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Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1949

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Wisbech.

LADY AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of submitting to you my report on the general health of the Borough for the past year, ending 31st December, 1949.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area, 4666 acres
Estimated resident population mid-1949, 17,500
Rateable value £83,478
Sum realised by a penny rate, £324 : 19 : 0
Number of inhabited houses, about 4,807

	Total	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate 311	163	148	} Birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population mid-1949, 19'7
	Illegitimate 34	20	14	
Stillbirths	Legitimate 7	2	5	} Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births, 19'8
	Illegitimate 0	0	0	
Deaths	220	125	95	Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated average population, 12'5

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births
Deaths from puerperal causes :—		
Puerperal sepsis ...	0	0
Other puerperal causes ...	0	0
Death rate of infants under 1 year of age :—		
All infants per 1,000 live births ...	...	26'08
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	19'2
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	88'2
Deaths from cancer (all ages) ...	...	23
Deaths from measles (all ages) ...	...	0
Deaths from whooping cough (all ages) ...	...	0
Deaths from diarrhoea (under two years of age) ...	...	0

The comparable figures for towns of approximately the same size are as follows :—

Birth rate per 1,000	...	18'0
Death rate per 1,000	...	11'6
Death rate of infants under 1 year of age	...	30'0

(i)

In the Borough there is one School Clinic, a Tubercular Clinic, a General Hospital, an Infectious Diseases Hospital and an Orthopædic Clinic held bi-monthly at the North Cambridgeshire Hospital.

Excellent Motor Ambulance facilities are available, whilst Diphtheria Antitoxin and Pathological and Bacteriological examinations are provided when necessary.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

The duties connected with this are carried out by the M.O.H. who is a part time officer, the Borough Surveyor, the Borough Senior and Additional Sanitary Inspectors, all full time Officers, together with those of the Council's employees who are specially needed for sanitary work.

INFANT AND CHILD WELFARE.

The Infant and Child Welfare Clinic is held weekly in Park Hall, Ruby Street, and is well attended.

Welfare attendances for 1949.			Children.	Attendances.
Number of children attending for the 1st time and who at the end of the year were under 1 year			164	
Total number of attendances for same				1301
Number of children attending for the 1st time and who at the end of the year were between 1 and 5 years			17	
Total number of attendances for same				156
Total 1st attending			181	1457
Number of children attending who at the end of the year were between 1 and 5 years (other than 1st attendance) ...			211	
Total number of attendances for same				2306
Total			392	3763

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

Number of children under the age of five years who have completed a full course of immunisation against Diphtheria during the year— ... 190.

HOUSING.

Future Requirements.

There is still a great need for further houses in the Borough, emphasised by the fact that at the end of the year 685 applicants remained on the waiting list.

Building.

Private houses completed in 1949	12
Private houses under construction at the end of 1949	10
Houses completed by Council in 1949	36
Houses under construction by Council at end of 1949	66
Number of applicants for Council houses on waiting list	685

WATER.

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS.

Physical Characters Very slight deposit, otherwise good.

Reaction pH 7.3

The sample contained :—

Parts per 100,000

Chlorine	2.90
Ammonia (Free from Saline) ...	absent
Ammonia (Albuminoid) ...	0.0004
Oxygen absorbed in 3 hours at 37°C ...	0.0313
Nitrates (expressed as Nitrogen) ...	0.70
Nitrates	absent
Poisonous Metals	absent

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION.

Coliform organisms absent in 100 mls.

Number of microorganisms per ml developing on Agar at 37°C = 1

Number of microorganisms per ml developing on Agar at 21°C = 2+ mould

MICROSCOPICAL EXAMINATION OF DEPOSIT.

Mainly mineral matter.

TOTAL HARDNESS 14.96 degrees (grains per gallon).

INFERENCE.

The results obtained on the analysis of this sample do not show any evidence of pollution with harmful organic or inorganic matter.

I am of the opinion that this water is fit for drinking purposes.

(Sgn.) S. GREENBURGH,

Public Analyst.

Extensions

New Mains	3" pipe 402 yds.
	4" pipe 594 yds.
	6" pipe 1272 yds.
	9" pipe 154 yds.

Services

67 new services have been connected to the mains.

FACTORIES ACTS 1937 AND 1948.

PART I OF THE ACT.

1. INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors.)

Premises	Number on Register	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	38	22	1	0
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authorities.	90	78	0	0
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises.)	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>128</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

2. Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Number of cases in which defects were found.

Particulars	Found	Remedied	Referred		Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
			To H. M. Inspector	By H. M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences					
(a) insufficient	1	1	—	—	—
(b) unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1	1	—	—	—

(iv)

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

A total of 148 cases were treated in the Wisbech and District Isolation Hospital—the main admissions being from the following areas:—

Diphtheria—

				Admissions		Deaths
Wisbech Borough ...	...	...	...	1	(suspected	0
Wisbech Rural District ...	...	...	...	2	cases not	0
Whittlesey District ...	...	...	...	3	confirmed)	0

Scarlet Fever—

Wisbech Borough ...	...	...	...	16	...	0
Marshland Rural District ...	...	...	...	32	...	0
Wisbech Rural District ...	...	...	...	12	...	0
Whittlesey Rural District ...	...	...	...	7	...	0
North Witchford Rural District ...	...	...	...	17	...	0
Peterborough District ...	...	...	...	11	...	0
Bourne District ...	...	...	...	4	...	0

Erysipelas—

Wisbech Borough ...	...	...	...	1	...	0
Marshland Rural District ...	...	...	...	2	...	0

Measles—

Wisbech Borough ...	...	...	...	3	...	0
Wisbech Rural District ...	...	...	...	2	...	0

Notifiable Diseases during the year:—

				Total cases notified.		Deaths.
Small Pox ...	...	...	...	0	...	0
Scarlet Fever ...	...	...	...	16	...	0
Diphtheria ...	...	...	...	0	...	0
Pneumonia ...	...	...	...	2	...	1
Erysipelas ...	...	...	...	3	...	0
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	...	...	...	0	...	0
Enteric Fever ...	...	...	...	0	...	0
Measles ...	...	...	...	23	...	0
Cerebral Spinal Fever ...	...	...	...	0	...	0
Whooping Cough ...	...	...	...	50	...	2
Para Typhoid Fever ...	...	...	...	2	...	0
Anterior Polio Myelitis ...	...	...	...	2	...	0

NOTIFICATIONS OF TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods.	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
35	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
45	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	0
55	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65 & over	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	3	6	0	0	4	2	0	0
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

I remain, Lady and Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

H. LESLIE GROOM, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary Inspector's Report for the Year 1949

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ALBION PLACE,

NENE QUAY, WISBECH

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Wisbech.

LADY AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my report for the year 1949 being my thirtieth Annual Report.

This report, as usual, is mainly in summary form and covers the work carried out by my department in the interests of the general health of the Borough.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.

The inspections for nuisances and matters generally coming within the Public Health Acts numbered 812 and have again been above normal. This again is due to extra visits paid for the provision of dust-bins. The supply of these bins to every house was well on the way by the end of the year and 128 bins had been provided after the service of notices. In five cases only was it found necessary to report the existence of nuisances to the Council for statutory action and all five were subsequently abated.

HOUSING.

The position regarding house repair is still a matter presenting many difficulties owing chiefly to the lack of material, which causes delay in getting work done and in view of the high cost of this work compared with the rents charged, there is not that willingness to put the work in hand as was experienced prior to the late war. There are many houses which are deteriorating rapidly owing to their old age and whereas these houses would in all probability in the normal way, have by this time been eliminated, it is necessary that the life of these houses be extended by doing a minimum of repairs in order that families may have an indifferent house rather than none at all until better accommodation is available.

Repairs to old property are therefore proceeding and repairs at 100 houses have been executed after notice from my department. 37 representations have been made for statutory action where informal notices were not complied with and where houses could be repaired at a reasonable expense, and two representations were submitted for demolition orders in cases of houses beyond repair. One certificate was issued under the Rent and Mortgage Interest Restrictions (Amendment) Act 1933. One family was removed who were living and sleeping in a dilapidated outhouse and Legal Proceedings were taken for possession of a house where a demolition order had become operative and in this case an Order was obtained for possession in one month.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

Two cases were dealt with under this Act where Orders were obtained from the Court for the removal of persons to hospital, where the persons concerned were found to be unable to devote to themselves and were not receiving from other persons proper care and attention. Two other cases were dealt with where persons were in similar circumstances and in these cases the persons were removed to hospital by voluntary action after persuasion.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of notifications of infectious disease has again been low as will be seen from the report of the Medical Officer of Health. These cases were all investigated as they occurred and disinfection was immediately carried out after removal to hospital or recovery of the patient.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The application for grant towards the scheme under the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act 1944, which was submitted to the Ministry of Health in August 1948, and which provided for the laying of water mains in the rural parts of the Borough, was disallowed by the Minister who reached the conclusion that the district was not a rural locality within the meaning of the Act. The scheme, however, was transferred for consideration to the Agricultural Executive Committee and progress was being made by the end of the year.

Three cases were dealt with in the rural area of the Borough where the water in the storage cisterns was proved on analysis to be unfit for drinking purposes.

CAMPS.

Fruit Pickers Camps were given the usual attention. The camp in Weasenham Lane designed to accommodate approximately 300 persons was put on a permanent footing, and in this respect new Kitchens, Ablution rooms, W.C.'s and Food Stores were built on up-to-date lines with drainage system and a direct supply of water provided from the town's mains.

ICE CREAM.

There are three premises in the Borough registered to manufacture Ice Cream, and at these premises the Ice Cream (Heat Treatment Etc.) Regulations 1947 are being carried out in a satisfactory manner. There are 28 premises registered for the sale and storage of Ice Cream and at the majority of these premises wrapped Ice Cream only is sold.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Two certificates have been issued with respect to adequate means of escape in case of fire.

RODENT CONTROL.

Rodent control is operated systematically in the Borough and the necessary sewer treatment has been carried out in order to qualify for grant. In addition to sewer treatment the following work has been in hand at various properties :—

Prebait laid	...	...	...	...	...	1,763
Poison bait laid	...	...	...	...	...	809
Gassing Operations	..	...	...	..	...	31
Estimated kill	...	...	...	...	...	821

LICENCES.

The following licences have been issued during the year :—

Licences to slaughter or stun animals	...	...	...	25
Knackers Licence ..	...	...	...	1
Dealers Licences to sell T.T. Milk	...	...	...	4
Dealers Licence to sell Pasteurised Milk	...	..	...	1
Camping Licences...	...	...	...	2
Gangmasters Licences	...	...	...	48

FOOD.

Food supplies have again been given regular attention. The Central Slaughterhouses have been given one or more visits daily and the premises have been found to be conducted in a satisfactory manner. The following particulars of condemnations are submitted:—

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED.

	Cattle including Cows.	Calves	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed	1,677	94	1,728	721
Number inspected	1,677	94	1,728	721
All Diseases except Tuberculosis ... Whole carcasses condemned ...	8	5	1	20
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	518	1	44	112
Percentage of the number inspected affected by Disease other than Tuberculosis	31'36%	6'38%	2'60%	18'31%
Tuberculosis only : Whole carcasses condemned ...	19	—	—	11
Carcasses of which some part of organ was condemned	135	—	—	7
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ...	9'18%	—	—	2'49%

TOTAL WEIGHT OF FRESH MEAT CONDEMNED, 16 tons 10 cwts. 1 qr. 7 lbs.

OTHER FOODS.

TINS.

Prepared Meat	...	...	...	...	...	49
Vegetables	...	...	...	...	...	212
Corned Beef	..	...	..	...	...	193
Soups	...	...	...	...	...	7
Milk	...	...	...	...	...	403
Fruit	..	...	...	...	...	56
Fruit Juices	...	...	...	...	...	27
Marmalade	...	...	...	...	...	15
Jam	...	...	...	...	...	21
Fish	...	...	...	...	...	59
Fish Paste	...	...	...	...	...	13
Various	...	...	...	...	...	110

1,165 tins.

JARS.

Honey	4
Fruit	2
Prepared Food	70
	76 jars.

PACKETS.

Cereals	124
Baked Wheat	939
Puddings	253
Semolina	16
Cake Mixture	27
	1,359 packets.

VARIOUS.

Frozen Meat	80 lbs.
Wet Fish	310 "
Crabs	127 "
Bacon	36 "
Sausage Meat	74 "
Sausages	118 "
Vermicelli	32 "
Macaroni	20 "
Pearl Barley	31 "
Cheese	259 "
Beet	2,240 "
Confectionery	78 "
Tea	24 "
Butter	62 "
Biscuits	16 "
Eggs	79 "

SUMMARIES.

INSPECTION OF PREMISES.

Inspections under Public Health Acts	812
Inspections under Housing Acts	388
Inspections after Infectious Diseases	31
Inspections of Factories and Workshops	102
Inspections of Shops and Food Stores	45
Inspections of Ice Cream Manufactories	78
Inspections of Slaughterhouses	416
Inspections of Dairies... ..	18
Inspections of Common Lodging Houses	18
Inspections of Camps and Caravans... ..	27
Inspections of Works in Progress	275
Re-inspections as to compliance with notices	777
Complaints investigated	245
Houses disinfected after Infectious Diseases	35
Houses treated for vermin	20
Smoke and water tests applied to drains	27
Ice Cream Samples taken	15

WORK CARRIED OUT IN COMPLIANCE WITH NOTICES AND UNDER SUPERVISION.

DRAINAGE.

New pipe drains provided	...	...	...	...	17
Drains repaired and cleansed	...	...	...	...	54
Inspection chambers built on drains	...	...	...	...	20
Cesspools emptied	...	...	...	...	6
New Cesspools built	...	...	...	...	2
Cesspools repaired	...	...	...	...	1
New ventilating pipes provided	...	...	...	...	1
Waste pipes disconnected from house drains	...	...	...	...	1

SANITARY CONVENIENCES.

New water-closets provided	...	...	...	...	7
Closets repaired	...	...	...	...	12
Flushing cisterns provided to W.C.'s	...	...	...	...	5
Privies converted into water-closets	...	...	...	...	1

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Factories provided with sufficient Sanitary Accommodation	...	...	...	...	1
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	---

DAIRIES.

Dairies provided with improved drainage	...	...	...	...	1
---	-----	-----	-----	-----	---

MISCELLANEOUS.

Houses repaired	...	...	...	...	100
Houses demolished	...	...	...	...	2
Houses cleansed	...	...	...	...	4
Houses provided with sufficient water supply	...	...	...	...	3
Dust-bins provided	...	...	...	...	128
Drinking water cisterns cleansed	...	...	...	...	3
Removal of animals improperly kept	...	...	...	...	2
Houses provided with new sinks	...	...	...	...	3
Yards paved	...	...	...	...	4
Accumulations of refuse removed	...	...	...	...	5

GENERAL.

The foregoing will show the endeavours that have been made to maintain the general health of the Borough. Generally speaking the health of the Borough has been good and I would again respectfully offer my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their valued consideration of the various matters brought especially to their notice.

I have the honour to be,

Your Obedient Servant,

E. J. SUTCLIFFE, M.S.I.A.,

Senior Sanitary Inspector.

