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Présentation de la fiche

Cote**b007_f0535**

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

drafted the First Report and the Recommendations of the Second. At the end of a very exhaustive investigation the Commission made a series of proposals with a view to the drafting of legislation. One of the most important of these proposals was that the Crown should have power to inspect and supervise the execution of all general measures for the sanitary regulation of large towns and populous districts. This recommendation involved, of course, the setting up of a new Government Department. The Commission also recommended that the necessary arrangements for drainage, paving and cleansing and for the provision of sufficient water supplies should be placed, in each locality, under one administrative body. Up to that time drainage had been in the hands of one body and street cleansing in those of another, while water supplies were generally provided by private companies. All this was to be changed when the recommendations of the Royal Commission came into effect. The first report of the Commission was laid before Parliament on June 27th, 1844, and the second on February 3rd, 1845.

For political reasons, legislation to implement the unanimous recommendations of the Health of Towns Commission was delayed. A Government Bill for the improvement of the Public Health was introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Lincoln in the session of 1845, but this measure was deferred owing to the resignation in 1846 of the Prime Minister on the vital question of the Repeal of the Corn Laws. The main Bill did not, in fact, become law until 1848, but opportunity was taken in the 1846 session to pass an Act of limited application called the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Act; and in the same session the famous Baths and Washhouses Act came into being.¹

Registration of Births and Deaths

The Births and Deaths Registration Act was passed in 1836 in accordance with the recommendations of a Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons on March 28th, 1833, which reported on August 15th, 1833, and as a result of its operation there came into being a department which was organised for the purpose of supplying to the Government, to the local authorities and to others interested, statistical information of the most essential character by the use of which the value of measures taken for

¹ The first public baths and washhouse establishment was opened in Liverpool in Upper Frederick Street in 1842, and the idea owed its inception to Mrs. Catherine Wilkinson who, living in a poor quarter of the borough, came to see the need for this provision during the cholera outbreak of 1832. Mrs. Wilkinson and her husband were appointed the first superintendents of the new establishment.



