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RURAL DISTRICT OF MERIDEN

ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

Health of the District

For the Year 1951

—BY—

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Acting Medical Officer of Health.

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I, SPRINGFIELDS,

COLESHILL,

1st August, 1952.

To the Meriden Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,

In presenting this report on the health of the district I am sure that members of the Council will wish me to first refer to the untimely death of Dr. Macleod on the 24th March. Prior to his appointment as Medical Officer in September 1948 he had spent twenty four years in the Colonial Medical Service, and so brought with him an eminent knowledge of Public Health in all its spheres. His passing has bereft the Council of an Officer of more than usual ability, and his pleasing personality will be sadly missed.

2. It is gratifying to be able to record the absence of diphtheria for the second year in succession.

Last year Dr. Macleod had to draw attention to the increase in the incidence of tuberculosis, poliomyelitis and food poisoning, and I am therefore pleased to be able to record that in the case of poliomyelitis the figures for 1951 show a marked decrease, while the figures for tuberculosis and food poisoning are very much the same as last year.

A notable feature of the year under review is the fact that much better progress has been made with the building of new houses, and it is to be hoped that this progress will at least be maintained, if not exceeded, during the current year.

All these matters are referred to in greater detail under the relevant sections of the report.

3. So far as the scheme of Area Administration is concerned, to which Dr. Macleod referred in some detail in his last report, I think it is fair to say that this has now settled down and is working smoothly and well. Many of the earlier "teething" difficulties have largely disappeared.

4. As usual the report of the Chief Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Haines, is included at the end of mine.

W. D. H. McFARLAND,

Acting Medical Officer of Health.

MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT

A. EXTRACT FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

Population (estimated)Mid-year, 1951	...	...	...	37,950
Birth Rate	...	...	...	15.5
Still Births - Rate per 1,000 total births	...	...	...	32.2
Death Rate	...	...	...	10.3
Deaths from Pregnancy, Child-birth, Abortion	...	...	...	1
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :-				
All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	34
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	32
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	...	...	77
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	1
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	Nil.

Population. The estimated population of 37,950 is 960 greater than that for 1950.

Birth Rate. At 15.5 per 1,000 population the birth rate is a little lower than for the previous year when it was 17.5. The figure for England and Wales for 1951 was 15.5 per 1,000

Death Rate. 10.3 per 1,000 compares with 9.2 for the previous year and 12.5 per 1,000 for England and Wales. Table IV gives a complete list of the causes of death, and Table V shows the age incidence of deaths.

Infant Mortality. The rate of 34 per 1,000 live births shows an improvement on the figure of 46 per 1,000 for last year, but is still a little higher than the 1951 figure of 29.6 per 1,000 for England and Wales.

The actual number of deaths was 20 - 12 dying under 4 weeks and 8 between 4 weeks and 1 year. The causes of these deaths were Prematurity (8), Broncho-Pneumonia (7), Congenital Malformations (2), Meningitis (1), Gastro-Enteritis (1), and Misadventure (1). Prematurity was undoubtedly the greatest offender under 4 weeks and Broncho-Pneumonia over 4 weeks.

Prematurity is a problem which is receiving considerable attention at the moment as in England and Wales approximately 5% of all births are premature. An important factor in this connection is maternal nutrition. It is also stated that the risk of prematurity rises (especially in the older woman) if the mother works during

the last five months of pregnancy. Many of the factors are unknown but we do know that regular and careful ante-natal care help to reduce the incidence.

Put more simply the apparently high figure of 77 deaths per 1,000 illegitimate live births represents the death of two out of a total 26 illegitimate live births.

Statistics for the last ten years and also for England and Wales in 1951 are given in Table VI.

Cancer.

As will be seen from Table IV there were 9 deaths from cancer of the lungs and bronchi. The striking increase in the incidence of cancer of the lungs and bronchi in this country, as shown by the Registrar-Generals' figures (fifteenfold between 1922 and 1947) reflects similar trends in the United States. Among the factors held to play a part, largely on the theoretical basis that irritants can be the cause of cancer, have been the increasing atmospheric pollution from petrol fumes and motor car exhausts, from gas works and tarred roads, from the smoke of coal fires and industrial plants and from tobacco smoking. Recent papers have produced statistical evidence that cigarette smoking is a factor in the cause of cancer of the respiratory tract but the full elucidation of the problem requires much more research. There is a divergence of opinion as to the effects of smoking in moderation but it is reasonable to suggest that the habit, followed in moderation does little harm. However, it is fairly certain that in excess it does have a deleterious effect. Why the majority of people smoke is one of those human problems that evades a satisfactory explanation. Someone commenting on the habit of smoking suggests that it is one of the signs of our diseased civilisation that men and women must so often turn to spirits, fire and smoke to cool off their seething tempers! It has also been stated that "It seems to be partly a substitute for other satisfactions. The increase in smoking might well have some correlation with the general plight of humanity." Is it due to a weakness of the character, or of the flesh, or both, and is it really indulged in as a pleasurable pastime or to soothe those tired nerves and clear the mind? The case against the "tawney weed" is summed up by a contributor in one of the medical journals as: "Pleasure at twenty, irresistible routine at thirty, painful addiction at forty, cardiovascular poison at fifty, emphysema, angina or carcinoma at fifty-five, special mention in death certificate at sixty or after—these are the joys of tobacco!" In the meantime, economic factors are likely to result in its diminished use.

B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

Public Health Officers

Mr. F. T. Kenyon, Senior Sanitary Inspector, retired on superannuation on the 29th February after 24 years service with the Council. Mr R. T. Haines, who joined the department in 1938, was promoted to the senior position as from the 1st March and designated Chief Sanitary Inspector. A new Additional Sanitary Inspector, Mr. R. D. Brown, was appointed and commenced duty on the 1st March. Mr. G. Dobb, who had been in the Council's service since 1942, was promoted Deputy Chief Sanitary Inspector as from the 1st March, but unfortunately he died in June after a long illness. A new deputy Mr. G. B. Stokes, was then appointed and took up his duties on the 1st October.

At the request of Dr. Macleod, the Council considered appointing a fourth Inspector, experience having shown that under normal working conditions it was impossible to devote adequate time to the supervision of food premises, which had become increasingly necessary since the adoption of the Council's clean food byelaws. There had been no addition to the inspectorial staff since 1938, despite an increase in population of over 10,000. Consideration of the matter was deferred for six months, but I am pleased to record that an appointment has now been authorised.

Towards the end of the year the Council approved the appointment of an extra clerk, to assist with the records and interviewing in connection with applications for Council houses.

C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

I. Water Supplies.

(1) Piped supplies in the district are satisfactory in quality and quantity. The increased supply provided by Nuneaton Borough Council for the parish of Arley has been maintained and no complaint of shortage was received.

It was not possible to proceed with the scheme for laying a trunk main from Birmingham to Nuneaton, but it is hoped when this work has been done that Arley and Astley parishes will be incorporated in the Nuneaton water area.

(2) Table III shows the extent to which water mains are available in the district and it is satisfactory to note that no less than 79.3% of the houses are provided with piped supplies.

The stage has now been reached at which practically all the properties which can be supplied at comparatively low cost have been provided for. Any future schemes, in terms of cost per house, are likely to be more expensive, but it is hoped that the Council will continue their present policy of providing water mains to existing properties whenever the cost can be considered reasonable, and that the necessary grants and Government approvals will be forthcoming.

(3) Routine samples of piped water supplies were taken during the year from the Birmingham and Coventry Water Departments' mains. They were examined chemically and bacteriologically and were satisfactory.

(4) There was no case of plumbo-solvent action.

(5) A short extension of 4 inch water main at Old Road, Berkswell to supply two houses was authorised during the year and the work has since been done.

(6) A scheme was prepared for laying approximately 1,453 yards of 4 inch main in the parish of Wishaw to supply 16 existing houses and 12 proposed Council houses, the water to be purchased in bulk from the South Staffordshire Waterworks Company by agreement. It was not possible to begin the work during the year but it is in progress at the time of writing this report.

(7) A survey of the Watery Lane area of Corley Moor, in the parish of Allesley, was made and showed the existing well supplies to 15 houses to be almost uniformly bad. The under ground water in the locality was known to be unreliable, but an approach to Coventry Water Department brought the reply that pressures from their Corley reservoir were insufficient to supply further houses beyond the present limits at Corley Moor. The Department have however taken steps to improve the supply, and at the time of writing this report a scheme for laying approximately 917 yards of new main is awaiting Ministry approval.

(8) A fresh survey of the Meer End area of the parish of Balsall was made during the year, and of the 26 wells which supply 36 houses and agricultural holdings, 25 were found to be polluted in varying degree. A scheme was prepared for providing approximately 2,130 yards of new main, which has since been authorised by the Ministry.

(9) A scheme for supplying mains water to 16 houses and

farms in the Green End area of Fillongley parish was submitted to the Ministry in July 1950, but there are engineering difficulties due to very low anticipated pressures at the end of the proposed main and the matter is still being negotiated.

(10) The Sanitary Inspector's report gives the results of chemical analysis and bacteriological examination of a total of 98 samples of water from private supplies during the year. It will be seen that only 7 out of 43 were satisfactory chemically and that of 55 bacteriological samples, 34 were polluted in varying degree.

Most of the samples were taken in the course of surveys of existing supplies, which were made in connection with proposals to provide new water mains.

II. *Drainage and Sewerage.*

(1) The new sewerage system for parts of the parishes of Balsall and Berkswell was nearing completion at the end of the year, and work is at present proceeding on several small but important extensions which have been authorised since the main scheme was approved.

(2) Three major schemes of sewerage and sewage disposal were submitted for Ministry approval during the year, but no approval has yet been given. They are :

- (i) the proposed re-sewering of parts of the township of Coleshill which are at present drained to the River Cole without treatment, together with certain incidental new sewers to serve existing properties and a proposed factory of national importance
- (ii) a scheme for providing new sewers and a sewerage disposal works for the village of Fillongley, much of which is at present drained without treatment to a tributary of the River Bourne from which the Birmingham Water Department take water to their Shustoke Reservoir ;
- (iii) the proposed re-sewering of the village of Hampton-in-Arden with a new outfall to the Drainage Board's works at Barston.

All these schemes, and especially the first two, are urgently needed in the interests of public health.

(3) A small sewer extension was carried out at Castle

Bromwich to serve 33 existing houses which were formerly drained to cesspools.

(4) A small scheme was approved for extending a sewer at Eastern Green in the parish of Allesley to serve a school, ten other existing properties and certain proposed development. This work is now in progress.

III. *Refuse Collection and Disposal.*

The collection of refuse throughout the area is still not 100% due largely to the shortage of labour for this type of work, but I think it only fair to say that the number of complaints during the year appear to have been less than in the previous year. I know that strenuous efforts are being made to still further improve this service.

D. HOUSING.

Council houses completed during the year numbered 94 which is a considerable improvement on the previous year's total of 44. The increased rate of completions is being maintained, but is unlikely to be materially exceeded with the present labour force available in the district. A further 16 houses were privately built under licences.

Applicants for houses on the Council's books at the end of 1951 were about 1,600, but this is a crude figure which does not take into account changes in circumstances since the applications were made, no revision having been possible for some time owing to shortage of staff. A revision undertaken since the year under review confirms that the net total is now about 1,000, but even this needs further pruning because it includes many people who are already reasonably housed, to whom the Council have little obligation. A substantial demand exists for houses for people who have no separate homes, but the plight of many who have lived for years in sub-standard dwellings ought not to be overlooked. There are still many houses in the district which were condemned before the last war because they had then outlasted their useful life, but most of them were pressed into service again during the war. Now, after a further 13 years during which they have had little or no maintenance, they are completely worn out and should be cleared away as soon as ever possible. The Council accepted this view after considering a report by the Sanitary Inspector in July, and have since authorised the demolition of 7 houses in a clearance area, which was carried out and the tenants re-housed. They are negotiating to buy four other clearance area houses for redevelopment of the site. Progress with the remaining condemned houses naturally depends on the availability of new ones and is necessarily slow, but

it is hoped within the next few years to get rid of them all. No-one wants the tenancy of a condemned house nowadays, except as an excuse to press for a Council house from the moment he gets possession.

A further deterioration in the state of old property in the district is a matter for some concern and in a few cases the Council find it necessary to make fresh closing and demolition orders, despite the housing shortage.

The position regarding squatters in the district is now under control, the Council having adopted the policy of demolishing the huts as soon as vacancies arise. Four were got rid of in this way during the year, but the principle as regards the largest site in the district was not given Ministry approval until Mid-1952, so that several opportunities were lost and vacant huts had to be re-let by the Council, to prevent further unauthorised occupation. It will take several years yet to provide sufficient houses for all the remaining squatters, and meanwhile the condition of the huts continues to deteriorate, despite attempts to patch them up.

The expectation of life has increased during the last half century, due, amongst other factors, to the growth of scientific medical knowledge and also to improvements in the social conditions under which the majority of people live. This brings in its trail the problem of an ever increasing proportion of old people associated with the requirements of providing homes suitable for people of advancing years. I feel sure the Council will continue to bear this in mind in future housing projects.

The benefits to health both physical and psychological of good housing are well known. With the increasing cost of living as it is today one should always be mindful that the increases in rents, transport costs etc. do not lead to a lower standard of nutrition and offset the apparent gain from a changed environment.

E. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Particulars of action with regard to meat and other foods is given in detail in the Sanitary Inspector's report.

There is no Ministry of Food abattoir in the district and the carcasses inspected were therefore those of emergency slaughterings only.

Food Hygiene

Experience shows that the Council's clean food byelaws under

Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 are appreciated by the majority of traders affected, but there is scope for improvement in many directions and it is hoped to pay more attention to the subject when the new appointment to the Sanitary Inspector's staff has been made.

Milk Supplies

Routine sampling of milk in the district is undertaken by officers of the County Health Department to which I am indebted for the figures given below. Samples are also examined at the various large wholesale dairies. Herds found to produce tuberculous milk are investigated by the Divisional Veterinary Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and his staff.

There is close co-operation between the departments mentioned and my office in deciding and carrying out such preventive measures as are necessary.

Investigations of Tuberculous Milk Supplies, 1951.

	Cases found on routine sampling in the County.	Cases reported by neighbouring County Authorities.
Number of completed investigations	2	13
Number of cows examined	80	279
Number of milk samples for diagnostic purposes	11	53
Number of cows slaughtered under T.B. Order	1	6
Number of cows removed from herds during investigation which may have been infected	3	9

During the year one notice had to be served under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, requiring treatment of milk prior to sale for human consumption.

Food Poisoning.

28 cases were notified which was exactly the same figure as for last year. Fortunately most of the cases were of a mild character and quickly cleared up.

In two cases it was possible to ascertain that the causative agent was *Salmonella typhi-murium*.

F. PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Diphtheria.

It is reported with satisfaction that, for the second year in succession there were no confirmed cases of diphtheria throughout the District.

This is a noteworthy observation. The success of the immunisation campaign, with the virtual disappearance of diphtheria and less fear of it, should not be misunderstood by the general public. The future of diphtheria is only conditional upon the maintenance of an adequate level of immunisation. Consequently, it is imperative that a complacent attitude must not creep in and parents leave their children unprotected, as this could lead to a return of diphtherial outbreaks.

During the year a full course of immunisation against diphtheria was completed by 525 children under 5 years of age and by 41 children between the ages of 5 and 14 years, a total of 566.

In addition 333 children were given a re-inforcing or "booster" dose. Most of the immunisations were carried out at Welfare Centres and Schools.

I am pleased to say that all these figures show a useful increase over those reported last year.

Acute Poliomyelitis and Acute Encephalitis.

Fortunately the incidence of Poliomyelitis and Encephalitis was much less than last year, and all the cases recorded were non-paralytic in type.

Measles.

Although Measles appeared in epidemic form in Coleshill Hampton-in-Arden and Arley during the year it is satisfactory to note that the number of cases notified throughout the District dropped from 744 last year to 444.

Whooping Cough,

There were 231 notified cases as compared with 154 last year. There were no deaths.

With the proposed introduction of prophylactic immunisation in 1952 it is hoped that, in the future, the incidence will be much

reduced and the position eventually approximate to that of diphtheria.

Table VII gives a complete list of the cases of infectious diseases notified during the year.

School Closures—Nil.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, TUBERCULOSIS.

Age—Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
1	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
5	3	1	6	2	—	—	—	—
15	9	7	3	1	—	1	1	—
25	6	6	—	—	—	1	—	—
35	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	3	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
55	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
TOTALS	28	17	9	5	1	3	2	1

The total of 59 notified cases of Tuberculosis is the second highest on record, the highest figure being 72 in 1913. Of the 59 cases six were Inward Transfers, which means that the number of new cases is only one more than the figure of 52 reported last year.

It is pleasing however to note that the number of deaths has fallen from 12 last year to 7.

The following table shows the incidence of and deaths from Tuberculosis during the last 20 years :-

<i>Tuberculosis.</i>							
	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Cases ...	21	36	21	35	27	26	19
Deaths	5	18	12	16	7	12	6
	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Cases ...	54	35	40	36	49	51	29
Deaths	17	18	18	19	13	20	18
	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	
Cases ...	38	42	48	42	52	59	
Deaths	9	11	14	11	12	7	

FACTORIES.

The numbers on the registers are :-

(1) Factories in which sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the Factories Act are enforced by the Council—5.

(2) Factories not included in (1) in which section 7 is enforced by the Council—110.

(3) Other premises in which section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority—3.

8 cases of sanitary defects were reported during the year and 7 were remedied after informal action. There were no prosecutions.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

*To the Chairman and Members of the
Meriden Rural District Council.*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I submit my report on the work of the Sanitary Inspector's Department for the year 1951, including two months for which my predecessor, Mr. Kenyon, was responsible. Owing to the long absence from duty of Mr. Dobb, who died in June after a protracted illness, there were only two inspectors for nine months of the year. This resulted in an unavoidable curtailment of activities and some arrears of work, which had not been overtaken at the end of the year under review, though at the time of reporting the department is again working normally.

INSPECTIONS

General inspections of the district are listed in table I at the end of the report. Complaints investigated numbered 505.

NUISANCES.

Nuisances reported and dealt with were as follows :-

Accumulations of refuse	19
Cesspools overflowing	44
Closets defective and insanitary	52
Drains choked and defective	83
Dirty houses	3
Dustbins defective or absent	88
Foul ditches	26
Smoke, dust and effluvia	6
Water supply pipes burst	2
Housing defects :	
Dampness	49
Defective floors	52
" walls	21
" roofs	58
" rainwater gutters	23
" chimneys	12
" windows	31
" paving	3
" wall and ceiling plaster	62
" firegrates	15
" washing boilers	3
" sinks	3

Further pressure from the Council resulted in the ceasing entirely of the offensive business of maggot-breeding which had been carried on from two premises in the district.

Much trouble was experienced from a factory engaged in reclaiming non-ferrous metals. The process involved the removal of rubber and plastic insulation from waste copper wire, which was done by burning in open hearths, and the resultant fumes gave rise to a serious nuisance. The firm concerned undertook to provide a furnace and chimney stack, which had not been done by the end of the year, but the work has since been completed with only limited success.

Eleven pail closets were converted to water-closets, the Council paying one-half of the cost, making a total of 75 conversions since the principle of contributions by the Council was accepted here. In addition, a group of very foul privy-middens serving 30 houses at Fillongley were demolished by the owners and new pail closets erected, one to each house. This work did not qualify for grant, but the pail closets are now readily convertible to water-closets when the sewer is available and the Council have undertaken to pay one-half the reasonable cost of the further conversions.

The surveys of the sanitary circumstances of the various parishes, which were begun during 1950 and which produced much useful information in considering the need for sewers, closet conversions, water supplies, etc, had to be suspended owing to staffing difficulties and no progress was made during the year.

Increasing difficulty is experienced in securing the provision of dustbins, which until recent times had always been regarded as owners' liability. In view of the attitude now taken by the courts, each case has to be investigated in detail and a decision taken by the Health Committee as to whether owner or occupier should be held responsible. The time spent in this administrative work is quite out of proportion to the results achieved. Almost every owner thinks his tenant should be liable and the tenant is equally convinced that the provision of a dustbin is a matter for the landlord, and the long delay involved in operating the enforcement procedure often means that houses are without dustbins for many weeks, with consequent hindrance to the already overburdened scavenging department. I am convinced that the only satisfactory way out of the difficulty, short of an amendment of the law, is for the Council themselves to provide dustbins and make an appropriate charge, under section 75 (2) of the Public Health Act, 1936. So far, however, they have been unwilling to accept this view.

HOUSING.

Complaints relating to defective houses were mainly dealt with informally. In 10 cases legal notices were necessary requiring the execution of repairs under section 93 of the Public Health Act, 1936. All the notices were subsequently complied with.

A demolition order under section 11 of the the Housing Act, 1936 was made in respect of a wooden bungalow at Hampton-in-Arden, which had been occupied in breach of an undertaking not to use it for human habitation. The Council accepted an undertaking from the owner of a wooden bungalow at Coleshill that it would not be re-occupied and allotted the tenancy of a new house to the occupier. A closing order under section 12 of the Act was made in respect of a cottage at Bacons End and the displaced tenant was moved to a new Council house.

The Council have accepted the principle that steps should now be taken to secure the removal of the houses which were condemned before the late war, and have authorised the demolition of seven houses in a clearance area at Coleshill. The work was carried out early in 1952 and all the tenants were re-housed. Existing condemned houses at the end of 1951 numbered 78, and are listed in Table II at the end of the report.

In a few instances, condemned houses have been bought by people who have spent considerable sums of money in reconditioning them regardless of the clearance orders and warnings from the Council. Owing to the shortage of houses the Council have issued licences under the Defence Regulations authorising temporary reoccupation, but the housing position is improving and I think the practice ought now to be brought to an end. In the event of these houses becoming vacant in the future, licences for fresh occupation should in my opinion be refused and demolition insisted upon.

The Council have decided to release the various requisitioned houses as soon as practicable, and have already released 10 of the 30 originally taken. Eight of those remaining are condemned and most of the occupiers are due for early re-housing.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Samples taken during the year were reported on as follows :-

Chemical Analysis.

	Satisfactory.	Unsatisfactory.	Unfit.	Total.
Old wells ...	6	32	4	42
New wells ...	—	—	—	—
Springs ...	1	—	—	1
Mains ...	2	—	—	2
				—
				45
				—

Bacteriological Examination.

Old wells ...	29	31	2	53
New wells ...	—	1	—	1
Springs ...	1	—	—	1
Mains ...	2	—	—	2
				—
				57
				—

Unsatisfactory and unfit samples were followed in all cases by written advice to boil the water before use for human consumption.

Action to secure the cleaning out and improvement of existing wells was taken in a few instances, but it was hoped to secure a remedy in many others by providing piped supplies, schemes for which were prepared.

FOOD INSPECTION

Inspections of food premises numbered 127 and 78 visits were made for food examination purposes.

The following articles of food were condemned and voluntarily surrendered for the reasons stated :

- 5-lbs Oats, mouldy.
 5 tins Jellied veal, total weight 30-lbs, partially decomposed.
 325-lbs Processed cheese, mouldy.
 120 tins Cherries (French), total weight 120-lbs, blown.
 26 „ Peaches (Italian), total weight 286-lbs, blown.
 100 „ Sardines, rusted and blown.
 28 „ Rabbits, partially decomposed.
 23 tins Plums, total weight 25-lbs, hydrogen swell.
 87 „ Ham, total weight 1,019-lbs, partially decomposed or damaged
 646 „ various foods, damaged or blown.
 Carcase and organs of one pig, generalised tuberculosis.

A loaf of bread sold to a Coleshill resident was found to contain a portion of a cigarette and was seized as unwholesome and submitted to a magistrate for formal condemnation. The loaf was made by a large multiple bakery firm and, after consideration of the circumstances including an explanation by their manager, the Health Committee decided not to prosecute but issued a warning.

The Council found it necessary in September to make representations to the Ministry of Food about the large quantity of imported tinned hams which were found to be unsound.

Food Premises.

The number of premises registered under section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 at the end of the year were as follows :

Manufacture and sale of ice-cream	10
Sale only of ice-cream	64
Manufacture of sausages and/or cooked meat ...	7
Fish-frying	13
	<hr/>
	94
	<hr/>

Three contraventions of the Council's clean food byelaws were dealt with informally.

The growth in the popularity of ice-cream and the availability of increased supplies have resulted in applications for registration of small premises which in the normal course might have been considered unsuitable. The Public Health Committee gave careful thought to this problem and realised that, if they set too high a standard, they would deprive many country people of a means of obtaining ice-cream. They have therefore adopted the expedient of registering in many cases subject to the ice-cream being sold in unopened wrappers as received from the makers, in which case the liability to contamination is greatly lessened and special sterilizing equipment need not be insisted upon.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Only 6 of the 20 private slaughterhouses in the district are now licensed. Their use is limited to the slaughter of casualties, and pigs produced for home consumption under licence from the Ministry of Food.

Eleven slaughtermen are licenced under the Slaughter of Animals Act, 1933.

MILK AND DAIRIES.

There are 30 registered distributors of milk in the district, most of them operating from the adjoining towns. Only 8 premises are registered as dairies other than dairy farms. They are generally satisfactory.

Nine inspections were made during the year.

Licences under the Milk (Special Designation) Regulations were granted as follows:

		Tuberculin tested.	Pasteurized.	Sterilized.
Dealers	...	7	10	4
Supplementary	...	8	9	7

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

Caravans which are occupied as permanent homes have become a considerable problem in the district and their supervision takes up a good deal of the inspectors' time, no less than 220 visits having been made during the year. Sanitary conditions are not always satisfactory and difficulty is experienced with some of the older sites, the licences for which were originally issued on the basis of annual renewal. The Council were however advised in 1948 that a site licence, once granted cannot be revoked. Consequently there is now no opportunity of improving the sanitary standards, which in many cases were accepted on a temporary basis and are below what would normally be required for a permanent site. This difficulty does not arise where moveable dwellings are licensed individually.

The position at the end of the year was that 22 site licences had been issued for a total of 175 caravans, 31 huts and 114 tents, and occupation of a further 96 caravans had been authorised by individual licences. Certain unlicensed caravans also existed but action in respect of them was deferred pending decisions from the planning aspect.

Legal proceedings were authorized in one case in which a caravan was occupied without a licence, but the dwelling was removed from the site before the summons could be served.

RODENT CONTROL, ETC.

The Council's ratcatcher is fully employed, and the policy of providing a free service for domestic premises encourages occupiers to report infestations. Complaints received numbered 151 and the following statement shows the work done:

Premises inspected	...	...	...	441
„ baited and poisoned				
Private			116	
Business			22	
			138	
Second treatments	...	...	...	68
Third „	...	...	...	20
Premises cleared	...	...	...	112
„ not cleared	...	...	...	26
Dead rats found and buried	...	...	...	602
Council refuse tips treated	...	...	...	6
„ sewage works „	...	...	...	6
Sewer manholes baited and poisoned:				
first treatments			320	
second „			207	
			527	

Recent "takes" of bait in sewers have been small, indicating that the infection there is well under control.

Other sanitary work carried out includes the following :

Articles of bedding disinfected or destroyed	...	...	47
Choked drains and sewers cleared	...	...	31

Houses disinfected :

T. B. death	...	...	...	1
„ removal	...	...	...	16
Cancer death	...	...	...	2
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	16
Vermin	...	...	...	24
				59

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION.

The use was continued of three deposit gauges for solids, and nine lead peroxide instruments for the determination of sulphur-gas concentration, with results shown in the following table, which gives the average monthly, results for 1951 with comparative figures for 1950.

Solid deposits.			<i>Tons per sq. mile per month.</i>	
			1951	1950
Lea Marston	...	...	26.12	24.05
Bacons End	...	...	11.03	9.22
Berkswell	...	...	8.40	7.06
Sulphur gases.			<i>Milligrammes per 100 sq. cms. per day.</i>	
Lea Marston (average of 7 gauges)			0.94	1.02
Bacons End	...	...	0.83	0.99
Berkswell	...	...	0.43	0.51

Total rainfall for the year at Lea Marston was 32.59 inches, compared with 25.21 inches for 1950.

The concentration of sulphur gases in the vicinity of the British Electricity Authority's generating stations at Hams Hall, Lea Marston, was again only a little above that at Bacons End (which is in the path of the prevailing wind from industrial Birmingham), indicating that a large degree of dispersal of sulphur pollution is effected by the very high chimneys of the power stations. Of the seven gauges which surround the stations the four worst results were again Whitacre Heath, Dunton Hall, Marston and Drainage Board Works, in that order.

The average amount of grit deposited at Lea Marston shows a progressive increase on the 1950 figure and on that for 1949, which was 22.09 tons.

RAG FLOCK ACT, 1951.

There are no premises in the district which require licensing or registration, premises used for repair (as distinct from manufacture) of upholstered goods being outside the scope of the Act.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948 (Section 50).

The body of a child of 4 years was buried by the Council at a cost of £12. 5. 6d.

Yours obediently,

R. HAINES.

Chief Sanitary Inspector

Town Hall,
Coleshill,
Birmingham.

August, 1952.

TABLE I.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

Housing (including investigation of applications for Council houses.)	...	...	...	...	...	651
Overcrowding	...	...	...	...	...	73
Nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	995
Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	...	8
Food premises	...	...	...	...	...	128
„ examination	...	...	...	...	...	78
Dairies	...	...	...	...	...	9
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	6
Water supplies	...	...	...	...	...	362
Moveable dwellings	...	...	...	...	...	220
Infectious diseases	...	...	...	...	...	116
Rodent infestation	...	...	...	...	...	321
Atmospheric pollution	...	...	...	...	...	134
Factories	...	...	...	...	...	14
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	124
						<hr/> 3,239 <hr/>
Informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	93
Statutory „	...	...	...	...	...	59
Legal Proceedings	...	...	...	...	...	None

TABLE II.
CONDEMNED HOUSES EXISTING AT END OF 1951.

Parish.	In clear- ance areas.	Subject to demol- ition orders.	Subject to closing orders.	Total	Number still occupied.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
(a) PRE-WAR ACTION.					
Allesley	—	3	—	3	3
Balsall	—	1	—	1	1
Barston	2x	—	—	2	1
Berkswell	—	3	—	3	2
Castle Bromwich	—	—	1	1	1
Coleshill	32	—	6	38	26
Corley	—	2	—	2	2
Curdworth	—	—	1	1	1
Fillongley	2x	1	1	4	3
Hampton-in-Arden	8	1	—	9	9
Lea Marston	—	1	—	1	—
Meriden	2	—	—	2	2
Packington	—	2	—	2	1
Shustoke	6	—	—	6	5
(b) POST-WAR ACTION.					
Fillongley	—	2	—	2	1
Maxstoke	—	1	—	1	1
	—	—	—	—	—
	52	17	9	78	59
	—	—	—	—	—

x indicates 2 houses since converted to one.

The purpose of the list is to show the probable number of new houses still needed in order finally to dispose of the existing condemned properties. It does not therefore include houses which are subject to closing orders or undertakings not to use for habitation and which are unoccupied, as they do not involve either demolition or re-housing.

Certain of the houses in column (3) may still be rendered fit and the closing orders determined, in which case re-housing may not be required.

TABLE III.
WATER SUPPLIES.

Extent to which piped supplies are available in the various parishes.

Parish.	Houses	Piped supplies.		
		Birmingham Water Department	Coventry Water Department	Others.
Allesley	405	—	305	—
Arley	819	—	—	807
Astley	64	—	—	20
Balsall	637	—	248	—
Barston	134	—	91	—
Berkswell	567	—	290	—
Bickenhill	685	624	—	—
Castle Bromwich	1293	1263	—	—
Coleshill	1440	1268	—	—
Corley	206	—	129	—
Curdworth	130	84	—	—
Fillongley	397	155	—	—
Hampton-in-Arden	364	—	307	—
Keresley	732	—	684	—
Lea Marston	75	33	—	—
Maxstoke	78	—	19	—
Meriden	475	—	402	—
Packingtons	66	—	5	—
Shustoke	143	117	—	—
Water Orton	532	509	—	—
Whitacre, Nether	232	212	—	—
Whitacre, Over	113	71	—	—
Wishaw	49	—	—	—
	<u>9636</u>	<u>4336</u>	<u>2480</u>	<u>827</u>

Total houses in district with piped supplies : 7,643.

Percentage : 79.3.

There are very few common standpipes, the majority of supplies being direct to the houses.

TABLE IV.
MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR, 1951.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	MALES.	FEMALES.
All Causes	202	188
1 Tuberculosis, respiratory	1	3
2 Tuberculosis, other	2	1
3 Syphilitic disease	1	1
4 Diphtheria	—	—
5 Whooping Cough	—	—
6 Meningococcal infections	—	1
7 Acute Poliomyelitis	—	—
8 Measles	—	1
9 Other Infective and Parasitic diseases	—	—
10 Malignant Neoplasm, stomach	4	5
11 Malignant Neoplasm, lung, bronchus	7	2
12 Malignant Neoplasm, breast	1	8
13 Malignant Neoplasm, uterus	—	3
14 Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	23	12
15 Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	1	2
16 Diabetes	—	4
17 Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	18	31
18 Coronary Disease, angina	21	13
19 Hypertension with Heart Disease	6	10
20 Other Heart Disease	27	33
21 Other Circulatory Disease	6	8
22 Influenza	14	5
23 Pneumonia	11	9
24 Bronchitis	13	5
25 Other Diseases of Respiratory System	6	1
26 Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	4	1
27 Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	2	2
28 Nephritis and Nephrosis	2	2
29 Hyperplasia of Prostate	2	—
30 Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	—	1
31 Congenital Malformations	2	—
32 Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	18	22
33 Motor Vehicle Accidents	4	1
34 All other Accidents	3	1
35 Suicide	3	—
36 Homicide and operations of war	—	—

TABLE V.
MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.

AGE INCIDENCE OF DEATHS.

	Under 4 weeks	4 wks. — 1 yr.	1 — 4	5 — 14	15 — 24	25 — 34	35 — 44	45 — 54	55 — 64	65 — 74	75 — 84	85 — 94	95 — 100	100+	Totals
MALE.	7	6	2	2	4	5	6	15	29	55	59	12	—	—	202
FEMALE	5	2	1	4	1	5	3	12	16	57	60	22	—	—	188
TOTALS	12	8	3	6	5	10	9	27	45	112	119	34	—	—	390
PERCENT-AGE	3.1	2.1	0.8	1.5	1.3	2.5	2.3	6.9	11.5	28.7	30.5	8.8	—	—	—

TABLE VI.
MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.
VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1951 AND PREVIOUS
TEN YEARS.

YEAR.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Nett.		Under 1 Year of age.		At all ages.	
		Number.	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1941	34,210	564	16.5	35	59	377	10.6
1942	34,510	600	17.4	25	42	321	9.3
1943	34,310	667	19.4	30	45	321	9.4
1944	33,870	679	20.0	30	44	337	9.9
1945	33,110	649	19.5	30	46	309	9.3
1946	33,770	631	19.0	41	65	19	9.5
1947	34,800	773	22.2	30	39	348	10.0
1948	35,380	714	20.2	27	39	319	9.0
1949	36,160	656	18.2	17	26	313	8.7
1950	36,990	646	17.5	30	46	340	9.2
1951	37,950	564	15.5	20	34	390	10.3

VITAL STATISTICS IN ENGLAND AND WALES, 1951.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

*Birth-rate, Death-rate, and Infant Mortality during the year 1951.
(Provisional Figures).*

Annual Rate per 1,000 Population.

	Live Births.	Still Births.	Deaths.	Deaths under one year to 1,000 Births
England and Wales	15.5	0.36	12.5	29.6
126 Great Towns, including London	17.3	0.45	13.4	33.9
148 Smaller Towns	16.7	0.38	12.5	27.6
London	17.8	0.37	13.1	26.4

TABLE VII.
MERIDEN RURAL DISTRICT.

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1951.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	Number of Cases notified.								Total cases removed. to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.								
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 45.	45 to 65.	65 and upwards.		
Measles	444	18	187	231	6	2				1
Whooping Cough	231	13	131	83	1	3			1	
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)										
Erysipelas	8			1		1	5	1		
Scarlet Fever	36		11	24		1			8	
Enteric Fever										
Pneumonia	78	5	5	5	2	14	24	23	2	20
Malaria										
Dysentery	25		7	4	4	8	1	1	1	
Puerperal Pyrexia	20				9	11			16	
Meningococcal Infection										
Acute Poliomyelitis	8	1	2	5					8	
Acute Infective Encephalitis	1			1					1	
Encephalitis Lethargica										
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	2	2							1	
Chicken Pox	32	1	12	17	1	1				
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	45			4	16	19	5	1	15	4
Other forms of Tuberculosis	14		2	8	4				6	3
Totals	944	40	357	383	43	60	35	23	59	28



