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RUTLAND, VT.
1919

The March issue of the Bulletin has been delayed in order that the new laws relating to public health passed by the session of the legislature just closed might be promptly made known to the people of this state. It is suggested that all who receive this bulletin, and especially physicians and health officers, study carefully the text of the new statutes which are given in detail.

DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS FOR VERMONT.

The General Assembly of 1919 has passed one of the most important public health laws ever enacted in this State, under the title, "An Act Authorizing the State Board of Health to Appoint District Health Officers in Place of Town Health Officers and Specifying Their Duties." This law, which was signed by the Governor March 26, 1919, makes a radical change in the public health organization of the State, and incidentally affects not only health officers but physicians and heads of families.

Briefly, the law provides that on July 1, 1919, the system of local health officers, which has been in effect in this State for thirty years or more, will be abolished. In its place the State will be divided into ten sanitary districts, and at the head of each district will be a district health officer, who must be a reputable physician and who will devote his whole time to public health work. The district health officers are to be appointed and may be removed by the State Board of Health. Authority is also given to appoint assistant district health officers when the occasion requires.

The district health officer will be able to exercise all the powers of the local boards of health within his district, and the law specifies certain duties which he is called upon to perform. Local boards of health, composed of the three selectmen of the town, remain the same as formerly and are vested with the same powers which they had previously in connection with local health officers.

DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS.

For the purpose of carrying out this law physicians attending cases of communicable diseases will be required not only to report such cases to the district health officer but also to place upon the house a quarantine card, which will be furnished by the State Board of Health. The district health officer will be required to assist physicians in the diagnosis of communicable diseases, and it will be part of his duties to enlist the co-operation of all physicians in the improvement of the public health.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.

One of the important items among the duties of a district health officer provides that he is to serve as health supervisor of all public, private and parochial schools within his district. This will bring medical inspection of schools within the reach of every town which desires it, and it is expected that a great majority of the towns in the State will immediately vote to have such inspection. Under the provisions of this law medical inspection will be furnished without expense to the towns.

FOR THE LARGER TOWNS.

Provision is made that cities and towns of over 5,000 inhabitants may have a local health officer, if they make provision for his salary and expenses. Under such conditions the State Board of Health will appoint a health officer for such town or city, and he will be called upon to perform similar duties in his city or town to those required of district health officers in their districts.

The full text of the law is as follows:

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH TO APPOINT DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS IN PLACE OF TOWN HEALTH OFFICERS AND SPECIFYING THEIR DUTIES.

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

SECTION 1. The State Board of Health is hereby authorized to divide the state into sanitary districts, not exceeding ten in number, and to appoint and remove at its discretion for each such district, a health officer who shall be a reputable physician. Such district health officer shall hold office until his successor is appointed and qualified and shall, at all times, be subject to the orders of the State Board of Health, and during his term of office shall not engage in the private practice of medicine. There may also be appointed in each district in cases of emergency and when deemed necessary by the State Board of Health, one or more assistant district health officers, who shall devote such time as is necessary to duties assigned to them.

Each district health officer shall perform the following duties:

1. Keep himself informed as to the sanitary and health conditions existing within his district.
2. Provide for the prompt and efficient quarantine of all cases of communicable diseases within his district.
3. Aid the physicians of his district in making diagnoses of communicable diseases, and endeavor to enlist the co-operation of all such physicians in the improvement of the public health.

4. Study the causes of excessive morbidity and mortality from any disease in any portion of his district.
 5. Promote efficient registration of births and deaths.
 6. Furnish information to the general public in all matters pertaining to the public health.
 7. Make regular inspections of the sanitary conditions of all school houses within his district and supervise the execution of the orders of the State Board of Health relating thereto.
 8. Serve as health supervisor of all public, private and parochial schools within his district, under the regulations of the State Board of Health, provided, however, that a minor shall not be compelled to submit to medical examination or treatment for or on account of any non-contagious disease if his parent or guardian objects thereto.
 9. Inspect public buildings and cause such buildings to conform to the regulations of the State Board of Health.
 10. Make inspections of sewer connections and plumbing and issue orders, in writing, for the performance of such work as is necessary to comply with the laws and regulations relating thereto.
 11. Make general sanitary inspections within his district whenever and wherever he has reason to suspect that anything exists which may be detrimental to the public health.
 12. Issue orders, in writing, for the destruction and removal, within a specified time, of nuisances, sources of filth and causes of sickness.
 13. Inspect all slaughter houses within his district and cause them to conform to the rules and regulations of the State Board of Health relating thereto.
 14. Perform such other duties as shall, from time to time, be assigned to him by the State Board of Health.
- Sec. 2. The salaries of the district health officers shall be determined by the State Board of Health, subject to the approval of the Board of Control, and they shall be allowed necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties, such salaries and expenses to be paid by the auditor of accounts upon approval by the State Board of Health. When, in the opinion of the State Board of Health, it is necessary to call any district health officer for the purpose of attending meetings or conferences, within or without the State, he shall be allowed his necessary expenses while away from home.
- Sec. 3. A district health officer may exercise all the powers of local boards of health within his own district, and his orders shall have the same force as the orders of the State or local boards of health. Failure to comply with the orders of the district health officer shall be construed as a failure

to comply with the orders of the State Board of Health and shall be subject to the same penalties as prescribed by law.

Sec. 4. Assistant district health officers shall be subject to call for such special services as are deemed necessary by the State Board of Health and for such services shall receive such fees as may be allowed by the Board of Control, and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of their official duties, such fees and expenses to be paid by the auditor of accounts, upon approval by the State Board of Health, as provided in Section two of this Act.

Sec. 5. Cities and towns of five thousand population or more may secure the services of a local health officer for such city or town by providing for the payment of the salary and expenses of such officer. When such provision is made, the State Board of Health shall appoint a health officer for such city or town, who shall be subject to the same provisions and perform the same duties within his city or town as are specified for the district health officers.

Sec. 6. The town clerk of each town shall receive all certificates of deaths occurring within his own town, and shall issue burial permits and receive fees therefor as provided by Sections 3801, 3808, 3811, 3812, 3813, 3814, 3818, 3819 and 3820 of the General Laws, provided that burial permits in cases of deaths from communicable diseases shall not be issued by said town clerk except in accordance with instructions to be issued by the district health officer or the State Board of Health and to be kept on file by the town clerk.

Sec. 7. For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, all physicians of the state shall be furnished by the State Board of Health with suitable cards for quarantining houses where cases of communicable disease exist, and shall be required to quarantine such houses as soon as the diagnosis is made or suspected and shall immediately report the case by mail to the district health officer. If he considers it necessary, he may also make such report by telephone or telegraph. A physician failing to comply with the provisions of this section shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars nor less than twenty-five dollars.

Sec. 8. Wherever the words "health officer" or "local health officer" occur in the General Laws relating to the powers and duties of such officers, it shall be construed to mean or refer to the district health officer, except as provided in sections five and six of this Act. The office of local health officer in the towns of any district shall not be vacated nor their fees invalidated until the district health officer of such district shall have been appointed and shall have qualified.

Sec. 9. The sum of thirty-five thousand dollars is hereby annually appropriated for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 10. Sections 6217 and 6234 of the General Laws are hereby repealed.

Sec. 11. This act shall take effect on the first day of July, 1919.

LEGISLATION RELATING TO VENEREAL DISEASES.

The venereal disease laws of Vermont, which up to this time have been well in the forefront as compared with other states, have been materially strengthened by the Legislature just closed. An addition has been made to Section 6250 of the General Laws which has to do with the reporting of the cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis. Not only are physicians called upon to report such cases but a druggist who sells "patent or proprietary medicine purporting to cure or alleviate the symptoms of Gonorrhoea or Syphilis" is required to secure the name, address and other details in regard to the person buying the remedy and report the same to the State Board of Health. Further than this a druggist or any other person selling certain drugs which are frequently used for the treatment of venereal diseases is required to keep a record of sales of such drugs in a book to be furnished by the State Board of Health, this book to be open at all times to inspection by members of the State Board of Health, State Board of Pharmacy or their authorized agents. The fee of twenty-five cents formerly paid for reports of venereal disease is now done away with.

In order to secure the advantage of the federal appropriation for the campaign against venereal diseases the sum of three thousand dollars is appropriated by the State for this purpose which sum will be duplicated from the funds available through United States Public Health Service. The full text of the law under which these provisions are made is as follows:

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 6250 OF THE GENERAL LAWS, RELATING TO THE PREVENTING OF VENEREAL DISEASES.

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont.

SECTION 1. Section 6250 of the General Laws is hereby amended so as to read as follows:

Sec. 6250. A physician or other person who knows or has reason to believe that a person whom he treats or prescribes for or to whom he sells patent or proprietary medicine purporting to cure or alleviate the symptoms of gonorrhoea or syphilis, shall immediately report the name, nationality,

race, marital state, address, age and sex of such person to the secretary of the State Board of Health on cards furnished for that purpose. Druggists, other than jobbers or wholesale druggists, or any other person, selling in compound or separately, other than on the prescription of a licensed physician, any preparation of copalba, cubebis, santalwood oil, methylene blue, hydrastis, formin, potassium permanganate, any one of the colloidal silver preparations, zinc, copper, alum, salts of mercury, other than calomel, iodide of soda or iodide of potassium, or any of the arsenical compounds known under the common name of arsphenamine, shall enter the sale of such drug or compound in a book kept for such purpose, said book to be furnished by the State Board of Health, which shall show the name and address of the person to whom such drug or compound was sold and the purpose for which it is to be used. This book shall at all times be open to inspection of the members of the State Board of Health, members of the State Board of Pharmacy or their authorized agents. Druggists, storekeepers, or any others dealing in drugs, when ordering any of the above mentioned drugs from jobbers, wholesalers, or other purveyors, shall make in triplicate a list of such drugs and amount ordered, one copy of which shall be sent to the person or persons from whom such purchase is made, one copy to the State Board of Health, and one copy retained on file by the purchaser for a period of two years, such file to be at all times open for inspection by members of the State Board of Health, members of the State Board of Pharmacy, and their authorized agents.

The sum of three thousand dollars of the moneys annually available for the purpose of said board shall be used to carry out the provisions of this and the first and fourth following sections. A person or firm who fails to comply with the provisions of this section shall be fined not more than two hundred dollars.

TREATMENT OF VENEREAL CASES.

An important law was enacted whereby an inmate of a prison, jail or other state institution may be kept in quarantine in such an institution after the expiration of his sentence if such person is found to be afflicted with tuberculosis, venereal or other contagious or communicable diseases. This provision is set forth in the following terms:

"The director of state institutions may, with the approval of the Board of Control, designate or construct a ward or hospital room at any state institution for the purpose of giving necessary treatment and care to inmates of such institutions.

Sec. 2. In case an inmate of a state institution at the expiration of his lawful term of confinement therein, has or is afflicted with tuberculosis, venereal or other contagious or communicable disease and, in consequence thereof, such inmate is under quarantine by order of the State Board of