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**Contributors**

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AC 4623(1) RENFREW



Burgh of Renfrew.

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Public Health Department.

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ANNUAL REPORT

*For the Year 1920.*

BY

W. G. STEVENS,

Medical Officer of Health.



# ANNUAL REPORT,

As called for by the Scottish Board of Health,  
Edinburgh.

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TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY OF  
THE BURGH OF RENFREW.

Gentlemen,

In conformity with the Public Health Act and the Regulations of the Board of Health, I have the honour to submit my Annual Report upon the Health of the Burgh and its Public Health Administration during the year 1920.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd.) W. G. STEVENS,  
*Medical Officer of Health.*

RENFREW, April, 1921.

(W.G. STEVENS)

# ANNUAL REPORT

Scottish Board of Health

Glasgow

Presented to the

General Assembly

in conformity with the Public Health Act  
of 1845, and the Public Health Act  
of 1850, and the Public Health Act  
of 1855, and the Public Health Act  
of 1860, and the Public Health Act  
of 1865, and the Public Health Act  
of 1870, and the Public Health Act  
of 1875, and the Public Health Act  
of 1880, and the Public Health Act  
of 1885, and the Public Health Act  
of 1890, and the Public Health Act  
of 1895, and the Public Health Act  
of 1900.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

(Sd) W. G. SEVERIN

Medical Officer of Health

W. G.

## STATISTICAL SUMMARY FOR YEAR 1920.

*(By the Registrar-General.)*

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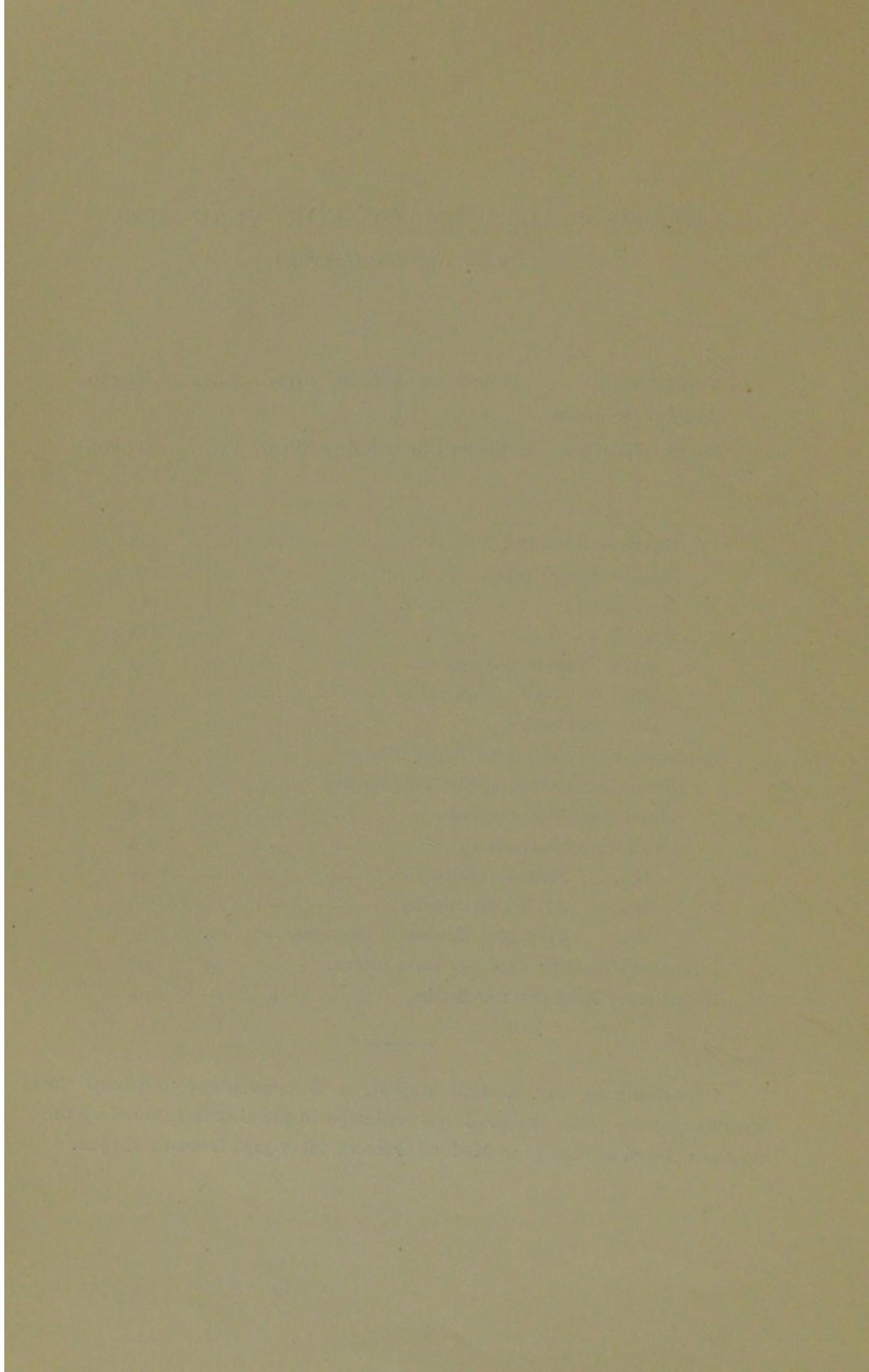
Year—1920.	Population—Census 1911.....	12,559
County—Renfrew.		
Burgh—Renfrew.	Estimated to Middle of Year,.....	14,700

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Births—Corrected, ... ..	382
Births—Illegitimate, ... ..	16
Marriages, ... ..	111
Deaths, ... ..	125
Do., Transferred out, ... ..	3
Do., do. in, ... ..	41
Do., Corrected, ... ..	163
Rates per 1000 Estimated Population:—	
Birth-rate (Corrected for Transcript), ... ..	26.1
Marriages (Uncorrected), ... ..	7.6
Death-rate (Corrected), ... ..	12.5
Do., Phthisis (Corrected), ... ..	0.96
Do., All Tuberculosis, ... ..	1.30
Do., Principal Epidemic Diseases, ... ..	0.62
Infantile Mortality Rate per 1000 Births, ... ..	94
Illegitimate Rate per 100 Births, ... ..	4.2

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In submitting my Annual Report, it is convenient to group the various matters under the headings indicated in the Circular issued by the Scottish Board of Health to Medical Officers dated 31st December, 1920.



**A**

Conditions injurious or dangerous to health have been almost all swept away during the last few years; but agreeably to instructions from the Scottish Board of Health, I have to report what has appeared here many times during the past years. (1st) Overcrowding, which is on the way of being overcome. (2nd) The disgusting and probably dangerous to health methods of delivering bread by the Vanman to Retail Shops (letters in the Glasgow papers appear at intervals expressing disgust at the method adopted). (3rd) Shop Assistants sweeping out the floors on to or across the pavement, if wind does not carry it in to the faces of pedestrians. (4th) Shop Assistants and Proprietors often wet their fingers with their tongue to separate paper and bags for the wrapping up of such as sweets and eatables, and some even blow into the bags to get them opened. I would suggest an official letter asking the persons concerned to mend their ways.

**B**

Special inquiries were made concerning the introduction of Smallpox into the Burgh; also, of one case of Enteric Fever, traced to an Ice-cream Shop on the Ayrshire Coast.

**C**

No Certificates were granted during the year, as none seemed called for.

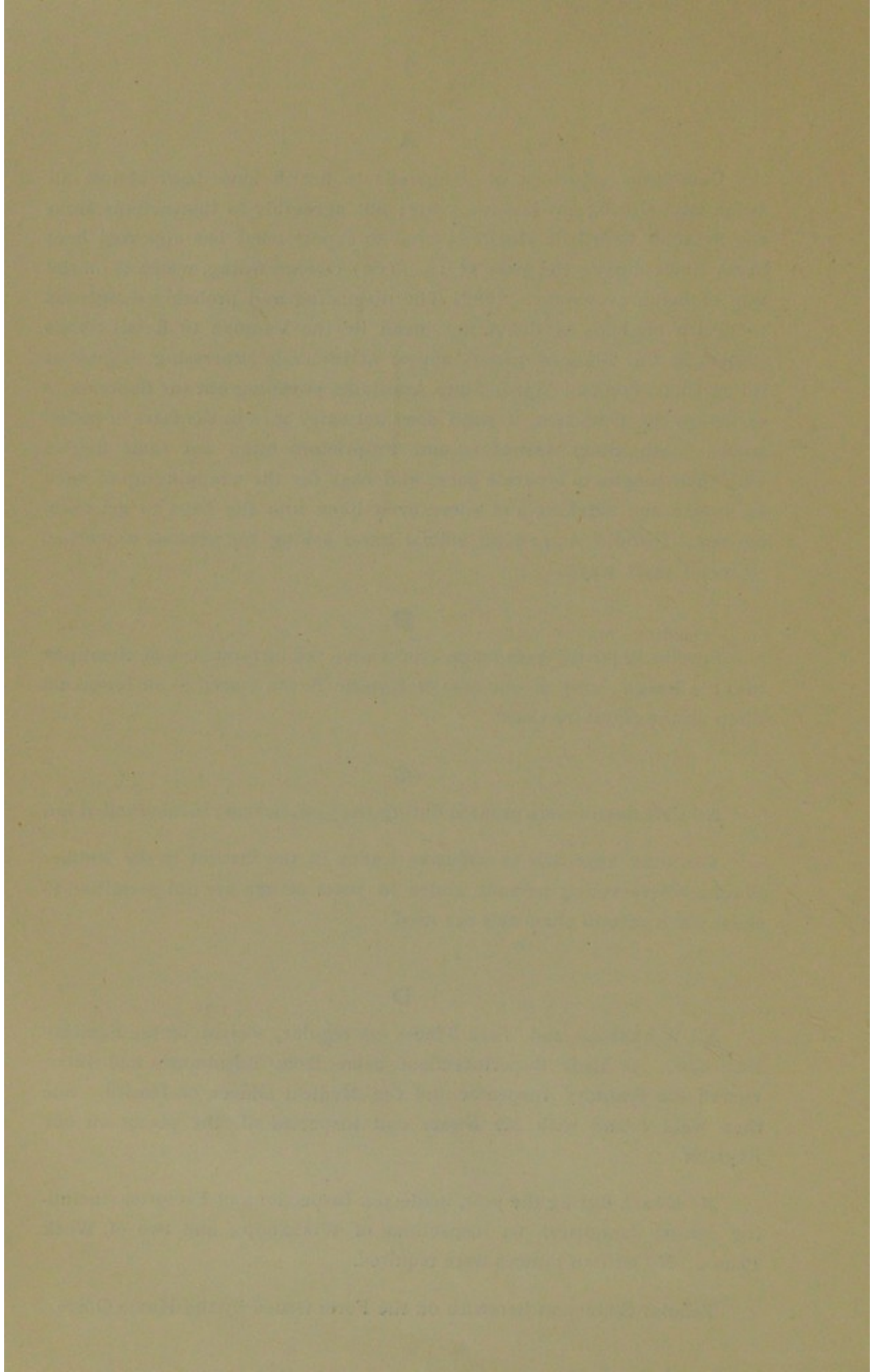
The only approach to offensive trades in the district is the Rubber Works, where young persons under 16 years of age are not permitted to assist when certain chemicals are used.

**D**

All Workshops and Work Places are regularly visited by the Sanitary Inspector. A Lady Superintendent came from Edinburgh and interviewed the Sanitary Inspector and the Medical Officer of Health. She then went round with Mr Ewart and inspected all the places on our Register.

Mr Ewart, during the year, made ten inspections of Factories (including factory laundries). 69 inspections of Workshops, and two of Work Places. No written notices were required.

Tabular Statement herewith on the Form issued by the Home Office.



**E**

Reports and complete information as to the sufficiency and habitability of working-class dwelling-houses have been presented to the Scottish Board of Health by the Local Authority, and will not require to be amended or extended by your Reporter. No action was taken when many cases of overcrowding were discovered, because there were no other houses for the people to go to, and believing that the present Schemes will completely remove this cause for complaint.

**F**

As to the expediency of a Town Planning Scheme, this has been answered by the active manner in which the Local Authority has been carrying on the Scheme adopted. Further, Housing Schemes are clearly set forth in the following "Press" cutting:—

"The Royal Burgh of Renfrew, which was the first municipality in Scotland to complete and have occupied new dwelling-houses, is proceeding with the second and concluding part of its Housing Scheme. At a sitting of the Dean of Guild Court, Dean of Guild Murray presiding, plans were submitted and approved for the erection of 354 houses at Loanhead at an estimated cost of £350,000. The houses will be of three, four and five apartments, with scullery and bathroom. The first portion of the Renfrew Housing Scheme involved the erection of 184 houses at Newmains. The first half of this portion of the Scheme has been completed and 60 of the houses are in actual occupation."

**G**

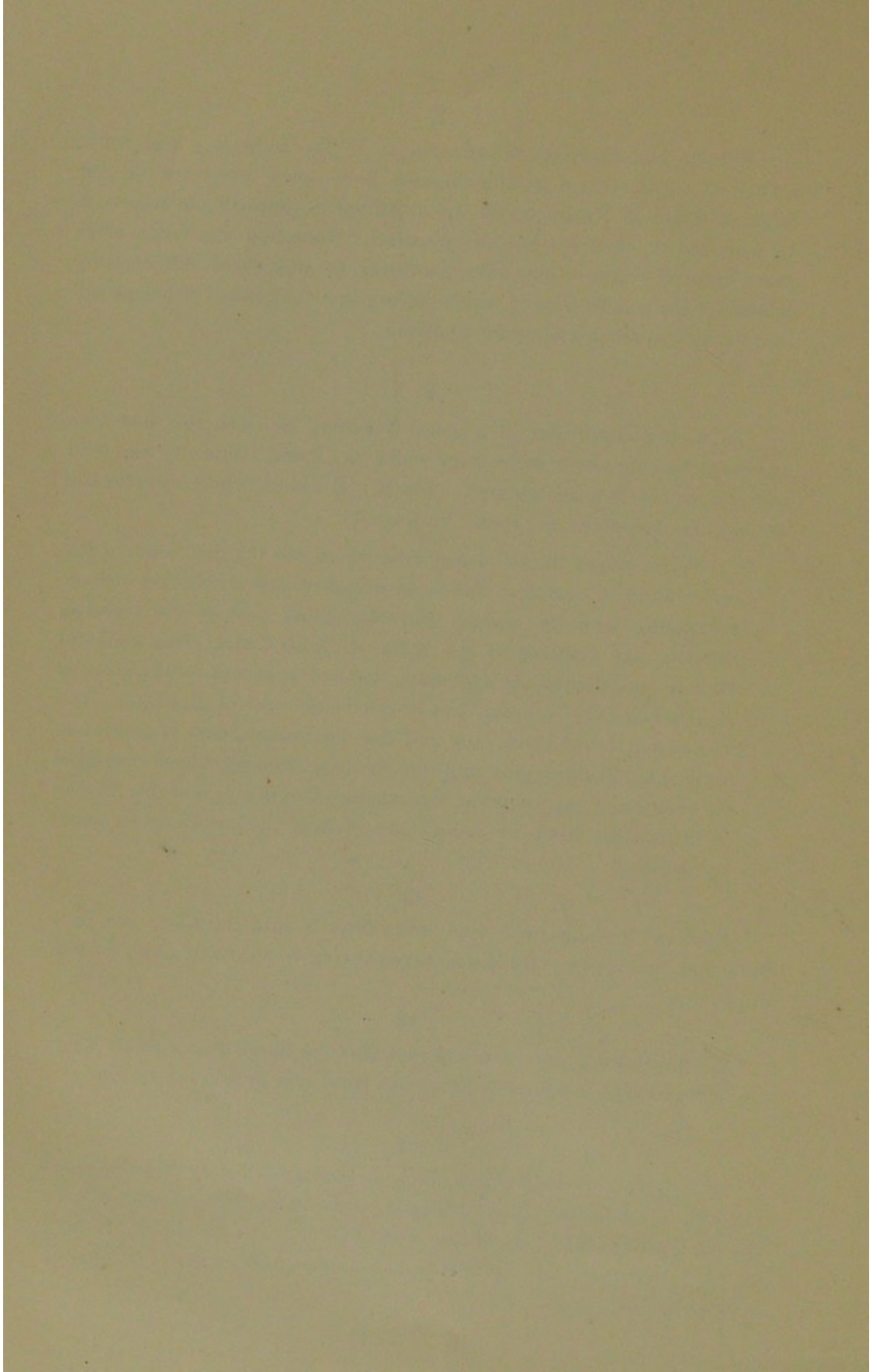
Renfrew Drainage untreated, runs directly into the Cart, the Millburn, and the Clyde. No action taken owing to the War and post-War conditions.

**H**

No proceedings were undertaken under the Burgh Police Act. There are neither Public nor Private Slaughter-Houses in or near the Burgh.

**I**

Hospital accommodation, available for persons suffering from infectious diseases, is abundant, fully equipped, convenient, and of easy access. Blawarthill Hospital on north side of the Clyde. The Smallpox Hospital is near Johnstone Combination Hospital, and has been in active occupation during the year.



We have no House of Reception, but when we sent two cases of Smallpox to Hospital we turned their infected dwelling-houses into a place of isolation, and in it confined the remaining members of the family, one of whom had quite recovered at home from a very mild attack of Smallpox.

## J

For the destruction or disinfection of infected articles, we have established at the two Hospitals up-to-date apparatus for that purpose, which we described in a former Report, and are fully adequate for our requirements.

The means for the conveyance and return of infected articles for disinfection is a one-horse van, and for patients a one-horse ambulance van.

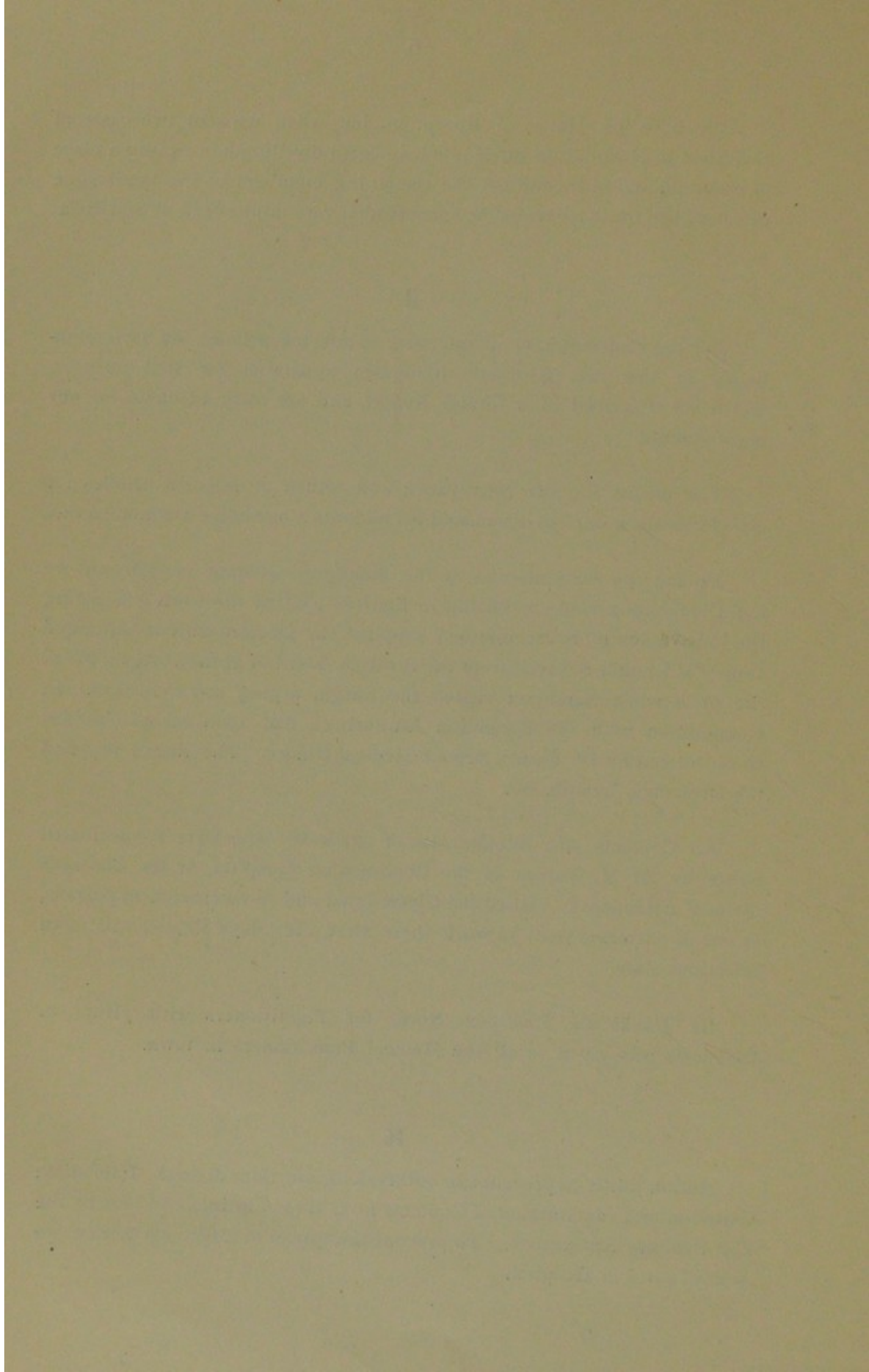
During the early months of the Smallpox epidemic in Glasgow, we had Chickenpox made notifiable in Renfrew; billed the town concerning the importance of re-vaccination; supplied the Doctors with an unlimited supply of Lymph received from the Scottish Board of Health. Again billed the town when Smallpox visited the Burgh, urging re-vaccination. In co-operation with the Education Authorities, had 1000 school children re-vaccinated by Dr Heard, School Medical Officer. The Burgh supplied the Dressings, Lymph, etc.

All Contacts and sub-Contacts of our local cases were re-vaccinated either by Dr M. Watson of the Combination Hospital, or the Contact's Medical Attendants. Visited the Clyde Trust and re-vaccinated 19 persons, as one of our cases went to work there after a few days' illness, still in an infectious state.

Dr Wanklyn's Smallpox Notes for Practitioners with Hints on Diagnosis was given to all the Medical Practitioners in town.

## K

Action taken to prevent the outbreak of infectious disease. Immediate visitation and examination of Contacts from abroad intimated to me by the Port Sanitary Authorities. To prevent the spread of infectious disease, we isolated cases in Hospital.



We prevented the attendance of Contacts at School till danger of infection was past. Re-vaccinated Smallpox Contacts and sub-Contacts. Paid more than 200 visits to those re-vaccinated Contacts till the eighteenth day of the Incubation Period was over. Visited in the early part of the forenoon, so as to be in time to detect any premonitory symptom, and visited cases of Chickenpox as soon as possible after notification.

## L

We have not established a Local Centre for the treatment of V.D., but we have made arrangements with various Hospitals for the purpose, which are situated conveniently in Glasgow. Each Medical Practitioner in the Burgh has a list of these Hospitals and a note of the hours for sending patients for treatment. This arrangement seems to me to be working satisfactorily.

## M

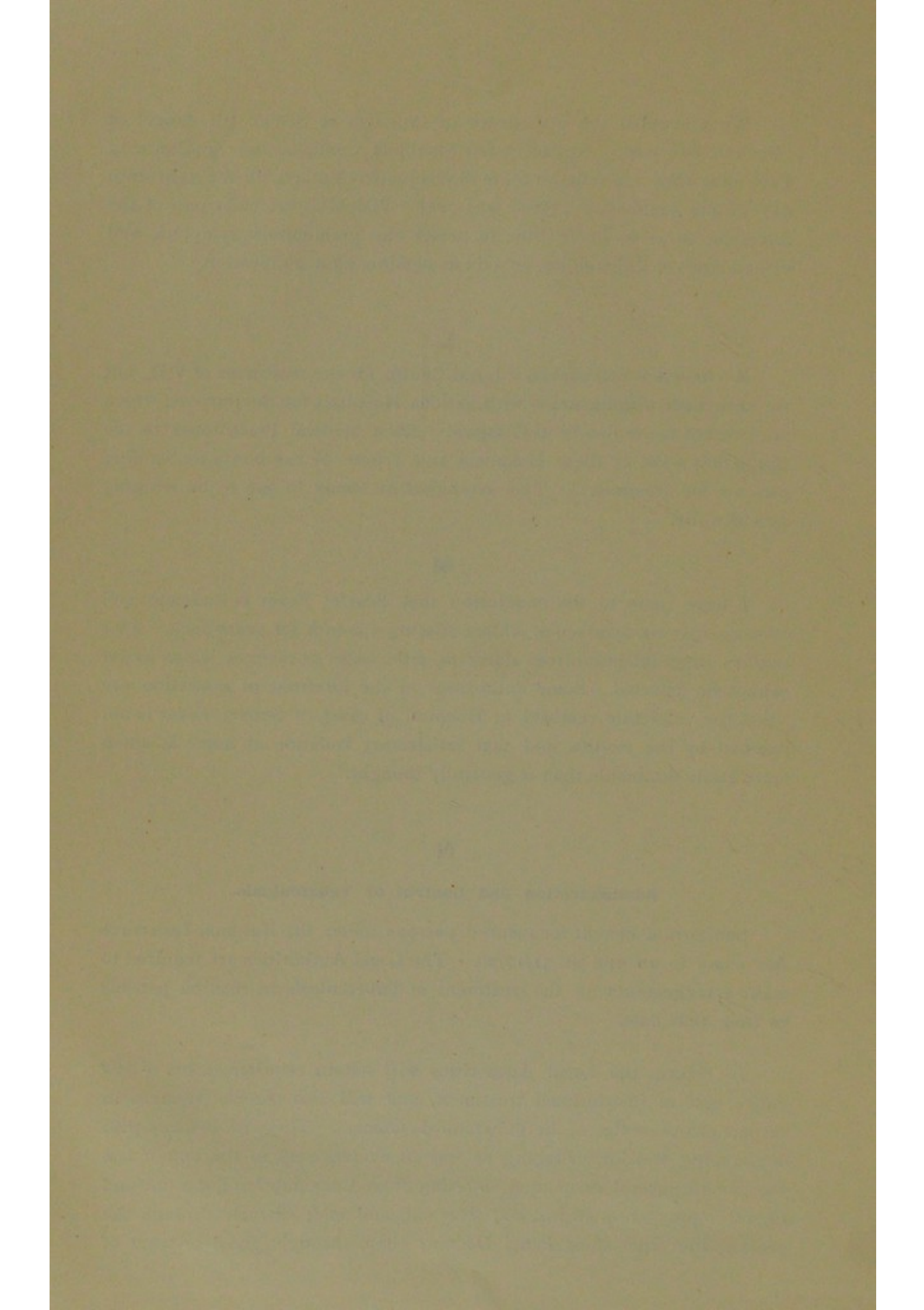
I have come to the conclusion that Scarlet Fever is endemic, and consequently its occurrence seldom missing a month for years back. This implies direct infection from active or mild cases or carriers, which as yet cannot be detected. Some authorities in the forefront of sanitation say "that the wholesale removal to Hospital of cases of Scarlet Fever is not justified by the results, and that satisfactory isolation at home is much more easily attainable than is generally thought."

## N

### **Administration and Control of Tuberculosis.**

Sanatorium Benefit for insured persons under the National Insurance Act came to an end at 31/12/20. The Local Authorities are required to make arrangements for the treatment of Tuberculosis in insured persons as from that date.

In return, the Local Authorities will obtain reimbursement of the entire cost of institutional treatment, and will also receive payment in respect of the service of the Tuberculosis Officers. This will do away with overlapping and overdrugging, as was in evidence up to the end of last year, as in several cases men suffering from Consumption got a full and liberal supply of medicine, cod liver oil, and malt extracts through the prescription from their Panel Doctor; then, through greed or want of



sense, went to the Tuberculosis Centre and got another supply of those things. Whether they swallowed these or gave them to other friends, my informant did not know.

There were twenty cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis notified during the year. There were ten deaths, six of which occurred outwith the Burgh. Of these, three died in the Sanatorium—

1 in Riccarton Asylum.

1 in Fraserburgh.

1 in Burgh of Johnstone.

The remaining four died in their homes in Renfrew.

## O

### **Maternity Service and Child Welfare in Renfrewshire.**

It is proposed soon to inaugurate a Scheme of Maternity Service and Child Welfare in the Upper and Lower Districts and also in the five smaller Burghs, which will include home visitation of infants and children up to five years of age and provide Child Welfare Centres in all the Burghs and the Six Areas of the Country Districts.

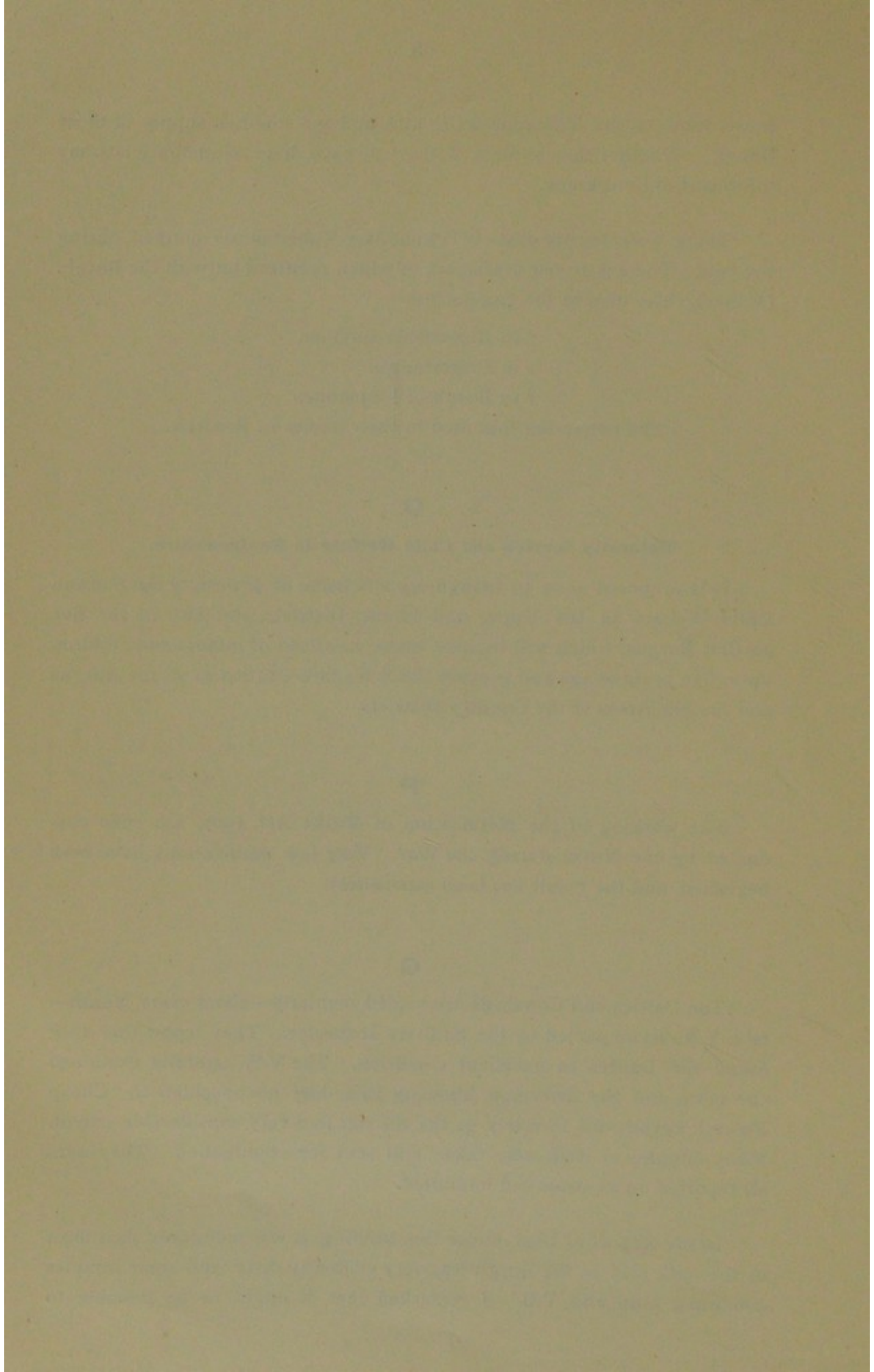
## P

The working of the Notification of Births Act, 1907, has been conducted by one Nurse during the War. Very few notifications have been neglected, and the result has been satisfactory.

## Q

The Dairies and Cowsheds are visited regularly—about every month—by a V.S., accompanied by the Sanitary Inspector. They report that they found the Dairies in excellent condition. The V.S. carefully examined the cows, and the dairymen, knowing this, does not speculate in "Cheap Piners" as they did formerly in the district to a very considerable extent. Many samples of milk were taken and sent for examination. They were all reported on as clean and undiluted.

In my Report of 1898, under this heading, it was mentioned that most of the milk sold in the Burgh was very evidently dirty, and some samples contained puss and T.B. I remarked that it ought to be possible to



purchase milk which was evidently clean and would not require to be boiled to make it safe for human food. I foretold that this would come to pass some day, when the people learned to know what they should get when purchasing milk, for then they would insist on getting it.

In "Maternity and Child Welfare" for December, 1920, is the following—"What can the public do to obtain a good milk supply?"

First, as consumers themselves and as parents of the rising generation, they can help to create that discriminate public opinion which will encourage Producers and Distributors of Clean Milk and discourage those who employ dirty and inefficient methods. Although it has taken nearly twenty-three years to see eye to eye with me, still I am pleased that they can now back up my opinion after years of consideration.

For I felt like one crying in the wilderness, until the Local Government Board desired me, in a letter dated 19/8/09, to make "a Report on the Milk Supply, and to state more specifically my objections to the then methods of supply and distribution in the Burgh." Report for 1909.

## R

Inspection of Meat at Shops undertaken by the V.S., accompanied by the Sanitary Inspector. No insanitary condition was discovered, and all the meat exposed for sale was sound.

## S

The Sanitary Inspector took some samples of Milk, Food, and Drink, and his is the only report required under this heading.

## T

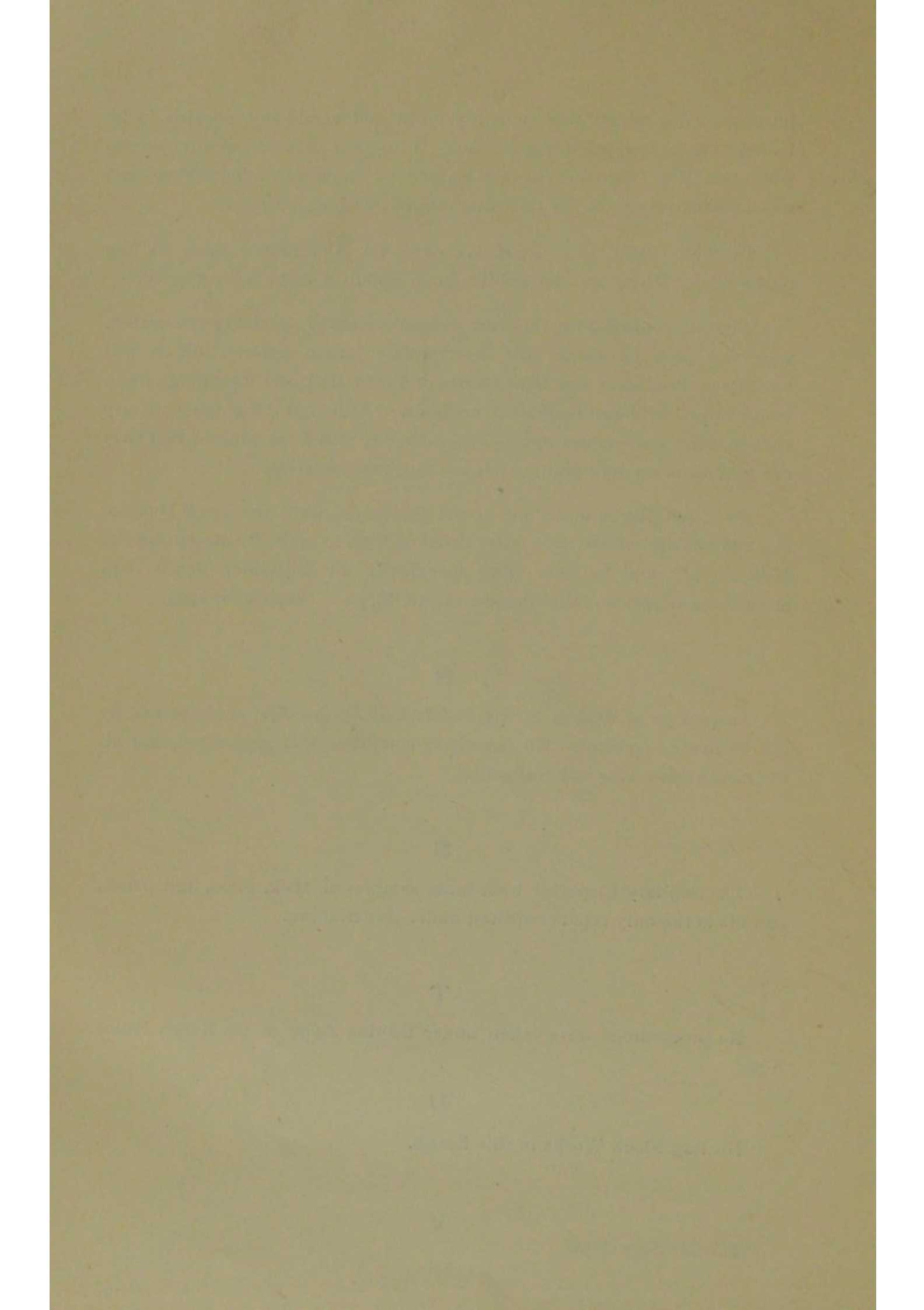
No proceedings were taken under Section 83-96 of the Burgh Police Acts.

## U

No Rag Flock Works in this Burgh.

## V

Tabular Statement.



## APPENDIX No. 1.

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### Control of Infection.

Pneumonia is now a notifiable disease, and was much in evidence during 1920, chiefly, I think, owing to infection from cases of Influenza. Out of 36 infantile deaths during the year, 13 were from acute Pulmonary Diseases.

The theory that infection is usually air borne greatly retarded the recognition of the great importance of fairly direct contact in the spread of contagious disease and prevented the employment of effective means of controlling disease.

The Medical Department of the Ministry of Health has issued a Report on the Pandemic of Influenza in 1918-19.

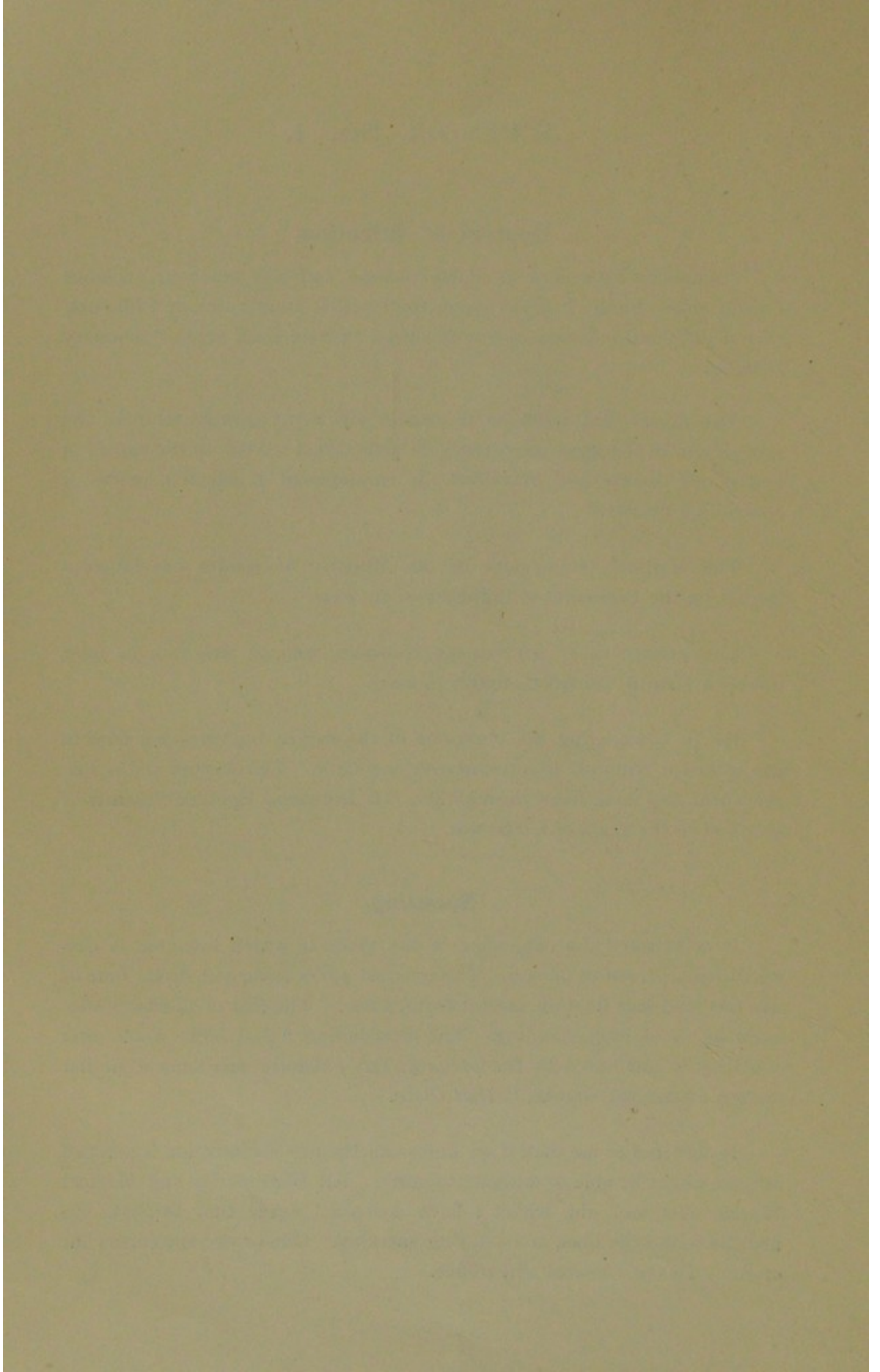
The preface is by Sir George Newman, who, at Brighton in 1906, issued a Health Calendar similar to ours.

He, in considering the prospects of the future, indicates his faith in the ultimate triumph of preventative medicine. The Report states that the world lost more lives through the last Influenza Epidemic than were sacrificed in the years of a fatal war.

### Sneezing.

It is believed that Sneezing is one mode in which infection is conveyed from person to person. The infected spray is carried direct four or five feet, and may float on several feet further. The fear of ill-effects after sneezing is of long standing. The benediction "God bless you!" after sneezing is attributed to St. Gregory, but Aristotle mentions a similar custom among the Greeks, "*Absit Omen.*"

It occurred to me that, if we knew exactly how the infection is sprayed out, we might be able to mitigate the evil. All Dictionaries and Medical Works, new and old, which I have consulted agree that through the nostrils comes the blast of air during sneezing. One or two specimens out of many I have collected will suffice.



*Doctor Weir Mitchell*

Says in "Hugh Wyne"—"One can neither grieve nor reason when one is sneezing. It is what Dr Rush calls a moral alterative."

*Collins' Dictionary.*

**SNEEZE.**—To emit air through the nose audibly and violently by a kind of involuntary convulsive force, occasioned by irritation of the inner membrane of the nose.

A sudden and violent ejection of air, chiefly through the nose with an audible sound.

*Hooper's Medical Dictionary.*

**SNEEZING.**—A convulsive action of the muscles of the chest, arising commonly from irritation of the nostrils.

Sneezing, produced in the ordinary way, though convulsive, is a natural and healthy action, intended to throw off instinctively, from the delicate membrane of the nostrils, whatever irritable or offensive material may chance to be lodged there.

*The Journal of the American Medical Association, 23rd Aug., 1919.*

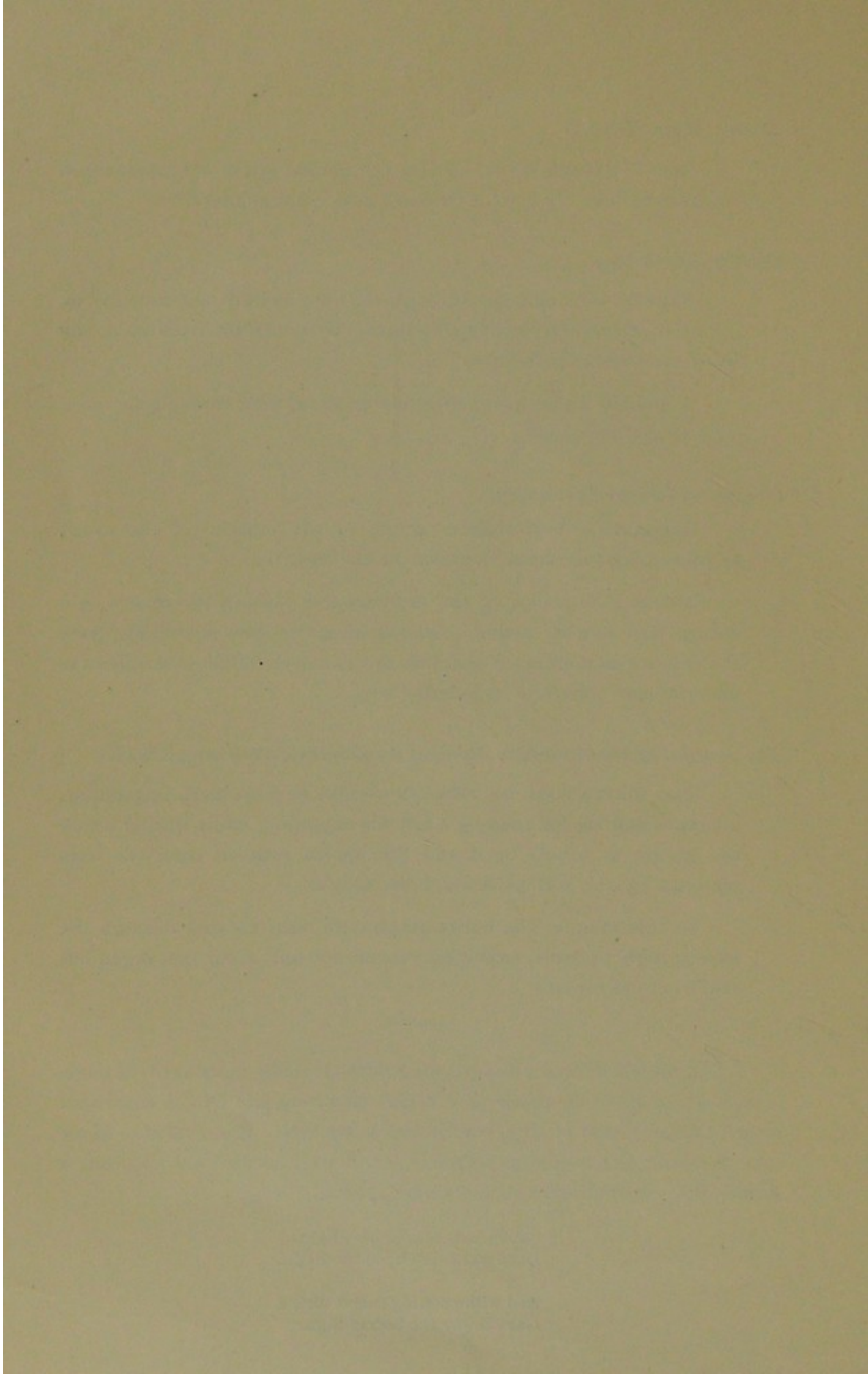
**THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SNEEZING.**—One or more deep inspirations are taken and are followed by a forcible expiratory effort, during which the glottis is widely open and the mouth shut off from the nasopharynx by the soft palate and the tongue.

In this manner the entire respiratory blast escapes through the nose at high pressure, expelling mucus not only from that organ but also from the throat.

I find myself in direct disagreement with all those views as to the mode of exit of the air when sneezing. I may be wrong, but I have convinced myself that this blast of air is wholly and solely oral. It is a relief to know that Sneezing is not always a forerunner of evil, for we find Catullus, a Roman poet, delighting in it, and singing joyfully of it—

"Cupid, Sneezing in his Flight,  
Once was heard upon the Right.

And with sporting sneeze divine  
Gave to Joy the Sacred Sign."



## APPENDIX No. 2.

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### **Tuberculosis Clinic.**

During the month of July, in the Bank Buildings at the Cross, Renfrew, the County Medical Officer of Health has inaugurated a Dispensary for Disease of the Chest, which is conducted by Dr Robb, the Assistant Tuberculosis Officer for the County.

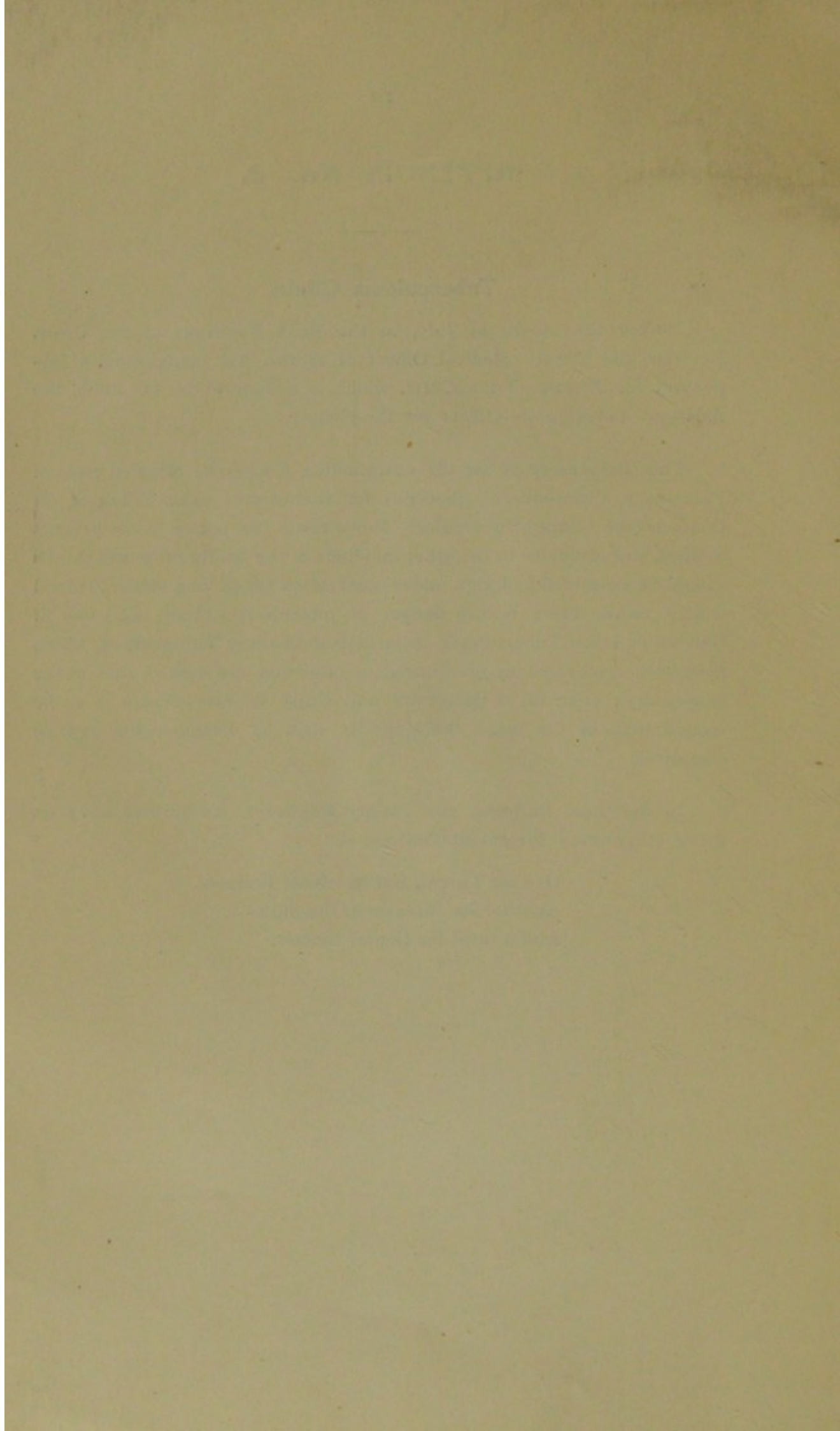
This Dispensary is for the examination of—(First) Notified cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis; (Second) for the careful examination of all Contacts (the County Tuberculosis Nurse visits the homes of the persons notified, and intimates to the other members of the family those she thinks should be examined and kept under observation for as long as the Medical Officer thinks there is any danger of infection); (Third) all cases of General or Local Tuberculosis, other than Pulmonary Tuberculosis, which have been discovered by notification or otherwise are looked after at the Dispensary; (Fourth) a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre is to be inaugurated in the same Buildings as soon as arrangements can be completed.

In the same Building, the County Education Authorities have set going other three Treatment Centres :—

One for Throat, Ear and Nose Diseases.

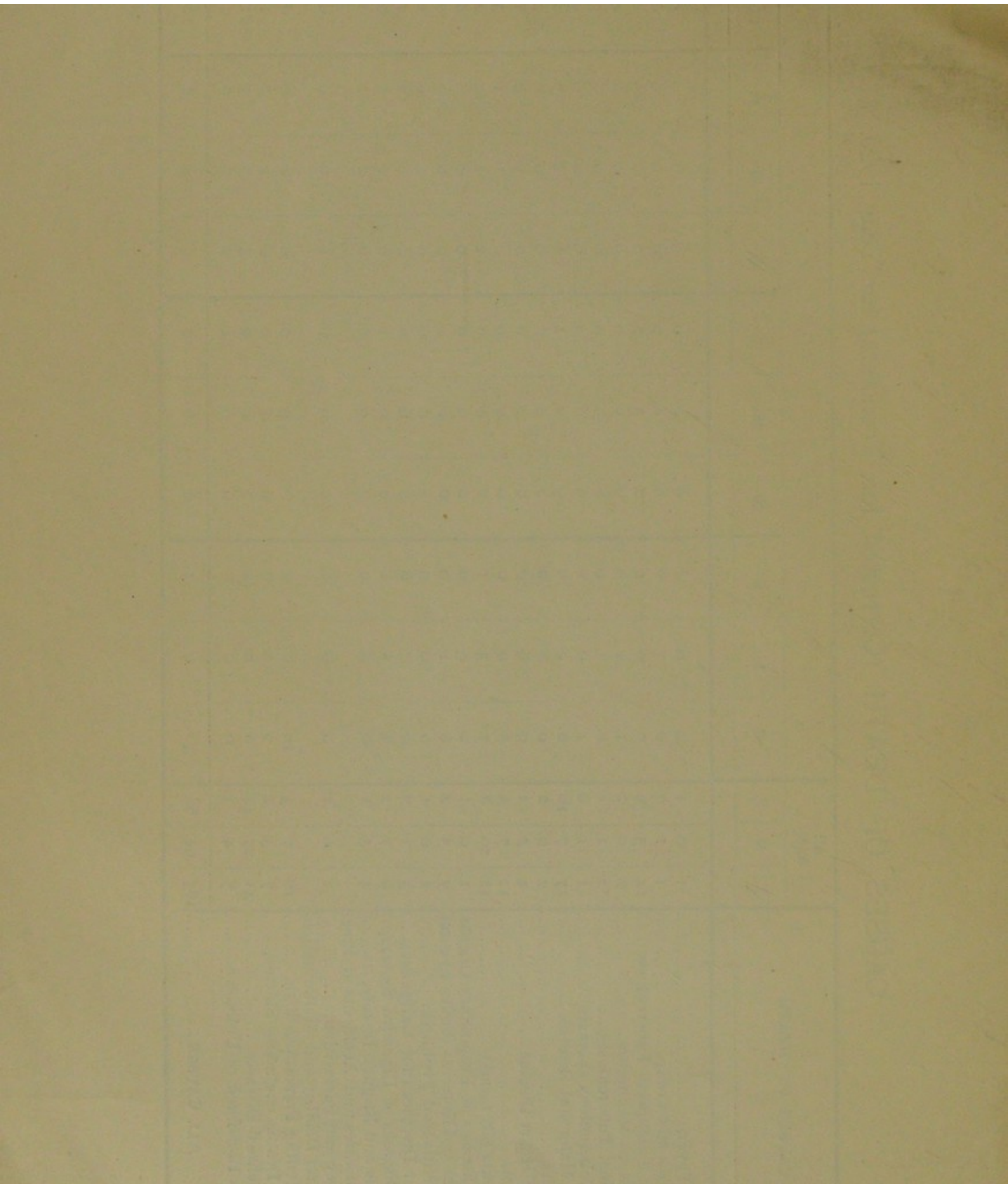
Another for Diseases of the Skin.

And a third for Dental Defects.



CAUSES OF DEATH (Corrected for Transfers) for Year 1920.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages.		A G E.										
	T.	F.	-1	1-	5-	10-	15-	25-	35-	45-	55-	65-	75-
	M.	F.											
Scarlet Fever, .....	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diphtheria and Croup, .....	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phthisis, Pulmonary Tuberculosis, .....	14	5	0	0	0	2	5	7	0	0	0	0	0
Tuberculous Meningitis, .....	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abdominal Tuberculosis, .....	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Tuberculous Diseases, .....	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer, Malignant Disease, .....	17	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	7	2	2
Meningitis, .....	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Organic Heart Disease, .....	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1
Bronchitis, .....	12	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2
Pneumonia (all forms), .....	18	10	7	3	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	3
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs, Diarrhoea and Enteritis (under 2 years), .....	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Appendicitis and Typhlitis, .....	7	5	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All Liver Diseases (not Malignant), .....	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Diseases of Digestive System, .....	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Nephritis and Bright's Disease, .....	9	7	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	4	0	0
Other Diseases and Accidents of Preg- nancy and Parturition, .....	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth, .....	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide, .....	10	7	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Defined Diseases, .....	7	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	0
Diseases Ill-defined or Unknown, .....	41	27	6	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	5	11	13
	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
<b>ALL CAUSES, .....</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>



I.—RETURN OF CASES ON INFECTIOUS DISEASE  
NOTIFIED, &c., DURING THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1920.

Population, Census 1911, ... 12,559. Population estimated to middle of 1920, ... \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY OF RENFREW. BURGH OF RENFREW.

DISEASE.	NUMBER OF CASES COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.									
	At all Ages.	At Age—Years.							Cases remov'd to Hos-pital.	Cases not remov'd to Hos-pital.
		Under 1.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 45.	45 and under 65.	65 and upwards.		
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	
<b>A.—NOTIFIED UNDER THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (NOTIFICATION) ACT, 1889.</b>										
Typhoid or Enteric Fever,.....	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Smallpox, .....	3	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	1
Scarlet Fever or Scarlatina, .....	39	0	14	22	3	0	0	0	36	3
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	9	0	4	4	0	1	0	0	7	2
Erysipelas,.....	6	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	5
Cerebro S. Meningitis, .....	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Chickenpox, .....	26	0	12	14	0	0	0	0	0	26
Total,.....	85	0	31	42	7	2	2	1	48	37
<b>B.—NOTIFIED IN TERMS OF REGULATIONS MADE UNDER SECTION 78 OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1897.</b>										
Ophthalmia Neonatorum, .....	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Acute Primary Pneumonia,.....	10	0	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	10
Acute Influenzal Pneumonia,.....	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis, .....	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	5
Total of A and B,.....	104	6	34	48	11	7	4	2	50	60

