

were being cared for by registered child minders and 1,795 places were provided in 61 statutorily registered private day nurseries. A study group of medical officers and health visitors, under the chairmanship of Dr. John Bowlby, of the Tavistock Clinic, completed their investigations into the possibility of increasing mental health work in the maternity and child welfare services and their recommendations, the main ones of which are being implemented, are set out as an Appendix to the Report.

Domiciliary Midwifery Service.

The number of domiciliary confinements, which has been declining since 1948, showed a slight increase during the year, when there were 10,546 home confinements out of a total of 51,655 live and still births.

Health Visiting and Nursing Services.

An average of 372 full-time equivalent health visitors were occupied during the year in connection with the various health services, apart from the tuberculosis and school health services, and, in addition to their clinic and other duties, these health visitors made 836,000 home visits.

Home Nursing.

The demand on the services of the District Nursing Associations, which carry out home nursing on behalf of the Council, continues to increase. The visits paid in 1954 (1,873,881) were about 70 per cent. in excess of those in 1949, the first full year after the inauguration of the National Health Service, and almost 150,000 more than in 1953. Each nurse made an average of 13 visits each day and the average number of cases in the care of a nurse at any one time was 23.

Domestic Help Service.

The domestic help service was expanded still further; 32,500 cases were assisted, 77 per cent. being aged and chronic sick persons. 3,124 full-time and part-time home helps were employed at the end of the year and the volume of assistance given was 65 per cent. above the 1949 level. 65 patients were provided with night helps to enable relatives to get one or two nights sleep a week, and special efforts were made to utilise the services of child helps outside normal hours to prevent children having to be taken into care outside their homes during periods of domestic difficulties.

Immunisation and Vaccination.

There was a slight though welcome improvement in the "immunity state" of children under five due to an increase in the number of primary immunisations against diphtheria from 36,004 in 1953 to 47,621 in 1954. The estimated percentage at the end of the year of children under five who had at any time been immunised against diphtheria was about 55 per cent. In a county as large as London, with large numbers of migrants passing through each year, the possibility of imported infection is always present and efforts to keep the level of immunisation as high as possible must be maintained.

In spite of the fact that no special publicity is given to whooping cough immunisation, the demand from parents to have their children immunised against this disease continues to grow and during the past four years has increased four-fold. The present generation of parents are undoubtedly familiar with whooping cough and appreciate its potential danger more than they do in the case of diphtheria.

The number of children vaccinated against smallpox in their first year of life has almost doubled since 1949 and during 1954 about a half of all children under one were vaccinated.

London Ambulance Service.

The demand on the London Ambulance Service was again very great; the directly provided and ancillary services removed a record number of over one million patients in journeys comprising more than five and a half million miles.

Recuperative Holidays.

Recuperative holidays were arranged, on medical recommendation, for 7,465 persons (including 4,314 children).

Health Education.

Two county-wide campaigns were held during the year, one urging diphtheria immunisation and the other drawing attention to the need to take safety precautions in the home.

Mental Health Services.

The officers responsible for the removal to mental observation wards of patients in need of care and attention because of mental disorder dealt with 8,690 cases, compared with 8,081 in 1953. The accommodation in occupation centres for mental defectives was supplemented and at the end of the year a further 130 places had been provided, making a total accommodation for 935 persons. The success of the establishment in East London of a special welfare clinic for backward children under five led to the opening during 1954 of six further clinics to provide a similar service throughout the County.

During the year the Council submitted written and oral evidence to the Royal Commission set up under the Chairmanship of Lord Percy of Newcastle to enquire into the existing law and administrative machinery governing the certification, detention and care of persons suffering from mental illness or mental defect. The Report contains a summary of these recommendations.

School Health Service.

The school health service is reviewed in detail in the Report and an account of the growth and development of this service over the past 50 years appears as an Appendix to the Report.

437,721 medical inspections were carried out during the year and 14.8 per cent. of the children examined required to be referred for further medical advice or treatment compared with 15.8 per cent. in 1953, 16.2 per cent. in 1952 and 17.0 per cent. in 1951. During 1954 a further survey of the heights and weights of a sample of school children was carried out, a full report of which has been published separately.

There was a further decline in the percentage of the school population found to be "verminous." This figure has reduced from 8 per cent. in 1948 to a record low figure of 2.7 per cent. in 1954.

Dental Services.

Some slight expansion was possible in the school dental services during 1954 but much remains to be accomplished in this field before the Council's policy of establishing a ratio of one full-time dental officer for each 3,000 children on the school roll can be achieved; the ratio attained throughout the County as a whole during the year was one to 5,600.

(The Report, published by the London County Council, may be purchased from the Record Room (B.21), The County Hall, S.E.1, or from Staples Press, Ltd., 14, Great Smith Street, S.W.1, either direct or through any bookseller. The price is 2s. 6d. (by post 2s. 10d.).)

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