

**[Report 1951] / Medical Officer of Health, Tamworth R.D.C.**

**Contributors**

Tamworth (England). Rural District Council.

**Publication/Creation**

1951

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RURAL DISTRICT OF TAMWORTH

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# ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE

## *Health of the District*

For the Year 1951

—BY—

W. D. H. McFARLAND,

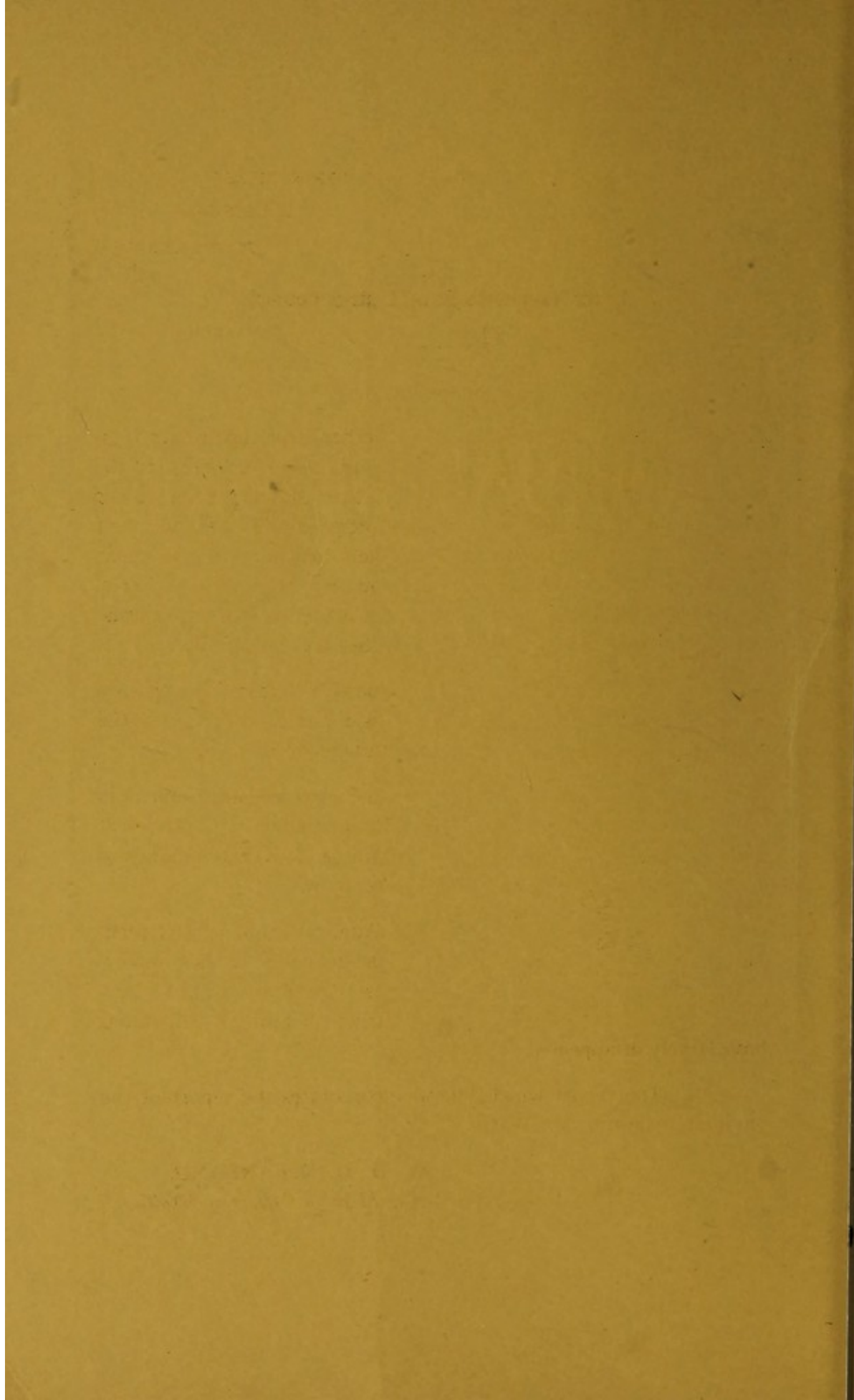
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Tamworth :

W. F. Woodcock & Sons Ltd., Printers, 81, Bolebridge Street.



I, SPRINGFIELDS,  
COLESHILL,

1st August 1952.

**To the Tamworth Rural District Council.**

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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. Once again it is gratifying to be able to record the absence of diphtheria for the fifth year in succession, and also a substantial drop in the number of notified cases of Tuberculosis.

It is also pleasing to observe the marked improvement in the number of new houses built as compared with last year and it is hoped that this improvement will be more than maintained when the figures for the current year are known.

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. The report which follows incorporates the report of the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Watts.

W. D. H. McFARLAND,  
*Acting Medical Officer of Health.*

## TAMWORTH RURAL DISTRICT

**A. EXTRACT FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.**

Population (estimated) Mid-year 1951	...	...	...	16,040
Birth Rate	...	...	...	16.6
Still Births - Rate per 1,000 total births	...	...	...	22.5
Death Rate	...	...	...	11.9
Deaths from Pregnancy, Child-birth, Abortion	...	...	...	Nil.
Death rate of Infants under one year of age :-				
All Infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	...	45
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	...	46
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	...	...	Nil.
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	1
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	2

*Population.* The estimated population of 16,040 is 150 higher than last year.

*Births.* The actual number of live births during the year was 267 of which 144 were males and 123 females. This gives a birth rate of 16.6 per 1,000 of the population which is exactly the same as in 1950. The 1951 rate for England and Wales was 15.5

*Deaths.* The number of deaths allocated to this area for the year was 192 which gives a death rate of 11.9 per 1,000 of the population as compared with 10.4 for the previous year, and 12.5 for England and Wales for 1951.

Table I. at the end of the report gives the causes of death and Table II the Age Incidence of Deaths. The chief causes of death in order of importance were diseases of the heart and circulatory system, cancer and respiratory diseases. These are the same as last year.

There were eight deaths from accidents, in two of which motor vehicles were involved, and three cases of suicide are recorded.

*Infant Mortality.* Deaths of infants under one year totalled 12 (6 males and 6 females) giving an infant mortality rate of 45 per 1,000 live births as compared with 23 for last year and 29.6 for England and Wales for the same period. Of this twelve, six died under four weeks of age.

The causes were :- Broncho Pneumonia (5) Prematurity (4), Congenital Malformations (2) and Infantile Convulsions (1).

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.

#### *Maternal Mortality.*

A noteworthy observation is that no woman died in childbirth in 1951. This is a most creditable reflection on the maternity services.

### **B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.**

#### *Public Health Officers.*

The position regarding staffing is exactly the same as reported by Dr. Macleod last year when he said that he regretted the necessity for referring to the question of staffing for the second year in succession. However, I feel it my duty to again remind the Council of its Statutory obligations as outlined in that report, and express the hope that the Council will, at long last, see their way to effect an improvement before the end of the current year.

### **C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.**

#### *I. Water Supplies.*

Water is supplied to the whole of the district by the following authorities :-

- (a) Tamworth Waterworks Joint Committee.
- (b) South Staffordshire Water Co.
- (c) Birmingham Corporation.

As indicated in the 1950 report, Birmingham Corporation took over on the 1st January the area which was originally supplied by the Council from their supply at Kingsbury.

During the year the quality of water supplied to the public continued to be satisfactory.

All water is chlorinated and regularly sampled either by the respective Water Authority or the Health Department of the Council

During the year seven samples were taken by the Sanitary Inspector from mains and one other source. In all cases the laboratory reports were satisfactory.

Four more houses which were without a piped supply of water indoors had this service installed after Statutory notices had been served.

## II *Drainage and Sewerage.*

It is estimated that some 80% of the population are enjoying the convenience of main sewerage. Of the area where main sewers are available, 50% of the properties are served by the sewers of the Tamworth Sewage Disposal Joint Committee. This area comprises Glascote and parts of Amington and Wilnecote. Sewage Disposal Works are also available to serve the remainder of Amington, Austrey, Kingsbury, Dosthill and Hockley, though all the the sewers are old or running at full capacity so that before many additions are made to the existing facilities, work of renewing, enlarging or improving most of them will have to be considered. In this connection, the Council's Consulting Engineer is at present engaged in the preparation of a scheme to enlarge the Kingsbury works at Cliff which, before long, will have to deal with the drainage from 130 houses on the Councils estate and the effluent from Pit Head Baths at Piccadilly. He is also preparing a report on the areas of Glascote and Wilnecote which drain into the Joint Committee's sewers.

The putting into operation of the Bassetts Pole scheme was delayed through various supply difficulties but it is hoped that this work will be completed during 1952.

Good progress was made with the Middleton scheme and this should be in use in 1952.

Following the Ministry's approval to the Northern Area scheme embracing Austrey, Newton Regis, Seckington and Shuttington, the Council's Engineer and Surveyor has been able to compile the necessary details and go out to tender. It is hoped that the Ministry will approve the tender so that work can be commenced on the appointed day in the Spring of 1952.

During the year work of converting earth closets to W.Cs. or chemical closets was carried out at eight houses.

Eight notices were served with regard to drainage offences under the Public Health Acts and all were complied with.

With the pending completion of the Middleton scheme it is anticipated that more works of drainage will be done during the coming year especially in the form of conversions.

Also during the year it was possible to get extensive works of drainage carried out at a farm where the disposal of its waste had been a source of complaint over a long period. This was solved by taking it to the Council's sewer. Another farm in the district is to be similarly dealt with.

### III *Refuse Collection.*

The system of collecting refuse by direct labour under the control of the Council's Engineer and Surveyor continues to give, as far as the labour problem will allow, a weekly collection in all parishes.

During the year the Council took a big step forward in endeavouring to solve the dust bin problem by adopting Section 35(3) of the Public Health Act, 1936. It is too early to judge the effect of this action as it was not taken until the end of the year, but it is anticipated that the scheme will work smoothly and the collection of refuse thus be maintained at a satisfactory level.

The next problem is likely to be the absence of suitable tipping grounds. The Ninefoot Tip is completely filled and there is a shortage of suitable sites. Of the sites in use no serious infestations from rat, flies or crickets occurred during the year.

### IV *Rodent Control.*

The work of the Council's Rodent Operative continued to be of a highly satisfactory order. As a result of his regular inspections and treatments complaints of infestations were extremely low and very few major infestations were found.

The Sanitary Inspector reports as follows on work carried out during 1951.

"Number of properties in district

Local Authority	...	...	18	
Houses	...	...	4388	
Agricultural	...	...	162	
Business	...	...	320	
			—	4,888

## Number of properties inspected

Local Authority	...	...	18	
Houses	...	...	748	
Agricultural	...	...	25	
Business	...	...	12	
			<hr/>	803

## Number of properties found infested and treated.

a) major infestations ; (b) minor

Local Authority	(a)	3	18
	(b)	15	
Houses	(a)	3	557
	(b)	554	
Agricultural	(a)	0	4
	(b)	4	
Business	(a)	3	12
	(b)	9	
			<hr/>
			591

Bodies found on Tips	...	...	187	
Bodies found on Sewage Works	...	...	141	
Bodies found on Farms	...	...	38	
Bodies found on Business premises	...	...	238	
Bodies found on Surface treatment	...	...	1117	
			<hr/>	1721

The half yearly treatments of the Council's sewers were carried out in June and December, with the following results.

June.	Number of manholes baited	...	203
	Number showing no takes of bait	...	118
	Number showing partial takes of bait	...	63
	Number showing complete takes of bait	...	22
December.	Number of manholes baited	...	235
	Number showing no takes of bait	...	118
	Number showing partial takes of bait	...	87
	Number showing complete takes of bait	...	30

No notices were served during the year, in fact, the co-operation of the public in this work continues to be of the highest order and together with the efficiency and keenness of your operator ensures smooth running of the service."

#### V. *Atmospheric Pollution.*

Reporting on this important work during 1951 the Sanitary Inspector says :-

"During the year the use of three lead peroxide gauges and the deposit gauge were, on the instructions of the Council, discontinued. The second year's readings on the remaining three gauges showed a general decrease over the previous year as follows.

Shuttington	6% decrease
Amington	13% „
Hurley	10% „

The closure of Alvecote Colliery, as anticipated in the 1950 report, took place at the end of June and it is of interest to note that the readings of the Shuttington gauge for the last six months of the year showed a 24% decrease on 1950. As to whether this improvement is entirely due to this event one can but hope, and look forward with renewed interest to future readings.

A reduction of 25% was also observed in the readings at Amington following works of improvement in stoking at a Tamworth factory and again the future should prove interesting.

The general decrease in the amount of sulphur present in the air is welcomed and it is hoped that this improvement in the state of the air in the district will be maintained.

Information is still exchanged with the Meriden Rural District Council and I wish to express my thanks to Mr. R. T. Haines, the Chief Sanitary Inspector for his co-operation."

As it is only by using instruments that we can decide the exact degree of atmospheric pollution and to what extent there is an improvement or otherwise, it is hoped that these gauges will be retained by the Council. These results are sent to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research who issue a very interesting monthly summary giving corresponding figures from many places all over the country. It is only by this means that an atmosphere deleterious to health can be detected and remedial steps taken.

#### D. HOUSING.

During the year 6 houses were erected by private enterprise and 54 by the Council. At the end of the year 12 were under erection by private enterprise and 102 for the Council, work being carried out on sites at Amington, Shuttington, Kingsbury, and Dosthill. These figures show a marked improvement on those reported last year.

During the year 27 cases were reported to the Council as needing sympathetic consideration in re-housing due to overcrowding and health reasons. Of these and cases previously reported, 16 were re-housed and others allocated houses which will be completed in 1952.

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 requirement 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.

With regard to the maintenance of buildings the Sanitary Inspector states "Continued limited progress has been maintained as regards minor repair to properties but the effect of the Rent Restrictions Acts in keeping the rents at a low figure, while the cost of repairs rise, is severely handicapping owners and consequently minimising the work done.

Notices were served in respect of repairs to 12 houses during the year and it was necessary to apply to the Court for an order in the case of two owners. The Court granted the necessary orders and the repairs in all cases were carried out.

One Demolition Order was made during the year but as yet the tenant has not been rehoused."

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

### **1. Food Inspection.**

The following items of food were examined and found unfit for human consumption :-

	lb.	oz.
8 tins cooked ham	120	2½
5 tins other meat (various)	5	12
12 tins tomato soup	6	—
4 tins fruit	7	4
2 tins vegetables	2	6
1 tin fish	—	7½
Cheese	9	—
	<hr/> 151	<hr/> —

1. Case Eggs (seconds).

2. *Slaughterhouses.*

The slaughter and inspection of animals killed for food, (other than bacon pigs killed by householders for their own use), is carried out at the Government Slaughterhouse which is situated in the Borough of Tamworth.

All slaughterhouses in the district are licensed under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Acts and include two knackers yards.

The number of licensed slaughtermen in the district is 44

3. *Food Poisoning.*

There was no case of food poisoning during the year.

4. *Food Hygiene.*

The number of premises registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938 is 42, comprising :-

26 premises for storage and sale of Ice Cream.

6 „ for manufacture, storage and sale of Ice Cream.

10 „ for the preparation and manufacture of sausages.

or potted, pressed, pickled or preserved food intended for sale, including the preparation of meat or fish by any process of cooking.

The standard of cleanliness observed by the one manufacturer of ice cream using the hot mix method continued to be satisfactory, as did the state of the vehicles used for selling the ice cream.

During the year improvements were carried out to one fish frying establishment.

5. *Propaganda.*

In connection with clean food propaganda the Sanitary Inspector gave a talk to the Food Produce Guild of the Warwickshire Branch of the Womens Institutes, and this was much appreciated.

6. *Milk Supplies.*

During the year work was commenced on two new dairies.

The number of licenses granted during the year was :-

Dealers (Sterilized Milk)	4
Dealers (Pasteurized Milk)	6
Dealers (Tuberculin Tested)	2
	—
	12
	==

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	5	3
Number of cows examined	142	55
Number of milk samples for diagnostic purposes	38	12
Number of cows slaughtered under T. B. Order	12	5
Number of cows removed from herds during investigations which may have been infected	3	2

During the year one notice had to be served under the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949.

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

The following table shows the cases of chief infectious diseases notified during 1951 together with their age incidence and deaths.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	NO. OF CASES NOTIFIED.									Total Cases Re- moved to Hospit <sup>l</sup>	TOTAL DEATHS.
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.									
		Under 1	1—5	5—15	15—25	25—45	45—65	65 and upwards			
Measles ....	298	8	172	117	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Whooping Cough ....	206	18	130	58	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Pneumonia ....	19	4	1	2	—	2	1	9	2	9	
Scarlet Fever ....	13	—	1	10	1	1	—	—	9	—	
Erysipelas ....	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	
Acute Poliomyelitis :											
Paralytic ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Non-paralytic ...	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	
Meningococcal Infection ...	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	
Dysentery ...	5	—	2	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ....	8	—	—	1	3	2	2	—	7	2	
Other forms of Tuberculosis	4	—	1	—	2	1	—	—	2	1	
TOTALS ....	557	30	307	192	8	6	5	9	22	15	

### *Diphtheria.*

For the fifth year in succession the district was free from diphtheria.

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 181 children under 5 years of age and by 43 children between the ages of 5 and 14 years, a total of 224.

In addition 121 children were given a re-inforcing or "booster" dose.

The majority of these immunisations were carried out at Welfare Centres and Schools.

I am pleased to say that the figures for the full primary course of immunisation showed a useful increase on those recorded last year.

#### *Acute Poliomyelitis.*

Fortunately only one case occurred during the year and this was non-paralytic in type. A seven year old boy at Wilnecote was involved, and he made a satisfactory recovery.

#### *Whooping Cough.*

There were 206 notified cases with two 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.

*School Closures - NIL.*

#### PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, TUBERCULOSIS.

AGE-PERIODS.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	<i>Pulmonary.</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary.</i>		<i>Pulmonary.</i>		<i>Non-Pulmonary.</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 ....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 ....	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
5 ....	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
15 ....	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
25 ....	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
35 ....	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45 ....	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
55 ....	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ....	4	4	3	1	2	—	—	1

The marked drop in the number of notifications of both Pulmonary and Non-Pulmonary cases of tuberculosis is perhaps the most satisfactory feature of this report. Last year the figures were Pulmonary 13 cases, Non-Pulmonary 10, as against 8 Pulmonary and 4 Non-Pulmonary this time. The number of deaths has also decreased from 6 to 3.

It is greatly to be hoped that this gratifying improvement will be maintained during the present year.

### FACTORIES

The numbers on the registers are :-

- (1) Factories in which sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the Factories Act are to be enforced by the Council—13.
- (2) Factories not included above in which Section 7 is enforced by the Council—41.
- (3) Works of General Engineering, Building Operations etc.—7  
No flagrant breach of the regulations was found.

### CANAL BOATS.

The Sanitary Inspector reports as follows :-

"Visits have been made to the various docks and wharves for the purpose of examining canal boats. Apart from coal barges traffic has been very light and consequently very few boats have been examined.

During the year one registration was surrendered and cancelled leaving a total on the register of 145.

Of six boats inspected, only five were occupied at the time of inspection. These were registered for occupation by 15 persons but were actually occupied by 13 persons made up as follows :-

Male adults	4
Female adults	4
Children	
aged 2 years	1
aged 3 years	1
aged 6 years	2
aged 10	1
	—
	13
	—

No requests for certificates of completion of repairs were received from yards in the area.

Contraventions were met with in two boats, in both the cabins were not weather proof.

No boat was found to be carrying offensive cargo, and as no infectious disease was met with, no boats were detained for disinfection.

TABLE I.  
TAMWORTH RURAL DISTRICT.  
CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR 1951.

<i>Cause of Death.</i>	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females</i>
All Causes ... ..	98	94
1. Tuberculosis respiratory ... ..	2	—
2. Tuberculosis, other ... ..	—	1
3. Syphilitic disease ... ..	—	—
4. Diphtheria ... ..	—	—
5. Whooping Cough ... ..	—	2
6. Meningococcal infections ... ..	—	—
7. Acute Poliomyelitis ... ..	—	—
8. Measles ... ..	1	—
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—
10. Malignant neoplasm, stomach ...	2	1
11. Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	2	—
12. Malignant neoplasm, breast ... ..	1	2
13. Malignant neoplasm, uterus ... ..	—	2
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	5	5
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia ... ..	1	1
16. Diabetes ... ..	—	1
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system ...	6	8
18. Coronary disease, angina ... ..	12	7
19. Hypertension with heart disease ...	3	4
20. Other heart disease ... ..	10	22
21. Other circulatory disease ... ..	1	1
22. Influenza ..... ..	5	5
23. Pneumonia ... ..	4	5
24. Bronchitis ... ..	7	5
25. Other diseases of respiratory system	2	—
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum ...	4	—
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea ...	—	1
28. Nephritis and nephrosis ... ..	2	1
29. Hyperplasia of prostate ... ..	6	—
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion ...	—	—
31. Congenital malformations ... ..	—	2
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	14	14
33. Motor vehicle accidents ... ..	2	—
34. All other accidents ... ..	3	3
35. Suicide ... ..	3	—
36. Homicide and operations of war ...	—	1

TABLE II.  
TAMWORTH RURAL DISTRICT.  
AGE INCIDENCE OF DEATHS.

	Under 4 weeks	4 weeks—1 year	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	2	4	2	1	3	1	—	9	16	31	25	4	—	—	98
FEMALE	4	2	2	1	1	2	2	5	13	25	30	6	1	—	94
TOTALS	6	6	4	2	4	3	2	14	29	56	55	10	1	—	192
Percent- age	3·1	3·1	2·1	1·0	2·1	1·6	1·0	7·3	15·2	29·1	28·7	5·2	0·5	—	—

TABLE III.

## SUMMARY OF VISITS BY SANITARY INSPECTOR

Water Supplies and Sampling	...	...	26
Drainage (including sampling)	...	...	140
Piggeries	...	...	10
Food Premises (Shops, etc.)	...	...	32
Miscellaneous Food Visits	...	...	29
Moveable Dwellings	...	...	12
Canal Boats	...	...	7
Factories (including Bakehouses)	...	...	21
Licensed Premises	...	...	5
Refuse	...	...	26
Atmospheric Pollution	...	...	89
Petroleum Acts	...	...	17
Housing	...	...	399
Infectious Diseases	...	...	31
Dairies	...	...	17
Milk (Samples, etc.)	...	...	23
Miscellaneous	...	...	100
			<hr/>
Total			984
			<hr/>



