

[Report 1956] / Medical Officer of Health, Caithness County Council.

Contributors

Caithness (Scotland). County Council.

Publication/Creation

1956

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/sgj4uvzj>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution license.

This licence permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

4c 4696

COUNTY OF CAITHNESS



ANNUAL REPORTS

For 1956

CHARLES N. MINTO,
M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,
Medical Officer of Health.

ALEX. T. BOYD,
County Sanitary Inspector.

CONTENTS

	Page
Vital Statistics	5
Care of Mothers and Young Children	9
Welfare Foods	10
Midwifery	11
Health Visiting	12
Home Nursing	13
Domestic Help Scheme	13
Vaccination and Immunisation	13
Prevention of Illness—Care and After-care	16
Convalescent Home Provision	22
Chiropody Service	22
Control of Infectious Diseases	23
Food Supply	25
Mental Health Service	25
Port Health Administration	26
National Assistance Act, 1948	26
Nursing Homes Registration (Scotland) Act	26
Health Education	26
Sanitary Inspector's Report	27

STAFF.

Medical Officer of Health—C. N. Minto, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Assistant Medical Officer of Health—D. A. Mackintosh, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

County Nursing Superintendent—H. Macmillan, R.G.N., S.M.N., S.C.M., H.V.

DISTRICT NURSES.

Bower	M. Macdonald
Canisbay	J. Cook
Dunbeath	L. M. Shearer
Dunnet	J. Calder (Resigned August, 1956; Transferred to Keiss September, 1956)
Halkirk	C. Sinclair
Keiss	K. Budge (Resigned June, 1956)
Latheron	F. Munro (Resigned July, 1956) I. Bremner (Appointed 1/10/56)
Lybster	J. Sinclair
Olrig	J. Anstey
Reay	H. Sutherland
Stroma Island	E. Bremner
Thurso Landward	C. Overy
Watten	M. Macpherson
Wick South Landward	D. Williamson
Wick Burgh	M. Dunbar J. Gunn M. J. Bruce (Appointed June, 1956)
Thurso Burgh	A. Sinclair
Clerks	D. M. Jockles C. L. Mowat

To the Department of Health for Scotland
and to the
County Council of the County of Caithness.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report as Medical Officer of Health for the County of Caithness for the year ending 31st December, 1956.

In the vital statistics the most notable feature is the increase in the notification of respiratory tuberculosis. There were 29 new cases in 1956 as compared with 13 in 1955. There were, however, only 2 deaths from tuberculosis during the year.

Vaccination against poliomyelitis became available for the first time in 1956.


I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Caithness County Council and the officials of the Northern Regional Hospital Board (Scotland) for their helpful co-operation throughout the year, and also to thank the staff of the Public Health Department for their loyal support.

I am,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

C. N. MINTO,
Medical Officer of Health.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b28648018>

COUNTY OF CAITHNESS.

REPORT BY THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1956.

POPULATION (Registrar General's Estimate).

Landward Area	13,355
Wick Burgh	7,517
Thurso Burgh	3,582
	<hr/> 24,454

The number of Births, Marriages and Deaths registered in the County, and in each of the Burghs, with corrected figures, is as follows:—

	Total.	Landward.	Wick Burgh.	Thurso Burgh.
Births registered (including illegitimate)	382	157	214	11
Births corrected	417	192	139	86
" " Males	212	93	73	46
" " Females	205	99	66	40
" " Illegitimate	28	16	9	3
Still Births registered (including illegitimate)	11	3	8	0
Still Births corrected	13	5	7	1
Infant Deaths	15	4	6	5
Marriages registered	181	46	90	45
Deaths registered	299	190	76	33
Deaths corrected	315	178	90	47
" " Males	155	87	43	25
" " Females	160	91	47	22
Maternal Deaths	0	0	0	0

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES.

Population estimated to middle of 1956	24,454
Birth Rate (corrected—per 1000 estimated population)	17.1
Illegitimate Rate per 100 Births	6.7
Still Birth Rate per 1000 Births	30.0
Infant Mortality Rate	36.0
Death Rate (corrected—per 1000 estimated population)	12.9
Death Rate (adjusted for age and sex distribution—per 1000 estimated population)	10.5

BIRTHS.

The number of births registered during the past ten years is shown in the following table:—

Year.	Number of Births.	Rate per 1000 Estimated Population.
1947	528	22.3
1948	461	19.5
1949	439	18.8
1950	429	18.8
1951	416	18.2
1952	410	17.9
1953	381	16.3
1954	413	17.3
1955	388	16.2
1956	417	17.1

Of the total live births, 28 were illegitimate, equal to an Annual Rate of 6.7 per 100 births. The Rate for Scotland is 4.3 per 100 live births.

STILL BIRTHS.

There were 13 still births, giving a rate of 30 per 1000 total births, including still births, as compared with 15 in 1955, giving a rate of 37 per 1000 total births.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The number of deaths of children aged less than one year was 15 as compared with 8 in 1955. The Mortality Rate for the County was 36 per 1000 live births as compared with 21 for the previous year. The Rate for Scotland is 29 per 1000 births.

The numbers, causes and age groups of Infant Deaths are contained in the following table:—

Causes of Death.	Number of Deaths.	Age Groups.				
		Under 1 Wk.	1-4 Wks.	1-3 Mths.	3-6 Mths.	6-12 Mths.
Pneumonia	3	—	—	—	3	—
Pneumonia of newborn	2	1	1	—	—	—
Congenital malformations	3	1	—	2	—	—
Asphyxia	1	—	—	—	1	—
Prematurity	2	2	—	—	—	—
Other diseases peculiar to early infancy	3	3	—	—	—	—
Other diseases of Nervous System ...	1	—	1	—	—	—
	15	7	2	2	4	—

The Infantile Mortality Rates, deaths during the first month of life, and still births for the past five years are shown in the following table:—

Year.	Infantile Mortality Rate.	Deaths 1st month of life.	Still Births.
1952	51	16	9
1953	24	5	6
1954	34	8	10
1955	21	6	15
1956	36	9	13

MARRIAGES.

The marriages numbered 181, equivalent to a rate of 7.4 per 1000 estimated population. The figure for 1955 was 165, giving a rate of 6.9 per 1000 estimated population.

DEATHS.

Deaths from all causes, and corrected for transfers, numbered 315, of which 155 were males and 160 females, giving a corrected and adjusted rate of 12.9 per 1000 estimated population. The figure for 1955 was 11.9.

Last year people of 65 years and over accounted for 71.5% of all deaths; this year the figure is 67.6%; those of 75 years and over last year accounted for 45.1% of all deaths; this year the percentage is 44.1; and those of 85 years and over gave a percentage of 14.9 last year and this year the figure is 12.3.

AGES AT DEATH.

	Total	Landward Area.	Wick Burgh.	Thurso. Burgh.
Under 1 year	15	4	6	5
1-4 years	—	—	—	—
5-9 "	1	1	—	—
10-14 "	—	—	—	—
15-24 "	5	4	1	—
25-34 "	6	3	3	—
35-44 "	11	4	4	3
45-54 "	24	12	9	3
55-64 "	40	23	12	5
65-74 "	74	42	25	7
75-84 "	100	63	22	15
85 years and over	39	22	8	9
	315	178	90	47

CAUSES OF DEATH.

	Total.	Landward Area.	Wick Burgh.	Thurso Burgh.
Tuberculosis of respiratory system	2	1	—	—
Malignant neoplasms	50	27	16	7
Diabetes mellitus	1	1	—	—
Anaemias	2	1	1	—
Other general diseases	3	2	1	—
Vascular lesions affecting central nervous system	47	26	14	7
Other diseases of nervous system	4	1	2	1
Chronic rheumatic heart disease	6	1	4	1
Arteriosclerotic and degenerative heart disease	92	59	21	12
Other diseases of heart	4	2	2	—
Hypertension with heart disease	2	2	—	—
Hypertension without heart disease	5	1	2	2
Other circulatory disease	8	5	—	3
Influenza	1	—	1	—
Pneumonia (except of newborn)	6	3	3	—
Bronchitis	9	6	1	2
Other respiratory diseases	6	2	3	1
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	7	6	1	—
Appendicitis	1	1	—	—
Intestinal obstruction and hernia	1	1	—	—
Diarrhoea (except of newborn)	1	—	1	—
Other diseases of liver	3	3	—	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	7	1	5	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	1	—	—
Other diseases of genito-urinary system	3	1	—	2
Diseases of skin and organs of locomotion	2	1	—	1
Congenital malformations	4	4	—	—
Diarrhoea of newborn	2	—	1	1
Other diseases peculiar to early infancy	5	1	1	3
Senility	11	6	5	—
Cause ill-defined and unknown	4	3	—	1
Suicide	4	4	—	—
Motor vehicle accidents	4	2	2	—
Other road transport accidents	1	1	—	—
Other violence	6	2	3	1
	<hr/> 315	<hr/> 178	<hr/> 90	<hr/> 47

The following tables give the numbers of deaths attributed to cancer and other malignant diseases for the past five years and details of the different types of cancer which occurred during 1956:—

Year.	Number of Deaths.
1952	40
1953	31
1954	43
1955	50
1956	50

Types of Cancer during 1956.

Carcinoma of Alimentary System—Stomach	11
Colon	4
Rectum	1
Pancreas	2
Oesophagus	3
Other	1
	— 22
Carcinoma of lung	2
Carcinoma of male reproductive organs	3
Carcinoma of female reproductive organs—Breast	8
Uterus	6
	— 14
Other	9
	—
	50

Cancer of the lung remains a comparatively uncommon cause of death in Caithness. Why this should be is not certain, but the absence of serious industrial pollution of the atmosphere may well be an important factor.

MATERNAL MORTALITY.

There were no maternal deaths in the County during the year.

CARE OF MOTHERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN.

(a) Ante-natal and Post-natal Clinics.

The services of a Consultant Gynæcologist and Obstetrician are available at Wick and Thurso hospitals for patients referred by their own doctors. This service is provided through the Northern Regional Hospital Board.

Maternity outfits are available through the district nurses and during the year 69 outfits were issued.

(b) Child Welfare Clinics.

The Child Welfare Clinics at Wick and Thurso continue to be well attended and the numbers attending and the attendances made during the year were:—

	Under 1 year.	1-5 years.
Number attending	233	49
Number of attendances	2,673	1,042

(c) Dental Care.

It has not been possible to provide dental treatment for expectant and nursing mothers and pre-school children, as the services of the only Dental Officer employed by the County Council are fully utilised in school dental work. The Council agreed to appoint another Dental Officer in order to undertake dental care of mothers and young children, but there have so far been no applicants for this post.

An Orthodontic Consultant has been appointed by the Northern Regional Hospital Board. He holds monthly clinics at the Bignold Hospital, Wick. The first clinic was held in April, 1956.

(d) Mother and Baby Homes.

As stated in previous reports, arrangements are made to admit unmarried mothers to the Aberdeen Mother and Baby Home and occasionally to Salvation Army Homes. During the year six cases were admitted.

(e) Day Nurseries.

None.

(f) Residential Nurseries and Children's Homes provided as part of the Authority's arrangements under Section 22 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act, 1947.

None.

WELFARE FOODS.

The distribution of welfare foods continues on the lines indicated in my Report for 1954. The scheme continues to work satisfactorily.

The following table gives details of the uptake of welfare foods during the year. It will be seen that there has been a slight increase in the amounts issued in 1956 as compared with 1955:—

	Issued in Clinics and by District Nurses.				Issued to Hospitals.			
	Nat. Dried Milk.	Cod Liver Oil.	Vitamins A. and D.	Orange Juice.	Nat. Dried Milk.	Cod Liver Oil.	Vitamins A. and D.	Orange Juice.
January-December, 1956	22,376	3,426	662	13,518	133	6	—	24

Dec.

... 21,902 3,344 717 11,665 119 - - 28

(vi) Administration of Analgesics.

Gas & Air. Trilene.

- (a) Number of domiciliary midwives in the area qualified to administer analgesia in accordance with the requirements of the Central Midwives Board for Scotland ... 16 1
- (i) Number in (a) employed on local health authority work ... 16 1
- (b) Number of domiciliary midwives who received their training during the year ... — —
- (c) Number of sets of apparatus for the administration of analgesia in use in the area at 31st December, 1956 ... 12 —
- (d) Number of cases in which analgesia was administered by midwives in domiciliary practice during the year:—
- (i) When doctor was not present at delivery ... 12 —
- (ii) When doctor was present at delivery ... 11 —
- (e) Number of cases in which Pethidine was administered by midwives in domiciliary practice during the year:—
- (i) When doctor was not present at delivery ... 11
- (ii) When doctor was present at delivery ... 8
- (vii) Number of cars in use by midwives at 31st December, 1956 15

HEALTH VISITING.

Three district nurses now hold the Health Visitor's Certificate. As stated in previous Reports, the health visiting is undertaken by the district nurses who carry out combined duties in their respective areas. The following figures relate to health visiting during the year:—

	Number of visits paid by Health Visitors (or by District Nurses in their capacity as Health Visitors) during the year.										
	* Expectant Mothers.		Children under 1 year.		Children between 1 and 5.		Tuber- culosis cases.		Other cases.		Total Visits paid.
Health Visitors em- ployed by the Authority	67	414	400	4,374	108	4,080	109	1,026	20	45	9,939
Health Visitors em- ployed by Volun- tary Organisa- tions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* These visits do not include visits paid by a Midwife Health Visitor who is to attend the confinement as a Midwife or Maternity Nurse.

HOME NURSING.

The Home Nursing Service continues to be efficiently maintained by the district nurses and the following are the number of cases and visits paid during the year:—

Number of cases attended by the district nurses	2,029
(Patients 65 years and over	537)

Number of visits paid to those cases	36,897
(Visits to elderly patients	20,382)

There is no special provision for the nursing of sick children except in so far as this is included in the normal duties of the nurses.

Number of injections given	5,076
-----------------------------------	-------

DOMESTIC HELP SCHEME.

The scheme has continued to work well during the year and it will be seen that there has been a further increase in the number of cases where domestic help has been supplied. There is no provision for night help.

(i) Number of Home Helps employed during the year:—

(a) Whole-time	0
(b) Part-time	74
(c) Retaining fee basis	0

(ii) Number of cases for which Helps were provided during the year	80
---	----

(iii) Number of cases in (ii) provided on account of:—

Confinement—At home	4
In hospital	5
Tuberculosis	1

(iv) Number of cases in (ii) provided on account of chronic sick, including aged and infirm	45
--	----

VACCINATION.

Pamphlets indicating the desirability of infant vaccination and urging that this be carried out before the child reaches the age of six months continue to be handed out by Registrars of Births and Deaths to every person registering a birth.

As reported last year, smallpox vaccination is carried out at the Child Welfare Clinics at Wick and Thurso.

The number of primary vaccinations was 144 as compared with 109 in 1955. Although this figure still falls short of that desirable, it is encouraging to note that there is an upward trend in the number of primary vaccinations.

Primary Vaccinations.

Typical vaccinia greatest at 7th-10th day	144
Accelerated (Vaccinoid) reaction 5th-7th day	0
Reaction greatest at 2nd-3rd day	0
No local reaction	7

Re-Vaccinations.

Typical vaccinia greatest at 7th-10th day	4
Accelerated (Vaccinoid) reaction 5th-7th day	1
Reaction greatest at 2nd-3rd day	5
No local reaction	1

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

As reported last year, the combined immunisation against diphtheria and whooping cough is available for pre-school children and this combined prophylactic is also being issued on request to general practitioners. In most cases the "triple antigen" which also provides protection against tetanus is now being used. The Health Department staff carry out immunisation of pre-school children in the Child Welfare Clinics at Wick and Thurso and in the rural schools, and occasionally in the child's own home. School children are given "booster doses" at the time of school medical inspections.

To the Education Committee and the Head Teachers I would like to extend my thanks for their continued co-operation in the scheme for pre-school children.

The following table gives the number of persons immunised against diphtheria by the Health Department staff and by the general practitioners:—

Year of Birth.	Health Department.						General Practitioners.					
	Full Course.			Maintenance.			Full Course.			Maintenance.		
	Diphtheria.	Whooping Cough and Diphtheria.	Triple Antigen.	Diphtheria.	Whooping Cough and Diphtheria.	Triple Antigen.	Diphtheria.	Whooping Cough and Diphtheria.	Triple Antigen.	Diphtheria.	Whooping Cough and Diphtheria.	Triple Antigen.
1956	1	4	18	—	—	—	—	2	4	—	—	—
1955	6	76	53	—	—	—	—	36	9	—	—	—
1954	1	29	3	—	—	—	—	16	3	—	—	—
1953	1	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1952	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
1951	6	2	—	37	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	1
1950	20	—	—	80	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1949	5	—	—	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1948	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1947	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1946	5	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1945	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1944	2	—	—	142	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1943	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1942	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1941	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1940 or earlier.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	54	120	74	279	—	—	—	55	16	1	2	1

VACCINATION AGAINST POLIOMYELITIS.

The County Council decided to participate in the scheme for vaccination against poliomyelitis as outlined in Department of Health Circular No. 4/1956.

Advertisements were inserted in the local press inviting parents to register children born in the years 1947-1954 inclusive, and the Council's decision was reported in the local papers. Only 440 children were registered (approximately 13% of the total number of children in this age group). Vaccine was also issued for the immunisation of the nursing staff of the Town and County Hospital.

A number of reasons probably account for the unenthusiastic response of the public to offers of this vaccine. The low incidence of the disease locally for several years did not give any sense of urgency, and at the time relatively little information about the vaccine was available. Despite assurances that the vaccine was safe, some apprehension existed among the general public that its use might be attended with some danger. I think, however, that the main reason for the poor response was that the initiative for seeking vaccination was left to the public. Whereas in the schemes for diphtheria immunisation and B.C.G. vaccination it has been customary to distribute leaflets and consent forms to all parents of eligible children, no such positive approach was adopted for the poliomyelitis vaccine. I believe that this lack of propaganda was justified by the situation at the time, but when the opportunity arises for further registrations to be accepted I think that every effort should be made to encourage people to be vaccinated. Despite the present infrequency of poliomyelitis in Caithness, there can be no guarantee that serious outbreaks might not occur in the future, and it is undoubtedly desirable that every effort should be made to increase immunity of the population to this disease.

The number of children who received this vaccination during 1956 is as follows:—

	Two Injections.	One Injection.
Males	26	5
Females	21	2
	<hr/> 47	<hr/> 7

PREVENTION OF ILLNESS, CARE AND AFTER-CARE.

TUBERCULOSIS.

The increase in the number of new cases of respiratory tuberculosis is rather disquieting, especially at a time when it is being reported elsewhere that this disease is on the decrease. I have thought of various possible explanations for this increase, but detailed examination of the histories of these patients has not provided evidence to support the various theoretical possibilities which I have considered. It may be of interest to set down some of the lines of thought which I have pursued.

At present the Dounreay atomic project is having a considerable impact on the lives of the people of Caithness and it is tempting to ascribe many

changes to conditions arising from this enterprise. The incidence of tuberculosis might have been influenced by Dounreay in two ways—firstly, by the increased population, and, secondly, by the possibility that the long hours worked by some of the employees there might have had an adverse effect on their health. In fact, no new case of tuberculosis has as yet been diagnosed among the people who have come into the County to work at Dounreay. With regard to the second point, only three of the new patients had been working at Dounreay; two of these were labourers and the third had a light job as a hut orderly. It appears, therefore, that conditions at Dounreay have not had anything to do with this increase in tuberculosis.

It might be thought that the increase might be partly due to more complete notification or better diagnosis. In 1954 a special form of intimation for patients suffering from active tuberculosis was introduced by the Department of Health, and at that time a clear definition was given of active tuberculosis. In view of this, the figures for the last three years can be regarded as strictly comparable. In 1956 there were nine cases of either primary tuberculosis or pleural effusion, and prior to 1954 some of these cases might not have been regarded as notifiable, but even allowing for this, there has still been an increase in the incidence of the disease.

Weather conditions may have had some effect. It was noticeable that during the exceptionally fine summer of 1955 very few new patients were referred for chest X-ray, and this continued for most of the remainder of that year. Tuberculosis notifications for the whole of 1955 were the lowest ever recorded in Caithness and there were very few in the second half of the year. It is perhaps reasonable to suppose that a number of the people prone to tuberculosis who fell ill in 1956 might have developed the disease in 1955 if the weather conditions had been less favourable. 1956, however, was characterised by very bad weather and the usual fall of notifications during the summer months did not occur.

Where small populations are concerned, considerable variations in vital statistics may occur which are attributable merely to the workings of chance, and it is probable that at least part of the apparent increase in tuberculosis is merely coincidental. How far this is true can only be determined by study of the statistics for the next few years, in conjunction with those already recorded.

It must be admitted that no satisfactory explanation has been found for this relatively large number of notifications. It is important to consider the measures that are being taken against the disease.

With regard to prevention, B.C.G. vaccination of 13-year-old school children was started in Wick in 1954 and in the remainder of the County in 1955. It is likely to be some years before this measure will have any appreciable effect on the incidence of the disease. Routine X-ray examination and B.C.G. vaccination of contacts has been carried out for several years. Although Mass Radiography has not yet become available, the numbers of patients referred to the Chest Clinics for X-ray examination suggests that early diagnosis is being obtained among the "symptom group" of patients.

From the point of view of treatment, there is every reason for satisfaction. Waiting lists have been virtually abolished both for admission of newly diagnosed patients and for thoracic surgery, and the results of modern treatment are excellent.

The tuberculosis figures for this year leave no room for complacency but I do not think that they give cause for undue alarm. Vigorous application of preventive measures, along with effective treatment of established cases of tuberculosis, should eventually produce a considerable reduction in the incidence of this disease.

At the time of writing this report, a Mass Radiography survey is being carried out in the County. Details of the survey will be given in next year's report, but, at this stage, it can be said that the public response has been good, and there is no doubt that this visit by the M.M.R. unit will make a valuable contribution towards reducing the spread of tuberculosis in Caithness in future years.

CHEST CLINICS.

These are held weekly at Bignold Hospital, Wick, and Dunbar Hospital, Thurso. The number of patients attending is as follows:—

	Bignold Hospital.	Dunbar Hospital.	Total.
Patients seen for first time	90	98	188
Notified tuberculosis cases kept under observation	93	53	146
Other cases under observation	32	43	75
Contacts	61	31	92
New cases found during 1956 (respiratory tuberculosis) ...	22	7	29
Transferred in	—	—	—
Transferred out	1	—	1
	299	232	531

B.C.G. VACCINATION.

The following are the numbers tested and given B.C.G.:—

	Tuberculin tested.		Negative reactors.		Vaccinated during 1956.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
(1) Nurses	—	1	—	—	—	—
(2) Medical students	—	—	—	—	—	—
(3) Contacts	15	13	10	10	9	8
(4) Special Groups not included in (1) to (3) above—	161					
(a) School leavers		163	118	118	118	118
(b) New born babies	—	—	—	—	5	3
(5) Others	—	—	—	—	—	—

Extra Nourishment supplied during the year.

Number of patients to whom milk was granted 31

Number of patients to whom Maltoline was issued 11

In all notified cases of tuberculosis—respiratory and non-respiratory—routine investigation is made of the milk supply with a view to ascertaining the possibility of the milk being a source of infection. On these investigations the services of the Veterinary Inspectors of the Ministry of Agriculture were readily available.

The following tables show the number of cases notified in the County (including the Burghs) in 1956, the number confirmed, the methods of discovery, the number in institutions, the number in the area known to be suffering from tuberculosis as at 31st December, 1956, and the number of deaths during the year:—

RESPIRATORY TUBERCULOSIS.

I.—Number of cases notified or regarded as notified during the year.

	Under 1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Totals
Males	—	1	—	7	5	—	3	1	1	18
Females	—	—	1	8	—	1	1	—	—	11
Total	—	1	1	15	5	1	4	1	1	29

II.—Number of cases confirmed to be suffering from Respiratory Tuberculosis.

	Under 1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Totals
Males	—	1	—	7	5	—	3	1	1	18
Females	—	—	1	8	—	1	1	—	—	11
Total	—	1	1	15	5	1	4	1	1	29

III.—Methods by which new patients were discovered to be suffering from Respiratory Tuberculosis during the year.

Symptom group examination (M.M.R. or other)	23
Contact group examination (M.M.R. or other)	6
Mass Miniature radiography (general public, including office and other staffs)	Nil
Routine examination of special groups (M.M.R. or other)—	
School staffs	Nil
National Service Recruits	Nil
Emigrants	Nil
Total	29

IV.—Number of new cases in Table II admitted to hospital for tuberculosis treatment for the first time during the year.

	Under 15 years.	15 to under 45.	45 and over.	Total.
Males	1	11	2	14
Females	—	9	—	9
Totals	1	20	2	23

V.—Number of patients admitted to, discharged from or dying in tuberculosis hospitals, sanatoria or wards in other hospitals reserved for the treatment of the tuberculous.

	In hospital on January 1.	Admitted during year.	Discharged during year.	Died in hospital.	In hospital December 31.
Under 15 years—					
Male	1	—	1	—	—
Female	—	—	—	—	—
15-45 years—					
Male	7	16	20	—	8
Female	5	11	14	—	6
45 years and over—					
Male	1	—	—	—	1
Female	—	—	—	—	—
Total	14	27	35	—	15

VI.—Number of patients dying from respiratory tuberculosis in hospital accommodation other than that reserved for tuberculous patients.

Nil.

VII.—Number on waiting list for admission to hospital at 31st December.

Nil.

NON-RESPIRATORY TUBERCULOSIS.

VIII.—Number of cases formally notified or regarded as notified as suffering from non-respiratory tuberculosis during the year.

	Age Groups.									
	Under 1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Totals
Males	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Total	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	3

IX.—Number of cases notified or intimated, confirmed to be suffering from active non-respiratory tuberculosis during the year (excluding transfers in by another Authority).

	Under 1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Totals
1. Abdominal—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Meningeal—										
Males	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Miliary Tuberculosis—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Bones and Joints—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Superficial glands—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
6. Genito-urinary organs—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7. Other organs—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	3

X.—Number of persons who died from tuberculosis in the area during the year with the period elapsing between notification or intimation and death.

	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Number of persons who died from tuberculosis of whom—				
Not notified or notified only at or after death	—	—	—	—
Notified less than 1 month before death ...	—	—	—	—
Notified from 1 to 3 months before death ...	—	—	—	—
Notified from 3 to 6 months before death ...	—	—	—	—
Notified from 6 to 12 months before death ...	—	—	—	—
Notified from 1 to 2 years before death ...	—	—	—	—
Notified over 2 years before death ...	1	1	—	—
Total	1	1	—	—

XI.—Return of number of persons resident in the area at 31st December, 1956, who were known to be suffering from tuberculosis.

	Under 1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Totals
1. Respiratory—										
Males	—	1	2	15	20	16	9	9	2	74
Females	—	—	—	25	18	7	7	—	—	57
2. Non-Respiratory—										
Males	—	2	2	1	3	4	4	1	1	18
Females	—	1	3	2	1	5	2	—	—	14

The following table gives the tuberculosis cases notified and the tuberculosis deaths during the past ten years:—

Year.	Notifications.		Deaths.	
	Respiratory.	Non-Respiratory.	Respiratory.	Non-Respiratory.
1947	18	12	6	2
1948	13	19	11	—
1949	22	12	5	1
1950	18	5	11	2
1951	10	8	4	1
1952	15	5	5	3
1953	21	9	2	1
1954	16	5	7	1
1955	13	5	4	—
1956	29	3	2	—

CONVALESCENT HOME PROVISION.

There is no Convalescent Home in the County.

CHIROPODY SERVICE.

A Chiropody Service is provided for Caithness and Sutherland by the Hospitals Boards of Management. The services of a Chiropodist are shared by the Boards for Caithness and Sutherland, and as far as Caithness is concerned, she holds sessions at Wick and Thurso, and also does domiciliary visits.

CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There were 33 notifications of infectious diseases during the year. The cases notified were:—

Cerebro-spinal fever	2
Dysentery	1
Erysipelas	2
Acute influenzal pneumonia	1
Acute primary pneumonia	7
Scarlet fever	8
Puerperal pyrexia	1
Food poisoning	11
	—
	33

Scarlet Fever.

Eight cases of Scarlet Fever were notified during the year. Six of the patients were removed to hospital and the other two received treatment at home.

Poliomyelitis.

No cases of Poliomyelitis were notified in 1956. The incidence of the disease has been very low in Caithness in recent years, as may be seen from the following table:—

Year	Under 1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Totals
1947—										
Males	—	1	1	4	—	1	—	—	—	7
Females	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1948—										
Males	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Females	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
1949—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1950—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
1951—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
1952—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1953—										
Males	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1954—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
1955—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
1956—										
Males	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals—										
Males	—	2	1	4	1	1	—	—	—	9
Females	—	4	3	1	1	1	—	—	—	10
Grand Total	—	6	4	5	2	2	—	—	—	19

FOOD POISONING.

There was an outbreak of food poisoning at Dounreay Camp in November, 1956. Ten men reported sick with diarrhoea, and it was thought that about twenty others were also affected. The organism responsible was not identified. It was suspected that stew was the vehicle of infection, but as over 1000 people had eaten the same evening meal without ill effects, it was thought that a single container must have been contaminated. The patients all made a rapid and uneventful recovery. No other cases of food poisoning were reported during the year.

FOOD SUPPLY.

A more detailed account of the work of the Public Health Department in this field will be found in the County Sanitary Inspector's Report.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE.

Care and After-care services were provided as follows:—

Mental Defectives under guardianship in private dwellings.

Males 6 Females 3 Total 9

Mental Defectives in Forse House (under guardianship of the Superintendent and Matron).

Males 4 Females 3 Total 7

Patients discharged on licence from Craig Dunain Hospital, Inverness.

None.

Mental Defectives accommodated in Institutions outwith the County.

Lennox Castle ... 1 female; Larbert ... 1 male; Baldovan ... 1 male;
Waverley Park ... 2 females.

There are no Occupation Centres in the County.

The aspects of the Mental Health Service affecting children of school age will be dealt with separately in the report on the School Health Service.

All staff engaged on the Mental Health Service are employed on a part-time basis. Medical aspects of the service are dealt with by the Medical Officer of Health, and the welfare side is the responsibility of the County Welfare Officer, who is also a "duly authorised officer" under the Mental Deficiency and Lunacy Acts. The District Welfare Officers are also "authorised officers" and they undertake visitation of mental defectives and the other mental health work under the general supervision of the County Welfare Officer. Statutory visits to boarded-out mental defectives are made by the general practitioners.

List of Authorised Officers.

Wick	J. Caldwell, Director of Welfare, County Offices, Wick.
Thurso, Reay and Halkirk	J. Duncan, District Welfare Officer, Thurso.
Olrig and Bower	A. Mathieson, District Welfare Officer, Castletown.
Canisbay and Dunnet	William Bremner, District Welfare Officer, Tofts, Freswick.
Latheron	J. Doull, District Welfare Officer, Lybster.

A monthly Psychiatric Clinic is held at the Bignold Hospital, Wick, by a visiting Psychiatrist from Inverness.

There is good liaison between the medical practitioners of the area, the Welfare Officers and the staff of Craig Dunain Hospital with regard to the disposal and treatment of mental patients, and it is gratifying to note that a high proportion of patients admitted to Craig Dunain go there as "voluntary patients."

PORT HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

In terms of the Part Sanitary Regulations (Scotland) Act, 1935, twenty Declarations of Health were received from the Officers of H.M. Customs at Wick and Thurso.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

Section 21.—Forty beds at Forse House are available for accommodation in terms of Part III of the National Assistance Act, 1948. It is also the duty of the Local Authority to "provide temporary accommodation for persons who are in urgent need thereof" and there is at present in the County no such accommodation available other than at Forse House.

Section 29.—Welfare services of the blind are provided through the Northern Counties Institute for the Blind, Inverness, and a similar service is provided by the Aberdeen Deaf and Dumb Benevolent Society.

Section 37.—Registration and Inspection of Homes for disabled and other persons. There is no Home of this type in the County.

Section 47.—There were no removals under this Section of the Act.

Section 48.—Care of property. No action was required under this Section of the Act.

Section 50.—Four burials took place in terms of this Section of the Act.

NURSING HOMES REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND) ACT.

There are no Nursing Homes in this County.

HEALTH EDUCATION.

Leaflets and pamphlets from various organisations were distributed to Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics and schools. Posters relating to Food Hygiene were distributed to School Meals Centres and to the Catering Department at Dounreay Camp.

I gave several talks on Health subjects to Women's Guilds during the year.

Sanitary Department,
County Offices,
Wick.

To The Department of Health for Scotland,
and the County Council of Caithness.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the work carried out by my Department during the year ended 31st December, 1956. The Report has been prepared in accordance with the Department of Health for Scotland Circular No. 70/1956, wherein the Secretary of State calls for a report from the Sanitary Inspector.

Once again I must acknowledge the assistance and co-operation I have received from all members of the County Council, officials of other Departments, and my staff.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) ALEX. T. BOYD,
County Sanitary Inspector.

INDEX

A. GENERAL SANITATION.	Page
Water Supplies	31
Water Sampling	32
Drainage	32
Scavenging	33
Housing	34
Housing (Scotland) Act, 1950	38
Housing (Repairs and Rents) (Scotland) Act, 1954	39
County Council Houses (Maintenance and Repairs)	39
Housing of Tinkers	39
Nuisances	39
River Pollution	39
Offensive Trades	39
Common Lodging Houses	40
Burial Grounds	40
National Assistance Act, 1948 (Section 50)	40
Infectious Diseases	40
Factories Act, 1937	40
B. FOOD SUPPLY.	
Milk and Dairies (Scotland) Acts, 1914-22	41
Milk (Special Designations) (Scotland) Order, 1950	41
North of Scotland Milk Testing Scheme	41
School Milk	42
Biological Examination of Milk	43
Milk and Dairies Order, 1934	43
Milk, General	43
Ice-Cream (Scotland) Regulations, 1948	43
Food Inspection	44
Food and Drugs (Scotland) Act, 1956	45
The Labelling of Food Order, 1953	46
Food Hygiene	46
C. MISCELLANEOUS.	
The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949	47
Staffing	48

A.—General Sanitation.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The County Water Engineers' Department is responsible for the management, control and supervision of the local authority water supplies and for the further development of the County Regional Water Supply Scheme. The procuring of samples of water for chemical analysis and bacteriological examination is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector's Department.

The County Regional Water Supply is being developed in three separate phases and with the main works of Phase I practically completed at the beginning of the year concentration by the County Council was directed toward the development of Phase II of the scheme and to the provision of a water supply scheme from Loch Shurrery to meet the requirements of the Atomic Station in the course of construction at Dounreay.

Phase II of the County Regional Water Supply Scheme consists of:—

- (1) A 9" rising mains from the waterworks station at Hoy to a service reservoir at Cnoc Dubh, Latheron, and serving parts of the parishes of Halkirk and Watten en route.
- (2) A gravity mains from Cnoc Dubh reservoir servicing the parish of Latheron and part of the parish of Wick.
- (3) Service reservoirs at Smerral, Newport, and Mid-Clyth and a booster station at Ramscaigs.

The County Water Engineer reported that at the close of the year all the works contracted for were proceeding according to schedule.

The scheme to supply a piped water supply from Loch Shurrery to Dounreay Atomic Factory consists of:—

- (1) The construction of a concrete dam at the outlet of Loch Shurrery to the River Forss to raise the level of and increase the storage capacity of the loch.
- (2) A 16-inch gravity mains from Loch Shurrery to a waterworks station to be erected at Shebster.
- (3) Two 12-inch gravity mains, one for carrying treated water and the other for carrying raw water, from the waterworks to Dounreay Atomic Factory.

At the close of the year the dam at Loch Shurrery and the pipe-laying contracts were completed and raw water was being supplied to Dounreay Atomic Factory.

WATER SAMPLING.

During the year 28 samples of water were procured for either chemical analysis or bacteriological examination and the results are as detailed in the following table, viz:—

Examination Required.	No. of Samples Procured.	Satisfactory.	Unsatisfactory.
Chemical	11	10	1
Bacteriological	17	13	4
Totals	28	23	5

One sample for chemical analysis and six samples for bacteriological examination were procured from the County Regional Water Supply and all were reported as being satisfactory. The remaining samples were procured from wells in districts at present outwith the range of the County Regional Water Scheme where owners were proposing to instal piped water supplies to their houses. Where a sample was found to be unsatisfactory examination of the area in close proximity to the well generally showed sources of contamination and the necessary works required to eliminate the cause of the contamination were recommended.

DRAINAGE.

The villages of Lybster and Castletown are the only Special Drainage Districts in the County. No sewage purification is required in either system, the raw sewage being discharged direct into the sea. The systems proved satisfactory at all times and no case of nuisance reported.

In districts which are not Special Drainage Districts drainage from housing schemes and private houses is treated in septic tanks and the effluent discharged into the sea, rivers, streams or ditches. This method proved satisfactory and no case of nuisance noted.

Reference has been made in previous reports of the difficulty in Halkirk Village of obtaining a satisfactory means of sewage disposal from houses situated at a distance from the Thurso River. In 1946 the County Council had the provision of a proper drainage scheme for Halkirk under consideration, but at that time it was decided to proceed with the provision of a County General Water Scheme and on account of the costs of such a large undertaking it was decided to defer any drainage and sewerage scheme for Halkirk. The County Council have had this question under consideration again and have instructed their Engineers, Messrs Binnie Deacon & Gourley, to arrange the preparation of suitable drainage and sewerage for Halkirk Village. On account of the wide lay out of Halkirk Village such a scheme, if carried out, will incur

heavy expense but will prove of great advantage to many householders who have been unable to modernise their properties by the provision of indoor water supply and sanitary accommodation due to difficulty of providing proper drainage facilities.

The provision of new houses, improvements to existing ones and other premises by the introduction of water supply and sanitary accommodation called for the inspection and smoke testing of 84 new drainage systems during the year. Smoke testing revealed defective joints in quite a number of instances and while the defects were all made good and the systems passed as satisfactory, the fact that defects were found on testing proves the necessity of good and careful workmanship on this class of work. It also proves the need for the testing of new drainage systems as in two instances the defects were leaks on the joint connecting the W.C. pedestal to the branch from the soil pipe. Had no test been carried out on these two drainage systems it would have meant foul air from the drain escaping through the defective joints into the houses. In connection with these new drainage systems 127 visits were made for the arrangement of layout, drainage disposal, inspection and testing.

SCAVENGING.

There are twelve Special Scavenging Districts within the County area, viz:—

- (1) Dunbeath.
- (2) Latheron and Latheronwheel.
- (3) Lybster.
- (4) Thrumster.
- (5) Papigoe and Staxigoe.
- (6) Keiss.
- (7) Janetstown, Milton and Haster.
- (8) Watten.
- (9) Halkirk.
- (10) Castletown.
- (11) Scrabster.
- (12) Reay.

The uplifting of household refuse is carried out under contract. In Scrabster the work is carried out by the Thurso Town Council Cleansing Department and in other districts by five private contractors. The service provided are three days per week in Lybster; two days per week in Castletown; and one day per week in the remaining districts. The work of the contractors was carried out in a satisfactory manner and the dumps kept in a tidy condition. Six refuse dumps are provided at (1) Dunbeath; (2) Lybster; (3) Halkirk; (4) Wester Links; (5) Castletown; and (6) Reay. The dumps were visited regularly by the County Pests Officer and treated with poison baits as found necessary to prevent danger of rat infestation.

With the development of new housing schemes in districts not provided with refuse collection services, the disposal of household refuse created problems for the tenants of the houses in quite a number of instances,

particularly so at Dunnet, Bowermadden and Gillock and it may be necessary in the near future to extend the present collection schemes to include these areas.

HOUSING.

During the year 6/3 apartment new County Council houses were completed and occupied at Castletown, which completed the County Council 1953 Housing Programme Scheme. Under the County Council 1956 Housing Programme work was begun on the erection of a further 64 houses for general needs and four houses for school teachers, a total of 68 houses.

The following tables give the details of the houses erected and occupied by tenants under the County Council housing Programmes from 1946 to 31st December, 1956, and also show the districts where houses were in course of construction at the end of the year under the 1956 Housing Programme.

DISTRICTS.	Houses completed during 1956.				Houses completed before 31.12.55.				Houses completed since 1946.				Houses under construction at 31.12.56.			
	Apartments—				Apartments—				Apartments—				Apartments—			
	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5	2	3	4	5
Reiss							4				4			2	2	
Reay						4	6			4	6					
Scrabster							8				8					
Geise							4				4					
Castletown	6				12	10	26	8	12	16	26	8				
Gillock							4				4					
Keiss					8	10	18	2	8	10	18	2				
Ackergill							8				8					
Staxigoe							8				8					
Papigoe						12	10	2		12	10	2				
Milton						4	10	2		4	10	2				
Haster						2	8			2	8					
Watten					4	10	14	4	4	10	14	4		2	2	
Halkirk					8	4	20	8	8	4	20	8		4	4	
Thrumster					4	8	12		4	8	12					
Lybster					8	4	24	6	8	4	24	6				
Dunbeath					4	6	4		4	6	4					
Bowermadden							4				4			2	2	
Dunnet						4	4			4	4					
Greenland														2		
John O'Groats ..														2	2	
Ulbster														4	—	
Barrock (Lyth) .														2	2	
TOTALS ...	6				48	78	196	32	48	84	196	32		20	14	
	6						354				360				34	

Included in above tables are 32/4 apartment houses erected and occupied by Agricultural Workers, viz:—

Gillock	4
Geise	4
Ackergill	4
Haster	4
Halkirk	8
Watten	4
Reay	4

Between the years 1919 to 1939 the County Council erected 198 houses in the County area consisting of 122/3 apartment houses and 76/4 apartment houses, and this number added to 360 erected and completed since 1946, gives a grand total of 558 houses. The following table gives details of those houses and the districts in which they are situated:—

DISTRICTS.	2 Apartments.	3 Apartments.	4 Apartments.	5 Apartments.	TOTAL.
Reay	—	6	14	—	20
Reiss	—	—	4	—	4
Scrabster	—	—	8	—	8
Geise	—	—	4	—	4
Castletown	12	30	46	8	96
Dunnet	—	6	4	—	10
Canisbay	—	4	—	—	4
Gillock	—	4	4	—	8
Keiss	8	26	28	2	64
Ackergill	—	—	8	—	8
Staxigoe	—	4	8	—	12
Papigoe	—	18	14	2	34
Milton	—	4	10	2	16
Haster	—	2	8	—	10
Watten	4	14	18	4	40
Halkirk	8	16	28	8	60
Spittal	—	6	—	—	6
Thrumster	4	12	12	—	28
Lybster	8	20	36	6	70
Latheron	—	2	2	—	4
Latheronwheel	—	6	—	—	6
Dunbeath	4	22	12	—	38
Bowermadden	—	—	4	—	4
Janetstown (Thurso)	—	4	—	—	4
TOTALS	48	206	272	32	558

During the year 14 families were rehoused in County Council houses which had been vacated, giving a total of 20 families having been rehoused by the local Authority. The vacated houses consisted of 2/2 apartment; 7/3 apartment; and 5/4 apartment houses.

In addition to the 6/3 apartment houses erected by the local Authority at Castletown 1/5 apartment was erected for the police constable at Reay, and the undernoted 19 new houses erected by private enterprise:—

DISTRICT.	Class of House.	No. of Houses.	No. of Rooms.
West Watten	Ordinary.	1	5
Castletown	Do.	1	4
Scrabster	Do.	1	4
Slickly, Lyth	Farm.	1	5
Isauld, Reay	Do.	1	6
Auckorn, Bower	Do.	1	4
Olgrinbeg	Do.	1	4
Isauld, Reay	Farm Servant.	6	4
Dale Farm	Do.	1	4
Waas, Thurso	Do.	1	4
Upper Warse, Canisbay	Croft.	1	4
Achrearnie, Reay	Do.	1	4
West Murkle	D.O.A.S. Holding.	1	4
Lochview, Bower	Do.	1	4

Reconstruction and improvement, which included the provision of indoor water supply, full sanitary accommodation and hot water supply systems, was carried out at 52 dwelling houses under private enterprise, as follows:—

Class of House.	No. Improved.
Ordinary	15
Farm	10
Farm Servant	6
Crôft	19
D.O.A.S. Holdings	2
	—
Total Houses Modernised	52

The total number of families whose houses were improved during the year amounted to 92 families as shown on the following summary:—

(1)	Families rehoused by the local authority in new houses	7
(2)	Families rehoused in vacated local authority houses ...	14
(3)	Families rehoused by private enterprise in new houses ...	19
(4)	Families whose houses were modernised by private enterprise	52
	Total ...	92

From the above summary it is evident that good progress was made during the year towards improving housing conditions in the landward area of the county, a rate of progress which has been steadily maintained since 1946 as will be seen from a study of the following tables:—

NEW HOUSES ERECTED SINCE 1946.
NEW HOUSES.

Year.	COUNTY COUNCIL.				PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.				
	General Needs.	Agricultural Workers.	Police.	Nurses.	Ordinary.	Farms.	Farm-servants.	Crofts.	Holdings
1946	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1947	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
1948	20	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—
1949	50	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
1950	38	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	1
1951	34	8	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
1952	18	16	—	2	2	—	—	1	5
1953	52	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
1954	80	—	—	—	1	3	4	—	2
1955	30	8	1	—	—	4	4	—	2
1956	6	—	1	—	3	4	8	2	2
	328	32	3	2	7	15	17	6	14
Totals	365				59				
424									

**Houses reconstructed and provided with indoor water supply
and full sanitary accommodation:—**

Year.	COUNTY COUNCIL.		PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.				
	General Needs.	School.	Ordinary.	Farms.	Farm Servant.	Crofts.	Holdings.
1946	—	2	12	4	1	2	—
1947	—	1	12	6	1	2	—
1948	—	1	11	4	6	1	—
1949	—	1	13	4	4	3	2
1950	—	1	10	4	1	3	3
1951	—	2	14	10	5	6	3
1952	—	—	12	8	5	6	4
1953	—	—	23	8	7	6	5
1954	—	—	20	4	9	14	5
1955	2	—	11	10	11	7	4
1956	—	—	15	10	6	19	2
Totals	2	8	153	72	56	69	28
	10		378				
	388						

Total new houses provided since 1946 by the Local Authority..... 365

Total new houses provided by private enterprise since in 1946 59

Total existing houses modernised since 1946 388

Total 812

The statement I have submitted shows that good progress has been made since 1946 in raising the housing standards in the landward area of the county, but despite this progress the demand for local authority houses continues, as at the close of the year there were 372 names on the County Council's list of applicants for houses. A scrutiny of the list shows that 141 of the applicants are resident either in the Burghs of Wick or Thurso or outwith the County, leaving 231 applicants in the landward area of the County. Under their 1956 Housing Programme the local authority are in the course of erecting 64 houses for general needs and four houses for school teachers in the following districts, viz:—

District.	3 apts.	4 apts.	Total Houses.
Reiss	2	2	4
Watten	2	2	4
Bowermadden	2	2	4
John O'Groats	2	2	4
Barrock (Dunnet)	2	2	4
Weydale	2	2	4
Mey	2	2	4
Spittal	4	4	8
Reay	2	2	4
Latheronwheel	4	2	6
Ulbster	4	—	4
Halkirk	4	4	8
Greenland	—	2	2
Lyth	2	2	4
Milton (School Teacher) ...	—	4	4
Totals	34	34	68

HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1950.

Since the coming into operation of this Act 172 applications have been approved for improvement of houses with aid of grant under the terms of Section III, and in 125 of the approved applications work has been completed and improvement grant paid. During the year 43 applications were approved and work was completed in 38 instances. The following table gives the details of the scheme since it came into operation in 1950:—

Year.	Number of applications approved.	Number of approved works completed.	Cost of Improvements.	Amount of Grant Paid.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1950	10	—	—	—
1951	14	7	3,406 14 0	1,703 7 0
1952	12	7	3,424 13 1	1,712 6 6½
1953	26	13	8,233 1 11	4,116 10 11½
1954	33	33	19,669 19 8	9,853 13 5½
1955	34	27	16,165 14 2	9,009 16 11½
1956	43	38	23,186 7 4	11,593 4 0
Totals	172	125	£74,086 10 2	£36,988 18 11

The average cost of improving a house under the above scheme is £592 13s 10d and the average amount of grant is £295 18s 2d per house. The amount of money paid to owners by the way of grant for improving houses is money well spent as without financial aid from the local authority quite a number of owners would have been unable to meet the cost of the works

involved in carrying out improvements and modernisation of their properties. As it is, quite a number of houses which would be liable to fall into an advanced state of disrepair in a few years' time have not only been preserved against that danger but have been given a new lease of life, and in all probability saved the local authority from having to provide new houses for the tenants concerned. From an economic point of view the scheme provided by the local authority is a wise one and owners of dwelling houses should be encouraged to make use of the benefits afforded by the scheme.

HOUSING (REPAIR AND RENTS) (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1954.

No action was called for under this Act during the year.

COUNTY COUNCIL HOUSES.

The maintenance and repair of the 198 houses erected under the County Council Housing programmes of 1919, 1931 and 1935, and the 31 requisitioned married quarter timber houses at Wick Airport, is supervised by my department. The Houses were inspected periodically and in general are well maintained by the tenants, although in a few cases the gardens could be kept in a tidier condition. Repairs were carried out as found necessary and offers accepted for carrying out the external paintwork on the 148 houses comprising the 1919 and 1931 housing scheme.

HOUSING OF TINKERS.

On various occasions in past years the housing of tinker families received much consideration from the local authority but a satisfactory solution to this problem was never determined. In recent years applications from tinker families for local authority houses have received the same consideration as other applicants with the result several tinker families have been rehoused in local authority houses. Further consideration was given to this problem during the year when it was decided to purchase several old properties in villages, repair and modernise them and let them to tinker families. This scheme is to be commended and when the houses are modernised and occupied the results will be watched with much interest.

NUISANCES.

During the year 62 complaints of nuisance were noted either as a result of complaints received or during routine inspection. The complaints were all more or less of a minor nature and were dealt with in the normal way.

RIVER POLLUTION.

No action was called for under this heading.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are no offensive trades in the landward area of the county.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There are no common lodging houses in the county.

BURIAL GROUNDS.

The burial grounds in the county continued to be maintained in a satisfactory manner.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948 (SECTION 50).

In terms of this Act four interments were carried out. The cost to the local authority was £100 8s 0d of which £22 0s 0d was recovered.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

A summary of infectious diseases notifications is included in the report of the County Medical Officer of Health, on whose instructions 19 houses were visited and disinfection carried out following cases of infectious disease.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

At the end of the year there were 62 factories in the landward area of the county, 41 of which were mechanical and 21 non-mechanical. The premises were visited periodically and in five cases minor defects were remedied. The list of factories is as follows:—

Blacksmith	13
Joiner	16
Meal Mill	8
Motor Repair Garage	4
Shoemaker	3
Fish Curer	2
Wood Mill	1
Baker	2
Tailor	2
Lime Shell Cleaning	1
Ice Cream Manufacturer	1
Sausage Manufacturer	7
Brick Maker	1
Engineer	1
	—
Total	62

B.—Food Supply.

MILK AND DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) ACTS, 1914-22.

At the close of the year there were 74 registered producers and 17 retail premises on the dairy register. During the year seven names were removed from the register of producers and four names added to the register of retailers. Of the 74 registered producers 67 are wholesale dealers, three sell milk partly wholesale and partly retail and four are producer retailers.

During the year two producers had their registration cancelled and their names removed from the dairy register on account of the unsatisfactory nature of their dairy premises and also because of the unsatisfactory quality of the milk produced. In both instances every opportunity had been given to the producers concerned to remedy the condition of their dairy premises and to improve their production methods.

MILK (SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS) (SCOTLAND) ORDER, 1950.

75 licences were in operation in terms of the above Order at the close of the year, viz:—

Certified Producers	0
Certified Dealers	0
Tuberculin Tested Producers	58
Tuberculin Tested Dealers	7
Pasteurisers	1
Pasteurised Dealers	9

During the year, one Certified Producers dealers licence, and one Tuberculin Tested producers licence were suspended on account of unsatisfactory milk test results. One Tuberculin Tested producer gave up dairying and three producers of ordinary milk were granted licences to produce Tuberculin Tested milk. Of the 16 registered producers of Ordinary milk, 14 have attested herds, and the remaining two producers were in the course of having their herds tested at the close of the year.

NORTH OF SCOTLAND MILK TESTING SCHEME.

Under this scheme samples of milk are procured from every producer each month and submitted to bacteriological examination at the Raigmore Hospital Laboratory, Inverness. The object of the scheme is to detect and eliminate as far as possible milk of unsatisfactory quality, and to raise the general standard of milk supplies.

During the year 1063 samples of milk were procured for bacteriological examination and the reports received are summarised in the following table, viz:—

Grade of Milk.	No. of Samples procured.	No. of Samples passed.	No. of Samples failed.	Failures due to—		
				High Bacterial count.	Presence of B.Coli.	High Count and B.Coli.
Certified	7	4	3	2	1	—
Tuberculin Tested	751	637	114	45	25	44
Pasteurised	44	40	4	1	3	—
Ordinary	261	198	63	32	5	26
Totals	1,063	879	184	80	34	70

The percentage of samples failing to comply with the test standard laid down amounted to 17.32 per cent. of the total samples procured during the year. The following summary shows how 81 producers shared the 184 unsatisfactory samples.

No. of Producers with 0 failures	14
No. „ „ 1 „	16
No. „ „ 2 „	20
No. „ „ 3 „	15
No. „ „ 4 or more failures	16

The above summary shows that 101 failures are attributed to 51 producers whose milk supply failed on three or less occasions, and that 14 producers had no failures. The remaining 79 failures are attributed to 16 producers, two of whom had their registrations cancelled by the local authority.

In cases where two consecutive samples of a producer's milk supply fail to comply with the test standard laid down the County Milk Officer visits the premises during milking, washing up and sterilising to assist in locating the cause of the failures and to tender any advice or assistance where considered necessary. Where continual unsatisfactory samples of a producer's milk supply are obtained the circumstances are reported to the Public Health and Welfare Committee for consideration.

All non-designated milk from registered producers is pasteurised at the North of Scotland Milk Marketing Board, Wick, where the premises and equipment are well maintained.

SCHOOL MILK.

Under this scheme Pasteurised milk is supplied to schools by the North of Scotland Milk Marketing Board, Wick, and during the year 19 samples were procured for bacteriological examination. One sample failed to comply with the prescribed test standards due to the presence of B.Coli.

BIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION.

Grade of Milk.	No. of Samples procured.	No. of Positive results.	No. of Producers involved in positive results.
Ordinary	11	0	0
Tuberculin Tested	22	0	0
Totals	33	0	0

The purpose of procuring samples of milk for biological examination is to ascertain evidence of tuberculosis in milk and it will be noted that all samples were reported as being satisfactory.

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDER, 1934.

No contravention of this Order was observed during the year.

MILK GENERAL.

- (a) No. of retail purveyors of milk 17
- (b) No. of producers and wholesale dealers who do not sell milk by retail 67
- (c) The approximate average number of cows in registered premises 28
- (d) No. of dairies exempt from registration 61
- (e) The approximate average number of cows in premises exempt from registration 4

All registered premises were visited regularly and from inspection of byres, dairy premises, equipment used in dairying and milking methods, it was evident that the standard of milk production continued to show improvement. At several premises more attention and care are required in the washing and cleaning of equipment coming in contact with milk as there is nothing more liable to affect the keeping qualities of milk than equipment improperly washed and sterilised. During the year a chart on clean milk production methods was compiled by the County Milk Officer and issued to all producers, and if the instructions given are carried out as submitted producers should have little difficulty in obtaining a satisfactory standard of production.

All milk produced at registered premises other than the milk retained by producer retailers, is sold to the North of Scotland Milk Marketing Board, Wick, where non-designated milk is pasteurised before being issued for retail purposes.

ICE CREAM REGULATIONS, 1948.

During the year 1 vehicle was registered for retail of ice cream in terms of above Regulations, giving a total of 6 premises registered for the manufacture and retail of ice cream; 11 premises registered for retail of ice cream; and 18 vehicles registered for the retail of ice cream.

Four samples of ice cream were submitted for chemical analysis, all of which complied with the prescribed standards. The average fat content was 9.23 per cent. The prescribed minimum fat content for ice cream is 5.00 per cent.

Registered premises were found on examination to be maintained in a satisfactory manner.

FOOD INSPECTION.

The following tables give a summary of the examination of meat and offals at Wick and Thurso slaughterhouses:—

WICK SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

Class of Animals.	Slaughtered.	Condemned.		Weights of Condemned Meat and Offals.		
		Wholly.	Partially.	Meat.	Offals.	Total Weight.
	No.	No.	No.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Cattle	1,330	12	24	5,949	743	6,692
Sheep	2,330	10	23	432	104	536
Pigs	633	—	—	—	—	—
Calves	204	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ...	4,497	22	47	6,381	847	7,228

THURSO SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

Class of Animals.	Slaughtered.	Condemned.		Weights of Condemned Meat and Offals.		
		Wholly.	Partially.	Meat.	Offals.	Total Weight.
	No.	No.	No.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
Cattle	1,260	5	49	2,650	519	3,169
Sheep	2,748	1	13	342	87	429
Pigs	565	—	3	93	—	93
Calves	104	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ...	4,677	6	65	3,085	606	3,691

Total Weight of Meat and Offals Condemned in Slaughterhouses:—

	Tons.	Cwts.	Lbs.
Wick Slaughterhouse	3	4	60
Thurso Slaughterhouse	1	12	107
Total	4	17	55

FOODSTUFFS CONDEMNED IN SHOPS.

Article.	No. of Tins or Packages.	Cwts.	Lbs.	Ozs.
Cooked Ham	10	1	2	10
Corned Beef	29	—	75	4
Fruit	171	1	102	14
Chopped Pork	12	—	52	—
Milk	50	—	51	14
Savoury Spread	13	—	1	10
Soup	18	—	13	8
Vegetables	16	—	18	5
Mince Meat Loaf	3	—	2	4
Beans	6	—	6	—
Peas	11	—	11	8
Pork Luncheon Meat	4	—	17	2
Gammon	2	—	25	2
Salmon	1	—	2	—
Dates	—	—	9	—
Butter	—	—	4	8
Mutton	—	—	90	—
Sugar	—	—	20	—
Pork Pies	—	—	11	—
	346	6	68	9

FOOD AND DRUGS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1956.

This Act, which both consolidated and amended the existing law relating to the Public Health aspects of food supply, came into operation on 1st August, 1956, and repealed the Food and Drugs (Adulteration) Act, 1928; the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 (as applied to Scotland), and other statutory provisions relating to food.

Included among the many new provisions of the Act, Sections 13 and 14 which relate to regulations as to Food Hygiene and the registration of food manufacturers and traders are of special interest to local authorities. The provisions do not come into effect until such times as the Secretary of State has made the necessary regulations and orders, and as the provisions indicate positive action towards the obtaining of a clean and safe food supply it is to be hoped that there is no undue delay in their publication.

FOOD SAMPLING.

The following table shows the nature and number of samples taken during the year under the Food and Drugs Acts.

Nature of Sample.	Number obtained.	No. of Formal Samples.	No. of Informal Samples.	Formal Samples.		Informal Samples.	
				Genuine.	Non Genuine.	Genuine.	Non Genuine.
Milk	47	1	46	1	0	40	6
Whisky	13	11	2	11	0	2	—
Ice Cream	4	—	4	—	—	4	—
Sausages	5	—	5	—	—	4	1
Mince	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Aspirin Tablets	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Boracic Crystals	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Askit Powders	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Baley Cough Syrup	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Arrowroot	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Cut Drained Peel	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Porridge Oats	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Branston Pickles	1	—	1	—	—	1	—
Totals	78	12	66	12	—	59	7

The 6 informal samples of milk reported as being non-genuine were deficient in the solids-not-fat contents. In one sample the addition of added water was detected and a follow up sample was taken and reported as being genuine. In other 5 cases the vendors were recommended to obtain advice from The College of Agriculture on the procedure to adopt to correct the deficiency.

The informal sample of sausages reported as being non-genuine was found to contain sulphur dioxide slightly over the amount permitted to be used in the manufacture of sausages and a warning was issued to the vendor.

The average butter fat and solids-not-fat contents of the 47 samples of milk was 3.91 per cent. and 8.75 per cent. respectively, compared with the prescribed presumptive standards of 3.00 per cent. and 8.50 per cent. respectively.

THE LABELLING OF FOOD ORDER, 1953.

No contravention of this Order was observed during inspections of shops from which foodstuffs are retailed.

FOOD HYGIENE.

Premises where foodstuffs are prepared, stored or exposed for sale continued to receive attention, and while there has been a general improvement in recent years in the standard of cleanliness being observed by persons handling foodstuffs and utensils coming into contact with foodstuffs, too often

food intended to be used as food for human consumption is exposed to contamination on counters, windows, shelves, and floors of shops. At the present time there is insufficient powers to deal with unsatisfactory food handlers and premises where food is prepared, sold or exposed for sale, but it is to be hoped that this position will be rectified when the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations to be made under Section 13 of the Food and Drugs (Scotland) Act, 1956, are made known and come into operation. While one cannot fully anticipate the extent of the proposed Regulations it can be surmised that much additional work and responsibility will be placed on the limited staff of the Public Health Department.

C.—Miscellaneous.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949.

The following table gives the details of the work carried out by the County Rodent Officer during the year:—

	TYPE OF PROPERTY.				Total.
	Local Authority Properties.	Dwelling Houses.	Business or Industrial Premises.	Agricultural Properties.	
1. Number of properties inspected by the Local Authority during 1956—					
(a) As a result of notification	6	4	5	6	21
(b) Otherwise	37	10	128	115	290
Total	43	14	133	121	311
2. Number of above properties found to be infested by rats or mice	14	5	13	19	51
3. Number of above infested properties satisfactorily cleared	14	5	13	19	51

Of the 51 premises found to be infested by rats or mice the services of the County Rodent Officer were requested to deal with the infestation in 21 instances, and the remaining 30 infestations were dealt with either by the owners or occupiers of the premises concerned. As the result of the work carried out by the Rodent Officer 347 rats and 57 mice were known to be destroyed. In the follow up visits to deal personally with infestations or to

check up on work undertaken by owners or occupiers a further 234 visits were made, making a total of 545 visits during the year. The methods used in dealing with infestations varied from trapping, poison baits or gassing, according to which method was considered most suitable.

STAFF.

At the close of the year the staff of the Sanitary Inspector's Department consisted of the County Sanitary Inspector, 1 Assistant, 1 Milk Officer, 1 Rodent Officer, and 1 Clerkess-typist.

"John O'Groat Journal"
Printing Works,
Wick.