

Last year eight local bills for police and sanitary purposes were presented to Parliament, and in March the House of Commons appointed a select committee to consider those bills and to report on police and sanitary regulations. At the instance of the committee, the Local Government Board obtained information from the authorities of the twenty-three urban districts in which, up to date, legislation on compulsory notification had been embodied in private or local Acts. This information is published in Parliamentary Paper 164 (1882), and this paper, along with the report of the Select Committee, I have carefully considered. The urban districts referred to are Barrow-in-Furness, Birkenhead, Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Bradford (Yorkshire), Burton-on-Trent, Derby, Huddersfield, Jarrow, Lancaster, Leicester, Llandudno, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Oldham, Preston, Reading, Rotherham, Stafford, Stalybridge, and Warrington, and the total number of their population amounts to 1,997,249; medical men, 932. In addition, there are reports from Edinburgh and Greenock, and the total population of the thirty-one cities and towns in which compulsory notification now exists may be roughly estimated at two millions and three-fourths, and the total number of resident medical men is 1,417. The reports of the local authorities state that the experience of notification gained under the local Acts has been satisfactory, and that it has enabled the authorities in many instances to prevent the spread of infectious disease. There is some difference in the methods of notification, and also in the number of infectious diseases included. Thus, there are thirty towns in which the medical attendant has to notify either directly or to the householder; seven towns in which, when there is a medical man in attendance, it is not the duty of the occupier to notify; twenty-two towns in which the duty to notify devolves upon the occupiers, whether there is a medical man in attendance or not; and twenty-three towns in which, when there is no medical man in attendance, it is the duty of occupiers to notify. The fees paid to medical men for each certificate vary: In twenty-five towns the sum is 2s. 6d. for each certificate, in four towns 1s. each, and in one town 1s. 6d. each. The amount of the penalty also varies: In twelve towns it is 40s., in ten towns £5, in eight towns £10 for each offence, and in four towns there is an increased penalty for a second offence.

The collective opinion of these thirty-one cities and towns is to the effect that the system of compulsory notification has proved beneficial to the health, and greatly assisted in preventing epidemics.