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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

OF THE

ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT,

AND THE

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor of New Buildings

FOR THE YEAR 1925.



ANNUAL REPORT

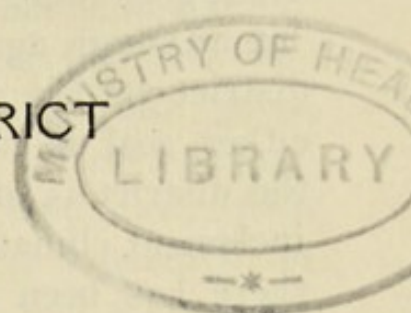
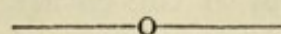
OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

OF THE

ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT

FOR THE YEAR 1925.



Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the year 1920 the Ministry of Health issued an order that for that year and every fifth year thereafter a more comprehensive and elaborate report, known as a Survey Report, should be prepared. This report, for the year 1925, is thus a Survey Report and I would ask the Council to bear with me while I recapitulate (by order) the natural and social conditions of the district, which are quite familiar to the members, but which are required by the Central Authority, who are naturally not so conversant with local characteristics.

The area of the Alnwick Rural District is 93,006 acres.

The population (census 1921) was 12,380. The population as estimated by the Registrar General for 1925 is 12,460.

The number of inhabited houses (1921) 2790.

The Rateable Value is £129,695.

The Sum represented by a penny rate is £390.

The Alnwick Rural District is situated on the sea coast of Northumberland roughly half way between the rivers Tyne and Tweed. It extends along the coast for about fifteen miles from the village of Hauxley on the South to Newton-by-the-Sea on the north and extends inland to a maximum distance of about 12 miles. The Rural District surrounds two urban districts, Alnwick and Amble, which are separate authorities. There are no towns in the district, but many villages large and small. The populations of the villages on the sea coast vary very much with the season of the year, in some cases being doubled or even trebled during the summer.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The prosperity or otherwise of the district depends entirely on two factors, viz., agriculture and minerals. As far as employment goes there is probably an even division between these two, for although agriculture and grazing engage the whole of the district yet the greater masses of population congregate where either coal is mined or stone quarried. The agriculture of the district is of a high class, notwithstanding the somewhat inclement climate. Most of the estates are large, and although there has been a certain tendency for farmers to buy their holdings, yet this does not always seem to have been to their advantage. There are many fine country mansions in the district, but alas! owing to heavy taxation they are not all inhabited by their owners. The farm houses are all solid stone buildings varying in size according to the value of the holding. The farm cottages are also well built and nearly always adequate to the size of the families and the number of employees. This condition is due to the smaller size of the families of the present day, and also to the tendency to lay arable farms down to grass. The effect of the spurt of tillage farming due to war legislation has almost disappeared owing to the large wages bill incidental to arable farming. The number of small agricultural holdings in the district is few, and although no doubt there is a strong demand for them, yet it is difficult to see how their number can be greatly increased. The difficulty is how to make a new small holding an economic proposition, considering the enormous proportional cost of the necessary house and farm buildings, at present building rates. Thus we find small holdings practically confined to the vicinity of villages where buildings of sorts already exist.

The mineral resources of the district comprise coal, whinstone, limestone, and sandstone. The great coalfield of South Northumberland extends into the south-eastern part of the Alnwick Rural District known as the Warkworth Sub-district in which the greater part of the population is concentrated. The housing of the miners is comparatively good, and we have, except at Radcliffe, none of the old back to back rows of houses. Since last Survey Report two new pit villages—one at

the New Shilbottle Colliery and the other at Whittle Colliery—have come into existence. The new Shilbottle Colliery is worked entirely by electric power. Quite an extensive village has been built, and a large new school is under construction. Many of the houses are excellent, built of sandstone and brick, but some of those earliest built are of cement and not very satisfactory. The houses at Whittle pit are quite good, especially those facing the main North Road. This company has acquired a country mansion known as Swarland Hall, which with its outbuildings they have converted into a barrack for miners and their families. This house never had a good and sufficient water supply for the occupying family and their servants, so naturally with a population of about 200, the deficiency is acute and even dangerous. Water has been found by boring and it is to be hoped that a sufficient supply will soon be available. With the proper and efficient ventilation which prevails in the pits in this district the miner's occupation is by no means unhealthy and there is no special incidence of phthisis among them.

In the North Eastern portion of the District quarrying for whinstone, limestone, and sandstone is carried out on a comparatively large scale and there is a considerable export trade, especially in whinstone road metal and setts. Beyond occasional accidents the work entailed does not cause any detriment to health.

VITAL STATISTICS.

It has been my habit in tabulating the vital statistics to give, along with the figures for the year those also for the two previous years. This report being not only for 1925 but also a survey report of the four preceding years, I propose for purposes of comparison to give the numbers for all five years. In the returns sent us by the Registrar General the total deaths are stated at 158 and the births at 227. My returns from the local registrars agree very nearly as to the number of deaths, which after deduction and additions for residents and non-residents amount to 157, that is one less than the official return, but in the number of births there is a discrepancy of 10, the Registrar General making it 227, while after several counts

I can only find 217. I shall follow the course I have always taken of using the Registrar General's figures for the general birth and death rates, but the local figures for the assignment of deaths as to the ages at which they occurred and the arrangement of the births and deaths with reference to the Sub-Districts in which they occurred, as, of course, I can only classify those of which I have information.

The following table shows the number of births and deaths belonging to the district for 1925, and for comparison the corresponding figures for the preceding four years are also given.

		Births.	Birth Rate per 1000 per annum.	Deaths.	Death Rate per 1000 per annum.
1921	...	219	17.68	138	11.14
1922	...	244	19.55	160	12.82
1923	...	231	18.43	147	11.73
1924	...	220	17.50	151	12.01
1925	...	227	18.21	158	12.68

The variations shown by the above table for the last five years are seen to be slight and fluctuating. The birth-rate for 1925 (18.21) is very nearly the same as that for England and Wales (18.3). The death-rate for 1925 (12.68) is slightly higher than that for the whole country (12.2). Of the births 110 were males and 117 females. Of the deaths 74 were males and 84 females. Of the births 214 were legitimate and 13 illegitimate. Of the former 9 died under one year, of the latter one.

The following table shows the ages at which the deaths occurred and for "Survey" purposes the four preceding years are also given.

	Under 1 and One under Year.	2 and under 2 yrs.	2 and under 5 yrs.	5 and under 15 yrs.	15 and under 25 yrs.	25 and under 45 yrs.	45 and under 65 yrs.	65 yrs. and over.	Total.
1921	16	3	3	8	9	9	30	57	135
1922	17	3	3	4	7	15	45	64	158
1923	14	4	7	5	3	17	33	64	147
1924	15	2	2	4	6	16	36	70	151
1925	10	0	4	2	7	12	40	82	157

Comparing the figures for 1925 with those of the four preceding years it will be seen that although the total number of deaths is among the largest, yet the distribution with regard to age is excellent. Take the deaths under one year, which were 10, and compare them with the four preceding years in which the average was 15.5. Take again the total deaths under 25 years and observe the steady fall—1921, 39; 1922, 34; 1923, 33; 1924, 29; 1925, 23. Here we find for 1925 a total of 23 against an average for the preceding four years of 33.7. Consider next the deaths over 65 years—the old age deaths. Here we find an increase corresponding with the decrease at the other end of the table, i.e., from 57 in 1921 to 82 in 1925. The above figures may perhaps give an exaggerated view of the increased chances of longevity, but at any rate they show how the wind blows.

DEATHS OF THE SUB-DISTRICTS.

The Alnwick Rural District is divided into three Sub-districts, viz. (1) Warkworth Sub-District to the south and south-east, which is the coal mining, and most populous district; (2) Embleton Sub-District to the north and north-east, which is the stone quarrying district; (3) Denwick Sub-District which is small in extent and population and occupies an area surrounding the Alnwick Urban District. For the death-rates of the Sub-Districts I take the census of 1921, the only information available on the subject.

		Population.	Deaths.	Death-rate.
Warkworth	... ..	7511	88	11.7
Embleton	... ..	4339	63	14.5
Denwick	... ..	680	6	8.8

From this table it will be seen that the death rate for Warkworth Sub-district is below the general rate for the district, that for Embleton Sub-district highest and that for Denwick much lower.

INFANTILE DEATH RATE.

The deaths of children under one year for 1925 numbered only ten as compared with an average of 15.5 for the four preceding years. Taking the births for 1925 according to

the Registrar General's Statement to be 227, this gives the very favourable infantile death rate of the whole district at 44.05. Taking the births as 217 as per local registration returns, the Infantile death rate would be 46.0. In either case the rate for the district is greatly below the general Infantile death rate for England and Wales which is 75 per 1000 children born. The following table gives the births for the sub-districts with the corresponding birth rates and infantile death-rates.

			Births.	Birth-rate.	Infantile Death-rate.
Warkworth	...	...	138	18.3	50.7
Embleton	...	...	67	15.4	44.7
Denwick	...	...	12	17.3	Nil.

Thus the infantile death-rate for Warkworth Sub-District exceeded that of the whole district, that of Embleton was less than the district rate, while Denwick Sub-District for the fifth year in succession had no infantile deaths.

There were no deaths from either puerperal fever or other accidents or diseases of pregnancy during 1925. There were no deaths from Measles, but one from Whooping Cough and one from Enteritis, which latter did not occur in the district although belonging to it. Five deaths were caused by Influenza.

POOR LAW RELIEF.

			Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.
Warkworth	...	...	4	15	10	29
Embleton	...	...	7	12	8	27
Denwick	...	...	0	1	0	1
			—	—	—	—
Totals	...	...	11	28	18	57

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

During the year 1925 there were notified in the district 82 cases of infectious diseases. Of these 2 were Smallpox, 40 Scarlet Fever, 2 Diphtheria, 2 Enteric Fever, 5 Erysipelas,

14 Chickenpox, 12 Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and 5 other forms of Tuberculosis. As regards the sub-districts the distribution was as follows.

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria.	Enteric Fever.	Erysipelas.	Chickenpox.	Pulmonary Tuberculosis.	Other Tuberculosis.	Totals.
Warkworth	2	10	2	1	3	12	6	5	41
Embleton	0	28	0	1	2	1	4	0	36
Denwick	0	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	5
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	2	40	2	2	5	14	11	5	82

SMALLPOX.

This disease has for some considerable time been very prevalent in the Morpeth District which lies immediately to the south of the Alnwick Rural District. A considerable number of cases had occurred in Broomhill Village which is continuous with Togston in the Alnwick Rural District. On April 7th a case of Smallpox was notified at Togston Terrace. A man aged 75 in the same house refused vaccination and was notified as suffering from the disease on April 24th. Both cases were removed to the Morpeth Smallpox Isolation Hospital at Chevington, as this hospital was close at hand and in going order. This arrangement, which was courteously agreed to by the Morpeth District Council, saved time and also the expense of opening out, staffing, and furnishing our own Smallpox Isolation Hospital. The cases were of a slight nature and recovered well.

Scarlet Fever of which 40 cases were notified occurred mostly in sporadic outbreaks. The only outbreak suggestive of an epidemic occurred in the district between South Charlton and Rennington. Reasonable care during the period of infection and disinfection of the houses thereafter has always prevented any serious spread of the disease.

Diphtheria.—Only 2 cases were notified in the district and that, notwithstanding the fact that practically in all septic throats a bacteriological examination is made. It is curious

how this disease, which in the early years of the century became more and more prevalent has of late years gradually died down.

Enteric Fever.—This disease has for many years rarely occurred in the Alnwick Rural District. The two cases reported occurred a long distance apart and no insanitary condition could be traced. In one case it seemed probable that the infection was derived outside the district.

Chicken Pox was made notifiable during the latter three quarters of the year owing to the prevalence of smallpox in the districts to the south of the Alnwick Rural District.

Tuberculous Disease.—Twelve cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified in the district. Of these 6 were males and 6 females. Five cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis were notified, one being a male and 4 females.

The following table shows the deaths from notifiable infectious disease and the distribution as regards the sub-districts. Except from tuberculosis there were no deaths from notifiable infectious disease.

	Warkworth.	Embleton.	Denwick.	Total.
Pulmonary				
Tuberculosis ...	4	3	0	7
Non-Pulmonary				
Tuberculosis ...	2	0	0	2
	—	—	—	—
Totals	6	3	0	9

Two deaths from pulmonary tuberculosis, of persons belonging to the district, which occurred outside the district are included.

The following table shows an analysis of the ages at which the above deaths occurred.

	Under One Year.	1 to 2 yrs.	2 to 5 yrs.	5 to 15 yrs.	15 to 25 yrs.	25 to 45 yrs.	45 to 65 yrs.	65 and over.
Pulmonary								
Tuberculosis ...	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0
Non-Pulmonary								
Tuberculosis ...	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

The following table shows the ages at which the cases of Tuberculosis were notified.

Age Periods.	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
0	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	2
15	0	0	1	0
20	1	0	0	0
25	1	2	0	0
35	1	2	0	1
45	1	2	0	0
55	2	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0

The notification of Tuberculous disease is gradually being more efficiently carried out in the district. This is probably due to an appreciation of the fact that such notifications are regarded as particularly confidential, the knowledge of the existence of the disease being confined to the Medical Officer of Health and the County Medical Officer.

No cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum were notified in the district during 1925.

SPECIAL CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

There is always a danger of a greater incidence of sickness in any area where the population is comparatively dense and the water supply defective. The above applies to only two places in the district, viz., Acklington and Swarland Hall. The former—Acklington—has provided for over thirty years the most insoluble water supply difficulty in the district. The water comes from no great depth and is of so small a quantity that the Railway Company actually have theirs brought in vessels from Amble. I have frequently reported on the dangers to health existing at Swarland Hall, which was a few years ago converted into a barrack for miners and their families to the number again of about 200. When the house was used as a country residence it was impossible to keep up a proper water supply for the family and servants during the

summer months. Boring operations have been carried out and a considerable supply tapped, which with the aid of a wind engine will, I hope, soon be available, not only for Swarland but also for several places lower down the country, possibly even Acklington.

NURSING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT.

For a district of so large an acreage and with so widely distributed a population the Nursing of the Alnwick Rural District is well carried out. This is proved by the consistently small infantile death rate, and the absence of puerperal fever, and the infrequency of deaths from the accidents and diseases of pregnancy and parturition. In the southern and more populous part of the district the nursing is carried out by District Nurses. There are nurses belonging to the Northumberland Nursing Association at Alnmouth, Warkworth, Radcliffe, Felton, Bolton, Eglington, Glanton, Shilbottle, and Boulmer. The service at Shilbottle which I, last year, reported as irregular, has been continuous and efficient this year, while Nurse Stanton, notwithstanding family cares and her exertions at lifeboat launching, still finds time to minister to the necessities of the village of Boulmer. The nursing in the northern part of the district is carried on by cottage nurses, supplied by that excellent institution the Beadnell Nursing Association. The Nurses' Home is at Chathill Station and the administration is carried on from Ellingham Vicarage by a lady whose energetic management of the scheme is only equalled by her discrimination in the choice of her nurses.

There are no midwives, as such, in the Alnwick Rural District, this work being carried on as part of the work of the District and Cottage Nurses. There are no special nurses for infectious disease.

HOSPITALS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

The hospitals available for the Alnwick Rural District are three in number, viz., The Alnwick Infirmary, The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the Joint (Urban and Rural) Smallpox Hospital. The latter is the only hospital in the District. The Alnwick Infirmary, although

not in the Rural District, is within it, and deals with the majority of cases requiring hospital treatment. This is a small well-equipped hospital run on infirmary lines, with a house surgeon and honorary staff. At present there are about 14 beds although this number can be exceeded in emergency. A new wing is being added which will add another seven beds, and will also greatly improve the sleeping accommodation of the resident staff. The cases admitted are mainly surgical, although urgent medical cases are also taken in for treatment. There is no maternity department, but the Committee has modified the rules so as to admit cases requiring the operation of Caesarian Section. This concession has, during the last five years, resulted in the saving of a considerable number of both maternal and infant lives. This Institution having private wards is able to extend its benefit to all classes of the community, and two of the most distinguished members of the Staff of the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, act respectively as Consulting Physician and Surgeon.

The Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, deals with those cases arising in the district which require either special means of investigation, or the benefit of the medical and surgical skill so lavishly concentrated in that great hospital. The Joint Smallpox hospital is placed in a suitable position about 3 miles south of the town of Alnwick. It is an iron and wood erection and is kept ready for emergencies and regularly inspected. There is no hospital for the isolation of ordinary infectious diseases in the Alnwick Rural District. Over thirty years ago when the Urban Authority erected an infectious isolation hospital, proposals were made to the Rural Authority for a joint scheme. Their proposals were then rejected and like many lost opportunities have been, well—lost. There is I think no doubt that Alnwick being in the centre of our widely spread rural district, is the most suitable place for an isolation hospital to serve both districts. I am aware that I am treading on contentious ground, and must ‘touch the harp gently,’ but I would suggest that if the Rural Authority were to spend on the present Urban Hospital a sum equivalent to

that already spent by the Urban, a joint isolation hospital most suitable to the requirements of both districts might be evolved.

Institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, and homeless children is made by the Alnwick Guardians at their Hospital and Children's Home in the town of Alnwick.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

Ambulances are kept at Alnwick and Amble for the use of the district. A carriage is kept at the Smallpox Hospital.

SCHOOLS.

The only School to which my attention has been drawn is that at Acklington. I have already reported on the difficulties of water supply of this place and that difficulty if solved will do all that is necessary.

LABORATORY WORK.

This is undertaken by the County Council and carried out at the Durham College of Medicine. The practitioners of the district make full use of the facilities afforded, and the service is conducted with great promptitude and efficiency.

LEGISLATION IN FORCE.

The following Acts and Bye-laws were adopted on the dates mentioned :—The Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1890, on the 25th April, 1898. The Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890, on the 13th May, 1907. The Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act, 1907, sections which relate to the attachment of urinals to refreshment houses, to filling up cesspools, and to the provision of an ambulance, on the 30th August, 1920. Certain Streets were paved at Alnmouth and Togston in 1896 under the Private Streets (Works) Act, 1892.

No Common Lodging Houses exist at present but bye-laws for them were adopted on the 15th December, 1876. Revised Regulations were adopted for cowsheds on the 13th November, 1899. New bye-laws with respect to slaughter-houses were allowed by the Minister of Health on the 26th February, 1923, and a revised code of bye-laws for new buildings, applicable to the whole of this Rural District, were sanctioned on the 7th March, 1823.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

(1) H. W. Walton, Clerk to the R.D. Council of Alnwick, and to the Board of Guardians.

(2) Scott Purves, M.D., M.B.C.M., Ed., Medical Officer, of Health. Parochial Medical Officer, Lesbury District.

(3) M. Temple Wilson, Certified Sanitary Inspector. Member of the Royal Sanitary Institute. (Edited and revised the third edition of "A Practical Guide for Sanitary Inspectors," issued by Knight and Co., Local Government Publishers, London.) Surveyor of new buildings.

The two latter are part timers to whom a salary contribution is made under the Public Health Acts.

Finally I wish to express my obligation to the Chairman and Members of the Council for their unfailing consideration and support, and to the Clerk and Inspector for their co-operation and help.

SCOTT PURVES, M.D., etc.,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report

FOR 1925.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.—At one time or another upwards of thirty miles of public cast-iron mains have been laid in this district, which will compare favourably with any other rural district in Northumberland. During the last five years the principal works carried out have been by loans of £1718 for the improvement of the Alnmouth Water Supply, and of £1485 for re-laying the watermain to Newton-on-the-Moor. During 1925 a borehole has been sunk at Swarland, and a supply of water tapped. At Togston Terrace the 3-inch main has been lowered to a safer depth. The ten public waterworks have been kept in a good state of repair, and several improvements of a minor character have been made. Each public supply is on the constant system. None are on the intermittent system, i.e. turned on for a few hours each day. About 750 houses are supplied from public works directly to the houses, and about the same number by means of standpipes. The sources of the water supplies are free from pollution, and as none have plumbo-solvent action no facts as to the contamination by lead can be stated.

As regards private supplies the watermain has been re-laid from the spring chamber at Rock to Rock Mill. A watermain has been laid along the "Steppy Loaning," at Lesbury, for the new houses. For the first time in my long experience I have come across a case where the landlord could be forced to bring a water supply to a farmhouse at the higher "reasonable cost" of £13, with the consent of the Ministry of Health. (A capital sum the interest of which at five per centum per annum equals 3d a week.) This was at Edlingham Castle Farm (Lumby Law) where water is obtained at a spout into a cattle trough 65 yards from the house. The supply was gauged, levels were taken, a plan prepared, an analysis of the water obtained at the public expense, and a definite tender from a plumber were all sent to London. The Ministry then

had some correspondence with the landlord and afterwards wrote:—It does not appear to be necessary that the Department should determine whether the case was one in which an order could properly be issued.” Subsequently the owner produced a tender from another plumber stating that it would cost just over £13 to get a better fall for the pipe. Matters once more came to a deadlock. It was not until the farmer volunteered to give a subscription that the Honourable Baronet carried out this little scheme which had been before the Council, on and off, for thirty-two years.

The sufficiency and quality of the water supply of the area are generally satisfactory, except for the three places below mentioned. (1) An independent water supply for the Township of Warkworth, including the houses on the high ground at Heather Leazes, a workable scheme for which is now being formulated by your Authority. (2) A supply for Acklington where the pump well is still used which is on the other side of the road to the graveyard, with sand and gravel in between, which has produced an epidemic of diphtheria, and, according to a recent analysis, is quite ready to cause another. (3) A supply for fourteen houses for the upper part of Felton which are above the level of the reservoir, and the occupiers have to depend on a pump-well in a private yard, and no closets or baths exist. The level of the reservoir is such that fifteen houses in the lower part of the village cannot have taps inside, and aged persons are involved in a good deal of manual labour in carrying water from a pant up some steps. The private Water Committee is unable to raise money for improving matters at Felton except for little jobs which can be done with a 3d or 6d voluntary rate levied on the consumers, with the result that little, or nothing, is ever done.

Rivers and Streams.—Although it cannot be stated that no river, or stream, in the district is polluted, the nature or the amount of contamination is such that no action to check it has been deemed necessary, except at Rennington.

Drainage and Sewerage.—During the last five years the chief works of sewerage were for the new workmen's dwellings at Shilbottle Grange, 808 yards long, a new sewer for Christon

Bank Village, and a new cast-iron outfall at the shifting tidal river at Alnmouth. During 1925 the 12-inch sewer through the garden at Wellfield, Alnmouth, has been re-laid. The sewer along the river banks near Warkworth bridge has been supported by piling and whinstone, and an extension has been made of a sewer towards the new houses at Heather Leazes. The ventilation of a main sewer at Embleton has been improved. At Radcliffe sewage was found escaping into the burn near some houses in Leslie Row, and an intercepting sewer was proposed to be laid along it. Just in the nick of time I found that another sewer was stopped up, causing sewage to escape down a storm water overflow pipe into the burn, and thus I saved the ratepayers £225. A sewer is proposed to be laid for the new houses now in course of erection in the Station Road and the "Steppy Loaning" at Lesbury. A plan has been prepared for a sewer for the north row at Rennington. Sewage ditches were cleaned out during the year at Felton, Embleton, Rennington, Dunstan, South Charlton, Acklington, Shilbottle, Buston Barns, Christon Bank, Radcliffe, and the "Cloddy Burn" at Newton-by-the-Sea.

As regards private drainage the drain has been extended to a better outlet at the dwelling, formerly a school, in Hauxley Lane. An up-to-date system of iron pipe drainage has been laid at Charlton Hall. At Newton Barns the system has been re-laid.

Sanitary Accommodation.—In round figures there are about 1800 privies in the district with fixed receptacles, 200 with movable receptacles, and about 50 earth closets. About 500 water closets are estimated, and 10 stop water closets. In villages where sewers and good water supplies exist the conversion of privies into closets on the water carriage system is proceeding on a definite policy. Thus at Alnmouth, which has over 200 houses in it, no privy now exists. At Warkworth the abolition of insanitary types of privy accommodation is completed at the Butts, and in recent years eleven privies in confined yards have been converted into privies, leaving ten in gardens to be dealt with. At Craster North Side it is creditable to the fishermen that they have converted twenty-two

privies into closets, which leaves only one to be altered. At Craster south side arrangements are now being made with the landlord to undertake this work, not necessarily all at once, but with a number each year. A new water main about to be laid along the higher part of Embleton will facilitate similar alterations. The provision of public conveniences for visitors in char-a-bancs at Alnmouth and Warkworth has not been accomplished. Improvements have been made during 1925 to the sanitary offices at Abberwick, Felton, Hazon High House, Powburn, and Whittle Colliery.

Scavenging.—The public systems of scavenging by contract at Alnmouth and Togston work well, but they are done during the day in open carts at both places. At Alnmouth ashbox refuse is deposited once a week in winter and twice a week in summer in a depot near the tidal river, and covered over with gas lime and earth. At Togston privy ashpit, refuse is put into a disused quarry. At the mining villages of Bilton Banks, Radcliffe and at Swarland the work is done by the coal companies. At Warkworth a cart is sent round once a month in summer and once every alternate month in winter, to collect broken glass, earthenware, tins, etc. No wire bins or cages exist for waste paper and empty bottles on Birling Links, or any latrines. The ideas of sanitation displayed by Race Week campers are not those usually attributed to white men.

Schools.—The sanitary condition of the public elementary schools is generally satisfactory. The addition of the new borehole at Shilbottle will augment the water supply to the top "pant" until such time as a new branch is laid direct to the school premises.

Housing.—As regards general housing conditions a shortage exists near collieries, or quarries, and the measures now being taken to meet this deficiency by your Authority consist of a scheme of sixty houses, which includes four now being built at Lesbury. Tenders have been received for six at Hauxley, four at Embleton, and four at Powburn. No houses have been condemned as unfit for human habitation, or any closing or demolition orders made. Houses for four private persons have been commenced with the Government subsidy of

£75, and eight other private houses are in course of erection. The disused farm cottages at Stamford have been well restored, and made habitable. A general sanitary inspection of the whole district as regards the fitness of houses, and sanitation, took place this year, as usual, and during my visits to every township I called upon every District Councillor, fifty-one in number.

An improvement has been effected since your Authority took over the common at Newton-by-the-Sea. Formerly it was not unusual for 14 caravans to turn up with as many families, and 21 horses and 18 dogs, who all squatted on about a quarter of an acre. Whins were filled with refuse, and sooty pans dipped into the village well by happy-go-lucky gipsies who pay no rates.

Milk Supply.—Thirty-two wholesale purveyors of milk, and twenty-eight retailers are registered under the Milk and Dairies (Amendment) Act, 1922. The fact of registration does not authorise the person to occupy any particular premises for the purpose of trade, or precludes proceedings for any infringement of the Regulations. The local arrangements for the supply and distribution of milk of pure and wholesome character are satisfactory. The demonstration of clean milk I assisted to arrange at Wooden, Lesbury, was well attended. One occasionally gets complaints that persons have to change their milk sellers either because they found dirt in the bottom of their cans, or could get no cream off the top. No action has been needed as to tuberculous milk, or cattle. About 450 cows are kept for this trade.

Meat.—Circulars, and posters, giving details of the Meat Regulations, 1924, have been sent to nine butchers, who are licensed. Bye-laws were revised by your Authority two years in advance of this new Act. I gather that the reasonable killing and sale of pigs and sheep by farmers, small holders and cottagers is not prohibited, and they are not compelled to send them to slaughter houses. Inspections are not, in every case, compulsory in a scattered rural district, and take place chiefly when one has grounds for suspicion. Personally, I

think that reasonable administration of the order will work without unnecessary friction with the butchers. The number of private slaughter houses in use in the area at the dates mentioned were as follows :—

			In 1920.	In Jan. 1925.	In Dec. 1925.
Registered	...	...	4	—	—
Licensed	...	...	3	8	9
			—	—	—
Total	...	...	7	8	9

OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1922.

This overdue Act is, at présent, an adoptive Act, and therefore has enabled a few local administrative bodies to let it lie on the table. Incidentally they allow their officials to pay rates towards the pensions of the county highway and sanitary officials, as well as the school teachers, police, Poor Law Officers and others who have them. Worse still a few Local Authorities have disgracefully shelved the whole matter until their older officials, who for many years have served the district faithfully and well, die off, or are thrown on the scrap heap as soon as they become unable to work, when they propose to commence the scheme with younger men who would have to pay in their contributions for about 40 years before anything is paid out to them! Your Authority has, on the other hand, taken a broad and generous view of the whole matter and has unanimously agreed to fall into line with 267 local bodies in the country who have adopted the Act of their own free will in the interests of efficiency and good feeling between employers and employees. On behalf of myself, and three other officials, I beg to express our heartfelt thanks to the Council for dealing with this Act in a handsome manner.

CONCLUSION.

When in an office which deals chiefly with complaints it is a refreshing change to come across a laudatory comment. I have culled the following from our esteemed local paper "The Alnwick Gazette and Guardian," which I place on record :—"The remarkably low death rate for the month of

September is evidence of the excellent health of the people, and a tribute to the generally efficient sanitation in the Rural District of Alnwick. It was down to 2.79, the lowest for the last thirty years. We have reason to congratulate those who give so much time and care to the safeguarding of our hygienic well-being, doctors, officials, and laymen alike."

M. TEMPLE WILSON, M.R. San: I.,
Sanitary Inspector.

Alnwick, 31st December, 1925.



Sanitary Inspector's Annual Report : Year ending Dec. 31st, 1925. (Sanitary Officers' Order 1922 Art. 19 (12)).

ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT.

Population, 12,530.

Inspector, M. T. Wilson, M.R., San. I.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Number of Inspections during year.	Number of Defects or Contraventions of Bye-laws.	Number out- standing from previous year.	Total.	Number remedied after letter or interview.	Number of Informal Notices served.	Defects remedied thereafter.	Number of Statutory Notices.	Defects remedied thereafter.	In progress or being dealt with.	Legal Proceedings.
<i>Housing.</i>											
Structural Defects	153										
Dampness	—										
Unfit for Habitation	—										
Defective Spouting	—										
Overcrowding	—										
Nuisances	19										
<i>Water Supply.</i>											
Insufficient	70										
Unsatisfactory	44										
<i>Drainage.</i>											
Foul	79										
Untrapped or Defective	36	12				12	7				
Ditches	38										
Insufficient	47										
<i>Sanitary Conveniences.</i>											
Structural Defects	34										
Insufficient	22	2				2					
Foul	97										
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops	24										
Slaughter Houses	25										
Tents, Vans, &c.	—										
Offensive Trades	—										
Workshops and Workplaces	13										
Keeping of Animals	4										
Insanitary Ashpits and Receptacles	—										
Ashpits improperly used	—										
Offensive accumulations	—										
Smoke Nuisances	—										
Petrol Stores	10										
Total	715	14				14	7				

Summary of Work Effected, 1925.

Inspector: M. T. WILSON, M.R.San.I.

		After letter or Interview.	After Informal Notice.	After Statutory Notice.	TOTAL.
Sanitary Conveniences.	Privies abolished.	2			2
	„ repaired.		9		9
	Privy ashpits abolished.				
	„ „ roofed or repaired.				
	Pail-closets abolished.				
	Water closets provided.	3			3
	„ „ repaired.				
	Sanitary bins provided.				
	„ „ renewed.				
Drainage.	New drains constructed.	4			4
	Drains repaired or re-constructed.				
	Additional gullies provided.				
	Old gullies replaced.				
	Scullery sinks provided.				
	„ waste-pipes repaired.				
	„ „ trapped.				
	Yards repaired or reconstructed.				
Water Supply.	Sources closed or discontinued..... 0	No. of houses affected..... 0			
	New service provided... .. 1	No. of houses affected..... 3			

RIVERS POLLUTION:—

Cases detectedOne

RemediedNone

S.D. Works providedNone

.....

Particulars— Pollution of Rennington Burn.

do.

do.

YEAR 1925.

Inspector: M. T. WILSON, M.R.San.I..

UNSOUND FOOD.		Surrendered.	Seized.	Legal Proceedings.
1.	Beef (Home-killed) Stones.	None.		
2.	„ (Imported) „	„		
3.	Mutton (Home-killed) „	„		
4.	„ (Imported) „	„		
5.	Pork „	„		
6.	Game Lbs.	„		
7.	Poultry „	„		
8.	Fish „	„		
9.	Fruit „	„		
10.	Canned Goods ; Tins or Cases.	„		
11.	Bacon Lbs.	„		
12.	Cheese „	„		
13.	Butter „	„		
14.	Lard „	„		
15.	Other Foods :—	„		

REMARKS (with result of any consequent legal proceedings) :

No suspicions regarding the wholesomeness of food produced or sold in the district have arisen during 1925.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS:

No.	Samples Taken.	Analysis.	Remarks as to action taken, and result.
	None.		

Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 (Act. V.).

ALNWICK RURAL DISTRICT.		SUB-DISTRICTS.				Total
Inspector: M. T. Wilson, M.R. San. I.		Warkworth	Embleton	Denwick		
(1)	Number of dwelling houses inspected ...	75	68	10		153
(2)	Number considered "unfit for habitation" ...					0
(3)	Complaints as to { (a) Householders					0
(4)	"unfitness" by:— { (b) Parish Councils					0
(5)	Closing { No. of "Representations to L.A."					0
(6)	Orders { No. of Orders made ..					0
(7)	{ No. determined after repair ...					0
(8)	No. of { (a) After "Informal Notice" ...					0
(9)	houses { (b) " Notice under Sect. 28 ...					0
(10)	made fit for { (c) " Closing Order made					0
(11)	habitation { (d) By L.A. in default of owner ...					0
(12)	No. of { (a) After notice under Sect. 28					0
(13)	houses closed { (b) Without "Notice" ...					0
(14)	No. of { (a) Under "Demolition Orders" ...					0
(15)	houses demolished { (b) Voluntary by owners ...					0
General character of defects—						
Housing Act, 1890.	(a) No. of "Representations" as to Obstructive Buildings ...					0
	(b) No. of such buildings demolished ..					0
	(c) Representations as to Unhealthy areas ...					0

Note.—From 1910 to 1916 a systematic inspection of the whole district was made when 2,975 houses were inspected and the records kept. The work now being done is chiefly in connection with the defects then found. Others are inspected as required.



