visited these sheds, and find the improvements ordered have been or are about to be carried out.

The Factory and Workshop Act has been carried out in accordance with my instructions. In the case of factories the duties are few, and refer to the provision of suitable and efficient sanitary conveniences, and also means of escape in case of fire. As for the means of escape in the case of fire, there is no danger of a panic with the exception of the Shirt Factory, in Pound-street, where the exits are decidedly cramped.

The workshops and workplaces have been regularly inspected. Altogether the workshops and workplaces in the town number twenty-three, and employ about a hundred hands. The principal trades carried on are tailoring and dressmaking, and only in one establishment are both males and females employed. In some cases the sanitary conveniences might be improved. Only one outworker is employed by tradesmen in the town, but there are a number of outworkers employed by a firm of glovers at Westbury. The lists of these are now regularly received, and I think, with few exceptions, the premises have been visited.

There is one common lodging-house in the district, which we always find in a satisfactory condition. Two cottages were reported as in an insanitary condition, and the defects were immediately remedied.

The usual statistical tables accompany this report.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

FREDK. I. FLOWER,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman, Warminster Urban District Council.

January 1st 1864

It is with great pleasure that I receive from you the enclosed copy of your letter of the 27th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, however, unable to say how long it will take before a decision is reached upon the matter. I will, however, endeavor to expedite the process as far as possible.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,  
J. M. [Name]

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, however, unable to say how long it will take before a decision is reached upon the matter. I will, however, endeavor to expedite the process as far as possible.

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Your obedient servant,  
J. M. [Name]

177, [Address]