

The Borough system of government aims to secure better government for a Metropolitan Area by partial or complete centralization of government. Whether or not one believes in the partial or complete centralization, it is accepted that certain main public services should be under a central authority.

The question asked is - Should Health Work be one of the public services placed under centralized control? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand what is meant by Health Work at the present time. The main functions of a modern health department may be listed as follows, without going into details:-

1. Preparation of health by-laws and regulations;
2. Collection and tabulation of vital statistics;
3. Control of Communicable Diseases;
4. Control of Tuberculosis;
5. Control of Venereal Diseases;
6. Provision for ante-natal care;
7. Provision for infant welfare and welfare of pre-school child;
8. School health service;
9. Health Education by public health nurses and other means;
10. Sanitation - general sanitary inspection and the supervision of housing conditions;
11. Control of Water and Milk Supply;
12. Control of Food Supply;
13. Public Health Laboratory Service for examinations in connection with Diphtheria, Tuberculosis, Typhoid Fever, etc.; examinations of milk and water; examinations of food; distribution of biological products.

If this outline be accepted as the work of the health department, the next point is, Why should these activities be centralized? This will be briefly explained for each of the above-mentioned activities:-

1. It seems reasonable to say that regulations concerning health matters should be uniform throughout the area. What is good for the health of one borough must be good for the others, and, conversely, if it is not good enough for one, its ill effects would pass to the adjacent boroughs.
2. Vital Statistics are only of value to the extent that they are used and understood. "Through intimate contact with these vital data, the health administrator is enabled to visualize his problem more accurately and to chart his course of procedure more intelligently than might otherwise be possible." Hospitals would likely be concentrated in one or two boroughs, and births and deaths would occur there for the whole metropolitan area; unless such statistics be centralized, they lose their value. Prompt information as to births is the basis of much of infant welfare work. The value of communicable disease reports depends on their prompt use; it is evident that they should be centralized.
3. Communicable Disease control. As disease germs are no respecters of geographical boundaries, and as they would be carried by people moving from one borough to another, central control is necessary. An ill-administered borough would be a constant source of menace to its neighbours; it would act as a reservoir from which infection would be carried to other boroughs. In tracing out sources of infection and spread of infection, the investigator would frequently be led from borough to borough. Such epidemiological work is the backbone of communicable disease control; it would be done best by an investigator with power and full authority from a central body to