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Contributors

Minehead (England). Urban District Council.

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S INTERIM REPORT FOR 1947.

The Registrar General's figures for the population of the town show a slight increase over last year; 7,037 as against 6,984 in 1946. As usual the influx of summer visitors in July and August practically doubled the population. During the July and August period there was some overcrowding. At the close of the holiday season the town reverted to its winter population and most of the hotels and boarding houses closed down.

The period under discussion was not remarkable for any spectacular change in the health of the town. No definite epidemic occurred and infectious diseases were of a mild type.

Water Supply.

The Main reservoir at Nutscale was quite equal to the prolonged summer drought. The level of the water in the reservoir was lower than on any previous occasion, but there was at all times a very ample reserve. The completion of the dam and ancillary works at Nutscale will be undertaken when the necessary conditions prevail.

Examinations of the water by the County Laboratory collected at the source and at distributing points were satisfactory.

Examination of the Alcombe supply has revealed a certain degree of plumbo-solvency. Whether this degree is of sufficient importance to justify the introduction of bye-laws dealing with this condition is at present sub judice.

No action was called for in respect of any contamination of the water supply.

Practically all the dwelling houses of the area are supplied with Council water direct to the houses.

Swimming Pool.

The water at the Swimming Pool was kept under observation and tested periodically with satisfactory results.

Sewage Disposal.

The sewage disposal has been satisfactory and no new works or extensions have been undertaken during the year.

Housing.

The total number of houses is 2,222. The number of houses erected during the year was 56. The conversion of existing buildings carried out have provided 12 new flats. The total number of houses in process of erection at the end of the year was 25.

The total number of applicants for Council houses at the end of the year was 320. These applications are dealt with according to the circumstances of the applicants and their needs.

The houses required at the present time are:-

- (a) To replace those unfit for habitation - 30.
- (b) To abate overcrowding - 30.
- (c) Where conditions are unsatisfactory, that is two families living in the same house, but not included in (a) or (b) - 200.

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Overcrowding.

There are many houses in the area which might be said to be overcrowded according to modern requirements. Seven failed to fulfil the statutory requirements and were dealt with satisfactorily. During the summer holiday there are doubtless many houses which are overcrowded, but these cases are very temporary and no action has been taken.

Infectious Diseases.

Infectious Diseases were of the sporadic type and no epidemic occurred. Cases of scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough and pneumonia were notified.

The notification of tuberculosis and mortality from this disease show very little alteration; 32 cases were notified and there were 2 deaths; in 1946 there were 25 notifications and 2 deaths.

During the early part of the year the Isolation Hospital was closed and its long term of usefulness brought to an end. The reasons for this included the outlay of a very considerable sum of money for its renovation and the ever present difficulty in maintaining the staff. It is a definite loss to the community. Cases now requiring institutional treatment are sent to Taunton. The disinfection of bedding and clothing which was carried out at the Isolation Hospital has now to be done elsewhere at an increased expenditure of time and money. The establishment of a disinfecting plant and transport in the neighbourhood is at present under consideration.

Disinfection of premises after infectious diseases and after cases of an unhygienic or unpleasant nature are carried out by the Staff of the Council.

Disinfection after scabies is undertaken by the Council. Cases of this disease which do not respond to domiciliary treatment are sent to a Centre for this purpose on the recommendation of the medical practitioner responsible.

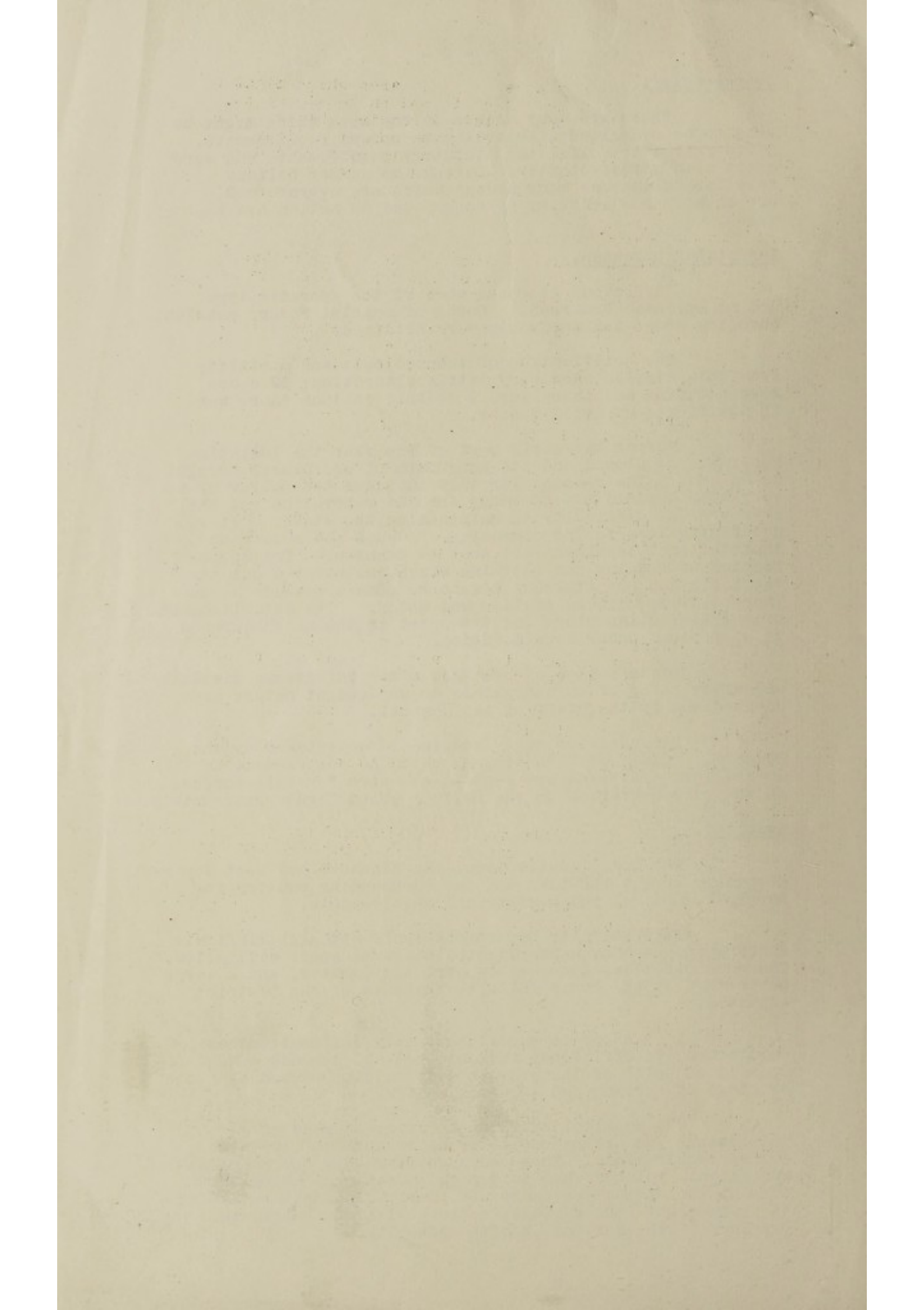
Hospital.

The local Institution, the Minehead and West Somerset Hospital, serves the town and the surrounding country for surgical, medical and obstetrical requirements.

The Maternity Department deals with all difficult labours and as many uncomplicated cases as space will allow. The accommodation, however, is strictly limited, and a large percentage of the cases falls to the care of the District Midwives.

I am happy to report that this Institution has maintained its efficiency and answered all demands made upon it in spite of the gravest difficulties caused by shortage of nursing and domestic staffs.

The Hospital building is in great need of alterations and extensions to bring it more in line with modern requirements. These were envisaged by the Hospital management, but have had to remain in abeyance owing to the War and the stringency exercised in building matters during the subsequent Peace. These matters will now become the province of the National Health Authority.



Clinics.

Clinics for Infant Welfare and Ante-Natal treatment are maintained in the town under the direction of Dr. H.M.Chappel.

Tuberculosis and Venereal Disease Clinics are held in the town and are under the control of and maintained by the County Council.

The Tuberculosis Allowances Scheme is also under the control of the County Council through the Tuberculosis Officer and the Health Visitor.

Premature infants are in the care of the District Nursing Association.

I have pleasure in taking this opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy and help of the Officers of your Council.

W. BAIN, M.B.,B.S.,Lond.,

October 1948.

