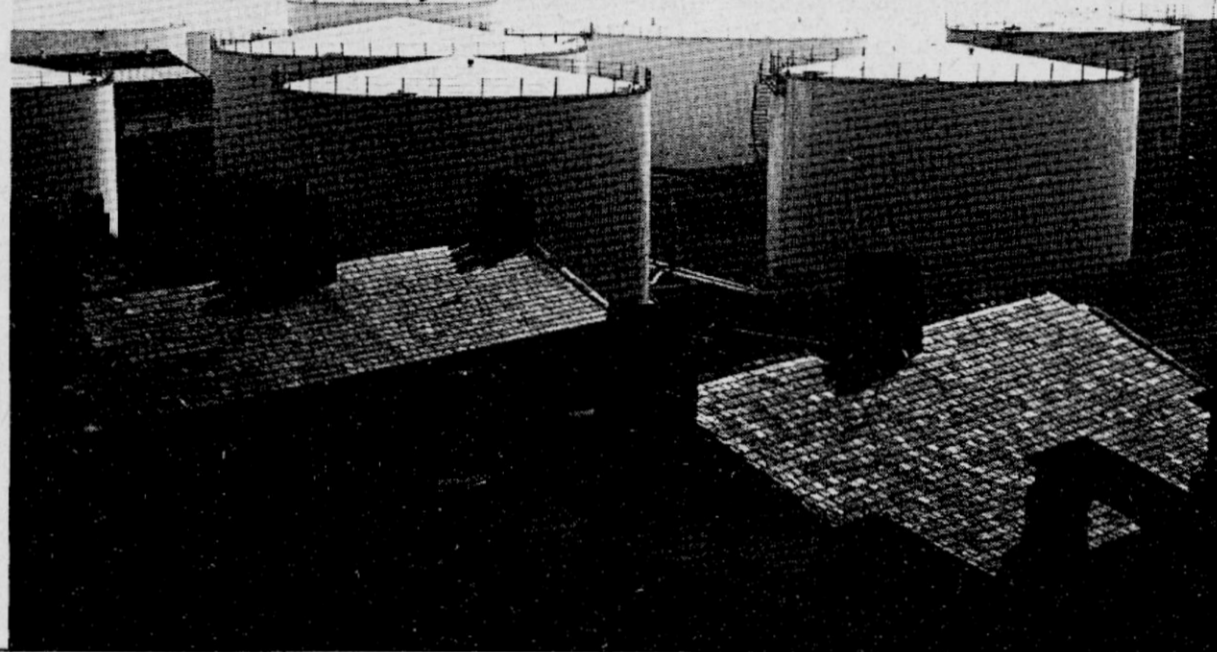


NAPTHA GAS, NOISE, OIL TANKS, RADIOACTIVITY...

[Picture: John Bossons



AND NOW SEWAGE!

Hospital bed crisis angers doctors

LIVERPOOL—a city with one of the highest disease and mortality rates in the country—has been ordered by the Department of Health, in London, to drastically reduce the number of hospital beds by 1973.

The Department's growing pressure to get the number of beds reduced has come at a time when doctors throughout the city are experiencing increasing difficulty in finding beds for emergency cases.

The number of beds in Liverpool's hospitals exceeds the national average: Locally, there are more than five per thousand people; nationally the figure is 3.3 per thousand.

But deaths from lung cancer, pneumonia, heart disease and bronchitis are far higher in the Liverpool area than elsewhere in the country.

The number of people who have to be admitted for general surgery is 9% higher than the national average, and the waiting time is now nine weeks.

The number of people admitted to Liverpool hospitals for bronchitis

The long wait for a hospital bed— Pages Six and Seven.

and other chest illnesses is double the national average. More men die from bronchitis in Liverpool than anywhere else. Only in Manchester do more women die from the same disease.

In theory the reduced supply of beds is to be compensated for by increased community health services. But most of these services are provided by the local authority, and Liverpool's Personal Health and Social Services Department is in a desperate financial position.

The department has said there is a need for 250 hostel places for the mentally handicapped—only eleven are provided at present.

Liverpool's local medical committee have opposed the Department of Health's proposals. The committee have attacked the purely financial reasons used to reach the decision that Liverpool has too many hospital beds.

Not enough attention has been paid to the local factors that make Liverpool a special case, says the committee. Unemployment is nearly twice the national figure. Liverpool's housing problem is among the worst in the country.

These factors worsen the health of the city and the ability of families to look after sick relatives.

THE DINGLE has been chosen by nearly 50 local authorities to become the sewage capital of the North-West.

The local authorities in Lancashire and Cheshire have together prepared plans to store three million tons of sewage each year in open tanks in the Dingle.

The raw and partially treated sewage will be pumped to a giant farm sited only yards away from the streets of terraced houses and tenements — if a detailed report now in the hands of Liverpool Corporation is accepted.

But passengers on the Mersey ferries have been spared from the evil stench of the sewage works. The report considered a site near Cammell Laird's shipyard but rejected it because of "the obnoxious nature of sewage sludge and the proximity of the passenger landing stage."

That obnoxious sewage sludge is

now likely to be dumped upon the Dingle community — where, the experts will doubtless argue, the people will soon grow accustomed to the odour.

The mammoth sewage works — with the capacity to hold a fortnight's supply of North-West turds — will compete with the other attractions already well established in the Dingle:

- The naphtha gas tanks which leaked 600,000 gallons of highly inflammable gas last June.
- The forest of oil storage tanks above and below ground.
- The radioactive materials stored in the Herculeaneum dock.
- The noisy, round-the-clock gravel operations in the Herculeaneum dock.

Two large tanks — containing 12,000 tons of sewage — will stand only ten yards from houses in

Garswood Street and Cockburn St. The other open storage tanks will be on 25 acres of land immediately alongside the oil storage tanks.

In the Corporation's plans for the future the area will remain residential.

Throughout the report — prepared by consultants for the North-West Sludge Disposal Consortium — the smell nuisance to people living in the Dingle is not disguised.

The tanks near Garswood St "would be in everyday use and in view of their location close to dwellings it would be necessary to provide them with roofs to prevent smell nuisance." The tanks will also be fitted with ventilators.

By the year 2001 the local authorities hope to be pumping 6 million tons of sewage a year down 180

(Continued on Page Two)

MORE MUCK— MORE BRASS

A NEW and larger ship has taken the place of the poison chemical ship 'Kinder' in Herculeaneum Dock.

The 'Mabelstan', which is shortly to be renamed 'Berwyn' began duties on March 13. The size of the Mabelstan (696 gross tons, compared with the Kinder's 465) and the higher dock charges it will be paying (£41.10 Per trip compared with £27.30 for the Kinder) show how the chemical dumping business is flourishing.

Effluent Services Ltd, who owned the Kinder, are one of two main companies operating from Liverpool.

Dockers fight the Act

LIVERPOOL DOCKERS and road transport workers are still united in their defiance of the Industrial Relations Court.

The court has forbidden the blacking of lorries carrying containers loaded by non-dock labour into Liverpool docks, and fined the Transport and General Workers' Union £5,000 for refusing to appear before the court.

But the dockers and transport workers have no plans for stopping their purge — started on March 20 — of transport employers who operate container warehouses outside any agreement conceding the

Background to the docks dispute— Page Three

dockers' right to load and unload containers.

The purge has also been aimed at ensuring that all drivers hold 1972 union cards, and are receiving the local union rate.

The Industrial Relations Court has picked the toughest battlefield in the country for testing its power — and the dockers and transport workers are united in their determination to defeat the court.

Sir John Donaldson — £14,000-a-year court president — was mistaken in his verdict when he said there was a dispute between the dockers and other labour.

There is no dispute between the dockers and transport drivers — they are solidly united.

The court has issued injunctions to two local transport firms, Heaton's of St Helens (whose boss, Robert Heaton, is former chairman of the North-West Haulage Association) and Bishops Wharf (a subsidiary of the massive Transport Development Group).

The injunctions are supposed to stop the blacking of the lorries at the Gladstone container terminal.

But the court have misfired their first shots completely by presenting an injunction to the Transport and General Workers Union. The joint committee are not under the jurisdiction of the T & G or any of its officers.

Still no joy

After the injunctions had been out several days Heaton's found two lorries still weren't getting any joy at Gladstone dock.

One member of the joint committee told the Free Press: "We aren't stopping the lorries coming into the docks, and we aren't stopping them load or unload."

"All we are saying is that they won't get the assistance of the crane drivers, the straddle-carrier operators etc.

"If a driver wants to, he can try and take the container off the waggon on his own."

The great airport race

Can your car do 90 m.p.h. in a built-up area? — It may need to if the airport planners are right. They claim you can drive over six miles from the city centre to Speke airport in ten minutes. That's averaging 36 m.p.h. in a 30 limit — even in the rush hour. It's just one of the daft things the planners have fumbled over. We tried to do it one quiet Sunday morning, but chickened out when we found it meant doing over 70 m.p.h. down Aigburth Boulevard.

For the low-down on more incredible tales about the airport see page six.