

Dr. P. H. BANKS of Risely, near Bedford, has, for the third time, received the grant of the Local Government Board for successful vaccination. The amount of the grant is £17 16s.

MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH AND REGISTRARS OF DEATHS.

SIR,—I beg to send you a copy of a letter written by me to the Registrar-General, and his reply to the same. His decision, instead of facilitating the work of the Medical Officer of Health, obstructs it.

I have been in the habit, when preparing a report on a village or parish, to call on the registrar and go carefully through his register books, and make an estimate of the percentage of deaths from each zymotic disease, as well as the annual death-rate. I then compare the mortality of this particular village or parish with the mortality of the other districts in Essex, and of districts in other parts of the kingdom. According to the wish of the Registrar-General, the Medical Officer of Health is to tell the registrar what he wants, and the registrar (many of whom spell and write most villainously, and are thus very apt to make mistakes) is to make written extracts for him. For this work, the Sanitary Authority is to fairly remunerate the registrar.

I am quite certain that neither of the Sanitary Authorities with which I am connected will pay the registrars for this work of making written extracts and estimates, a work which more properly devolves on a medical man. In looking over the registers of mortality, the necessity that the examination should be made by a medical man frequently presses itself on my attention, if a correct estimate is to be made. I would not trust my clerk, whose education is far superior to the majority of district registrars, to make the scrutiny for me.

I had hoped that the Registrar-General would have smoothed the way of the Medical Officer of Health, which is already sufficiently beset with difficulties.

You are quite at liberty to make any use you please of this correspondence. I am, etc., CORNELIUS B. FOX, M.D.

Maldon Rural Sanitary Authority, July 13th, 1874.

Copy of Letter from Dr. C. B. Fox to the Registrar-General.

Maldon Rural Sanitary Authority, July 6th, 1874.

Dear Sir,—Having been instructed by the Maldon Rural Sanitary Authority to prepare a sanitary report on the parish of Burnham, situated in the Southminster District of the Maldon Union, I immediately proceeded to ascertain the mortality of the parish.

I went to the Superintendent Registrar's office in Maldon, and consulted the registers of deaths. Mr. Codd, the Superintendent Registrar, was most courteous and obliging, and offered me every facility for extracting the information which I required. On my asking for a sight of the last register-book (which I wanted particularly to examine, in order to ascertain the number of deaths that had recently occurred from small-pox), he told me that it was in the hands of the district registrar, Mr. Carter Wigg. I accordingly wrote Mr. Wigg a most courteous letter, asking him when I could conveniently look at the register of deaths in his possession. After a delay of about a fortnight or three weeks, I received a reply from him, which I am quite prepared to show you if you wish to see it. In his letter, he declined to allow me to see the register of deaths unless I paid him for so doing the usual fee.

I placed the letter of Mr. Wigg, the Registrar of the Southminster District, before the Maldon Rural Sanitary Authority at a recent meeting of that body. The members quite felt, as I do, that, as a public official, the registrar should not have refused me free access to all information, but at the same time did not know that they had any power to compel the registrar to allow me the inspection without the payment of a fee. I may say that there is not the slightest ill-feeling, that I am aware of, between the Sanitary Authority and the registrar, or between the registrar and myself.

I write to inquire whether I, as a public official, can compel the registrar to give me, without a fee, the information which I require, in order to enable me to make what estimates I may think proper as to the death-rate, and prevalence of preventable disease in Burnham.

We all feel that if he cannot be compelled, registrars ought to be under an obligation to furnish such information to a Rural Sanitary Authority, for it is a most anomalous state of things for a Medical Officer of Health to pay a fee for such matters.

I must say, however, that I have not before been annoyed by such a demand, although I have examined registers of deaths at the offices of several registrars in my extensive district.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, CORNELIUS B. FOX, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health of the Combined Sanitary Districts of
Chelmsford, Maldon, and Billericay, Essex.

To the Registrar-General.

Copy of Letter from the Registrar-General.

July 9th, 1874.

Sir,—I am desirous that, for sanitary purposes, any information to be derived from the civil registers of deaths should be in possession of Medical Officers of Health.

But I am also desirous that these public records should not leave the custody of registration officers, and that written extracts from them should only be given by those to whose safe custody they are confided, however respectable may be the applicants—whether of the medical, legal, clerical profession, or any other.

Therefore it is my wish that the Registrar of Births and Deaths should forthwith furnish you with any stated particulars that you may require respecting the parish of Burnham, receiving fair remuneration for the extra trouble thus imposed on him from the Local Authority.

Your faithful servant,

GEORGE GRAHAM,

Registrar-General.

To Cornelius B. Fox, M.D.

MILITARY AND NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICES.

THE Director-General of the Naval Medical Service has recently inspected all the hospitals under his control at Portsmouth and Portland; and it is understood that he will proceed to Plymouth and Ireland.

THE vacant Medical Good Service Pension has been bestowed on Dr. Salmon, Inspector-General of Hospitals and Fleets. It is said that Dr. Salmon is by several years the senior officer of his rank now on the active list.

NAVAL MEDICAL SERVICE.—List of naval medical candidates who were successful at both the London and Netley examinations, having passed through a course of instruction at the Army Medical School at Netley, and who will receive Commissions as Surgeons in the Royal Navy, August 1874.

	No. of Marks.
1. Saunders, E. H.	4297
2. Richardson, H. A. W.	3825
3. Collot, J. A.	3460
4. Luther, E. W.	3437
5. Benthams, R.	3425
6. Ross, N. C.	3394
7. Collins, H. B.	3179
8. Bennett, W. E.	3150
9. McKinlay, A.	3032
10. Hawton, J. W. H.	2910
11. Mulock, E. R.	2800

MEDICO-PARLIAMENTARY.

HOUSE OF LORDS.—Thursday, July 30th.

Sanitary Laws Amendment Bill.—Lord WALSINGHAM, in moving the second reading of this Bill, stated that, up to the year 1872, great confusion existed among the sanitary authorities throughout the country, and various questions were submitted to a Royal Commission, who recommended, in their report, that the country should be divided into urban and rural districts for sanitary purposes, and that only one authority should exercise jurisdiction in each district. The Public Health Act of 1872 attempted to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission. The country was divided into urban and rural sanitary districts, the authorities in the former being the Town Council, the Improvement Commissioners, and the Local Board, and in the latter the Poor-law Guardians. The Act also dealt with minute and intricate questions connected with local administration. Anomalies had since been recognised in the operation of the existing law, and the present Bill was a necessary step towards the ultimate attainment of a desired object—viz., the consolidation of the sanitary laws.—Lord REDESDALE agreed that nothing was wanted more than a consolidation of the sanitary laws, but he did not think this measure could fairly claim to be a step in that direction until it was more clearly drawn. With regard to Boards of Guardians, he feared they might incur very heavy expense if great powers were given to them.—Earl FORTESCUE was disappointed that a more comprehensive measure had not been submitted to Parliament this year upon the subject. He should have preferred that some of the time wasted in considering the Intoxicating Liquors Act had been bestowed on the consolidation of the numerous Sanitary Acts. The sanitary condition of the country had almost retrograded since the first Public Health Act was passed in the Administration of Earl Russell.—The Duke of RICHMOND agreed with the noble earl that