

THE HEALTH OF THE NATION

*From the Foreword by the Right
Honourable Neville Chamberlain,
M.P., Minister of Health.*

'I welcome this book as a useful and comprehensive review of the organisation and purpose of our public health service. A perusal of its pages serves to bring out the extent and variety of the measures taken to safeguard the health of the nation, while statistics of death rates and of the incidence of some of the diseases formerly dreaded as among our most deadly foes fortify us in the belief that our efforts have been crowned with a substantial measure of success.'

'So much important information has rarely been assembled so clearly and in so small a compass.'—*Spectator*.

'The book can be strongly recommended.'

—*British Medical Journal*.

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THE HEALTH OF THE NATION

Whether a nation be great or little depends entirely on what sort of men and women it is producing. A sound nation is a nation that is made up of sound human beings, healthy in body, strong of limb, true in word and deed, brave, sober, temperate and chaste.

J. FROUDE.

Our bodies are our gardens, of which our wills are gardeners.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Educate your people and you have reduced to comparatively insignificant dimensions the problems of temperance, of housing, and of raising the condition of your masses.

VISCOUNT HALDANE.

THE HEALTH OF THE NATION

BY

F. E. FREMANTLE

M.P., M.D., M.CH., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., D.P.H.

Author of

'THE HOUSING OF THE NATION.'

With a Foreword by

THE RT. HON. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

Minister of Health



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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
STANLEY BALDWIN
A VERY GREAT ENGLISHMAN

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
FOR THE STRENGTHENING AND ENRICHMENT OF LIFE
OF THE PEOPLE HE LOVES AND LEADS

AUTHOR'S NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

IN preparing this edition—such is the pace of legislation—notes have been added in connection with relief of tax in respect of children (p. 18), reform and consolidation of Poor Law and Local Government (pp. 36, 77, 78, 83), the registration of nursing-homes (p. 61), National Health Insurance (p. 94), the Edinburgh Corporation and venereal diseases (p. 116), and mental deficiency (p. 128). The estimated profit to the nation of lives saved (p. 30) has been revised in the light of the work of Louis I. Dublin, statistician, of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company of New York. A few facts and phrases have been amended.

Some critics have asked for expansion. But the book is limited to the size likely to attract the ordinary man or woman; and attention may be drawn to the references, the bibliography (p. 197), and the directory of leading organisations (p. 200). A critic has rightly remarked that the information on any one subject is better given in official publications. But this book is the bait.

Lastly, the author has been flattered by complaints that he has not given his own opinion. But this book is no platform for individual views. It is a plain, brief statement of facts and tendencies. Dogma is of the devil. Solution comes by experience.

It is hoped that this little book, unique in its aim and scope, will be of use to the vast numbers of citizens, young and grown up, who would know something of the health problems of the nation and help towards the attainment of a healthier and happier people.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN the all-pervading problems of public health, in which the national and local electorate is keenly interested and personally concerned, it is difficult to realise either the relative value of facts or the statutory provisions, regulations, orders, and by-laws concerned with them. Legal language is difficult to follow ; effective powers in any particular case are difficult to ascertain ; generalisations are as misleading as single instances. The perplexities of the politician, the ratepayer and the social reformer are shared to no small extent by medical officers and local authorities.

It is hoped that this book may be useful to all concerned in bringing together in right proportion the main facts and factors in the health of the people, and the general system of law, authority and administration affecting each issue. In contrast with medical and legal text-books, written for professional use, on the one side, and with popular handbooks, written to arouse and satisfy well-meant curiosity, on the other, stress is here laid on the Parliamentary aspect of the problems, and on their political history and economic bearing. I hope it may be as useful to my colleagues in both Houses of Parliament, and to all to whom may fall the opportunity to instruct and encourage public opinion in such matters, as the writing of it has been to myself. The record of achievement on

which it is based is one that can hardly be matched in any other country or time. It is on public opinion and personal determination that further progress will depend; and thereout the nation may expect the richest reward.

I gratefully acknowledge help from many friends and colleagues, and not least from some who prefer to remain unknown. My thanks are especially due to Dr. W. W. Jameson, Medical Officer of Health, Hornsey; to Miss A. L. Lawrence, of the staff of the British Medical Association; Miss Hester Viney, of the College of Nursing; Mr. H. N. Linstead, Secretary of the Pharmaceutical Society; Mr. R. Lindsay, of the British Dental Association; Miss Evelyn Fox, of the Central Association for Mental Welfare; and to the officers of many other health organisations; to Professor F. Hobday, F.R.C.V.S., Professor E. L. Collis, Sir John Robertson, Dr. A. K. Chalmers, Sir J. K. Fowler, Sir Leonard Rogers; and, not least, to the numerous officers of official organisations and Government Departments whose tedious duty it is to furnish the replies to Members' questions in the House of Commons.

To Mr. Neville Chamberlain my thanks are especially due for having, as for *The Housing of the Nation*, contributed the Foreword, thus giving to *The Health of the Nation* the cachet of the Minister who, with exceptional gifts of level-headed insight and clear and forceful exposition, has done more than any other statesman to promote a policy of continual progress for the advancement of the National Health.

FOREWORD

BY

THE RT. HON. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.,
MINISTER OF HEALTH

IN acceding to Colonel Fremantle's request that I should contribute a brief Foreword to his handbook on *The Health of the Nation* I must premise that the views and opinions expressed therein are his own, and that I must not be held necessarily to assent to them. But I welcome his book as a useful and comprehensive review of the organisation and purpose of our public health service. A perusal of its pages serves to bring out the extent and variety of the measures taken to safeguard the health of the nation, while statistics of death-rates and of the incidence of some of the diseases formerly dreaded as among our most deadly foes fortify us in the belief that our efforts have been crowned with a substantial measure of success.

Colonel Fremantle has attempted in one of his chapters to estimate in monetary terms the profits and losses of national health; I may be permitted to doubt if such estimates provide a true value for things which themselves are incapable of measurement. But human happiness and human capacity for useful work, whether of hand or brain, are indubitably bound up with physical health and fitness, and there will be no disagreement with the view that the health of its members must always be one of the first cares and duties of any progressive community.

The history of the growth of public health organisation in this country reveals, not only its strange and varied origins, but its steady incorporation

of many aspects of human life formerly considered to lie outside its scope. For, though it began with the relief of the poor and the registration of births and deaths, it now comprises industrial welfare, the control of the food-supply, the provision of housing accommodation, the care of the infectious person, and the supervision of the mentally defective. The utilitarian and the individualist of a century ago would be even more surprised to discover that our modern understanding of public health organisation contains provisions for dealing with maternity and infant welfare, with the child before and during its school life, with the health insurance of the great majority of the wage-earners of the country, and with the education in hygiene of the people as a whole. Thus the scope of the subject has been enlarged until it includes almost everything which concerns the life of man, from the cradle to the grave. I am satisfied that this enlargement, this wider understanding of the problem to be solved, is in itself responsible for much of the success which has been attained. The idea of our forefathers that the sanitation of the environment was sufficient has been proved by medical knowledge to be inadequate to meet modern needs. I am the last person to under-estimate the necessity of good sanitation and adequate housing—which, indeed, must always remain the basis of public health reform—but it is significant to observe the growing disposition of Parliament to favour direct medical services which shall provide for the mother and infant, the widow and orphan, the industrial worker who is 'down and out,' the cripple and the disabled. Not less significant is the straightforward attack

which is being made upon special forms of disease, such as tuberculosis, dental decay, venereal disease, rheumatism and cancer. It is no longer held to be sufficient to reduce total death-rates. We are beginning to concentrate upon the actual, morbid conditions which produce a premature death-rate, and this book sets forth the manifold means which are being applied to this end.

As there has been change and development in the problems to be faced, so there has been advancement in the methods of solution. For instance, there has been adjustment and readjustment of the actual machinery of Local Government, and there is still need for further changes in this direction; there has been a remarkable growth in the knowledge of the science and art of medicine in its application to communal health; there has been an ever closer association between the State and the medical profession in practice; and there has been a fuller appreciation of the fact that the life of one part of the Empire is dependent upon that of other parts, and of one nation upon that of other nations. All along the line new occasions have taught us new duties, and we are slowly though steadily learning the essence both of partnership and of interdependence. We have left behind us the days of the parish pump, and we are moving forward to the implications of imperial and international health. From the time of the establishment of the Ministry of Health in 1919 to the present, the Ministry has found itself inevitably concerned in these larger issues. The education and equipment of the medical man, for service overseas as well as at home, the investigation of the diseases associated with the

Tropics, on the mastery of which depends the prosperity of vast regions within the Empire, the ever-widening responsibilities of international co-operation in isolating or controlling the spread of affliction which know no frontiers—these are among the subjects in which we find ourselves directly interested to-day.

Looking to the future, I am disposed to think that the framework of public health organisation, if not already fairly complete, is at least so designed as to be capable of such adjustment as may be necessary from time to time to meet changing conditions of the future. The greatest need of to-day is the further education of our people, so that they may be able to take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them. There must, of course, be an alert and vigilant central authority, working hand in hand with the Local Authorities of Government; there must be a continual quest for new knowledge and the accurate investigation of causes and effects; but above all there must be the cultivation of 'the public health conscience' in the minds of the people themselves. Without their co-operation, willingly accorded by reason of their understanding of the meaning of their actions, the machinery of the health services cannot fully perform its functions. I hope that this book will inspire its readers to spread this knowledge and understanding where they still lag behind the times. In so doing, it will make its contribution towards the establishment of a healthier, and therefore a happier and more contented, population.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
29th July, 1927.

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CONCLUSION

As we recover from the effects of the war, there is constant search for new fields of enterprise and development, for fresh sources of public and private wealth. Here at our very feet is the gold-mine for which we have been asking. At home or overseas, in its homes and in its individual persons, the nation has a latent force, still at the mid-stage of its growth and waiting for further development. Compared with other mercantile and national enterprises the cost is small, the profits great, the indirect profits greater still. It is not by money alone that the value can be estimated; it is not by money alone that the result can be obtained. The will and understanding of the individual are essential to the success of the venture; every £1 spent is £1 wasted unless it draws out £2 worth of determined effort from the person concerned.

This is no Socialistic measure, further to squander the limited capital of the nation in mere vote-catching comfort. It is the proposal of common sense to make general use of existing knowledge by methods that have proved their value, and to allow our neglected human capital to fructify to its full capacity. It is in that sense that we commend to a new generation of hopeful and vigorous fellow-countrymen this brief guide to their common assets and liabilities in the Health of the Nation, this gateway to the Joy of Life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

OFFICIAL publications may be purchased direct from His Majesty's Stationery Office at Kingsway, W.C.2, or 120 George Street, Edinburgh, or through any bookseller.

The bibliography of housing is given in *The Housing of the Nation*, by the present author.

For *current information* in clear, Parliamentary language, the annual reports of the chief officers concerned are strongly recommended, especially those of Sir George Newman as Chief Medical Officer both of the Ministry of Health (*On the State of the Public Health*) and of the Board of Education (*On the Health of the Schoolchild*), and those of the Scottish Board of Health, which include the reports on school health. For England and Wales the financial and less technical facts are given in separate annual reports of the Ministry of Health and Board of Education. For more particular purposes, reference should be made to the census reports—e.g., general tables (1925), general report (1927), and reports on occupations, industries, housing, fertility, and separate counties—and to the annual statistical review of the Registrar-General; to annual reports of the Medical Research Council, Safety in Mines Research Board, Board of Control (Mental), Ministry of Labour, Chief Inspector of Factories, Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India, and to those on the Health of the Navy, of the Army, and of the Air Force. The Home Office issue an annual volume of licensing statistics, and the Stationery Office a useful guide to current official statistics.

On *special problems*, the reports of Royal Commissions are usually both authentic and exhaustive, and their conclusions are concise. Reference may here more especially be made to those on Sewage Disposal (1903), the Poor Law (1909), Tuberculosis (1912), Venereal Disease (1916), Mines (1925), National Health Insurance (1926), and Lunacy and Mental Disorder (1926). The reports of certain departmental committees are also valuable within their terms of reference, such as those of the Health of Munition Workers Committee (1918), the Astor Committees on Tuberculosis (1912 and 1919), the Newton Committee on Smoke Abatement (1921), the Monro Committee on Preservatives in Food (1924), the Maclean Sub-Committee on

the Transfer of Functions of Poor Law Authorities (1917), the Haldane Committee on the Machinery of Government (1918), the Tryon Committee on the Ministry of Pensions (1921), the Cave Committee on Voluntary Hospitals (1921), the Betterton Committee on Public Assistance Administration (1924). The reports of the National Birth-rate Commission (Chapman & Hall, 1917 and 1920) states the problem of the declining birth-rate. The articles in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh (1910) and subsequent editions, are of general value, such as those on Population, England (Local Government), Poor Law, Tuberculosis, Cancer, Temperance, Liquor Laws, Insanity, Vaccination, Veterinary Science, Vivisection. The Ministry of Health, Board of Education, Medical Research Council, and Home Office issue frequent memoranda, of which catalogues may be had from the Stationery Office. The health organisation of the League of Nations is publishing a series of important international studies of health problems (Constable & Co., 12 Orange Street, W.C.2); and the International Labour Office of the League of Nations at Geneva publishes useful international reports, such as that on *Factory Inspection in Certain Countries* (1923, 5s.), to be obtained through the League of Nations Union, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1.

The history of the subject, far too much neglected, is found in the classical *English Sanitary Institutions*, by Sir J. Simon, and *The History of Epidemics in Britain*, by Charles Creighton; and latterly in *Evolution of Preventive Medicine*, by Sir A. Newsholme, 13s. 6d.; *Health Problems in Organised Society*, by Sir A. Newsholme, 12s.; *Interpreters of Nature*, by Sir George Newman, 12s. 6d.; *A Short History of Medicine*, by Charles Singer, 7s. 6d. For general technical use, readers may be referred to *Hygiene and Public Health*, by Whitelegge and Newman, and to the *Synopsis of Hygiene*, by Jameson and Marchant.

For the legal aspects, reference may be possible to the official annual publications of the Statutes passed and of the Statutory Rules and Orders issued during the year; to the index to those in force on June 30, 1924; to the Statutes, etc., relating to National Health Insurance, with Consolidated Regulations, 1924, and to the Approved Societies Handbook, 1925. *Health Legislation*, by Lieut.-Col. F. Harvey, R.A.M.C. (1926), and the *Handbook of Sanitary Law*, by Burnett Ham, summarise the case conveniently.

Useful reference books are :

The Statesman's Year Book.
The Municipal Year Book.

- A Handbook of Public Social Services*—National Council of Social Service, 2s.
A Handbook of Statutory and Voluntary means available for the Prevention and Relief of Distress (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.), 2s. 6d.
Guids to Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Pensions, by T. S. Newman, 6d.
Guide to National Health Insurance, by T. S. Newman, 6d.

The following may be suggested from the many instructive publications constantly being issued on the several aspects of health work :

- The Ministry of Health*, by Sir A. Newsholme, 5s.
The Declining Birth-rate, by Sir A. Newsholme, 6d.
The Conduct of Medical Practice, by the Editor of the *Lancet*, 10s. 6d.
An Outline of the Practice of Preventive Medicine, by Sir George Newman, 1s.
Recent Advances in Medical Education in England, by Sir George Newman, 1s. 3d.
The Fight Against Infection, by Lieut.-Col. G. E. F. Stammers, 2s. 6d.
Drink in 1914-1922 : A Lesson in Control, by A. Shadwell.
The House of Health, by Sir John Robertson, 2s. 6d.
The Health of the Workers, by Sir Thomas Oliver, 2s. 6d.
The Child at School, by Sir Leslie Mackenzie, 2s. 6d.
The Story of English Public Health, by Sir Malcolm Morris.
Popular Education in Public Health, by Daley and Viney, 6s.
Problems in Tuberculosis, by Sir J. K. Fowler, 20s.
Health Problems of the Empire, by Balfour and Scott, 16s.
Health and Empire, by F. E. Fremantle, 7s. 6d.

Further information on publications of all kinds in connection with their subjects may be obtained from the organisations scheduled on p. 200. Their annual reports are often most useful reviews of legislation and progress during the year ; and most of them issue periodicals, which have a considerable value in spreading information and maintaining interest. Sample copies will, no doubt, be sent on application. The library of the College of Nursing is worthy of a visit.

DIRECTORY OF LEADING ORGANISATIONS

Government Departments

- In Whitehall, S.W.1; except
Pensions, Ministry of, 18 Great Smith Street, S.W.1.
Air Ministry, Kingsway, W.C.2.
Trade, Board of, Great George Street, S.W.1.
Mines Department, Dean Stanley Street, Millbank, S.W.1.
Medical Research Council, 15 York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.2.
Board of Control, 66 Victoria Street, S.W.1.
General Medical Council, 44 Hallam Street, Portland Place, W.1.
General Nursing Council, 20 Portland Place, W.1.
Central Midwives' Board, 1 Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, S.W.1.

Local Government

- Offices of County or County Borough Council; of Borough Council; of Urban or Rural District Council. (Address Clerk or Medical Officer of Health.)
County Councils Association, 84, Eccleston Square, S.W.1.
Association of Municipal Corporations, Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, S.W.1.
Urban District Councils Association, Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, S.W.1.
Rural District Councils Association, St. Stephen's House, Victoria Embankment, S.W.1.

General

- Royal Sanitary Institute, 90 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1.
Royal Institute of Public Health, 37 Russell Square, W.C.1.
Institute of Hygiene, 33-4 Devonshire Street, W.1.
British Red Cross Society, 19 Berkeley Street, W.1.
National Health Society, 53 Berners Street, W.1.
National League for Physical Education and Improvement, Carnegie House, 117 Piccadilly, W.1.
People's League of Health, 12 Stratford Place, W.1.
Research Defence Society, 11 Chandos Street, W.1.

Population

- Eugenics Society, 20 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.1.

Housing

- See *Housing of the Nation*, by the present author, Appendix II.

Food and Drink

- Food Education Society, Dane's Inn House, 265 Strand, W.C.2.
National Clean Milk Society, 3 Bedford Square, W.C.1.
True Temperance Association, Donnington House, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C.2.
United Kingdom Alliance, 1 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Mother and Child

- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children,
15 Leicester Square, W.C.2.
National League for Health, Maternity and Child Welfare,
117 Piccadilly, W.1.

Hospitals

- King Edward VII Hospital Fund, Worcester House, Walbrook,
E.C.4.

Tuberculosis

- National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis,
1 Gordon Square, W.C.1.
Welsh National Memorial Association, Westgate Street,
Cardiff.

Cancer

- British Empire Cancer Campaign, 19 Berkeley Street, W.1.
Imperial Cancer Research Fund, Queen's Square, Bloomsbury,
W.C.1.

Veneral Disease

- British Social Hygiene Council (formerly the National Council
for Combating Venereal Disease), Carteret House, Carteret
Street, S.W.1.

Mental

- Central Association for Mental Welfare, 24 Buckingham
Palace Road, S.W.1.

Industrial

- Industrial Welfare Society, 51 Palace Street, S.W.1.

Professions

- British Medical Association, British Medical Association House,
Tavistock Square, W.C.1.
Society of Medical Officers of Health, 1 Upper Montague
Street, Russell Square, W.C.1.
Royal Sanitary Institute, 90 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1.
Women Sanitary Inspectors' and Health Visitors' Association,
92 Victoria Street, S.W.1.
Royal British Nurses' Association, 194 Queen's Gate, S.W.7.
College of Nursing, Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square, W.1.
Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses, 58 Victoria
Street, S.W.1.
Overseas Nursing Association, Imperial Institute, S.W.7.
Midwives' Institute, 12 Buckingham Street, W.C.2.
Pharmaceutical Society, 17 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1.
Institution of Municipal and County Engineers, 92 Victoria
Street, S.W.1.
Institution of Civil Engineers, Great George Street, S.W.1.
Institution of Sanitary Engineers, 120 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

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