BOROUGH OF BEDFORD

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

Health of Bedford

FOR THE YEAR

1945

BY

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Together with the report of

F. C. HAYNES, Cert.San.I., M.S.I.A.,
SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

BEDFORD
DIEMER & REYNOLDS LTD.

BOROUGH OF BEDFORD

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1945

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PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
TOWN HALL,
BEDFORD.

14*th May*, 1946.

To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Bedford.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1945.

During the year the transition from war-time to peace-time conditions began in the work of the department, though it seems that it will be several years before it is possible to return to peace-time standards and methods in all respects.

Notwithstanding all difficulties, so far as it is possible to estimate from information available to the department, the physical health of the population was well maintained.

In presenting an annual report, one is faced with the alternative of writing it early before the full figures of the Registrar General become available, and being faced with the necessity of making additions and sometimes corrections when these figures are received, or of waiting for these figures, in which case the report is so late that it has lost much practical interest. It is now being begun before the figures have arrived, in the hope of reasonably early publication.

I desire to express my thanks to the staff of this department for their help in the work, as well as to my colleagues in other departments.

I am,
Your obedient servant,
G. K. BOWES,
Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

(a) MEDICAL.

Medical Officer of Health.

G. K. Bowes, M.A., M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Deputy Medical Officer of Health.

Dora Mason, M.A., M.B., B.S.

(b) DENTAL.

Dental Surgeon for Maternity and Child Welfare Work.

V. A. Vasey, L.D.S.

(c) SANITARY INSPECTORS.

Senior Sanitary Inspector.

F. C. Haynes, Cert.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

Sanitary Inspector and Food Inspector.

J. F. Wilkinson, M.R.San.I., Cert.Meat Inspection R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

Sanitary Inspectors

J. N. Martin, A.R.San.I., Cert. Meat Inspection R.San.I., M.S.I.A.
C. R. Starmer, A.R.San.I., Cert. Meat Inspection R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

(d) HEALTH VISITORS.

Senior Health Visitor.

Miss B. M. Rodgers, S.R.N., H.V.Cert.R.San.I.

Health Visitors

Miss A. Dickson, S.R.N., H.V.Cert.R.San.I.
Miss F. D. Cooper, S.R.N., H.V.Cert.R.San.I.
Miss E. E. Hill, S.R.N., H.V.Cert.R.San.I.
Miss I. Love, S.R.N., H.V.Cert.R.San.I.

(e) MUNICIPAL MIDWIVES.

Senior Midwife.

Miss C. E. Hall, S.R.N., S.C.M.

Midwives.

Mrs. I. M. Munro, S.R.N., S.C.M.
Mrs. E. M. Yarde, S.C.M.
Miss S. V. Bennett, S.C.M.

(f) CLERICAL AND OTHER STAFF.

Chief Clerk.

F. J. Dix.

Clerks.

E. J. Constable, A.R.San.I.
F. E. Casemore
R. T. Prudden
Miss K. M. Butler
Mrs. B. R. Barcock
Miss I. Bates
Miss E. Hawkins.

Laboratory Assistant

D. Ayres

Disinfectors and Drain Testers.

G. V. Burridge
F. Wootton

Rodent Destruction Operator.

H. B. Walker.

PUBLIC ANALYST.

C. Harcourt Wordsworth, B.Sc.(Lond.), F.R.I.C.

BOROUGH OF BEDFORD.

Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health For 1945

I. Summary of Statistics

Area of Borough (in acres)	4,972
Population :—	
Census 1931 (before extension)	40,554
Census 1931 (including area added 1st April, 1934)	42,606
Registrar-General's Estimated Civilian Population for 1945 ...	51,070
Number of Inhabited Houses :—	
Census 1931 (including added area)	10,427
According to Rate Books (31st December, 1945)	13,733
Number of Families or Separate Occupiers (Census 1931, including added area)	11,206
Rateable Value (31st December, 1945)	£403,322
Yield of One Penny Rate (30th September, 1945)	£1,645

Extracts from Vital Statistics for the Year 1945.

	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Rate per* 1,000	
Live Births :—					
Legitimate	804	398	406		
Illegitimate	126	65	61		
Total	930	463	467	Birth-rate	18.2
Stillbirths :—					
Legitimate	24	15	9		
Illegitimate	0	0	0		
Total	24	15	9	Rate	0.47*
Deaths	620	296	324	Death-rate	12.1

* 25.2 per 1,000 total (live and still) births registered.

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, Childbirth :—

From Sepsis	1	1*
From Other Causes	0	

Deaths of Infants under one year of age per 1,000 Live Births :—

Legitimate 28 ; Illegitimate, 5 ; total, 33.

Deaths from :—	*Number*	*Rate*
Measles	0	—
Whooping Cough	0	—
Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	4	†
Respiratory Tuberculosis	29	0.57
Other Tuberculous Diseases	7	0.14
Total Tuberculosis Deaths	36	0.70
Cancer	84	1.64
Influenza	5	0.09

* 1.05 per 1,000 total (live and still) births registered.
† 4.30 per 1,000 total live births registered.

Causes of Death.

The following table shows causes of death as given in the Registrar-General's statistics.

	Causes of Death	Males	Females
	All Causes	296	324
1.	Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	1	—
2.	Cerebro-spinal Fever	2	—
3.	Scarlet Fever	—	—
4.	Whooping Cough	—	—
5.	Diphtheria	—	—
6.	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	11	18
7.	Other forms of Tuberculosis	5	2
8.	Syphilitic Diseases	2	1
9.	Influenza	1	4
10.	Measles	—	—
11.	Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	—	—
12.	Acute Infective Encephalitis	1	1
13.	Cancer of Buccal Cavity and Oesophagus (M) ; Uterus (F)	2	5
14.	Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum	9	4
15.	Cancer of Breast	—	8
16.	Cancer of all other Sites	24	32
17.	Diabetes	1	3
18.	Intra-cranial Vascular Lesions	31	56
19.	Heart Disease	72	70
20.	Other Diseases of Circulatory System	17	25
21.	Bronchitis	21	18
22.	Pneumonia	9	7
23.	Other Respiratory Diseases	11	4
24.	Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	9	4
25.	Diarrhoea under 2 Years	2	2
26.	Appendicitis	1	1
27.	Other Digestive Diseases	4	6
28.	Nephritis	11	10
29.	Puerperal and Post-Abortion Sepsis	—	1
30.	Other Maternal Causes	—	—
31.	Premature Birth	8	1
32.	Congenital Malformation, Birth Injuries, Infantile Diseases	5	3
33.	Suicide	1	5
34.	Road Traffic Accidents	1	1
35.	Other Violent Causes	7	4
36.	All Other Causes	27	28

In addition to the special causes of death mentioned on page 10, the following causes may be noted, with the number of deaths due to each :—cerebro-spinal fever, 2 ; scarlet fever, *nil* ; diphtheria, *nil* ; influenza, 5 (in comparison with 3 in 1944) ; maternal deaths, 1 ; suicide, 6 ; road traffic accidents, 2 (the same number as in 1944). The number of fatal road traffic accidents which occurred within the Borough boundary were three—two residents and one evacuee.

Population.

The population, 51,070, shows a slight reduction on that for 1944, namely 52,670, due, no doubt, to the return of evacuees and war workers.

Death Rate.

The death rate for Bedford was 12.1 compared with 11.4 for England and Wales. The age constitution of the population of Bedford is such that, if other things were equal, a considerably higher death rate would be expected than in the country as a whole.

If correction of the actual crude death rate were made for difference in age constitution, the death rate for Bedford would be below that for England and Wales. Correction is not now possible on account of movement of populations.

Maternal Mortality.

The one maternal death recorded was due to :—

Acute suppurative pericarditis due to septic endometritis following abortion.

In one additional death, though not classified by the Registrar-General as due principally to a maternal cause, childbirth played a definite part in causation. The cause of death as certified was :—

(*a*) Eclampsia (post-partum).
(*b*) Chronic nephritis.

Infant Mortality.

The following table shows infant mortality from individual causes, stated in accordance with age at death.

Cause	Weeks				Total under one month	Months				Total under one year
	0–	1–	2–	3–		1–	3–	6–	9–	
Congenital syphilis	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
Influenza	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Status lymphaticus	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Meningitis	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2
Convulsions	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	2
Bronchitis	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1
Broncho-pneumonia	†1	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	2
Pneumonia	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Gastro-enteritis	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	1	4
Intussusception	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1
Congenital malformation ...	–	*2	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	2
Congenital debility	–	2	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	2
Premature birth	8	1	–	–	9	–	–	–	–	9
Birth injury	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Icterus gravis neonatorum ...	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Asphyxia neonatorum ...	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Accidental death ... ... (Pulmonary oedema due to irritation of trachea by swallowed food)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
Totals	12	5	–	–	17	5	6	–	5	33

* One, of palate ; one, hypertrophic pyloric stenosis.
† Also bilateral hare-lip and cleft palate (complete)

Birth Rate.

The birth rate was 18.2 for Bedford and 16.1 for England and Wales. Both for Bedford and for the country as a whole the figure remains above the average for recent, pre-war and earlier war, years. The illegitimate birth rate for 1945 in Bedford shows a considerable increase over even the high figures of earlier war years. The following table gives figures for the war years and the years immediately preceding. The percentage of illegitimate to total births for England and Wales is not available for all the years, but it can be stated generally that in the years preceding the war the percentage of illegitimate births was about 4.3 per cent.; while in 1943 it was 6.31, in 1944 7.03, and in 1945 9.18.

Birth Rates and Proportion of Illegitimate to Total Births 1936—1945.

Year	Birth Rate Bedford	Birth Rate England and Wales	Percentage of Illegitimate to Total Births Bedford
1936	12.2	14.8	7.35
1937	13.4	14.9	5.27
1938	14.4	15.1	5.32
1939	14.25	15.0	5.46
1940	13.2	14.6	5.68
1941	13.5	14.2	6.02
1942	14.7	15.8	5.78
1943	17.1	16.5	8.99
1944	19.8	17.6	9.03
1945	18.2	16.1	13.55

Birth Rates, Death Rates, Deaths from certain causes, for Bedford and England and Wales compared.

The following table gives rates for births, deaths, certain causes of death, maternal and infant mortality for Bedford and England and Wales compared.

	Rates per 1,000 Civilian Population Bedford	England & Wales
Live Births	18.2	16.1
Still Births	0.47	0.46
Deaths :—		
All causes*	12.1	11.4
Typhoid and Paratyphoid	0.02	0.00
Scarlet Fever	—	0.00
Whooping Cough	—	0.02
Diphtheria	—	0.02
Influenza	0.09	0.08
Smallpox	—	—
Measles	—	0.02

*On account of the complexity of population movements the Registrar-General is no longer able to furnish a comparability factor for correction of the death rate in respect of age and sex constitution.

	Rates per 1,000 Live Births Bedford	England & Wales
Deaths under 1 years of age	35	46
Deaths from Diarrhoea and Enteritis under 2 years of age	4.3	5.6

	Rates per 1,000 Total Births (Live and Still) Bedford	England & Wales
Maternal Mortality (excluding abortion) :—		
Puerperal Infection	1.05	0.24
Others	—	1.22

II. Social Conditions

The most important social change during the year was the formal return of evacuees from Bedford to their homes under Government arrangements and the spontaneous return of others under their own arrangements. A number of persons who came originally as evacuees have for one cause or another remained in the town. Officials of this department were connected in many ways with the Government Scheme, either as members of this department, or in other ways in addition to their ordinary work. Much work was undertaken during the year in consequence of the termination of evacuation, in such matters as arranging for the closing of institutions, and dealing with the large amount of stores and equipment used in the Scheme.

To speak generally, any adverse effect of evacuation on physical health was surprisingly small. It was certainly expected that the mixture of populations would cause an increase in epidemic disease, but this increase did not take place to an appreciable extent in Bedford or elsewhere. There were undoubtedly other troubles, arising from the separation of families. Reports seem to have shown that in many cases the mental effect of billeting on children was worse than that of bombing. The "scheme," never officially contradicted, seemed to contemplate to the end the separation of wives from their husbands and children from their parents for five years and more continuously, without holidays spent at home. And perhaps after all parents were wiser in reality than their rulers in taking their children home after, or even before, all apparent danger had ceased, and allowing them home for the holidays, than if they had strictly adhered to the "scheme." "Safety first" may not always be the best policy in all respects, and there may be greater evils than the risk of physical death.

III. General Provision of Health Services in the Area

1. LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The following table shows the work carried out by the Municipal Laboratory during the year.

Nature of Specimen	Numbers
Throat swabs for examination for diphtheria and other organisms, from local practititioners, Isolation Hospital, Oakley, and Medical Officer of Health	215
Sputa for Tuberculosis	2
Ringworm	1
Gerber Tests of Milk	36
Bacteriological examinations of Water samples	187

Specimens requiring further, or more elaborate, examination than can be carried out in the Public Health Laboratory are sent to the Emergency Public Health Laboratory of the Ministry of Health, Cambridge, or to the Pathological Department of the Bedford County Hospital.

2. MIDWIFERY AND MATERNITY SERVICES.

Midwives Service.

During the year 32 midwives notified their intention to practise, including some who undertook temporary duty only. The following table shows the work carried out by midwives practising in the Borough.

Midwives—Cases Attended.

	No.	As Midwife	As Maternity Nurse	Total
Municipal Midwives	4	171	30	201
Midwives in Private Nursing Homes..	6	23	482*	505
Midwives attached to the Bedford District Nursing Association ...	4	47	47	94
Midwives attached to the Public Assistance Institution	9	441	31	472
Midwives attached to the Bedford and County Girls' Home	1	46	2	48
Midwives attached to the Bedford County Hospital	6	200	59	259

* Including cases attended by Maternity Nurses who do not notify their intention to practise.

Municipal Midwives.

Since the beginning of the municipal midwifery service in 1937 the annual number of patients attended by municipal midwives, as midwives or as maternity nurses, has shown an almost continuous decline, as the following table shows.

The table shows the number of cases attended during the last nine years.

Year	As Midwife	As Maternity Nurse	Total
1937 (six months only) ...	127	14	141
1938	281	63	344
1939	237	44	281
1940	231	46	277
1941	194	42	236
1942	198	40	238
1943	183	30	213
1944*	212	37	249
1945	171	30	201

* Year of evacuation due to flying bombs.

This decline is no doubt in the main due to the greater proportion of births taking place in institutions, a matter which was referred to in my previous reports. At the same time that the annual number of births attended by each midwife has been declining, the tendency on the whole has been for the area covered by each midwife to expand, on account of new building in the pre-war and in the post-war years, building at a lesser density than in older parts of the town. Transport, therefore, has become an increasing problem, especially since the midwives rely upon cycles only ; and the distances to be covered are increased when one midwife has to act as substitute for another on account of holidays and days off. This service, therefore, is considerably less economical than formerly. Under present conditions there would be practical difficulties in, or objections to, many of the remedies that might be suggested with a view to employing the services of midwives to greater advantage ; such as provision of motor transport, arrangements for interchange of work between domiciliary and institutional midwives, or between midwives in areas of different authorities. Moreover, it seems that in the near future the midwifery service will pass out of the hands of this authority, or even of any authority on which it is represented.

During the year the Council approved a scheme for training of all the midwives in the use of the Minnitt apparatus for analgesia in childbirth by gas and air. This scheme was begun during the present year, though at the time of writing it is not effective on account of delay in obtaining the necessary apparatus.

Institutional Accommodation for Maternity Cases.

Sixty cases for whom the Council accepted financial responsibility were admitted to the Maternity Wards of the Bedford County Hospital.

These admissions are nearly always for obstetric reasons, though on occasion admission may be approved for unsuitable home conditions.

The problem of finding institutional accommodation for mothers expecting confinement still remains difficult, mainly on account of shortage of midwives and domestic staff, yet the demand for beds in institutions tends to rise, as is shown in the following table.

Domiciliary and Institutional Births.

Year	Total No. of Births notified among Residents*	Proportion of Domiciliary Births *Percentage*	Proportion of Births in Institutions: Total *Percentage*	Private Nursing Homes *Percentage*	Other Institutions (Hospital, Girls' Home) *Percentage*
1936	582	64	36	10	26
1937	661	62	38	8	30
1938	689	62	38	10	28
1939	686	52	48	15	33
1940	732	48	52	19	33
1941	826	41	59	21	38
1942	853	34	66	22	44
1943	927	32	68	26	42
1944	1,099	33	67	23	44
1945	982	31	69	28	41

* These figures, being compiled locally, differ slightly from the figures as furnished by the Registrar-General.

Ante- and Post-Natal Supervision by Private Practitioners.

The following table shows the work carried out under these headings by private practitioners.

No. of ante-natal examinations		72
No. of first examinations included in above :		
Total		63
Insured patients	17	
Uninsured patients	46	
No. of post-natal examinations		1

3. HOME HELPS.

Towards the end of the year an attempt was made to galvanise into activity the previously dead, or perhaps rather stillborn, home help scheme, and to provide helps, not only for confinements, but for other domestic emergencies. Advertisements and publicity secured a small number of applicants, some suitable, some quite unsuitable ; and for a time a scheme of some sort did in fact exist and function on a small scale. It soon died out, however, and at the time of writing no scheme is in being. The greatest number of home helps that existed at any one time was two half-time helps and one casual. The following statistics show the work carried out during the year.

Applications for service of home help :		
Total		25
For confinement	6	
Others	19	
Applications accepted :		
Total		15
For confinement	3*	
Others	12*	
Applications refused :		
Total		4
For confinement	3	
Others	1	
Applications withdrawn		4
Applications deferred owing to lack of help		2

* Includes one who subsequently cancelled.

4. MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRES.

In order to serve the needs of children residing in the Queens Park area, at some distance from the Centre at 3 Brereton Road, a subsidiary Centre, under the supervision of the Health Visitor of the area but not attended by a doctor, was opened on the 6th June in the Moravian Church Room. This centre was from the beginning well attended.

Children.

The following table shows the attendances of children at the Welfare Centres.

	Children below 1 year	Children aged 1-5	Total
First attendances	573* ...	63 ...	636
Total number of children attending	486† ...	885 ...	1,371

* Children who were under 1 year at the date of their first attendance.
† Children who were under 1 year at the end of the year under review.

The total attendances are shown below, distributed as follows :—

	Bedford Residents	Evacuees
3 Brereton Road	5,286 ...	293
29 Barford Avenue	4,876 ...	70
Queens Park	785 ...	0

Mothers.

The following table shows the attendances at ante- and post-natal clinics.

	Ante-Natal Attendances		Post-Natal Attendances	
	Bedford	Evacuees	Bedford	Evacuees
3 Brereton Road	849	59 ...	33	4
29 Barford Avenue	711	1 ...	47	0

5. HEALTH VISITING.

The following table shows the work carried out by the Health Visitors.

Total primary visits paid to infants	871
Total re-visits, under 1 year	4,306
Total re-visits, 1 to 5 years	6,845
Total number of ante-natal visits	101
Total number of special visits	265
Total number of useless visits, *e.g.*, mother not at home ...	2,598
Total number of post-natal visits	10

6. PREMATURE INFANTS.

Circular 20/44 of the Ministry of Health relating to the care of premature infants was mentioned in my last report. It had then been possible to take only limited action in carrying out the recommendations of the Circular. Since materials have now become more easily obtainable, it was decided in October of the year under review to purchase five complete sets of the less expensive equipment, including blankets, hot water bottles, special feeding bottles, and thermometers, to be kept in immediate readiness for use at each of the midwives' houses and with the district nurses. The more bulky or expensive articles, including cots and electric blankets, were to be kept at the Welfare Centres at

Brereton Road and Barford Avenue only, since their use would not be so urgent. It was later found that there was some objection to the use of electric blankets in domiciliary work, notwithstanding their mention in the Ministry's Circular, and these were, in consequence, returned to the suppliers. The equipment was used in one case only, of twins, in the year under review. The babies survived for five weeks only.

There are arrangements with the hospitals for obtaining information about premature babies on discharge. Health visitors devote special care to these babies, if resident in the borough ; otherwise the necessary information is sent to the Welfare Authority of the area in which the baby resides.

The following information may be given about premature infants during the year. For the purpose of recording, any infant whose weight at birth is 5½lbs. or less is regarded as premature.

Number of Premature Infants Born and Resident within the Borough	Number of Premature Infants Born Outside but Resident within the Borough	Total Number of Premature Infants included within the two preceding columns Alive Three Months after Birth	Number known to have died within Three Months of Birth	Number not Traced at Age of Three Months
48	—	34	12	2

7. ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN.

Miss Mumford, Lady Superintendent of the Bedford and County Girls' Home, continues to co-operate with the Health Visitors in the care of illegitimate children.

8. DENTAL TREATMENT.

The following table shows the work carried out for expectant and nursing mothers, and for pre-school children.

Expectant and Nursing Mothers.

Number of mothers attending (*a*) Expectant	51
(*b*) Nursing	11
Number of attendances	164
Number of extractions	332
Number of general anaesthetics	74
Number of fillings	1
Number of scalings	0
Other operations	36
Dentures supplied to (*a*) Expectant mothers	24
(*b*) Nursing mothers	8

Pre-School Children

Number of individual children attending	51
Number of attendances made by these children	62
Number of extractions	164
Number of fillings	3
Number of scalings	0
Number of general anaesthetics	59

9. PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936—PART VII.

Child Life Protection.

The number of persons who were receiving children for reward at the end of the year was 26, and the number of children so received 129.

Regular visits are paid to children and foster parents in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Information was received from the Ministry of Health that the Jewish Refugee Home in 7 Rothsay Gardens, with accommodation for 30 children from 0 to 5 years, would no longer be under the direct control of the Ministry of Health, and should therefore be dealt with in accordance with the Child Life Protection Section of the Public Health Act, 1936. Arrangements were accordingly made for its formal supervision by this department, and for compliance with provisions for sending notices relating to the children.

10. WAR-TIME NURSERIES.

There was no change in the arrangements for War-time Nurseries during the year. The following table shows the average numbers per day attending.

St. John's Day Nursery	49.5
Park Road West Day Nursery	17.75
Denmark Street Day Nursery	14.5

At the end of the year a Joint Circular from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education was received, dealing with nursery provision for children under five. This circular received the consideration of the Council and some of its recommendations are now in operation.

With regard to day nurseries, the following observations may be made. Originally St. John's War-time Nursery was started in order to enable more women to enter war industries, while Park Road West and Denmark Street were started to serve the needs of evacuees and war workers. The hours of St. John's Nursery have been arranged to cover normal working hours, while the other two nurseries are open for hours corresponding to the normal school hours. At present, the needs of workers as such have become less prominent than the needs of mothers who must work in order to support their children—mothers who are unmarried, or widows, or whose husbands have failed to support them ; and than the social problems arising out of life in lodgings, or under over-crowded conditions, or in other ways unsatisfactory. In deciding the future of nurseries, all these factors should be considered. The use of nurseries in general in helping to supply the needs of industry and commerce can be determined if the following equation (in which the quantities represent woman-hours or their equivalent) is solved :—

Let a be the work performed by women whose children are cared for in war-time nurseries and could not otherwise be cared for ;

b the work carried out in looking after the children in the nurseries by the nursery workers ;

c the other miscellaneous work involved in nurseries, *e.g.*, care and maintenance of buildings, work of administrative staff ;

x the net value, in terms of work, of providing a nursery.

Then $a - b - c = x$.

The problem was, and is, to determine x ; but, both now and formerly, the writer feels that many persons were so interested for other reasons in starting war-time nurseries that a kind of conspiracy of silence existed to prevent the proper determination of x. This is rather a general than a special aspect of the problem, but in special areas the answer may determine the amount to be

added to (or, should x be negative, subtracted from) the need for nurseries on social grounds. The Maternity and Child Welfare Committee has endeavoured to assess the need of nurseries with the information at its disposal. For the present, the Council has decided that St. John's Nursery should be continued, while the position of Park Road West and Denmark Street is still under consideration.

11. ADDITIONAL SERVICES.

The Circular mentioned in the preceding paragraph also recommended certain additional services for the care of growing children. The decision of the Council on these may be briefly summarised, though action was not taken in the matters till the present year.

Daily Guardians. Since a previous attempt to obtain these failed, no action was considered possible.

Crèches. These were to be established at the Welfare Centres in accordance with the need. Now, there is a crèche twice weekly at the Barford Avenue Centre and once a week at the Co-Partners' Hall, to which the Howard Avenue Centre has now been transferred.

Sitters-in. A service of evening sitters-in was to be organised with the co-operation of the Youth Organisation. This service has now begun, but it is too early to say how it will work.

12. PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936—PART VI.

Nursing Homes.

The number of registered Nursing Homes now in the borough is nine, and the total number of beds at the end of the year 82, including 27 maternity and 55 other beds. The distribution of these beds is given below.

Address of Home	Number of Beds		
	Maternity	Other	Total
3 Kimbolton Avenue	—	10 ...	10
33 The Embankment	—	8 ...	8
62 Chaucer Road	—	8 ...	8
24 and 26 De Parys Avenue	14	3 ...	17
34 Kimbolton Road	3	9 ...	12
84 Castle Road	1	2 ...	3
23 Kimbolton Road	4	7 ...	11
42 De Parys Avenue	3	8 ...	11
Bedford and County Girls' Home, Park Road North	2	— ...	2
Total	27	55 ...	82

These Homes are regularly supervised and visited by Dr. Mason, Deputy Medical Officer of Health.

The line of demarcation between a nursing home and a house which provides accommodation for aged persons is difficult to determine, and often seems to depend on the degree of infirmity of the aged persons. Information is sometimes received that premises are being used as nursing homes where, on investigation, it appears that they hardly come within this category. There is, however, a great demand for homes which will take in old, and often increasingly infirm, persons ; and thus there is often a temptation for persons in charge of these homes to take in persons who should not be accepted in unregistered houses. Informal supervision is maintained on some of these houses where old people are received in order to ensure that they do not come within the category of nursing homes, so as to render them liable to registration ; and that in any case they are reasonably well-maintained.

13. EMERGENCY NURSING IN THE HOME.

In the early part of the winter it was foreseen that there might be epidemics of influenza or other illnesses, which might cause great hardship or difficulty in many houses. In order to meet such an emergency the Ministry of Health recommended that arrangements should be made for nursing, for persons who would help in the homes or with the shopping, for the provision and transport of meals on a cash-and-carry basis, and for other services necessary in the care of households stricken with illness. In order to discuss arrangements a meeting was held in the autumn, at which representatives of various organisations were present, including the British Red Cross, St. John Ambulance Brigade, the W.V.S., and the Youth Organisation. A scheme was prepared under which the two first mentioned organisations would provide emergency nursing; and it was also arranged with the co-operation of the Education Officer of the Divisional Executive, that, if necessary, the school meals service should be expanded to provide meals on a cash-and-carry basis. Mrs. Kilby, commandant of No. 2 Detachment of the British Red Cross, consented to act as Liaison Officer to co-ordinate the various services if required. Fortunately, epidemic illness did not prevail on a large scale, and it was not necessary to put the arrangements into force.

IV. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

WATER.

Quantity and Quality—General.

The water supply has been satisfactory in quantity and quality during the year under review.

Bacteriological and Chemical Analysis.

Bacteriological examinations are made regularly in the Public Health Laboratory in accordance with the scheme of examination given in my previous report, though for a time, on account of a breakdown in the incubator, these could not be carried out.

The results generally are similar to those quoted in my previous report; they indicate that the fully treated water always reaches the highest drinking water standard, and it is only on rare occasions that the filtered water, before final chlorination, fails to reach the same standard of a gelatin count below 100 per cc. and absence of *b. coli* in 100 cc.

Action to Prevent Contamination.

Regular monthly inspections of the river are carried out by the Borough Surveyor's Department in order to detect and prevent contamination.

No contamination was discovered.

Supply to Dwelling Houses.

This remains the same as in my previous report.

V. Housing

1. STATISTICS.

The following table gives statistics of housing work undertaken during the year. The table is given in the usual form with the exception that headings where the return is *nil* are omitted.

1.	Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year :		
	(1)	(*a*) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	784
		(*b*) Number of inspections, including reinspections, made for the purpose	1,666
	(2)	(*a*) Number of dwelling houses [included under sub-head (1) above] which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1936	37
		(*b*) Number of inspections, including reinspections, made for the purpose	265
	(4)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	414
2.	Remedy of defects during the year without service of Formal Notices :		
		Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	446
4.	Housing Act, 1936, Part IV—Overcrowding :		
	(*b*)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	9
	(*c*)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year ...	5

2. OBSERVATIONS ON STATISTICS.

The 784 houses inspected by the Sanitary Inspectors under the Housing Acts and Public Health Acts, may be classified as follows :—

I—Houses inspected under Housing Acts :		
(i) Reasonably capable of repair	37	
(ii) Not requiring repairs	0	
(iii) Totally unfit for human habitation	0	
	—	37
II—Houses inspected under Public Health Acts :		
(i) Minor defects	414	
(ii) Not requiring repairs	333	
	—	747
Grand total		784

VI. Inspection and Supervision of Food

1. MILK.

(a) Premises and Purveyors.

The following table shows the number of registered premises and purveyors at the end of the year.

Number of cowsheds on register	2
Number of purveyors with premises within the Borough ...	23
Number of County purveyors on register	9

(b) Defence Regulation 55G.

Restrictions on the Sale of Milk in Certain Areas.

Regulation 55G provides that in specified areas, in addition to certain types of specially designated milk, only milk which has been heat treated shall be sold in such areas, and a later order of the Ministry of Health prescribes tests of such milk.

No further steps were taken with reference to the declaring of Bedford as a specified area.

(c) Bacteriological Examination.

The following table shows the number of samples of milk, either specially designated under the Milk (Special Designations) Order, 1936, or heat treated, taken for bacteriological or other special examinations, and the results of such examinations.

Specially Designated Milk.

Class of Milk Specially Designated	Number of Samples	Satisfactory			Unsatisfactory			Remarks
Tuberculin Tested	6	4			2			
		Bacterial Count	Phosphatase Test	Methylene Blue Test	Bacterial Count	Phosphatase Test	Methylene Blue Test	
Pasteurised	43	40	39	31	3	4	4	8 samples examined in accordance with prescribed test under Milk (Special Designations) Order 1936. 35 samples examined also in accordance with the Milk (Heat Treated) Order 1943 prescribed test, which includes methylene blue test. 2 samples adversely reported upon for bacterial count and methylene blue test arrived late at Laboratory
Heat Treated	33	—	29	24	—	4	9	2 samples adversely reported upon for methylene blue test arrived late at Laboratory.

The cause of unsatisfactory samples is investigated by the inspector; when the milk is produced, or subjected to treatment, in an area outside the borough boundary, co-operation with the officials of other areas is necessary.

2. MEAT.

The following table shows the number of carcases inspected and condemned during the year.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle (excluding cows)	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed and inspected	4,015	879	3,617	7,606	1,094
ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS: Whole carcases condemned	4	5	2	12	3
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned..	1,056	266	4	93	32
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	26.40%	30.83%	0.17%	1.38%	3.19%
TUBERCULOSIS ONLY: Whole carcases condemned	14	18	1	—	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned..	256	167	2	—	5
Percentage of number inspected affected with tuberculosis	6.72%	21.05%	0.08%	—	0.91%

The following table shows the total weight of diseased and unsound home-killed meat condemned.

Class of Animal	Tuberculosis			Other Diseases			Total lbs.
	Whole Carcase	Part Carcase and Offals	lbs.	Whole Carcase	Part Carcase and Offals	lbs.	
Oxen	14	256	17,897	4	1,056	13,739	31,636
Cows	18	167	16,784	5	266	6,561	23,345
Calves	1	2	137	2	4	231	368
Sheep and Lambs...	—	—	—	12	93	1,330	1,330
Pigs	5	5	761	3	32	1,097	1,858
Totals ...	38	430	35,579	26	1,451	22,958	58,537

3. OTHER FOODS.

The following table shows the amount of other foods condemned.

Class of Food	*No. of lbs.*
Tinned goods—various commodities (3,348 containers)	5,276¼
Imported Meats	152
Fish	5,533
Fish Cakes	310
Apple Rings	2
Bacon	40
Dried Fruit	183
Slab Cake	185½
Bread	52
Cocoa Butter	224
Sausage	124
Cereals	168
Crumpets	270
Cake Mixture	80
Cheese	56½
Sweetmeats	12
Tea	4¾
Total	12,673

Arrangements are in existence for the salvage for purposes other than human consumption of all foodstuffs condemned.

4. ADULTERATION OF FOODS.

Fifty-four samples of milk (of which four were broken in post) and 38 samples of other foods and drugs were submitted to the Public analyst.

The following tabular statement shows the nature of samples found adulterated or deficient, and the action taken in these cases.

Action Taken on Adulterated Samples.

Serial No. of Sample		Commodity	Nature of Adulteration	Remarks as to Action Taken
Formal	Informal			
—	B.548	Pork Sausage	S.O.2 123 parts per million	No offence. Notice as to preservatives exhibited at time of sale.
B.559	—	Milk	8% abstracted fat	Case investigated. Vendor cautioned
B.624	—	Milk	8.5% added water	No legal action against retailer. Case further investigated without definite result.

In addition, 36 samples of milk were tested in the laboratory by the Gerber Test. 31 were up to and 5 below the standard. Samples found deficient were made the basis for further action in determining causes of deficiency or in referring samples to the Public Analyst.

5. SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

All the work of slaughtering is concentrated in four slaughterhouses under the Ministry of Food. 1,158 visits have been made to these premises during the year for the purposes of inspecting the animals slaughtered and of ensuring that the premises are maintained in a satisfactory condition.

6. SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS ACT, 1933.

At the end of December, 1945, there were 47 slaughtermen licensed under this Act.

VII. Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases

1. INFECTIOUS DISEASES, OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS.

(a) General Statistics.

The following table shows the number of cases of infectious diseases notified during the year, together with the number of cases admitted to hospital and the deaths from these diseases.

Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) notified during the year 1945.

Disease	*Total cases notified	†Cases admitted to Hospital	Total deaths registered
Smallpox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	94	79	—
Diphtheria	8	8	—
Typhoid	1	—	1
Paratyphoid	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	11	—	1
Pneumonia	39	—	16
Cerebro-spinal Fever	5	9	2
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis	2	—	2
Polioencephalitis	—	—	—
Erysipelas	19	2	—
Dysentery	—	—	—
Malaria	1	—	—
Opthalmia Neonatorum	2	—	—
Measles	838	85	—
Whooping Cough	25	—	—
Jaundice	14	1	—

* The figures are the true figures after making allowance for revision of diagnosis.
† Reference is to Hospital of the Bedford Joint Hospital Board or other Isolation Hospitals. Provisional diagnoses are included.

The following table gives an account of cases of infectious disease notified according to age.

Analysis of Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year ended 31st December, 1945.

Disease	Under 1 year	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 and upwards	Total all ages
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	2	7	9	11	37	15	3	5	3	2	—	94
Diphtheria	—	—	—	1	2	3	—	—	2	—	—	—	8
Typhoid	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Paratyphoid	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	9	1	—	—	11
Pneumonia	2	3	5	2	1	2	3	1	7	3	5	5	39
Cerebro-spinal Fever	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	5
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
Polioencephalitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	1	2	9	4	—	19
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaria	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Measles	21	75	119	102	125	332	40	11	10	3	—	—	838
Whooping Cough	2	3	7	3	1	8	—	—	1	—	—	—	25
Jaundice	—	—	1	—	—	1	5	1	1	1	3	1	14

(b) Individual Diseases.

Smallpox. With the large amount of traffic between this country and places where smallpox is prevalent, notices are now frequently received from the ports to the effect that persons who have been in contact with smallpox, usually during a sea voyage, have come to reside in Bedford. All these cases are supervised from this department. Fortunately no case of smallpox developed.

Scarlet Fever. The prevalence of this disease was somewhat less than in 1944 ; the number of cases was 94, giving a rate of 1.84 per thousand in comparison with the rate of 1.89 for England and Wales.

Diphtheria. Eight cases only occurred, a number almost identical with 1944, namely seven. None of these patients had been immunised. The rate of 0.16 per thousand may be compared with the rate of 0.46 for England and Wales.

Enteric Fever. One case only was notified, a man of 70, which occurred in an institution in the town. Diagnosis was not made till after death.

Measles was epidemic during the year, 838 cases having been notified. There were no deaths. 85 patients were admitted to hospital, a relatively large proportion ; accounted for by the fact that Bedford School relied upon Oakley Isolation Hospital for treatment of their patients, since their own sanatorium arrangements had broken down ; and by the number of children residing in institutions or in houses where conditions were unsatisfactory.

Whooping Cough. Twenty-five cases only were notified, in contrast with 140 in the previous year.

Puerperal Pyrexia. Eleven cases were notified.

Cerebro-spinal Fever. Five cases were notified, of which one was not a Bedford resident, but was notified from an institution in the town. The rate was 0.09 per thousand, compared with the rate of 0.05 for England and Wales.

Influenza. There were five deaths from influenza, giving a rate of 0.09 per thousand, which may be compared with 0.08 for England and Wales.

Jaundice. Fourteen cases were notified during the year. Enquiries are made in each case. It is often possible to find two or three cases in the same household, indicating case-to-case infection or a common source. But the cause of this condition, though recognised as of infective origin, is still obscure, and it is not possible to take any really effective methods of prevention.

2. TUBERCULOSIS.

The following table shows the number of new cases, and the number of deaths in their age groups.

Age Distribution of Cases and Deaths.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		*Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	1	2	—	1	—	—	3	2
5	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
15	1	3	—	—	—	1	—	—
20	5	9	—	1	1	5	1	—
25	8	5	—	—	1	4	—	—
35	5	2	—	1	4	3	—	—
45	5	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
55	8	—	—	—	2	2	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—
Totals	34	22	1	3	11	18	4	3

*There is a slight discrepancy in the distribution of the sexes between the Registrar-General's figures and those compiled locally. The latter appear to be correct.

Three deaths occurred in cases not previously notified. In unnotified cases a communication is addressed to the doctor certifying death, or who is known to have been in previous attendance on the patient, in order to ascertain the cause of failure to notify.

The causes of death of the seven cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis were as follows :—

3 Tuberculous meningitis.
3 Miliary tuberculosis.
1 Tubercular peritonitis.

The following table shows the death rates for tuberculosis during the past ten years.

Tuberculosis Death Rates during Ten Years.

Year	All Forms		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	Number	Rate per Thousand	Number	Rate per Thousand	Number	Rate per Thousand
1936	37	0.83	34	0.78	3	0.06
1937	19	0.42	14	0.31	5	0.11
1938	28	0.61	23	0.50	5	0.11
1939	27	0.56	22	0.46	5	0.10
1940	33	0.62	25	0.47	8	0.15
1941	20	0.34	18	0.30	2	0.03
1942	23	0.41	16	0.28	7	0.12
1943	25	0.47	20	0.37	5	0.09
1944	32	0.60	28	0.53	4	0.07
1945	36	0.70	29	0.57	7	0.14

In dealing with small number of deaths, as in Bedford, the fluctuations due to chance are so large that it is not possible to determine whether war conditions have caused any increase in the number of deaths from tuberculosis.

3. CONTAGIOUS DISEASES
(including Scabies and Verminous Infestation).

General.

The arrangements for the treatment of scabies at the Cleansing Station remained the same as during the previous year. The total number of which information was received, namely 835, represents a small decline on the number of the previous year, but it is too soon to say whether scabies is really permanently declining.

(a) Scabies.

The following tables show the action taken under the various heads in connection with treatment of scabies.

Scabies Order, 1941

Number of New Cases of Scabies and Contacts Examined and Treated at Cleansing Station during 1945.

	Bedford	County
Number of New Cases	577	258
Number of Examinations	358	188
Number of Treatments—Diagnosed Cases ...	1,114	504
Contacts	113	39
Total	1,227	543
Number of Families concerned	284	110
Number of Households concerned	120	93

Legal Notices Served during 1945.

Numbers served for Inspection of Premises	Numbers served for Examination of Persons		Numbers served for Treatment		
	Number of Persons concerned	Number of Households in which these Persons were contained	Number of Individual Notices	Number of Persons concerned	Number of Households in which these Persons were contained
9	43	6	19	19	3

(b) Verminous Infestation.

The following table shows the action taken in connection with the treatment of verminous heads.

Number of Persons with Verminous Heads Examined and Treated at the Cleansing Station during 1945.

	New Cases		Treatments		Examinations	
	Bedford	County	Bedford	County	Bedford	County
Schoolchildren	39	7	114	14	69	15
War Workers	15	22	30	53	26	41
Others ...	33	11	95	27	54	16
Totals ...	87	40	239	94	149	72

4. DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The following figures show the numbers immunised during the year.

	Treatment completed	Treatment begun but not completed
Children aged 1-5	379 ...	27
Children aged 5-15	208 ...	7
Other children and adults	— ...	—

The number of children, with their ages, who had completed a full course of immunisation at any time up to the 31st December, 1945, and the estimated mid-year child population are shown in the following table, which includes residents only and not children who were immunised as evacuees.

Immunisation in Relation to Child Population.

Numbers of Children who had completed a full course of Immunisation at any time up to 31st December, 1945.

Age at 31.12.45 *i.e.*, Born in year	Under 1 1945	1 1944	2 1943	3 1942	4 1941	5 to 9 1936-1940	10 to 14 1931-1935	Total under 15
Number Immunised ...	—	213	318	266	362	2,383	2,276	5,818
Estimated mid-year population, 1945	4,090					7,420		11,510

The figures indicate that children immunised under the Council's scheme form 28 per cent. of all children at ages from birth up to five, while from five to fifteen they form 63 per cent. of the total. These figures are a considerable understatement of the numbers immunised, for many children under five are immunised privately, as well as some children over five who have not been immunised previously. It may be estimated that probably 50 per cent. or more of the children under five have been immunised, either under the Council's scheme or privately, and that 70 to 75 per cent. of older children have been immunised.

Health Visitors give special attention to children visited by them in order to secure the immunisation of as many as possible at or a little before the first birthday. A birthday card, offering immunisation, is sent to all children on reaching the age of one. Some parents still do not like to have their very young children immunised, though it is really not wise to postpone immunisation ; accordingly, a further invitation is sent to all parents whose children enter the primary schools at the age of five, urging the advisability of immunisation, either by the complete course, or, if they have already been immunised, by one further injection as an additional safeguard. The facilities remain, of course, for children of any age whose parents wish to have them immunised, even if they have declined previously. The Heads of the Local Education Authority's Schools co-operate thoroughly in endeavouring to secure immunisation of children attending their schools. The Heads of the schools of the Harpur Trust and of private schools in the borough are also informed that the facilities are available for any pupils attending their schools where private medical arrangements are not made. The individual appeals so made are reinforced by the periodical display of posters and advertisements in the press. Treatment is carried out at one of the clinics, which are held at monthly intervals at the Barford Avenue Welfare Centre and at the School Clinic, Bromham Road, in accordance with times fixed for individual cases.

The action just described and similar action over the whole country has been followed by a definite reduction in the incidence of diphtheria generally, in which Bedford has shared.

VIII. Conclusion

"This is a rebellious people . . . . which say . . . . to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits."—Isaiah xxx. 8, 9.

"Thou art deceived, thou art deceived, if thou seek any other thing than to suffer tribulations; for the whole of this mortal life is full of miseries, and signed on every side with crosses."—Thomas à Kempis.

Most of those who live under a democracy demand of their leaders (or followers, if it is truer to give them this name), that they should prophesy smooth things, which are often likely to turn out to be things of deceit; and most men now are busily occupied in trying to avoid those tribulations and crosses, which one, wiser in truth than our rulers, said that it was not the lot of mankind to escape. But the very urgency of the demand for comfort and ease may indeed be one cause that makes it harder to achieve these things; for, while nearly all wish to obtain the benefits of the schemes of social improvement now proposed, few are willing to do the hard, unpleasant, and self-sacrificing, work that such schemes require. Women in childbirth, the sick—children and others, the aged and infirm, often do not find from members of their own families the care and help that they would have found in past generations; and so the demand grows for beds in maternity wards, in hospitals, and in other institutions; while on every side the difficulty is heard of providing staff for these institutions—nurses, midwives, cooks, domestic workers. Even schemes for providing municipal home helps to do what in the past was largely done by relatives, have almost universally failed, because few women can be found to undertake this work. Time will show whether these problems can be solved.

Some part of the need of, as well as some part of the difficulty in, realising the new plans is due to the break-up of family life. But the plans themselves often seem to have as their intention, or, at least, as their effect, a further disintegration of family life, and thus to constitute a vicious circle. Philosophers, it is true, from Plato to those who now have their habitation at the Ministry of Education, have often disparaged family life and tried to devise something better. But Nature has shown at least that family life works; and Nature is a wise, old-fashioned body, who, unlike philosophers, "does not talk much," but acts, and, if flouted, takes her certain revenge, to be seen before long by us or our successors.

To descend a little more to detail; the authors of the schemes designed to inaugurate the new social order, of which some are already at work and some are planned to begin shortly, often proceed as if on the assumption that change in itself is a good thing, and that it is necessarily an advantage to transfer powers and duties from smaller to larger authorities, either now existing as parts of local government or to be constituted as parts of the central government. Again, time will show how the changes work; and whether indeed the makers of the new schemes do not in fact intend that the larger local authorities shall themselves, like Odysseus, be eaten last by the Cyclops of Whitehall.

BOROUGH OF BEDFORD

REPORT

OF THE

SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR

For the Year 1945

CONTENTS

Report of Senior Sanitary Inspector

F. C. HAYNES, Cert.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

I. Sanitary Inspection of the Area

The following Report shows the general and detailed nature of the duties carried out by the Sanitary Inspectors of the Department during the year 1945.

This Report includes particulars with regard to Sanitary Inspections of the Area: in conjunction with details with regard to matters referred to in the Report of the Medical Officer of Health relating to Housing (Section V), and Inspection and Supervision of Food (Section VI).

1. SUMMARY OF GENERAL INSPECTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES.

Housing.

No. of Houses inspected under the Housing Regulations	37
No. of Houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	37
No. of Houses found to be totally unfit for human habitation ...	—
No. of Houses inspected under the Public Health Acts	747
No. of Houses where nuisances were discovered under the Public Health Acts	414
No. of Re-visits to Houses and Premises under Housing and Public Health Acts	882
*No. of Houses remedied under Housing Act	32
No. of Houses where Nuisances remedied under Public Health Acts	414
No. of Houses inspected under Housing Acts which were outstanding at end of 1945	7

* This figure includes two houses inspected in 1944 and remedied in 1945.

Overcrowding.

No. of Visits	9
No. of Houses found to be overcrowded	9
No. of Houses where overcrowding abated	5

Drainage

No. of House drains tested on payment of fee	7
No. of House drains where defects found	7
No. of Nursing Home or Hospital drains tested	2
No. of Nursing Home or Hospital drains where defects found ...	2
No. of School and Boarding House drains tested	4
No. of School and Boarding House drains where defects found ...	4
No. of Drains tested on complaint, or inspected during alterations..	278
No. of Drains where defects found	184
No. of Re-visits for inspection during repairs or reconstruction ...	359
No. of Re-tests made to drains	66

Infectious Diseases.

No. of Visits made	353
No. of Rooms disinfected	117
No. of Articles of Clothing, Bedding, etc., disinfected	9,475
No. of Visits made in connection with Scabies	267

Cowsheds and Dairies.

No. of Visits made to Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops	294

Slaughterhouses.

No. of Visits to Slaughterhouses	1,158

Other Food Premises.

No. of Visits to Meat Shops and all Food Premises, Stores and Vehicles	727
No. of Visits to Bakehouses	91

Factories.

No. of Visits to Factories with mechanical power	118
No. of Visits to Factories without mechanical power	57
No. of Visits to Outworkers' Premises	11

Shops Act.

No. of Visits made	140

Offices.

No. of Visits made	9

Fish Frying Premises.

No. of Inspections of Premises	55

Offensive Trades.

No. of Inspections of Premises	12

Common Lodging Houses.

No. of Visits made	29

Houses Let in Lodgings.

No. of Visits made	133

Animals (Premises).

No. of Visits made	14

Moveable Dwellings, Caravans, etc.

No. of Visits made	88

Places of Entertainment.

No. of Visits made	30

Public Houses, Refreshment Houses and Hotels.

No. of Visits made	139

Rats and Mice Destruction Acts.

No. of Visits made to Premises by Sanitary Inspectors	115
No. of Visits made to Premises by Rodent Officer	1,274

Rent Restriction Acts.

No. of Complaints in connection with Excessive Rents	39

Sundry Nuisances.

No. of Visits made with reference to complaints or nuisances discovered	27

Miscellaneous Visits.

No. of Visits made (Unclassified)	1,154
No. of Visits made (Government Evacuation Scheme)	147

Food and Drugs Sampling.

No. of Samples submitted to the Public Analyst	92
No. of Informal Samples procured and examined in the Laboratory of the Public Health Department	36
No. of Samples of Graded Milk submitted for examination ...	82

General Administration.

No. of Informal Notices served under Housing Act	37
No. of Informal Notices served under Public Health Acts	414
No. of Informal Notices served under the Shops Act	9
No. of Informal Notices served under Factories Act	11
No. of Informal Notices served under Food and Drugs Act ...	17
No. of Informal Notices served under various Byelaws, Orders and Regulations	11
Total No. of Informal Notices served	499
Total Statutory Notices served :	
Housing Act	—
Public Health Act	—
Total Legal Proceedings taken under :	
Public Health Acts	—
Housing Act	—
Food and Drugs Act	2
Rent Restriction Act	—
Other Statutes, Orders or Regulations	—

II. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

1. GENERAL

(a) Housing Act, 1936.

During the year 37 houses were inspected under the above Act, following complaints, and informal notices were served upon the owners to put the houses in a reasonable state of repair. In no instance was it necessary to serve a formal notice upon the owner, as the necessary works were carried out. It was still not found possible to carry out the general routine inspection of houses as until skilled labour becomes available, and building materials also, it is impossible to get works of repair carried out.

Frequent visits were paid to the 14 houses situated in Goldington (condemned in 1939) which are licensed by the Ministry of Health and are still housing evacuees. It is hoped that it will be possible to demolish these cottages as soon as housing accommodation becomes available.

Eight hundred and eighty-two visits were made during the year to supervise works of repair, both under the Housing Act and Public Health Act.

No houses were represented as being unfit for habitation during the year.

(b) Purchase of Cottage Property.

The policy of the Corporation purchasing houses of unfit and low standard as opportunity occurs was continued during the year and 21 houses situated in proposed redevelopment areas were purchased at very reasonable prices. These cottages have been put into a reasonable state of repair by the Housing Manager and are now under his control.

(c) General Condition of Houses in the Borough.

Estimated number of Private Houses in the Borough ...	12,596
Houses owned by Corporation	1,137
Total	13,733

It is estimated that some 500 of these houses are unfit for human habitation, and 1,000 of a low standard.

Houses without Secondary Means of Access. There are 98 houses without secondary means of access, *i.e.*, the front door has to be used to gain access to the back yard, and the majority of these are scheduled for demolition. There are no back-to-back houses in the Borough.

Closet Accommodation. All the houses in the Borough have separate closet accommodation with the exception of 13 almshouses, at which there are only seven closets. These cottages are scheduled for demolition.

Water Closets. All the houses in the Borough have water closets with drainage connected to the public sewer with the exception of 61 cottages, at which the following closet accommodation is provided :—

*Pail closets	47
Water closets connected to cesspools	14

Nineteen of the houses with pail closets are scheduled for demolition, while at the 42 remaining houses it is not possible to provide water closets connected to the public sewer as at the moment there is no sewer available.

*In addition there are eight factories remotely situated in the Borough, seven of which have pail closets and one has a water closet connected to a cesspool.

Internal Water Supply. All the houses in the Borough with the exception of 47 houses have internal water supply, together with sinks. Of these 47 houses, 16 obtain their water supply from nine private wells while the remaining 31 houses obtain water from the public water supply by means of

stand pipes. Thirty-two of these houses are scheduled for demolition. Of the remaining fifteen, seven are some considerable distance from water mains and the remaining eight have water mains in the main road but no drainage.

Baths. It is estimated that there are some 5,000 houses in the Borough without baths, and of these some 3,500 have suitable accommodation for baths, while at the remaining 1,500 there is no suitable accommodation. Of the latter, some 500 are definitely scheduled as unfit, and the other 1,000 are of a low standard.

Under the provision of the Housing Act, 1936, it is not possible to request that a bath should be installed in a house, but it is hoped that new legislation will be laid down whereby the standard of a "fit" house shall include a bath. However, as soon as conditions return to normal, *i.e.*, when labour and materials are available, I propose to take up with owners of the estimated 3,500 houses where accommodation is available the advisibility of installing baths in such houses. By doing so, landlords will be entitled to increase the rent by 8 per cent. I have already discussed the matter of the provision of baths and hot water supply with the Electricity and Gas Departments, and they are prepared to consider a scheme whereby these can be provided on either cash or deferred payment. If, therefore, I can persuade owners to instal baths there will be, in my opinion, no general need for public baths.

(d) Public Health Act, 1936.

During the year 747 houses were inspected under the provisions of the above Act, and at 414 minor defects or nuisances were found to exist, and these were abated as a result of informal action.

In addition, inspections were made of hostels, refreshment houses, houses of public entertainment, and offices.

Section 58—Dangerous or Dilapidated Buildings or Structures.

On inspection of the undermentioned premises, namely :—

10 Bromham Road,
17 St. John's Street,
79 Tavistock Street,

portions of the buildings were found to be in a very dilapidated condition, and upon taking informal action with the owners these buildings were demolished.

(e) King's Ditch.

This water course has during the year been cleaned out and a further portion of the embankment wall reinstated.

(f) Various Acts, Byelaws, Orders and Regulations.

The work of inspection of premises such as shops, factories, dairies, cow-sheds and bakehouses, etc., was carried out in order to ensure that the same complied with the provisions relating to these classes of premises.

The following table gives a summary of the Notices served to secure compliance with the provisions of the various Statutes, Byelaws, Orders and Regulations.

Statute	Notices Served Informal	Statutory
Housing Act	37 ...	—
Public Health Act	414 ...	—
Shops Act	9 ...	—
Factories Act	11 ...	—
Food and Drugs Act	17 ...	—
Various Byelaws, Orders and Regulations ...	11 ...	—
Total	499	

2. DRAINAGE.

The following table is a summary of the houses and other premises at which drains were tested or inspected and repair work carried out.

Type of Premises	No. tested	No. inspected	No. where defects found	No. wholly relaid	No. repaired
(i) Private Houses					
(*a*) On payment of fee ...	7	—	7	—	7
(*b*) On complaint, etc. ...	11	261	178	17	161
(ii) Schools and Boarding Houses					
(*a*) Harpur Trust	4	—	4	—	4
(*b*) Private	—	—	—	—	—
(iii) Nursing Homes	1	—	1	—	1
(iv) Hospitals	1	—	1	—	1
(v) Other premises	1	5	6	6	—
Totals	25	266	197	23	174

Three hundred and fifty-nine visits were made for the purpose of supervising the reconstruction of drains, and 66 re-tests carried out.

The Maltings Cottage, Ampthill Road.

Following on complaints from the occupier relating to drainage, it was found possible, after further investigation, to connect this drain to a nearby sewer, and the owners were called upon to do so, and to replace the present pail closet by a water closet, and it is hoped that this work will be completed during 1946.

Piggeries, rear of 139 Kimbolton Road.

On inspection of these premises it was found that the drains were connected to a cesspool, and the owner was called upon to relay the drains and connect same to the public sewer. This work was duly carried out.

3. INSPECTION OF OFFICE PREMISES.

Inspections were made of nine office premises during the year, and the same were found to be in a satisfactory condition.

At one premises a new water closet and washing facilities were provided.

4. HOTELS AND PUBLIC HOUSES.

Forty-five visits were made to these premises during the year, and the same found to be in a satisfactory condition.

5. REFRESHMENT HOUSES.

Ninety-four visits were made to these premises during the year, and in only six instances was it found necessary to call upon the occupiers to redecorate the premises, while at one other premises structural alterations were made so as to provide more seating accommodation for customers, and the kitchen was enlarged.

The occupiers of two café premises were prosecuted and fined for selling horseflesh without displaying a notice.

Frequent visits of inspection were made to the kitchens of the three British Restaurants, as these are now under my administration. By the end of the year, only one British Restaurant, namely Mill Street, was retained.

Before the Food Control Committee grant a licence for opening a catering establishment, an inspection of the premises and report are made by this department.

6. PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT.

Thirty visits were made to the four cinemas and the theatre in the Borough during the year for the purpose of ensuring that the premises were being maintained in a cleanly condition and that the sanitary accommodation was satisfactory.

A report as to the sanitary accommodation of the cinemas was submitted to the Bedfordshire County Council as the Licensing Authority, and with regard to the theatre to the Borough Watch Committee.

7. OFFENSIVE TRADES.

There are only three premises in the Borough at which offensive trades are carried on, namely rag-and-bone dealers. Twelve visits were made to these premises, and same were found to be in a satisfactory condition.

8. FISH FRYING.

There are 16 premises in the Borough at which the trade of fish frying is carried on, and 55 visits were made to these premises, when same were found to be maintained in a satisfactory condition.

9. SHOPS ACT, 1934.

Section 10—Health and Comfort of Shop Workers.

One hundred and forty visits were made to shop premises during the year, and the same were found to be in a satisfactory condition.

At four premises additional water closets were provided, while at five shops suitable heating was installed. Five shops were redecorated and washing facilities were provided at two.

10. HOUSING ACCOMMODATION.

With a view to obtaining accommodation for inadequately housed families, houses have been requisitioned during the year, and as a result 141 families have been provided with accommodation.

The works of adaptation, including the provision of additional sinks and cookers, have been carried out under the supervision of the Housing Manager.

11. OVERCROWDING.

There is no doubt that overcrowding does still exist in the Borough, but the only cases which come to our knowledge do so when persons apply for council houses, and in a number of serious cases the Housing Manager has been able to relieve the overcrowding by finding additional accommodation, but it is, of course, impossible to relieve all cases until more accommodation becomes available. In order, however, to determine the extent of overcrowding in the Borough, it would be necessary to organise another survey, but at the moment,

having regard to the movement of the population, the cost of carrying out a survey would not be justified.

Fifteen applications were received during the year from landlords and agents for the permitted number of persons who may occupy a house.

12. FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

Section 14—Registration of Premises used in connection with the Manufacture or Sale of Ice Cream, or Preserved Foods, etc.

The following is a list of premises registered under the above-named Section :—

Manufacture and sale of ice cream	10
Sale of ice cream	91
Preparation or manufacture of sausages, potted, pressed, pickled or preserved foods	69
Total	170

With regard to the manufacture of ice cream there is no standard laid down by the Ministry of Health relating to its chemical contents or purity, and therefore one cannot take any legal action in this matter.

13. BAKEHOUSES.

There are 47 bakehouses on the register, but only 41 were in occupation during the year.

All premises have been maintained in a satisfactory condition, and in only five instances was it necessary to request the occupier to take action to cleanse the walls and ceilings. In a number of instances occupiers of bakehouses have been persuaded to paint the walls and ceilings of the interior in place of the periodic limewashing.

There are no underground bakehouses in this Borough.

Ninety-one visits of inspection were made during the year.

14. RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT, 1919.

The work of eradication of these pests was continued during the year and the following table shows the amount of infestation and the action taken.

Type of Premises	No. of Premises Visited	Degree of Infestation							Treatment		Estimated No. of Vermin Destroyed		Contracts entered into
		Heavy 50–100		Med'm 12–50		Small 1–12		Free	No. of Visits	No. of Treatments			
		R	M	R	M	R	M				R	M	
Business Premises	963	2	–	1	9	51	32	868	253	95	312	503	7
Private Houses	303	–	–	1	8	257	32	5	1,125	296	586	505	–
Other ...	8	5	–	1	–	1	–	1	42	7	507	–	1
Totals ...	1,274	7	–	3	17	309	64	874	1,420	398	1,405	1,008	8

As will be seen from the above table, in only seven instances was heavy infestation discovered, namely at two business premises and five other premises, comprising Refuse Destructor and Allotments. Necessary action was taken to disinfest these premises.

Most of the small infestations found at dwelling houses were due to the keeping of poultry, rabbits, etc., in yards.

It is pleasing to report that infestation is not serious in the Borough, and no doubt this is due to the continual efforts made over many years to eliminate the pests.

A sum of £17 16s. 0d. was received during the course of the year for work undertaken at business premises, so that it would appear that the balance of the cost will have to be met either by the Corporation or the Ministry of Food.

The work of eradication of rats in the sewers is carried out by the Borough Surveyor. I am informed that the results of this work have been effective.

The Divisional Rodent Officers have paid several visits to the Borough and appear to be satisfied with the work undertaken.

15. RENT RESTRICTION ACT, 1920-1939.

During the year 24 complaints were received regarding unfurnished accommodation and 15 in connection with furnished accommodation. All were investigated and details are given in the following tables.

Unfurnished Accommodation.

Type of Letting	Rent Charged	Rent Excessive	Rent Reduced to	Remarks
House (4 rooms)	10/2 p.w.	Yes	8/2 p.w.	Agreed sum of excess rent refunded
3 rooms ...	15/- p.w.	No	—	
3 rooms ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	15/- p.w.	
3 rooms ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	15/- p.w.	
5 rooms ...	10/- p.w.	No	—	
5 rooms ...	9/- p.w.	Yes	7/6 p.w.	Excess rent refunded over period of 2 years
1 room with joint use of kitchen	23/- p.w.	Yes	20/- p.w.	Agreed sum of excess rent refunded
3 rooms ...	17/6 p.w.	No	—	
5 rooms ...	17/6 p.w.	No	—	
6 rooms ...	18/9 p.w.	Yes	16/- p.w.	
3 rooms ...	15/- p.w.	Yes	12/6 p.w.	
2 rooms ...	20/- p.w. including light	Yes	14/- p.w. inclusive	£5 excess rent refunded
2 rooms ...	15/- p.w.	Yes	12/- p.w.	£7/10/0 refunded
4 rooms ...	£90 p.a.			Being the first letting, this established the Standard Rent, and no action could be taken
4 rooms ...	26/- p.w. including lighting			
3 rooms ...	30/- p.w.	Yes	25/- p.w.	£15 excess rent refunded
3 rooms ...	25/- p.w.	Yes	20/- p.w.	£8 excess rent refunded
2 rooms ...	14/- p.w.	Yes	10/- p.w.	8/- refunded (excess rent paid over two weeks' tenancy)
2 rooms ...	15/- p.w.	Yes	9/- p.w.	
3 rooms ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	14/- p.w.	
2 rooms ...	15/- p.w.	Yes	12/- p.w.	£7/10/0 excess rent refunded
House (6 rooms)	10/- p.w.	Yes	9/6 p.w.	
3 rooms ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	17/6 p.w.	£10/2/6 excess rent refunded
2 rooms ...	10/- p.w.	Yes	5/- p.w.	£20 excess rent refunded

Furnished Accommodation.

Type of Letting	Rent Charged	Rent Excessive	Rent Reduced to	Remarks
House (6 rooms)	63/- p.w.	Yes	45/- p.w.	Excess rent over 1 month's tenancy refunded
4 rooms ...	63/- p.w.	No	—	
2 rooms ...	30/- p.w.	Yes	25/- p.w.	
1 room ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	15/- p.w.	
1 room ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	12/6 p.w.	
2 rooms ...	45/- p.w.	Yes	40/- p.w.	
1 room ...	30/- p.w.	Yes	20/- p.w.	
1 room ...	35/- p.w.	Yes	25/- p.w.	
1 room ...	35/- p.w.	Yes	20/- p.w.	
1 room ...	25/- p.w.	Yes	15/- p.w.	
1 room ...	10/- p.w.	Yes	7/6 p.w.	
1 room ...	30/- p.w.	Yes	20/- p.w.	
1 room ...	35/- p.w.	Yes	20/- p.w.	
1 room ...	20/- p.w.	Yes	15/- p.w.	
2 rooms ...	40/- p.w.	Yes	30/- p.w.	£8 excess rent refunded

In no instance was it found necessary to institute legal proceedings to secure reduction of rent, as when the attention of the owners concerned was directed to the excessive rents being charged, they agreed to reduce the rents on the basis recommended.

During the year, there has been a decided decrease in the number of complaints of excessive rents for furnished accommodation, being 15 as against 38 in 1944.

In addition, many interviews have been held with owners and occupiers in connection with notices to quit and increasing of rents.

III. Premises and Occupations which can be controlled by Byelaws and Regulations

1. HOUSES LET IN LODGINGS.

There are still 95 houses occupied as this class of letting.

On inspection of a number of rooms at these houses there were found to be a number of children, and in some cases the rooms were found to be overcrowded. It is hoped that as soon as housing accommodation becomes available it will be possible to rehouse all these families, especially where they are living in upstairs rooms, and where the garden is common to all families living in the one house. This type of house, with proper conversion into separate flats, would serve the purpose of housing families having not more than one child.

One hundred and thirty-three visits have been made to this class of dwelling.

2. COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There are four registered Common Lodging Houses in the Borough, and the following table shows the situation and accommodation available, and the number of lodgers admitted during the year.

Situation	No. of Rooms	No. of Beds	No. of Lodgers Admitted
8a Tavistock Place	6	40	14,028
4 All Hallows Lane	4	19	2,949
22 All Hallows Lane	5	28	3,671
104 Greyfriars Walk	5	14	Nil
	20	101	20,648

Male lodgers only are accommodated at these premises.

At 22 All Hallows Lane some of the bedding was found to be in a verminous condition, and this was destroyed. These premises have accommodated most of the lower grade of the casuals, chiefly Irish labourers, many of whom leave much to be desired in the question of personal cleanliness. I was anxious to close these premises, but in view of the Police Authorities' wishes have had to agree to the premises being kept open owing to the closing of the Casual Wards.

A total of 29 visits were made to the Common Lodging Houses during the year, and, apart from the instance mentioned above, no serious breaches of the Byelaws were discovered.

3. MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

Inspections were made of the caravans stationed on the Fairground during the two statute fairs, and these were found to be kept in a clean condition, and no cases of infectious disease were reported or discovered amongst the dwellers.

Inspections were also made of the sanitary accommodation provided for the showmen.

Visits were also made to the four caravans stationed in the Clarence Yard, and these were found to be maintained in a satisfactory condition.

There are no licensed camping sites within the Borough.

4. SMOKE ABATEMENT.

Only two complaints were received with regard to the emission of excessive smoke, and upon visiting the factories it was found that the chief cause was the poor quality of fuel supplied.

IV. Factories Act, 1937

1. INSPECTIONS.

The following table shows the number of factories, excluding bakehouses, registered in the Borough at the end of the year.

(*a*)	Factories with mechanical power	310
(*b*)	Factories without mechanical power	102
	Total	412

Many of these are small factories where only a few persons are employed.

Seven notices were received from H.M. Inspector of Factories relating to :—

Sanitary Conveniences :	
Unsuitable or defective	5
Not separate for the sexes	2

Of the five unsuitable or defective W.C.s, three have been cleansed, one has a closet connected with a cesspool but no water supply, and the occupiers have agreed to connected the drain to the public sewer and to instal a water supply, while at the other premises the sanitary accommodation was a pail closet with no water supply. The occupiers of these two latter premises have been called upon to erect a new building together with drainage to the public sewer and water supply. It is hoped that this work will be completed during 1946.

With regard to the two premises where there is no separate accommodation for the sexes, plans have been submitted and it is hoped that the work of providing additional accommodation will be completed shortly.

The following table shows the number of inspections made and defects found, and the result of action taken.

	Inspections	Defects found	Defects remedied during 1945
Factories—			
(*a*) With mechanical power ...	118	9	4
(*b*) Without mechanical power...	57	2	2
Outworkers	11	—	—
Totals	186	11	6

2. HOMEWORK.

During the year, as a result of lists that were received from employers recording the names and addresses of outworkers residing in the Borough, 11 visits of inspection were made and the premises found to be in a satisfactory condition.

V. Disinfection and Disinfestation

1. DISINFECTION.

Three hundred and fifty-three visits were made with regard to investigation of infectious diseases.

Disinfection of 117 rooms and 9,475 articles of bedding and clothing, etc., after cases of infectious disease, tuberculosis and cancer were carried out.

In addition, a large quantity of bedding, etc., was disinfected for the military authorities.

2. DISINFESTATION.

(a) Eradication of Bed Bugs.

The work of eradication of bugs in infested houses was carried out by this department free of charge.

In all, 108 houses, comprising 324 rooms, were given treatment by means of spraying with an effective insecticide (Zaldecide generally being used), and infested bedding was removed for steam disinfestation. So far I have not used the D.D.T. insecticide, but during 1946 I intend to use it, and according to scientific reports am looking forward to obtaining good results. The majority of the houses were not seriously infested, but at 17 houses it was found necessary to destroy the bedding.

In two cases occupiers of rooms were prosecuted by the N.S.P.C.C. for allowing children to sleep on filthy bedding. Evidence was given by myself in both cases, and in one case the mother was sent to prison for three months, and the father fined £10, while in the other case both parents were bound over.

(b) Other Vermin.

Fifteen premises infested with beetles, crickets, flies and ants, were discovered and treatment given.

(c) Scabies.

Two hundred and sixty-seven visits were made to houses for the purpose of investigating cases of scabies and to arrange for their treatment. In no cases were legal proceedings taken to enforce treatment.

VI. Rag Flock Act, 1911-1928

Visits were made to premises where rag flock is used in the manufacture of bedding, etc., and as this material was supplied with a guarantee as to cleanliness it was not deemed necessary to take samples.

VII. Schemes arising out of present Emergency

Return of Evacuees.

In June, 1945, arrangements were made for 80 unaccompanied children to return to London.

There are still a number of evacuees billeted in the Borough.

Hostels and Schools.

It was necessary during the early part of the year to reorganise the staff of the Hostel for Difficult Children, and to remove some of the children to other Hostels. Towards the end of the year, owing to difficulty in staffing it was found necessary to close the institution.

The Buffer Hostel and the Sick Bay were also closed towards the end of the year.

The work of removing Government equipment from these Hostels and the Sick Bay was undertaken by this department.

The Old People's Hostel is still being maintained.

During the year 147 visits were made to billets and hostels, etc., in the Borough for the general administration of the Government Evacuation Scheme.

Housing Accommodation.

A number of evacuated families are still residing in requisitioned premises in the Borough, to which periodic visits are made. The maintenance and repairs to these premises are carried out by the Housing Manager.

Communal Baths.

Prior to December 17th, 1945, Communal baths were open three sessions per week for the use of evacuees and transferred war workers, but owing to the poor response, were closed on the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

Government Equipment.

The staff of the Public Health Department have been engaged on the collection of equipment, comprising beds, bedding, furniture and household utensils, from various hostels and private houses, which is now stored at the Borough Isolation Hospital, Mile Road.

In the first instance, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry, the whole of the equipment was to be checked and accounted for, and in due course was to be returned to Central Government Stores.

At a later date, a change of policy as to the disposal of this equipment was made by the Ministry, and further instructions were received that the equipment was to be sold locally.

The matter was fully considered by the Emergency Committee, who issued instructions that local traders be contacted and requested to submit tenders.

This instruction was duly carried out, but in view of the small number of local traders who appeared to be interested, the matter was again submitted to the Emergency Committee, when it was resolved to sell the equipment direct to the public.

It is hoped to dispose of this equipment during the early part of 1946.