PUBLIC HEALTH

AND POOR-LAW MEDICAL SERVICES.

The Drainage of Southend-on-Sea.

The Southend Local Board having made an application to the Local Government Board for power to borrow £250 for purposes of drainage, an inquiry was held before the local board, and the evidence of one of the examiners, the name being in alphabetical order in each case. That in the award of honours the results of the Second as well as the Final examination shall be taken into account.

Ophthalmia in the Thames Valley.

A fresh outbreak of ophthalmia is reported at Ebber, in the Thames Valley (which has been the centre of much opposition to notification), and several cases have been removed to hospital. In bringing the matter before the Kingston rural sanitary authority, Dr. Gibbs, the medical officer of health, called attention to the culpable indulgence to infection among the poorer classes. No medical advice was sought; no notification given, and no precautions adopted until the case was already out of hand and the time of its utmost period. A sentence of this nature, which the board have long since passed, and which the medical officer of health has endeavoured to enforce by the continuous attendance of a medical officer, will, doubtless, take some note of that fact. It was stated, in the course of the discussion, that the master of the oysters deposited in certain parts of the foreshore were killed, apparently by the seaweed carried from the present outfall. The survivors, it is reassuring to hear, are not eaten by the dogs who belong to the house and cooking purposes, with what consequences was not mentioned.

Hornsey Graveyard.

At the last meeting of the Hornsey Local Board it was decided by a majority of 1 to 1 to close the churchyard belonging to the parish church. From a statement made by the chairman in proposing the resolution, it appears that no record of the number of burials exists except during the last hundred years. A careful count of the burial books shows that no less than 6,000 persons have been buried in the churchyard during this period. The original church, on the same site, was built about 1250, from which time burials have taken place in only 3 acres in extent. In 1816 the churchyard was partially closed, but within the last ten years 2,000 persons have been buried there. On a piece of ground adjoining and attached to the churchyard, the board have erected a new church, at a cost of £1,000, and the expense of which is to be recovered from the churchyard. This will be a danger to the health of the community. A resolution to put an end to such a state of things ought to have been carried unanimously instead of by a majority of 1.

Tenure of Office of Medical Officer of Health.

Up to the present time Beckenham has formed part of the West Kent Combined Sanitary District, of which Mr. Butterfield is the medical officer of health. The tenure of his appointment not having expired, the other boards renewed it for a further term of five years, but the Beckenham authority, it is said, that so far as they were concerned, the capital point was to be for one of the endowments. The tenor of the appointment, and the refusal of the board to agree to the tenure, was declared to be with the local board. The tenure of Mr. Butterfield, according to the endowments of 1842, is to be regulated by the Board. The difficulty, the withdrawal of Beckenham without any ground of complaint in the matter, was an injustice to Mr. Butterfield, and a breach of the implied understanding. It was not even stated that the experienced health officer, was induced to take the Kent West appointment. The local board cannot be unaware of the growing feeling in favour of appointing specially trained health officers, unfettered by the ties of private practice—a feeling which of late years has gained greatly in strength, and especially now that compulsory notification is becoming general. It would seem, then, that the board contemplate appointing Mr. Butterfield to the vacant position. If this is the case, some explanation appears to be due from him to Mr. Butterfield and to the profession.

AN INSANITARY AREA.

The value of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, becomes more and more apparent as the work progresses, and has been hampered in its actions if this Bill had not become law. A most important scheme is now under consideration in the neighbourhood of the town of Southend-on-Sea, by which the improvement seems to be an advance of a quarter of an acre, or, as situated between Gray's Inn Road and Leather Lane. Here may be seen a group of dilapidated houses and sheds in the midst of many narrow courts and alleys. As long ago as the late Board of Works was asked to take the matter in hand under Cross's Act, but no action was taken because it was regarded as too small to be treated as a metropolitan scheme under that Act. In 1891 Gray's Inn Road was widened, causing the displacement of 14,000 persons of the working class. The main thoroughfare was improved but the adjoining courts suffered. The people crowded into them. There is no adequate provision in yards or open spaces although the area is literally swarms with people. Some of these tenements have recently been demolished, and all would have been down by now had it not been that the magistrate at Clerkenwell Police Court adjourned them as not fit for human habitation. The minute that this Act was made for a close inspection of favours under the Act. The number of persons who have had to make a step to-day would not be less than 100,000. The Council hope to deal with the area under Part II of the Housing Act, and let each one be sold for the erection of dwellings sufficient to accommodate the inhabitants, but the rent of one shilling a week is not sufficient to meet the cost of dwellings. The new courts and alleys, and the remainder paved and left open, so as to form a breathing space for the inhabitants of the district.

A MODEL SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

A new central slaughterhouse has recently been opened at Nuremberg, with a floor area of one and a half acres, and constructed according to the most advanced scientific principles. It includes a special slaughterhouse entirely isolated from the other parts of the building, and having a butcher's shop and a tropical section for diseased or doubtful soundness; there is also a separate place for animals suffering from contagious plagues, and a cool air chamber kept at a temperature of 30° C. One storey of the building, which the slaughterhouse is a building where animal vaccine lymph is prepared, and where the calves used for the purpose are kept under observation.

HEALTH OF ENGLISH TOWNS.

In twenty-eight of the largest towns, including London, 8,546 births and 3,440 deaths were registered during the week ending Thursday, October 3rd. The annual rate of mortality in these towns, which had increased from 18.8 to 21.0 per 1,000 in the preceding three weeks, declined again to 18.4 during the week under notice. The rates in the several towns ranged from 12.1 in Portsmouth and in Brighton; 11.4 in Cardiff, and 15.1 in Hali-}