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URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF PORT-OF-SPAIN.

REPORT ON THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF PORT-OF-SPAIN FOR THE YEAR 1925.

Laid before the City Council on the 18th March, 1926.

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Port-of-Spain City Council.

URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF PORT-OF-SPAIN.

Report on the Vital Statistics of the Urban Sanitary District of Port-of-Spain for the year 1925.

SECRETARY LOCAL AUTHORITY.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit for the information of the Local Authority the following summary of the vital statistics of the Urban Sanitary District of the City of Port-of-Spain for the year 1925, with a comparison of the figures for 1924.

Table I.

POPULATION, BIRTHS, DEATHS AND INFANT MORTALITY.

	1924.	1925.
Mean Population (Estimated to 30th June)	63,954	64,535
Total Births	1,890	1,820
Birth-rate	29.55	28.20
Total Deaths	1,493	1,492
Death-rate	23.34	23.12
Deaths under 1 Year	278	282
Infant Mortality Rate	147.09	154.95

2. The salient points of the statistics in this group are an increase on the previous year of 581 in the mean population estimated to 30th June ; 70 fewer births and a decline in the birth-rate of 1.3 per 1,000 of the population ; one death less than in the preceding year and a decrease of 4 in the number of deaths under 1 year, with a consequent rise in the infant mortality rate from 147.09 per 1,000 births in 1924 to 154.95 in the year under review.

3. The high proportion of deaths under 1 year attributable to congenital disease and other prenatal causes referred to in previous reports still continues to be recorded, and emphasises the large scope which exists for the extension of the antenatal branch of the Maternity and Child Welfare work that may be expected to follow the recent public gift to that end from a wealthy and philanthropic citizen of Port-of-Spain.

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Table II.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Notifications, Deaths and Death-rates.

Diseases.	1924.			1925.		
	Notifications.	Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 population.	Notifications.	Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 population.
Enteric Fever	370	49	0.77	168	20	0.31
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	181	162	2.53	173	148	2.29
Pneumonia and Broncho-pneumonia	72	50	0.78	85	63	0.98
Diphtheria	27	2	0.03	25	2	0.03
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	..	..	..	5	..	..
Membranous Croup	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chicken-pox	12	..	..	31	..	..
Small-pox	..	..	..	..	..	..
Plague	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera	..	..	..	..	..	..
Yellow Fever	..	..	..	..	..	..


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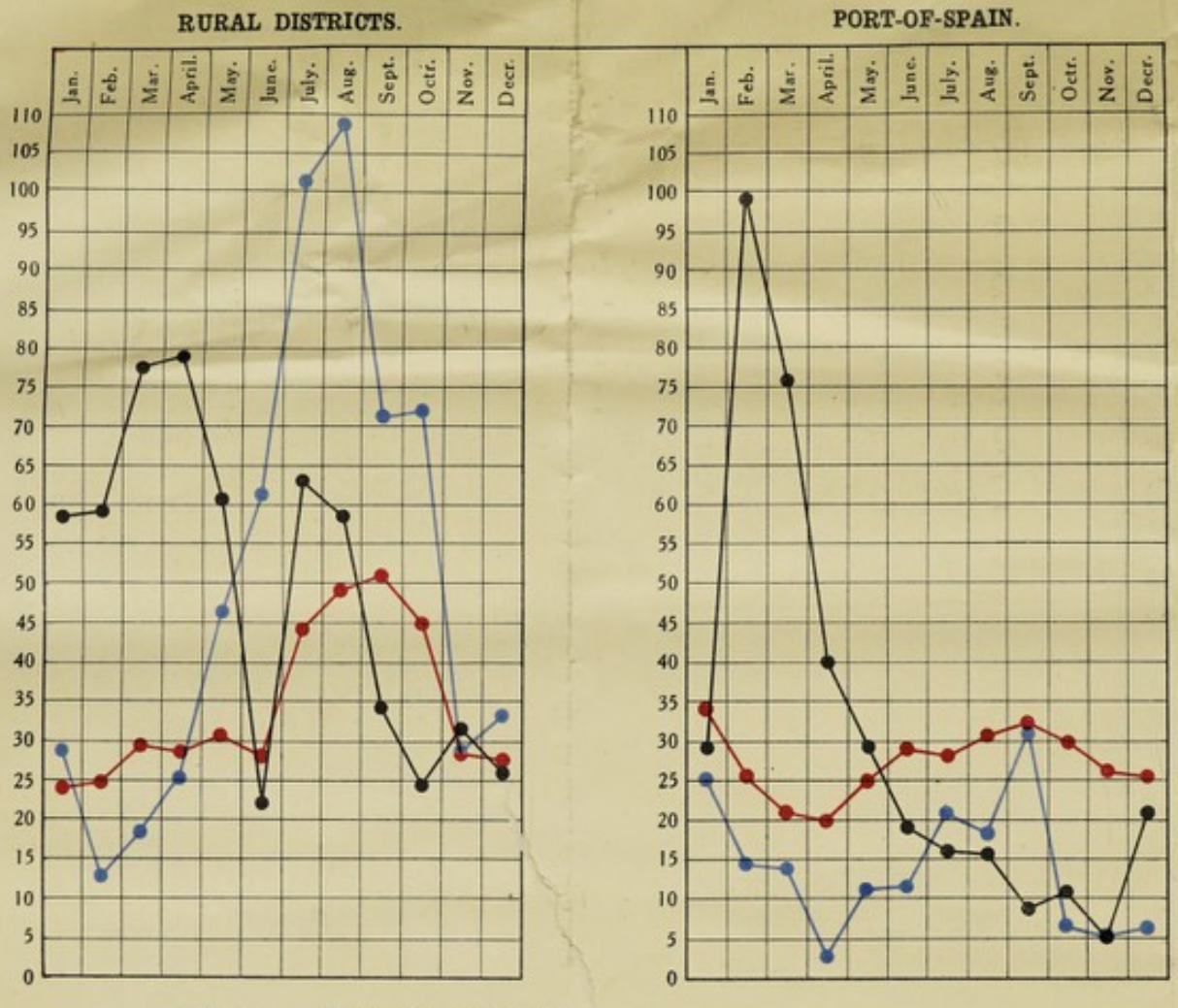
CHART

ENTERIC FEVER.



Black — Enteric Fever in 1924.
Red — Seasonal Prevalence each month—Port-of-Spain 1918-1923.
Do — Do. do. Rural Districts 1919-1923.
Blue — Enteric Fever in 1925.

4. This table shows a decrease on 1924 in the number of cases of enteric fever and pulmonary tuberculosis notified, as well as in the deaths from these diseases; an increase in the corresponding figures for pneumonia, and in the notifications of chicken-pox which rose from 12 in 1924 to 31 in 1925, but without any mortality. There was a slight decrease in the number of cases of diphtheria notified, but the deaths certified to that cause, viz.: 2, remained the same each year.

5. The decline in the prevalence of and deaths from enteric fever is worthy of special notice. The number of cases notified fell from 370 in 1924 to 168 in 1925, and the corresponding deaths from 49 to 20, being a decline on 1924 of 54.6 per cent. in the notifications and 59.2 per cent. in the deaths.

Further, the notification figures for 1925 are 50.44 per cent. and the deaths 71.43 per cent. below the annual averages of 339 notifications and 70 deaths for the previous 7 years—1918-24.

The deaths and death-rate from pulmonary tuberculosis, it is satisfactory to note, are still pursuing a steady, though slower, downward course.

Summing up, there were 487 notifications and 233 deaths from notifiable infectious disease in 1925, compared with 662 notifications and 263 deaths in 1924, or a decrease in 1925 of 26.4 per cent. in the notifications and 11.4 per cent. in the deaths.

Table III.

NON-NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Deaths and Death-rates.

Diseases.	1924.		1925.	
	Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 population.	Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 population.
Malaria	42	0.66	53	0.82
Influenza	..	..	2	0.03
Dysentery	42	0.66	31	0.48
Syphilis	48	0.75	70	1.08
Ankylostomiasis	15	0.23	7	0.11
Whooping Cough	..	..	5	0.08
Puerperal Fever	..	..	..	..
Diarrhœa and Enteritis	75	1.17	71	1.10

6. In this group malaria and syphilis take pre-eminence. Both show increases—malaria from 42 deaths in 1924 to 53 in 1925, and syphilis from 48 to 70 deaths in the corresponding periods. Every death from malaria is investigated and followed by a mosquito survey round about the last place of abode of the deceased person, but in no instance during the year was any actual breeding place of anopheles mosquitoes discovered within the City limits. On the other hand a history of previous attacks of fever acquired in known malarious localities has frequently been obtained in these cases.

7. The rise in the mortality assigned to syphilis may to some extent be due to waning diffidence on the part of medical practitioners in certifying such deaths to that cause, but the concurrent increase in congenital and prenatal causes of infant mortality lends support to the current opinion that syphilis is a growing menace to the health of the City.

8. Deaths from dysentery, diarrhœa and enteritis, and ankylostomiasis were in each case fewer in 1925 than in the preceding year. The annual average number of deaths from diarrhœa and enteritis for the five years 1919–1923, previous to the chlorination of the water supply, was 143.6 and from dysentery 38.2. A similar improvement has usually been noticed after the introduction of a pure supply of potable water in other tropical places, and there seems little reason to doubt that the sterilisation of the City's water supply, which was practised with increased efficiency during the year, has had its effect in promoting these encouraging results.

Table IV.

OTHER CAUSES OF DEATH.

Deaths and Death-rates.

Diseases.	1924.		1925.	
	Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 population.	Deaths.	Death-rate per 1,000 population.
Bronchitis	61	0.95	83	1.29
Cancer	37	0.58	39	0.60
Disease of Heart and Blood Vessels ..	183	2.86	190	2.94
Bright's Disease and Nephritis	98	1.53	111	1.72
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis	25	0.39	17	0.26

9. The main features of this group are a marked increase in the mortality from bronchitis, a slight rise in deaths from cancer and other malignant diseases, the respective numbers for 1924 and 1925 being 37 and 39; somewhat greater increases in deaths from diseases of the heart and blood vessels, Bright's disease and nephritis, all of which are consistent with an actual increase in the spread of syphilis.

10. Deaths from non-pulmonary tuberculosis, including affections of glands, bones, joints and the coverings of the brain numbered 17, and were fewer by 8, or 32 per cent. than in the previous year.

11. On the whole, barring the infant mortality which is appalling, and the grave position with respect to syphilis, as reflected in the increasing number of deaths classified to that disease, the morbidity and conditions affecting health disclosed in the vital statistics of Port-of-Spain for 1925 are an improvement on those which prevailed in the preceding year.

12. Appended is a chart showing the curve of enteric fever in Port-of-Spain for 1924 and 1925, and the seasonal prevalence each month for the period 1918-1923 with a comparison of the prevalence of the disease in the rural districts made from data obtained through the courtesy of the Medical Inspector of Health.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

GEORGE H. MASSON,
Medical Officer of Health.

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad,
Public Health Department,
Town Hall, 15th March, 1926.