

PUBLIC HEALTH AND POOR-LAW MEDICAL SERVICES.

THE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMBINED RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY AND THEIR MEDICAL OFFICER.

At a meeting of the delegates of this sanitary authority, Mr. Haviland was asked if he had a report to present, to which he replied that his report would depend on whether or not he was considered to have been their medical officer of health between April last year, when his agreement with them expired, and August, when he was reappointed, as he had not received any salary during that period, although he had acted officially when required. After hearing Mr. Haviland, who stated that he considered he was bound to them until the new appointment was made, they decided that they had no power to pay him a salary, as he was not specially employed by them, and reminded him that a district which had paid him had been surcharged. From this it appears that, if a medical officer of health continue to act after his time be expired, he has no claim for any services except those done on the special order of any one of the local authorities forming the union. This is a great hardship on the officer, as, if the appointment occupied his whole time and were valuable, as in Mr. Haviland's case, he would most probably not seek any other engagement until after the election was over; and is also objectionable as regards the combined district, as there would not be any medical officer of health during the interregnum. As we understand the matter, Mr. Haviland objects to make an annual report for the year during which he was medical officer for seven months only. Be that as it may, the result is such as to deter men of good standing from seeking after these appointments, as, however well he may do his duty, the combined sanitary authority may not be reconstituted, or, if so, may neglect to reappoint for some months, and leave the officer without salary during the whole of that period.

REPORT OF THE HEALTH-OFFICER OF THE PORT OF LONDON.

THIS report for the half-year ending December 31st, 1876, refers to work done on the river, in the docks and school-ships, and also amongst canal population. The former is ordinarily done on four days a week by an inspector with the aid of the steam-launch, and no less than 3,370 vessels were visited and 180 orders issued for whitewashing, cleansing, etc.; 50 foul cargoes, such as rotten potatoes, etc., were found, and 59 sick seamen removed to the hospital. There were 2,912 vessels visited in the docks, of which 200 required cleansing, and 63 sick seamen were found on board. As regards the school-ships, the medical officer points out that the sick bay, however commodious, ought not to be used for anything more than a temporary refuge, and that all who are likely to have a severe illness should be sent away. There was a slight outbreak of scarlatina on board the *Cornwall*, which was stopped by sending all the infected or suspected boys to the hospital at Greenwich. Mr. Harry Leach refers at some length to the cabins of the barges occupied by the canal population, and states that the average capacity is about two hundred and eighty cubic feet, and that they are generally kept clean. He says that the population of the barges coming into the port of London is about 15,000, and that the cubic spaces and the portions allotted to these people "set all sanitary notions at defiance, and the entire conditions of existence, whether viewed in their physical, moral, or educational aspects, are a sarcasm upon civilisation".

THE HEALTH OF TOTTENHAM.

IN consequence of the death-rate in Tottenham from all causes, and especially from zymotic diseases, having largely increased for several years before 1873, a Sanitary Association was formed in that year to bring public opinion to bear on the local sanitary authority, so as to compel the carrying out of certain recommendations which had been made by Mr. Netten Radcliffe, after an inquiry he had made respecting the causes of a severe outbreak of fever in the district. The Association states that the sewerage arrangements were very bad for want of an extension of sewers to newly built houses, and that the water-supply was at all times liable to become unfit for use by reason of land-spring water being mixed with the original supply derived from deep wells. Soon after the formation of the Association, the Board took steps to remedy these evils by drawing all the water from the chalk, so that it is now purer than that of even the West Kent, and by

covering over offensive ditches and generally improving the drainage. Since that time, the death-rate from zymotic diseases has greatly decreased, the average for the years 1871-3 having been 4.70, and for 1874-6 only 2.31 per 1,000 population; and the death-rate from "all causes", which was 19.31 in 1871-3, was reduced to 17.39 in 1874-6. It will be seen from this that the reduction in the mortality from the seven chief zymotic diseases was equal to 2.39 per 1,000 and from all causes 1.92, so that the latter had really increased in the three years. The chief diminution occurred in the deaths from scarlet fever, small-pox, fever, and diarrhoea, so that it is to be hoped that the mortality will be permanently reduced. It must not, however, be forgotten that the death-rate from zymotic diseases was unusually low in 1874-6, and that, therefore, Tottenham may have thus participated to a very considerable extent, irrespective of the benefits accruing from the sanitary works that have been carried out.

POOR-LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION.

At the meeting of the Council of the Poor-law Medical Officers' Association held at their rooms, 3, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, the question of the alleged abuse of authority by the police in transferring their supposed sick cases from the streets and from the cells to the infirmaries of the workhouses was discussed, when it was resolved that application be made to the medical officers of the metropolitan and certain provincial urban workhouses requesting them to forward to the Honorary Secretary, Mr. J. W. Barnes, any information they can supply bearing on this subject.—The annual meeting of the Association will take place at 3, Bolt Court, on Thursday, June 21st, at 3 P.M.

UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

EXAMINERS.—The following have been elected Examiners for 1877-8. *Chemistry*: Professor Roscoe, Ph.D., B.A., F.R.S., and W. J. Russell, Ph.D., F.R.S. *Botany and Vegetable Physiology*: Rev. M. J. Berkeley, M.A., and Maxwell T. Masters, M.D., F.R.S. *Comparative Anatomy and Zoology*: G. J. Allman, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S., and Professor E. Ray Lankester, M.A., F.R.S. *Practice of Medicine*: Professor Wilson Fox, M.D., B.A., F.R.S., and Charles Murchison, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S. *Surgery*: John Cooper Forster, M.B., and W. S. Savory, M.B., F.R.S. *Anatomy*: George W. Callender, Esq., F.R.S., and Professor John Curnow, M.D. *Physiology*: Professor William Rutherford, M.D., F.R.S., and Professor J. Burdon Sanderson, M.D., F.R.S. *Obstetric Medicine*: J. Hall Davis, M.D., and Professor W. S. Playfair, M.D. *Materia Medica and Pharmaceutical Chemistry*: T. Lauder Brunton, M.D., D.Sc., C.M., F.R.S., and Professor Sydney Ringer, M.D. *Forensic Medicine*: Professor Ferrier, M.D., M.A., F.R.S., and Thomas Stevenson, M.D. *Hygiene, Medicine in relation to the Origin and Prevention of Diseases, and Vital Statistics*: William Farr, M.D., D.C.L., F.R.S., and John Simon, C.B., D.C.L., F.R.S. *Sanitary Law and Engineering, Meteorology, and Geology*: T. R. Fraser, M.D., F.R.S.E., and Captain Douglas Galton, C.B., F.R.S.

MEDICO-PARLIAMENTARY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—Thursday, May 3rd, 1877.

Universities (Oxford and Cambridge) Bill.—A proposal by Mr. COURTNEY for enabling the University to examine female students concurrently with male students, and to grant licences to practise medicine to female students, was negatived by 239 to 119.

Closing Burial-Grounds.—Sir H. SELWIN-IBBETSON, in answer to Mr. Greene, said there were no actual difficulties in the way of closing overcrowded churchyards or other burial-grounds. There were some difficulties which would be overcome by the transfer of the authority to the Local Government Board.

Friday, May 4th.

Army Surgeons.—Mr. MITCHELL HENRY asked the Secretary of State for War whether he would state why the commissions of the gentlemen who were gazetted as surgeons under the Royal Warrant of April 28th, 1877, were not antedated as was heretofore the case; and, in the event of their not being antedated, would the time spent at the Army Medical School, Netley, count towards promotion for those who might be continued in the Department after ten years.—Mr. HARDY