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LETCHWORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

With the compliments of the Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and of the

CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR

for the year

1939

To the Chairman and Members of the Letchworth Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the request of the Ministry of Health, and in accordance with the Sanitary Officers Orders, the following report is submitted. It is the twenty-first report on the sanitary circumstances and vital statistics of your district. The report covers the period from 1st January to 31st December 1939.

The report is considerably curtailed in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health, but full records have been made for the year, and it is hoped to present these when circumstances are more favourable.

SECTION A:

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The area of the district is 4,905 acres.

Population. The Registrar General's estimates of population are:-

- (a) resident population mid 1939 - 16,660.
- (b) average population appropriate to calculation of death rates 17,620.

Both these estimates are in my opinion far too low, especially taking into consideration the following facts. National Registration of the 29th September gave a population of 20,797 persons. Calculations on the basis of 3.6 persons per occupied house give a population of 18,223. This figure gives what could be described as the normal population of the town and does not include evacuation and industrial increases. The Registrar General has I feel consistently under-estimated the population of the Letchworth Urban District since the 1931 Census, and birth rates and death rates based on these estimates are most misleading.

Inhabited Houses. At December 31st there were according to the rate books 5062 occupied houses.

Rateable Value. The rateable value is estimated to be £159,903 and a penny rate is estimated to produce £588.

Social Conditions and Chief Industries. The social conditions, especially as regards type of population, considerably changed in September as a result of the War, but it is too early to judge the effect on the district as a whole. The chief industries have changed little except they have been further extended.

Extracts from VITAL STATISTICS.

Births. For 1939 the Registrar General has given two sets of figures relating to the number of births. IM for calculating infant and maternal mortality and BR for calculating birth rates.

<u>Live births.</u>	IM			BR		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Legitimate	282	125	157	258	115	143
Illegitimate	8	3	5	8	3	5
Totals	290	128	162	266	118	148

Birth rates per thousand resident population.

- (a) Based on Registrar General's estimate of 16,660 = 15.96
 (b) Based on our estimate of 18,233 = 14.59

Still births.

	Total	Males	Females
Legitimate	19	9	10
Illegitimate	-	-	-
Totals	19	9	10

The still birth rate per thousand live and still births is 66, much higher than normal.

The number of births is the highest recorded since the formation of the Urban District in 1919.

Deaths.

<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
178	91	87

Death rates per thousand resident population.

- (a) Based on Registrar General's estimate of 17,620 = a
 Crude Rate of 10.1 and a
 Corrected Rate of 11.0
 (b) Based on our estimate of 18,233 = a
 Crude Rate of 9.7 and a
 Corrected Rate of 10.5
 ENGLAND & WALES = 12.1

Deaths from Puerperal Causes. There were none, so the Maternal Mortality Rate is nil. It has been nil since 1931.

Death Rate of Infants under One year of age.

	Total	Males	Females
Infant Mortality			
Legitimate	10	6	4
Illegitimate	1	-	1
Totals	11	6	5

SECTION B:

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

(i) STAFF:

Medical Officer of Health (part time)
BERTRAM SUGGIT, M.B.Ch.B. (Leeds and Manchester) D.P.H. (Cambs)
Chief Sanitary Inspector (also Designated Housing Officer,
Inspector under Petroleum Acts, Shop Acts and Factories Acts)
ARTHUR JUMP, M.S.I.A. Cert.R.San.Inst. (Meat and Foods)
Additional Sanitary Inspector
CEDRIC H. MARSDEN, M.S.I.A. (Resigned July- Appointed Sanitary
Inspector to Corby U.D.C.)
RUSSELL F. FORRYAN, M.S.I.A. (Appointed August. On military
Service from November).
Temporary Additional Sanitary Inspector.
FREDERICK G. BRADLEY, M.S.I.A. (appointed December)

It will be seen that during the year there was constant changes in personnel, but the work of the department proceeded normally.

(ii) OTHER SERVICES:

- (a) LABORATORY FACILITIES. No change except that advantage has been taken of the services of the Ministry of Health emergency laboratories.
- (b) AMBULANCE FACILITIES. No change.
- (c) NURSING IN THE HOME. No change.
- (d) TREATMENT CENTRES AND CLINICS. An additional Sick Bay and Clinic was set up at Letchworth House to deal with evacuated children. The other treatment centres and clinics have all carried on normally.
- (e) HOSPITALS. (Public and Voluntary). No change.

SECTION C:

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1. (i) Water: There has been no material change during the year. Bacteriological samples are now taken every fortnight. The samples throughout the year proved most satisfactory.
(ii) Drainage and Sewerage: No material change. The additional population has emphasised the importance of the sewage works being enlarged at the earliest possible moment.
2. Rivers and streams: No change.
3. (i) Closet Accommodation: One pail closet and three cesspools were abolished
(ii) Public Cleansing: No change.
(iii) Sanitary Inspection of the Area: Work has proceeded as normally as circumstances will permit. (See appendix)
(iv) Shops and Offices: Seventy shops were visited and inspected. The ten contraventions found were remedied. It was not possible to carry out any systematic inspection of offices, but several cases were dealt with.
(v) Camping Sites:
 1. One site was used.
 2. No licenses granted.
 3. Eighty-seven persons in thirty-four caravans ("Fair" encampment).(vi) Smoke abatement: Further progress was made without recourse to statutory action.

(vii) Swimming baths and pools:

Public. There were 17,028 attendances. Samples were taken at regular fortnightly intervals and the results were satisfactory.

(viii) Eradication of bed bugs:

1. (a) Council houses found to be infested - 4.
(b) Other houses found to be infested - 7.
All were disinfested.
2. Same as previous year.
3. -do-
4. -do-
5. -do-

SCHOOLS:

No change other than owing to evacuation, all existing schools were fully utilised and additional premises had to be taken.

Rag Flock Acts 1911 and 1928: Same as 1938.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS CONTROLLED BY BYELAWS OR REGULATIONS:

Same as 1938. Four visits were paid to barbers and hairdressers premises.

RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT:

Normal work was maintained.

FACTORIES AND WORKPLACES.

At December 31st there were on the register:-

131 mechanical factories, 55 non-mechanical factories
and 47 workplaces.

Normal work was maintained until September.

SECTION D:

HOUSING.

The situation was fairly normal until September when we received a considerable number of evacuated persons due to official schemes and private arrangements. So far as we are able to ascertain no gross overcrowding took place.

HOUSING STATISTICS 1939:

Number of new houses erected during the year:

(3) by other bodies and persons 82
(4) by Public Utility Societies 2

Inspection of dwelling houses during the year:

1. (a) Total number inspected 318
(b) Number of inspections made 503
2. (a) Inspected under Housing Acts 128
(b) Number of inspections made 266
3. Number found unfit nil
4. Number found not to be in all respects fit 99
2. Remedy of defects.
Number of houses rendered fit 93
3. Action under Statutory powers nil

4. Housing Act 1936 Part IV overcrowding:

(a)	No. of dwellings overcrowded at end of year	one
"	" " families dwelling therein	one
"	" " persons	nine
(b)	No. of new cases found	eight
(c)	" " cases relieved	seven
"	" " persons concerned	forty-seven
(d)	" " dwelling houses again overcrowded	none
(e)	Remarks same as 1938.	

SECTION E:

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) Milk Supply, including cream and ice cream:

The work of supervision was maintained as far as possible. Seven farms are Registered for the production of milk and eighteen persons are Registered as retail purveyors of milk, ten of whom have premises within the district. One dairyman produces and retails Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk, two bottle and retail Tuberculin Tested Milk. Three dairymen retail Tuberculin Tested Milk. Five farmers produce and two dairy men retail Accredited Milk. One application for a licence to pasteurise and sell Pasteurised Milk was granted. Samples: Brief particulars of samples taken are as follows:-

Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk:

Number taken	13.
Average count	61,753
Lowest	500
Highest	480,000
Bacillus Coli	present in 1/100 ml in two samples.
Methylene Blue Test	failed in one sample.

Tuberculin Tested Milk:

Number taken	10
Average count	43,740
Lowest	9,000
Highest	91,000
Bacillus Coli	Present in 1/100 ml in 5 samples
Methylene Blue Test	three samples failed.

Accredited Milk:

Number taken	7
Average count	14,514
Lowest	2,400
Highest	30,000
Bacillus Coli	Present in 1/100 ml in one sample
Methylene Blue Test	none failed.

Pasteurised Milk:

Number taken	13
Average count	58,000
Lowest	11,200
Highest	330,000
Phosphatase Test	
No. submitted	6
No. passed	6
Bacillus Coli Absent	9
present in 1 ml	1
" 1/10	2
" 1/100	1

Ordinary Milk:

Number taken	49
Average Count.	56,465
Lowest	6,400
Highest	224,000
Bacillus Coli	Absent 11
	Present in 1ml 3
	1/10 ml 10
	1/100 ml 7
	1/1000 ml 18
Methylene Blue Test	8 samples failed.

Ice Cream:

Number taken	24
Average count	1,556,196
Lowest	40
Highest	12,000,000
Bacillus Coli	Absent 8
	present in 1ml -
	1/10 ml 6
	1/100 ml 2
	1/1000 ml 8

One sample of raw cream used in the manufacture of ice cream was taken and examined. The bacterial count was 46,720,000 and bacillus coli was present in 1/10,000. It is really unnecessary to add the sample of ice cream made with this raw cream was also of poor bacteriological standard.

(b) Meat and other foods:

The usual routine inspections were maintained throughout the year. In September the Abattoir and Bacon Factory became a wholesale meat depot and slaughterhouse for the Ministry of Food. The extra work involved placed a large strain on the resources of the department, but the carcasses of all animals slaughtered were inspected. Further details are given in the appendix.

Carcases Inspected and condemned.

(excluding shops).

	<u>Cattle</u> <u>excluding</u> <u>Cows</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Calves</u>	<u>Sheep</u> <u>and</u> <u>lambs</u>	<u>Pigs</u>
No. killed	27	11	5	526	28,030
No. inspected	27	11	5	526	28,030
ALL DISEASES EXCEPT Tb.					
(1) carcasses condemned	-	1	2	-	396
(2) parts or organs "	5	1	-	16	4,494
(3) percentage affected	18.5	18.1	40	3	17.4
TUBERCULOSIS ONLY					
(1) carcasses condemned	-	4	-	-	20
(2) parts or organs "	2	-	1	-	1,485
(3) percentage affected	7.4	36.3	20	nil	5.3

(c) Adulteration etc.

The County Council are the Food and Drugs Authority for the district, the officer being Mr. G.F. Hart.

SECTION F:

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS
AND OTHER DISEASES.

1. General. There was little notifiable infectious disease during the year, one hundred and six notifications being received as compared with one hundred and ninety-six during 1938. Immunisation against diphtheria is being carried out to a limited extent at the Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic held under the auspices of the County Council. Fortunately little infection occurred during the evacuation period.

Chicken Pox. Forty-eight cases were notified compared with one hundred and forty-four during 1938. Most of the cases occurred during the middle of the year. There were twenty-one cases under school age, twenty-four were of school age the remaining five being adults. Fourteen cases occurred amongst children from a London Nursery school that were on holiday in Letchworth. These children had contracted the infection before their arrival.

Diphtheria: Fourteen cases were notified, two more than during 1938. All the cases were removed to the isolation hospital. Five cases were of school age, two were young children, and seven were adults. There was a common source of infection in three instances, the other cases occurred sporadically during the year. I regret to have to report one case proved fatal.

Erysipelas: Three cases were notified, the same number as last year. All were treated at home.

Measles: Two cases were notified, both young evacuee children under school age.

Pneumonia: Eleven cases were notified compared with eight cases during 1938. Three of these cases received hospital treatment.

Puerperal Fever: Three cases notified, none removed to hospital.

Scarlet Fever: Twenty-four cases were notified, the same number as last year. All the cases were removed to the isolation hospital. There were no deaths and the disease generally was of a mild type. Five of the cases were young children, sixteen were of school age the remaining three cases being adults. The cases occurred sporadically throughout the year. Five cases occurred at a private school, and in nine instances it would appear that the disease was contracted outside the town.

Para-typhoid: One case was notified during October and was removed to the Isolation Hospital. The infection which was of a mild type appeared to have been contracted whilst the patient was on holiday. The usual precautions were taken and no further cases occurred.

Undulant fever: No cases were brought to my notice.

Epidemic Catarrhal Jaundice: No cases were brought to my notice.

Vaccination: No action was taken under the Regulations of 1917.

2. Cancer: There was no abnormal prevalence. There were 26 deaths during the year, fifteen being males and eleven females. There are no special facilities available in the district for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

3. Tuberculosis:

No action under 1925 Regulations or Public Health Act 1936.

4. Tuberculosis:

New cases and mortality during 1939.

Age Periods	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Respiratory:		Non-Respiratory:		Respiratory:		Non-Respiratory:	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
5-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	1
10-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
20-	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	-
25-	3	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
30-	1	1	-	1	2	1	1	-
45-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
55-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65- and over	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Totals	8	2	4	6	5	2	1	1
1938 do.	3	4	1	1	4	3	2	1

INFECTIOUS DISEASE - LETCHWORTH URBAN DISTRICT 1939.

Disease:	At all ages.	0-	1-	2-	3-	4-	5-	10-	15-	20-	35-	45-	65	
Chicken-pox	48	-	2	7	6	6	20	2	4	1	-	-	-	
Diphtheria	14	-	1	-	-	1	3	2	4	3	-	-	-	14 Removed to Hospital. 1 Death.
Erysipelas	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1		
Pneumonia	11	1	-	-	1	1	2	-	1	2	-	2	1	3 Removed to Hospital. 1 Death.
Puerperal fever	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	
Scarlet fever	24	-	-	-	2	3	12	4	-	3	-	-	-	24 Removed to Hospital.
Paratyphoid	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 do.
Measles	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Totals:	106	2	3	8	9	11	38	8	9	12	1	3	2	42 Removed to Hospital 2 Deaths.

Until September, the work of the Department was able to proceed comparatively normally; afterwards owing to pressure of emergency duties, some routine work had to be discontinued, but we have endeavoured to carry out all public health services as far as practicable.

In conclusion, I should like to thank both the Council and my colleagues in the Health Department and other services for their keen interest and co-operation during the year.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
BERTRAM SUGGIT,
Medical Officer of Health.

Council Offices,
Letchworth.
October 1940.

APPENDIX.

REPORT OF THE WORK CARRIED OUT BY THE SANITARY INSPECTORS
DURING THE YEAR 1939.

<u>GENERAL (under Public Health and Housing Acts):</u>		
<u>(a) Visits and Inspections.</u>		
Houses inspected under Public Health Acts	...	190
" reinspected " " "	...	52
" inspected under Housing Acts	...	128
" reinspected " "	...	138
" visited re defective dustbins	...	8
Housing Survey Form A primary	...	14
" " " " secondary	...	425
" " " B primary	...	4
" " " " secondary	...	2
Visits to overcrowded houses	...	27
Inhabited vans inspected	...	34
Nuisances investigated	...	257
Systematic inspections of district	...	176
Special investigations re water courses and ditches	...	61
" " sewers	...	41
" " smells	...	25
Visits and inspections to entertainment premises	...	7
" " of swimming baths	...	41
" " waterworks	...	6
Smoke observations	...	36
Drains - smoke tested	...	32
" water "	...	75
" colour "	...	26
Visits to works outstanding and in progress	...	598
Number of preliminary notices served	...	725
" statutory " "	...	1
Visits to stables	...	44
" piggeries	...	15
" refuse tips	...	70
" re rat investigation	...	396
" to conveniences	...	7
Miscellaneous visits	...	50
Samples of effluent submitted for analysis	...	1
<u>Special Emergency Duties:</u>		
General A.R.P.	...	151
Evacuation	...	239
Emergency clinics	...	74
Emergency mortuary	...	13
Food Control	...	39
<u>(b) Nuisances Abated and Repair Work Carried Out.</u>		
Choked drains cleared and put into proper order	...	77
Choked W.Cs. cleared	...	8
Drains repaired or relayed	...	72
Inspection chambers built or repaired	...	48
" " covers provided	...	41
Intercepting traps fixed	...	4
W.Cs. repaired or renewed	...	54
W.C. flushing cisterns repaired or renewed	...	46
W.Cs. cleansed	...	10
Urinals repaired or renewed	...	14
Soil pipes repaired or renewed	...	13
Vent pipes repaired or renewed	...	17
Fresh air inlets repaired or renewed	...	12
Gulleys repaired or renewed	...	55
Sinks provided or renewed	...	22
Lavatory basins and baths fixed or renewed	...	27
Waste pipes repaired or renewed	...	53
Pail closets abolished	...	1
Septic tanks built or repaired	...	1

Cesspools repaired	...	...	2
Cesspools emptied and cleansed	...	...	6
Cesspools abolished	...	...	3
Water service pipes repaired or renewed	...	...	45
Wells repaired	...	...	-
Eaves, guttering and rainwater pipes repaired or renewed	...	...	64
Dustbins provided	...	...	7
Yard paving provided or repaired	...	...	33
Roofs repaired or renewed	...	...	45
Doors and door frames repaired or renewed	...	...	86
Windows and frames repaired or renewed	...	...	137
Lighting and ventilation improved	...	...	33
Fire-places and ranges repaired or renewed	...	...	9
Chimney stacks repaired or rebuilt	...	...	12
Coppers provided or repaired	...	...	4
Floors repaired or renewed	...	...	45
Food stores provided	...	...	1
Staircases repaired	...	...	5
Ceilings and plaster repaired	...	...	60
External rendering repaired or renewed	...	...	33
Brickwork repaired	...	...	39
Dampness remedied	...	...	24
Damp-proof courses renewed or provided	...	...	8
Overcrowded abated	...	...	7 cases
Rooms cleansed	...	...	97
Dairies cleansed and limewashed	...	...	30
Cowsheds cleansed and limewashed	...	...	36
Bakehouses cleansed	...	...	16
Slaughterhouses cleansed	...	...	4
Filthy houses cleansed	...	...	14
Accumulations removed	...	...	59
Accumulations of manure removed	...	...	8
Animals improperly kept	...	...	11
Premises and sheds ratproofed	...	...	10
" gassed for rats	...	...	14
" baited " "	...	...	13
Ponds cleansed	...	...	3
Ponds treated for mosquitoes	...	...	2

SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES:

<u>(a) Visits and inspections.</u>			
To Abattoir	...	...	634
Butchers shops	...	...	614
Butchers vans	...	...	39
Fish Shops	...	...	68
Other Food Shops	...	...	82
Bakehouses	...	...	38
Food Preparing Places	...	...	90
Dairies	...	...	239
Cowsheds	...	...	127
Ice Cream Vendors	...	...	104
Hawkers of Foods	...	...	60
<u>(b) Samples Taken.</u>			
Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk	...	...	13
Tuberculin Tested Milk	...	...	10
Accredited Milk	...	...	7
Pasteurised Milk	...	...	13
Ordinary Milk	...	...	49
Ice Cream	...	...	24
Raw Cream	...	...	1
<u>(c) Licences Granted.</u>			
Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk - Dealers	...	...	1
Tuberculin Tested Milk - Bottling and Dealers	...	...	2
" " " " - Dealers	...	...	2
Accredited Milk - Supplementary dealers	...	...	1
Pasteurised Milk - Pasteurising	...	...	2
Game Licences	...	...	3
Amount of fees received: £6.12. -d.			

(d)	<u>Carcases Examined:</u>	
	<u>I. At Abattoir.</u>	
	Cows	11
	Heifers	2
	Bulls	9
	Bullocks	16
	Calves	5
	Sheep	526
	Pigs	28030
	<u>II. At Shops and Other Premises.</u>	
	Beasts	494
	Calves	167
	Sheep	2049
	Pigs	967

(e)	<u>Condemned and Destroyed:</u>	
	<u>I. Abattoir.</u>	
	5 Cows and all organs	
	13 Beasts lungs	
	4 Beasts livers	
	2 Beasts heads	
	1 Beasts mesentery	
	2 Calves and all organs	
	3 Calf plucks	
	1 Calf head and tongue	
	416 pigs and all organs	
	37 forequarters' pork	
	9 Hindquarters pork	
	4783 lbs. Pork	
	1419 Pigs' heads	
	1187 Pigs' plucks	
	6106 Pigs' lungs	
	1837 Pigs' livers	
	1452 Pigs' kidneys	
	526 Pigs' mesenteries	
	594 Pigs' spleens	
	2296 Pigs' other organs	
	2 Sheep plucks	
	2 Sheep lungs	
	13 Sheep livers.	<u>Total Weight: 70,271 lbs.</u>
	<u>II. Shops and Vans.</u>	
	2116 lbs. English beef	
	197 lbs. Imported Beef	
	4 Beasts' livers	
	1 Beast's mesentery	
	7 Pigs' carcasses	
	4 Pigs' heads	
	3 English rabbits	
	3 6lb. tins tongue	
	4 English fowls	
	2 boxes Herrings	
	1 box haddocks	
	1 loaf bread	

Regular Notices of Slaughter Received	1
Notices of Occasional or Emergency Slaughter Received	11
Applications for licences to Slaughter Animals	16
Licences granted to Slaughtermen	16
Amount of fees received: £1. 3. -d.	

INFECTIOUS DISEASE:

(a)	<u>Visits and Inspections.</u>	
	To infected houses	350
	schools	31
	Number of School Notices sent	43
	Disinfection: General cases	104 rooms
	Tuberculosis	10 rooms
	School rooms	13
	Hospital Wards	1
	Library books	29
	Disinfestation	63 rooms

(b) <u>Bedding Stoved.</u>			
Beds	6	Pillows	29
Bolsters	10	Mattresses	102
Blankets	275	Eiderdowns	1
Quilts	4	General linen	1 bundle
Cushions	2	Sheets	4
Suits	2	Shawls	2
(Much of this was necessary owing to evacuation).			
(c) <u>Bedding Destroyed.</u>			
Mattresses	5		
Beds	1		
Sheets	2		

FACTORIES.

Inspections and Visits to:	
Mechanical factories	283
Non-mechanical factories	23
Work-places	48
Outworkers premises	22
Rag flock Acts	4
Outworkers lists received	16

PETROLEUM ACTS.

Visits and inspections	125
Contraventions found	9
" remedied	9
Number of licences granted:	
(a) Petroleum spirit and products	51
(b) Carbide of calcium	7
Amount of fees received	£33.15. -d.

Notices of intention to store petrol under Petroleum Spirit (motor vehicles) Regulations 1929: 5.

SHOP ACTS.

Number of Shops on Register	212
Visits and inspections	70
Intimation notices served	8
Contraventions found	10
" remedied	10

GAME LICENCES.

Number of licences granted	3
Amount of fees received	15s. -d.

HAIRDRESSERS AND BARBERS.

Number of visits and inspections	4
Number of contraventions found	Nil.

From the foregoing summary, it will be seen that notwithstanding changes in personnel, and pressure of emergency duties, a considerable amount of work was successfully accomplished. This was only achieved by the loyal co-operation of all concerned, which I take this opportunity of acknowledging.

Yours obediently,

ARTHUR JUMP.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

Council Offices,
Letchworth.
February 1940.

