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CHEPSTOW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL  
AND  
PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY.

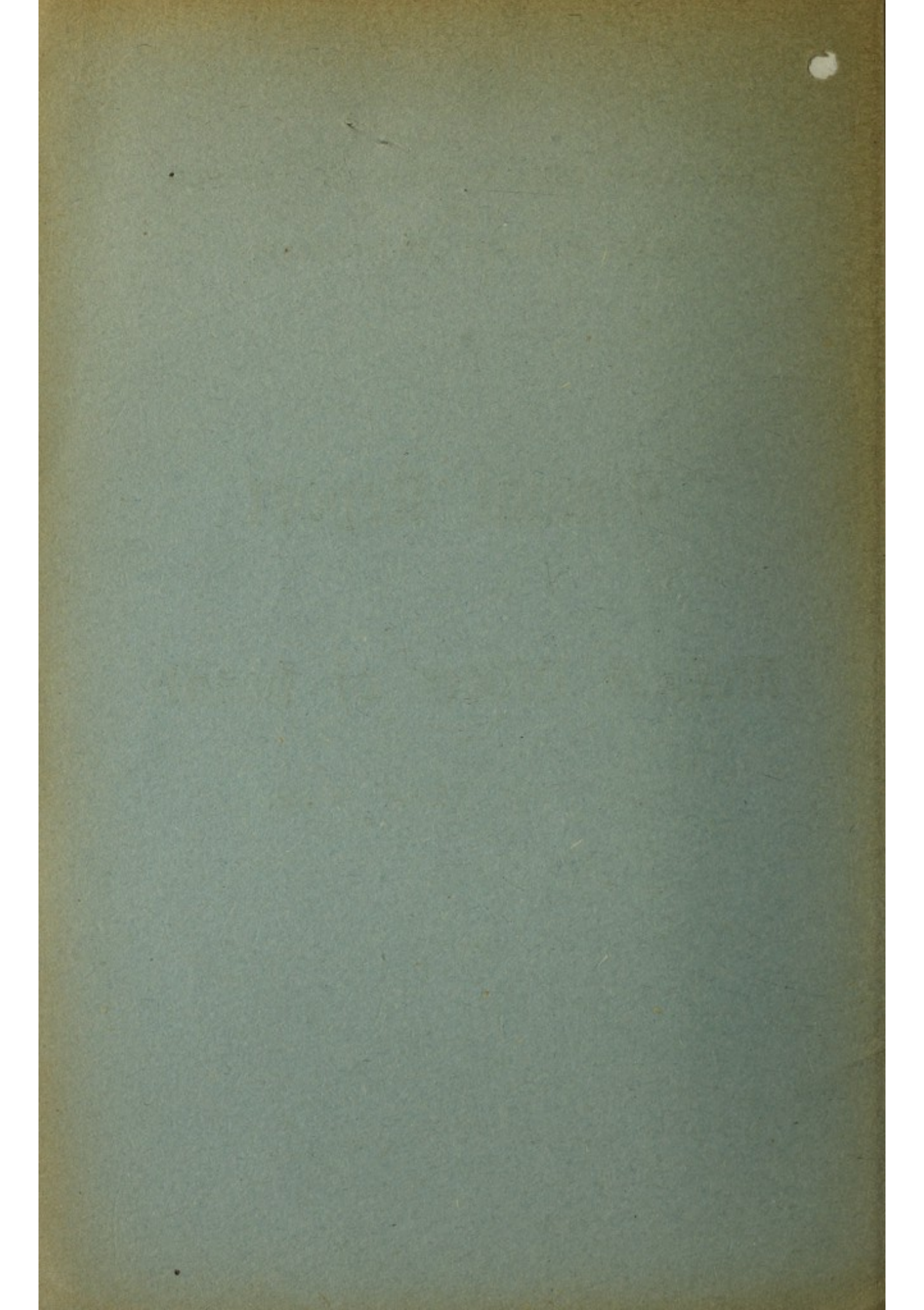
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**Annual Report**  
OF THE  
**Medical Officer of Health**  
FOR THE YEAR 1938.

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CHEPSTOW :  
CHEPSTOW PRESS, PRINTERS, BANK STREET.





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### **Functions of the Council.**

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The Ministry of Health, which was created in 1919 to control all matters bearing on the people's health, was also given powers designed to co-ordinate and supervise local government.

Under the Ministry, Chepstow Urban District is administered by Monmouthshire County Council in respect of certain services, and by Chepstow Urban District Council in respect of others.

The County Council, besides being an appeal and supervisory authority in all public health matters, administers directly public assistance, elementary and secondary education, the maternity and child welfare and school medical services, tuberculosis and venereal disease schemes, and the mental health services. It is the local authority under the Midwives Acts, the Blind Persons Act, the Food and Drugs (Adulteration) Act, the Poison and Pharmacy Act, the Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, and the Shops Act.

The Urban Council is responsible for the notification and control of infectious disease, housing, sanitation, water supply, street cleaning and refuse removal, and the prevention of atmospheric and river pollution. It is also the Local Authority under the Factories Act.

The Council is also Port Health Authority for the port of Chepstow.

**CHEPSTOW URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL  
AND  
PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY.**

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*Chairman :* Mr. T. F. H. LANG, J.P.

*Vice-Chairman :* Mr. D. H. DAVIES.

*Councillors :*

Mr. A. W. ANDREWS  
Mr. C. H. CLARKE  
Mr. C. HOLLINS  
Mr. A. J. JAMES  
Mr. N. F. JAMES  
Mr. J. KEENAN

Mr. E. J. KING  
Mr. R. C. MAXFIELD  
Mr. J. F. PRICE  
Mr. A. J. PROCTOR  
Mr. R. J. QUINTON  
Mr. W. C. THOMAS

Mr. J. WADLEY.

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OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL.

*Clerk :* Capt. G. A. EVILL.

*Town Surveyor and Inspector :*

Mr. J. N. JEFFERIES, M.I.M.C.E., M.R.S. Inst.

*Rating Officer :* Mr. G. J. VINCENT.

*Medical Officer of Health :* Dr. J. J. O'REILLY.



*Annual Report*  
*to the*  
*Chepstow Port Health Authority.*

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GENTLEMEN,

As no vessels made use of the Port during the year, none of the many duties ordinarily falling to Port Health Authorities became necessary apart from the supervision of the general sanitary condition of the district.

The Slipway is kept in a satisfactory condition and the old tendency to use the neighbouring river bank as a refuse dump has been checked. Complaints were made of nuisance caused by the discharge of sewage over the cliffs into the river from the new houses in Tutshill. Otherwise nothing of note has been brought to my notice.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. J. O'REILLY.

"ST. ANNS,"

CHEPSTOW,

August, 1939.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Chepstow Urban  
District Council.*

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MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of your District for the year ending 31st December, 1938. I take the opportunity of thanking you once more for your kind co-operation.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

J. J. O'REILLY.

## **STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.**

The area of the Urban District is unchanged, 1,550 acres exclusive of water. The Registrar General's estimate of the resident population in mid 1938 was 4,078, and the vital statistics following are based on this figure. The last census figure was 4,303 and the estimated population in mid 1937 was 4,130.

The number of inhabited houses at the end of 1938, according to the rate books, was 1,144.

The rateable value of the District was £23,677.

A penny rate produced £91 5s. 4½d.



Chepstow owes much to its position and historical associations, the beautiful Wye Valley and the ruins at Tintern and in the town itself attracting many visitors. This aspect of Chepstow, as a place of old-world charm pleasing to so many in this age of "housing estates," lays a special obligation on those who plan its development.

During the year a modern cinema with seating accommodation for 810 persons was opened, and the old premises closed. It is proposed to widen the adjoining part of Station Road with the removal of the arch, and to permit this the Council has purchased the property known as 5 Beaufort Square with the buildings in the rear back to Nelson Street. Part of this only will need to be taken down; the rest will be re-let. Further along Station Road the new Labour Exchange is being erected and this will be a welcome improvement on the old structure.

In Bulwark the Red and White Bus Company has erected very fine office headquarters in pleasing design and finish, and also an extensive bus garage. As this Company also plans to build 400 new houses, something of its size and growth will be realized.

The buildings at the Council's depot have been reconstructed to allow provision of a Fire Station, and a new building erected for stabling the Council's two horses. The Fire Station was opened on December 3rd and is a great improvement on the old headquarters in Nelson Street. A new Gas Meter House in Belle Vue became necessary when the supply was piped from Newport instead of being generated as formerly in a local works.

The accommodation for washing carts and lorries at the Cattle Market has been enlarged. This was necessary owing to the majority of the cattle being conveyed to the market in these vehicles which require to be washed and disinfected with Izal spray before leaving.

The number of animals entering the market during the year was :—

Pigs	...	...	...	5,193
Sheep	...	...	...	6,566
Cattle	...	...	...	1,681
Calves	...	...	...	1,203

The number of carts was 1,266.

The number of animals slaughtered in Chepstow was :—

Sheep and Lambs	...	3,360
Pigs	... ..	542
Cattle	... ..	333
Calves	... ..	87

The other industries, the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company, the Beaufort Quarries, and the Cambrian Asphalte Company, remain unchanged, and the general stimulus caused by the rearmament programme has helped to reduce unemployment here as elsewhere.

### VITAL STATISTICS.

#### Live Births 65.

	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Legitimate	61	33	28
Illegitimate	4	3	1

Birth-rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population, 15·9.

	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>
Still Births	2	2	0

#### Deaths 54.

Male 32, Female 22 (including four residents who died outside the District).

Death-rate per 1,000 of estimated population, 11·6  
(corrected by A.C.F.)

Deaths from Puerperal Sepsis	...	0
„ „ other Puerperal causes	...	2

Deaths of Infants under one year of age, 2  
(both legitimate)

Infant death-rate per 1,000 live births, 30·7.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	9
„ „ Measles	...	0
„ „ Whooping Cough	...	0
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	0



In 1937 the birth-rate was 17·9 and the death-rate 18·4 ; the latter, however, was not standardised and is therefore not comparable ; the rate, however, is appreciably lower in 1938. In Monmouthshire in 1937 the birth-rate was 16·1 and the death-rate 12·1. In England and Wales in 1937 the birth-rate was 15·1 and the death-rate 11·6.

None of these figures call for special comment, as they represent chance degrees of variation.

## **GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES**

### **Staff.**

This remains practically unchanged ; the chief officials are given on page 3.

### **Full Time Medical Officer of Health.**

Under the Local Government Act (1933), Section III, it is the duty of the County Council to take steps to provide that Medical Officers of Health shall be full time officials restricted from engaging in private practice. This it is proposed to do by appointing such an officer to a number of local authorities. Thus in the scheme formulated by Monmouthshire County Council, the two Chepstow Councils and the two Monmouth Councils would share the same Medical Officer. These combined Districts have a population of 23,434.

Home Nursing and Hospital Services remain as recorded in the Report for 1937.

### **Proposed New Isolation Hospital.**

Under powers conferred by the Public Health Act (1936), Section 185, the County Council has divided its area into four parts, each to be provided with an adequate isolation hospital. The two Chepstow Districts with Caerleon Urban and St Mellons and Magor Rural Districts make up one of these areas, and the nature of the proposed hospital has been engaging the attention of these Councils. There has been a good deal of criticism of the scheme, the feeling being that the present arrangements had served quite



well and that therefore the expense was not justified. A more serious objection to the scheme is that it does not appear to conform to expert views on present day fever hospital practice, as set out for instance by Forbes in the *Lancet* of August 19th, 1939.

### **Ambulance Facilities.**

There is no public ambulance in the District, although a private one may be obtained from a local garage. The charge for the services of a private ambulance is necessarily high and a large proportion of people are unable to meet it; there is no provision for this purpose in any of the local health contributory schemes. A good motor ambulance service must be regarded as an essential to Chepstow—available at any hour and with the question of charge made a secondary consideration. This is a matter in which joint action with the neighbouring authorities would be desirable, and also with voluntary bodies such as the Hospital Workmen's Fund, and with the local branch of the St John's Ambulance Brigade, the latter a body which is particularly associated with the ambulance service. Efforts to procure such a service have been made by individuals from time to time (in fact it is understood that certain funds have been collected for the purpose), but the power to establish it evidently resides only in the Council, and I commend the matter to their early consideration.

## **SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.**

### **Water.**

All water in the Urban District is supplied by Chepstow Water Company.

Chepstow Water Company derives its water from two sources:—Rogerstone Grange, St. Arvans, and White Mill, in the Shirenewton district. The Rogerstone Grange supply comes from springs and a deep well; these are piped a short distance into a chlorinating tank, and thence into a 1,000,000-gallon reservoir. The White Mill supply, which is the chief one, is taken from Moun-ton Brook soon after its junction with the Glyn Brook. It contains the surface water of a large catchment area with poor soil and a small scattered population engaged in "mixed" farming. These streams are further fed



by a large number of small springs. Above the point at which the water is taken the stream is fenced off for one-third of a mile to permit of aeration. This water is treated by rapid mechanical filtration, alumino-ferric being used as a coagulant, followed by chlorination. There is no storage reservoir on this supply. Chlorination of both supplies is carried out by means of the "chloramine" process, and new and up to date apparatus has been installed in each case.

Complaints have been made by consumers that the water sometimes tastes strongly of chlorine, and that, following heavy rain, it carries a heavy sediment. Neither of these complaints involves any direct public health danger, although it is obviously desirable to provide a drinking water which is pleasant as well as safe. Probably both of these objections will be corrected in time. The small percentage of chlorine necessary to purify the water is generally only noticed by people unused to a chlorinated supply, and our trouble locally has arisen from the use of an excessive dose intermittently. Experience in this treatment, which has nowadays become a standard procedure of water undertakings, should soon lead to uniformity of dosage and an end of taste troubles. The sediment complained of is due to storm water at White Mill, and the remedy is to supply only from Rogerstone during heavy rain; this the Company is planning to do.

More serious doubt has recently been thrown on the purity of this water supply by Dr. G. Rocyn-Jones, Director of the County Laboratory and analyst to your Council. Rather contradictory findings from another laboratory examining on behalf of the Water Company suggested the advisability of a conference, together with a "field inspection" by both analysts and the interested officials of the Water Company and of your Council. At this it became clear that nothing in itself harmful had ever been detected in the water, but that the margin of safety favoured by Dr. Rocyn-Jones was somewhat more exacting than that of his colleague. However, all suggestions put forward by Dr. Rocyn-Jones for the further purification of the water were accepted by the Water Company, and the impression left by the conference was that the purity of the supply would be adequately safeguarded.

Periodic sampling will of course continue.



### **Drainage and Sewage.**

A contract has been let for laying a new sewer from St. Tecla to St. Lawrence Road and Newport Road, and the drainage of the houses abutting on these roads will shortly be connected to this sewer, obviating the use of the present cess-pits which in many cases have proved unsatisfactory. The usual Enquiry was held before this scheme was sanctioned by the Ministry and there were no objections, although the Wye Fisheries and others interested in the question of the pollution of the river attended and were somewhat critical. It will be remembered that crude sewage is discharged without treatment.

### **Public Cleansing.**

The removal of house refuse has been rearranged, two new horses and modern carts purchased and a younger staff of men engaged, giving much more satisfactory results. About 30 tons of refuse is removed every week, the collection being twice weekly in the town and once weekly in Bulwark and Hardwick.

### **SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.**

Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notice:—

By Owners	...	...	...	..	20
By Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	...	...	nil

Nuisances were remedied by Order of the Court at Tin House, St. Lawrence Road, and Crossway Green.

The provision of urinal accommodation in the northern portion of the town has been under consideration, but the difficulty is to obtain a suitable site. It is hoped that in the near future a definite proposal will be considered by the Council.

### **Shops.**

No action has been taken during the year under the provisions of the Shops Act, 1934, as the ventilation, temperature and sanitary conveniences have been reported satisfactory.



Under the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901, the following table shows the work done :—

**I.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces, including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors and Inspectors of Nuisances.**

PREMISES.		Number of		
		Inspections.	Written Notices.	Occupiers prosecuted.
Factories (including Factory Laundries)	...	6	1	nil
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries)	...	nil	nil	nil
Workplaces (other than Outworkers' premises)	...	nil	nil	nil
Total	...	6	1	nil

**II.—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.**

PARTICULARS.	Number of Defects			Number of offences in respect of which Prosecutions were instituted.
	Found.	Remedied	Referred to H. M. Inspector.	
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :</i>				
Want of cleanliness ... ..	1	1	nil	nil
Want of ventilation ... ..				
Overcrowding ... ..				
Want of drainage of floors ... ..				
Other nuisances ... ..				
Sanitary accommodation :				
Insufficient ... ..	nil	nil	nil	nil
Unsuitable or defective ... ..				
Not separate for sexes ... ..				
Total ...	1	1	nil	nil

### **Eradication of Bed Bugs.**

No action was taken under this head during the year.

### **Schools.**

There has been no change from the previous year.

## **HOUSING.**

Number of houses owned by Local Authority on the 31st	
December ... ..	78
Number of houses in course of erection on the 31st	
December by Local Authority ... ..	-
Number of houses for which sanction had been given but	
which had not been commenced on the 31st	
December ... ..	-
<hr/>	
Total number of houses erected during the year :—	
By Local Authority ... ..	-
Private Enterprise ... ..	4
<hr/>	
Total ... ..	4
<hr/>	

The work of revising the Council's Building By-Laws has been commenced, and it is hoped that their approval will shortly be given by the Ministry of Health.

### **Overcrowding.**

This has been completely abated.

## **INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.**

### **Milk Supply.**

There are five wholesale producers and nine retailers. The purity of the milk supply is chiefly the charge of the County Council; although on the Urban Council devolves the duty of inspecting the dairies and cowsheds of any vendor to whom they issue their licence. There were three successful prosecutions for the sale of milk below the legal standard.



### Meat and other Foods.

One tuberculous carcase was destroyed.

There are three registered slaughterhouses, in fair condition. In previous years there was a fourth, but that at the Greyhound yard has closed down.

There are five bakehouses in the District, under constant supervision.

### PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

There was no undue prevalence of infectious or other disease during the year.

There were notified :—

Scarlet Fever	...	12	} Admitted to Hospital.
Diphtheria	..	2	
Pneumonia	...	4	

Seventeen premises were fumigated after infectious disease.

### Tuberculosis.

#### New Cases and Mortality during 1938.

AGE PERIODS.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Respiratory		Non-respiratory		Respiratory		Non-respiratory	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0— ... ..								
1— ... ..								
5— ... ..	...	...	...	2				
15— ... ..	...	...	1	2				
25— ... ..	...	...	...	2				
35— ... ..	...	1						
45— ... ..								
55— ... ..	...	...	...	...	1			
65 and upwards								
TOTALS ...	...	1	1	6	1			

A larger proportion of the cases have been notified in this District in recent years.

In conclusion I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Sanitary Inspector and your Clerk for their unfailing courtesy and loyal co-operation on all occasions.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. J. O'REILLY.





