

Public Health

AND

POOR LAW MEDICAL SERVICES.

VITAL STATISTICS IN ENGLAND AND WALES (1909).

WE are indebted to the Registrar-General for the following rates, compiled and published for the convenience of medical officers of health. The figures are provisional and subject to revision.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Annual Birth-rates, Death-rates, and the Death-rates from the Principal Epidemic Diseases.

	Annual Rates per 1,000 Living.				Deaths under One Year to 1,000 Births.
	Births.	Deaths.		Principal Epidemic Diseases.	
		Crude.	Corrected *		
England and Wales	25.6	14.5	14.5	1.12	109
76 great towns ...	25.7	14.7	15.6	1.42	118
143 smaller towns ...	24.8	13.9	14.5	1.08	111
England and Wales less the 219 towns	25.6	14.5	13.6	0.80	98

* The corrected death-rates are the rates which would have been recorded had the age and sex constitution of the populations of the several areas been identical with that of England and Wales as enumerated in 1901.

DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICERS AND SCHOOL CERTIFICATES.

A POOR LAW medical officer in a country district informs us that a letter has recently been addressed by the instruction of the county education committee to the guardians of the district calling the attention of the board to the fact that in its district parents of children who are being treated by the Poor Law medical officers are not able to obtain a certificate of the sickness of their children. The letter goes on to refer to "the decision of the Local Government Board, that under Article 205 (3) of the General Consolidated Order a parent can require a certificate of the sickness of his child when attended by the district medical officer." The letter concludes by asking the guardians to inform the education committee whether they will instruct their medical officers to give certificates to the parents in cases where the children are receiving treatment.

So far as we are aware this suggestion involves a proposal to put a new duty on Poor Law district medical officers. The following is the text of Article 205, paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of the General Order (Consolidated), of July 24th, 1847, and we reproduce a footnote to number (3) from the eleventh edition of Glen's *Poor Law Orders*:

DUTIES OF A MEDICAL OFFICER.

Art. 205.—The following shall be the duties of every medical officer appointed by the guardians, whether he be the medical officer for a workhouse or for a district:

(1) To give to the guardians, when required, any reasonable information respecting the case of any pauper who is, or has been, under his care; to make any such written report relative to any sickness prevailing among the paupers under his care, as the guardians or the commissioners may require of him; and to attend any meeting of the board of guardians when requested by them to do so.

(2) To give a certificate respecting children whom it is proposed to apprentice, in conformity with Arts. 59 and 61.

(3) To give a certificate under his hand in every case to the guardians, or the relieving officer, or the pauper on whom he is attending, of the sickness of such pauper or other cause of his attendance, when required to do so.

The footnote is as follows:

That is, when required to give such certificate by the guardians of the union of which he is an officer. It is optional with him to give the certificate to boards of guardians or relieving officers of other unions. The certificate need not be in any particular form. It will suffice if it be in the form in which ordinary medical certificates are usually given. If the medical officer be summoned to attend a justice when he makes an order for the removal of a lunatic to an asylum under 53 and 54 Vict., c. 5, s. 16, the case will not be within this regulation. Apparently the regulation will include a certificate of illness in the case of a member of a benefit club, where the medical officer may attend in sickness on a pauper, if such a certificate be required of him by the guardians, or the relieving officer, or the pauper. It forms no part of the official duty of a medical officer to attend the justices to prove that the sickness or disability of a pauper is likely to produce a permanent disability, so as to render such pauper removable to the parish or union of his settlement under 9 and 10 Vict., c. 66, s. 4; 28 and 29 Vict., c. 79. He must be summoned or subpoenaed to attend before the justices the same as any other witness whose evidence is necessary, and he will be entitled to be recompensed accordingly for his attendance.

Under Art. 205, No. 3, it will be the duty of a medical officer of a union or parish in the metropolis to give certificates for the admis-

sion of paupers into the Leavesden and Caterham Asylums. See Art. 5 of the regulations issued to these asylums on October 6th, 1870, post.

The certificates to which the application of the Education Committee refers are not required for the use of the guardians to enable them to carry out any of their special duties, but are required by another body—namely, the education authority, which has different duties to perform and has special funds at its command for the discharge of such duties. We therefore fail to see that medical officers of the guardians can be called on to certify as suggested by the education authority.

NOTIFICATION FEES.

A RESIDENT medical officer of a union infirmary can claim a fee from the urban district council in which the infirmary is situated, for notifying cases of infectious disease which occur in the infirmary and which are treated in the infirmary.

The Services.

TERRITORIAL FORCE.

NURSING SERVICE.

MISS SIDNEY BROWNE, R.R.C., has been appointed Matron-in-Chief of the Territorial Nursing Service. The full establishment of the service is 2,783, and the number already enrolled is 2,570. Twenty-three general hospitals of the Territorial Force have been organized, and the staff of each consists of a principal matron, a matron, 22 sisters, and 68 nurses, that is to say, 92 altogether; to make provision for the fact that at the moment of mobilization the whole staff might not be immediately available, the staff to be actually enrolled for each general hospital is 121. At the present time the general hospitals are controlled by the county associations and each has the assistance and advice of the matrons of the principal hospitals in each area.

An Army Order issued recently with regard to the appointment of Matron-in-Chief Territorial Nursing Service contains the following: "The Matron-in-Chief will not be called up for duty in time of peace, but will be required to make herself acquainted with the organization of the service, and should be a member of the Advisory Council. She may be called up for duty on the embodiment of the Territorial Force. In the event of the Matron-in-Chief being called up, she will be on the staff at head quarters, and will be required to exercise general superintendence; to co-ordinate the administration of the nursing service in the various hospitals of the Territorial Force, and will be responsible for the general efficiency of the nursing service."

Every nurse enrolled is required at the beginning of each year to report to the principal matron of the Territorial hospital to which she is attached; inquiries are made as to the nurse's fitness for duty, and the nature of the work she has been doing during the preceding twelve months, so that any who show signs of physical incapacity, or who have specialized to a degree which would interfere with their usefulness for the Territorial nursing service are replaced by others.

Miss Browne, who is a sister of Dr. Langley Browne of West Bromwich, has had a long experience of army nursing. In 1884-5 she was with the Suakin field force, and was subsequently superintendent of nurses in turn at Malta, the Curragh, the Herbert Hospital, Woolwich, and the Connaught Hospital, Aldershot. During the South African war she was matron successively of General Hospitals 3 and 12. At the close of the war she was appointed matron-in-chief of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service; when she took up the duties she found a staff of 87 nursing sisters; when she retired four years later there were 400. In 1902 the King conferred the decoration of the Royal Red Cross upon her, and she also holds the Egyptian medal and clasp, the Khedive's star, and the King's and Queen's South African medals.

R.A.M.C. (TERRITORIAL).

PAY IN CAMP.

L. P. D.—The pay of a major R.A.M.C.(T.) in camp is £1 3s. 6d. a day; after three years' service as such it is £1 6s., with allowances according to Class 9.

MR. W. H. LEVER has been elected Chairman of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in the room of the late Sir Alfred Jones.

The annual dinner of the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society will be held at the Hotel Great Central, Marylebone, on Wednesday, February 16th, at 7.30 for 8 p.m.

WE regret to have to announce the death of Mr. W. W. Wagstaffe, formerly Senior Assistant Surgeon and Lecturer on Anatomy at St. Thomas's Hospital, who was compelled to retire from that position many years ago owing to ill health.

At the meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, to be held at 17, Bloomsbury Square, W.C., on February 8th, Mr. C. A. Hill and Mr. J. C. Umney will read a paper on the essential oils of the *British Pharmacopoeia*. Medical friends and members will be cordially welcomed.