Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1925.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Members of the Wisbech Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

The Report which I have the honour of presenting to you for the past year ending December 31st, 1925, with relation to the prevailing sanitary conditions existing, and to the general health of the district, bring forth the following remarks.

Again I have to record there are no conditions existing which are especially prejudicial to the health of the district, and therefore no measures are needed, other than those ordinarily carried out to keep the town and district in its usual healthy and cleanly condition.

The prevalence of zymotic sickness, have been more in evidence this year, compared with the previous year, spread throughout every month, but not being of a severe type, no great cause for anxiety existed. The most serious of these diseases, viz., Diphtheria was notified in twenty-two cases, and of these one male and one female died ; fifteen of these cases were treated in the Isolation Hospital, and so the further spread of this serious illness was again greatly arrested.

Among other infectious illnesses, we had to deal with fourteen cases of Scarlet Fever, four cases of Erysipelas, two cases of Puerperal Fever and one of Enteric Fever. No case of Ophthalmic Neanatorium was notified, and although we had a severe scare, no case of Small Pox was found to exist.

Again I am able to record, the very ready willingness to take advantage of the use of the Isolation Hospital, where the greatest comfort is obtainable, and much care and attention given by the Nursing Staff. I also must again record my pleasure of the ever ready assistance rendered by the Officials of the town, who find no trouble too much in rendering help where needed, and in disinfection and distribution of disinfectants where infection has existed.

It is especially gratifying to record that the welfare and health preservation of infant children is a vital factor in relation to the diminishing number of births annually in the Country, in relation to this the Infant Welfare Centre is doing really good work and continues very popular, as well, the infants in the locality are visited by the District Nurses, when suitable hygienic principals are taught, suitable infant feeding suggested and much useful advice given.

The number of individual mothers who have attended the centre was one hundred and ten during the year, and the total number of children one hundred and sixty-one, whilst the total number of attendances of mothers was eight hundred and ninety-nine and of children one thousand three hundred and forty-four. During the year there were fifty-one sessions held with an average attendance of mothers twenty, and of children twenty-six Whilst the meetings are attended by the Doctor frequently and periodically also by the County Medical Officer of Health. Surely such a good work should receive the generous support of the public generally.

Perhaps the most serious and important illness with which we have to deal with is Phthisis, and conditions where Tuberculosis exists, this disease is always present, and needs ever increasing vigilance in dealing with the cases. In this area the fresh cases that were notified, as suffering from Tuberculosis were nine from Pulmonary Phthisis, three males and six females, and eight from other forms, three males and five females with Tubercular disease of the glands and in other parts of the body, and I regret having to record that three males and three females died from Pulmonary Tuberculosis and one male and two females from other tubercular diseases, compared with the previous year when seven deaths were recorded. In connection with this disease, a considerable number are now treated in the local hospital and others secure Sanitorium treatment, which can always be obtained when desired.

General Statistics.

The area of this district is 6,475 acres, with a present population estimated to be 11,660, whilst the number of inhabited houses being about 1,850 with a rateable value of £53,830 (1921) and the sum that is realised by a penny rate about £160, probably the number of separate families or occupiers (is estimated) to be 1920, although several new houses have been built, there still remains a great want of more new dwellings.

Births.

There were two hundred and ten births during the year compared with two hundred and two last year, of which number one hundred and fifteen were legitimate males, eighty-eight legitimate females, and seven illegitimate males and eight illegitimate females, giving a birth rate of eighteen per one thousand of the population, and I regret to report that four deaths were attributable to pregnancy. There are no midwives practicing in the district.

Deaths.

There were eighteen death of infants under the age of one year, fourteen being males four females and three deaths of illegitimate infants all males, giving an Infantile death rate of eight-five per one thousand births.

The number of deaths from all causes was one hundred and seventy-three, of these ninety-four were males and seventy-nine females, being thirty-nine in number more than during last year, and giving a death rate of 14.8 per one thousand of the estimated population, included in these deaths were four males and three females who died from Pneumonia, three males and four females from Bronchitis, fourteen males and eight females from Cancerous diseases, nine males and nine females from Heart disease, three males and four females from Influenza, and with respect to infectious diseases Scarlet Fever caused one death, Whooping Cough caused seven males and one female deaths and Diphtheria one male and one female deaths.

There exists in the Town one School Clinic, a General Hospital, an Infectious Diseases Hospital, a Small Pox Hospital, and Ambulance facilities are provided free of cost, a supply in needy cases of Antitoxin, whilst Pathalogical and Bacteriological examinations, when necessary can be had. The prevalence of Veneral Diseases fortunately are few.

Sanitary Administration.

Accompanying this report, is also the report of the Sanitary Inspector, from which you will see that again, a large amount of work has been done in inspections, visits paid and nuisances promptly dealt with when found. Upon our periodical visits together, I have again found the Town kept cleanly and well looked after, the Public Buildings, Factories, Schools, Milk Shops, and Slaughter Houses are still kept under constant supervision and have been found more satisfactory than of late. There remain nineteen factories and sixty-seven workshops, but in these no deleterious trades are carried on ; the chief industry is the timber trade and work in connection with the fruit growing industry.

During the past year the sewerage system has worked satisfactorily, except for small troubles, no difficulty has been experienced in keeping the main and other drains working well, the enormous supply of Marham water, which is supplied under constant pressure both day and night, largely assisting this. This artificial water supply is now used by practically all the inhabitants, and is one of the blessings we enjoy in the area, and I note with great satisfaction that you have in contemplation the extension of the sewerage system to the Harecroft Road and World's End districts in the near future.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.

The duties connected with this, are still carried out by the M.O.H., who is a part time officer, the Town Surveyor, the Sanitary Inspector, who are both whole time officers, together with those of the Council Employees, who are specially needed for sanitary work.

I still view with considerable alarm, the continued falling off of vaccination, as a preventitive against Small Pox, in view of the fact, that this terrible disease has been widely prevalent in different parts of the Country, and although we have not experienced any outbreak here, I cannot too strongly advise that the simple operation of vaccination should be taken advantage of.

Herewith are tabulated records of notifiable diseases, deaths and tubercular affections.

	Total Cases Notified.	Treated in Hospital.	Deaths.
Diphtheria	21	15	2
Scarlet Fever ...	14	11	1
Enteric Fever ...	1	0	0
Puerperal Fever ...	3	0	3
Erysipelas	4	0	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	1	0	0

The number of deaths were :—

Under 1 year of age	20
" 2 years "	4
" 3 " "	1
" 4 " "	1
" 5 " "	1
" 10 " "	5
" 15 " "	4
" 20 " "	4
" 38 " "	10
" 45 " "	11
" 65 " "	35
Over 65 " "	77

And the notifications of Tuberculosis :—

Age Periods.	New Cases. Pulmonary.		New Cases. Non-Pulmonary.		Deaths. Pulmonary.		Deaths. Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
1 to 5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 ,, 10	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
10 ,, 15	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
15 ,, 20	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
20 ,, 25	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
25 ,, 35	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
35 ,, 45	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
45 ,, 60	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
	6	3	1	7	3	3	1	2

HOUSING.

The number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total ... 52

(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts 1919, 1923 or 1924.

I. By the Local Authority ... 16

II. By other bodies or persons ... 25

UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

1—INSPECTIONS—

I. Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Acts ... 239

II. Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 ... 209

III. Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... 5

IV. Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 244

2—REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officer ... 222

3.—Action under Statutory Powers.

(A) Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.

I. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... 13

II. Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notice—

(a) by Owners ... 10

(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners ... none

III. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declaration by Owners of intention to close ... 3

(B) Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

I. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... 9

II. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notice—

(a) by Owners ... 9

(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners ... none

(C) Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.

I. Number of representations made with a view to making closing orders ... 5

II. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which closing orders were made ... 5

III. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined the dwelling houses having been rendered fit ... none

IV. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which demolition orders were made ... 2

V. Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders ... 2

In view of the fact that there are many houses needed to meet the want, I am gratified to know that several new houses are being erected, which will help somewhat to abate the present over crowded dwellings, and add much to the comfort of the inhabitants.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Very faithfully yours,

HARRY GROOM, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

1—Inspections of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Premises.	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers Prosecuted.
Factories	28	1	0
Workshops	97	8	0
	125	8	0

2—Defects Found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

	Number of Defects		Referred to H.M. Inspector.	Number of Offences in repect to which Prosecutions were instituted.
	Found	Remedied		
Want of cleanliness	2	2	0	0
Want of ventilation	0	0	0	0
Overcrowding ...	0	0	0	0
Want of drainage of floors	1	1	0	0
Other nuisances ...	3	3	0	0
Sanitary accommodation:				
Insufficient ...	2	2	0	0
Unsuitable or defective	1	1	0	0
	9	9	0	0