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Présentation de la fiche

Cote**b007_f0534**

Source**Boite_007-15-chem | Police médicale anglaise.**

Langue**Français**

Type**FicheLecture**

Personnes citées**[Frazer, W M](#)**

Références bibliographiques**[Frazer, A History of English public health, 1834-1939](#)**

Relation**Numérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730**

Références éditoriales

Éditeur**équipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).**

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Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 22/07/2020 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

INTRODUCTION

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province of public administration, are drainage, the removal of all refuse of habitations, streets and roads, and the improvement of the supplies of water."

"That the expense of public drainage, of supplies of water laid on in houses, and of means of improved cleansing would be a pecuniary gain, by diminishing the existing charges attendant on sickness and premature mortality."

"That, for the protection of the labouring classes and of the ratepayers against inefficiency and waste in all new structural arrangements for the protection of the public health, and to ensure public confidence that the expenditure will be beneficial, securities should be taken that all new local public works are devised and conducted by responsible officers qualified by the possession of the science and skill of civil engineers."¹

These recommendations are, it is thought, well worth quoting because they state the principles on which sanitary reform during the next fifty years was based. They constituted the pure milk of the word to the early sanitarians and being, for the most part, principles of universal application they are, in general, as valid today as they were when they were enunciated. As will be mentioned in the following chapter, the recommendations of the Poor Law Commission, although generally accepted, only came into operation very gradually and many years were to elapse before the cleanliness of the towns became assured. There were, at the outset, the political implications of Chadwick's proposals to be considered, because they involved heavy expenditure and because it would be necessary, if they were to be put into operation, to call into being a new branch of government. Accordingly, Sir Robert Peel, as Prime Minister, and Sir James Graham, as Home Secretary, arranged for the whole question to be placed before a Royal Commission and this was constituted by a patent of May 9th, 1843, with the Duke of Buccleuch as Chairman.² Writing in 1890, Sir John Simon observes that of the original members of the Commission only two had survived, Sir Lyon Playfair and Sir Richard Owen. Although Chadwick was not a member of this Royal Commission, but was, strictly speaking, a witness before it, he was consulted by the Chairman and Secretary at every stage and it is known that he

¹ Report of an Inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, 1842, Synoptical Volume (by Mr. Chadwick), pp. 369-71.

² A Commission for Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts—often referred to as the *Health of Towns Commission*.

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