

adopted in Belfast are difficult to understand. The flesh of the "shot" animal was said to bleed less readily, and to show signs of putrefaction twelve or fifteen hours before that of the "stunned" animal; on microscopic examination the blood vessels of the "shot" animal were gorged with blood corpuscles, while those of the "stunned" animal were perfectly emptied of blood. These results are not quite in accordance with those obtained by observers elsewhere. At the recent Animal Congress held in London, Herr Heiss, Director of the Straubing Abattoir, stated that, in the slaughterhouse there, 30,000 animals were killed by the shooting method in one year, and it is inconceivable that such a well-recognized authority should continue this system if attended by the drawbacks set out by the Belfast Committee.

#### INFECTED CLOTHING.

A curious question of sanitary law has arisen in County Tipperary. The Nenagh Urban Council has protested against the use of the disinfecting chamber of the workhouse by the Thurles Guardians to disinfect the clothing of fever patients from the last named union. The Nenagh Council having informed the Local Government Board that it would seize and burn all such clothing, the Board expressed the opinion that "no danger can arise if suitable precautions are taken," and warned the urban council that it should be careful to make certain that it had the power to seize or destroy clothing sent for disinfection.

## England and Wales.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.]

### LANCASHIRE.

#### COUNTY OF LANCASTER HEALTH REPORT.

IN his quarterly health report for the administrative county of Lancaster, the Medical Officer, Dr. Sergeant, says that the death-rate for the quarter ending June 30th was 13.4 per 1,000. There was a somewhat marked increase in the epidemic death-rate compared with the same quarter last year. Measles contributed no less than 267 deaths, while there was a slightly increased prevalence of scarlet fever. Three cases of small-pox were reported. One case at Middleton and another at Farnworth occurred in persons working in the carding room of a cotton mill, both of whom had been vaccinated in infancy, but not revaccinated. These may be compared with the cases that have occurred at Stockport in cotton workers noticed in our last issue. The third case was an unvaccinated negro, and the origin of the infection could not be traced. Measles was extensively prevalent, and a considerable number of schools had to be closed. In some cases over 50 per cent. of the children were attacked. Several schools were closed also on account of mumps, in one instance 38 per cent. of the scholars being attacked. One school was closed for a month on account of diphtheria, and two or three for scarlet fever. Much attention has been given to river pollution by sewage, and the condition of the river Alt from sewage contamination apparently needs some drastic remedies. The report gives some interesting details of the public health legislation promoted by the Local Government Board. Objection is taken to the clause in the Milk and Dairies Bill which enables a medical officer of health to inspect a dairy outside his own district, and to make an interim order prohibiting the sale of the milk if there is reason to suspect that any cow is suffering from tuberculosis. It is pointed out that the County Councils Association recommended that no local authority should have jurisdiction within the area of any other local authority. It is suggested that it would be a less complicated procedure if the county council were required to take action in respect to any cowshed within its area on complaint from an outside medical officer of health concerning tuberculous milk. Dr. Sergeant also thinks that "a mistake has been introduced in continuing, except in large urban districts, the supervision of dairies and cowsheds by local sanitary authorities, for in the past such administration has not been satisfactory as regards

efficiency or uniformity." Attention is also drawn to a new feature in the bill allowing certain sanitary authorities, not being rural districts, to establish and maintain dépôts for the sale of milk specially prepared for consumption by infants under two years of age.

#### THE MIDWIVES ACT IN LANCASHIRE.

IN his report to the Midwives Act Committee, Dr. Sergeant says that at the end of the June quarter the county register contained the names of 964 midwives whose qualifications were as follows: Obstetrical Society of London 70, Liverpool Lying-in Hospital 38, St. Mary's Hospitals, Manchester, 63; certificate by examination of the Central Midwives Board 72, various hospitals 4, and in bona fide practice before the appointed day 717. Of these 853 are actually practising, while 111 have temporarily, for various reasons, ceased to practice. There were 421 records of sending for medical assistance, against 415 in the corresponding quarter of last year. Of these, 11 were for abortions or abnormalities of pregnancy, 332 for difficulties during labour, 44 for complications in the lying-in period, and 34 for the infants. In only 3 cases was medical aid summoned for inflammation of the eyes of infants, and we are told that in no case was the midwife to blame. The number of cases of puerperal fever reported was 37, with 11 deaths, giving a case death-rate of 29.7 per cent. for the quarter; in several instances midwives were reprimanded or cautioned in connexion with puerperal fever cases, the offences consisting in delay in obtaining medical aid, failure to send record to the supervising authority, non-compliance with letter of suspension, etc. One of the lady inspectors reports that in the great majority of cases the midwives' bags and appliances were in a cleanly state and the registers well kept considering the standard of education of many of the "bona fide midwives," and it is said that "a large number of these women are really excellent practical midwives, though they have not the capacity to grasp the requirements of the rules as to keeping books and sending notices." Another inspector says that in some cases much ignorance is displayed and the work of many of the untrained midwives is still very rough. In one of the puerperal fever cases the perineum was badly ruptured and medical aid was not called in until the temperature rose several days later. In one case a midwife had attended a case of miscarriage without suggesting that medical aid should be called in, and the placenta was not expelled until a fortnight later.

### WALES.

#### SHORTAGE OF WATER.

WHILE Swansea is on short service of water, and the inhabitants are bearing with commendable patience a condition of things which leaves them with only three hours' supply a day, the new reservoir at Cray is full to overflowing. At least the wide expanse of water which has been enclosed in the Cray watershed at a cost of £500,000 is only inches from the overflow, and out of its 1,000 million gallons' capacity there are more than 900 millions enclosed and available. The explanation of the shortage is as follows: Before the Cray reservoir was opened Swansea had three other reservoirs in the Velindre area. These provided the ordinary requirements of the town, but the necessities of the future required further provision. This the Cray supplies, and more than supplies; but it was not thought prudent to incur the expense of £100,000 in taking full advantage of the Cray till it was absolutely necessary. Thus, at first a pipe line of 17 in. diameter was laid between the reservoir and the town. This carries 2,500,000 gallons daily, which, with 3,000,000 gallons a day from the older reservoirs, would amply meet all requirements save in case of drought. But the present year is the driest since that year of drought 1887, and while the Cray is still sending down its 2,500,000 gallons daily, and can do so for a whole year if there is not another drop of rain, the older reservoirs have run dry. Thus it is that Swansea is suffering. The Swansea Corporation on August 12th paid a visit of inspection to the Cray Reservoir. The Mayor and Town Clerk were able

to report that the work of laying a second pipe track from the Cray is well in hand. This second line will be 24 in. in diameter, and will carry to Swansea 6,000,000 gallons in addition to the 2,500,000 gallons carried down by the existing pipes. The cost will be £100,000, and the work is being pushed on with such dispatch that, although it has only been in hand for a fortnight, already there are four openings along the route, and half a mile out of the twenty-four miles has been laid. So long as the fine weather prevails, it is expected that about three-quarters of a mile can be laid weekly.

There is practically a water famine at Burry Port also, and if the present drought continues the position will become serious. The inhabitants have been inconvenienced for some weeks past, and the supply at Clyndu appears to have been almost exhausted. Some time ago it was said to be plentiful, the flow of water in June last being about 10,000 gallons per twenty-four hours, but before the end of the month it dropped to 6,000, and in July it was only 4,000. At the present time it is not more than 2,000 gallons, and this is insufficient for the Graig district alone. Several parts of the district are supplied by the urban council water cart. Precautionary measures are being taken to tide over the drought. The position is engaging the serious attention of the council, which, although it has been endeavouring to find a scheme for some years, has not yet succeeded in doing so. Under the provisions of the Llanelly Water Bill, which was recently passed, power was given to the Llanelly Urban Council to lay mains to Burry Port upon application.

## Sydney.

[FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.]

### PROGRESS OF CREMATION.

A CREMATION society has recently been established in Sydney with the Hon. Dr. Creed, a member of the Legislative Council, as President. He has addressed a letter to the Hon. C. G. Wade, the State Premier, setting forth the various arguments in favour of the adoption of this practice. In the course of this letter the writer remarks that:

The health of the people is the most potent factor in the material prosperity of a country, and no government can prudently neglect to adopt any precautions, though possibly incomplete, which tend to its preservation. The State Government is therefore approached to provide the necessary funds for the erection of a crematorium, in a central position, because it would be available for all persons whose death occurs within a reasonable distance of the railway, and because the number of persons desiring to cremate in any one district might not, in the immediate future, be sufficiently great to justify the expenditure of the municipal funds, urgently required for other public purposes, in this direction. When the custom grows, as the experience of all highly civilized countries shows it will, future crematoria might be left to be provided by the local authority.

The Cremation Society recommends that when a crematorium is established no incineration shall take place unless the death is registered, the cause having been certified by a medical practitioner who has been in attendance on the deceased for at least forty-eight hours immediately prior to death, and that the reliability of the certificate has been confirmed by a second doctor, preferably a Government medical officer, who has made fitting inquiry. These certificates having been given and the death registered, a permit to cremate may be granted; such permit, should any suspicious circumstances be afterwards discovered, may be suspended by a stipendiary magistrate or police magistrate, until doubt as to the cause has been set aside, either by further inquiries or a *post-mortem* examination. In default of the medical certificates being forthcoming, no cremation shall take place until after the cause of death has been determined by *post-mortem* examination, except by the special leave of the Minister of Justice. This is to provide for cases of sudden death from obviously natural causes.

So far no reply to this communication has been forthcoming from the Government.

### THE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

Two or three further sporadic cases of bubonic plague have occurred in the city. The Board of Health, through its President, Dr. Ashburton Thompson, has made an appeal to the citizens, and especially to those in occupation of business premises in the city, to co-operate earnestly in rendering their premises secure from infestation by rats. With one or two exceptions, all the cases of

plague reported this year received the infection on business premises which were so imperfectly protected as to be infested with rats. The long experience of the health authorities goes to show that if the rats were kept outside the houses there would be no epidemic of plague. Unless the citizens do their part, the united efforts of the authorities cannot prevent the spread of contagion. The situation is one that is causing the health authorities much anxiety.

### ROYAL PRINCE ALFRED HOSPITAL, SYDNEY.

The annual report of this institution was presented to a meeting of the subscribers last month. The number of beds available at present is 318, and the total number of in-patients treated during the year was 4,778, an increase of 225 on the year 1907. The total number of operations performed was 2,932 as compared with 2,912 in 1907. Professor Anderson Stuart, the Chairman of Directors, in commenting on some features of the report, pointed out that although the total number of patients treated was larger than in the previous year, the average daily number of patients in the wards was less. This was accounted for by the fact that the average stay of patients in the wards was less by one and one-fifth day than in the year 1907. This represented nearly 6,000 days of treatment altogether, and showed what an important thing it was not to keep patients longer than was absolutely necessary. The hospital staff had been increased by the appointment of an honorary pathological chemist and two honorary assistant pathologists, whose work was necessarily having a considerable effect upon the pathological department. The board of directors had been so impressed with the necessity for improving the facilities for work of this kind, that three further rooms had been made available for clinical-pathological work, and £325 was being spent upon the improved equipment of the department, which was being made one of the most complete south of the line. Reference was also made to the proposed transfer of patients from the Coast Hospital to this institution. Last year Sir Joseph Carruthers promised that the Government would remove the Coast Hospital general beds to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The present Government, however, refused to ratify this arrangement, and the Board of Directors found themselves with 150 beds on hand all ready to receive patients, and patients clamouring for admission, but with no means to open the beds. During the past year the board had been in communication with the Minister with a view to the possible opening of 100 beds for the reception of the more important surgical and medical cases now sent to the Coast Hospital. The Government finally decided against this proposal, but promised to allow the directors to draw £ for £ subsidy on subscriptions and donations up to £5,500 a year instead of £4,000 a year as formerly. In consequence it was hoped to open 30 or 40 more beds at an estimated cost of from £45 to £50 a bed. The necessity for enlarging the Nurses' Home was referred to. The home was full, and nearly one-half of the nurses employed at the hospital were at present accommodated in unused wards and other parts of the hospital. There was an overdraft of £1,329 on the Nurses' Home, and a special committee had been appointed to take steps to clear off this debt.

### HOSPITAL FOR CHRONIC CONSUMPTIVES.

In consequence of repeated representations to the Government on the necessity for making some better provision for the large number of cases of chronic consumption, a hospital has been erected at Waterfall, a site on the South Coast Railway line some twenty miles from Sydney. Only a part of the original plan has so far been completed, but accommodation for about 150 cases has been provided, and this number has been transferred from the Liverpool asylum, where all destitute chronic cases of pulmonary consumption have hitherto been accommodated. The erection of this new institution will be of immense benefit to the patients themselves as well as an important aid in the crusade against tuberculosis.

### PURE FOOD ACT.

The Pure Food Act recently passed in this State comes into force on July 1st. The Advisory Committee appointed in terms of the Act has held sixteen meetings for the