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CLYDEBANK IN THE INTER-WAR YEARS:

A STUDY IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE

by

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Carrick Watson

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ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Clydebank Press
CTCM	Clydebank Town Council Minutes

These sources are held in Clydebank Public Library

SUMMARY

The main theme of this thesis is the social, economic and political response of a single community to economic dislocation in the inter-war years. The community under consideration is Clydebank.

The thesis is divided into several parts. Part I establishes the development of the burgh and considers the physical framework of the community, mainly in the years before 1919. The town's characteristics are examined in terms of population structure and development between the world wars. In the last part of this section there is a review of the economic structure of the burgh and changes occurring in it between 1919 and 1939.

In Part II consideration is given to the actual extent and form of the unemployment affecting Clydebank at this time, and comparison is made with other communities and geographic/economic areas. Attention is then focussed more narrowly on the actual individuals suffering unemployment in the burgh during the 1930s, in an attempt to personalise the experience of the unemployed.

Part III reviews central and local government responses to the situation in which Clydebank found itself between 1919 and 1939. Central government policies discussed include unemployment insurance, public works, the Special Areas legislation, assistance in the construction of the 534 "Queen Mary" and the direction of financial support to areas of particular need. Amongst local authority actions described are additional local support for the poor, public works, efforts to attract new industry to the town, attempts to deal with the housing problem which was particularly acute at times of high unemployment and measures to maintain health standards in the community.

In Part IV the responses of the community to unemployment and government policies are detailed. The burgh's commercial sector is surveyed as are developments in leisure provision, religion, temperance and crime, and local politics. A number of individual responses are also given consideration such as migration, commuting, changes in birth and marriage rates and suicide.

In the final part of the thesis several conclusions are discussed. In the first place Clydebank was not as badly affected by unemployment in the inter-war years as hitherto believed - in many ways the town was a relatively prosperous place. This in turn suggests the need for further local studies to discover whether Clydebank's experience was as anomalous as it would seem to have been. Secondly, though the burgh was a pocket of relative prosperity in an area of depression, severe unemployment did affect the town in the early 1920s and early 1930s, when a large proportion of the working population, including skilled men, found themselves unemployed. Generally however it was the low paid/unskilled man who suffered most, whether in periods of depression or not, since he was the least able to retain work and enjoy the benefits which comparative prosperity helped to bring to the area such as the growth of high amenity council housing.

Next, though unemployment played a considerable part in the timing of many of the changes which took place in inter-war Clydebank, other factors such as government policy or the town's legacy from its past were equally important in causing such change. Fourthly the strains which variations in employment levels put on the fabric of the community need not cause a breakdown of that fabric - though it has to be admitted that the case of Clydebank was not necessarily typical. In the fifth place assumptions about economic conditions generated by national or regional averages need not be applicable at a local level, and this must be recognised if attempts are being made to ameliorate the problems of economic dislocation. To this end more local studies of a contemporary and/or historical nature are needed. Lastly attempts by central government to deal with unemployment can be underpinned by its actions in other, apparently unrelated, areas as was shown in Clydebank, for example in the provision of finance to improve the quality of the local housing stock which helped to weaken the strains in the community fabric caused by poor quality housing exacerbated by unemployment.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to consider the impact of economic dislocation, in particular as the initiator of change and as the instigator of economic and social problems. In view of the considerable literature already existing relative to the national level, it was felt more apposite that any such investigation should consider the experience of a local community. Such an approach was thought to have a particular contribution to make in view of the comparative lack of such local studies. It was decided that investigation should be made into the situation in the period between the two World Wars as the problems of economic dislocation certainly existed at that time and information was relatively readily available. However sufficient time had passed to allow a comparatively objective consideration of the problem.

As it developed, the thesis came to consider the view, propounded by contemporary observers¹ and modern textbooks², that established, often single industry, communities in Northern Britain suffered to a greater extent than those in the South from the problem of unemployment and its consequences in the inter-war period.

The local community chosen for study was Clydebank. This choice was based on the fact that the town was known to have suffered considerably from unemployment between the wars - indeed as a community in Northern Britain basically reliant on shipbuilding and engineering it seemed likely to have been particularly affected by the adverse economic circumstances of this period. Equally, such severe and prolonged dislocation had, in popular belief and in the general historiography of the inter-war period, produced deleterious effects on the population, on the local economic structure, on the community spirit and on general health and standards of life. The result of the present research shows that considerable revision of the conventional view of the town's experiences between 1919-1939 is now necessary, and that there is a possibility that, in at least some aspects, this revision may be extended beyond the geographical and chronological boundaries of the study.

During the time of the research a variety of questions arose relevant to the accepted view of the experience of Clydebank as a single industry community in Northern Britain in the period under investigation. Was it in fact a single industry town and to what extent was it affected

by unemployment throughout the period rather than simply during the depths of depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s? The study made confirmed that the economic structure of the town was dependent on the old established shipbuilding and engineering industries, but that a great variation in unemployment levels existed and for a substantial part of the inter-war period the town was considerably less severely affected by unemployment and was more prosperous than the general literature might suggest.

A further aspect of the investigation undertaken was to examine the extent to which changes were occurring in the burgh community concurrently with the stresses imposed upon its social fabric by, at times, severe economic problems. Indeed change was found to be occurring in a variety of areas, such as the expansion of the local authority housing stock, the development of the commercial sector, the growth of recreational provision, the ebb and flow of migration, changes in the birth rate and the local political developments which occurred in the rise to prominence of new political philosophies. Yet two conclusions were evident from this study of change. Firstly in some areas there was no significant change; community health standards remained static as did total population levels. The local economy remained very dependent on shipbuilding and engineering throughout the period and attitudes towards the unemployed remained relatively sympathetic. Secondly, it became clear that unemployment was by no means the only causal factor behind change in the burgh at this time. While its influence on the timing of developments may have been significant, it was by no means the only cause of the evident changes which took place in the town. Other influences such as relative prosperity in the area, government policy and national trends played an equally if not more significant part.

The research carried out demonstrates that the reality of the inter-war period in Clydebank was rather different from the accepted views sustained by folk memory and enshrined in general surveys of national average trends. The community in Clydebank, relative to others in much of Northern Britain, was less badly affected by unemployment and its attendant problems, except during the periods of deepest depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s. In fact unemployment rates suggest that in some years comparisons with areas in the southern part of Britain where the "new industries" were established, would not be unreasonable.

Similarly the experience of inter-war Clydebank gives a negative reply to the suggestion that severe economic dislocation must result in the break up of the social fabric of the local community. The evidence from the burgh, even from periods of particular distress, points to the conclusion that community life was maintained at a level acceptable to the great majority of town citizens throughout the inter-war years.

Thirdly, government action has a two-fold impact on unemployment. Policies aimed at dealing with the problem had, in the case of Clydebank at least, a restricted effect. However the policies of central government in areas apparently divorced from direct connections with unemployment, eg housing, may well both have some effect on unemployment levels and, more importantly, strengthen the ability of the community to withstand the stresses generated by economic dislocation.

Perhaps most importantly, since Clydebank's inter-war experience diverged considerably from accepted national and regional averages, any attempt to deal with economic dislocation and its effects must take such divergence into account. To ignore local variations in the acceptance of a generalised overview must be to reduce the effectiveness of attempts to ameliorate distress following on unemployment and its associated problems.

Thus the present research has given rise to a number of findings. In relation to Clydebank itself, the traditional picture of its experience between the wars is too gloomy. At times, large scale problems of unemployment existed - but equally at other times considerable employment opportunities were to be found within the burgh's established economic structure. Significant developments associated as much with prosperity as with poverty occurred - amongst these were the growth of the town council's housing stock, increased recreational provision, the maintenance of the commercial sector and above average local provision for the poor. This comparative prosperity helped to ensure that the fabric of the local community was relatively unscathed by the experience of severe depression in the early 1920s and particularly the early 1930s.

It may be that the need to reassess the inter-war experience of Clydebank has lessons for contemporary Britain. Unemployment need not have an enduring effect on a community. Central government has an important role to play in dealing with unemployment and its attendant problems both through its actions directly related to the problem and in other areas. Lastly, studies on the impact of unemployment and of attempts to deal with the problem must address themselves to the local as well as the regional level.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Many examples of this could be given such as the Ministry of Labour Report for the Year 1937, Cmd 5717, 1938, pp 4-5 or J B Priestley, English Journey, (London 1934), pp 397-399.
- 2 Again this view can be found in a wide variety of textbooks such as R K Webb, Modern England, (London 1969), pp 527-528 or S Glynn and J Oxborrow, Interwar Britain: A Social and Economic History, (London 1976), pp 152-153.

PART I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLYDEBANK

CHAPTER ONE

THE TOWN

1.1 Origins to 1919

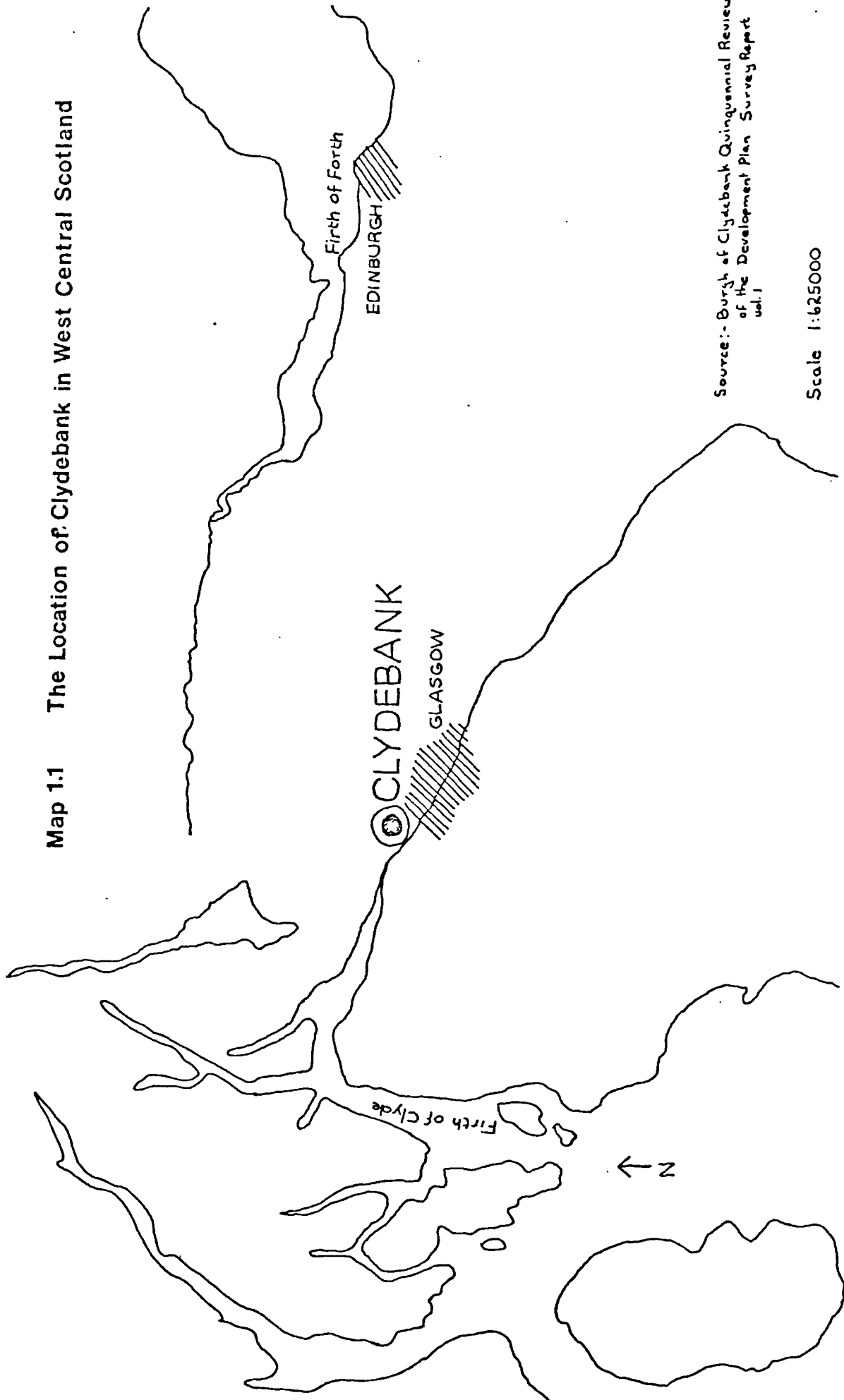
The town of Clydebank¹ is situated on the western boundary of the city of Glasgow (see map 1.1 p. 2). It is only right that the name of this relatively "new" town should incorporate the name of the river on which it stands, for without the river the town would not exist. There was no such town in the 1840s when the parish in which it is situated, Old Kilpatrick, was described in the New Statistical Account. The parish minister, the Rev Matthew Barclay wrote:

"In sailing down the river, as we pass Renfrew Ferry, near which the parish begins, at the village of Yoker, the country is flat and well cultivated, having all the appearance of land that will repay the skill and toil of the husbandman. At this part the whole breadth of the parish is seen rising with a gentle slope to the upper boundary. As we proceed down the river, the part in view is still fertile and well cultivated, but begins to be narrowed by the enclosing hills, so that by the time the navigator sweeps past the parish church and the village of Old Kilpatrick, the base of the hills comes nearly to the water's edge. At the part of the parish farthest down the river, it opens up again into a plain of considerable extent²."

The burgh of Clydebank did not then exist, though a number of villages which were later incorporated into the town did. Some were included in the author's list of villages of the parish, "Old Kilpatrick, Bowling, Little Mill, Milton, Dumbuck, Dalmuir, Dalmuir Shore, Yoker, Duntocher, Faifley and Hardgate³." It was mainly in these villages that the local manufacturing industries were carried out such as textiles, bleaching and dyeing, distilling and, most significantly for the future, ship-building at Bowling and Little Mill.

It was in the "fertile and well cultivated" land where it began "to be narrowed by the enclosing hills"⁴ that in 1871 the firm of J & G Thomson bought the farm of West Barns o' Clyde as the site of their new shipyard. They had had to move their yard from Govan because of the development of Princes Dock, and had brought many of their workers with them. The housing which developed for the workforce of this yard formed the nucleus of what was to become the burgh of Clydebank. Urban growth was further stimulated with the establishment by other firms of works in the area - between 1877 and 1905 the firm of Napier, Shanks and Bell (renamed Napier and Miller in 1899) operated a shipyard at East Barns o' Clyde; more importantly, between 1882 and 1884 the Singer Manufacturing Company erected a large sewing machine factory at Kilbowie, to the north-west of J and G Thomson's yard. By 1899 the Thomson yard had been taken over

Map 1.1 The Location of Clydebank in West Central Scotland



Source:- Burgh of Clydebank Quinquennial Review
of the Development Plan Survey Report
vol.1

Scale 1:625000

by John Brown and Co. Ltd., of Sheffield, to become the firm with which the name of the town became closely linked. Finally in 1905 the trio of major Clydebank employers was completed when Beardmore's shipyard opened in Dalmuir, the one-time village which had by then been incorporated into the expanding burgh.

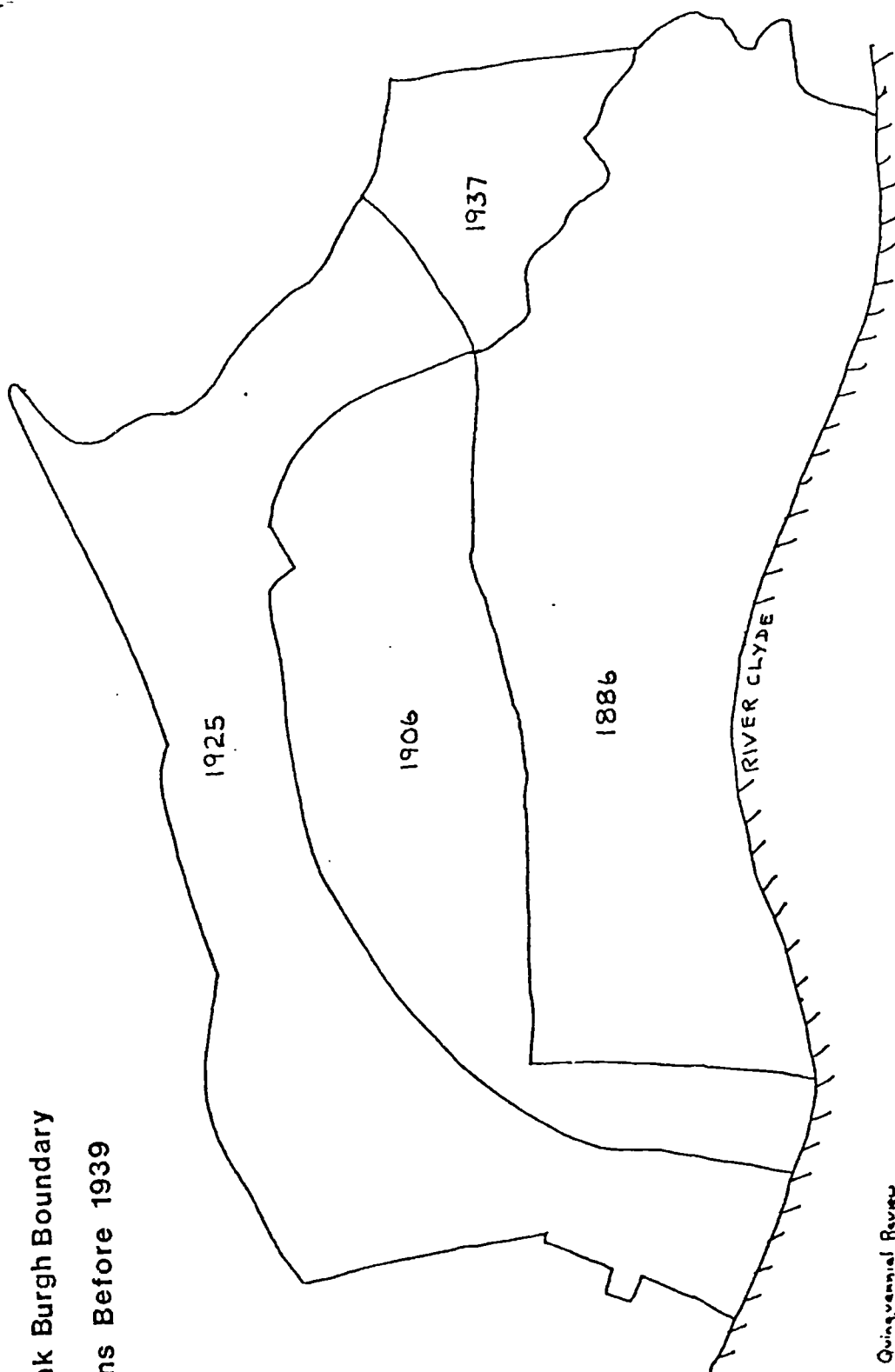
In 1886 the developing town was formed into a police burgh under the General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act 1862⁵. With over 5000 inhabitants the town came within the definition of a populous place under the Act. As a result, after a public meeting and poll, police commissioners and magistrates were elected with the power to raise rates. Initially these rates were used for watching, lighting, paving, cleansing and water supply. In 1906 the town council was set up to take over the powers and duties of the 1886 commissioners under the Town Councils' (Scotland) Acts 1900 and 1903⁶.

The original boundary of the police burgh ran from Yoker in the east, parallel with but some distance to the north of the Forth and Clyde Canal, to Dalmuir in the west (see map 1.2 p. 4). In 1906 the boundaries were extended to take in land to the north and west of the town and the number of town wards was increased from four to five. Such physical expansion, but much more its population growth to 38,000 in 1911, entitle Clydebank to claim that it was one of Scotland's pre-1914 boom towns. Its apposite nickname of the early 20th century, "the risingest burgh"⁷, seems justified in view of its growing population and the importance of its industries.

Industrially, the town grew on a heavy engineering base, and the reasons for this growth were connected with the town's geographical location near Glasgow, providing a workforce and markets, and its transport and communication facilities. J and G Thomson's yard had been built on the West Barns o' Clyde site partly because it lay directly opposite the mouth of the River Cart, permitting the launch of larger ships than would otherwise have been the case. The River Clyde itself, on which dock facilities were soon built⁸, was a major commercial artery. The Forth and Clyde Canal passed through the growing town, though it was obsolescent by the town's boom period. There was significant railway⁹ provision in the area with the lines operated by the North British Railway Company and the Caledonian Railway Company - these were the Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railway (opened 1896), the Glasgow, Yoker and Clydebank Railway (opened 1880) and the Glasgow, Dumbarton and Helensburgh Railway (opened 1858). After the reorganisation of 1921 these lines were operated by the London, Midland and Scottish (LMSR), London

Map 1.2 Clydebank Burgh Boundary

Extensions Before 1939



Source:- Burgh of Clydebank Quinquennial Review
of the Development Plan Survey Report
vol. I map 1.1

Scale 1:25000

and North Eastern Railway (LNER) companies. The road network was extensive with the main Glasgow - Dumbarton road passing through the town, prior to the inter-war construction of the Great Western Road or Boulevard which skirted the northern boundary of the burgh.

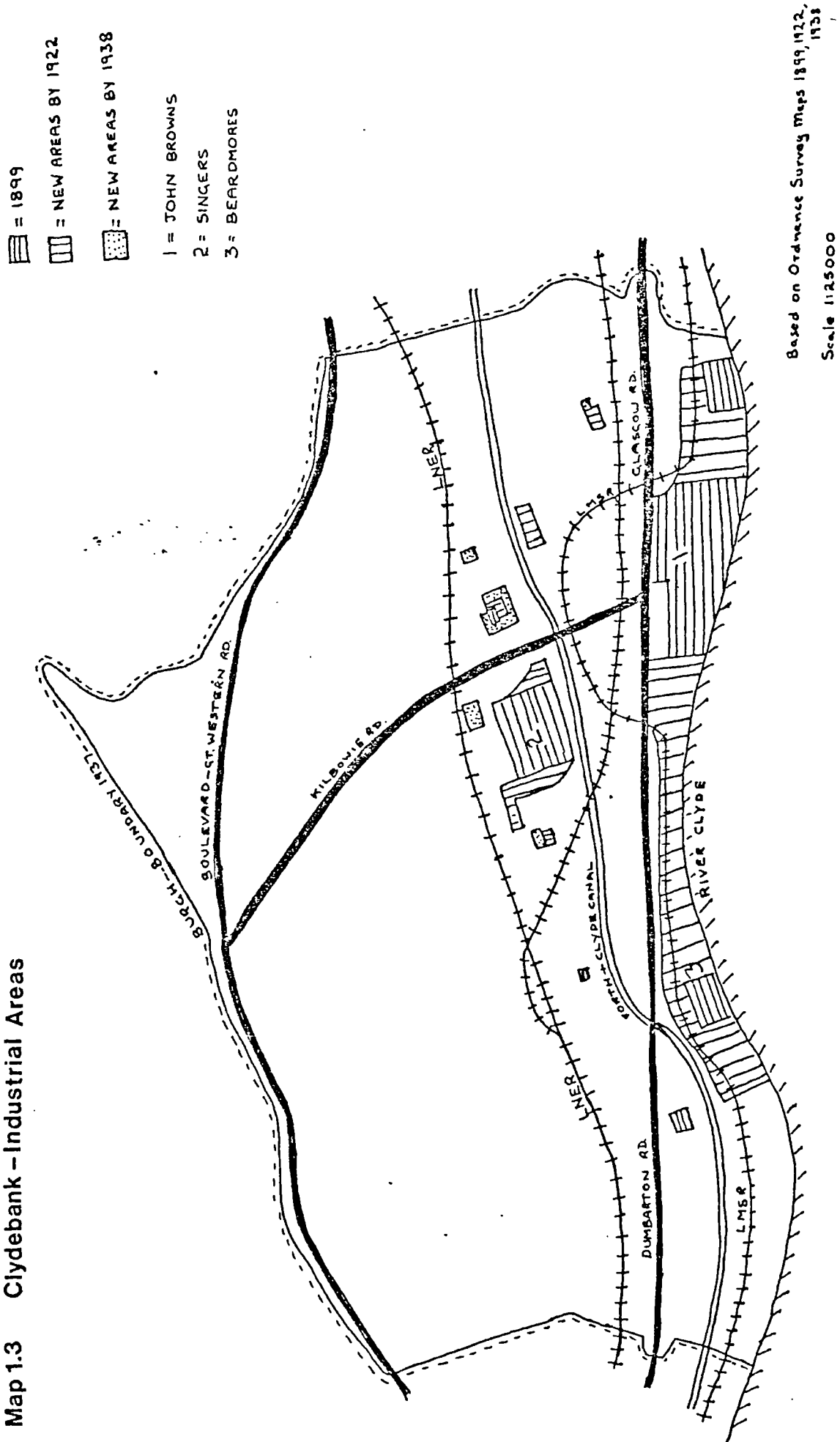
The geography of the area and the transport facilities affected the physical make-up of the early town. Roads, railways and canal were built on the flat land near to the river, avoiding the hills which lie close by. Industrially, two ribbons of land use developed, one next to the river and the other beside the railway and canal (see map 1.3 p. 6). The earliest industrial areas (occupied by J and G Thomson, Napiers, Singers and a small group consisting of print, iron and dredger works) were situated in the east, centre and west of the early town. The Singer factory was immediately to the north of Dumbarton Road, flanked by the canal and the Glasgow, Dumbarton and Helensburgh and the Lanarkshire and Dumbartonshire Railways. The other industrial area lay to the south of Dumbarton Road, at the side of the river. The increase which took place in the industrial area of the town in the early 20th century was largely restricted to this southern area next to the river, mainly as a result of the establishment of Beardmores in Dalmuir. By 1922 there had also been expansion of the Singer plant and a number of smaller firms in the chemical and engineering sectors had been set up, again in relatively close proximity to the river.

The area and configuration of industrial land use was a powerful influence on the development of housing areas in the earlier years of the town. Initially housing provision for the rapidly growing population was constricted to the suitable building land between the river industrial area and the canal (see map 1.4 p. 7). The original tenemental core of the town was built by private enterprise and grew up in the vicinity of Thomson's yard at the eastern end of the burgh, to house the workforce. With the building of the Singer factory in the 1880s urban growth took place nearer the western edge of the town and on flat land to the north of the canal. In fact, until after World War I, housebuilding was basically restricted to the area below the 50' raised beach level. Thus the early town developed in a long and narrow form, incorporating the village of Dalmuir in the west.

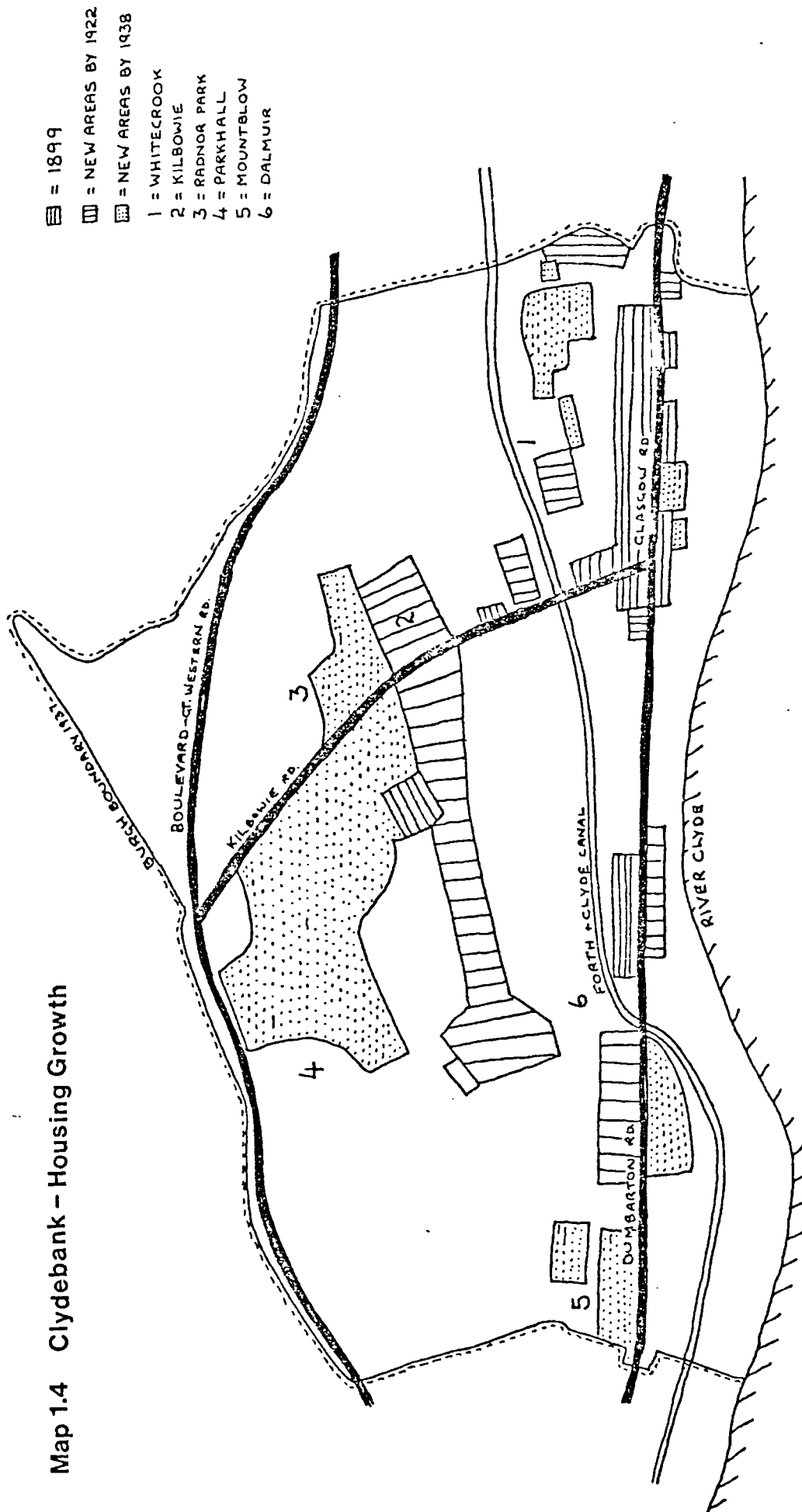
1.2 The Inter-War Years

This section briefly indicates changes affecting the burgh in the years 1919-1939, many of which will be considered in more detail in later chapters. The first area of change to be dealt with concerns the physical

Map 1.3 Clydebank - Industrial Areas



Map 1.4 Clydebank - Housing Growth



Based on Ordnance Survey Maps 1899, 1922, 1938
Scale 1:25000

extent of the town. In 1925 the burgh boundaries were extended to take in 770 acres to the north-east and west of the 1906 boundaries, increasing the area of the town to 2194 acres. This new land comprised Dalnottar, Mountblow, Auchentoshan, North East Kilbowie and the area to the south of Milton Mains and Braidfield Farms. The town boundaries were further extended in 1937 when 153 acres to the north of Whitecrook were added to the town (see map 1.2 p. 4). Thus in the inter-war period there was a considerable increase in the physical size of the town, incorporating areas in which new housing was to be built.

At the same time in 1923 and 1933 the boundaries of the town's five wards were altered, (see maps 1.5 p. 9 and 1.6 p. 10), as the town extended to the north into areas of higher land which had previously been avoided because of the greater difficulty of building on them. An approximate description of the areas covered by the town's wards from 1933 is given below.

Ward 1 - Whitecrook and the eastern part of the old burgh.

Ward 2 - the central part of the old burgh and a section of Dalmuir.

Ward 3 - the area to the north of Whitecrook and to the east of
Kilbowie Road.

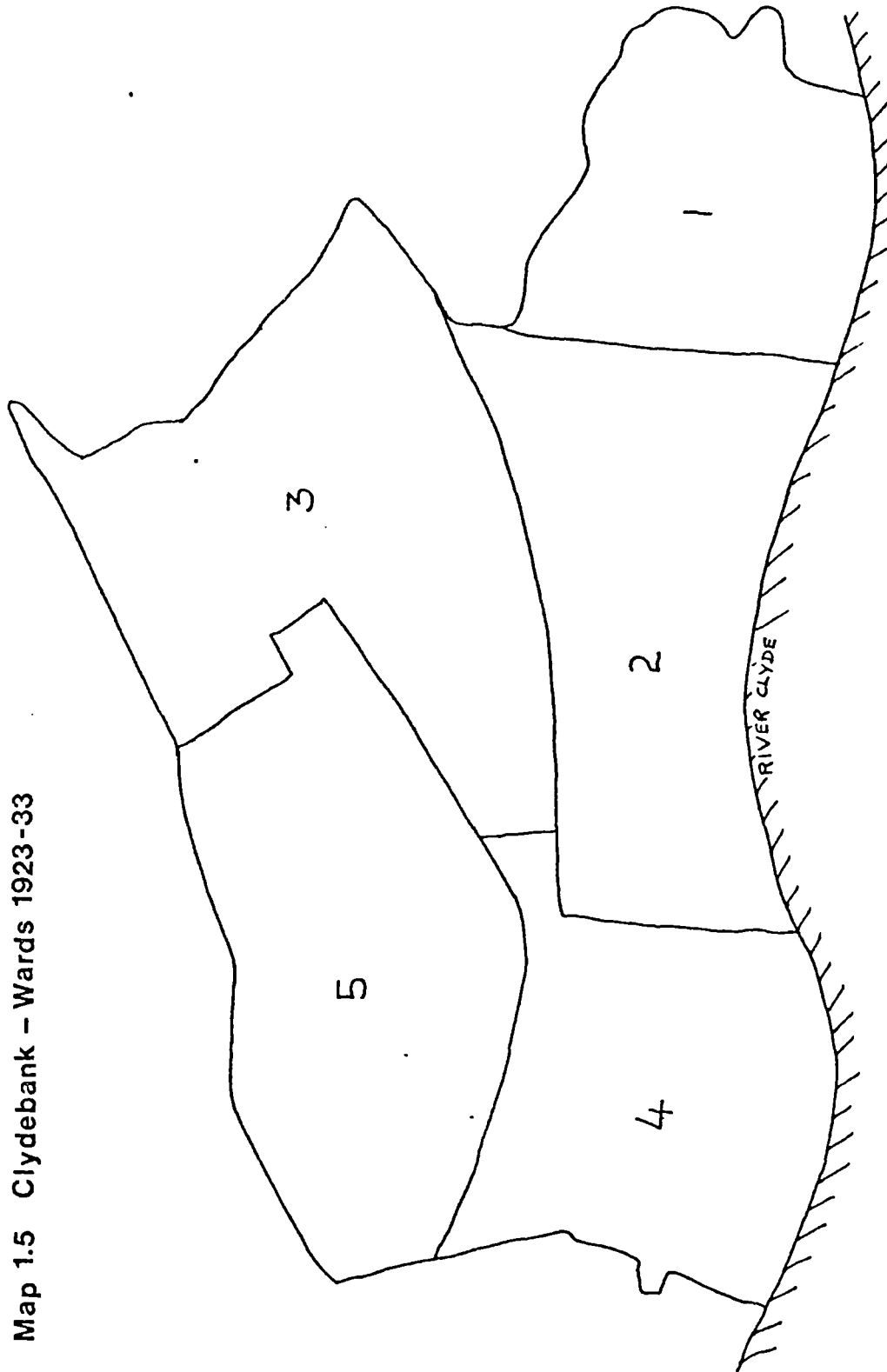
Ward 4 - Mountblow, the western part of Dalmuir and the western area
of Parkhall.

Ward 5 - the remainder of Parkhall and Radnor Park to the north of
Kilbowie.

The cause of such alterations was housing development. In common with the normal contemporary pattern, housing development prior to World War 1 had been almost exclusively private - only 28 council houses were built in that period - and very little of this was for owner occupation. By the end of the war it had become clear that population pressure and rising expectations of the quality of housing necessitated a substantial housebuilding programme.

However it was equally clear that, after 1919, the private sector would not occupy its former predominant position in the provision of new lower cost rented accommodation. To a considerable extent this was a result of the continued operation of the war-time Rent Restriction Acts in the post-war situation, which meant that private enterprise no longer found it profitable to build houses for rent in working class areas. Thus, after 1919, a new national acceptance developed of the provision of housing for rent by local authorities, exemplified by the introduction¹⁰ of several Housing Acts, such as those of 1919, 1924 and 1930, to encourage such house-building. In this way new housing areas developed in Clydebank in the inter-war period to the north and west of the old

Map 1.5 Clydebank – Wards 1923-33



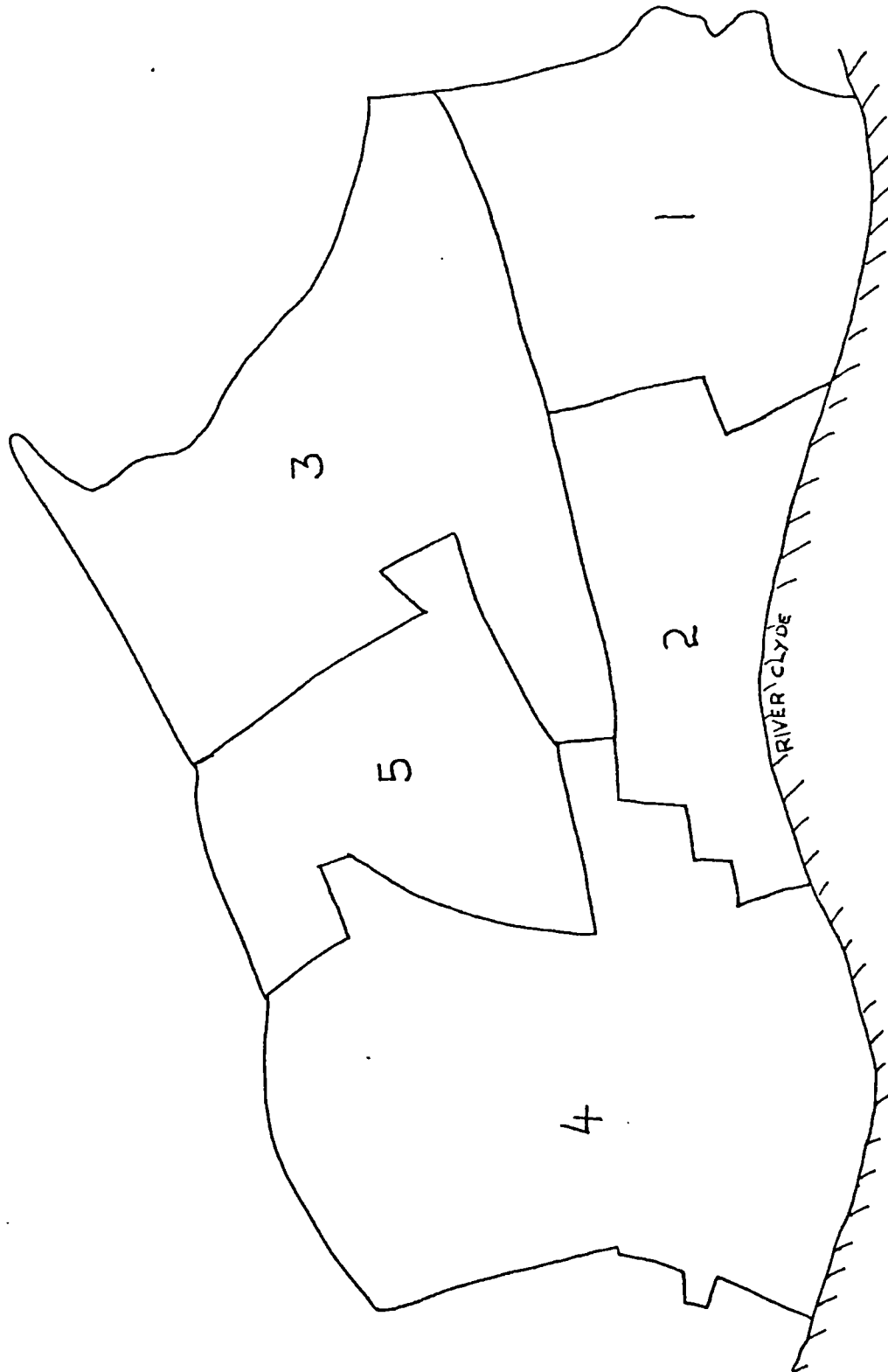
WARD

- 1 = Whitecraik and the eastern part of the old burgh.
- 2 = Central part of the old burgh and eastern section of Dalmeir
- 3 = Area north of Whitecraik and east of Kilbowie Rd.
- 4 = Mountblow and western part of Dalmeir
- 5 = Parkhall and Radnor Park

Based on map in
Clydebank Press 16.3.23

Scale 1:25000

Map 1.6 Clydebank – Wards 1933-39



WARD

- 1=Whitecrook and eastern part of old burgh
- 2=Central part of old burgh and eastern section of Dalmuir
- 3=Area north of Whitecrook and east of Kilbowie Rd.
- 4=Mountblow, western part of Dalmuir and western area of Parkhall
- 5=Remainder of Parkhall and Radnor Park to the north of Kilbowie

Based on Town Council Minutes 3-8-33

Scale 1:25000

town. However, in contrast to the period before the First World War, such developments were almost exclusively the province of the town council, with government assistance under the various Housing Acts (see map 8.1 p.201).

The first of the council schemes were begun in 1920 in Whitecrook to the east of the town and East Kilbowie to the north-east. These comprised 119 and 184 houses respectively. In the second half of the 1920s further building of 422 houses took place at West Kilbowie and Whitecrook. There was more urban growth to the north and west of the town when, between 1929 and 1933, 858 houses were erected at Parkhall 1st and 2nd Developments and at Mountblow. The pace of development slowed at the time of the economy cuts of the early 1930s and, except for John Knox Street slum clearance houses of 1934, the substantial building programme was not revived until the end of the 1930s. In 1938 a large housing scheme was begun at North Kilbowie.

The rapid growth in the area of the town, occasioned largely by housing developments, was reflected in the fate of some of the fringe belt areas. The cemetery at Kilbowie and the public park in Dalmuir, which were on the outskirts of the town in the early part of the 20th century, were, by the 1930s, surrounded by housing developments at Kilbowie and Mountblow.

The inter-war period had seen substantial changes in housing. The schemes developed had extended well beyond pre-war housing areas. The number of houses in the town was substantially increased. Building for private letting virtually ceased and the town council, assisted by national legislation, became the largest single landlord in the burgh, controlling approximately 18% of the town's housing stock by 1939.

Yet in at least two ways no substantial change took place in housing. As will be seen in chapter 8 p.241, the major problem of overcrowding still remained. In addition, the tenants of the new housing, as well as those still in privately rented pre-war accommodation, remained basically working class. As shown in table 8.6p207 only 7% overall of properties in Clydebank were owner occupied even in the later 1930s. The middle class owner occupier remained uncommon in what was almost entirely a working class town.

Except for the introduction of motor buses, in transportation also there was little change in the inter-war years. The facilities in existence prior to 1919 continued in use. The only physical addition was the

building of the Great Western Road or Boulevard as an unemployment relief scheme in the 1920s. This skirted the northern boundary of the town. Thus the existing standard of communications in the town was at least maintained and to some extent improved.

Part of the function of such a transport system was to move materials and products of local industry, and in the inter-war period there were substantial changes in industry in Clydebank. Unlike housing, in the 1920s and 1930s there was little expansion in the industrial area of the town. Instead there was contraction and some change of function. The Beardmore yard at Dalmuir closed in 1930. Reductions in the size of the workforce in the other major town employers took place at times as these firms too faced trading problems, particularly in the early 1920s and early 1930s, for the pre-war boom days were over. Some new industry did come to the town in the 1930s, such as the Turner Asbestos Cement Company or J Brockhouse and Company Ltd. However though some of these firms were in the old established engineering sector, none was particularly large and some were very small indeed. Thus though there was some expansion into new areas, the town's industrial base remained predominantly heavy engineering.

The periodic contractions in employment helped to bring about a change in the pattern of land use in the town. Until the 1920s there was comparatively little provision of recreation areas or allotments, although a considerable amount of land within the town's boundaries was meadow or arable. Yet in the inter-war period a fairly large part of such areas was used for recreational purposes and allotments. Such provision reflected the necessity of helping the unemployed pass their enforced leisure and, in the case of allotments, of enabling some of them to grow food which otherwise they might have had difficulty in obtaining.

Clearly a number of changes took place in Clydebank in the period 1919 to 1939. The town expanded in size beyond the pre-war developments close to the river. The housing stock grew considerably but this expansion was under municipal control rather than, as had been the case, private enterprise. There was some improvement in transport facilities. A major change was the end to industrial growth which had been experienced in the boom years to 1919. Instead some contraction of industry took place with significant effects on employment in the town. Though there was some extension of the type of industry in the burgh, the bulk of employed citizens in Clydebank still worked in shipbuilding and engineering.

The inter-war town saw elements of both change and continuity which helped to mould the experience of the burgh citizens in the period 1919-1939. One area which contained both changing and static aspects was population, and this will be surveyed in chapter two.

Footnotes

- There is no published history of the burgh of Clydebank. Information
on the early history of the parish of Old Kilpatrick, in which the
burgh is situated, may be found in the First and Second Statistical
Accounts of Scotland. In addition, the following may be consulted:-
- D McLeod The Clyde District of Dunbartonshire (Dumbarton 1886)
- J Bruce A History of the Parish of West or Old Kilpatrick
(Glasgow 1893)
- The history of the burgh itself from its formation in 1886 is dealt
with in outline in I M M McPhail A Short History of Dumbartonshire
(Dumbarton 1963)
- More recent information can also be found in the Third Statistical
Account of Scotland, vol vi, (Glasgow 1959) ed.M S Dilke.
- New Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. viii, (Edinburgh 1845) pp 15-16
- Ibid., p.29
- Ibid., pp 15-16
- 25 & 26 Vict., Ch. 101
- 63 & 64 Vict., Ch. 49 and 3 Edw. 7, Ch. 34
- Quoted in M S Dilke (ed.) The County of Dumbarton, Third Statistical
Account of Scotland, vol. vi, (Glasgow 1959), p.240.
- For information on the Forth and Clyde Canal see J Lindsay
The Canals of Scotland (Newton Abbot 1968)
- For information see E Carter A Historical Geography of the Railways
of the British Isles, (London 1959), and J Thomas A Regional History
of the Railways of Great Britain, vol. vi, Scotland:
The Lowlands and Borders, (Newton Abbot 1971)
- For an outline of the legislation affecting Scottish housing
development see R D Cramond Housing Policy in Scotland 1919-1964
(Edinburgh 1966)

CHAPTER TWO
POPULATION

2.1 Outline Growth

The Scottish population tripled in the 19th century from 1.6 million in 1801 to 4.5 million in 1901. Taken alone, the natural increase in the population would have resulted in an even higher figure, but such growth was eroded by substantial migration - for example in the period 1861-1901 there was a net loss to the population increase of almost 500,000 by migration¹. Even within this growth period Clydebank proved to be something of a special case. From a population of 5,000 at its inauguration as a burgh in 1886, the number of citizens had risen by 1901 to almost 19,000, a four fold increase in only 15 years. The growth of the town's population was particularly rapid as a result of natural increase and migration from other parts of the country as people sought work in the burgh's booming industries.

In the 20th century however the situation changed both nationally and locally, and from early in the century population growth became much slower with an absolute decline nationally between 1921 and 1931 of some 40,000 to 4.8 million. The burgh population boom continued during the first two decades of the 20th century, but there was in fact only a very small increase in the town's population of 46,000 during the first inter-war decade. Lack of a census in 1941 makes it difficult to give a figure for population change in the period from 1931 but the estimates of the Registrar-General for Scotland given in Table 2.1 below suggest a small increase in both the nation and the town. However, as indicated in note 1 to the table, such estimates may not be completely accurate.

Table 2.1/

Table 2.1 Scotland and Clydebank - Population 1891-1939

Year	Population	Intercensal Increase (+) or Decrease (-)	% Change
Scotland			
1891	4,025,647	+290,074	+7.8
1901	4,472,103	+446,456	+11.1
1911	4,760,094	+288,801	+6.5
1921	4,882,497	+121,593	+2.6
1931	4,842,980	- 39,517	-0.8
1939	5,006,689	+163,709	+3.4
Clydebank			
1891	10,041	-	-
1901	18,670	+ 8,656	+86.4
1911	37,548	+ 18,878	+101.1
1921	46,506	+ 8,958	+23.9
1931	46,952	+ 446	+1.0
1939	48,118	+ 1,116	+2.5

(1) There is some doubt about the accuracy of the estimates of the Registrar-General, at least in the case of Clydebank. The 1935 Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank contains the following:

"The Registrar-General continues to think that we should still be increasing as formerly for he estimates our population at 780 more in the middle of 1934 than the police found it to be at the end of the year²."

Accordingly in all future tables only census population will be used for calculations.

(2) The census of 1921 was not taken in April but in June. The numbers of those holidaying away from home must therefore have had some impact on the totals enumerated, though in the case of a working class town like Clydebank where annual holidays were taken in July, this is unlikely to have been substantial.

Source:- Report on the Census of Scotland 1891-1931.

Annual Report of the Registrar-General for Scotland 1939.

From Table 2.1 it is clear that although Clydebank shared the national trend of population growth from its establishment as a burgh in the 1880s the rate at which its population grew in the later 19th and early 20th centuries was far greater than the comparable national rate. Between 1891 and 1911 the burgh population rose by 27,534 or 275% whereas the national increase was 734,447 or 18%. This situation continued until 1921 when the trend altered and the Clydebank figure came much closer to that seen nationally. The very slight increase in the town's population in the decade 1921-1930 of 446 was mirrored by a slight decrease in the Scottish population of 39,517. The lack of a 1941 census makes it impossible to indicate accurately the changes of the second inter-war decade. However

the Registrar-General's figures suggest that Clydebank shared to roughly the same extent the slight population growth which occurred in Scotland as a whole.

Within the burgh's relatively static inter-war population, there were variations in distribution which were reflected in the changing sizes of the ward populations. The following table indicates the size of the population in each of the town wards at various times during the years 1919-1939 (see maps 1.5 p. 9 and 1.6 p. 10). Unfortunately figures are not available for all years.

Table 2.2 Clydebank - Ward Populations 1921-1938

Year	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Total
1921	5,123	7,137	8,006	11,153	15,087	46,506
1931	10,085	8,556	9,274	8,235	10,784	46,952
1932	9,684	8,418	8,976	7,883	12,902	47,863
1933	9,044	9,794	9,107	9,392	10,631	47,968
1934	9,168	9,810	9,084	9,173	10,573	47,808
1935	9,226	9,162	9,009	9,221	10,526	47,144
1936	9,178	9,445	8,879	9,098	10,377	46,977
1938	9,405	9,338	9,106	9,211	10,266	47,326

NB Ward boundary changes took place in 1923 and 1933 (see Chap 1 p8)

Source:- Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Police Census of Clydebank in Reports of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1932-1938

The figures for 1921 show the necessity for the redrawing of ward boundaries which took place in 1923 at the end of a period of considerable growth in the town. To secure equality of representation, it was necessary for ward populations to be approximately equal in size. Though this aim was achieved in the 1923 redivision, by the early 1930s a further redivision had become necessary. This resulted from the physical extension made to the burgh but more particularly from the redistribution of the town population resulting from council housing developments referred to in chapter 1. Thus a further redivision took place in 1933 with the result that ward population size was again equalised at about 10,000.

2.2 Birth Rate, Death Rate and Natural Increase

One factor explaining the rapid pre-war growth of the town's population is natural increase. The table below shows the considerably higher birth rate per 1000 population in Clydebank than in Scotland in the period 1911-1920.

Table 2.3/

Table 2.3 Scotland and Clydebank - Birth Rate per 1000 1911-1920

	1	2	
Year	Scotland	Clydebank	Clydebank Differential
1911	25.65	32.7	+7.05
1912	25.90	33.8	+7.90
1913	25.49	34.0	+8.51
1914	26.11	31.6	+5.49
1915	23.86	29.9	+6.04
1916	22.79	28.7	+5.91
1917	20.07	25.6	+5.53
1918	20.17	26.3	+6.13
1919	21.71	26.0	+4.29
1920	28.07	31.6	+3.53

Source:- Annual Reports of the Registrar-General for Scotland 1911-1920. Even during World War I, when birth rates generally fell, the rate in Clydebank was higher than that for Scotland, though the substantial gap of pre-war years narrowed particularly after 1918. One contributory factor to this difference was that migration influenced the age structure of the population (see below). Since those migrating to the town would most likely be younger elements in the population, it is not surprising that the general structure of the Clydebank population was younger than that of the nation as a whole. This structure would contribute to a higher birth rate.

Another factor underlying the above average population increase in Clydebank was that the proportion of Roman Catholic families in the town was higher than that in Scotland generally. There is some evidence, though mainly in the period after 1919, of a higher Roman Catholic birth rate.³ In Scotland in the period 1911-1914, the reports of the Registrar-General reveal that Roman Catholic marriages fluctuated between 10.7% and 11.8% of total marriages - the comparable figures for Clydebank were 20.0% and 25.7%. This difference continued into the inter-war period when Roman Catholic marriages in the town fluctuated around 25% against a national figure of 12%. It is of course true that marriages of Clydebank Roman Catholics need not necessarily have taken place in the town, or that some of those married in the town need not have lived there. Nevertheless the figures at least suggest that there was a greater proportion of Roman Catholics in the town than in the nation generally. Further evidence of the proportion of Roman Catholics in the Clydebank population comes from a survey of the numbers of Roman Catholic pupils and places in local schools. This shows similar levels to the proportions of marriages given above in the years for which figures are available.

Table 2.4 Proportion of Places and Pupils on Register in Roman Catholic and Non-Roman Catholic Schools in Scotland and Clydebank 1906-1908

<u>1906-07</u>	% places non-RC	% places RC	% pupils non-RC	% pupils RC
Scotland	90.38	9.62	89.73	10.27
Clydebank	80.82	19.18	77.40	22.60
<u>1907-08</u>				
Scotland	90.17	9.83	89.73	10.27
Clydebank	80.82	19.18	77.80	22.20

Source:- Calculated from Report of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland 1906-07, 1907-08 (Cd 3522, 4085).

These figures confirm that the percentage of Roman Catholics in the Clydebank population was higher than in Scotland and was in the region of 20-25%. Indications of a rather higher Roman Catholic birth rate come from an increase in the proportion of Roman Catholic pupils in schools in the Clydebank area after 1919 to a level above that of the marriage rate. The 1923-1924 Report of the Committee of Council on Education in Scotland (Cmd 2174) shows that 24.31% of Clydebank pupils were enrolled in Roman Catholic schools. The Old Kilpatrick School Board pupil attendance returns⁴ for November 1925, November 1933 and November 1935 show rising average proportions of Roman Catholic pupils registered at 25.95%, 29.85% and 31.11% respectively of all pupils.

Two aspects of population developments relating to the inter-war period can be mentioned briefly here, though they are dealt with in more detail in chapters 8 and 13. In 1920 the Clydebank crude birth rate per 1000 population stood at 31.6. This compared with a figure of 28.07 for Scotland, 33.3 for Greenock and 31.7 for Glasgow. Such a figure put the Clydebank rate amongst the highest in the country. By 1939 a fall in the birth rate had occurred throughout Scotland. However the Clydebank figure of 17.7 was just above the national average of 17.4, whereas the Greenock figure of 20.3 and the Glasgow figure of 19.2 were still considerably above the Scottish figure. Thus the birth rate in Clydebank showed a greater fall than occurred nationally or in some other towns and cities. This may indicate the effects of the ageing of the town's population resulting from migration and the consequences of depression on the burgh. It also suggests that these factors may have operated more powerfully in Clydebank than elsewhere.

Similarly death rates (corrected for transfer, age and sex) seem to show the greater effects of migration and economic dislocation on a population

affected at times by severe depression. Prior to 1919 the Clydebank death rate had tended to be somewhat lower than in other large burghs and in 1920 the rate per 1000 was 13.4, below the Scottish average of 14.02 and considerably below those of Greenock (16.7) and Glasgow (16.9). By 1939 the burgh death rate had increased to 14.0, whereas those for Scotland, Greenock and Glasgow had all fallen, to 12.9, 14.4 and 15.0 respectively.

2.3 Migration

A second factor causing the increase in the burgh's population to the end of World War I was substantial migration into the town at times when considerable employment opportunities existed in the engineering and shipbuilding sectors. In a survey of adult able-bodied unemployed applicants for additional town council relief in the years 1931-1938 (see chapter 5), only 27.9% of the 506 applicants surveyed were born in Clydebank. In the years 1931-1932 and 1933-1934, before the establishment of the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB) affected the representativeness of the survey⁵, 21.8% and 24.8% respectively of applicants were born in the burgh. These figures give support to the view that there was substantial pre-war migration into the town, though they need not provide completely accurate information on the actual level of such migration. Unfortunately more accurate figures for levels of pre-war migration into Clydebank cannot be calculated as it was not until 1911 that the Registrar-General began to give separate information on births etc for Clydebank Burgh itself. In addition the reports of the local Medical Officer of Health are incomplete prior to 1910.

As in the nation generally, the Clydebank population was affected by migration in the inter-war years. The Preliminary Report of the 1951 Census of Scotland estimated the net loss by migration from Scotland in the period 1921-1930 as 392,000 or 8.0%. In the same period as will be seen in more detail in chapter 13 p363 the net loss from Clydebank was 5422 or 11.7%. Lacking a 1941 census, use of the Registrar-General's population estimates for 1939 gives migration figures from Scotland of 25,348 or 0.5%, and from Clydebank of 1701 or 3.6% in the period 1931-1939. Though sharing the trends in migration with Scotland as a whole, the figures show that Clydebank was more severely affected than was the nation. Though other factors such as the high proportion of younger individuals in the town's population contributed, the stronger impetus to migration in the burgh will be explained in part as a consequence of the greater severity of recession which affected the town during a few years in the inter-war period, and the contrast this made with the boom of the earlier 20th century and the relative prosperity of parts of the

inter-war decades.

The relationship between migration and employment can be seen in a consideration of the rise in the town's population in the later 1930s suggested in the Registrar-General's estimate and figures from the burgh police censuses (see tables 2.1 and 2.6 pages 16 & 23). In considerable part this was the result of a population movement into the town. The 1938 Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank gives evidence of this. In describing overcrowded living conditions in the town he remarked "The type of overcrowding caused by this influx (of families into the town) is the occupancy of houses only intended for one family by two and in some cases more families⁶." An explanation for such reverse migration is the improvement in employment opportunities which occurred in the town in the latter part of the 1930s ie a renewal of the pre-war trend. The lifting of recession in the later 1930s and its effects on migration also contribute to an explanation of the growth of the Scottish population suggested by the Registrar-General.

2.4 Age Structure

Further changes in the town's population, related to migration, are found in a consideration of age structure. The following table gives a comparative survey of the situation in Scotland, Clydebank and Greenock, a nearby shipbuilding town. Lack of a census in 1941 makes it impossible to complete this table for the entire inter-war period, so 1951 figures have been used as a, somewhat unsatisfactory, alternative.

Table 2.5 Age Structure of the Scottish, Greenock and Clydebank Populations
By Percentage Age Groups 1911-1951 (Both Sexes)

<u>1911</u>	0-14 yrs.	15-44 yrs.	45-64 yrs.	65+ yrs.
Scotland	32.26%	46.71%	16.04%	5.39%
Greenock	32.74	48.12	14.59	4.53
Clydebank	37.10	49.22	11.32	2.09
<u>1921</u>				
Scotland	29.48	46.15	18.63	5.99
Greenock	31.75	47.51	16.27	4.45
Clydebank	33.23	48.36	15.37	2.65
<u>1931</u>				
Scotland	26.94	45.77	20.17	7.29
Greenock	30.56	44.89	18.74	5.79
Clydebank	29.39	47.44	18.69	4.48
<u>1951</u>				
Scotland	24.8	43.0	22.2	9.9
Greenock	26.7	43.6	21.0	8.8
Clydebank	26.2	46.2	19.8	7.7

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1911-1951

The 1911 figures show that, at 86.32% of the total population aged 44 or less, Clydebank had a younger population structure than Scotland (76.97% under 45) or even Greenock (80.86%). This reflects the burgh's recent foundation and boom period when younger individuals would be more likely to migrate to the town in search of employment. A further consequence of the migration of younger elements in the population movement into the town was its high birth rate. However the figures for the inter-war period show a population structure ageing more rapidly in Clydebank than elsewhere. In 1931 the percentage of those aged under 45 had fallen by 9.49% to 76.83% in Clydebank. This compared with a fall of 4.26% to 72.71% in Scotland and of 5.41% to 75.45% in Greenock. This greater proportional reduction in the burgh was a consequence of at least two factors. Firstly there was the larger fall in the town's birth rate than was occurring elsewhere, discussed briefly above. Secondly migration levels from the town are likely to have been greater amongst the larger than average group of younger individuals born during the boom period of the early 20th century, and all looking for work during times of severe depression affecting the town in the early 1920s and early 1930s. In view of the migration from the town in the 1930s it is likely that this ageing trend in the population structure continued beyond 1931, though less quickly than before. The absence of census figures for 1941 makes it impossible to confirm this directly. However, though complicated by the effect of World War II, the ageing trend continues to be visible in figures from the 1951 census where, as shown in the table, under 45s were found to comprise 72.4%, 67.8% and 70.3% respectively of the Clydebank, Scottish and Greenock populations.

2.5 Conclusion

Clearly there were changes affecting the population in Clydebank in the inter-war period in comparison with the situation in the boom years of the early 20th century - the rapid increase found in the earlier period fell away and the size of the population became almost static, the direction of migration was generally reversed during the inter-war years and the population contained a greater proportion of older people. In addition, though these trends were not restricted to Clydebank, they seem to have been stronger in the town than elsewhere. There is a case for arguing that the cause of such changes and the degree of their effects was in part related to developments in the employment and economic structure of the town.

Footnotes

- 1 D J Robertson "Population" in A K Cairncross (ed.) The Scottish Economy (Cambridge 1954), Table 3, p.13
- 2 CP, 19 July 1935 - Available inter-war figures showing discrepancies between police censuses (apparently taken in November) and the Registrar-General's estimates are given below.

Table 2.6 Clydebank - Police Census and Registrar-General's Estimates of Population

Year	Police Census	Registrar-General's Estimate
1919	47,441	48,025
1922	46,470	46,850
1925	46,140	46,444
1926	46,015	46,561
1932	47,863	48,046
1933	47,968	48,348
1934	47,808	48,588
1935	47,144	48,449
1936	46,977	47,829
1938	47,326	47,912

Source:- Reports of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1919-38
Reports of the Registrar-General for Scotland 1919-38

- 3 Some discussion of this point at a national level can be found in Robertson (ed. Cairncross), op. cit., p.31.
- 4 These can be found in Strathclyde Regional Archives, City Chambers, Glasgow, Accession Number CO4/6/4/5/32.
- 5 As a result of the establishment of the UAB in 1935, the new body took responsibility for those in receipt of means tested unemployment benefit or public assistance who might previously have applied for town council aid. In the latter part of the 1930s town council relief was given to a group more unrepresentative of burgh citizens generally, such as dependents of those on strike, widows not entitled to a pension, deserted wives etc. For a fuller discussion see Chapter 5, pp.75-6
- 6 Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1938, p.35. These reports are held in the Local History Collection of Clydebank Public Library.

CHAPTER THREE
EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Clydebank developed because of its location adjacent to booming Glasgow, because of industry's need to find extra space which was unavailable or too expensive in the city, and the fact that good transport and communication facilities existed in the Clydebank area. Thus in the early 1870s the firm of J and G Thomson moved their shipyard a few miles down river from Govan where space was no longer available. In the early 1880s the Singer Manufacturing Company Ltd.¹ moved from Glasgow to set up their sewing machine factory near Thomson's yard. The existence of these two large enterprises attracted a skilled workforce to live in the growing town, and a number of other firms moved to the area, many of which operated in the same economic sector, shipbuilding and engineering. The largest of these was William Beardmore and Co. Ltd.² which set up its shipbuilding business in Dalmuir in the early 20th century. Other smaller scale businesses developed at this period such as D and J Tullis Ltd, an engineering firm, or Stamford and Company, chemical manufacturers. With an industrial base composed largely of shipbuilding and engineering, Clydebank was booming for almost the whole period 1870-1914, with a final war related flourish in the years 1914-1918.

3.1 Male and Female Employment

Some indication of the economic and employment structure of the town and the developments of the 1920s can be gathered by a study of material in the reports on the census of Scotland of 1921 and 1931. The census reports provide a useful source of information, though, as indicated in Appendix 1 p428, some care has to be exercised in their use. It is from this source that Table 3.1 below has been constructed, showing the basic male and female employment pattern in Clydebank and elsewhere.

Table 3.1/

Table 3.1 Composition of the Workforce by Sex 1921, 1931

1921 - Those Aged 12 Years +				
		1 No	2 No	
	Total Workforce	of Males	of Females	Ratio of 1:2
Scotland	2,208,080	1,579,835	628,245	2.5:1
Glasgow	488,599	342,577	146,022	2.3:1
Dundee	89,094	50,506	38,588	1.3:1
Greenock	36,592	28,013	8,579	3.3:1
Paisley	43,764	26,873	16,891	1.6:1
Clydebank	20,516	16,096	4,420	3.6:1
1931 - Those Aged 14 Years +				
Scotland	2,221,375	1,554,026	667,349	2.3:1
Glasgow	522,200	356,332	165,868	2.1:1
Dundee	95,369	53,600	41,769	1.3:1
Greenock	35,299	25,751	9,548	2.7:1
Paisley	42,234	27,287	14,947	1.8:1
Clydebank	21,784	16,368	5,416	3.0:1

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Men clearly formed the majority of the workforce in the period 1921 to 1931, though there was a considerable variation in the proportion among the towns. This may reflect to some extent local attitudes to the employment of women, but much more important were the employment opportunities to be found in the types of industry existing in these towns and cities. Paisley and Dundee with large textile sectors had considerably greater female employment opportunities than the Scottish average. The shipbuilding and engineering industries existing in the Clydebank area offered the greatest level of male employment opportunity in Table 3.1 above, but fewer opportunities for women. Female employment opportunities were fewer in Clydebank even than in Greenock, a nearby town also concentrating on shipbuilding and engineering.

Yet some change in these proportions can be seen to have occurred in the intercensal period. In almost all cases there was a reduction in the male proportion of the workforce. Only in the case of Paisley did the male proportion increase. These falls can be explained in two ways. The more important factor was that employment opportunities for men were reduced with the collapse which took place, particularly in the heavy industries, during the 1920s depression. A lessening of the importance of such heavy industries as shipbuilding, which was almost exclusively a male employment sector, certainly helps to explain the Clydebank figure, as will be seen.

A second, less important factor was that employment opportunities for women increased. This is indicated in the table below.

Table 3.2 Total Females and Proportion in Female Workforce 1921, 1931

1921	No of Females (12 +)	No in Workforce	% in Workforce
Scotland	1,967,133	628,245	32.5
Glasgow	408,888	146,022	35.7
Dundee	75,602	38,588	51.0
Greenock	29,032	8,579	29.6
Paisley	35,202	16,891	48.0
Clydebank	16,424	4,420	26.9
1931	No of Females (14 +)	No in Workforce	% in Workforce
Scotland	1,909,503	667,349	34.9
Glasgow	424,857	165,868	39.0
Dundee	75,403	41,769	55.4
Greenock	28,389	9,548	33.6
Paisley	34,884	14,947	42.8
Clydebank	16,739	5,416	32.4

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Female employment opportunities, and the number of women willing to take them, increased generally in the period 1921-1931. The increase of 5.5% in Clydebank was rather greater than that experienced elsewhere. This partly reflects the significance for female employment in the town of the Singer factory - as will be seen the company workforce reached its maximum for the inter-war years of 12,507 in 1928 having increased from 9026 in 1922. In addition there was an increase in the number employed in the tertiary sector.

3.2 Clydebank Employment Structure in the 1920s

The most obvious feature of Clydebank employment, as indicated by Table 3.3, was that its economic structure was highly skewed. In 1921 71.8% of all employment was in the metals and machines sector, while in the economically more difficult year of 1931 the proportion was still 61.6%. The location quotients show that Clydebank was four to five times as dependent for employment on that sector as was Scotland as a whole. Though by 1931 there were fewer people employed in the metals and machines sector, the town had become even more dependent upon it than in the nation generally. Clydebank was extraordinarily dependent for employment on the metals and machines sector ie shipbuilding and engineering.

Table 3.3 Clydebank - Industrial Structure of Total Workforce 1921, 1931

1921 Industry Order	Employment Clydebank	% of Total	Employment Scotland	% of Total	Location Factor Clydebank
Fishing	-	0.00	25,011	1.16	0.00
Agriculture	70	0.34	183,086	8.51	0.03
Mining & Quarrying	25	0.12	179,952	8.37	0.01
Bricks & Pottery	10	0.04	12,440	0.57	0.07
Chemicals etc	34	0.16	17,087	0.79	0.20
Metals, Machines	14,738	71.83	368,610	17.14	4.19
Textiles	127	0.61	151,106	7.02	0.08
Leather	12	0.05	6,021	0.28	0.17
Clothing	276	1.34	66,888	3.11	0.43
Food, Drink & Tobacco	260	1.26	81,844	3.80	0.33
Woodworking	137	0.66	42,065	1.95	0.33
Paper & Printing	63	0.30	46,141	2.14	0.14
Building & Contracting	420	2.04	67,829	3.15	0.64
Other Manuf Industries	45	0.21	20,067	0.92	0.22
Gas, Water & Electricity	95	0.46	16,451	0.76	0.60
Transport & Communications	704	3.43	155,564	7.23	0.47
Commerce & Finance	1,787	8.71	289,369	13.46	0.64
Public Admin & Defence	751	3.66	143,191	6.66	0.54
Professions	187	0.88	65,792	3.06	0.28
Entertainment & Sport	61	0.29	10,689	0.49	0.59
Personal Service	719	3.50	199,648	9.28	0.37
Other Industries	1	0.00	734	0.03	0.00
Total Employment	20,516	100.00	2,149,582	100.00	1.00
1931					
Fishing	-	0.00	21,847	0.98	0.00
Agriculture	64	0.28	176,732	7.95	0.03
Mining & Quarrying	14	0.06	146,397	6.59	0.00
Bricks & Pottery	10	0.04	15,043	0.67	0.05
Chemicals Etc	59	0.27	21,200	0.95	0.28
Metals, Machines	13,416	61.64	280,374	12.62	4.88
Textiles	146	0.67	152,374	6.86	0.09
Leather	12	0.05	5,816	0.26	0.19
Clothing	153	0.70	46,586	2.09	0.33
Food, Drink & Tobacco	559	2.56	92,551	4.16	0.61
Woodworking	179	0.82	44,818	2.01	0.40
Paper & Printing	87	0.39	52,160	2.35	0.16
Building & Contracting	626	2.87	101,742	4.58	0.62
Other Manuf Industry	112	0.51	24,494	1.10	0.46
Gas, Water & Electricity	215	0.98	17,496	0.78	1.25
Transport & Communications	1,154	5.30	155,803	7.01	0.75
Commerce & Finance	2,413	11.80	363,190	16.35	0.67
Public Admin & Defence	1,044	4.79	152,284	6.85	0.69
Professions	282	1.29	77,805	3.50	0.36
Entertainment & Sport	99	0.45	17,141	0.76	0.59
Personal Service	928	4.26	222,954	10.03	0.42
Other Inds or not stated	213	0.97	32,622	1.46	0.66
Total in Employment	21,764	100.00	2,221,375	100.00	1.00

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Apart from metals and machines other employment was of minor importance. The next largest group of occupations lay in the tertiary sector in transport, commerce and public administration with 3,242 workers or 15.8% of the workforce in 1921, and 4,611 or 21.1% in 1931. Yet even such occupations were only half to three quarters as common in the burgh workforce as in Scotland as a whole. The tertiary sector generally was weak, and this weakness must have been compounded for the town since a considerable amount of tertiary employment must have been outwith the burgh, in Glasgow. Nevertheless over the period 1921-1931 there was some increase in the significance of tertiary employment to the inhabitants of the town, both absolutely and relative to Scotland as a whole.

Further indications of the importance of primary ie extractive, secondary ie manufacturing and tertiary ie service industries in employment in Scotland, Clydebank and a number of other towns and cities are given in Table 3.4.

Several comments can be made about this table. Least importantly, there was virtually no primary sector in urban areas, and Clydebank shared this trend as is also evident in Table 3.3. Secondly, Clydebank's male inhabitants relied considerably more in both years on the secondary sector (basically shipbuilding and engineering) than did their counterparts elsewhere. At the minimum, 75% of the Clydebank male workforce was employed in this sector in firms in and out of the town. In the case of female employment in the secondary sector this reliance was slightly less marked but was still considerable, a consequence of the existence of the Singer factory. Only the secondary sectors of Dundee and Paisley with their textile industries surpassed that of Clydebank in both years as a source of female employment.

Thirdly, in Clydebank as elsewhere the proportion of males employed in the secondary sector declined between 1921 and 1931. The reduction of the percentage of male employment in the local shipbuilding and engineering industries was however more significant in Clydebank than in other urban areas or in Scotland as a whole. The reduction in the burgh was 9.3% as opposed to 9.1% for Paisley and less for the other areas tabulated, reflecting the effect of depression at times on local heavy industry and some increasing employment opportunities in the tertiary sector. In contrast to the national trend of reduction however, the proportion of Clydebank females employed in secondary industry remained static. A major reason for this was the relative prosperity enjoyed by the Singer Company in the latter half of the 1920s and the expansion of its workforce at that time.

Table 3.4 Economic Sector - Numbers and Percentages of Workforce
Employed 1921, 1931 - by Sex

<u>MALES</u>		<u>1921</u>		<u>1931</u>	
<u>Primary</u>	Age No (12+)	% of Total Male Workforce	Age No (14+)	% of Total Male Workforce	
Scotland	358,978	23.6	326,312	21.0	
Glasgow	8,825	2.6	7,439	2.1	
Dundee	992	2.0	943	1.8	
Greenock	174	0.6	214	0.8	
Paisley	420	1.6	374	1.4	
Clydebank	81	0.5	64	0.4	
<u>Secondary</u>					
Scotland	642,789	42.3	606,825	39.0	
Glasgow	196,328	57.3	183,222	51.4	
Dundee	31,196	61.8	30,435	56.7	
Greenock	19,065	68.1	16,588	64.4	
Paisley	19,530	72.7	17,341	63.6	
Clydebank	13,620	84.6	12,336	75.3	
<u>Tertiary</u>					
Scotland	519,570	34.1	620,889	40.0	
Glasgow	137,413	40.1	165,671	46.5	
Dundee	18,318	36.3	22,222	41.5	
Greenock	8,764	31.3	8,949	34.8	
Paisley	6,923	25.8	9,572	35.1	
Clydebank	2,368	14.7	3,986	24.4	
<u>FEMALES</u>					
<u>Primary</u>	Age No (12+)	% of Total Female Workforce	Age No (14+)	% of Total Female Workforce	
Scotland	29,071	4.6	18,667	2.8	
Glasgow	568	0.4	393	0.2	
Dundee	58	0.2	54	0.1	
Greenock	40	0.5	23	0.2	
Paisley	60	0.4	46	0.3	
Clydebank	14	0.3	13	0.2	
<u>Secondary</u>					
Scotland	237,306	37.8	230,276	34.5	
Glasgow	65,251	44.7	63,298	38.2	
Dundee	27,831	72.1	28,844	69.1	
Greenock	3,530	41.4	3,287	34.4	
Paisley	12,164	72.0	9,636	64.5	
Clydebank	2,475	56.0	3,041	56.1	
<u>Tertiary</u>					
Scotland	361,868	57.6	418,406	62.7	
Glasgow	80,203	54.9	102,177	61.6	
Dundee	10,699	27.7	12,871	30.8	
Greenock	5,009	58.4	6,238	65.3	
Paisley	4,666	27.6	5,265	35.2	
Clydebank	1,931	43.7	2,362	43.6	

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Lastly the relative weakness of the tertiary sector employment in Clydebank is clear, particularly in the case of males with at most 24% employed there. This weakness is further emphasised as the figures relate to those living in the town, not necessarily those working in it, and many tertiary as well as secondary sector employment opportunities must have existed in Glasgow. Commuting to the city was easy with a corresponding reduction in the need for a large tertiary sector in the town itself. Even Paisley, in a similar geographical proximity to Glasgow, had a larger male tertiary sector, a consequence of its greater age and size.

The increase of 10% in the proportion of male employment in the tertiary sector between 1921 and 1931 occurred at a time when there is some evidence of increased commuting from Clydebank, mainly to Glasgow. This will be considered in detail in chapter 13^{p369-76} but some indication is given here. Between 1923 and 1929 the number of trains out of Clydebank at peak periods rose from 28 to 30, suggesting greater commuting. At the same time, from 1926 to 1930 a new tram service operated between Dalmuir West and Alexandra Park. The first tram from Dalmuir left at 7.44 am and so was unlikely to be used extensively by employees in manufacturing industries. However the original point remains valid. Despite any increase, the tertiary sector in Clydebank remained weak.

Though employment in the tertiary sector was rather more important for women in Clydebank than for men, it remained less significant than in other areas. Nor did it share in the general increase in importance between 1921 and 1931 which was seen elsewhere. The maintenance of female employment in the secondary sector of the town goes some way to explaining this rather unexpected finding.

The evidence of the data in Table 3.4 confirms the pattern established in Table 3.3. Clydebank was more dependent on a narrow band of manufacturing industries than was the average town in Scotland. This dependence tended to fall as the first inter-war decade passed, but was still very substantial in 1931. The fall reflected the effects of depression on the staple industries of the area. There was some increase in tertiary sector employment for males, but this sector remained weaker in Clydebank for both males and females than in most other areas.

The census statistics can yield one further piece of information. Within the secondary sector employment was indeed largely in shipbuilding and engineering. Of 14,748 persons employed in the metal and machine industries in Clydebank in 1921, 9,687 (65.7%) indicated in the census

that they worked in shipbuilding and repairing or marine engineering, and 4,528 (30.7%) in engineering (not marine or electrical). The 1931 figure for shipbuilding was 5,473 (40.8% of the total employed in metals and machines), and for engineering (not marine or electrical) 7,467 (55.7%). Though there was a clear shift of emphasis between the two areas, their combined importance was still very great.

3.3 Employment Trends in the 1930s

At best the census figures indicate the relative importance of various types of employment for the citizens of Clydebank between 1921 and 1931. However greater problems exist for the period after 1931, for statistical information is far less abundant. There was no census in 1941 so a major source of information is absent. Despite considerable research in Clydebank, no unofficial local census of employment has been found. Indeed there seems to have been no strong feeling in the town that more data were needed on the local employment structure.

However it is possible to suggest at least two general trends in the 1930s based on other evidence such as Labour Exchange statistics and a survey of types of local firms in existence. The first is the continuing importance of heavy industry in the town - in 1938 72.7% of Clydebank workers were employed in shipbuilding and engineering, according to registrations at the Clydebank Labour Exchange³. The other trend is some diversification of secondary employment as a result of the establishment of a number of new small firms in the town.

Both these trends can perhaps more clearly be seen through a survey of firms which existed in the town during the inter-war period. Such a survey must of necessity be incomplete to a greater or lesser degree since many of the firms no longer exist and there are often few or no records of the period. However a study of valuation rolls⁴ can give information on what firms existed, and, in most cases, some additional information can be obtained elsewhere about them. The following survey briefly discusses firms according to the type of activity carried out.

(i) Shipbuilding

The most significant employment sector was shipbuilding and engineering and, in shipbuilding, employment was dominated by John Browns, Beardmores and the later and smaller firm Arnott Young. The most important of these firms was John Brown and Co Ltd⁵, formerly J & G Thomson, which existed throughout the inter-war period. More detailed consideration will be given to it below. At its maximum it employed over 9,000 men (1919, 1920, 1939) from Clydebank and elsewhere, whilst at its minimum in 1932 it gave

work to only 422. The firm was clearly significant to employment in the Clydebank area - in June 1921 when the national census was taken it employed, 3,853 men when 16,096 male inhabitants of the town were employed in industry, thus in principle providing 24% of the jobs required by the male workforce of the burgh. By the census of April 1931 there were 1,717 men employed in the yard and engineering works representing 10.5% of the employment requirements of the male workforce. As with other major employers in the town, Browns was not only important for the numbers it employed and the families thereby supported but because the financial wellbeing of shopkeepers and other small businessmen in the town was dependent to a large extent on its economic health.

The second major shipbuilding firm in Clydebank was W Beardmore and Co Ltd.⁶ which had moved from Govan to Dalmuir in 1905. This firm had been a major employer prior to and during World War I. On the closure of the yard in 1930 the Glasgow Herald reported

"It was learned that before the war the number of men employed in the yard ranged from 2,000 to 3,000, while during the war period it ran as high as 6,000. In the postwar boom the total fluctuated between 3,000 and 4,000, but since 1928 the number had steadily declined ... and during the present year it has fluctuated between 1,000 and 500 ... only 500 men are now employed in the shipyard.⁷"

Though the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd took over the shipyard and kept it closed, the marine engineering works continued in operation, employing about 450 in 1931. However this too was closed in 1934, though by 1938 there was renewed activity in the engineering works. Throughout the 1930s there was a small diesel research station in operation. As an individual firm, Beardmores was a significant employer only in the 1920s, and decreasingly so during that period. Even so, the virtual disappearance in 1930 of a long established major employer in the area was a substantial blow to the inhabitants of Clydebank, employees of the firm who lived in other areas, and local businessmen whose prosperity was partly connected with that of Beardmores.

The third local firm with shipbuilding connections was W H Arnott Young and Co Ltd (Shipbreakers). It came to Clydebank in late 1934, taking over approximately one third (18 acres) of the old Beardmore yard. The firm employed perhaps 150 men. Its importance lay more in the fact that beginning in 1938, it developed 9 acres of its premises as a small industrial estate on the lines of Hillington. In the words of Provost Martin of Clydebank,

"The enterprise of this firm has made available a modern industrial site with factories large and small ... to attract whatever new industries can be secured to this attractive trading estate run on modern lines."⁸

(ii) Engineering

The other major local employment sector was engineering, and in this sector the Singer Manufacturing Co Ltd, was the largest local employer. This significance was reflected in its gross rateable value, £38,612 by 1938-1939. It employed women on a much larger scale than other secondary sector town employers, but proportional figures are not available as many of the company's records were destroyed during the Blitz. However the following table gives available information on the overall size of the workforce.

Table 3.5 Singer Company Workforce - Annual Average 1922-1939

Year	Number	Year	Number
1922	9,026	1931	7,991
1923	9,191	1932	6,798
1924	10,777	1933	7,599
1925	12,174	1934	7,614
1926	11,037	1935	8,103
1927	11,258	1936	8,405
1928	12,507	1937	9,104
1929	12,440	1938	7,375
1930	9,463	1939	8,809

Source:- A Dorman A History of the Singer Co (UK) Ltd
(Clydebank Factory)p 47 - ms in Glasgow University Archives,
no date, reference number UGD 121.

Clearly Singers was a major town employer, though of course not all who worked there lived in Clydebank. Even during the depression of the early 1920s the workforce was comparatively large, and rose considerably during the remainder of the 1920s. Though it was substantially reduced during the early 1930s, the workforce was less badly affected by depression than that in the local shipyards. In part this was because the firm manufactured a consumer product, sales of which were rather less affected by contemporary economic problems.

However a note of caution is necessary here. Those still employed by the firm in the early 1930s suffered a considerable period of short time work. At that time "for nearly two years the factory worked on short time, sometimes on a week on/week off basis⁹." The problems facing the company were noted in a 1930 report to the John Brown Board. "The Singer Company, till now the backbone of employment in the district, have had to abruptly stop all work on their present design of machine in view of intense German competition¹⁰."

With economic recovery the number employed increased as the 1930s progressed,

though not to the same levels as the 1920s. In 1938 the Admiralty approached the firm to produce tools and equipment for aircraft manufacture as part of the rearmament programme.

A second firm in the engineering sector was Aitchison Blair which existed in the town throughout the inter-war period as a producer of marine steam engines, compound and triple expansion engines. Despite severe depression in the shipbuilding industry, in the early 1930s, the firm seems to have been reasonably successful. However the firm's gross rateable value of £192 in 1938-1939 suggests small premises and a small workforce.

Dawson and Downie Ltd manufactured pumping equipment throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Their gross rateable value of £759 in 1938-1939 does not suggest either very large premises or a particularly sizeable workforce. D & J Tullis Ltd were also based in Clydebank during the inter-war period as manufacturers of steam laundry equipment. Perhaps rather surprisingly it was reported in 1932 that that year had been an improvement on 1931 - they were "quite busy and on full time¹¹." In 1935 they were reported to be negotiating with the town council to buy land adjacent to their works for an extension, suggesting that trade continued to be good. Their gross rateable value of £1,808 in 1938-1939 was one of the largest in the town, excluding Browns and Singers, and possibly the size of their workforce reflected this.

J Brockhouse & Co Ltd was a Birmingham firm with a Glasgow factory which expanded to Clydebank in 1937. Their work was "mainly trailer building, but they also had quite a large department to make and service springs¹²." Their initial workforce was 100 men, but plans reported in late 1937 to bring additional factory and plant into operation in six months would have almost doubled that number of employees. This extension was built, their gross rateable value increasing from £410 in 1936-1937 to £890 in 1938-1939. These rateable values may give some basis of comparison for the size of workforce in other factories of a similar nature.

Lastly in this sector, the firm of Clyde Blowers came to Clydebank in 1935. It supplied the Admiralty, government factories and power stations with soot blowers. However this was only a small concern employing 14 in the machine and fitting shop and 6 in the office in 1936.

(iii) Chemicals

There were two companies in the chemical sector in the burgh both of which existed in Clydebank throughout the inter-war years. The British Chemical Co Ltd of Whitecrook were manufacturing chemists. Stanford and Co Ltd was

a chemical and soap manufacturing business which, in 1936, was stated to have "started over half a century¹³ ago to extract iodine, bromide and potash salts from seaweed charcoal." Neither of these companies could have been large employers of labour. The census of 1921 found only 34 workers in the chemicals etc industries living in Clydebanks, and that of 1931 found 51. In addition, the rateable values were comparatively low - in 1938-1939 that of the British Chemical Co was £608 and that of Stanford and Co was under £100.

(iv) Other Industries

In the latter part of the 1930s a number of new companies set up premises in Clydebanks partly as a result of the Special Areas Legislation¹⁴, partly because of transport facilities and partly because of the already mentioned industrial estate. The Clyde Portland Cement Co Ltd set up works on land owned by the Clyde Navigation Trustees at Rothesay Dock in 1933 to make cement from blast furnace slag. Similarly the Turner Asbestos Cement Co part of the Turner Newall group, began to produce asbestos cement on part of the old Beardmore site in 1938. According to the local press their factory was to cost £40,000 and employ 350 rising to 500 within a year¹⁵. The gross rateable value of the Turner Asbestos Cement Co in 1938-1939 was £3,250, the third largest in the town, whilst that of the Clyde Portland Cement Co was £1,182.

The Distillers Company maintained premises in Glasgow Road throughout the 1920s and 1930s. According to the valuation rolls the premises contained a yard, warehouse and offices at a gross value in 1938-1939 of £475. Consequently the numbers employed must have been low. Convoys Ltd first appeared in the valuation roll for 1938-1939 at a gross value of £1,020. However, as the company acted as warehouse keepers and transport contractors it is unlikely to have employed a large number of people. Another company on Rothesay Dock from 1938-1939 was the White Rock Quarry Co formed in 1937 to make composite granite pavement. The gross rateable value of £245 suggests only a small firm. The UCBS Bakery existed in Clydebanks from 1920, and in 1938 a new factory was opened employing over 750 workers, 600 of whom were women and girls.

Further employment opportunities, which are not however readily quantifiable, existed in offices and shops, such as the 92 retail outlets of the Clydebanks Cooperative Society Ltd in Clydebanks and surrounding areas. Employment was also available in the building industry, and this received a boost from the town council housing programme. Begun in the 1920s, it continued fitfully into the 1930s, though little was done during the worst years of depression. Docks and railways too provided employment in the town, though statistics are lacking.

3.4 Employment and the Effects of Depression

This brief survey has shown the continuing importance of one type of industry, shipbuilding and engineering, in the burgh in the 1930s, and consequently depression in that sector would have a major effect on the people of the town. It had also shown how in the 1930s a number of small and medium sized firms moved into the area. Though some of these companies worked in the shipbuilding and engineering sector, others did not, broadening somewhat the industrial base of the community.

The survey has given a rough outline of the economic structure of the town. However the implications for employment of the economic difficulties of the inter-war period cannot be traced for all these firms for lack of information. In one case, John Browns, information is available, and general implications may be drawn from a more detailed consideration of this firm. Annual average figures showing employment levels are given below.

Table 3.6 John Brown & Co Ltd - Annual Average Employment per Week 1919-1940

Year	Number	Year	Number
1919	9,049	1930	5,085
1920	9,297	1931	3,556
1921	6,322	1932	422
1922	3,653	1933	675
1923	3,404	1934	3,758
1924	5,181	1935	5,381
1925	4,353	1936	5,617
1926	4,150	1937	6,198
1927	5,372	1938	8,075
1928	7,626	1939	9,583
1929	6,675		

Source:- Abstract Wage Books, John Brown & Co, Clydebank
1919-1940 UCS 1/52/3-7

Clearly there were two periods when employment with this very important local firm underwent considerable contraction, in 1922-23 and above all in 1931-1934. These were the years when depression affected Britain and particularly the old staple industries most severely. It is also clear that the latter part of both inter-war decades saw considerable recovery from the low employment levels of a few years previously. Not surprisingly this will be seen to parallel the employment experience of the town.

However the relative severity of the contraction of employment which affected Browns can perhaps be more easily appreciated when a comparison

is made between John Browns average employment figures and the British figures for insured employed in the shipbuilding and repairing industries. In both cases the figures have been expressed as a percentage of that for 1924.

Table 3.7 Shipbuilding Employment Index 1924-1939

Year	Britain	Browns	Year	Britain	Browns
1924	* 100.0	100.0	1932	37.4	8.1
1925	* 86.8	84.0	1933	36.5	13.0
1926	* 71.2	80.1	1934	44.7	72.5
1927	88.0	103.7	1935	49.6	103.9
1928	81.5	107.2	1936	63.5	108.4
1929	87.9	128.8	1937	73.9	119.6
1930	78.7	98.1	1938	77.6	155.9
1931	47.0	68.6	1939	78.5	184.1

* Figures for those aged 16 and over - remainder those aged 16 - 64.

Source:- Calculated from John Brown Abstract Wage Books 1924-1939
UCS 1/52/3-7 and British Labour Statistics Historical Abstract 1886-1968 (London 1971) Table 114 p 216.

This table indicates that Browns followed the national trend insofar as the later 1920s were better for employment than the early 1930s, after which a recovery took place. Yet the comparison is not very close. Compared to the employment situation in shipbuilding generally, Browns was not as badly affected until 1932. In that year a catastrophic fall in employment took place, much more severe than that occurring nationally, a result of the cessation of work on the Cunarder 534, "Queen Mary". When work on this vessel restarted in 1934, employment in the Clydebank yard reached levels considerably better than those nationally. This recovery was buoyed up in the later 1930s by contracts resulting from the naval rearmament programme. These rather more unexpected findings will be seen to mirror the unemployment experience of the burgh generally and the reasons for them are considered briefly in Chapters 4 and 6.

Some further information on the type of employment available in Browns can be obtained from Tables 3.8 and 3.9. They show the numbers and percentages of journeymen, apprentices, labourers and boys employed in the shipyard, engine and boiler works and the general offices.

The figures show the greater numbers employed in the shipyard as opposed to the engine and boiler works. They also show the greater proportion of skilledmen in the engine and boiler works, where numbers seem to fluctuate

Table 3.8 Numbers of Journeymen, Apprentices, Labourers and Boys employed
By Sections in John Browns 1919-1939

End of Last Pay Week in December	Journey- men	Shipyard				Engine & Boiler Works				General Offices			
		Apprentices	Labourers	Boys		J	A	L	B	J	A	L	B
1919	2961	943	1928	606		1885	510	955	60	71	-	-	11
1920	2334	924	1922	626		1611	508	846	45	69	-	-	10
1921	1970	620	798	136		856	407	420	35	64	-	-	5
1922	1318	480	515	138		776	331	344	25	45	-	-	4
1923	793	461	400	166		536	250	227	16	39	-	-	5
1924	2180	434	1055	287		1413	238	591	27	40	-	-	4
1925	692	290	486	157		938	260	392	24	36	-	-	6
1926	1162	432	460	152		988	276	413	26	37	-	-	6
1927	2493	596	1093	440		1470	305	589	39	39	-	-	8
1928	2797	699	1063	386		1553	343	666	39	42	-	-	7
1929	1836	629	750	335		1363	318	568	29	41	1	-	7
1930	1240	663	484	151		1038	258	425	44	41	1	-	6
1931	191	19	20	19		163	18	19	4	39	1	-	4
1932	115	6	22	10		89	3	17	1	19	-	-	2
1933	273	275	73	38		247	92	40	4	20	-	-	2
1934	1687	526	636	198		1349	243	449	19	38	-	-	5
1935	3160	570	791	412		1430	281	471	33	43	-	-	6
1936	1628	617	704	302		1497	321	593	25	47	-	-	6
1937	2338	727	996	415		1518	335	514	30	54	-	-	8
1938	3686	922	1337	452		1820	419	678	34	62	-	-	10
1939	4147	939	1613	333		1977	397	799	39	72	-	-	6

Source: John Brown Pay Bill Books - Average Wage Per Week UCS 1/52/3-7

Table 3.9 Percentages of Journeymen, Apprentices, Labourers and Boys employed
By Sections in John Browns 1919-1939

End of Last Pay Week in December	Journey- men	Shipyard				Engine & Boiler Works				General Offices			
		Apprentices	Labourers	Boys		J	A	L	B	J	A	L	B
1919	45.9	14.6	29.9	9.4		55.3	14.6	28.0	1.8	86.6	-	-	13.4
1920	40.2	15.9	33.1	10.8		53.5	16.9	28.1	1.5	87.3	-	-	12.7
1921	55.9	17.6	22.6	3.9		49.8	23.7	24.4	2.0	92.8	-	-	7.2
1922	53.8	19.6	21.0	5.4		52.6	22.4	23.3	1.5	91.8	-	-	8.2
1923	43.6	25.3	22.0	9.1		52.1	24.3	22.1	1.6	88.6	-	-	11.4
1924	55.1	11.0	26.7	7.3		62.3	10.5	26.0	1.2	90.9	-	-	9.1
1925	42.6	17.8	29.9	9.7		58.1	16.1	24.3	1.5	85.7	-	-	14.3
1926	52.7	19.6	20.9	6.9		58.0	16.2	24.3	1.5	86.0	-	-	14.0
1927	53.9	12.9	23.6	9.5		61.1	12.7	24.5	1.6	83.0	-	-	17.0
1928	56.6	14.1	21.5	7.8		59.7	13.2	25.6	1.5	85.7	-	-	14.3
1929	51.7	17.7	21.1	9.4		59.8	14.0	24.9	1.3	83.7	2.0	-	14.3
1930	48.9	26.1	19.1	5.9		58.8	14.6	24.1	2.5	85.4	2.1	-	12.5
1931	76.7	7.6	8.0	7.6		79.9	8.8	9.3	2.0	88.6	2.3	-	9.1
1932	75.2	3.9	14.4	6.5		80.9	2.7	15.5	0.9	90.5	-	-	9.5
1933	41.4	40.5	11.0	5.8		64.5	24.0	10.0	1.0	90.9	-	-	9.1
1934	55.4	17.3	24.2	6.5		65.5	11.8	21.8	0.9	88.4	-	-	11.6
1935	64.1	11.6	16.0	8.4		64.6	12.7	21.3	1.5	87.8	-	-	12.2
1936	50.1	19.0	21.7	9.3		62.8	13.5	22.6	1.0	88.7	-	-	11.3
1937	52.2	16.2	22.2	9.3		63.3	14.0	21.4	1.3	87.1	-	-	12.9
1938	57.6	14.4	20.9	7.1		61.7	14.2	23.0	1.2	86.1	-	-	13.9
1939	59.0	13.4	22.9	4.7		61.6	12.4	24.9	1.2	92.3	-	-	7.7

Source: Calculated from John Brown Pay Bill Books - Average Wage per week
UCS 1/52/3-7

rather less sharply than in the shipyard. This may be because work of that type could be done for outside firms. It is also noticeable from the percentage tables that at the time of greatest depression in 1932 skilled men were rather more likely to be kept in employment than were apprentices or labourers. This is confirmed from information on the average weekly wage paid in that year which showed an increase from 53/4d in 1931 to 60/7d in 1932, then a fall in the following year to 54/9d. A picture of the employee most likely to retain his job during the inter-war years is that of a skilled journeyman, possibly a foreman, and probably employed in the engine and boiler works.

However there were a few years when this was not necessarily the case. The percentage figures in Table 3.9 confirm that in some years at least, apprentices were more likely than normal to find themselves employed compared to journeymen, such as 1923, 1930 and 1936. Such a situation occasioned criticism on the grounds that apprentices were being used as cheap labour. In February 1931 a mass meeting was held to complain about this problem. However it should be noted that those abnormally high levels occurred at times of low employment generally - Browns, Managing Director, Sir Thomas Bell felt that apprentices "cannot be paid off in slump time like other men¹⁶." On this occasion the company were proved correct when they pointed out that "the situation is caused by conditions of work and will right itself as work progressed¹⁷."

3.5 Conclusion

This survey of the employment and economic structure of Clydebank has confirmed that the inhabitants of the town relied to a very high degree on employment in the secondary sector of shipbuilding and engineering. Within this sector there were few large employers in the burgh. Expansion in the types of employment available in the town only occurred in the latter part of the 1930s, and the numbers involved in this expansion were comparatively small. Heavy reliance on staple industries which were badly affected at times by depression in the inter-war years meant a very severe unemployment problem which affected the town on two main occasions, in the early 1920s and the early 1930s. Such unemployment is the subject matter of part II of this thesis.

Footnotes

1. The Singer Factory was built at Kilbowie between 1882 and 1884. A history of the factory by A Dorman A History of the Singer Co (UK) Ltd (Clydebank Factory), exists in undated typescript form in Glasgow University Archives, reference number UGD 121. A second copy can be found in the local collection of Clydebank Public Library.
 2. For a recent general account of the many activities of this firm see M Moss and J R Hume Beardmore: A History of a Scottish Industrial Giant (London 1979)
 3. Third Statistical Account of Scotland (Glasgow 1959), vol. vi, p.238.
 4. Valuation rolls for the Burgh of Clydebank during the inter-war period are held in the Local History Collection in Clydebank Public Library.
 5. For a history of the firm see A Grant Steel and Ships: The History of John Browns (London 1950)
 6. See Moss and Hume, op. cit.
 7. Glasgow Herald, 11 September 1930. More detailed information on employment levels is not available in the Beardmore Papers, stored in the Archives of Glasgow University.
 8. Glasgow Herald Trade Review 1938, p.33.
 9. Dorman, op.cit. p.51.
 10. John Brown Papers, Reports to the Board, 30 May 1930, UCS 1/2/1.
 11. Glasgow Herald Trade Review 1932, p.24.
 12. Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Journal, vol. xxi, July 1938, p.173.
 13. CP, 9 October 1936.
 14. Legislation in the 1930s aimed at assisting particularly depressed areas, the Special Areas, was:-
Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act 1934, 25 & 26 Geo 5, Ch.1.
Special Areas Reconstruction (Agreement) Act 1936, 1 Edw. 8, Ch.19.
Special Areas (Amendment) Act 1937, 1 Geo. 6, Ch.31.
Reports of the Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland were published for December 1934 - June 1935 (Cmd 4958); July 1935 - December 1935 (Cmd 5089); December 1935 - July 1936 (Cmd 5245); July 1936 - August 1937 (Cmd 5604); September 1937 - September 1938 (Cmd 5905).
Consideration of government regional policy can be found in Chapter 6.
 15. CP, 25 February 1938.
 16. John Brown Board Papers, 28 October 1927, UCS 1/5/26.
 17. John Brown Papers, Reports to the Board, 27 February 1931, UCS 1/2/1.
- NB UCS is the notation reference for records of companies forming the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. Relevant records can be found in the business record collection of the Economic History Department of the University of Glasgow in the University Archives.

PART II

THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

CHAPTER FOUR
THE SCALE AND PATTERN OF UNEMPLOYMENT

4.1 The Data Problem

The inter-war years have long been synonymous with prolonged unemployment in the staple industries. Clydebank, being so dependent on the trades of shipbuilding and engineering, represents a classic case-study in this respect. There are however difficulties in undertaking a study of unemployment in a single community. Some of these relate to the nature of the data and how the figures were compiled, notably that the National Insurance Scheme did not then cover all workers, though the main categories employed in Clydebank were well covered. This and the problems of interpretation are reviewed in Appendix 2, The Problems of Data (pp.430-36).

A second difficulty relates to Clydebank's position within the Glasgow area. Those made unemployed would most naturally register at the labour exchange closest to their homes, but Clydebank was and is part of Glasgow conurbation. A considerable proportion, estimated at up to one third,¹ of Clydebank residents listed as being in work were employed outwith the town, so that unemployment rates and figures for Clydebank do not necessarily completely reflect the employment situation in the burgh itself. Yet while this presents a problem in estimating the scale of unemployment, it is less significant in any attempt to assess the impact of unemployment on the community in Clydebank and its response to that impact.

A third example of these difficulties can be given. Until 1926 nationally, and throughout the period locally, published unemployment figures do not differentiate between those wholly unemployed and those working on short time. Very few indications exist to suggest the extent of short time working in Clydebank, and this does have an effect on any attempt to assess the local unemployment situation. But such problems are not insuperable and sufficient information does exist to indicate the trends of unemployment in the inter-war period with reasonable accuracy, both nationally and locally.

4.2 The Scale of Unemployment

Unemployment in inter-war Britain was not a new feature of society. It was already a recognised issue. What was new was the scale of the problem, and this was made more acute for the individual by comparison

with the war years and the immediate post-war boom. Thereafter employment prospects deteriorated, reaching their nadir in 1932. Though recovery then took place, unemployment before 1939 never fell to the levels of the immediate post-war years. Indeed not only was this a period of major depression, but an awareness of that fact was sharpened since government statistics and other data became increasingly available to show its extent and effect. In addition, knowledge of the position was spread by the mass media.²

The extent of unemployment is indicated in Table 4.1 below. However, since not all who were unemployed would necessarily register, these must be regarded as minimum figures.

Table 4.1 Number of Persons (Insured and Uninsured) in Scotland and UK Registered as Unemployed in January 1923-1939 (000s)

Year	Scotland	UK
1923	207.1	1541.5
1924	169.8	1322.5
1925	184.5	1287.4
1926	198.6	1262.4
1927	182.6	1375.4
1928	134.9	1199.1
1929	177.4	1433.9
1930	181.5	1533.7
1931	338.6	2671.2
1932	374.6	2793.7
1933	407.3	2979.4
1934	365.1	2457.2
1935	353.3	2397.1
1936	330.0	2230.0
1937	271.3	1766.4
1938	270.0	1927.0
1939	288.7	2133.8

Source:- British Labour Statistics Historical Abstract 1886-1968
(London 1971) Table 162.

Thus in the worst period in the early 1930s, at least 400,000 Scots contributed to the UK total of three million unemployed.

Table 4.2 shows the annual average percentage rates of unemployment. Only the insured unemployed are included in this table, but this group formed a majority of the workforce.

Table 4.2 Absolute and Relative Levels of Unemployment
UK and Scotland 1920-1939 (See also Graph 4.1 p.44)

Year	UK	Scotland	Scotland as % of UK	Year	UK	Scotland	Scotland as % of UK
1920	3.9%	-	-	1930	16.1%	18.5%	114.9
1921	16.9	-	-	1931	21.3	26.6	124.9
1922	14.3	-	-	1932	22.1	27.7	125.3
1923	11.7	14.3	122.2	1933	19.9	26.1	131.2
1924	10.3	12.4	120.4	1934	16.7	23.1	138.3
1925	11.3	15.2	134.5	1935	15.5	21.3	137.4
1926	12.5	16.4	131.2	*1936	13.1	18.7	142.7
1927	9.7	10.6	109.3	*1937	10.8	15.3	141.7
1928	10.8	11.7	108.3	*1938	12.9	15.7	121.7
1929	10.4	12.1	116.3	*1939	10.5	-	-

* Figures include Agricultural Labourers

Source:- Calculated from British Labour Statistics Historical Abstract
1886-1968, (London 1971) Table 160.

BB Gilbert British Social Policy 1919-1939 (London 1970)
Appendix 1 Table 3.

Since figures of insured unemployed covered only the majority of the workforce more liable to unemployment, it is likely that percentage rates of unemployment for the entire workforce were rather lower than those given above (see Appendix 2 - Problems of Data pp.430-34).

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 together show the general trends of unemployment in the inter-war period. After a short post-war boom, the unemployment figures worsened very substantially, reaching the highest levels of the first inter-war decade in 1921. The remainder of the decade saw an improvement, though the trend was again rising from 1927. The slump which began in 1929 produced the worst unemployment figures of the inter-war period in 1932-1933 after which a recovery took place, reaching its high point in 1937. In 1938 the recovery was checked, though it resumed again in the following year. Such a pattern clearly shows the effects of the trade cycle though it is by no means solely influenced by that factor.

Table 4.2 above also compares the situation in Scotland with that in the nation as a whole. It is clear that, generally, the Scottish trend followed the national trend, but at least two comments need to be added. Firstly the Scottish figures were consistently worse than the national figures, a reflection of Scotland's greater dependence on the old staple industries which were particularly affected by depression in the inter-war years. The figures for Scottish unemployment as a percentage of UK

Graph 4.1 Percentage of Insured Workers Unemployed – U.K. and Scotland



unemployment show clearly that only in the late 1920s was the situation in Scotland almost as favourable as that experienced nationally. At other times, particularly from 1933 onwards, unemployment in Scotland was considerably worse than that nationally. Secondly, leading from the last comment, recovery in Scotland from 1933-1934 was considerably weaker than that in Britain generally. At the peak of recovery in 1937, Scottish unemployment in relation to the national position was almost at its worst in the entire inter-war period. Only 1936 showed a greater disparity between Scottish and UK unemployment levels.

Taken alone national statistics obscure the variation in employment levels in different areas of the country. Unemployment existed everywhere throughout the period, even in the "new industries" such as electricity or vehicle construction, but it was concentrated in certain industries and geographical areas. These were the staple industries on which Britain's 19th Century economic predominance had been built - shipbuilding, coal, iron and steel and cotton.

Since these industries tended to be concentrated in Scotland, Wales and the North of England, these formerly prosperous areas suffered the worst inter-war unemployment levels. A regional break-down is given in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Regional Unemployment Rates 1929-1937

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936*		1937
London	5.6%	8.1%	12.2%	13.5%	11.8%	9.2%	8.5%	7.2%	7.0%	6.3%
SE	5.6	8.0	12.0	14.3	11.5	8.7	8.1	7.3	7.2	6.7
SW	8.1	10.4	14.5	17.1	15.7	13.1	11.6	9.4	9.4	7.8
Midlands	9.3	14.7	20.3	20.1	17.4	12.9	11.2	9.2	9.2	7.2
NE	13.7	20.2	27.4	28.5	26.0	22.1	20.7	16.8	13.5	11.0
NW	13.3	23.8	28.2	25.8	23.5	20.8	19.7	17.1	17.0	14.0
Northern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22.9	17.9
Scotland	12.1	18.5	26.6	27.7	26.1	23.1	21.3	18.7	18.7	15.9
Wales	19.3	25.9	32.4	36.5	34.6	32.3	31.2	29.4	29.4	22.3
Britain	10.5	16.3	21.6	22.2	20.0	16.8	15.5	13.2	-	10.8

* In August 1936 alterations were made to the boundaries of some administrative divisions as they had existed since 1923, the most important of which was the creation of the Northern Divisions. This new division comprised Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland (except Berwick), Westmorland and the Cleveland District of Yorkshire. (see Ministry of Labour Gazette, August 1936, p 280).

Source:- W Beveridge Full Employment in a Free Society (London 1944)
Table 5 p.61.

As is evident from Table 4.3, the highest rates of unemployment were to be found in the north and west and the lowest in the south and east. Yet, in view of local variations, it is desirable to subdivide the data still further with special reference to the relative position of Clydebank. Scotland was not the worst affected area of the regions producing the 19th century staples, yet it had an unemployment rate consistently twice that to be found in London. Variations within Scotland too were large. As MP Fogerty wrote:

"Unemployment in Scotland was largely concentrated in certain counties and a number of other counties were more prosperous - in some cases very much more prosperous - than the national average In Scotland there was a clear distinction between the areas in which unemployment was above and below the average for Britain. The relatively depressed counties were mainly in the west and north Unemployment in the counties in the south and east of Scotland was about or below the national average³."

For example, in the worst year of depression, 1932, the British insured unemployed figure was 22.1%, but that for Dunbartonshire was 49.8%, for Midlothian 16.9% and for Aberdeenshire 19.0%.

4.3 Unemployment in Clydebank

It is against this background of particularly severe depression in certain industries and areas of the country that unemployment in Clydebank must be considered. The town had extensive shipbuilding and engineering industries at a time when such industries were badly hit by depression. It was situated in Dunbartonshire, one of the worst hit areas of west-central Scotland in the early 1930s. As a result it might be expected that unemployment in the burgh would be a consistent and often severe problem.

Such a suggestion can be tested against two main sources of statistical information. From 1923 the Ministry of Labour Gazette published monthly the numbers of unemployed in the area of the Clydebank Labour Exchange, which was almost equal to the area of the burgh. Monthly percentage rates of unemployment in the exchange area were published by the Ministry of Labour in the Local Unemployment Index from 1927 (for details see Appendix 2 - Problems of Data p⁴³⁴).

Table 4.4/

Table 4.4 Clydebank - Annual Average Numbers of Registered Unemployed 1923-1939 (See also Graph 4.2 p.48)

Year	Males	Females	Juveniles	Total
1923	4,100	244	273	4,617
1924	1,846	287	109	2,243
1925	2,686	239	173	3,098
1926	3,061	235	192	3,488
1927	1,359	208	120	1,687
1928	1,202	220	159	1,581
1929	1,637	252	173	2,062
1930	3,611	764	303	4,678
1931	7,896	1,578	603	10,077
1932	10,323	1,515	707	12,545
1933	8,749	831	472	10,052
1934	5,627	694	541	6,862
1935	4,481	601	630	5,712
1936	3,176	554	503	4,183
1937	2,120	435	294	2,849
1938	1,971	696	341	3,008
1939	1,531	651	344	2,467

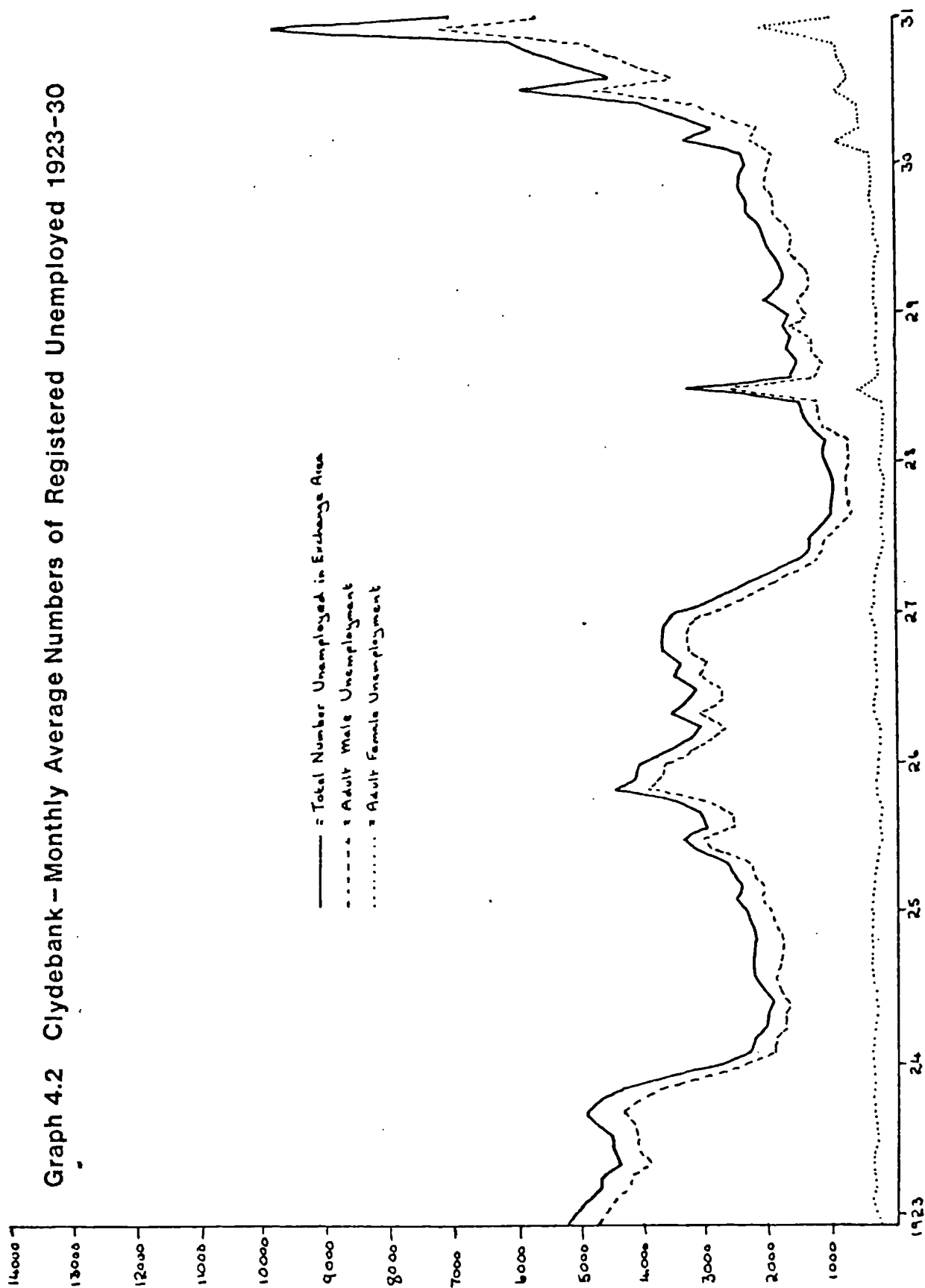
Source:- Calculated from Ministry of Labour Gazette 1923-1939.

Some information on the situation prior to 1923, before the beginning of the Ministry of Labour Gazette series, is also available. In December 1919 there were 500 unemployed in Clydebank,⁵ at the end of 1921 5,006 and in December 1922 a high point for the decade of 5,574 had been reached.⁶

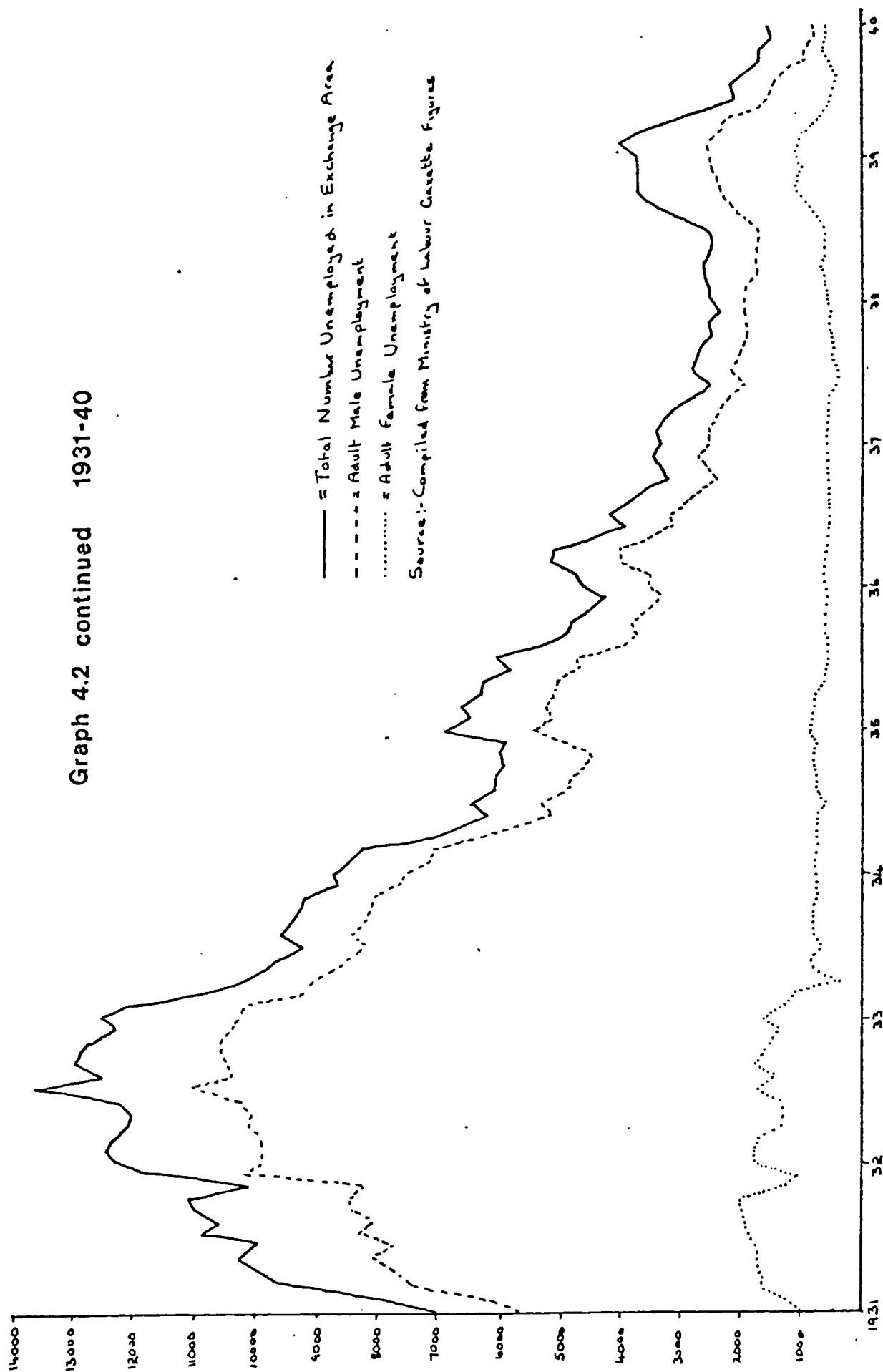
The figures in Table 4.4 include both insured unemployed qualifying for benefit and the uninsured unemployed registered as seeking work. Since in Clydebank the majority of the workforce, especially amongst men, were employed in insured sectors according to the census returns, the effect of the inclusion of the uninsured is unlikely to have made any significant difference in numbers.

In the most general sense the trends of unemployment in Clydebank, as shown in Table 4.4 above, follow those indicated nationally in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 - substantial unemployment in the early 1920s falling to a low point in the later years of the decade, then a rise to an inter-war high in 1932 followed by a decline to 1939, interrupted in 1938. However, as later evidence will suggest, a more detailed examination of the data indicates that such levels of unemployment left Clydebank relatively unaffected by the problem for much of the inter-war period - an

Graph 4.2 Clydebank - Monthly Average Numbers of Registered Unemployed 1923-30



Graph 4.2 continued 1931-40



important point which has been obscured by the generalised reality of high unemployment in shipbuilding.

The numbers of unemployed in Clydebanks in the years 1919-1939 were closely related to employment levels in the major local firms. Not surprisingly, changes in the size of the workforce in John Browns and Singers are reflected in the ebb and flow of burgh unemployment levels. The relevant figures are given in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Annual Average Workforce - John Browns and Singers 1919-1939

Year	Browns	Singers	Total
1919	9,049	-	-
1920	9,297	-	-
1921	6,322	-	-
1922	3,653	9,026	12,679
1923	3,404	9,191	12,595
1924	5,181	10,777	15,958
1925	4,353	12,174	16,527
1926	4,150	11,037	15,187
1927	5,372	11,258	16,630
1928	7,626	12,507	20,133
1929	6,675	12,440	19,115
1930	5,085	9,463	14,548
1931	3,556	7,991	11,547
1932	422	6,798	7,220
1933	675	7,599	8,274
1934	3,758	7,614	11,372
1935	5,381	8,103	13,484
1936	5,617	8,405	14,022
1937	6,198	9,104	15,302
1938	8,075	7,375	15,450
1939	9,583	8,809	18,392

Source:- Calculated from John Brown & Co Ltd. Abstract Wage Books 1919-1940 UCS 1/52/3-7.

A Dorman A History of the Singer Co (UK) Ltd (Clydebanks Factory) - ms. in Glasgow University Archives (no date) reference number UGD 121 p 47.

Clearly the fortunes of these employers played a significant part in determining the numbers of unemployed in the town. Even when reduced by depression in 1931, their combined workforce of 11,574 could have given employment to 53% of the 21,784 Clydebanks workers enumerated in the census of that year. Yet it must also be remembered that the

existence of Beardmores in Dalmuir in the 1920s and the arrival of new smaller firms in the town from the mid 1930s also contributed to varying the availability of employment.

It is noticeable that employment in the Singer Company was less sharply affected by the depression of the early 1930s. This can, at least in part, be explained by the retention of workers on short time rather than redundancy - though such workers could still claim unemployment benefit and thus appear in official statistics of unemployment. The author of a history of the Clydebank factory wrote that "For nearly two years the factory worked on short time, sometimes on a week on/ week off basis⁷." Such a solution was not adopted at that time by Browns which opted instead for heavy redundancies.

This highlights a problem of unemployment statistics in the inter-war period - the extent to which short time working prevailed amongst those registering as unemployed. There are no official figures available on this problem for Clydebank. Nationally, Mitchell and Deane have noted that the Ministry of Labour Gazette figures include those temporarily stopped as well as those completely unemployed. They calculate the proportion of the latter to the total as shown below in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 British Unemployment and Short Time Working

Year	% Totally Unemployed	Year	% Totally Unemployed
1926	63%	1933	78%
1927	69	1934	79
1928	67	1935	81
1929	72	1936	82
1930	68	1937	-
1931	74	1938	-
1932	76	1939	86

Source:- Mitchell and Deane Abstract of British Historical Statistics, (London 1962), p.66.

The natural short term reaction to recession would be to put workers on short time, especially if, as in the early 1920s, that recession was expected to be temporary and memories of a boom period were relatively fresh. However continuation and deepening of such recession over a long period of time would tend to change the reaction to one in which employees were made totally redundant. This helps to explain the figures above which suggest that the proportion of those on short time was greater in the 1920s and fell with the arrival of the depression of the early 1930s. It is probable that at that time the depth of the

recession meant that the alternative to full employment was unemployment rather than short time. The continuation of this trend in the later 1930s may reflect improving economic conditions when less short time working was required. Whatever the explanation, the figures given above indicate that, nationally, at least 20% of the unemployed during much of the inter-war period were in fact working on short time.

In local sources consulted for information on Clydebank, only two items were discovered relating to short time working. The town council minutes of 8 August 1921 contain a reference to information from the local labour exchange that 5324 men were unemployed and 1660 on short time. This suggests that 76.2% of unemployed men were wholly unemployed, rather higher than might be expected if the apparent national trends of the 1920s were followed in the burgh. Such a situation can be explained if there was less need for short time work in the town than elsewhere. Though this figure could also suggest that Clydebank was more severely affected by depression, it seems less likely in view of evidence, to be discussed later, that for much of the 1920s, and indeed the 1930s, the town was relatively less badly affected by depression than might be expected.

Such a conclusion also gains more support from the second piece of local evidence on short time working. This comes from the Clydebank Press of December 1931, after the cessation of work on the 534 "Queen Mary". The newspaper printed the following table, based on information from the labour exchange.

Table 4.7 Unemployment and Short Time Working in Clydebank, December 1931

	Men	Boys	Women	Girls	Total
Wholly Unemployed	6,631	402	870	160	8,063
Temporarily stopped/ on short time	3,426	56	527	63	4,072
Total	10,057	458	1,397	223	12,135

Source:- Clydebank Press, 18 December 1931.

These figures show the wholly unemployed to make up 66.4% of the total, comprising men 65.9%, boys 87.8%, women 62.3% and girls 71.7%. Here again the Clydebank proportion of 66.4% wholly unemployed is rather different from Mitchell and Deane's national estimate of 74% - though, as with the evidence from 1921, it is rather difficult to compare annual and monthly figures. However one possible explanation for the rather larger amount of short time working in Clydebank in 1931 than nationally may have been

attempts then by important local employers to hold on to skilled labour for as long as possible, especially in view of the comparatively recent onset of depression in the town. This possibility will be commented on later.

4.4 Comparative Unemployment Rates

To convert numbers of unemployed into rates of unemployment it is necessary to make use of the Local Unemployment Index. This was produced by the Ministry of Labour from 1927 detailing unemployment rates in approximately 600 local areas. The index was originally intended to provide information for commercial interests considering sales prospects in particular areas of the country,⁸ but it also provides a valuable social source. The rates quoted in Table 4.8 below are not entirely accurate (see Appendix 2 - Problems of Data p434), but they do provide an adequate indicator of trends and approximate rates of unemployment in the local areas - and this is the only source of strictly comparable local data. For the purposes of comparison, figures for six other towns have been tabulated below alongside Clydebank. They are Greenock, another Clydeside town dependent on shipbuilding; Dundee, a city on the east coast of Scotland mainly dependent on the jute industry; Paisley, another local town relying on thread making; Glasgow, the centre of the local conurbation with a more diversified economic structure; South Shields, a northern English town dependent on shipbuilding, and Luton, a town in south east England with a significant share of the "new industries".

Table 4.8 Local Unemployment Rates - Annual Averages 1927-1939

(See also Graph 4.3 p.55)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Clydebank</u>	<u>Greenock</u>	<u>Dundee</u>	<u>Paisley</u>	<u>Glasgow</u>	<u>South Shields</u>	<u>Luton</u>
1927	6.5%	18.6%	7.6%	9.0%	12.3%	24.3%	3.0%
1928	4.8	17.8	9.1	8.6	13.1	27.4	4.2
1929	6.3	16.0	12.0	10.1	14.6	24.7	4.1
1930	12.4	21.7	27.4	16.4	20.6	32.2	4.6
1931	34.6	41.7	38.0	24.2	30.3	45.3	7.9
1932	50.4	43.7	35.0	24.3	30.7	45.3	7.9
1933	43.5	40.3	29.3	23.4	30.5	43.8	5.3
1934	29.6	35.7	29.5	19.9	27.7	41.9	3.5
1935	23.5	34.2	25.8	19.3	25.9	44.1	4.4
1936	18.5	28.4	23.6	16.1	22.9	38.5	5.4
1937	11.5	21.4	22.1	12.3	17.4	29.4	5.5
1938	11.5	19.8	22.9	14.6	17.0	30.3	7.2
1939	10.8	19.0	17.0	13.0	16.0	29.0	5.9

Source:- Calculated from Local Unemployment Index 1927-1939.⁹

Figures for Clydebank are the most unexpected amongst the areas surveyed. In the period 1927 to 1929 Clydebank unemployment rates were closer to those of Luton, in the most prosperous region in the country, than any other. Yet by 1932 the unemployment rate in the burgh was higher than that of any of the other towns - higher than for Greenock, a comparable nearby shipbuilding town, or South Shields, a town whose experience Clydebank might have been expected to mirror. Substantial falls in the rates began in 1934, rather earlier than elsewhere, and by the end of the period were again closer to those of Luton than any other. Only in the years 1931 to 1934 was the Clydebank rate higher than that for Glasgow, and the rate was substantially better than that for Scotland except in the years 1931 to 1935¹⁰. Clydebank might have been expected to be severely affected by unemployment throughout the inter-war period because of its geographical position in West Central Scotland and its economic structure concentrating on shipbuilding and engineering. Yet the figures in Table 4.8 suggest that only in the early 1930s was Clydebank affected by a relatively short period of very severe unemployment comparable to the worst experienced in the nation. However on either side of this period unemployment was considerably less severe than in many similar industrial areas in Scotland and England, giving the town periods of relative prosperity. Unexpectedly, Clydebank can be seen as comparatively unaffected by unemployment for much of the inter-war period.

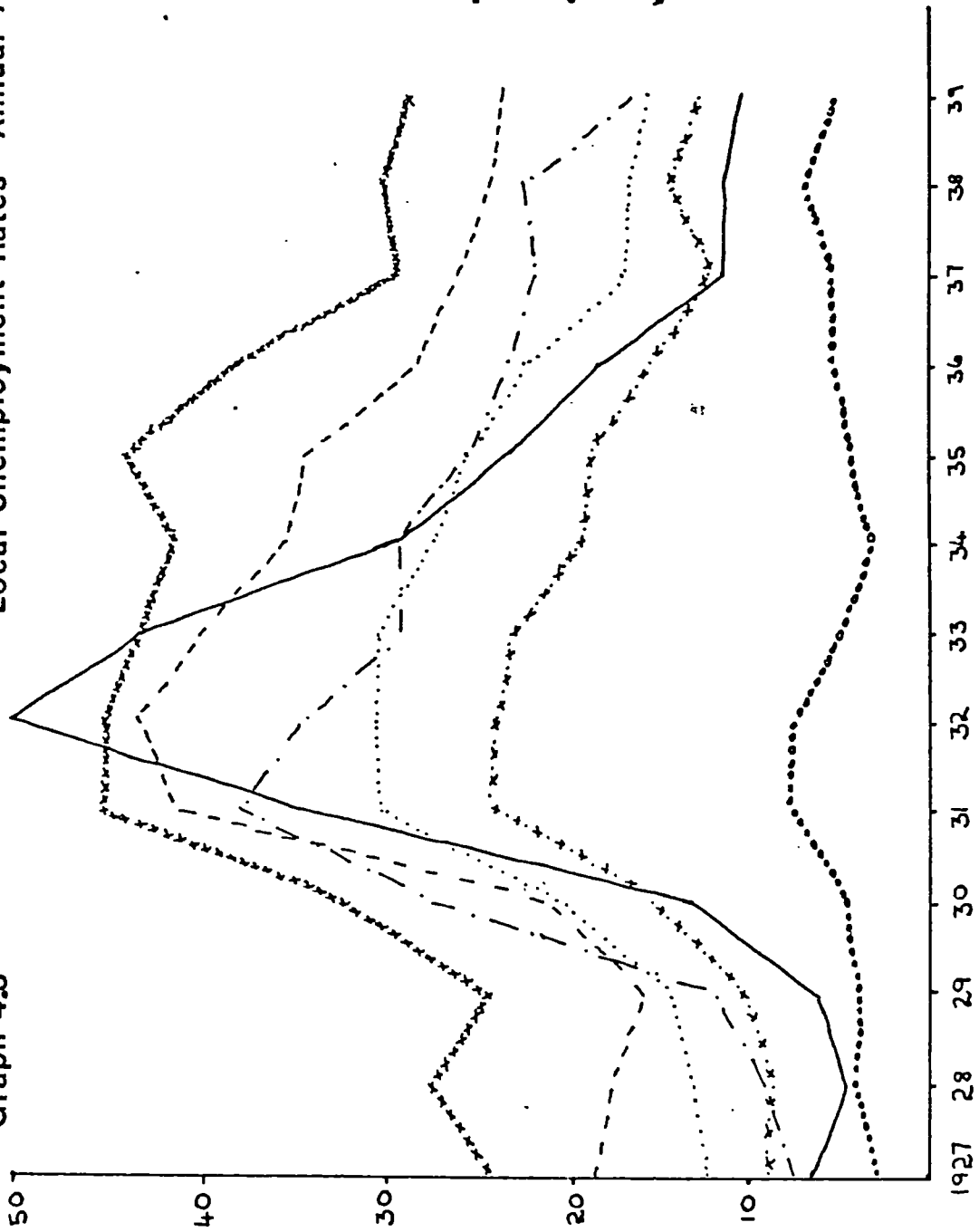
Unfortunately percentage rates of unemployment are not available from the early 1920s at a time when the town was also affected by depression. The available evidence quoted earlier suggests that the maximum number of unemployed in the town at that time was approximately 6,000, similar to the average number unemployed in 1935. At that time the unemployment rate was 23.5%, having dropped considerably from its maximum in 1932 of over 50%. If such a comparison can be accepted as a very rough indication of the position, it implies that in the earlier period of depression Clydebank was less severely affected by unemployment than in the early 1930s. Such a conclusion is supported by a consideration of employment levels in Browns and Singers shown in Table 4.5. Employment opportunities were considerably greater in the early 1920s than in the early 1930s.

Despite some doubt about the total accuracy of the Local Unemployment Index figures, as with other measures of unemployment, they are not so inaccurate as to conceal the extent to which Clydebank was less depressed than the conventional histories' view of the inter-war period would suggest.

At least two other independent pieces of evidence support the view that

Graph 4.3 Local Unemployment Rates - Annual Averages 1927-39

TOTAL %
UNEMPLOYED



Source: ...
Table 4.3

the unemployment problem in Clydebank relative to other areas, was basically confined to the early 1930s. Firstly, in June 1927 the Town Council was informed that the Unemployment Grants Committee would not give them financial assistance to build a golf course because "the extent of unemployment in the burgh is not so exceptional as to bring the scheme within the revised conditions for a grant." Secondly, as indicated in chapter 3, Table 3.7 p.37, average employment figures show employment levels in John Brown and Co Ltd to have been comparatively better than in the British shipbuilding and repairing industry generally, except in the years 1932 and 1933.

The relatively strong position of Clydebank for considerable parts of the inter-war period requires explanation. In the first place Clydebank was and is part of the Glasgow conurbation, allowing access to the variety of job opportunities in the city. Certainly in most years Glasgow suffered higher rates of unemployment than Clydebank - in 1928 the Glasgow figure was 13.1% whilst that for Clydebank was 4.8%, in 1930 the respective figures were 20.6% and 12.4%, and in 1935 25.9% and 23.5% and in 1939 16.0% and 10.8%. However it is possible that the generally greater prosperity enjoyed by the burgh citizens produced groups within the population more able to obtain clerical, teaching and other tertiary sector employment generally in Glasgow where such "middle class" opportunities existed, than some of the inhabitants of the city. In chapter 3 p.30 evidence was given of such a move into tertiary employment among Clydebank inhabitants in the period 1921 to 1930. However this explanation is moderated by evidence to be considered of relatively high youth unemployment in the burgh in the 1930s, suggesting that this cannot have been a major factor.

Probably much more significant were the particular circumstances of the town's main employers, Singers and John Browns. The Singer Company was less badly hit by recession in the inter-war years than some other sectors of the engineering industry as it produced industrial and domestic sewing machines. Demand for such consumer and consumer related products was relatively stronger than for some other products of the engineering industry. South Shields certainly had no equivalent. Indeed the Singer employment figures in Table 4.5 bear such a comment out. The lowest number employed, in 1932, was still almost 6,800 or 54% of the highest figure of the inter-war years, 12,500 in 1928 - though it must be remembered that in the early 1930s there was a considerable amount of short time working. In the shipbuilding sector, John Browns made a speciality of passenger-liner and cargo-liner construction, in which the company differed from others such as those located in north

east England. This allowed them to obtain sufficient contracts in the 1920s, though at low profit levels, to maintain a reasonably sized workforce as is indicated in Tables 4.5 and 4.9. In the period 1919 to 1928 the company had 26 tenders for merchant vessels accepted and 8 in the period 1929 to 1938. Their ability to obtain naval contracts in the rearmament period of the mid and later 1930s also resulted in the need for a substantial labour force - here 6 tenders were accepted in the period 1919 to 1928 and 17 in the period 1929 to 1938¹². It was in the years from 1931 when work on the 534 "Queen Mary" ceased and no other work was available that the Clydebank unemployment rate rose sharply in step with the simultaneous changes in the Singer workforce. In the same way it fell again when work resumed in 1934.

Another partial explanation may have been a reluctance on the part of major local firms completely to dispense with the services of skilled workers until the last possible moment - Browns certainly attempted to retain employees for as long as possible except in the depth of depression. Managing Director Sir Thomas Bell noted in July 1922 that Browns had tendered for a ship contract at cost price because

"it is absolutely essential at the present time to do everything in our power for old and tried employees of the company".¹³

R H Campbell has recently written, in relation to the history of Browns from the mid 1930s,

"By 1933 the prospects had reverted to those of the earlier 1920s. (Bell wrote) '... while it is possible ... to obtain more work, the difficulty is to be able to satisfy ourselves that such work will not entail a serious loss.' Once again the need to trim tenders in order to hold skilled labour together became common, but, by then, unlike the 1920s, increasing defence expenditure provided a basis for increased traditional activity by Browns".¹⁴

A last, though less important, possible explanation for the relatively low levels of unemployment in the town in the mid and later 1930s is the arrival of some new industry. Although none of the new enterprises such as Clyde Blowers, J Brockhouse and Co Ltd, or the new UCBS Bakery were very large employers of labour, their existence played a part in reducing Clydebank's unemployment rate.

A further check on the validity of the conclusion that Clydebank was relatively less affected by unemployment in the inter-war years may come from a consideration of participation rates. This method gives an alternative means of measuring labour opportunities, and the lack of such opportunities, by comparing the employed population with the total population in the working age groups. The former, measured as a

percentage of the latter, is an indicator of labour activity. Participation rates for Clydebank were therefore studied with a view to determining whether this justified any modification of the picture presented by unemployment rates.

However, before considering the results of such a study, several qualifications need to be made which reduce their significance to some extent. In the first place, a number of the figures used are estimates. An estimate of the number of insured aged 16-64 in the area of the local labour exchange comes from the Local Unemployment Index. A reduction estimated by the manager of the local labour exchange at one eighth has then to be made to give a figure for the burgh alone, since the exchange area extended beyond the burgh boundaries (see Appendix 2 - Problems of Data p 434). Secondly, there is the net commuting problem. In an area with above average employment opportunities, as was the case in Clydebank in the later 1920s, people may register for employment at the local employment exchange who do not live in the area. This may help to explain the high participation rates found prior to 1931. Thirdly, lacking accurate annual figures of those in the economically active age group 16-64, use has been made of the numbers in that age group found in the burgh census of 1931 ie 30,166. Though the town's population was roughly static for much of the inter-war period, changes in the age distribution of the population did take place (see Chapter 2 p.21). Fourthly, a rate can be calculated only for the entire working population since separate estimates for male and female insured were not published. Lastly, and most importantly, to calculate the numbers of insured employed, estimates of the insured population have been reduced by the percentage recorded as unemployed in the Local Unemployment Index. Accordingly, the participation rate cannot be independent of the unemployment rate.

Table 4.9/

Table 4.9 Participation Rates - Clydebank 1927-1939

Year	Population AGED 16-64	Estimated Insured 16-64 in Labour Exchange Area	Unemployment Rate	Number Employed in Labour Exchange Area	* Burgh Employed	Participation Rate
1927	-	28,410	6.5%	26,563	23,243	0.77
1928	-	28,880	4.8	27,494	24,057	0.79
1929	-	31,690	6.3	29,649	25,982	0.86
1930	-	31,340	13.2	27,203	23,803	0.78
1931	30,166	28,890	34.8	18,836	16,824	0.54
1932	-	24,900	50.4	12,350	10,806	0.35
1933	-	23,180	43.5	13,097	11,460	0.37
1934	-	23,180	29.6	16,391	14,297	0.47
1935	-	24,270	23.5	18,567	16,243	0.53
1936	-	22,620	18.5	18,435	16,131	0.53
1937	-	21,830	11.5	19,320	16,950	0.56
1938	-	23,710	11.5	20,983	18,360	0.60
1939	-	26,970	10.8	22,273	19,498	0.64

* Numbers of insured employed in the Labour Exchange Area have been reduced by 1/8 to give a figure for the Burgh alone (see Appendix 2 - Problems of Data p434).

While the participation rate is based on an assumed static population as enumerated in the census of 1931, changes were occurring in the age distribution of the Clydebank population, as indicated in chapter 2, Table 2.5, p.21. It is felt however that the scale of these changes is not sufficiently great to invalidate any conclusions based on the contents of this table.

Source:- Calculated from Local Unemployment Index 1927-1939.

One check can be made on the method of calculation employed in the above table. A participation rate can be calculated on the basis of information on the numbers of employed and unemployed contained in the 1931 census, though there are still problems about the use of these figures. The Clydebank population aged 16-64 numbered 30,166, of whom according to the census 21,652 were gainfully occupied - but the latter figure included 6,463 persons out of work, giving an actual total of employed individuals of 16,189. This produces an activity rate of 0.50. Using the Local Unemployment Index rate of 33.8% for the census month of April 1931, and following the method of calculation adopted in Table 4.9 above, an activity rate of 0.55 is obtained. This is of the same general order as that calculated from the census figures and suggests that Table 4.9 is not wholly inaccurate, though it may rather overestimate the extent of employment.

An overestimation seems probable in view of the excessively high activity rate of the period 1927-1930. The reasons for such an overestimate may lie in the original estimation necessary to produce the table - the numbers of insured may have been less than was estimated. It is also possible that more of the insured workers of Clydebank may have lived outwith the burgh in the 1920s than in the 1930s. In addition, more workers living in Clydebank but working outside it may appear as insured workers for areas outside Clydebank in the later 1930s when recovery from depression was occurring generally. This too would have an effect on the accuracy of the figures. Whatever the explanation, if these figures can be accepted as a guide, they give some support to the idea that in the latter part of both inter-war decades Clydebank was a comparatively prosperous community. In those years unemployment levels were relatively low, and it was only in the early 1930s when the Singer factory was on short time and work on the 534 "Queen Mary" was halted that the town was particularly badly affected.

4.5 Male and Female Unemployment

Nationally the majority of Britain's insured workforce was male, and approximately 26%-28% was female. Such figures must however be regarded as an uncertain guide since many unoccupied women might have been willing to join the workforce had suitable work been available. In addition some female employment areas, eg domestic service lay outwith the insurance scheme for much of the inter-war period. National figures also hide considerable regional and local variations in the levels of female employment compared to male, as the table below illustrates. Figures on which the percentages are based included those out of work.

Table 4.10 Percentages of Males and Females Aged 14+ Occupied 1931

	Males	Females
Clydebank	94.5	32.4
Greenock	92.3	33.6
Dundee	93.1	55.4
Paisley	92.1	42.8
Glasgow	92.8	39.0
Scotland	91.0	34.9
South Shields	90.7	22.7
Luton	93.9	45.2
England & Wales	90.5	34.2

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1931,
Reports on the Census of England and Wales 1931.

Though of course local custom may have played some part, the table must reflect differing female employment opportunities, eg the particularly high rate in Dundee was probably linked to the availability of low paid textile work in that area.

Against this background, unemployment rates for men and women in the seven local areas surveyed can be given. The discrepancy between the figure for 1931 in Tables 4.10 and 4.11 is explained by the fact that Table 4.10 includes those unemployed at the time the census was taken.

Table 4.11 Annual Average Rate of Male Unemployment in Local Areas 1927-1939

Year	Clydebank	Greenock	Dundee	Paisley	Glasgow	South Shields	Luton
1927	6.7%	21.7%	10.0%	13.4%	14.8%	26.5%	3.2%
1928	4.7	20.6	12.8	12.7	15.6	30.6	4.4
1929	6.7	18.7	15.4	15.3	17.3	27.0	4.7
1930	13.5	23.1	27.4	23.6	24.9	35.4	4.8
1931	35.3	47.2	37.6	34.2	36.2	49.8	9.3
1932	56.4	52.0	38.0	37.7	38.4	49.3	10.4
1933	49.9	47.5	35.2	35.8	37.7	47.2	6.8
1934	31.4	40.2	33.6	29.5	33.2	44.7	3.5
1935	23.6	38.0	28.8	27.3	30.6	46.3	3.9
1936	18.2	29.8	25.3	22.0	26.6	40.8	4.3
1937	10.7	23.2	21.7	17.0	20.3	32.1	4.2
1938	10.4	21.3	21.2	18.4	19.2	33.4	5.5
1939	9.4	20.8	17.0	14.4	18.0	31.9	4.7

Source:- Calculated from Local Unemployment Index 1927-1939.

Since the majority of the workforce was male, it is not surprising that generally the levels and trends in the figures above are similar to those

in Table 4.8 p 53. In the case of Clydebank the above table would again seem to confirm that the experience of the town was better than that suffered elsewhere, except for a period in the depression of the early 1930s.

Female unemployment percentages are tabulated below.

Table 4.12 Annual Average Rate of Female Unemployment in Local Areas
1927-1939

Year	Clydebank	Greenock	Dundee	Paisley	Glasgow	South Shields	Luton
1927	5.3%	8.7%	5.6%	3.6%	6.3%	9.0%	3.3%
1928	4.4	8.9	6.3	3.2	7.5	9.6	4.6
1929	5.7	9.5	9.7	3.6	9.1	10.3	3.8
1930	13.2	18.5	30.5	8.6	16.1	13.7	5.1
1931	36.2	25.4	41.2	12.6	19.7	19.6	6.8
1932	34.4	19.7	34.3	6.5	15.8	20.6	5.2
1933	21.0	18.3	27.0	6.2	16.0	20.6	3.5
1934	16.0	16.3	26.2	5.4	14.4	16.1	4.0
1935	15.0	16.3	22.8	6.2	13.6	14.9	6.0
1936	13.6	16.8	22.0	5.8	13.2	14.9	8.3
1937	10.3	16.0	22.6	5.7	10.6	14.0	6.9
1938	15.6	14.7	25.2	9.4	11.8	13.6	11.0
1939	16.7	13.0	16.8	8.8	11.3	14.3	8.5

Source:- Calculated from Local Unemployment Index 1927-1939.

As with male unemployment, female unemployment in these areas generally followed the national pattern of a peak in the early 1930s with lower rates both before and after that date. However some general comments are worth making. Unlike the position for the workforce nationally, local rates of female unemployment in the later 1930s were not close to the levels of the later 1920s, even in Luton. This suggests that the recovery of local female employment opportunities was somewhat weaker in those areas, and this would certainly seem to be the case in Clydebank. In the burgh not only were female rates in the later 1930s higher than in the late 1920s, but they were also higher than the corresponding male and national rates. This is probably related to the fact that the Singer workforce, which incorporated a large proportion of women, was smaller in the late 1930s than it had been 10 years earlier.

However caution must be exercised in interpreting these, and other, figures. Female rates give a clear example of the way in which administrative factors played a part in determining unemployment figures. Part of the sharp rise in the rate of female unemployment in the years 1930-1931 was a result of changed procedures in the adminis-

tration of the unemployment insurance scheme. In March 1930 the "genuinely seeking work" condition for the payment of benefit was dropped, leading to an increase in applications. When this change was reversed in the Unemployment Insurance (No. 3) Act, 1931¹⁵, the Anomalies Act, the rates of female unemployment were generally reduced at a time when it might have been expected that they would rise still further.

In the case of Clydebank specifically, the female unemployment rate at its worst was higher than in most other areas. This reflects the significance to female employment opportunities of the Singer Company, and the redundancies and short time working in that company in the early 1930s. It is also noticeable that Dundee, with a substantial female labour force in the textile industry, suffered a particularly high level of female unemployment in those years. The fact that South Shields often had a lower female unemployment rate than Clydebank may reflect a quirk in less than completely reliable data. However it is also possible that this situation was a consequence of local attitudes towards female employment in an area with relatively fewer employment opportunities for women. If comparatively fewer jobs for women had ever been available there might be less incentive to register at a Labour Exchange. The exception to this trend of high unemployment in areas of particular reliance on one employer or type of employment would seem to have been Paisley where employment opportunities in the thread industry appear to have been less severely affected throughout the period. The lower levels found in Glasgow were probably related to the wider variety of employment opportunities to be found in that city, whilst in Luton, in the comparatively favoured south east of England, rates remained low throughout, though surprisingly rising in the latter part of the period.

But again it must be emphasised that statistics on female unemployment are likely to be less accurate than those for men for reasons given above. Thus, though trends shown in the figures are likely to be valid, indications of the scale of the problem may be more inaccurate.

4.6 Juvenile Unemployment

If reasonably accurate knowledge of the position relating to female unemployment is difficult to obtain, so too is information in connection with levels of juvenile unemployment ie affecting those aged under 18 years. There is no consistent and comparable series of official juvenile unemployment statistics at national, regional or local levels for the entire inter-war period. In addition, accurate information is made more difficult to obtain since those workers aged 14 and 15 were not covered

by unemployment insurance until 1936 and so had little incentive to register for employment. However, Garside has attempted to produce national percentage rates on the basis of available Ministry of Labour Gazette figures and other sources. They are as follows.

Table 4.13 Percentage Unemployment Rates: Insured Juveniles 14-18 in Britain 1923-1938

Year	Boys 16+17	Girls 16+17	Year	Boys 14+15	Boys 16+17	Girls 14+15	Girls 16+17
1923	4.3	5.3	1931	-	7.8	-	7.0
1924	3.8	4.2	1932	-	8.3	-	6.3
1925	4.3	4.1	1933	-	6.3	-	5.1
1926	4.6	5.6	1934	-	5.0	-	4.4
1927	3.4	3.4	1935	-	5.1	-	4.7
1928	3.7	3.3	1936	2.1	5.2	2.7	5.0
1929	3.2	3.1	1937	2.6	3.6	2.3	4.1
1930	5.5	6.0	1938	1.8	4.2	2.6	5.0

Source:- W R Garside "Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars." Economic History Review 2 xxx, May 1977, Appendix 1, p 337.

Such a table, following the general adult trend but indicating a lower rate than for adults, has recently suggested to Benjamin and Kochin that the comparatively smaller governmental financial support given to juveniles reduced the amount of voluntary unemployment in this age group. Garside disagrees, pointing to the inadequacy of the statistics especially in relation to the uninsured juvenile who had little incentive to register at a Labour Exchange.

Certainly a review of local juvenile unemployment rates supports his view that the statistics are unsatisfactory. Juvenile unemployment rates in the local areas are given below. Male and female rates were not published separately and the statistics were no longer provided after 1936.

Table 4.14/

Table 4.14 Annual Average Rate of Juvenile Unemployment in Local Areas 1927-1936

Year	Clydebank	Greenock	Dundee	Paisley	Glasgow	South Shields	Luton
1927	6.0%	13.1%	3.5%	6.6%	11.2%	19.7%	1.0%
1928	6.6	11.0	5.0	8.2	10.3	17.5	0.9
1929	7.1	11.5	5.1	9.1	12.3	19.0	1.3
1930	10.7	17.6	15.4	9.2	12.4	22.9	1.4
1931	27.1	34.6	22.4	18.6	18.4	34.3	3.0
1932	32.6	32.8	19.6	17.9	20.4	35.2	3.0
1933	35.3	31.5	8.9	17.4	19.3	36.9	1.9
1934	46.7	40.0	18.4	19.7	24.6	51.8	1.2
1935	48.4	42.2	19.8	26.5	25.8	69.6	1.8
1936	35.0	46.5	18.3	23.3	22.5	53.5	2.7

Source:- Calculated from Local Unemployment Index 1927-1936.

Before commenting on these figures it is perhaps worth reproducing the warning given in each issue of the Local Unemployment Index.

"... in the case of juveniles ... the percentages are computed by relating the numbers unemployed aged 14 to 17 to the numbers insured aged 16 and 17. While the figures may generally be taken as broadly indicative of the relative unemployment position in the different areas named, they do not purport to show the actual percentage of unemployment amongst juveniles."

The figures in Table 4.14 suggest that juvenile unemployment in these local areas was considerably worse, except in Luton, in the 1930s than the national picture provided by Garside's estimates. It would seem that, locally, whilst unemployment trends for juveniles followed those for adults until the early 1930s, such was not the case thereafter. Improving trade seems to have provided fewer juvenile job opportunities at a time when demographic movements following World War I were increasing the supply of juvenile labour. If any reliance can be placed on these local statistics, they would seem to give little support to the suggestions of Benjamin and Kochin.

Clydebank itself developed a fairly severe youth unemployment problem - from having one of the lowest rates in Table 4.14 in the later 1920s, it had the second highest rate by 1935. This contrasts with the adult experience where, having reached a maximum, rates had begun to fall from 1932 and reached 24% for males and 15% for females by 1935. Indeed, in a reversal of the situation affecting adults, Clydebank's problem was greater in the mid 1930s than in Glasgow, its near neighbour, and in

most of the other areas surveyed. A number of reasons can be put forward to help to explain this. By the 1930s the last of the large numbers of those born during the town's boom period in the first decades of the 20th century would be coming on to the labour market at a time when the supply of available employment was in any case relatively small. In addition, as indicated at the end of chapter 3, there was some opposition in highly organised and unionised local industry to the "excessive" use of apprentices. The consequence of this may have been a cut back in recruitment of young people in major local industries. There is some slight evidence for this in Table 3.9 p38 where the percentages of apprentices employed in Browns in the 1930s tend to be at the lower end of the range found in the inter-war period. Lack of finance may also have contributed to this situation, for juveniles may have found greater difficulty in commuting, eg to tertiary sector employment in Glasgow, than adults.

4.7 Duration and Age Distribution

Juvenile unemployment with its effects on the attitude and morale of the future workforce was certainly a problem in the inter-war years though its true extent is far from clear. Slightly clearer indications of the extent of the remaining two problems to be dealt with in this chapter are available, ie the duration of unemployment and the age distribution of the unemployed. Most of the available information concerns the 1930s and relates to the national and regional levels, but there is a small amount of material dealing specifically with Clydebank which may assist in determining whether conclusions drawn from national material are applicable to the burgh. Local material will be considered after material relating to national or regional levels has been dealt with.

The table below gives information at a national level on the duration of unemployment.

Table 4.15/

Table 4.15 Duration of Unemployment Amongst Applicants for
Benefit or Allowances in Britain 1929-1939

Date	0-3 months	3-6	6-9	9-12	12+ months	Total
Numbers of Men and Women Aged 18-64						
Sept 1929	758,900	102,900	37,250	22,750	45,100	966,800
Aug 1932	1,485,152	277,783	184,518	156,443	412,245	2,516,141
Aug 1936	727,863	125,307	80,549	60,219	331,635	1,325,573
Aug 1937	666,625	111,326	71,849	47,295	287,821	1,184,961
Aug 1938	957,069	161,705	101,770	62,159	279,840	1,562,534
Aug 1939	622,408	95,772	63,140	52,819	244,000	1,078,103

As Percentage of All Applicants						
Sept 1929	78.5	10.6	3.8	2.4	4.7	100.0
Aug 1932	59.0	11.1	7.3	6.2	16.4	100.0
Aug 1936	54.9	9.5	6.1	4.5	25.0	100.0
Aug 1937	56.3	9.4	6.0	4.0	24.3	100.0
Aug 1938	61.3	10.4	6.5	4.0	17.8	100.0
Aug 1939	57.7	8.9	5.9	4.9	22.6	100.0

Source:- W Beveridge Full Employment in a Free Society, (London 1944)

Table 8 p 64.

These figures are unlikely to be completely accurate since they refer only to the individual's last period of unemployment, and therefore ignore others during the year. But they do show clearly the growing problem of the 1930s. The proportion of those unemployed for a short period fell with economic recovery, whereas long term unemployment, ie over 12 months, affected, from the early 1930s, a large and relatively static proportion of the unemployed. Though the numbers of long term unemployed fell considerably from 1932, this reduction was not reflected in the proportions. In view of the likely effects of long term unemployment on the morale and employability of the unemployed individual, this was obviously an increasingly serious problem.

In a review of the duration of unemployment in the Ministry of Labour Gazette of January 1937 information was given on this problem by industry. The figures published in relation to the industrial sector of the registered male long term unemployed in June 1936 showed that the percentage in the shipbuilding and repairing industry was 28.2, in engineering 29.1 and in mining 36.0. The long term unemployed in all industries made up 26.5% of the unemployed, whilst in some industries the percentage was lower, such as distributive trades 22.5 or shipping 19.5. From these figures it would seem that long term unemployment was a problem affecting some industrial sectors more than others, particularly some of the 19th century staples.

This is confirmed by the fact that the areas of the old staples tended to contain the largest proportions of the long term unemployed, as the table below indicates.

Table 4.16 Duration of Unemployment Amongst Applicants for Benefit and Allowances 21 June 1937 - Proportion by Region

Region	0-3 months	3-6	6-9	9-12	12+months	Total
London	71.0%	12.8%	5.3%	3.2%	7.7%	100.0
SE	67.2	13.3	6.2	3.7	9.6	100.0
SW	68.7	10.9	5.0	3.3	12.1	100.0
Midlands	60.7	11.2	5.6	3.4	19.1	100.0
NE	67.7	8.6	4.5	3.0	16.4	100.0
NW	52.4	12.3	5.9	4.1	25.3	100.0
Northern	36.6	11.0	6.6	5.5	40.3	100.0
Scotland	40.5	13.6	7.4	5.4	33.1	100.0
Wales	36.0	11.3	7.5	5.9	39.3	100.0
S Britain	66.7	12.0	5.4	3.4	12.5	100.0
N Britain + Wales	48.0	11.5	6.3	4.6	29.6	100.0
Britain	53.5	11.6	6.1	4.3	24.5	100.0

Source:- W Beveridge Full Employment in a Free Society (London 1944)
Table 10, p 68.

Use of the information in the text and the tables above would lead the reader to expect that Clydebank, with its reliance on shipbuilding and engineering, would suffer considerably from long term unemployment. The proportion would rise in the early 1930s and remain roughly constant thereafter. Use of the Local Unemployment Index, Table 4.8, p 53, on the other hand would suggest that such a picture would have to be amended. Employment was relatively easily available for Clydebank citizens in the later 1920s when unemployment rates ranged from 4.8% to 6.5%. This situation recurred in the later 1930s when the rate had again dropped to 18.5% in 1936 and 10.8% in 1939, considerably below that experienced in many other areas. Under these circumstances it would seem that long term unemployment in the burgh would be at its most severe in the early 1930s when unemployment generally was at its worst, and less of a problem both before and after this period when the town was relatively prosperous.

The available local evidence suggests that this was the case. Evidence given by Poor Law Authorities to the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance in 1931 included a tabulation of the duration of unemployment experienced by those on public assistance living in a number of towns and cities, including Clydebank, in the week ending 7 February 1931. The Clydebank figures are given below.

Table 4.17 Clydebank - Duration of Unemployment of Applicants to
Poor Law Authorities, 7 February 1931

Unemployed	Insured		Uninsured		All Unemployed	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under 12 months	635	96.0	69	85.2	704	94.8
Unemployed over 12 months	27	4.1	12	14.8	39	5.2
Total	662	100.0	81	100.0	743	100.0

Source:- Calculated from Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance 1930-1931, Appendix vol. 1, Table 7, p 94.

These figures emphasise the fact that employment opportunities in Clydebank were still relatively better in early 1931 than those to be found elsewhere. There was very little long term unemployment compared to that experienced in other areas, as unemployment had only affected the town to any extent in the recent past. A figure of 5.0% long term unemployed should be compared with a level of at least double that suggested nationally by Table 4.15 p 67. Clearly, since the long term unemployed would be most likely to need public assistance before the depths of depression were reached in 1932-1933, the situation in Clydebank was considerably better than that experienced in other parts of the country.

A second source of information comes from a survey of able bodied unemployed applicants for additional relief from Clydebank Town Council between 1931 and 1938, discussed in chapter 5 p 75. However some caution must be exercised when using these data. In the first place the size of the sample was not great - at maximum 506 individuals and, in view of the incomplete nature of some of the applications, sometimes less than this. In the second place, though the survey was carried out on a random basis of roughly each sixth application, applicants were not necessarily representative of all the unemployed in the burgh since they chose to apply for additional assistance - and this was not a course adopted by all the unemployed in the town. Till 1935 council assistance was the only source of extra help for long term unemployed. They were presumably mainly those who felt themselves most severely affected by unemployment and probably contained a larger proportion of the long term unemployed than the community generally. Thirdly, the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB) began to take over most of the functions of the provision of additional relief from 1935, and this administrative change was completed in 1937. Accordingly, those still applying for town council relief, particularly from 1937, were not fully representative of the true situation of the burgh inhabitants.

The table below gives available information on the total period of unemployment and the time on town council assistance of the 114 applicants known to have obtained further employment, and of all 506 applicants in the four years surveyed. The period of unemployment is the length of time between loss of employment and last appearance on council records. The period of assistance is the length of time between application and last appearance in the records.

Table 4.18 Clydebank - Duration of Unemployment of Applicants for Local Authority Assistance 1931-1938

(a) Period of Unemployment	114 Applicants Regaining Employment		All 506 Applicants	
	Under 12 months	Over 12 months	Under 12 months	Over 12 months
1931-1932	21.2%	78.8%	13.1%	86.9%
1933-1934	36.7	63.3	15.7	82.3
1935-1936	44.5	55.5	29.3	70.7
1937-1938	20.0	60.0	15.4	84.6
(b) Period on Town Council Assistance				
1931-1932	24.5%	75.5%	17.9%	82.1%
1933-1934	69.9	30.1	38.6	61.4
1935-1936	94.4	5.6	47.6	52.4
1937-1938	60.0	40.0	44.7	55.3

Source:- Calculated from Applications to Clydebank Town Council for Additional Relief 1931-1938 (see chapter 5 p 75).

These figures are unlikely to provide completely accurate information on the actual scale of the problem - indeed the figures for 1931-1932 are at considerable variance with those in Table 4.15 p 67, though such variance can partly be explained as a result of the sudden onset of deep depression in the town in those years. But Table 4.18 can at least suggest trends. It gives support to the view expressed above that the problem was at its worst in the early 1930s and declined thereafter. The proportion of long term unemployed in receipt of assistance fell by 16-23% between 1931-1932 and 1935-1936, at which time the establishment of the UAB began to affect the comparability of the figures.

The evidence in Table 4.18, when added to the information in Table 4.8, suggests that indeed, against the national trend, long term unemployment in Clydebank was becoming less of a problem as the 1930s passed. Though not negligible even at the end of that decade, the improving employment opportunities available in the town from 1934 onwards significantly reduced the problem of the long term unemployed both in numbers and proportion, against the trend seen elsewhere.

In terms of the age distribution of the unemployed, Scotland seems to have fitted more closely the national average. The common conception of such an age distribution is described by Beveridge -

".... it is assumed by many people that an older man is more likely to lose his job than a younger man,"

but he continues,

"This is definitely not the case. In the period between the wars the risk of a man losing his employment was practically the same from 55 to 64 as from 45 to 54 or ¹⁷35 to 44 and was actually less than at the ages of 25 to ¹⁸34."

Support for this can be found in a comparison between the size of the relevant age groups in the male population aged 18 to 64 from the 1931 Census of Scotland and an age distribution of registered male unemployed in the same age group in Scotland from the Ministry of Labour Gazette of July 1935. Males aged 23 to 34 comprised 25.2% of the male population but 28.5% of the unemployed, whereas those aged 45 to 54 were 18.5% of the population and 16.1% of the unemployed. Those aged 55 to 64 were 15.0% of the population and 14.1% of the unemployed.¹⁸

The effect of age on unemployment was however considerable since once unemployed the older man was likely to find more difficulty in regaining employment. A Ministry of Labour Gazette survey of benefit applicants published in June 1938¹⁹ showed that of those registered unemployed for 12 months and over 7.2% were aged 18 to 24 and 30.5% were 45 to 64. Some local support for this comes from the survey of applicants to Clydebank Town Council for additional relief. Of 114 men known to have regained employment, 16.7% were aged 45 or over at application against 33.5% in this age group in the town population generally.

The situation with regard to female unemployment was rather different, considerably the greater proportion coming from the youngest age groups. This was pointed out in a Ministry of Labour Gazette article of 1935 in which it was stated that

"The proportions in the lower age groups among unemployed women were much greater than in the case of men, over 63% being under the age of 35 years while less than 20% were aged 45 years or over."

The Gazette continued

"The fact that the proportions in the lower age groups were much greater among women than among men is mainly due of course to the effects of marriage in reducing the total numbers of women in the higher age groups who are available for employment."²⁰

As in the case of men, there is some evidence that the Clydebank age distribution of unemployment among women followed the national pattern. The survey of applicants for extra relief shows that 81.7% of the 60 female applicants to the town council were aged under 35 at application, and 75% of all female applicants were single whilst 1.7% were married.

4.8 Summary and Conclusion

The size of the inter-war unemployment problem was very substantial, concentrated as it was in certain areas of the country, in certain industries and amongst certain types of individuals. It might have been expected that the burgh of Clydebank would have been particularly badly affected by this problem. Yet the available statistical evidence suggests that, except for the early 1930s, the town was relatively less severely affected by unemployment and must have been comparatively prosperous by the standards of the area. Though unemployment rates among burgh inhabitants in the early 1920s are not available, the evidence of the absolute figures suggests that at that time of recession too, unemployment in Clydebank was not as extensive as it was later to become. It was in the early 1930s that the town was faced by very severe unemployment and all its attendant problems. At this time the community must have suffered even more than the figures suggest in view of the contrast with the relative prosperity of earlier years. It would seem true to say that in several respects the unemployment experience of Clydebank in the inter-war years was anomalous when comparison is made with other local, regional and national data, and with present beliefs about its experience.

In this chapter discussion of unemployment has been at a rather abstract, statistical level. The following chapter attempts to take a more detailed view of exactly who were the unemployed, living in such numbers in Clydebank in the early 1930s.

Footnotes

1. See chapter 5 p95.
2. Yet perhaps surprisingly even in the early 1930s media attention focussed as much on other problems - in 1934 the India Bill received more press coverage than the Unemployment Bill. Subjective assessment suggests that in Clydebanks the local Clydebanks Press gave as much if not more attention to subjects ranging from housing to leisure at that time.
3. MP Fogerty Prospects of the Industrial Areas of Britain (London 1945), p.131.
4. Ibid., Table 8
5. CTCM, 8 December 1919
6. Glasgow Herald, 4 March 1925
7. A Dorman A History of the Singer Company (UK) Ltd (Clydebanks Factory) - typescript in Glasgow University Archives (no date), reference number UGD 121, p.51. Also available in the Local History Collection of Clydebanks Public Library. Though the years referred to are not precisely specified it is clear from the context that the author is referring to the early 1930s.
8. It was stated in the introduction to the first issue of the Local Unemployment Index in January 1927 that
 "This monthly index of local unemployment is prepared and issued primarily for the guidance of manufacturers and distributors wishing to adjust their sales activity in the changing prosperity of the various local areas, and to make due allowance for such changes in judging the effectiveness of their advertising and salesmanship."
Local Unemployment Index, January 1927, p.2.
9. Changes in the method of calculation in 1937 render figures in that and later years not strictly comparable with earlier figures. In January 1937 all uninsured persons and insured juveniles aged 14 and 15 were excluded from the calculations. From September 1937 further changes attempted to ensure that those on the register but not actually unemployed on the day of the count were excluded. However neither of these changes affected the statistics to a considerable extent.
10. Between 1931 and 1935 the Scottish rate rose from 26.6% to peak in 1932 at 27.2% and had fallen by 1935 to 21.3%.
11. CTCM, 2 June 1927
12. A Slaven "A Shipyard in Depression: John Browns of Clydebanks 1919-1938", Business History vol. xix, No. 2, July 1977, p.198.
13. John Brown Board Papers, 26 July 1922, UCS 1/5/21

14. R H Campbell The Rise and Fall of Scottish Industry (Edinburgh 1980), p.168
15. 21 & 22 Geo.5, Ch.36
16. Ministry of Labour Gazette, January 1937, pp.8-9
17. W H Beveridge Full Employment in a Free Society (London 1944), p.70
18. Ministry of Labour Gazette, July 1935, pp.248-49
19. Ibid., June 1938, pp.212-13
20. Ibid., July 1935, pp.248

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CLYDEBANK UNEMPLOYED - A SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Chapter 4 considered the unemployment situation in Clydebank in a general overview, concentrating on numbers of unemployed and rates of unemployment. But these figures resulted from the individual experience of each unemployed person in the town. This chapter considers at least some of the unemployed in Clydebank during part of the inter-war period on a rather more individualistic basis. The material in the chapter is based on a survey made of a sample of Clydebank unemployed in the 1930s.

5.1 The Sample Survey and Methodology

The source materials of the study were the applications to Clydebank Town Council for extra relief of all types under the auspices of the Poor Law or the Public Assistance system by the able bodied unemployed whose weekly income was not sufficient to bring them up to the level set locally as necessary by the town council. The applicants included the totally destitute as well as those in receipt of Unemployment Insurance benefit or Unemployment Assistance benefit, pensions, income from dependents etc. The source material is currently stored in Clydebank Public Library and comprises, for the period 1930-1939, in the region of 8,000-10,000 applications in 36 volumes filed annually. Single annual volumes were impractical in the years to 1934 in view of the large number of applications, with the result that such applications were filed on an alphabetical basis. Unfortunately no annual record of the number of applications has survived.

Those wishing assistance completed an application form which required 22 pieces of information ranging from name, address, date of birth, etc to result of application and a section for a description of any later change in status. In practice not all questions were actually completed on every application - however even in the later years when omission of answers was most frequent it does not affect a very large proportion of most questions. A copy of a typical application from 1931-1932 is appended to this chapter.

The survey of a proportion of these applications was completed with the assistance of Glasgow University Computing Service, and is based on an examination of 506 applications, 206 from 1931-1932, 153 from 1933-1934, 82 from 1935-1936 and 65 from 1937-1938. This gives roughly a 5% sample overall. Those included in the survey were chosen on the basis of approximately each 6th application, though this varied somewhat from

year to year surveyed. Applications were dealt with in three groupings. These were (a) all 506 applicants, (b) the 114 applicants known to have regained employment and (c) the 62 applicants known to have been transferred to the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB) from 1935.

A distinction should be drawn between the types of person applying before and after the establishment of the UAB. Until then able bodied unemployed applicants received additional assistance from the town council for two main reasons. Firstly, applicants could be outside the national unemployment insurance scheme. This might result from a lack of sufficient contributions, from breaking the statutory conditions for the receipt of benefit, or having worked in uninsured employment. Secondly, candidates for assistance could be those whose unemployment benefit or other source of income did not reach the local basic income level set down by the local authority, and depending on family size and circumstance.

However this situation was altered from 1935 with the introduction of the UAB as a result of the Unemployment Act 193¹₄. The Board was established to provide financial and other relief to those whose statutory 26 weeks of unemployment benefit were exhausted and who (a) were between 16 and 65 years of age, (b) were either normally employed in work in respect of which contributions were made under the Widows', Orphans' and Contributory Pensions Acts 1925-1932, or would have been employed in such work but for the employment situation in the area in which they lived and (c) were capable of and available for work.

This meant that from then a proportion of those who had been in receipt of town council funded assistance were taken over by the new Board, or applied to it in future, and largely ceased to be a responsibility of the council. This take over took place in two parts. Those who were in receipt of Means Tested benefits on the exhaustion of their standard Unemployment Insurance benefits were taken over in January 1935 and November 1936, and those on Public Assistance in April 1937.

As a result of these changes the types of persons generally qualifying for town council assistance, especially from 1937, were the following:

1. Those applying for public assistance whilst waiting for receipt of assistance from other sources eg those requiring aid in the period between application for and receipt of an old age pension, widow's pension etc.
2. Those requiring extra assistance over and above that received from other sources.

3. The able bodied unemployed. This number was greatly reduced after 1935 since assistance was only given to those who fell outwith the widening scope of the Insurance Acts.
4. Dependents of those involved in strikes and lockouts who could be provided with emergency relief.
5. The sick. Generally this group comprised those whose income, for the duration of their illness, was too small to support them, and relief could take the form of medical or financial assistance. Medical relief could also be provided to those in receipt of Unemployment Assistance, since the UAB was not allowed to provide for the medical needs of its clients.
6. Others eg widows not entitled to a pension, dependents of prisoners, deserted wives, etc.²

The purpose of this survey is to individualise the unemployment experience of Clydebank citizens. The sample of applications for relief is the only way found, despite considerable research, of accomplishing this on a statistically acceptable basis. Nevertheless some qualifications require to be made concerning this material before considering any results of the survey. Firstly, and most importantly, the work of the UAB from 1935 reduced the representative nature of the sample. Applications made in the years 1931-1932 and 1933-1934 when unemployment was at its worst in the burgh meant that a wide spectrum of the Clydebank community was included in the survey. After 1935 those surveyed became considerably less representative. Secondly, the size of the sample was not great, at most 506 individuals. Yet since some of the applications were incomplete not all of the information from each of these applicants is necessarily available. Lastly, though the survey was carried out on a random basis, it can cover only that group within the unemployed who chose to make application. These were presumably those who, on the whole, felt themselves to be most severely affected by unemployment. Thus the applicants do not necessarily reflect the experience of all those unemployed who lived in Clydebank at that time.

Despite such qualifications, as the only available source of its type, the material can give a good deal of information on the unemployed in the burgh. The results of the survey are given in section 2 below.

5.2 Survey Results/

5.2 Survey Results

These will be considered under various headings, grouping connected findings into sub-sections.

(i) Sex

The sample studied contained 506 applications from individuals aged 14 years or more. Of these, 446 were male (88.1%) and 60 were female (11.9%). This balance contrasts strongly with the sex distribution in the town in the 1931 Census in which, in similar age groups, 50.6% were male and 49.5% were female. The disparity between these two sets of figures can be explained by the fact that married women would normally be regarded as dependents of their husbands for the purposes of relief. This is borne out by the fact that 75% of all female applicants were unmarried and a further 15% were widowed. Among males only 21.3% were single and 3.8% widowed. However some change in this situation can be seen in the following table.

Table 5.1 Ratio of Male to Female Applicants, 1931-1938

Period	Ratio
1931-1938	7.43:1
1931-1934	12.30:1
1935-1938	3.45:1
1931-1932	14.84:1
1933-1934	9.92:1
1935-1936	2.72:1
1937-1938	4.90:1

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938

The figures show that the passage of time reduced the need for men to apply to the town council for assistance. This might suggest a much swifter recovery of male employment prospects as time passed. There is some evidence for this in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 pp.61 and 62, where male unemployment rates in the late 1930s were lower than those for women and had fallen from a considerably higher level. However an important factor in explaining this development was the take over by the UAB of able bodied unemployed males. On the other hand this did not apply to a considerable proportion of female applicants, many of whom had been outwith the scope of the relevant Unemployment Acts eg 10 stated that they had never worked, 5 were housewives, 18 were domestic servants and 3 were cleaners.

(ii) Marital Status

The marital status of the applicants at the time of application is tabulated below.

Table 5.2(a) Marital Status of Applicants 1931-1938

Year	Single		Married		Widowed		Separated		Divorced	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1931-1938	140	27.7	328	64.8	26	5.1	9	1.8	3	0.6
1931-1932	26	12.6	166	80.6	13	6.3	1	0.5	-	-
1933-1934	46	30.1	96	62.7	8	5.2	2	1.3	1	0.7
1935-1936	45	54.9	35	42.7	2	2.4	-	-	-	-
1937-1938	23	35.4	31	47.7	3	4.6	6	9.2	2	3.1

Source:- Calculated from applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938

These figures can be further broken down

Table 5.2(b) Overall Marital Status by Sex 1931-1938

	Single		Married		Widowed		Separated		Divorced	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Male	95	21.3	327	73.3	17	3.8	7	1.6	-	-
Female	45	75.0	1	1.7	9	15.0	2	3.3	3	5.0

Source:- As table 5.2(a)

The figures for the sample overall and for the earlier years confirm the suggestion made previously - the majority of male applicants were married and the majority of female applicants were single. The reasons for this are fairly obvious.

Married men would be more likely to apply in view of their family commitments, and their wives would be covered by any such application. This means that applications from women, whose occupations in any case would be rather more likely to lie outwith the insurance scheme, would tend to come from those who were single and in need of extra relief for themselves or dependents such as parents. There is one small point to note. The Census of 1931 shows that 8,883 males in the age group of the applications were married (55.8%) while 7,032 were single (44.2%), yet 73.3% of male applicants in the survey were married and 21.3% were single. It is unlikely that unemployment would affect married men more than their proportion in the population generally would suggest. Nor does it seem very likely that married men on unemployment benefit with dependents allowances would find it much more difficult to make ends meet than a single man on his lower allowance. A more likely explanation is that the town council relief scales tended to treat married men relatively more generously than the single man whose own scale payment from the town council was generally similar to that provided by

unemployment insurance. This would encourage more applications from married men. Information on levels of local authority relief can be found in chapter 7, pp.158 & 162.

By the latter two years of the survey a change can be noted with a great increase in the proportion of single applicants and a reduction in the proportion of married applicants. There seems little reason to doubt that this was largely a result of the establishment of the UAB which took responsibility for many of the married men who would previously have been assisted by the town council. In addition, from June 1934, the town council allowances became rather higher for some single people and this may have helped increase the proportion of single applicants.

(iii) Birthplace

A question regarding the birthplace of applicants can be used to indicate the extent of migration to Clydebank in earlier years, and the results show that just over one quarter of applicants had actually been born in the burgh.

Table 5.3 Birthplace of Applicants for Relief 1931-1938

Birthplace	% of all Applicants	% of those Transferred to UAB	% of those Regaining Employment
Clydebank	27.9	38.7	28.9
Glasgow	22.3	21.0	28.9
West-Central Scotland	19.2	19.4	14.0
Rest of Scotland	9.9	3.2	6.1
England	4.2	4.8	2.6
Ireland	16.2	12.9	17.5
Elsewhere	0.4	-	1.8

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

A number of points in this table are worthy of note. Firstly, only 28% of applicants were born in Clydebank, an indication of the considerable migration into the town in the period before 1921, which helps to explain its substantial pre-war population growth. Secondly, a large proportion of the population was born in Ireland and this may be connected to the fact that the town Roman Catholic community seems to have been rather larger than average. Thirdly, though it would be misleading to suggest that individuals from any particular area were more prone to suffer unemployment, distress, etc. which would ignore important factors such as family size, occupation and length of

residence in the burgh, it does seem that a substantially larger proportion of those transferred to the UAB were born in Clydebank. Although it may be that local residents were in categories of employment or residence which made them particularly likely to fall within the UAB jurisdiction, the reason for this finding is not clear.

(iv) Age Structure

Probably more important is a review of the age of applicants at the time of application in comparison with the age distribution of the burgh population generally. Tables 5.4(a), (b) and (c), pp 82, 83, 84. give this comparison.

A number of comments can be made in relation to these tables. From Table 5.4(a) it would seem clear that those in the age group 25-44 were more likely to apply for assistance than their proportion in the population generally would suggest. This applied to males who formed the majority of applicants and is in fact clear in each of the tables. This is presumably a reflection of the relative insufficiency of central government support of this group with its growing family responsibilities, and the slightly more generous provision made by the town council for those with children even at the time of the economy cuts, October 1931-June 1934 (see chapter 7 p162). Secondly, Table 5.4(a) shows that fewer males in the age group 15-24 than might be expected from their distribution in the population as a whole applied for assistance, but considerably more females. The most probable explanation of this finding is that females were more likely to be in uninsured occupations when, mainly before marriage, unemployment or lack of finance forced them to seek assistance. This is less likely to have applied to young males who would probably have worked in insurable employment and thus, when without dependents, would receive as much in unemployment benefit as in town council relief. Young single men would thus have less incentive to apply for council assistance than young single women.

Table 5.4(a) also shows that a rather lower proportion of those in the group aged 45 and over applied for assistance than their distribution in the population as a whole might suggest. In the case of women this was a result of marriage after which they were normally regarded as dependents of their husband. As for men, having had a longer working life with grown up children less likely to stay in the family home, they might have had greater resources behind them and less need to ask for council help than younger applicants with growing families. Some, particularly in the age group 55+ lived with sons or daughters and so were regarded as dependents.

Table 5.4(a) Age Distribution of All Applicants 1931-1938

Both Sexes Aged *	COLUMN 1		COLUMN 2		RATIO 1:2
	No of Applicants	% of Total	1931 Census (age 15-74) No.	%	
15-24	116	23.0	8,988	27.5	0.84
25-34	140	27.7	7,257	22.2	1.25
35-44	119	23.6	6,031	18.4	1.28
45-54	63	12.5	5,142	15.7	0.80
55-64	49	9.7	3,634	9.9	0.98
65-74	18	3.6	1,668	5.1	0.70
TOTAL	505	100.0	32,720	100.0	1.00
Males Aged *					
15-24	77	17.3	4,569	27.2	0.64
25-34	130	29.2	3,638	21.7	1.35
35-44	113	25.4	2,990	17.8	1.43
45-54	60	13.5	2,697	16.1	0.84
55-64	47	10.6	1,947	11.6	0.91
65-74	18	4.0	847	5.0	0.80
TOTAL	445	100.0	16,778	100.0	1.00
Females Aged					
15-24	39	65.0	4,419	27.6	2.36
25-34	10	16.6	3,619	22.6	0.73
35-44	6	10.0	3,041	19.0	0.53
45-54	3	5.0	2,445	15.3	0.33
55-64	2	3.3	1,687	10.5	0.31
65-74	-	-	821	5.1	-
TOTAL	60	100.0	16,032	100.0	1.00

* One individual aged 14 has been omitted.

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-38; Report on the Census of Scotland 1931.

Table 5.4(b) Age Distribution of Applicants Transferred to UAB
1935-1938

	COLUMN 1		COLUMN 2		RATIO 1:2
Both Sexes Aged	No of Applicants	% of Total	1931 Census (age 15-74)		
			No	%	
15-24	20	32.3	8,988	27.5	1.17
25-34	10	16.1	7,257	22.2	0.72
35-44	19	30.6	6,031	18.4	1.66
45-54	11	17.7	5,142	15.7	1.12
55-64	2	3.2	3,634	9.9	0.32
65-74	-	-	1,668	5.1	-
TOTAL	62	100.0	32,780	100.0	1.00
Males Aged					
15-24	14	25.5	4,569	27.2	0.94
25-34	10	18.2	3,638	21.7	0.83
35-44	19	34.5	2,990	17.8	1.94
45-54	10	18.2	2,697	16.1	1.13
55-64	2	3.6	1,947	11.6	0.31
65-74	-	-	847	5.0	-
TOTAL	55	100.0	16,718	100.0	1.00
Females Aged					
15-24	6	85.7	4,419	27.6	3.10
25-34	-	-	3,619	22.6	-
35-44	-	-	3,041	19.0	-
45-54	1	14.3	2,445	15.3	0.93
55-64	-	-	1,687	10.5	-
65-74	-	-	821	5.1	-
TOTAL	7	100.0	16,032	100.0	1.00

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town
Council 1931-1938; Report on the Census of Scotland 1931.

Table 5.4(c) Age Distribution of Applicants regaining Employment
1931-1938

	COLUMN 1		COLUMN 2		RATIO 1:2
Both Sexes Aged *	No of Applicants	% of Total	1931 Census (age 15-74)		
			No	%	
15-24	28	24.8	8,988	27.5	0.90
25-34	35	31.0	7,257	22.2	1.40
35-44	30	26.5	6,031	18.4	1.44
45-54	13	11.5	5,142	15.7	0.73
55-64	6	5.3	3,634	9.9	0.54
65-74	1	0.9	1,668	5.1	0.18
TOTAL	113	100.0	32,720	100.0	1.00
Males Aged *					
15-24	17	17.0	4,569	27.2	0.63
25-34	35	35.0	3,638	21.7	1.61
35-44	29	29.0	2,990	17.8	1.63
45-54	12	12.0	2,697	16.1	0.75
55-64	6	6.0	1,947	11.6	0.52
65-74	1	1.0	847	5.0	0.20
TOTAL	100	100.0	16,778	100.0	1.00
Females Aged					
15-24	11	84.6	4,419	27.6	3.07
25-34	-	-	3,619	22.6	-
35-44	1	7.7	3,041	19.0	0.41
45-54	1	7.7	2,445	15.3	0.50
55-64	-	-	1,687	10.5	-
65-74	-	-	821	5.1	-
TOTAL	13	100.0	16,032	100.0	1.00

* One individual aged 14 has been omitted.

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town
Council 1931-1938; Report on the Census of Scotland 1931.

Another area of interest related to the age of those transferred to the UAB, Table 5.4(b). In this group overall a larger number than might have been expected were aged 15-24, though this was most evident among females. This was probably a consequence of the greater difficulties, commented on in chapter 4, Tables 4.12 and 4.14, pp.62 and 65, which females and juveniles seem to have had in obtaining employment as the 1930s progressed and depression weakened. The second group which seems to have been particularly likely to be transferred to the UAB were males in the age group 35-54. As shown in chapter 4, the older an unemployed man was the greater his difficulty in regaining employment. This was commented on in the UAB report for 1936 which stated that "A large proportion (of the Board's applicants) are, by present industrial requirements, relatively old.³"

Table 5.4(c) confirms that on the whole younger individuals had a greater chance of finding work again once they had been made unemployed. There was however no sharp age boundary between candidates for re-employment and for transfer to the UAB. Tables 5.4(b) and (c) together show that, compared to the general age distribution, younger applicants were more likely to regain employment whilst older people were more likely to be transferred to the UAB.

The trends noted on a year to year basis were similar to those described above for the whole period 1931-1938.

(v) Housing

The section on the application form asking for information on dependents makes it possible for an average household size to be calculated. The total number of applicants and their dependents being 2,052, the average size proves to be 4.06 persons. This is close to the 1931 Census figure of 4.37 persons per house, suggesting that the sample survey may not be totally unrepresentative. A more detailed break down of percentage figures is shown in the table below.

Table 5.5/

Table 5.5 Distribution of Household Size by Percentage
of Sample 1931-1938

Household size of applicant	Column 1 Overall	Column 2 1931-32	Column 3 1933-34	Column 4 1935-36	Column 5 1937-38	Column 6 to UAB	Column 7 to employ- ment
1 person	12.6	8.3	13.7	8.5	29.2	3.2	2.6
2 people	11.1	7.8	13.1	14.6	12.3	4.8	7.9
3	21.1	21.4	22.2	25.6	12.3	24.2	28.9
4	17.4	19.4	15.0	14.6	20.0	22.6	21.9
5	15.8	20.4	12.4	14.6	10.8	12.9	19.3
6	9.3	11.2	8.5	6.1	9.2	11.3	5.3
7	5.3	5.8	5.9	4.9	3.1	11.3	2.6
8	3.8	3.7	3.3	4.9	3.1	3.2	7.0
9	1.4	-	3.3	2.4	-	-	1.8
10	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.2	-	3.2	0.9
11	0.6	-	0.7	2.4	-	1.6	0.9
13	0.4	1.0	-	-	-	1.6	-
15	0.2	-	0.7	-	-	-	0.9

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town
Council 1931-1938

One point of interest here, in comparing columns 2-5, is the general trend towards a reduction in the size of household of those applying for assistance. In part this was a result of the growing proportion of applicants who were single with few or no dependents. Particularly in the case of women, the proportion of such applicants increased after the establishment of the UAB, for reasons mentioned above. A second point relates to those transferred to the UAB. Households of 1-5 persons comprised 78.1% overall and 80.7% of those regaining employment, but 67.7% of those transferred to the UAB. Thus there would seem to have been a tendency for those with larger families to be more likely to become UAB clients. Since those transferred to the UAB tended to be rather older, they would be more likely to have larger families.

In relation to housing itself, the first matter to be dealt with concerns the town wards in which the applicants lived. The following table gives this information in relation to the general population distribution by ward found in the police census of 1933.

Table 5.6/

Table 5.6 Distribution of Applicants for Relief by Ward 1931-1938

No Information or	Police Census 1933		Overall		Applicants Transferred to UAB		Applicants Regaining Employment	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
No Fixed Abode	-	-	37	7.3	1	1.6	2	1.8
Ward 1	9,044	18.9	86	17.0	11	17.7	20	17.5
Ward 2	9,794	20.4	103	20.4	13	21.0	25	21.9
Ward 3	9,107	19.0	84	16.6	8	12.9	18	15.8
Ward 4	9,392	19.6	88	17.4	16	25.8	25	21.9
Ward 5	10,631	22.2	108	21.3	13	21.0	24	21.1
Total	47,968	100.0	506	100.0	62	100.0	114	100.0

Source:- Calculated from report of the Medical Officer of Health for Clydebank 1933, p.2.

Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

A comparison of the proportions shows that they are of a similar order of magnitude, suggesting that unemployment was fairly generally distributed throughout the town. Yet within the total population of applicants, concentrations appear in certain streets - for example there were 44 applicants with addresses in Dumbarton Road (wards 2 and 4), 40 from Crown Avenue (ward 5), 26 from Glasgow Road (wards 1 and 2), 24 from Second Avenue (ward 5) and 21 from Livingstone Street (ward 3). Applications from most other streets were numbered in single figures. It might be expected that two of the longest streets in the town, Glasgow and Dumbarton Roads, would house large numbers of applicants. However it is more difficult to give reasons for such concentrations in Crown Avenue, Second Avenue and Livingstone Street. The obvious explanation of low rents and poorer inhabitants does not seem to apply. Rents in these streets were not greatly different from those paid elsewhere in the town. Nor were these properties owned exclusively or predominantly by a major local employer, housing workers in that firm. Accordingly, sudden redundancy from a large local firm could not explain this pattern, especially as the situation arose over the whole period 1931-1938. In fact no significance seems to be able to be attached to this finding which may simply have resulted from chance. However, whatever the explanation it seems clear that within the general spread of applications there were particular pockets where the effects of unemployment were especially severe.

Another point of interest comes from a survey of addresses. Of 506 applicants in the survey, 40 (7.9%) gave addresses at the time of application in streets in which the town council was the main landlord - and 14 of these applicants lived in cheaper slum clearance housing available from 1934 in John Knox Street. This compares with a figure of approximately

18% of town housing owned by the local authority by 1938, and most of that had been built by the early 1930s, so was available throughout the period of the survey. Local authority housing tended to be more expensive to rent and be occupied by skilled or semi-skilled individuals (see chapter 8 p.230). Thus it would seem reasonable to suggest that, particularly as time passed, unemployment and its effects were tending to hit the poorer sections of the community proportionately harder, thus forcing them to apply for help. Further evidence to support this view will be presented later.

A study of the housing status of those applying for relief reveals a change taking place in the later years of the survey, again probably a result of the establishment of the UAB. The figures are as follows.

Table 5.7 Housing Status of Applicants for Relief by Percentage 1931-1938

Status	1931-1938	1931-1932	1933-1934	1935-1936	1937-1938
Occupier	63.6%	84.5%	60.8%	40.2%	33.8%
Lodger	29.1	11.7	33.3	56.1	40.0
Hostel	3.2	3.4	4.6	-	3.1
No Fixed Abode	3.8	0.5	0.7	2.4	23.1
No Information	0.4	-	0.7	1.2	-

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

The decreasing proportion of occupiers applying for relief and the increasing proportion of lodgers is evident - though here some care must be exercised since a considerable number of those describing themselves as lodgers were in fact lodging with parents or relatives rather than those to whom they were not related. This change can be explained as a consequence of the increase in the proportion of young single applicants and the reduction in applications from married men as a result of the appearance of the UAB. This too helps to explain the sharp increase in the proportion of those of no fixed abode applying for assistance in the later part of the period, since they would be very unlikely to fall within the scope of the UAB.

Information on house sizes gives support to the suggestion that on the whole applicants tended to come from less well off groups in the community. In the following table those who described their homes as a room and kitchen have been included in the figures for one apartment houses.

Table 5.8/

Table 5.8 Distribution of House Sizes 1931-1938

Size	Census 1931	Applications Overall	1931-1932	1933-1934	1935-1936	1937-1938	Transferred to UAB	Regaining Employment
No Information or No Fixed Abode	-	7.7%	3.9%	3.3%	12.2%	24.6%	3.2%	-
1 Room	12.8%	33.0	31.1	39.2	22.0	38.5	37.1	29.8%
2 Rooms	54.0	49.2	55.8	47.7	52.4	27.7	50.0	63.2
3	23.2	8.7	9.2	9.2	9.3	7.7	8.1	4.4
4	6.1	1.2	-	0.7	4.9	1.5	1.6	1.8
5	2.0	0.2	-	-	1.2	-	-	0.9
6	1.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7+	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source:- Calculated from Report on the Census of Scotland 1931

Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938

The considerably higher proportion of applicants living in one and two room houses (82.3% overall) than in the burgh population as a whole (66.8%) is further evidence that the poorer socio-economic groups were more likely to find themselves unemployed and forced to seek local authority assistance. Yet the trend for applicants to live in small houses seems to have become less marked as time passed - the relevant figures are 1931-1932 86.9%, 1933-1934 86.9%, 1935-1936 74.4% and 1937-1938 66.2%. However the appearance of the UAB, which increased the proportion of applicants of no fixed abode, certainly contributed to this trend. Yet it is true that in the later years more applicants did not answer this question, so the explanation may in part be statistical. The fact remains that only at its lowest in 1937-1938 did the proportion of applicants in one and two roomed houses reach the level found in the 1931 census of the entire town, which itself showed Clydebank to have one of the worst records for small houses in Scotland.

Unfortunately a very detailed break-down of rent was not possible with the computer, but enough information can be extracted to suggest that the conclusion referred to above, that fewer than might be expected of those applying for relief were council tenants, is correct. The figure for rent was generally given for rent alone, but some applicants gave a combined amount for rent and rates and this was the figure used for the calculations, lacking a figure for rent alone. In consequence of this, in a few cases applicants may be in a higher category for rent than would otherwise be the case. The results are tabulated below.

Table 5.9 Rent by Percentage of Survey 1931-1938

Level	Overall	1931-1932	1933-1934	1935-1946	1937-1938
No Fixed Abode or No Information	9.3%	3.9%	6.5%	13.4%	27.7%
1d-26/8 per month (to £13 per annum)	5.7	3.9	8.5	2.4	9.2
26/9d to 43/4d per month (£13-£26 per annum)	76.5	85.4	75.8	70.7	56.9
43/5d or more per month (over £26 per annum)	8.3	6.3	9.2	13.4	6.2

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

Several points can be made about this table. Those paying the lowest level of rents, ie to 26/8 per month, were normally lodgers or those living in hostels, though a few occupiers paid rentals in this category. The majority of applicants paid between £13 and £26 per year - yet as will be seen in chapter 8, the great majority of council housing cost £26 per year or more.

Only the 72 slum clearance houses in John Knox Street (from 1934) and 250 2 apartment houses of a total of 1,783 council houses by 1938 cost less than £26 per annum to rent. On the other hand, information to be found in chapter 8, p280-3 will show that private rentals seldom exceeded this level. Thus it would seem that the 8.3% of applicants paying £26 per annum or more were likely to be council tenants, ie fewer than might have been expected given the proportion of the housing stock owned by the town council. The figure also compares closely with that quoted earlier for the percentage of applicants living in streets in which town council housing was predominant. In Table 5.9 percentages in both the highest and lowest categories increased as time passed. In the case of those paying no rent, there was a definite increase in the proportion of homeless applicants especially after the creation of the UAB, which also brought about an increase in the number of young female lodgers applying for assistance. Increases among those paying the highest rentals may be partly explained as a result of larger numbers including rates with rent.

A final area of interest connected with housing is the fact that 48.8% of applicants had lived in their present accommodation for less than one year. Although it must be admitted that some applicants did not give this information, it would seem that a substantial group were not well established at their application address, ie had lived there for less than one year. This in its turn may suggest difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation, not unlikely in inter-war Clydebank.

(vi) Duration of Unemployment and Assistance

Further information from the survey relates to the period elapsing between becoming unemployed and applying for relief. The table below indicates this period and includes a small number for whom the information was not available.

Table 5.10 Period between Unemployment and Application for Assistance
1931-1938

Period	Number	% of Survey
0-1 month	179	35.4
2-3 months	46	9.1
4-6 months	39	7.7
7-12 months	47	9.3
1-2 years	65	12.8
2-5 years	59	11.7
5 years +	71	14.0

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

The most unexpected result of this is the considerable number who claimed to have delayed application for a lengthy period. Obviously many did apply quickly for assistance - 52.2% within six months - yet a large number of people did not apply for a considerable length of time. Why this should arise can perhaps be explained in several ways. It is possible that individuals delayed application until they knew for certain that they complied with the council's income requirements. Alternatively others may have been too proud to apply for what they considered to be "charity", especially when accompanied by the stigma of the Poor Law, and so delayed applying. Others may have considered it not to be worthwhile - later evidence will show that amounts of relief could be very small - and so put off their application for as long as possible.

At this time of large scale unemployment in the town it is useful to indicate the period of reliance on council support of the applicants. Some applications lapsed when new work was found, other applicants moved from the area, some were transferred to the UAB, others died or were transferred to the Ordinary ie Sick Poor list, and in some cases assistance ceased with no explanation given. The following table gives an indication of the period on council able bodied relief of applicants included in this sample survey.

Table 5.11 Period on Council Able Bodied Relief 1931-1938

Period	Number	% of Survey
0-1 month	59	11.7
2-3 months	22	4.3
4-6 months	35	6.9
7-12 months	48	9.5
1-2 years	64	12.6
2 years +	278	54.9

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

Though some doubt must exist as to the total accuracy of this table as a date of termination of council assistance is not invariably given, it is nevertheless adequate to suggest a substantial problem of long term unemployment among applicants for relief. More than half of the applicants were on long term relief in excess of two years. One other point of interest relates to those helped for less than one month, usually those receiving medical or indoor relief. As time passed this percentage increased from 5.3% in 1931-1932 to 32.7% in 1937-1938, again evidence of the effect on the type of application received of the establishment of the UAB.

A more accurate description of the period of unemployment comes from a study of the 114 applicants who were specifically stated to have regained work. In such a case accurate dating is almost invariable. The statistics are detailed below.

Table 5.12 Period of Unemployment of Applicants Known to Have Regained Employment 1931-1938

Period	Number	% of Sample
0-1 month	5	4.4
2-3 months	4	3.5
4-6 months	8	7.0
7-12 months	16	14.0
1-2 years	22	19.3
2 years +	59	51.8

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

Clearly the nature of this survey - taken from those who felt themselves to be so badly hit by unemployment that they turned for help to the town council - would by definition include a larger proportion of the long term unemployed than existed in the community generally. Accordingly these figures cannot give accurate information on the extent of long term unemployment among the town's inhabitants as a whole. Nevertheless they do suggest that long term unemployment affected applicants for relief to a considerable extent, and must therefore have affected Clydebank citizens generally, though probably to a lesser extent. Yet its importance was decreasing with the passage of time - of those applying for assistance in 1931-1932 almost 80.0% were unemployed for over one year, whilst the figure for those applying in 1933-1934 was 62.3% and for 1935-1936 55.5%. The figure for 1937-1938, 80.0% has clearly been affected by the operation of the UAB. Improving economic conditions from 1934 had an effect on the numbers of long term unemployed both in the survey and outside. This finding gives support to the suggestion made in chapter 4 that long term unemployment was rather less of a problem in Clydebank than in other areas, at least in the later 1920s and later 1930s.

(vii) Occupation

What exactly was the type of work done by applicants before becoming unemployed? The largest single group of applicants, 154 or 30.4%, described themselves as labourers. This again indicates that lower socio-economic groups were more likely to be forced by unemployment to apply for additional assistance and, with certain reservations, this would

seem to be supported by the table below. It attempts roughly to divide applicants according to the type of employment lost by the 490 individuals who stated a particular occupation and includes the 16 who had never worked.

Table 5.13 Occupation of Applicants for Relief by Percentage 1931-1938

	Skilled/ Semi-skilled	Service/ Distribution	Labourer Unskilled	Other
Overall	43.0%	10.5%	38.0%	5.3%
1931-1932	57.8	5.3	31.6	1.5
1933-1934	39.2	11.8	41.2	5.2
1935-1936	30.5	20.7	35.4	12.2
1937-1938	26.2	12.3	47.7	9.2
Transferred to UAB	32.3	11.7	51.6	4.8
Regained Employment	54.4	14.0	23.7	6.1

(NB Skilled or semi-skilled refers to boilermakers, fitters, electricians, moulders, slaters, etc. Service/Distribution includes clerks, shop assistants, musicians, waiters, whilst labourer/unskilled describes labourers, stairlighters, holders on, platers helpers, etc. Others were self employed, housewives and those who had never worked. There were no professional applicants in the survey.)

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these figures. Firstly the sudden onset of deep depression in 1931-1932 clearly affected all types of workers in the burgh to a significant extent. Certainly skilled and semi-skilled men did not escape unemployment unscathed. However, recovery from the depths of depression obviously offered work opportunities in major local industries to the skilled individual more rapidly than to the unskilled. This is evident from the increasing extent to which, particularly in the later years, applicants were unskilled or labourers. The establishment of the UAB is unlikely to have diminished this trend. This is related to a second point arising from the above table which concerns those transferred to the UAB and those who regained employment. Those who were skilled or semi-skilled were considerably more likely overall to regain employment than those who were not, whilst those who were labourers or unskilled were more likely to be transferred to the UAB. This is further evidence implying that lower income groups may have been affected in general to a greater extent by the depression of the 1930s.

Only 290 applicants named their former employer. Of these, 72 (24.8%) had been employed by the Singer Company, 77 (26.7%), by John Browns and 25 (8.6%) by Beardmores, a total of 60.1% of those giving this information. This compares fairly closely with approximately 68% of males who gave their occupation as in the shipbuilding and engineering sector in the 1931 Census (and almost 90% of applicants for relief were male), again suggesting that this survey is not totally unrepresentative. As for the 85 who indicated where they regained employment, 39 (45.9%) went to Browns and 12 (14.1%) to Singers, again giving a total percentage close to the census figure. This latter survey figure might also suggest some reluctance to move to other types of employment, even if available.

Some information on the percentage of the Clydebank population actually employed in the town and the proportion travelling outwith the burgh boundary can also be discovered in these applications. The following table shows where the 314 applicants who gave this information had been employed.

Table 5.14 Place of Work of Applicants for Relief 1931-1938

Place of Work	Number	% of Sample
Clydebank	218	69.4
Elsewhere	96	30.6

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938

This table suggests that up to one third of Clydebank's working population may have found employment outside the town, and these proportions were maintained when studying those applicants who regained employment. This information was given by 91 out of the 114, of whom 60 (65.9%) found work in Clydebank and 31 (34.1%) elsewhere. Though these figures may not be totally accurate for the entire working population, they do make it clear that a substantial part of the Clydebank workforce worked outside the town.

(viii) Income

The next area on which applications give information relates to income. The following table gives the statistics of the income admitted by the applicants.

Table 5.15/

Table 5.15 Weekly Income of Applicants for Relief 1931-1938

Amount	Number	% of Sample	Amount	Number	% of Sample
0	86	17.0	30/1-35/-	55	10.9
1d-5/-	5	1.0	35/1-40/-	40	7.9
5/1-10/-	18	3.6	40/1-45/-	22	4.3
10/1-15/-	17	3.4	45/1-50/-	13	2.6
15/1-20/-	41	8.1	50/1-55/-	16	3.2
20/1-23/-	28	5.5	55/1-60/-	3	0.6
25/1-30/-	153	30.2	60/- +	9	1.8

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

A considerable proportion of applicants claimed to have no income, and this proportion increased with time, from 9.7% in 1931-1932 to 32.3% in 1937-1938. This is likely to be a relatively accurate figure since Public Assistance Committee (PAC) officials made enquiries into at least a proportion of the claims to reduce the likelihood of fraud. Such an increase resulted in part from the growing proportion of claims from those of no fixed abode and of young single people resulting from the establishment of the UAB.

An income of 30/- per week or less was claimed by 348 applicants (68.8%). The mean income lay in the range 20/1d to 25/- as did the median, whilst the mode was in the range 25/1d to 30/-. This suggests that if such an individual as the "average applicant" existed he or she would have an income from various sources to be discussed later of about 25/-. The value of such an income and the reason why assistance was needed from the town council can perhaps be shown through two pieces of evidence. The first relates to the average wage paid before deductions to those in John Brown and Company Limited in the years 1930-1939. This reached a minimum of 52/10d in 1930 and a maximum of 68/9d in 1939 (see Table 7.6 p167). Of course accurate comparisons are impossible given differing types of work, family sizes, rents, etc., but assuming deductions of 30%, the "average" Browns employee in work had an income of at least 10/- per week more than the "average" applicant for relief.

The second piece of evidence comes from the 1931 Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Clydebank. In it he wrote "The average size of family per occupied house is 4.4. The approximate quantities and prices of the ordinary articles of food required by such a family weekly are as stated below

Bread, flour, material for milk puddings equivalent say to 7 loaves weekly @ 3½d	0.2.0½
Butter 1½ lbs weekly @ 1/2d	0.1.9
Milk 3 pints daily @ 3d	0.5.3
Eggs 2 dozen weekly @ 1/2d	0.2.4
or bacon 2 lbs @ 1/2d } or fish 2 lbs @ 1/2d }	substitutes
Beef ¾ lb daily @ 1/2d	
or split peas or lentils or cheese (substitutes)	0.6.0
Potatoes 2 stones @ 1/6d	0.3.0
Oatmeal ½ stone	0.1.6
Sugar, tea, vegetables, salt	0.1.6
	<hr/>
	£1.3.4½

The rate of relief being paid to a family of this size is on the average about 30/-, varying between 27/3 and 33/-, leaving a margin of 4/- to 9/- weekly for rent, rates, fuel and clothing⁵."

It can be seen from the above that the admitted incomes of those applying for relief were on the whole low in comparison with local wages for those who were employed, and certainly in comparison with necessary expenditure (even if the town council granted small amounts of relief). This does not mean that there were not those who were better, or worse, off than the average, yet it would certainly seem true to say that life could hardly have been comfortable for the applicants for town council relief, and indeed for other unemployed whose income could not have been greatly different, in Clydebank in the 1930s.

One other area relating to income remains to be considered, the source of any income admitted by the applicants. The following table gives the most frequently occurring sources of income.

Table 5.16 Sources of Income at Relief Application 1931-1938

Table 5.16 Sources of Income at Relief Application 1931-1938

	Overall (a)		1931-1932		1933-1934		1935-1936		1937-1938	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Unemployment insurance only	217	42.9	127	61.7	64	41.8	12	14.6	14	21.5
Unemployment assistance only	17	11.6	-	-	-	-	6	7.3	11	16.9
Unemployment insurance + other	73	14.4	39	18.9	27	17.6	6	7.3	1	1.5
Unemployment assistance + other	12	8.2	-	-	-	-	7	8.5	5	7.7

OTHER Numbers and Percentages in Receipt of Income from Any of the Following

Dependent's unemployment insurance	41	8.1	21	10.2	12	7.8	6	7.3	2	3.1
Dependent's unemployment assistance	18	12.2	-	-	-	-	15	18.3	3	4.4
Dependent's pension/allowance	31	6.1	4	1.9	13	8.5	9	11.0	5	7.7
Dependent's 1845 (b)	27	5.3	-	-	4	2.6	16	19.5	7	10.8
Dependent's earnings/income	46	8.6	10	4.9	8	5.2	19	23.2	7	10.8

NB (a) Figures involving Unemployment Assistance in the Overall column have been calculated on the basis of numbers from 1935-1938, not 1931-1938 as with others.

(b) Dependent's 1845 = financial assistance to the ordinary poor from the town council, i.e. the chronically sick, the old etc.

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

This table shows that the most important source of admitted income for applicants for relief was unemployment insurance benefit, either alone or in combination with other sources. But this source decreased in importance as time passed, which must reflect a change in the type of applicant as, particularly after 1935, other sources of income such as unemployment assistance appear or grow in importance. There were several other sources of income such as old age pensions, sickness benefit, insurance policies or union funds. Perhaps the most interesting of these minor sources from the point of view of the survey were those who, on application, admitted receiving income from a lodger - overall the number was 18 or 3.5%. A number of recipients of relief later took in lodgers with the result that some, whose income then exceeded the scale set by the council for relief, lost assistance. This figure of 3.5% is far smaller than the overall percentage of applicants who claimed to be lodgers, 29.1%. This discrepancy can partly be explained by the fact that a number of young people claimed to lodge in the homes of parents or relatives where they were not lodgers in the accepted sense. Nevertheless a substantial difference must remain which can only be explained by fraud or, more likely, since applicants tended to occupy smaller houses than the population generally with whom lodger applicants might live, the applicant for relief was less able to take a lodger in his smaller home.

(ix) Results of Application and Benefits

One last area remains to be surveyed, that of the result of applications and the amount of benefit, if any, paid. The results of the sample applications were as follows.

Table 5.17/

Table 5.17 Result of Application for Relief 1931-1938

	Number	% of Survey
No information	1	0.2
Financial assistance granted	344	68.0
Medical relief granted	61	12.1
Indoor relief granted	23	4.5
Referred to another party eg father	7	1.4
Short period of allowance (1-3 weeks)	5	1.0
Application withdrawn	2	0.4
Refused - no reason given	23	4.5
Refused - over scale	27	5.3
Refused - broke residence qualification	10	2.0
Refused - voluntarily unemployed	2	0.4
Refused - included in dependents UAB allowance	1	0.2
Refused - all reasons	63	12.5

NB Indoor relief refers to those sent to Townend Hospital, the local workhouse in Dumbarton. Refused - over scale refers to those who were refused on the grounds that their income was above that deemed necessary by the council's relief scale, whilst refused - broke residence qualification refers to those who had not lived for six months in the burgh (apparently at any time in their lives). A refusal at one point did not necessarily preclude a later successful application when the cause of the refusal had disappeared.

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

A further breakdown of the most important results can be seen in the table below.

Table 5.18 Percentage Results of Applications by Sample Years

	1931-1932	1933-1934	1935-1936	1937-1938
Financial Assistance	82.5%	74.5%	54.9%	23.1%
Medical Relief	0.5	7.2	20.7	49.2
Indoor Relief	1.5	0.7	4.9	23.1
Refused-All Reasons	12.6	13.1	18.3	3.1

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

From Tables 5.17 and 5.18 it is obvious that the most likely result of an application for relief was the granting of financial assistance. However this form of assistance became less significant as time passed, depression receded, the numbers of unemployed fell - and the survey becomes less representative of the Clydebank unemployed generally.

Its replacement, particularly in the last year of the survey, by medical and indoor relief again highlights the change in town council clientele as a consequence of the establishment of the UAB. Those who fell completely outwith central government's social services net would tend to be those of no fixed abode who were granted indoor relief in Townend Hospital - where very few remained for long. Similarly the fact that the UAB did not provide medical relief explains the increase in that form of assistance provided by the town council. With employment opportunities improving as the decade passed fewer Clydebank citizens needed to apply for financial help or failed to enter national insurance schemes as a result of insufficient contributions. A similar reason may lie behind the sudden fall in the numbers refused in 1937-1938 - on the whole only the most deserving cases were left to apply to the town council by that time.

The last part of this study considers the amount of financial benefit received by applicants for relief and the results are tabulated below. The figure 0 means application refused, medical or indoor relief granted etc.

Table 5.19 Financial Benefit Granted 1931-1938

	Overall		1931-1932		1933-1934		1935-1936		1937-1938	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0	157	31.0	33	16.0	37	24.2	37	45.1	50	76.9
1d-5/-	171	33.8	114	55.3	45	29.4	12	14.6	-	-
5/1-10/-	75	14.8	28	13.6	23	15.0	18	22.0	6	9.2
10/1-15/-	54	10.7	21	10.2	23	15.0	8	9.8	2	3.1
15/1-20/-	21	4.2	6	2.9	6	3.9	3	3.7	6	9.2
20/1-25/-	13	2.6	2	1.0	11	7.2	-	-	-	-
25/1-30/-	9	1.8	1	0.5	4	2.6	3	3.7	1	1.5
30/1-35/-	5	1.0	1	0.5	3	2.0	1	1.2	-	-
35/1-40/-	1	0.2	-	-	1	0.7	-	-	-	-

Source:- Calculated from Applications for Relief to Clydebank Town Council 1931-1938.

From this table it would seem that if financial relief was granted, it would be most likely to be 5/- per week or less, hardly a large amount especially in view of the comments recorded earlier by the Medical Officer of Health. As payments made by the town council varied according to the number of dependents as well as income, it is not surprising that there is a similarity between the table above and Table 5.5 showing household size distribution. Again, the change consequent upon the introduction of the UAB is evident when the proportion in receipt of financial relief fell as time passed whilst the proportion in receipt

of other forms of assistance rose.

(x) Conclusion

The applications for extra relief to the town council in Clydebank fell basically into two categories. The first group was those who were UAB clients or prospective UAB clients before the organisation was set up, whilst the second group was generally made up of those who, for one reason or another, fell outwith the social security net provided by central government, such as it was. It is this second group which becomes much more prominent in the filed applications to the town council after 1935, resulting in some change in the way applicants were treated.

However, given that the majority of applications to the town council for assistance came in the earlier part of the decade when unemployment in the town was at its worst, and before the introduction of the UAB changed to some extent the type of applicant, it would seem possible to use the information obtained by this survey to give a rough picture of the "average" Clydebank unemployed person applying for additional assistance in the early 1930s. Such a man would have been born outside the town and would be in the age group 25-34. He would be married with two dependents. He would have lived with his family in a two roomed house for less than a year, for which he would pay to a private landlord a rent of between £13 and £26 per year. He would have worked in the town's shipbuilding and engineering sector, most likely as a labourer, and would apply for council assistance fairly soon after becoming unemployed. He would receive financial assistance of 5/- per week or less and would be in receipt of such assistance for over two years, even if he eventually found another job. He is likely to have found such a job in Clydebank in the same industrial sector that his previous job had been. Any income before application would come from unemployment benefit and would be in the region of 25/- to 30/- per week.

Such an individual would of course merely be the average, based on the frequency of responses given in the application form. A wide variety of conditions and situations could and did exist, not only when the application was made but as the circumstances of the individual changed with the passage of time. Yet this profile of the "average" unemployed person is accurate enough to give a reasonable indication of the conditions of such persons in Clydebank during the depression of the early 1930s.

APPLICATION FOR RELIEF

REPORTING REPORTS.

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t of
f

Date of
Committee's Minute
Authorising Change

Name of Applicant *Robert Pollitt*
 Residence *173 Dumbarton Rd Glasgow* Apartments *2* Rent *£1.9.6 per 4 w*
 Form of Relief applied for (Ordinary, Able-Bodied or Casual) *Ordinary* Date and Hour of Application *10.30. 8/1/32*
 Birthplace *Glasgow* Date of Birth *17/7/1813*
 Trade or Occupation and where Employed *Housekeeper 9 Brunswick St* work since *12/12/31*
 If Adult, whether Married or Single, Widow or Widower *Widow* Religion *Prot*
 If Child, whether Orphan, Deserted or Separated
 Wholly or Partially Disabled
 Disablement
 Names of Parents and Circumstances if alive *Arthur Pollitt (deceased) (deceased)*
+ Margaret McGeoghegan Woodville Cottrell 0/4 Parnish
Glasgow
 Date and Place of Marriage *14/7/1922 Parkhead*
 Husband's or Wife's Name, Place and Date of Birth, Occupation, and Parentage *Agnes Gaunt*
Motherwell 9/12/18 36 yrs. Housewife. Denis Gaunt.
Woodburner & Agnes Carson (both deceased)
 Dependants or Other Relatives Living with Applicant

NAME.	Age	Birthplace	Occupation and Where Employed	Earnings or Other Income	REMARKS
<i>Children</i>					
<i>Margaret</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>Glasgow</i>	<i>at school</i>		
<i>Alice</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>Clydebank</i>			
<i>Relatives (stating relationship)</i>					

Children not living with Applicant

NAME	Age	Married or Single	Birthplace	Occupation and Where Employed	Earnings or Other Income	Residence.

PARTICULARS AS TO INCOME OF APPLICANT

	Per Week
Earnings	nil
Health Insurance Benefit	nil
Unemployment Insurance Benefit	1.7.3
Workmen's Compensation	nil
Friendly or other Society Allowance	nil
Old Age or Widows', Etc. Pension	nil
Army Pension	nil
Lodgers	nil
Assistance from Relatives	nil
Other Sources of Income	nil

21.43

Money (in own, or husband's or wife's name) in Bank, Co-operative Societies, or elsewhere

Life, or other Insurance

Length of Residence in present house and of Previous Residences —

1.2 1944

County or Large Burgh

7.12.1

Years

Months

Days

4

-

References for proof of birth of party whose settlement is to be ascertained and any other information as to circumstances:—

DECLARATION

I am able-bodied, destitute and unable to obtain employment, and declare that the information given by me and appearing in this Schedule is true, and that it contains an accurate statement of my Income from all sources.

Robert Lollitt

First Visiting Report:

30/3

24/3

31-

where

Days

Date and hour of Visit

District Inspector.

RESULT OF APPLICATION

District Inspector's Decision

Decision of Committee

If Refused, Ground of Refusal

Date

Date

FOR USE AT HEADQUARTERS*

Examined

(Init.)

Decision of Committee

B

Approved

2/

A. GALE

er information as

FOR USE IN CASE OF POOR CHARGEABLE TO OTHER AREAS

Statutory Notice sent to

Claim sent

Admitted by

Refused by

Further Action

Date

Date

Date

Relief Authorised

per week

CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES AND INFORMATION FROM VISITING REPORTS.

Date	CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES, ETC	Alterations in Amount of Relief	Date of Committee's Minute Authorising Change
8/8/32	Report his mother staying with him from 29/7/32 to 14/8/32. LE 27/3 + 27/6 = 27/9 now	60	
15/8/32	Report, mother left his home on 13/3/32 and came to 31/3. LE 27/3 now	3/	
12/10/32	Report - wife & children gone into Deacons home 6/10/32. Chg. biased	nil	
22/10/32	Report (1330) same 30/3 same 22/7/32	3/	
3/7/33	Report W. + 14/6/33 Chgoe	nil	

References

1. 24 & 25 Geo.5, Ch.29
2. A discussion of the legislation of 1934 and its effects can be found in Wm A Robson (ed). Social Security (London 1943), especially pp.35-54, 126-134, and in D C Marsh National Insurance and Assistance in Great Britain (London 1950), pp.22-26, 48-53
3. Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board 1936, Cmd 5526, p.5.
4. Information obtained from John Brown Pay Bill Books UCS 1/52/3-7
5. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1931, p.2.
These reports are held in the Local History Collection of Clydebank Public Library.

PART III

UNEMPLOYMENT : THE STATE AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

CHAPTER SIX

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT POLICY

This chapter is not concerned in any detailed way with the nature of government economic policy between the wars. It focusses on specific and general measures designed to ease the plight of the unemployed and to generate new employment. These measures fall into several broad categories - Unemployment Insurance and Assistance; Public Works; Labour Mobility and Retraining; Industrial Support, Reorganisation and Reconstruction; General Special Areas Assistance, Rating, Derating and the Direction of Financial Support to Local Authorities. These measures are reviewed in the following sections, normally with specific reference to the Clydebank situation. It should be noted however that the above divisions are somewhat arbitrary since there was an inevitable overlap and conflict between policies - for example, rationalisation policies aimed at producing a healthier economy, at least in the short term increased the numbers of unemployed requiring assistance. Arbitrary though such divisions may be, it is hoped that they will help to clarify a rather complex picture.

6.1 Unemployment Insurance and Assistance¹

In most cases policies considered in this chapter are dealt with only briefly in view of the generally limited extent to which they had an impact in Clydebank in the inter-war years. Nevertheless, in view of the importance of Unemployment Insurance and Assistance to some of the inhabitants of Clydebank throughout the period between the wars, and to a very large proportion of the burgh population at times in this period, it is proposed to give rather more detailed consideration to this aspect of government policy and its development than is the case with others.

Local provision for the relief of the poor and unemployed had a long history in Britain. In the inter-war period such provision continued to be made to its traditional recipients, the sick poor. Local relief to the able bodied unemployed in England and Wales was allowed under the workhouse system of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834². However, the Scottish Act, the Poor Law (Scotland) Act 1843³, restricted official relief to the destitute who were physically unfit. It was not until the passage of the Poor Law Emergency Provisions (Scotland) Act 1921⁴, that assistance, by then mainly financial, could legally be given in Scotland to the able bodied unemployed by the relevant authority, the Parish Council. Thus in the inter-war period the Poor Law authorities (the

Parish Councils and from 1930 town or county councils), could assist the poor unemployed in their areas by use of locally raised rates. The safety net of local provision of relief has been briefly discussed in chapter 5 p76 and will be given further consideration in chapter 7 p.153

The first part of the 20th century saw the development in Britain of a parallel system of aid to the unemployed, funded and controlled directly by central government. It gradually assumed the function of assistance to most of the able bodied unemployed through an insurance scheme. The result of this was that the long established local authority system began to deal predominantly with the chronically sick and those who for one reason or another fell outwith the provision made by central government for the able bodied unemployed.

Such central government provision for the relief of the unemployed⁵ came rather later in Britain, with the 1911 National Insurance Act, than in some other countries. The Act followed a recommendation in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1909 "that the establishment and promotion of unemployment insurance, especially among unskilled and unorganised labour, is of paramount importance in averting distress arising from unemployment."⁶ The Act of 1911 covered approximately 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ million workers in certain more vulnerable trades such as building, shipbuilding and engineering. The benefit rate was 7/- per week for men and women and 3/6 for boys and girls, on the basis of one week's benefit for five weeks contributions. This was limited in duration to 15 weeks in any 12 months, provided that the applicant fulfilled all four statutory conditions. These were (a) that he had been employed for 26 weeks in an insured trade in the preceding five years; (b) that he applied in the prescribed manner and proved continuous unemployment; (c) that he was capable of work, but was unable to obtain employment and (d) that he had not exhausted his right to benefit. In 1916 this cover was extended to workers in munitions and certain other industries, a total of 4 million people.

Several comments can be made about this provision. Firstly, it was not particularly popular, for those who were seldom unemployed often disliked contributing to the support of those who were often out of work. Secondly, the Act was not intended to provide total maintenance for the unemployed person, being merely a prop to help him until new work could be found. Thirdly, the fact that benefits were small, limited in duration and proportionate to contributions emphasised the fact that it was an insurance scheme.

So long as the unemployment rate among those eligible remained below 8.46% the scheme could remain in surplus, and this was how things stood at the First World War. However the Act could not cope with the situation which developed after the war. The immediate problem was to provide for the demobbed members of the armed forces and those made unemployed as a result of the ending of the war, eg munitions workers and others. Though the expectation of a "Land Fit For Heroes" had been promoted by politicians, little thought was given to post-war unemployment during the war. The result was the Out of Work Donation, a hastily cobbled together measure by which civilians until November 1919, and ex-servicemen until April 1921, were entitled to non-contributory support from the Treasury. The Donation, which cost £60 million, was generous when compared with weekly unemployment benefit, at 24/- for men and 20/- for women, with childrens' allowances at the rate of 6/- for the first child and 3/- for each additional child. From 12 December 1918 these rates were raised to 29/- for men and 25/- for women; boys and girls aged 16-18 received half adult rates. Benefit was limited in duration to 26 weeks in the year following demobilisation for ex-servicemen and 13 weeks for civilians, though this period was later extended and benefit reduced. The scheme gave an indication of future developments - it was produced rapidly and showed a contrast between the older insurance concept and a newer dole incorporating further allowances.

The post war period was one of continual problem and change in the area of unemployment insurance, a result of a number of factors. In the first place there was a conflict between the insurance aspect of 1911 and the principle of support as of right of the Out of Work Donation. There was also the difficulty that the size of the unemployment problem was growing rapidly and preparations were inadequate to deal with the consequences of this. Thirdly there was the problem of inflation in the earlier years, and deflation after 1921. Pressure for the upward adjustment of benefit rates was later followed, in the deflationary period, by pressure to maintain such rates, so increasing their real value. In addition there was the fear of unrest, particularly in the early years, should nothing be done. B B Gilbert quotes from Cabinet documents of 1919 indicating this concern.

"My Liverpool correspondent even goes so far as to say that there will be serious trouble if the doles are withdrawn during the winter ... The discontent among ex-soldiers is not diminishing. There is a possibility of disturbances in the London district when the unemployment donation is stopped.⁷"

The first enactment to face this developing situation was the 1920 Unemployment Insurance Act.⁸ This raised weekly benefit from 11/- for men and women and 5/6 for boys and girls (established in December 1919)

to 15/- for men, 12/- for women, 7/6 for boys and 6/- for girls. This was paid for a maximum of 15 weeks in an insurance year at the rate of one weeks benefit for six contributions - despite being increased, such levels bore no comparison to the Out of Work Donation. Benefit was also extended to all manual workers aged over 16, except domestic servants and agricultural workers, and to all others earning under £250 per year. A number of other groups were also specifically excluded such as civil servants, teachers, the police, members of the armed forces and railway workers. Benefit was paid providing all the statutory conditions were fulfilled. These were that the applicant (a) had paid not less than 12 contributions; (b) had applied in the prescribed manner and proved continuous unemployment; (c) was capable of and available for work but had been unable to obtain suitable employment; (d) had not exhausted the right to benefit and (e) attended a course of instruction if required by an insurance officer. As a result of this Act, unemployment insurance was extended to cover almost 13 million people in a working population of 19 million.

The 1920 Act proved unworkable as a result of the extension of the principles of 1911 into the situation of the 1920s with its long term, large scale unemployment problem, and was followed as a result by no less than eighteen Amending Acts. However the basic pattern laid down in the 1920 Act remained, with modifications, until the 1934⁹ Act. What did change in the 1920s was the attitude towards the insurance concept. Though insurance - ie contributions made in anticipation of future need - continued and provided standard or covenanted benefit, a new system was introduced which diluted the insurance aspect of the scheme. Under this system, further benefits - initially under the Minister's discretion - were paid when standard benefit was exhausted in anticipation of future contributions when re-employed. Essentially this meant the establishment of a dole for the partial support of the unemployed paid for by the employed. These payments were known as uncovenanted benefit from 1921 to 1924, extended benefit from 1924 to 1927 and transitional benefit from 1927 to 1931. The Unemployment Insurance (no. 1) Act 1921¹⁰ extended benefit to 26 weeks in an insurance year, after which uncovenanted benefit was paid for 16 weeks (increased to 22 weeks by the Unemployment Insurance (no. 2) Act 1921¹¹). Further Acts of 1922-1924 extended the provision of uncovenanted benefit.

The Act of 1927¹² provided for the payment of extended benefit as a statutory right on exhaustion of standard benefit ie finally severed the connection¹³ between contributions and benefit. The, by now, permanent drawing of extended benefit made a mockery of the insurance content of the scheme. This aspect had been further undermined by the Unemployment Insurance

Workers' Dependents (Temporary Provisions) Act 1921¹⁴, by which dependents allowances were paid at the rate of 5/- for adults and 1/- for children. Though initially intended to be temporary, they soon became permanent, indicating the practical and political difficulty for governments of withdrawing concessions once made, in this case in the Out of Work Donation and the 1921 Act.

The 1927 Act, which followed the Blanesburgh Committee on Unemployment Insurance, was not only significant because of its introduction of continuous extended benefit. It also relaxed the statutory conditions. These were now (a) that not less than 30 contributions had been paid in the preceeding two years (the qualification for extended or transitional benefit was to be at least 8 contributions in the previous two years or 30 at any time); (b) that the application was made in the prescribed manner and the continuous unemployment was proved; (c) that the applicant was capable of and available for work; (d) that he or she was genuinely seeking work but was unable to obtain suitable employment and (e) that an applicant attended a course of instruction if required by the insurance officer.

The consequence of this move away from an insurance system, with the growth of transitional benefits, dependents benefits and reduction in contributions required, was to increase the cost of the system. The surplus built up under the 1911 Act was soon gone and weekly contributions, though raised to 4d for an employed male in 1920 and reaching a maximum of 10d in 1931, were inadequate to cover the extension of benefit. As a result of the increasing deficit of the Insurance Fund, Treasury support, and therefore Treasury control, had increasingly to be sought. Borrowing to sustain the Insurance Fund increased the National Debt and, as employment remained above 10% of the insured workforce for most of the 1920s, the accumulated deficit of the Insurance Fund rose, to reach £36 million by 1929 and £60 million by the end of 1930. By Spring 1931, unemployment figures suggested an annual expenditure of £120 million. As a result, the benefits producing such deficits were a prime target for the May Committee, and 10% cuts were introduced in October 1931. At the same time transitional benefits, renamed transitional payments, became means tested. As protests and demonstrations across the country, such as that in Clydebanks in April 1932, (see chapter 12 p.335) showed, this was a source of great dissatisfaction among recipients. From October 1931 onwards, though Exchequer funded, transitional payments were to be administered by the Public Assistance Committees (PACs) of local councils. This led to further protests, firstly because of varying levels of support granted by different PACs, and secondly because councils were unhappy that this onerous burden had been placed on them. As mentioned in chapter 12 p.349, in January 1932 Clydebanks Town Council petitioned the

government to repeal the Order-in-Council which had established the system.

This was the background to the last major change in the inter-war unemployment insurance system, introduced in the Unemployment Insurance Act 1934¹⁵. The Act, which followed the recommendations of the Holman Gregory Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, split the system into two parts. Firstly, it re-established the standard scheme on an insurance footing, basing contributions on an assumed unemployment rate of 16½%, and extending it to agricultural workers. The age of entry was reduced from 16 to 14 and benefits were restored to levels existing before the cuts of 1931. An Unemployment Statutory Committee was appointed to oversee and report on financial aspects. As a result of these changes, this part of the scheme proved financially sound. Secondly, those whose unemployment lasted beyond the 26 weeks of statutory benefit were to be dealt with by a new organisation, the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB), whose funds were to come from the Treasury and local authorities.

However, before giving more detailed consideration to the UAB it might be useful to indicate the actual amount of benefit payable under the evolving insurance schemes of the 1920s and 1930s. This information can be found in the following table.

Table 6.1 Weekly Unemployment Benefit 1918-1938

Year	Adult Male	Dependents		Real Rates (1931=100)	
		Adult	Child	Single Man	Man & Wife
1919	11/-	-	-	49	34
1920	15/-	-	-	59	40
1921 (March)	20/-	-	-	87	59
1921 (June)	15/-	5/-	1/-	80	72
1924	18/-	5/-	2/-	101	87
1927	17/-	7/-	2/-	100	96
1930	17/-	9/-	2/-	105	109
1931	15/3	8/-	2/-	100	100
1934	17/-	9/-	2/-	118	123
1936	17/-	9/-	3/-	115	119
1938	17/-	10/-	3/-		

Source:- Adapted from Glynn & Oxborrow Interwar Britain, (London 1976), p 259.

Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance 1931, vol. 1, appendix II, p 161

It can be seen that insurance benefit increased in money terms over the period, and even more so in real terms because of the fall in the cost of

living index which took place from the early 1920s until the later 1930s. Thus the unemployed in the interwar period were better off than those who had been unemployed before World War 1 and received benefit. Yet such a statement would be misleading in its implications. In the first place, benefit was not meant to provide total support - in the report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Public Assistance Administration of 1924 the statement is made that unemployment benefits

"have not been designed to cover all the responsibilities of the unemployed person in all circumstances, but rather to supplement private effort in mitigating distress due to involuntary unemployment".

Secondly, even with a falling cost of living index, the amounts given in benefit, assuming no other source of income, do not closely approach those regarded as necessary to maintain "physical efficiency" by Rowntree in his social survey of York and his "The Human Needs of Labour". To consider this problem in respect of Clydebanks specifically - 10,506 houses were enumerated in the town in the 1931 census, containing 46,102 persons, an average of 4.37 persons per house. If a man, wife and two children can then be regarded as the average Clydebanks family, an income of 33/- per week at a maximum in standard or transitional benefit does not approach Rowntree's figure of necessary income of £2, excluding rent, per week. Of course, in practical terms the comparison is frequently likely to have been inaccurate. Households were not necessarily of this size or composition, part-time employment (up to 20/- per week) could raise the family income before benefits were affected, extra assistance could be obtained from Poor Law or PAC sources, and in any case Rowntree's figures need not be universally applicable. Nevertheless, the point is significant in view of the assertions in recent studies by Benjamin and Kochin to be discussed later.

6.2 The Unemployment Assistance Board

Discussion of the levels of financial support to the unemployed brings consideration back to the UAB, established by the second part of the 1934 Act. It was to provide assistance to those aged 16-65

"whose normal occupation is employment in respect of which contributions are payable under the Widows, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions Acts 1925-1932, or a person who, not having been engaged in any remunerative occupation, would have been in such employment as aforesaid but for the industrial circumstances of the district in which he resides",

and who was capable of and available for work. The three member Board, designed to be outwith political control, and its 6,000 staff, were to provide a service totally separate from the insurance aspect of Part 1 of the 1934 Act, in an attempt to deal mainly with the long term

unemployed concentrated in the depressed areas. The Board was to take responsibility for its clients in two groups, those on transitional payments in January 1935, and the able bodied unemployed relieved solely by the local public assistance authorities in March of the same year. However difficulties arose in putting such intentions into operation.

It became evident soon after responsibility had been taken for its first clients that the scales of relief proposed by the UAB were, in some cases, lower than those paid by the PACs. Clydebank was such an area, and a great deal of opposition arose to the proposed scales. At a public meeting called by the town council in September, 1936, after there had been some upward revision of the proposed UAB scales, the local MP David Kirkwood claimed that 80% of those on benefit would have their scales reduced on being taken over by the UAB.¹⁹ In addition the UAB Report for 1935 shows this local opposition when it states that

"At the inception of the Board, while there was no disorder or organised demonstration of antagonism, there was undoubtedly considerable discontent at the result in cash value of the application of the regulations in those areas where Public Assistance Department's scales were in many cases in excess of the Board, notably in the City of Glasgow and the Burgh of Clydebank.²⁰

The practical result of such public discontent was the Unemployment Assistance (Temporary Provisions) Act 1935²¹ according to which applicants in areas where PAC scales were higher than Board scales were to be paid at PAC levels rather than UAB levels. A gradual upward revision of Board scales and declining unemployment meant that opposition subsided, and the take over of clients went ahead again in the original two groups in November 1936 and April 1937 with little difficulty. It was this transfer which substantially altered the composition of the sample survey of able bodied unemployed referred to in chapter 5.

The creation of the UAB was a considerable step towards the social services system which grew up in Britain after the Second World War. Financial assistance was not merely given on a flat rate scale, but the discretion allowed to local officers meant that additional payments could be made to those in exceptional circumstances. There was too a concern for aspects of life of the relieved individual other than the purely financial eg the provision of adequate cooking or bedding facilities. But this greater generosity to its clients brought the UAB up against a problem which had existed in connection with the earlier schemes of assistance to the unemployed, though perhaps to a lesser extent - the narrowing gap between assistance and wages paid to

those in employment. The Board could not raise local wage rates nor reintroduce the politically sensitive less eligibility principle - the problem was that in practice some local wage rates were too low rather than relief too generous. Yet the Board's report for 1937 seemed to confirm the findings of earlier investigators that levels of assistance which were relatively high did not greatly deter the unemployed from seeking work. The section of the report on the Board's Scottish area stated that

"One important result of the higher allowances payable under the revised regulations, together with the more frequent exercise of discretionary powers, has been to bring a much larger proportion of the Board's allowances appreciably nearer to general wage levels. In Glasgow for example the average wage level of 13 different groups of unskilled workers has been computed at 47/6d and there are many applicants receiving allowances not much below that amount. It can be stated that up to the present there is no clear evidence that this close approximation of unemployment allowances to wages has adversely affected the willingness of the majority of applicants to accept employment when it is offered to them, although a small number of such cases have come under notice.²²"

6.3 Benefit and Assistance Levels

Mention of this problem, voluntary unemployment, brings attention to the last aspect of unemployment insurance to be considered ie whether unemployment benefit and assistance levels were sufficient to encourage large numbers of workers to prefer unemployment. The argument is not new and it would be naive to deny it any validity, as the above quotation shows. However it has recently been suggested by Benjamin and Kochin that

"while the members of the army of the unemployed were chiefly conscripts in the two major depressions of the era, they seem to have been willing volunteers during the late '20s and '30s," and "in the absence of the unemployment insurance system the overall unemployment rate would have averaged about 7% instead of nearly ²³~~14~~14%."

They consider that stricter conditions in the operation of the system would have meant a reduction of the numbers on the register, which in turn would mean reduced wage levels and so prices. This would have spread employment to more people and would have increased sales, with employment rising as a result.

Before considering in more detail the evidence currently produced by Benjamin and Kochin, it might be useful to review more contemporary

opinion. Opinion at the time was mixed, though it should be emphasised that nowhere was the suggestion made in an official quarter that the system should be abolished or cut to a minimum to reduce the unemployment problem. There were certainly suggestions that benefit levels were too high - the following evidence from the National Confederation of Employers Organisations to the Holman Gregory Royal Commission in 1931 shows this.

"We suggest that scales should follow the principle of being such as will not tempt the individual to improvidence when he is at work, or tempt him to prefer relief to work when he is unemployed."²⁴

There is however an equal weight of evidence, including the conclusions of the Holman Gregory Commission, to suggest that voluntary unemployment was not a major problem. The report noted

"It is also sometimes suggested that the payment of benefit makes the recipient less active in seeking work in his own locality; and that the unemployed man who has been disallowed benefit is more likely to seek (and even find) work. The special investigation that was made on behalf of the commission into the subsequent history of persons whose claims to benefit had been disallowed, gave no support to this theory."

It continues, quoting evidence put before the Blanesburgh Committee, relating to the first half of the 1920s when gaps existed between the payment of standard and limited periods of uncovenanted benefit,

"I should not myself say that many more people found work because they were coming up to or were actually against a gap than would have found work under ordinary circumstances if there had been no gap."²⁵

The speaker was Mr J F Price, C B. It would seem that the payment of unemployment benefit was regarded in some quarters during the inter-war period as contributing to unemployment levels, though this was not accepted by all. Even its supporters regarded it as only one part of a wider problem, and did not concentrate on the type of argument put forward by Benjamin and Kochin.

These authors have suggested at least two specific pieces of evidence to support their contention. Firstly those treated least generously in terms of the ratio of unemployment benefit to wages, ie juveniles aged 16-17, had "normal" unemployment rates during the 1920s and 1930s. Secondly they suggest that changes in the stringency of the qualifications for benefit in relation to married women led to a reduction in female unemployment.

²⁶
Concerning juveniles, Garside argues convincingly that statistics on

juvenile unemployment are insufficiently accurate to put forward as a major support of the new view. Certainly the available evidence from Clydebank, shown in Table 4.14, p.65 does not suggest a low juvenile unemployment rate - though the qualification must be made that in the late 1920s and early 1930s the age structure of the burgh meant that a probably greater than average number of juveniles were coming on to the labour market. Even if the rates in that table are inaccurate, and juvenile unemployment was low, it could be argued that such a finding would not be totally unexpected. As in the case of women, juveniles normally had lower wage rates or structures and so would be more attractive to employers, particularly in a depression. Garside also feels that Benjamin and Kochin have ignored a number of important factors in their contention generally eg the severity with which eligibility rules were administered, and here points out that between March 1921 and March 1930 almost three million claims were refused because the applicants could not convince officials that they were making sufficient effort to find work.

A second piece of evidence brought forward relates to the introduction in October 1931 of the Unemployment Insurance (no. 3) Act²⁷ (the Anomalies Act), designed to prevent married women exploiting the insurance scheme to supplement their husband's income. The authors assert that the consequence of this was to reduce female unemployment rates - "the ratio of male to female unemployment is substantially higher after 1931 than before."²⁸ The following table indicates the position in Clydebank.

Table 6.2 Ratio of Male to Female Live Reg. Unemployed - Clydebank
Annual Averages 1923-1939

1923	16. 8 : 1	1932	6. 8 : 1
1924	6. 4 : 1	1933	10. 5 : 1
1925	11. 2 : 1	1934	8. 1 : 1
1926	13. 0 : 1	1935	7. 5 : 1
1927	6. 5 : 1	1936	5. 7 : 1
1928	5. 5 : 1	1937	4. 9 : 1
1929	6. 5 : 1	1938	2. 8 : 1
1930	4. 7 : 1	1939	2. 4 : 1
1931	5. 0 : 1		

Source:- Calculated from Ministry of Labour Gazette figures.

For Clydebank at least there would seem to be some effect, though hardly of the magnitude implied by Benjamin and Kochin. In any case, given that the administrative change of 1931 produced the effect nationwide that the authors suggest, it merely proves that benefit was more difficult to obtain, not necessarily that unemployment became less, and gives some

confirmation of the difficulties experienced in the measurement of unemployment levels discussed in the appendix, Problems of Data pp.430-36.

The classical view of the wage fund theory being discussed by Benjamin and Kochin may suggest that reduced wage levels will increase employment. Yet this is not necessarily the same as saying that reduced benefits will increase employment. Reduction in benefit might result in lower average incomes and in deflation which would force wage levels down - to this extent Benjamin and Kochin's arguments have some force. But such factors would operate in a closed economy. In the 1920s and 1930s substantial reductions in wage levels in Britain would have been paralleled by competitive reduction of wages abroad to maintain the relative position of other countries. Thus any positive effect on British employment levels would probably have been marginal. In any case politicians were against the major reductions in benefit which Benjamin and Kochin argue for in view of the potential unrest which such cuts would in all probability generate, and the authors give little consideration to this political aspect.

In addition they pay insufficient attention to another explanation of the unemployment rate, that given by Whiteside²⁹. This was the tendency of governments to encourage short time/work sharing, through exhortation and the administrative system of the insurance scheme. Under this system unemployment benefit could be paid after a waiting period of as little as three days, and shorter periods of unemployment within a specified number of weeks could be added together to produce this waiting period. This form of short time/work sharing was certainly introduced in Clydebanks, though the evidence in chapter 4, Table 4.7 p.52 would suggest that it was a significant factor only at times of worst depression - in 1921 certain departments in John Browns were only working four days per fortnight, and in the Singer Company, those still employed in the early 1930s were working on a week on/week off basis. The governments and employers of the time would seem to have preferred part time working to full time unemployment and more reliance on the Poor Law, though the distinction was not obvious in the statistics.

The provision of financial assistance to the unemployed through the developing unemployment insurance scheme was a major plank in the structure of government response to the problem facing it. Certainly in those areas of the country particularly badly hit by unemployment dependence on unemployment insurance must have been considerable. At a community as well as an individual level, dependence in Clydebanks must have been rather less owing to its relatively lower levels of unemployment. The exceptions to this were the early 1920s and,

particularly the early 1930s when unemployment levels were abnormally high and reliance consequently greater.

6.4 Public Works

The provision of financial support could be described as a passive form of assistance to those who had become unemployed, and was certainly the most important form of aid to the unemployed in the period both nationally and in Clydebank. Yet a number of other government policies, to be considered more briefly, attempted to provide active assistance. The first of these policies was the provision of finance for public works carried out at local level. In the Clydebank case this is described in more detail in chapter 7 p.173.

An initial tentative step had been taken in this direction in 1905 when the Unemployed Workmans Act³⁰ allowed local distress committees, with Exchequer assistance, to provide work. In the immediate post war period considerable attention was given to public works as a counter to cyclical depression at a time of potential unrest, though emphasis on this form of help for the unemployed faded as the decade passed. There were at least two reasons for this change. In the first place, public works had initially been brought into operation as a method of dealing with cyclical unemployment. By the later years of the decade it had become clearer that concentrated structural unemployment in particular areas was generally the greater difficulty, to which public works were rather less well suited as a solution. Secondly, and more importantly, governments were reluctant to divert capital from normal industrial channels into public works - it was argued that use of limited resources for public works would divert investment from private industry.

Though a public works policy was considered undesirable it nevertheless existed in order to provide badly needed work, particularly in the early 1920s. This ambivalent government attitude was illustrated by the fact that the Unemployment Grants Committee (UGC), set up by the government to direct public works finance, was established in winter 1920/21 at the same time as the Geddes economy cuts were imposed. The UGC gave grants of 50/60% to local authorities to finance public works programmes - in Clydebank this normally meant road improvements, and these are described in some detail in chapter 7, p.173.

Any grants were given under strict conditions which became even stricter in 1925 after the election of the new Conservative government. This tightening of control was well illustrated in Clydebank when two circulars were received from the UGC in 1925. In April a letter to the

council's Streets and Buildings Committee

"intimated that the government proposed to continue and encourage the execution of works of public utility during winter 1925/26 for the assistance of the relief of unemployment.³¹"

In December a further circular was received which stated that grants would be given in future if (i) the work was of public utility to relieve unemployment, (ii) would not otherwise be undertaken for at least five years and (iii) the unemployment sought to be relieved had to be exceptional.³² Soon the town council felt the impact of this tougher attitude when its application for a grant towards the construction of a golf course was rejected in 1927 on the grounds that

"the extent of the unemployment in the burgh is not so exceptional as to bring the scheme within the revised conditions for a grant.³³"

As a result of this ambivalence, the policy helped comparatively few in the 1920s. Pollard notes that

"the UGC itself spend £69.5 million between December 1920 and January 1932, but this compared with £600 million paid out in benefits and relief.³⁴"

Hancock suggests that in the period 1920-1929

"relief works and related services may have employed about 1% of the work force. It is clear that special works secured no more than a very modest increase in employment.³⁵"

Certainly in Clydebank the evidence given in chapter 7 suggests that only a small proportion of the unemployed were assisted by public works schemes.

Whilst the public works programme had been severely constricted by cuts and government control in the 1920s, it was virtually eliminated as a policy in the 1930s as a result of the cuts of 1931. Runciman, President of the Board of Trade, commented at the World Economic Conference in July 1933,

"We have terminated our schemes for dealing with unemployment by means of capital expenditure works, and we shall not reopen these schemes no matter what shall be done elsewhere.³⁶"

As a result the numbers of men employed on public works dwindled until by 1937 the UGC schemes gave work to 303 men.

Clearly it was only in the 1920s, and in the case of the burgh of Clydebank only in the early 1920s when a few score men gained employment, that the public works policy made any impact on unemployment at all - though burgh citizens may have been able to obtain further employment on public works schemes just outwith the burgh boundaries, such as the

Great Western Road extension and the construction of the George V Dock. However the ending of the centrally financed public works programme was counterbalanced by the development of schemes such as industrial derating which resulted in increased government funding for the finances of local authorities in depressed areas. This is discussed in section 6.9, p.136 Thus, though the public works policy may have had little impact on unemployment, it was the form rather than the fact of central government financial support which ended with its virtual abolition.

6.5 Labour Mobility and Retraining

Other policies introduced by inter-war governments were aimed at increasing the mobility of labour and thus reducing unemployment. A means of putting those seeking work into contact with those seeking workers had been in existence since before World War 1. These were Beveridge's labour exchanges which however failed to come up to his expectations as a method of increasing labour mobility and so reducing unemployment in the inter-war period. This was because of the wide scale of unemployment, especially in certain areas, and the resulting emphasis on the payment of unemployment benefit.

Another attempt to increase mobility came from the introduction by the government in 1928 of the Industrial Transference Scheme to reduce unemployment in distressed, initially mining, areas. This provided training and money for the transfer of individuals from areas of high unemployment to areas of better employment opportunities. However the Scheme achieved little. The UK annual totals of adults involved ranged from a high of 32,000 in 1929 to a low of 8,000 in 1933. Juvenile figures were approximately half adult numbers. In the case of Clydebank there is no evidence to suggest any involvement in this scheme at all. There was little need for official transference in the later 1920s and later 1930s when unemployment levels were relatively low. In the early 1930s there was no great incentive to move to areas where unemployment levels, though lower, were still a considerable problem. These comments should be regarded as separate from the independent voluntary migration of individuals and families which, as will be seen in chapter 13, p.363 was fairly substantial, especially in the early 1920s.

A related form of solution adopted by governments was to remove the unemployed to another country. Training and assisted passages were given by inter-war governments to certain prospective emigrants to the empire. This type of action took place at local level too, as revealed in the minutes of Old Kilpatrick Parish Council. On a number of occasions individuals requested, and from time to time received,

financial aid to emigrate. Yet such a scheme was only feasible as a solution when there was a demand for a large scale influx of labour into the receiving country and, in the conditions of the inter-war period, could not be successful on any large scale.

Another area of government policy to be considered was that which aimed at altering the circumstances of the individual to make it less likely that he would become unemployed. The first measure to be dealt with relates to the juvenile unemployed who often found that any work obtained was of the dead-end variety, such as van-boy. Dismissal at the age of 18 to 20, and lack of training afforded in such jobs made it even more difficult for the individual to find work in an already very competitive market. Though the government could not provide suitable jobs directly, it did try to provide centres where unemployed juveniles could profitably spend their time and maintain their employability. They were not provided, however, with specific training, as was made clear in official comments which stated that the centres had been set up "with the object of preventing deterioration in character through prolonged idleness."³⁷

These Juvenile Unemployment Centres were first established in the winter of 1918-1919 when attendance was compulsory for those over 15 in receipt of the Out of Work Donation. They then lapsed and were revived from the winter of 1922-1923 for those juveniles in receipt of unemployment benefit. After an earlier attempt had failed for lack of suitable accommodation, one such centre was set up in Clydebank in 1923 with a 75% Exchequer grant, the remaining 25% to be found by the local authority.³⁸ There were then significant numbers of unemployed juveniles in the burgh, and it was hoped to establish eight classes in the centre. In these classes, half the boys' time was to be spent in manual work, half the girls' in domestic science. The remainder of the time was to be spent on English, Arithmetic and lectures on topical subjects.³⁹ However, the system did not work satisfactorily. In Clydebank attendance was reduced by improving employment opportunities, in addition to problems faced by the system nationally such as lack of adequate resources of staff and materials or an unsuitable and unattractive syllabus. In June 1925 the Dunbartonshire Education Authority confirmed that only 52 juveniles had actually attended classes in Clydebank and Dumbarton in the previous month.⁴⁰ The system continued to little effect.

In two other ways attempts were made to deal with the problem of juvenile unemployment. One, mentioned above, was the Industrial Transference Scheme, and this was as unsuccessful with juveniles as it was with adults. Another suggestion was to raise the school leaving age from 14. In conditions of financial stringency this was not achieved and although improving conditions in the later 1930s made this feasible, the outbreak

of war forced postponement.

6.6 Health and Sickness Insurance⁴¹

The 1909 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws had suggested that assistance to the sick would help to reduce poor relief applications, and in the inter-war period it was accepted by governments that prevention of illness would be a major step towards the prevention of poverty. Since sickness might well result in loss of work and the unemployed were a considerable group amongst the poor, it was clear that steps taken to deal with health problems would have an impact on the unemployed. The first moves had been made before World War 1 with the health insurance system established under the National Insurance Act of 1911, and this system continued throughout the inter-war period. The scheme covered those earning £250 per annum or less, and provided financial assistance in the form of sickness benefit (15/- for men, 12/- for single women and 10/- for married women), disablement benefit (7/6 for men) and a maternity grant of £2. It also provided the insured individual with the services of a GP but not with hospital care. At first the government was not directly involved in the working of the scheme since it was operated by insurance companies. However in 1919 a Ministry of Health was set up to participate more closely in caring for the health of the nation.

This health scheme faced a number of problems in the inter-war period. The Ministry was relatively weak, whilst the insurance companies with their vested interests were comparatively strong and were reluctant to see change in the system. The scheme had several drawbacks. It dealt only with the insured person, not with dependents, and excluded hospital treatment. In addition, at times of worst unemployment the number of claims increased. This could reflect the equation unemployment = poverty = sickness, but it was generally regarded as simply a method of increasing the family income at a difficult time.

Health care was also being provided by local authorities through the activities of Medical Officers of Health, local authority hospitals and services such as Child Welfare Schemes, all of which existed in Clydebank and are given some consideration in chapters 7 and 8. It has been suggested that as a result of such activities at a national and a local level the general health of the nation was improving in the inter-war years. This improvement in health would have had an impact on unemployment. Yet recently Dr Charles Webster⁴² has pointed out that national averages, which show a trend to improvement, hide significant regional, local and class variations in which any improvement in health standards could be minimal.

Health standards in Clydebank are considered in more detail in the section on health in chapter 8 p233-40. Clydebank started the inter-war period with health standards which the Registrar-General's figures suggest were above those of Scotland and other large burghs, and this may be a consequence of the town's relative newness and prosperity. In addition, during the inter-war period there was a considerable increase in health services provided by the town council. Yet the burgh did not fully share in the general improvement in health which the tables indicate took place by 1939. Table 8.19 p.237, which shows the infantile death rate, indicates that adverse effects on health in Clydebank can be associated with the deep depression of the early 1930s with its high levels of unemployment. Thus the actions of central, and local, government had less effect on the health of Clydebank citizens, and thus less of an impact on the unemployed, than might have been wished.

6.7 Industrial Support, Reorganisation and Reconstruction⁴³

It can be argued that in some ways the main force of government efforts to deal with the unemployment problem came not through policies designed specifically to solve this problem, but with policies aimed at improving general economic performance. In the short (or long) term unemployment would be solved by a general improvement in the economic condition of Britain. The government was however faced with something of a dilemma since there could be a tension between immediate job creation and longer term recovery - economic policies designed to improve industrial performance often resulted in at least a temporary increase in unemployment. Yet with the consequences of this mitigated by unemployment insurance and the Poor Law, it was argued that the difficulty would have to be accepted since eventually unemployment would be reduced as the economy picked up.

To an extent general economic policies can be divided into two phases - in the 1920s efforts were concentrated on attempts to deal with what was then regarded as cyclical depression whilst in the 1930s rather greater emphasis was laid on solving the structural problems of British industry. Though policies initiated in the 1920s continued to the 1930s, the focus changed from gold standard, export related policies to attempts to stimulate internal recovery. The general elements of government policy to be considered briefly here are (i) the control of public expenditure, (ii) the reduction of costs and wages, (iii) tariffs and protection, (iv) cheap money and investment, (v) rationalisation, (vi) the Trade Facilities Acts and the Scrap and Build policy and (vii) rearmament. A further sub-section, (viii) the '534' Episode, will consider government policy directly applicable to Clydebank.

(i) Control of Public Expenditure

Economic policies were basically measures to increase confidence in the British economy and to stimulate international trade - though in the 1930s this latter aspect was less important as the return to tariffs insulated Britain somewhat from world trends. The most obvious aspect of these policies, introduced early in the inter-war period and supported by many leading bankers, industrialists and economists were deflation, a return to the Gold Standard and an attempt to balance the budget and cut government expenditure (though this latter aspect involved something of a double standard in view of the rapidly rising cost of unemployment insurance). The traditional Gladstonian attitude to public finance resulted from a fear that an unbalanced budget involving "excessive" expenditure might drive the country towards bankruptcy, inflation and worsened economic problems. On the other hand a small, balanced budget would encourage growth in the private sector which could not happen if high taxation and interests levels resulted from government borrowing and expenditure on a large scale on, for example, public works. As a result, government expenditure was kept as low as possible while successive chancellors wrestled with the problem of producing a budget surplus. Cost cutting exercises were introduced at times of greatest economic difficulty and highest unemployment, eg the Geddes proposals of 1921 and those of the May Committee of 1931. The impact of such a policy on unemployment has already been indicated to some extent in section 6.4 p.120, where consideration was given to public works both in Clydebank and the nation generally.

This attitude of financial stringency towards public expenditure, known as the Treasury view, was not restricted to central government. In 1921 in Clydebank Councillor Shand appealed for stringent economy in local schemes to help the unemployed.⁴⁴ In the same way, as will be seen when politics are considered in chapter 12, p.328, in the early 1930s several local town council candidates emphasised the need to restrict expenditure. Indeed, as nationally, cuts were made by Clydebank Town Council in October 1931.

(ii) Reduction of Costs and Wages

One aspect of a cost cutting operation which could be applied in both the public and private sectors in the hope of stimulating confidence and growth, and thus eventually reducing unemployment, was to cut wages. In 1920 weekly wage rates were almost three times the level they had been in 1913. Such high rates, it was felt, increased prices and so reduced sales, promoting unemployment. As a result, despite strong Trade Union opposition, employers reduced wage rates on average to nearly two thirds of their 1920 level by 1923 - though in certain, mainly export, trades reductions of 40% or even

50% took place. The government cuts of 1921 had forced down both prices and wages by deliberate budget decision. Probably the best known of the inter-war wage cuts, those imposed on teachers and other government employees after the report of the May Committee in 1931, reduced only wages. However the effect of greater cost reductions at the same time was to improve real wages for those still in work.

Wage cuts were imposed in Clydebank as elsewhere. In John Browns, where export markets were significant, average weekly earnings fell from 81/11d in 1920 to 48/4d in 1923, ie by 42%, rising again to between 50/- and 60/- for much of the 1920s and 1930s (see table 7.6 p.167). Yet such wage reductions had little effect in protecting employment levels as can be seen in table 3.6 p.36. At the same time the wages of some, though not all, town council employees were reduced - in May 1921 builders' and labourers' wages were reduced by 2d per hour⁴⁵. In 1931 the town council reduced the wages of those employees earning £104-350 per annum by 5% (so long as they did not then fall below TU rates), and by 7½% for those earning over £350. In Browns at that time average wage levels did not fall substantially though employment levels did, leaving mainly higher paid foremen in employment.

The value of such cuts in dealing with unemployment is uncertain. If Browns can be regarded as an exemplar in the 1920s they did little to improve the prospects of firms in the export market. They also caused considerable discontent amongst those affected.

The above policies have to be seen in the light of the government's wish to return to the Gold Standard. It was hoped that the return to gold at a pre-war parity of £1 = \$4.86 would help to stabilise the international economy and improve confidence in Britain. The domestic economy would be given a boost and so unemployment would be reduced. When this took place in 1925 the expected consequences did not follow. The pound was over-valued in practice in comparison with the dollar, franc and mark, exports became less competitive and unemployment was not helped. Certainly in Clydebank, Browns position was not eased. Clydebank depended to a large extent on the export of ships yet there is some evidence to suggest that the return to the Gold Standard hindered Brown's competitive position when tendering for merchant vessels. Though other factors may have played a part, it remains true that the latter half of the 1920s saw a considerable reduction in the numbers of Brown's tenders for merchant vessels which were accepted - in the years 1920-1924, 16 tenders were accepted while in the period 1925-1929 this had fallen to 10.⁴⁶

(iii) Tariffs and Protection

The general crisis of stagnant trade in 1931 which forced Britain off the Gold Standard was accompanied by the introduction of tariffs against foreign imports. Though the policy was not new in the 1930s - it had been applied to a limited extent in the 1920s eg to protect the domestic film industry - the scale adopted was a radical reversal of British policy since the mid 19th century. However tariffs raised revenue, were a useful bargaining counter in a world increasingly dominated by economic nationalism, were a pre-requisite of a policy of imperial preference and, by giving some protection to British industry against foreign competition, increased business confidence. In this latter aspect there were links to the rationalisation and reconstruction policy eg in the steel industry. However, as with the Gold Standard, there is no evidence that the introduction of tariffs had a major impact on employment in Clydebank. In the later 1930s increasing employment opportunities in the type of industry existing locally were a result of other factors to be discussed later.

(iv) Cheap Money and Investment

A further general economic policy of the 1930s, again of little real significance in the Clydebank context, was that of cheap money. In June 1932 the Bank Rate was reduced to 2%, remaining at this level until 1939. Though the initial purpose of the move had been to reduce interest payments on the National Debt, it was soon claimed, eg by Chamberlain, to be a major element in a recovery programme. The argument was that reduced interest rates would encourage industrial investment, raise the level of economic activity and so reduce unemployment. The claim would seem to have been overstated - its main success was supposed to have been the building boom of the 1930s. Here other factors such as rising real incomes and reduced material costs were at least as important as cheaper mortgages. Moreover in industries burdened by unused capacity and weak demand, such as shipbuilding, the decision to invest is not likely to have been greatly influenced by the price of money.

Nevertheless this policy may well have had some impact in Clydebank, though not necessarily by significantly reducing unemployment. The availability of cheap money in the 1930s coincided with a resumption by the town council of housebuilding in the latter part of the decade. Local authority construction had been virtually halted during the period of financial stringency in the early 1930s, but with improving economic conditions and the availability of finance through lower cost loans, the burgh's housebuilding programme was resumed from 1936, leading to improved housing standard. Housing development will be considered in more detail in chapter 8 p.189.

(v) Rationalisation

A conflict in attitude has already been mentioned between the desire to strengthen the economy by restricting spending and the existence of pressure to spend on public works, unemployment insurance etc. Another policy conflict existed which affected Clydebank particularly. This was the attempt to improve the economic performance of the particularly badly affected staple industries, such as shipbuilding, and the result of such an attempt in terms of employment levels. Government involvement in the restructuring and rationalisation of ailing industries had begun in the late 1920s when the Baldwin government had assisted in the creation of the Lancashire Cotton Corporation. Similarly in 1930, the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd was created to buy up and close excess yard capacity. Thus Beardmores in Dalmuir was closed in late 1930 and some 500 jobs were lost - though the closure must have enhanced Browns chance of obtaining naval orders - and by 1933 six other Clyde yards had been shut down completely, whilst others were partly closed. Similar attempts were made to restructure other industries in the later 1930s, such as iron and steel or coal, but the effect was the same. Existing jobs were lost in the attempt to increase efficiency without any certainty that markets would be regained by the remaining part of the sector. It was also unclear that existing jobs in firms remaining open, would be protected or the foundations laid for later expansion. However government involvement and legislative activity in this field was a step towards the more managed economy desired by the economic radicals of the 1930s.

(vi) Trade Facilities and the Scrap and Build Policy

Government activity related particularly to the shipbuilding industry, and thus to a major sector in Clydebank's economic structure, took at least three forms. Two of these, the Trade Facilities Acts⁴⁷ of the 1920s and the British Shipping (Assistance) Act 1935,⁴⁸ had little impact on employment levels in Clydebank or elsewhere. However, the third policy, rearmament, certainly did affect the shipbuilding industry in the town.

The Trade Facilities Acts had given loan guarantees for the construction of ships, but only 110 ships of 850,000 tons were built under this scheme compared to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ million tons launched from British yards during the period it operated.⁴⁹ Clearly the Acts can have had little effect on employment levels in the industry generally and in Clydebank particularly.

A similar conclusion can be reached on the "scrap and build" policy contained in Part 11 of the British Shipping (Assistance) Act 1935. By this Act, government loans were made available to the owners of cargo steamers who were willing to replace old tonnage. Yet in the two year life of the Act

only 200,000 tons of shipping was built under its auspices. This was approximately 4% of all tonnage built.⁵⁰ Generally the impact of the Act was disappointing and in the case of Clydebank the Cunard orders and rearmament contracts were much more important.

⁵¹ (vii) Rearmament

In the Clydebank context a major employment support had been the building of naval vessels. There were two phases in the placing of orders for such vessels in the inter-war years. A period of naval disarmament followed the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 with considerable effects in the burgh. The Beardmore yard in Dalmuir had been established before World War 1 for the purpose of naval construction, yet from 1919 there were virtually no Admiralty orders except for a cruiser and two submarines launched in 1928. Though John Browns relied less on naval work than did Beardmores, their financial position was made more difficult when only 6 tenders for the more profitable Admiralty contracts were accepted in the 1920s. This reduction in naval orders at a time of great difficulty in shipbuilding generally had an important adverse effect on the profitability of the yards and their ability to sustain high employment levels.

The second phase began in late 1933 with a policy change towards rearmament, particularly after the establishment of the Defence Requirements Committee under Sir Maurice Hankey, following a growing realisation of the threat from the dictators. As a result of this, orders for 400,000 tons of warships had been placed by 1937. Recovery of employment in John Browns had already begun with the restarting of work on the "Queen Mary" in 1934. In addition to this, 7 other contracts for merchant vessels had been obtained between 1929 and 1938. However in the same period, though particularly towards its end, 17 contracts for naval vessels had been obtained.⁵² Thus the growth of employment which took place in the yard in the latter part of the 1930s was strongly associated with the government policy of rearmament. Nevertheless, Admiralty orders of the 1920s and 1930s were not important only because of the employment which they gave. As they returned a higher profit level than merchant contracts where, particularly in the 1920s, profits had been cut to the bone and in some cases turned into losses, any naval contracts were important in ensuring the continued viability of the yard as a major employer in Clydebank.

(viii) The "534" Episode

Any consideration of government policies affecting the unemployment level in Clydebank itself must relate to the building of the Cunarder 534⁵³ "Queen Mary". In 1929 the Cunard Company's prospects seemed relatively bright and the decision was made to build replacements for ageing liners

such as the "Aquitania" to provide an express Atlantic service. The liners on this service would be in competition with the subsidised fleets of France, Germany, Italy and the United States. The contract for the first of these ships went, in May 1930, to John Browns. The 534 contract was doubly welcome; firstly to the firm which throughout the 1920s had only operated with difficulty in a depressed market, and secondly to the town generally. The Clydebank Press stated in an editorial

"The news was especially welcome for although the district has escaped in the most marked degree the effects of unemployment which are so general throughout the country, there were evidences latterly that the depression in trade was manifesting itself locally⁵⁴."

Further good news came with the Cunard (Insurance) Agreement Act 1930⁵⁵ by which the government assumed part of the insurance risk on the 534, ensuring adequate insurance cover.

However problems were soon to arise. In the first place the government was anxious about the future of the other major British North Atlantic carrier, the White Star Line, whose parent group, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co., was in financial difficulty. As a result, the government favoured a rationalisation of North Atlantic services by the merger of White Star and Cunard. This Cunard was unwilling to do, preferring, if possible instead, to take over the White Star Line. This situation remained unresolved throughout 1930 and 1931. Meanwhile in the developing depression the financial position of the Cunard Company was growing worse, until by December 1931 its earnings were insufficient to cover depreciation and it was unable to raise further funds. An application to the government for financial assistance was refused and as a result on 12 December 1931 work on the 534 was suspended.

The government refused to help Cunard financially for a number of reasons. In the first place any direct financial assistance would bring a flood of further requests at a time when government spending had to be kept low. Secondly, financial guarantees had proved an unsatisfactory policy in the past - as Sir Warren Fisher wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in February 1932 "When the Trade Facilities Acts were terminated in 1927

with the consent of all parties, it was agreed that the chief effect of the guarantees to shipbuilding has been to keep alive uneconomic shipyards and increase the glut of super-fluous tonnage."⁵⁴

A further reason was the undesirable financial consequences of assistance to Cunard for the Treasury and Northern Ireland government.

"The/

"The Treasury in conjunction with the Northern Irish government holds practically a half interest in the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company, which is the operating company of the White Star Line. The two governments have a financial interest in the White Star Line approaching £3 millions, and as the main operations of the White Star are in the North Atlantic in competition with Cunard, it would be damaging to the White Star interests to finance their competitor. This financial argument cannot in these times be overlooked.⁵⁷"

The decision naturally came as a great blow to Browns which had received no warning of a potential suspension until November 1931. As a result 3,700 men were paid off, and the number of unemployed registered at the Clydebank Labour Exchange, which had increased to 10,070 in November 1931, rose to 11,802 in December and 12,320 in January 1932. This was almost the highest level reached in the inter-war period which peaked at 13,612 in July, 1932. Much concern was expressed locally at this situation over the next two years by David Kirkwood, the local MP, and by the Town Council which established a committee

"to take whatever action may be deemed necessary in the interests of the burgh."⁵⁸

A member of this committee, Baillie McKendrick, stated in August 1933 that

"They did everything they could to bring pressure to bear on those in authority, pointing out the depression that existed then and still existed, and tried to impress upon them the need for work on the Cunarder being resumed."⁵⁹

Yet it would seem that not all town citizens were satisfied that the council had done all it could. On several occasions such as February and August 1933 demonstrations and deputations from the United Front Workers Council of Clydebank, the Communist Party, ILP and National Unemployed Workers Movement asked, among other requests, that the council should take further action to encourage a resumption of work on the Cunarder. The council took no action on their requests, probably because it felt it had done all it could, but possibly because the Moderate Council disagreed with the politics of those making the request.

Meanwhile at a national level government policy continued to play a large part in determining the fate of the 534 and Brown's workforce, which averaged only 422 employees in 1932 and 675 in 1933. The government continued to refuse assistance throughout 1932, but by 1933 Chamberlain,

Chancellor of the Exchequer, was intimating that some assistance might be forthcoming under certain conditions.

These conditions were based on the report made, at the government's suggestion, in 1932 by Lord Weir. When implemented after protracted discussion it brought about the desired merger of the Cunard Company and the White Star Line in early 1934. Cunard held 60% and White Star 40% of the new company, Cunard White Star Ltd. The government then loaned the new company £9.5 million, £3 million of which was to complete the 534, £5 million for a future sister ship and £1.5 million working capital. Though the government was criticised for refusing money for public works yet loaning large sums to a capitalist enterprise, Parliament gave its approval and, as a result of this government policy change, work resumed on the 534 in April 1934. The immediate result was to help reduce the number of unemployed in the Clydebank Labour Exchange area from 8,325 in March 1934 to 7,107 in April and 6,733 in May. The average weekly numbers employed in the yard rose from 675 in 1933 to 3,758 in 1934. Thus the action taken by the government in encouraging the merger and providing finance for the 534 was very significant in initiating the move out of depression which was taking place in the town at that time.

There were a number of reasons for this change in government policy towards the provision of financial support. Several of the most significant were noted in a private paper on the merger by Walter Runciman -

"... the only reasonable business way of avoiding heavy losses to the Exchequer on those loans (to White Star) was to secure an amalgamation between Cunard and the White Star. This was the real genesis of the whole proposition, though naturally it cannot be spoken of except in strict secrecy in the narrowest of circles. What can be said openly is this For the double object of securing a necessary amalgamation and restarting employment upon the new liner the government consented to revive in this single instance the principles of the Trade Facilities Acts.⁶⁰"

Thus consideration of employment levels in Clydebank and other areas producing material for the construction of the ship was secondary, on this evidence, to the financial situation. Certainly the reduction of unemployment is mentioned in other documents from the same source as a factor in explaining the policy change. A number of other factors were, however, given equal weight, including strategic considerations

if foreigners controlled the White Star in time of war, prestige, rationalisation of competing services and the impact resumption of the 534 would have on morale in Britain generally.

However, whatever the reason for the policy change, the government did provide the money which enabled many of the inhabitants of the town to regain employment at a time when other parts of the country were still deep in depression. It is perhaps ironic that Clydebank's recovery was based on the provision of government financial assistance for the construction of the 534 "Queen Mary" and later the "Queen Elizabeth" and the rearmament programme. After all this was a spending policy which governments of the inter-war period had tried to avoid. They had introduced all possible alternatives yet were in practice forced back to a policy which they strongly disliked.

6.8 The Special Areas

Many of the measures discussed in the previous section were related to the effects in Clydebank of government policy towards a specific industry, shipbuilding. The next type of policy to be surveyed relates to government attempts to assist whole geographical areas. The problems facing Clydebank in the early 1930s were similar to those facing other areas dependent on staple industries in Central Scotland, Northern England and South Wales. To deal with the particular problems of these areas the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act 1934⁶¹ was introduced⁶². Under this Act, the government appointed two commissioners, for England and Wales and for Scotland, to help to attract new employment to parts of Central Scotland, North East England, West Cumberland and South Wales which had been particularly badly affected by the depression of the early 1930s. However, major towns such as Glasgow were excluded from the assisted areas, and the initial government grant of £2 million was only allowed to be used for restricted purposes eg the commissioners were unable to assist private industry or public works projects. As a result, in the first year 90% of the Scottish commissioners funds were spent on sewerage schemes.

Following this, changes were made in 1936 and 1937. In 1936 the Special Areas Reconstruction Association was set up to provide loans for small businesses willing to set up in the special areas. In the following year⁶³ the Special Areas Amendment Act provided tax inducements and Treasury loans to firms in the special areas. In addition, in 1936 Lord Nuffield set up a £2 million trust to encourage the movement of businesses into the special areas. Trading estates were set up, such as Hillington in 1937,

where ready built factories were leased to firms moving into the area. Indeed, in McCrone's words,

"By 1939 the trifling powers which the commissioners had been given in 1934 had been turned into a complete armoury of weapons consisting of the provisions of finance to private industry, tax incentives, trading estates and labour transferences ... they embraced a wider range than regional policy was to acquire again until the 1960s."

Yet in Clydebank, where the lifting of depression was mainly associated with recovery in John Browns and Singers, the policy had almost no effect. The only financial assistance received from the Special Areas Commissioner for Scotland came in 1936 when a grant of £6,000 was made towards the layout of a new recreation ground, the construction of which employed 30 men over nine months.⁶⁵ By this time major recovery of employment in the shipyard etc had already begun. In 1937-1938 there was also discussion of special areas aid for the building of a Joint Hospital for Clydebank and Dumbarton, but nothing was achieved before the war. Indeed an industrial estate was set up in the burgh in 1938 covering almost 9 acres of the old Beardmore site, but this had little to do with the activities of the Special Areas Commissioner. Advice or financial assistance from that source was acknowledged by Provost Martin of Clydebank when he wrote

"of the help given by the Commissioner for Special Areas, the Special Areas Reconstruction Association and the Nuffield Trust" towards the establishment of the estate - though no details of this assistance are available. However, he emphasised particularly the part played by a private firm, W H Arnott Young and Co (Shipbreakers) Ltd when he commented that

"the enterprise of this firm has made available a modern industrial site with factories large and small to attract whatever new industries can be secured"⁶⁶

Unfortunately no specific information has been found of particular businesses attracted to the industrial estate. However the Clydebank Press and local valuation rolls indicate that a number of firms were established in the former Beardmore site in 1938-1939. They include W H Arnott Young itself from 1934 and from 1938 the Turner Asbestos Cement Company and the Post Office which set up a submarine cable ship base, while plans were mooted in 1938 and 1939 for the reopening of the Beardmore engine works and the opening by the War Office of an Ordnance Factory. Some or all of these businesses may have occupied part of the industrial estate yet none were very large employers of labour.

Thus in Clydebank the Special Areas legislation would seem to have had a limited effect on the growth of employment opportunities in the town. On a larger scale too this would seem to have been the case as indicated in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Industrial Development in the Special Areas 1934-1938

Year	No of Factories opened in Britain	% in Special Areas	% in Greater London
1934	478	2.7	49.2
1935	514	0.8	41.8
1936	942	2.2	47.3
1937	522	4.4	39.1
1938	414	17.1	40.6

Source:- G McCrone Regional Policy in Britain (London 1969) p.101.

On the basis of the above figures the policy was clearly a failure in attracting a considerable proportion of any new industrial development into the Special Areas. A number of reasons for this can be put forward. Labour was available throughout the country, so firms did not need to move to the Special Areas to find a workforce. Also, since these areas were by definition particularly depressed, there would be, as a result of the accelerator effect, a lower demand for goods and services, and this would act as a disincentive to firms to move into such areas. As a result the industrial structure of these areas was not significantly altered by an influx of new industry. Accordingly when unemployment began to fall it was as a result of recovery in the old staple industries, largely caused by the approach of war. Thus the problem of the distressed areas was postponed to reappear after World War II.

6.9 Rating, Derating and the Direction of Financial Support to Local Authorities

Another government policy introduced in the late 1920s might also be regarded as particularly aimed at assisting the depressed areas by encouraging firms to remain or possibly move into them. This was the derating policy introduced by Churchill in 1928, which was explained by Mr Charles Milne, Unionist candidate for the Dumbarton Burghs, to an election meeting in Clydebank in 1929. He said

"At present, rates were payable on premises and plant of productive industry whether these industries were producing any income or not. The government intended to relieve such productive industries of three quarters of their rates to help regain markets and so employment. Ordinary ratepayers would not

have to make up the deficiency - the Exchequer would find the money⁶⁷."

A derating scheme was necessary because rate levels were a disincentive to industry to remain in or move to the areas of worst depression. In such areas rates were high because of the need to provide amenities already existing elsewhere and the need to pay for Poor Law support for the unemployed, in addition to normal expenditure. The additional cost burden to firms in such areas could drive them away or out of existence.

Clydebank must have benefited from this scheme, probably to a greater extent than some other areas in view of its larger industrial base, as Table 6.4 indicates.

Table 6.4 Percentage of Burgh Gross Rateable Value Related to Industrial Property 1930-1940
Clydebank and Dumbarton Burghs 1930-1940

Year	% in Clydebank	% in Dumbarton
1930-31	23.3	13.7
1931-32	20.4	12.9
1932-33	20.1	11.3
1933-34	20.8	11.4
1934-35	21.3	11.3
1935-36	20.4	10.7
1936-37	18.6	10.9
1937-38	17.2	11.9
1938-39	19.3	15.2
1939-40	21.1	20.0

Source:- Calculated from Abstracts of Accounts of Clydebank and Dumbarton 1930-1940

The table suggests that the income received by the burgh from the Exchequer under the derating scheme was greater in Clydebank than in Dumbarton, a not dissimilar nearby burgh, though the difference had substantially narrowed by the end of the period. Yet generally the practical effects of the derating scheme in preventing industrial drift from the depressed areas would seem to have been small, at best slowing the speed with which rising rates were affecting local industry.

Central government financial assistance to local authorities, such as that in the derating scheme, enabled Exchequer support to be directed towards areas of greater need. Throughout the period, government policy, intentionally or not, tended to shift resources from relatively prosperous

areas to those areas in particular need. This could result from payments by the Unemployment Grants Committee, or the expanding and centrally subsidised local authority housing programme concentrated in the most deprived areas. Another method, used from the late 1920s, was the block grant support system. Unlike earlier grants, this took into account the size of population, number of young children, rateable value, unemployment level and population per mile of roads. The effect of the new system was to favour those local authorities with low incomes and high costs. As a result throughout the inter-war period central assistance to local authorities was increasing generally, but particularly to areas of greatest need.

However there are a number of problems involved in a consideration of central government financial assistance to local authorities. The subject generally has been under-studied. Additionally, strict comparability is not always possible in view of the changing functions assigned to units of local government and the differences in the method of reporting them. Lastly, in the case of Clydebank, the sources of information, the abstracts of accounts, are not all available for the period 1919-1939. Accordingly, the comments made in the following paragraphs are intended to give only an indication of the situation, for which sufficient resources are available.

There is indeed evidence that government policy was shifting resources from more to less favoured areas in the country and that assistance generally was increasing. This is indicated in Table 6.5 and in graph 6.1.

Table 6.5/

Table 6.5 Central Government Grants etc to Local Authorities 1921-1939

Year	Population	<u>England and Wales</u>		Population	<u>Scotland</u>	
		Grant	Grant per Head		Grant	Grant per Head
1921	37.9m	£63.0m	33/2d	4.9m	£8.3m	33/8d
1922		76.7	40/4		11.0	44/8
1923		75.8	40/-		10.3	42/-
1924		78.3	41/2		10.9	44/4
1925		81.7	43/-		11.4	46/4
1926		84.6	44/6		12.1	49/2
1927		87.0	45/8		12.8	52/2
1928		90.1	47/4		13.4	54/6
1929		92.3	48/6		13.3	54/2
1930		107.8	56/8		16.1	65/6
1931	40.0m	130.2	65/-	4.8m	19.7	82/-
1932		126.6	63/2		19.7	82/-
1933		120.5	60/2		18.8	78/2
1934		121.6	60/8		18.3	76/2
1935		125.0	62/4		18.9	78/6
1936		132.9	66/4		21.0	87/4
1937		135.6	67/8		21.3	88/8
1938		136.1	68/-		21.4	89/-
1939		140.2	70/-		22.0	91/6

Source:- Calculated from Mitchell and Deane Abstract of British Historical Statistics (London 1962), pp 415,422.

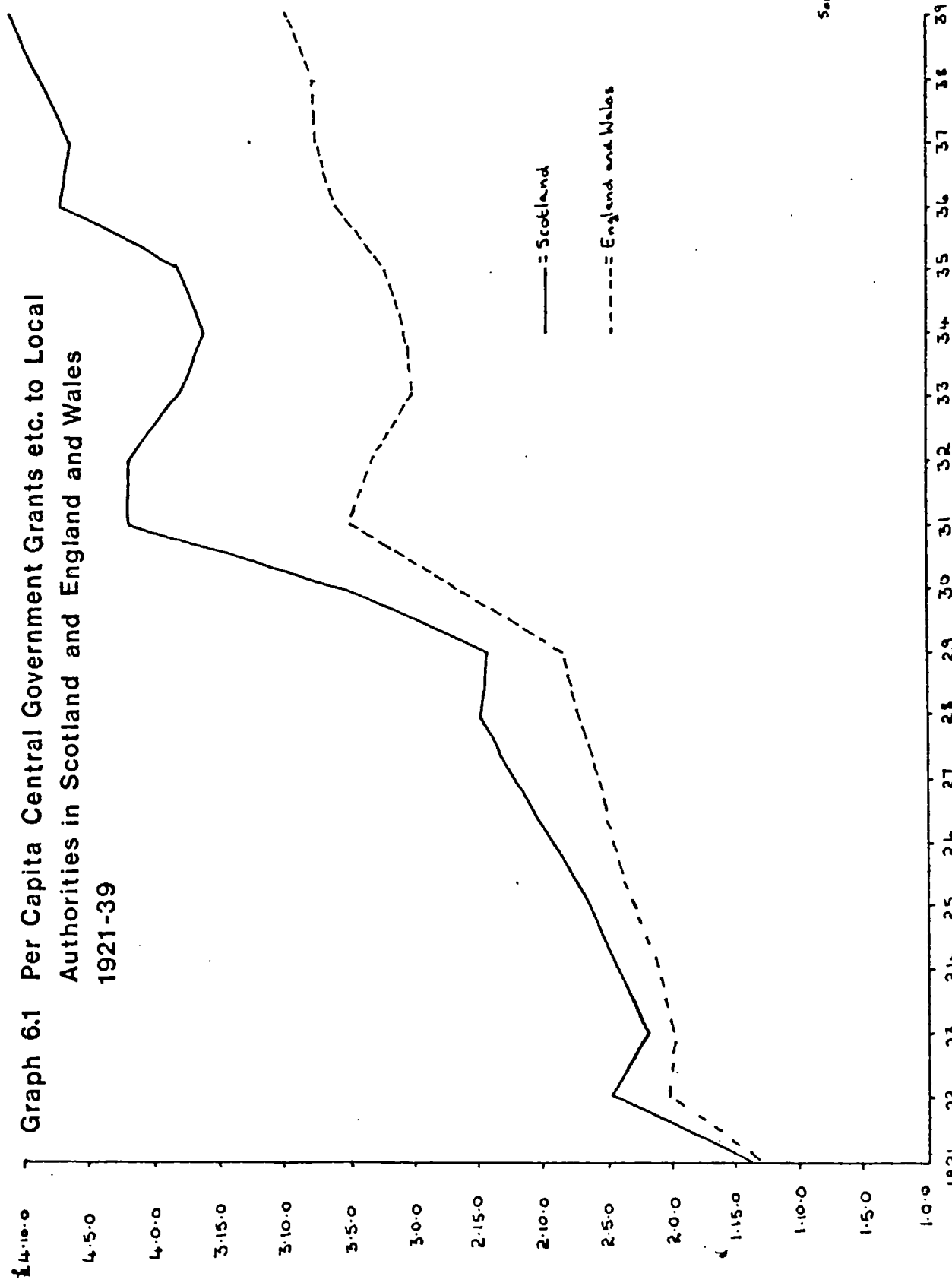
Report on the Census of England and Wales and of Scotland 1921, 1931

Clearly the amount per head of central government grants of all types increased throughout the period and equally clearly the increase was greater in Scotland, the more depressed area - though to some extent the divergence may be a population effect. As Scotland's population was stagnant or declining for much of the inter-war period in comparison with that of England, the grant per head in Scotland would tend to grow more rapidly.

Table 6.6 and Graph 6.2 show the position in relation to Clydebank, and for comparative purposes, the nearby town of Dumbarton.

Table 6.6/

Graph 6.1 Per Capita Central Government Grants etc. to Local Authorities in Scotland and England and Wales 1921-39



Source: - as
Table 6.5

Table 6.6 Central Government Grants to Clydebank and Dumbarton Burghs
1919-1940

Year	Population	<u>Clydebank</u>		<u>Dumbarton</u>		
		Grant	Grant per Head	Population	Grant	Grant per Head
1919-20		£5,202	2/2d		£6,308	5/4d
1920-21	46,506	7,020	3/-	22,933	6,473	5/6
1921-22		13,853	6/-		11,083	9/6
1922-23		na	-		10,913	9/4
1923-24		na	-		12,967	11/-
1924-25		12,547	5/2		10,392	9/2
1925-26		17,258	7/4		13,676	11/10
1926-27		16,532	7/-		14,944	13/-
1927-28		24,390	10/6		16,111	14/-
1928-29		26,678	11/4		18,081	15/6

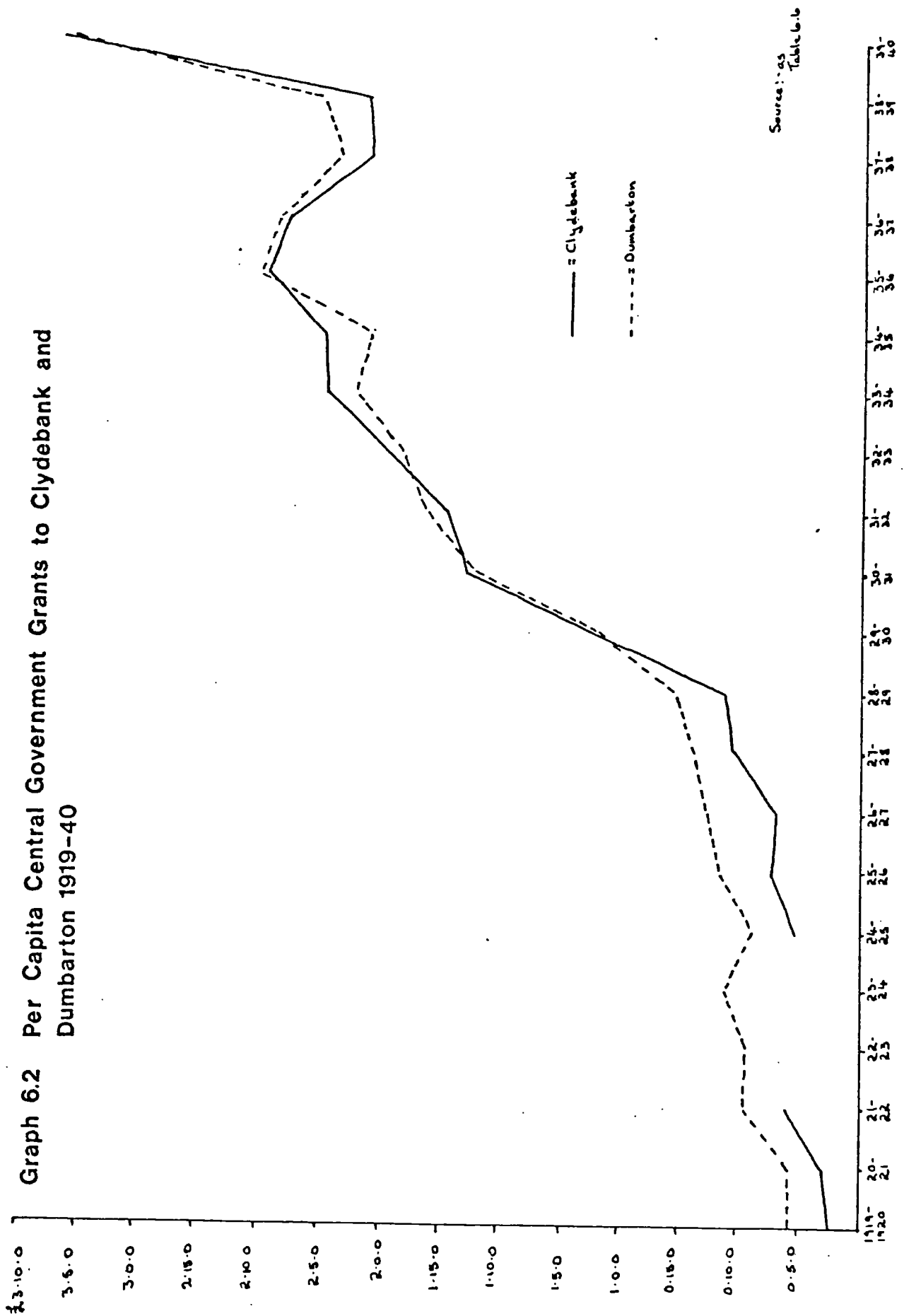
1929-30		51,918	22/2		25,376	22/-
1930-31	46,952	79,812	33/10	21,546	35,526	32/10
1931-32		81,517	34/6		39,044	36/2
1932-33		93,348	39/6		41,671	38/6
1933-34		105,336	44/10		46,295	42/10
1934-35		105,661	45/-		44,640	41/4
1935-36		116,543	49/6		54,898	50/10
1936-37		112,927	48/-		52,827	49/-
1937-38		97,473	41/4		47,571	44/-
1938-39		98,496	41/10		48,996	45/4
1939-40		*157,583	67/-		*71,474	66/2

*Increased due to preparations for war

Source:- Calculated from Abstracts of Accounts of Clydebank and Dumbarton Town Councils 1919-1940
Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931

Several points need to be made in connection with Table 6.6. The large increase in grant in 1929-1930 reflects the introduction of the industrial derating scheme. Secondly, with roughly static populations, the grant per head in both burghs was rising, but was significantly less than those in Table 6.5. This explained by the fact that neither burgh performed all the functions for which grants were available. Though the grants in Table 6.6 cover roads, housing, public health, UGC etc, they do not, in the case of Clydebank, include police functions, nor in either area education, a very significant source of central finance for local authorities. Also, earlier grants had a bias towards rural counties with higher costs and lower rateable values. Only by the inter-war period did urban areas appear to need more aid. Yet even given this situation, particularly in the case of Clydebank, the grants seem low. Thirdly, except in the first part of the

Graph 6.2 Per Capita Central Government Grants to Clydebank and Dumbarton 1919-40



1930s when Clydebank was particularly badly affected by unemployment, the burgh received less per head in central government assistance than did Dumbarton. Table 6.6 would then seem to indicate two facts. In the first place central government was indeed directing financial assistance to those areas in particular need, as the figures for Clydebank at the time of worst unemployment suggest. In the second place, except for the early 1930s, Clydebank would seem to have had less need for government assistance. Such a proposition gains support from work in other chapters which has suggested that for much of the inter-war period Clydebank was relatively well off and not particularly badly affected by unemployment by the standards of West Central Scotland. Further support for this can be found in Tables 6.7 and 6.8.

Table 6.7 Gross Rateable Value per Head and Rate Poundages - Clydebank and Dumbarton Burghs 1919-1940

Year	<u>Clydebank</u>			<u>Dumbarton</u>		
	Gross RV	RV per Head*	Rate Poundage	Gross RV	RV per Head*	Rate Poundage
1919-20	£285,415	122/6d	4/5½d	£107,511	93/6d	4/11½d
1920-21	287,820	123/6	6/8½	112,466	98/-	5/11½
1921-22	365,397	157/-	4/9½	114,051	99/4	5/10½
1922-23	371,765	159/10	4/6	143,098	124/6	5/4½
1923-24	375,654	161/4	4/11	146,028	127/4	5/7½
1924-25	383,412	164/10	4/10½	146,671	127/10	5/6½
1925-26	388,356	167/-	4/5½	147,912	128/10	5/4½
1926-27	396,956	170/6	4/5½	147,297	128/4	5/4
1927-28	403,181	173/2	12/5½	149,776	130/6	11/10½
1928-29	407,121	175/-	13/3½	152,614	133/-	11/2½
1929-30	412,061	177/4	12/1½	153,838	134/-	9/11½
1930-31	420,144	178/10	11/6	157,572	146/-	10/1½
1931-32	418,698	178/2	12/3	157,155	145/10	9/8½
1932-33	425,151	181/-	12/9	154,504	143/6	11/2½
1933-34	421,825	179/6	13/1	153,811	142/6	11/10½
1934-35	419,335	178/6	14/5	157,092	145/8	12/3½
1935-36	418,561	178/4	14/-	154,268	143/-	12/-
1936-37	419,181	178/6	14/3	156,671	145/4	11/-
1937-38	416,499	177/4	14/1½	160,502	148/10	10/8
1938-39	431,187	183/6	14/1½	169,900	157/6	10/8
1939-40	441,223	187/10	14/9	186,574	173/-	12/8

NB The substantial increase in rate poundages in 1928 results from the take-over by the town councils of the collection of parish and education authority rates.

*Calculated on the basis of population figures in the Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Source:- Calculated from Abstracts of Accounts of Clydebank and Dumbarton
Town Councils 1919-1940
Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Any attempt to measure relative affluence by consideration of gross rateable values must be a fairly crude method. Revaluation was erratic and there was a sluggishness in reassessing values downwards in a recession, when incomes and profits could fall faster than rateable values. Nevertheless Table 6.7 does suggest that Clydebank, with its much higher rateable value and value per head was relatively more affluent and consequently in rather less need of central government financial assistance. Even in the early 1920s when rate poundages were lower than in Dumbarton, Clydebank could still collect as much as Dumbarton in rate income per head because its rateable value per head was greater. From 1928 with both a higher rateable value per head and a higher rate poundage, Clydebank could obtain a substantially higher revenue per head than Dumbarton. Clydebank was in a better position than its neighbour to finance its schemes locally, such as the levels of public assistance which, as will be seen in chapter 7 p.162, were higher in Clydebank than in other areas.

Additional support for the suggestion that Clydebank received less in central government financial assistance because the burgh was comparatively affluent can be found in Table 6.8. This shows the revenue per head raised locally in both burghs. The figures for 1927-1930 include the collection of rate revenue for the parish and local education authority.

Table 6.8/

Table 6.8 Rate Revenue Per Head - Clydebank and Dumbarton Burghs 1919-1940

Year	<u>Clydebank</u>			<u>Dumbarton</u>		
	Rate Revenue (a)	Population	Revenue per Head	Rate Revenue	Population	Revenue per Head
1919-20	£76,356		32/10d	£35,595		31/-d
1920-21	106,594	46,506	45/10	43,456	22,933	37/10
1921-22	103,433		44/6	52,422		45/6
1922-23	na		-	47,917		41/6
1923-24	na		-	52,745		45/10
1924-25	100,284		43/-	54,115		47/-
1925-26	98,018		42/-	52,200		45/4
1926-27	121,083		52/-	52,230		45/4
1927-28	274,259		117/10	99,355		86/8
1928-29	273,086		117/6	100,091		87/4
1929-30	260,855		112/4	93,083		81/-
(b)						
1930-31	179,363	46,952	76/4	62,759	21,546	58/2
1931-32	187,116		79/6	60,517		56/-
1932-33	196,689		83/6	69,048		64/-
1933-34	214,736		91/4	73,889		68/4
1934-35	227,905		97/-	76,272		70/6
1935-36	222,772		94/8	75,597		70/-
1936-37	228,996		97/4	70,519		65/4
1937-38	228,201		97/2	69,737		64/6
1938-39	232,420		99/-	71,541		66/4
1939-40	249,774		106/2	89,729		83/2

(a) Revenue rate income from assessments

(b) Consolidated rate income

Source:- Calculated from Abstracts of Accounts of Clydebank and Dumbarton Town Councils 1919-1940

Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

The figures in this table indicate that for most of the inter-war period Clydebank was able to raise, and spend, significantly more per head of population in rates. High rate poundages could be raised and were needed because the town had high spending desires - but the consequence of this action was to reduce the amount it received in government grant aid throughout much of the period 1919-1939.

Some confirmation of this may be found in Table 6.9. It attempts to show the proportion of burgh income from government grants in both Clydebank and Dumbarton, and to show any changes in the significance of this by

expressing the proportion of income from government grants in Clydebank as a percentage of that in Dumbarton. However some caution is necessary when considering this table since, for example, Dumbarton was in receipt of central grants as a police authority which was not a function performed by Clydebank Town Council. In addition the figures from 1927 to 1930 are distorted by the collection of rates for parish and education authorities. Nevertheless the table is probably adequate to indicate trends, especially when taken in conjunction with preceeding tables.

Table 6.9 Proportion of Burgh Income from Government Grants - Clydebank and Dumbarton 1919-1940

Year	Clydebank		Dumbarton		Clydebank's proportion of Government Grants as a % of Dumbarton's
	Total Rate and Grant Income	% from Government Grants	Total Rate and Grant Income	% from Government Grants	
1919-20	£81,558	6.6	£41,904	15.1	42.4
1920-21	113,614	6.2	49,929	13.0	47.7
1921-22	117,286	11.8	63,505	17.5	67.4
1922-23	na	-	58,830	18.6	-
1923-24	na	-	65,712	19.7	-
1924-25	112,813	11.1	64,507	16.1	68.9
1925-26	115,276	15.0	65,876	20.8	72.1
1926-27	137,615	13.7	67,174	22.2	61.7
1927-28	298,649	8.2	115,446	14.0	58.6
1928-29	299,764	8.9	118,172	15.3	58.2
1929-30	312,083	16.6	118,459	21.4	77.6
1930-31	259,175	30.8	98,285	36.1	85.3
1931-32	268,633	30.3	99,561	39.2	77.3
1932-33	290,037	32.2	110,755	37.6	85.6
1933-34	320,072	32.9	120,184	38.5	85.5
1934-35	333,566	31.7	120,912	36.9	85.9
1935-36	339,315	34.3	130,495	42.1	81.5
1936-37	341,923	33.0	123,346	42.8	77.1
1937-38	325,674	29.9	117,308	40.6	73.6
1938-39	330,916	29.8	120,537	40.6	73.4
1939-40	407,357	38.7	161,203	44.3	87.4

Source:- As Tables 6.6 and 6.8

The table does show that the proportion of income received from government grants was increasing in both burghs throughout the inter-war years and peaking in the depressed early 1930s. Nevertheless Clydebank received a smaller proportion of its income from central government than did Dumbarton. However this discrepancy was significantly narrowed in the

first half of the 1930s when Clydebank was suffering from unemployment and its effects to an even greater extent than its neighbour. At other times central government would seem to have considered that the local authority in Clydebank was able to raise a larger proportion of its income from local sources than was the case in Dumbarton. Again, this is a further indication of comparative prosperity in Clydebank.

All the evidence in Tables 6.6 - 6.9 implies that for much of the inter-war period Clydebank obtained relatively less in central government financial assistance because it was comparatively affluent - a conclusion that fits well with other evidence noted elsewhere. The need for the redirection of central government finance was seen to be less pressing in the burgh than in other areas. Indeed the only period when government financial policy seems to have favoured the town was, not surprisingly, the early 1930s when it was faced with a massive unemployment problem. At other times the burgh could raise a greater proportion of its income locally and be more generous in its spending on public assistance, housing, local amenities and so on. Further discussion of financial aspects of local government activity is contained in chapter 7 p.176.

6.10 Conclusion

The fact of very substantial unemployment in Clydebank in the early 1920s and above all the early 1930s cannot be denied. The effect of contemporary government policy is rather more problematic. Certainly in some ways government policy was responsible for the unemployment affecting the town at these, and other, times. The policy of financial stringency, the Treasury view, had most effect in the town when it resulted in cuts in defence expenditure and so in the virtual ending of naval orders for much of the inter-war period. Opposition to the provision of finance for public works meant that little of this nature could be done effectively to assist those already unemployed in the burgh. Clearly the government's refusal for approaching two years to give financial assistance to the Cunard Company must have played a very large part in causing and prolonging the stoppage of work on the 534 "Queen Mary" with its consequent effect on unemployment. Thus government policy itself, which was attempting to put Britain back on its feet economically, aggravated the very problem which it was trying to avoid. Of course other factors played a part in causing unemployment in the burgh - above all cyclical and structural factors - which were outwith government control. However government policies certainly contributed to the unemployment which affected the town in the period 1919-1939.

Government action to deal with the unemployment problem had a variable effect in Clydebank. Most forms made virtually no impression on the situation of the burgh unemployed, whilst a few had a significant impact. The provision of unemployment relief under the National Insurance system had an obvious effect by making the situation of the unemployed person in the burgh rather more acceptable - though, the system having by then reached its full development, such a statement would be more accurate in relation to the depression of the early 1930s than that of the early 1920s. In addition, the local economy must have been assisted, as a result of the expenditure of this centrally funded finance by the unemployed, in its attempts to maintain its viability at times of particular depression. Nevertheless it was felt that the level of assistance granted was inadequate, and this would seem to be borne out by the dissatisfaction frequently expressed locally (see chapter 12 p.334-6), the large numbers of applications for additional relief discussed in chapter 5, and the results of Rowntree's work. Above all this policy did not provide work, though, as with the redirection of central finances to the local authority, it did help to maintain the quality of life in the burgh at times of particular hardship.

General attempts by the government to manipulate the economy of the country had little effect on the provision of work in Clydebank. As indicated above the policy of economy created unemployment, as did rationalisation. Wage and benefit cuts did little to protect employment and certainly caused much dissatisfaction. The return to the Gold Standard, cheap money and tariffs had little effect on reducing unemployment in the town, and in the case of the Gold Standard at least may even have contributed to worsening the situation.

It might have been hoped that government attempts to stimulate industrial development in depressed areas would have helped Clydebank, but there is little evidence of this. Not much was done through the Special Areas Legislation, and what was done came after recovery had begun in the mid 1930s. In any case those new industries which came to Clydebank show no evidence of having been attracted by government development policies. Again government policies specifically related to shipbuilding, such as "scrap and build", had little impact in Clydebank.

It is clear that government policy played only a limited part in dealing with unemployment in the 1920s in Clydebank. The government's policies may have helped to improve the general economic atmosphere, but did little specifically for Clydebank. The situation in the 1930s was rather different. The government's eventual decision to provide

finance which could be used to restart work on the 534 signalled the beginning of real recovery in the town and the rearmament policy of the later 1930s helped to allow this recovery to continue. Thus the impact on the town on semi-Keynsian spending policies was significant. These were not the only factors in the town's recovery, and they ignore the situation in the Singer factory which remained largely unaffected by government policy. However, through the jobs directly produced and the consequent reflation of the town's economy, government policy decisions were of considerable importance to the burgh in the 1930s. Yet it should be remembered that these policy decisions were not taken primarily to deal with unemployment in Clydebank or elsewhere. They were taken mainly for financial and security reasons.

Central government however was not the form of government most directly affected by the level of unemployment in the town. In so far as unemployment lay within its area of competence, this problem was faced most directly by Clydebank Town Council. The actions of the local authority in this situation are dealt with in the following chapter.

Footnotes

1. A full discussion of the development of the Unemployment Insurance scheme in the inter-war period can be found in B B Gilbert British Social Policy 1914-39 (London 1970), chapters 2, 4 and 6. See also S Glynn and J Oxborrow Interwar Britain: A Social and Economic History (London 1976), chapter 9.
2. 4 & 5 William IV, Ch.16
3. 8 & 9 Vict., Ch.83
4. 11 & 12 Geo.5, Ch.64
5. 1 & 2 Geo.5, Ch.55
6. Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress (1909), Cd 4499, p.537
7. Gilbert, op.cit.,p.67
8. The National Insurance (Unemployment) Act 1920, 9 & 10 Geo.5, Ch.77
9. The Unemployment Insurance Act 1934, 24 & 25 Geo.5, Ch.29
10. 10 & 11 Geo.5, Ch.30
11. 10 & 11 Geo.5, Ch.82
12. The Unemployment Act 1927, 17 & 18 Geo.5, Ch.30
13. A temporary removal of ministerial discretion over the payment of extended benefit had previously meant its payment as a right between August 1924 and August 1925.
14. 11 & 12 Geo.5, Ch.62
15. 24 & 25 Geo.5, Ch.29
16. Quoted in the Minutes of Evidence to the Unemployment Insurance Committee 1927 (Blanesburgh Committee), p.172
17. B Seebohm Rowntree The Human Needs of Labour (London 1937)
Poverty and Progress (London 1941)
18. Unemployment Insurance Act 1934, 24 & 25 Geo.5, Ch.29, Part II, paragraph 36.
19. CP, 11 September 1936
20. Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board 1935, Cmd 5177, p.271
21. 25 Geo.5, Ch.6
22. Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board 1938, Cmd 5752, p.162
23. D K Benjamin and L A Kochin "Searching for an Explanation of Unemployment in Inter-War Britain", Journal of Political Economy, vol.87 No.3, June 1979, p.468; and "What Went Right with Juvenile Unemployment Policy Between the Wars: A Comment", Economic History Review, 2 xxxii, November 1979, p.525
24. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance 1931, vol. iii, p.1011
25. Report of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance 1931, Cmd 4185, p.483

26. W R Garside "Juvenile Unemployment Between the Wars: A Rejoinder", Economic History Review, 2 xxxii, November 1979, pp.529-32
27. 21 & 22 Geo.5, Ch.36
28. Benjamin and Kochin, Journal of Political Economy, vol.87 No.3, p.461
29. N Whiteside "Welfare Insurance and Casual Labour: A Study of Administrative Intervention in Industrial Employment 1906-1926", Economic History Review, 2 xxxii, November 1979, pp.507-22
30. 5 Edw.7, Ch.18
31. CTCM, 27 April 1925
32. Ibid., 28 December 1925
33. Ibid., 2 June 1927
34. S Pollard The Development of the British Economy 1914-50 (London 1962), p.254
35. K J Hancock "The Reduction of Unemployment as a Problem of Public Policy 1920-29", Economic History Review, 2 xv, 1962 No.2, p.335
36. Quoted in D Winch Economics and Policy (London 1969), p.210
37. Report of the Committee on the Coordination of Administration and Executive Arrangements for the Grant of Assistance from Public Funds on Account of Sickness, Destitution and Unemployment (1924), Cmd 2011, p.19
38. CP, 19 January 1923
39. Ibid., 18 January 1924
40. Ibid., 5 June 1925
41. For a description of the inter-war development of national health services see B B Gilbert, op.cit., chapters 3 and 6
42. C Webster "Healthy or Hungry 30s?", History Workshop, Issue 13, Spring 1982, pp.110-29
43. These policies are described in more detail in general textbooks such as D H Aldcroft The Inter-War Economy: Britain 1919-1939 (London 1970) passim; or S Pollard The Development of the British Economy 1914-1950 (London 1962) passim.
44. CTCM, 8 August 1921
45. Ibid., 18 May 1921
46. A Slaven "A Shipyard in Depression : John Browns of Clydebank 1919-1938", Business History, Vol. xix No.2, July 1977, p.198
47. These were the Trade Facilities Act 1921, 11 & 12 Geo.5, Ch.65; the Trade Facilities and Loans Guarantee Act 1922 (Session 2), 13 Geo.5, Ch.4; the Trade Facilities Act 1924, 14 & 15 Geo.5, Ch.8; the Trade Facilities Act 1925, 15 & 16 Geo.5, Ch.13; the Trade Facilities Act 1926, 16 Geo.5, Ch.3
48. 25 Geo.5, Ch.7
49. Aldcroft, op.cit.,p.167
50. Ibid., p.168

51. Comparatively little has been written specifically on the armaments cycle but see R P Shay British Rearmament in the Thirties (Princeton 1977); Aldcroft, op.cit., passim; M Moss and J R Hume Beardmore : A History of a Scottish Industrial Grant (London 1979) passim; Slaven, op.cit., pp.192-217; T Balogh "Economic Policy and Rearmament in Britain", The Manchester School vii, (1936), pp.77-90; F Coghlan, "Armaments, Economic Policy and Appeasement Background to British Foreign Policy 1931-7", History vol.57, 1972, pp.205-216
52. Slaven, op.cit., p.198
53. A recent review of the history of the 534 and the Cunard/White Star merger can be found in F E Hyde, Cunard and the North Atlantic 1840-1973 (London 1975), chapter 7 pp.191-218.
54. CP, 30 May 1930
55. 21 Geo.5, Ch.2
56. PRO T160, Sir Warren Fisher to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 23 February 1932
57. Loc.cit.
58. CTCM, 14 December 1931
59. CP, 18 August 1933
60. PRO T190, Mr Runciman's Criticisms of the Proposed Cunard White Star Deal (no date - 1933?)
61. 25 & 26 Geo.5, Ch.1
62. A useful introduction to this legislation can be found in G McCrone Regional Policy in Britain (London 1969), pp.92-102. For a general discussion of a contemporary view of industrial development in the depressed areas see S R Dennison The Location of Industry and the Depressed Areas (Oxford 1939). See also R H Campbell "The Scottish Office and the Special Areas in the 1930s", The Historical Journal, 22, 1 (1979), pp.167-83
63. 1 Geo.6, Ch.31
64. McCrone, op.cit., p.99
65. Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland 1936, Cmd 5245, p.23
66. Glasgow Herald Trade Review 1938, p.33
67. CP, 22 February 1929
68. An introduction to the subject may be found in L Boyle Equalisation and the Future of Local Government Finance (Edinburgh 1966)

CHAPTER SEVEN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The level of government most directly in contact with unemployment in the burgh of Clydebank itself was the local authority, in the form of either Old Kilpatrick Parish Council or Clydebank Town Council. This chapter considers the actions of these bodies in their attempts to deal with the problem as it grew and diminished in scale in the inter-war period. It is divided into three main sections. The first examines the Poor Law and its administration locally; the second deals with other actions taken by the local authorities to ameliorate the problems of unemployment; and the third section looks at certain financial aspects of local government response. Some areas of local authority activity having a bearing on the unemployed, particularly housing and politics, are discussed in chapters 8 and 12.

1

7.1 The Poor Law and its Administration in Clydebank

The direct involvement of local authorities with the unemployed was at its greatest through the medium of the Poor Law, reorganised as Public Assistance in the 1930s. This was local provision from local rates for the poor, unemployed, sick, orphaned and old.

The Poor Law differed in Scotland from that in England. In Scotland the Act of 184²₅ made Parochial Boards, later Parish Councils, responsible for the maintenance of the destitute who, by reason of physical unfitness, were unable to provide for their own maintenance. These were the ordinary, or legal poor. Traditionally, and legally, the able bodied were excluded from support. Assistance to such individuals was not legally permissible until the passage of the Poor Law Emergency Provisions (Scotland) Act³, introduced in 1921 at a time of severe depression, and government concern about potential unrest. This Act allowed local authorities to give relief to able bodied persons providing they were unable to obtain employment and were destitute. Destitution did not necessarily mean that the applicant had to be devoid of all resources. The measure was introduced at a time when the extension of National Insurance brought more workers into the scheme and reduced the numbers of persons likely to apply to this lowest tier of the social services system in normal conditions.

A further extension of support for the able⁴ bodied came with the Poor Law Emergency Provisions (Scotland) Act 1927 by which destitute

dependents of able bodied persons who were unemployed owing to direct or indirect involvement in a trade dispute could be given relief. In 1929 the Local Government (Scotland) Act⁵ transferred the functions of parish councils with respect to provision for the poor and unemployed to county councils and town councils of burghs with a population of 20,000 or more. As a result the number of Poor Law authorities was reduced from 869 to 55, and in Clydebank the Old Kilpatrick Parish Council was replaced as Poor Law Authority by Clydebank Town Council through its Public Assistance Committee (PAC). This situation continued beyond 1939 though most of the responsibilities of the provision of relief to the able bodied unemployed were taken over by the Unemployment Assistance Board (UAB) in the later 1930s. Relief provided by the local authorities for the able bodied and ordinary poor was normally outdoor, though there was provision in Clydebank for the local poor to be accommodated if necessary in the Dumbarton Poorhouse.

For most of the inter-war period, at least until the establishment of the UAB, the able bodied unemployed could be catered for by the local authorities in two basic situations. Firstly, they could be outside the state unemployment insurance scheme for lack of sufficient contributions, or through exhaustion of benefit, or the breaking of statutory conditions or having been in uninsured employment. Secondly, since minimum income levels for the poor were established locally⁶, the level depending on family size and circumstance, those in receipt of unemployment benefit, whose income did not reach the levels laid down, could receive extra support from the local authorities to bring them up to the required standard. After the establishment of the UAB in 1935 the type of applicant dealt with by the local authority became predominantly the ordinary poor, though some able bodied poor still received help. This change in clientele is considered more fully in section 1 of Chapter 5, p.75.

Table 7.1 indicates the average numbers in the Clydebank area assisted in the 1920s by the Parish Council and in the 1930s by the PAC. The information, particularly for the 1920s is incomplete and averages have been calculated on the basis of available monthly figures. The area of the parish extended beyond Clydebank, but since approximately 83% of the parish population lived in Clydebank in 1931, it is reasonable to assume that the great majority of those supported by the parish council lived in the burgh.

Table 7.1/

Table 7.1 Monthly Average Numbers in Receipt of Relief 1923-1939

(1) From Old Kilpatrick Parish Council

Year	Heads of Families	ABLE-BODIED POOR			ORDINARY POOR			% of total parish pop. assisted
		Dependents	Total	% of total Parish Pop*.	Dependents	Total	% of total Parish Pop*.	
1923	2,258	5,211	7,469	13.4	997	1,745	3.1	16.5
1924	706	2,103	2,809	5.0	1,136	1,987	3.7	8.7
1925	885	2,571	3,456	6.2	1,054	1,912	3.4	9.6
1926	865	2,263	3,126	5.6	1,129	2,099	3.8	9.4
1927	293	856	1,149	2.1	924	1,785	3.2	5.3
1928	235	645	880	1.6	870	1,726	3.1	4.7
1929	207	364	571	1.0	898	1,819	3.3	4.3
1930	154	218	372	0.7	906	1,865	3.3	4.0

(2) From Clydebank Town Council PAC

Year	Heads of Families	% of total Burgh Pop*.			% of total Burgh Pop*.			% of total burgh pop. assisted
		Dependents	Total	Heads of Families	Dependents	Total	% of total Burgh Pop*.	
1930	144	134	278	693	828	1,521	3.2	3.8
1931	896	2,171	3,067	712	1,589	2,301	4.9	11.4
1932	1,629	5,177	6,806	832	1,016	1,848	3.9	18.4
1933	1,877	6,082	7,959	970	1,198	2,168	4.6	21.5
1934	1,131	3,502	4,633	1,055	1,333	2,388	5.1	15.0
1935	703	1,241	1,944	1,215	1,518	2,733	5.8	13.9
1936	457	512	969	1,275	1,555	2,830	6.0	8.1
1937	148	167	315	1,240	1,415	2,655	5.7	6.4
1938	40	31	71	1,295	1,240	2,535	5.4	5.6
1939	29	21	50	1,087	1,055	2,124	4.6	4.7

*Calculations based on parish and burgh population figures from the Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

Source: Calculated from Clydebank Press; Minutes of Old Kilpatrick Parish Council; Minutes of Clydebank Council 1923-

A number of comments can be made in relation to Table 7.1. Firstly, the numbers of able bodied poor relieved from local sources peaked in the early 1920s and early 1930s. This follows the unemployment trend indicated in Tables 4.4 and 4.8, pp47&52. In addition the comparatively small numbers assisted in the later 1920s give further support to the suggestion that employment opportunities in the area were comparatively good at that time. Though from 1934 the trend was clearly downwards, the establishment of the UAB in 1935 affects the figures, making an accurate comparison in the later 1930s difficult. Certainly the fall in the numbers of the able bodied requiring relief must have been less substantial than the numbers given in Table 7.1 would seem to indicate. This can be seen in the following table which shows that, though by 1938 Clydebank was considerably less badly affected by the sort of long term unemployment which was still a problem in other areas, a relatively large number of individuals were being relieved by the UAB who might otherwise have turned to the PAC for financial assistance.

TABLE 7.2 Numbers in Receipt of Assistance from UAB 1938

Area	Number in Receipt of Allowances Per 10,000 population	
Clydebank	870	182
Dumbarton	550	252
Greenock	3,210	396
Port Glasgow	870	443
Scotland	107,800	217

Source: Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board 1938,
Cmd. 5752, Appendix 5, p 184.

In 1938 on average 3,008 individuals in Clydebank were registered unemployed, 870 aided by the UAB and 1,335 by the PAC. The extent of the influence of UAB assistance on the provision of relief can be judged by the fact that of the average total of 5,213 assisted in the town in 1938, the UAB helped 16.7%. The PAC assisted 25.6%, the great majority of whom, 1,295 or 97%, were ordinary poor.

Secondly, it should be remembered that in the severe depression of the early 1930s the numbers assisted do not exactly reflect the numbers in need of assistance - many others in the town received help from unemployment benefit or the means tested transitional payments administered by the local PAC under the Unemployment Insurance (National Economy) Order No.² of 1931, but funded nationally.

Lastly, though most attention in this chapter will be given to the able bodied unemployed forming the bulk of those capable of work, the

increasing number of ordinary poor in the 1930s is worthy of comment. There are several possible explanations of this. A probable contributory factor to the numbers of sick poor was the stress caused to the ageing local population by the prolonged and severe unemployment of the first part of the 1930s. This suggestion gains some support from the figures in the sections on health of chapters 8 and 13 - general health standards in the burgh do not seem to have improved in the 1930s in contrast to other areas of Scotland. Another contributory factor was the increase in payments to the sick poor made from 1934 onwards at a time when falling price levels were increasing the value of such payments and so perhaps attracting more applicants. Though it is possible that attitudes to relief became more generous, they were not restricted to the sick poor since able bodied relief scales were also increased, as can be seen in section 7.2 below, though rather later. Nor is there evidence of substantial changes in the regulations and their administration.

7.2 Levels of Assistance

The great majority of the able bodied in receipt of Poor Law or PAC assistance were given it in the form of financial help. In the survey of the unemployed discussed in chapter 5, of 206 applicants for PAC relief in 1931-1932, 170 or 82.5% received money while in 1933-1934, 74.5% or 153 applicants were given financial assistance. Fuller details of the type of relief received can be found in Tables 5.17 and 5.18 p.100. In later years the type of assistance given was affected by the establishment of the UAB. Tables 7.3 and 7.4 give the available information on the levels of relief regarded as necessary in the Clydebank area, as set by the local authorities. It should be remembered that by no means all applicants received the full amount indicated. Those with alternative sources of income would receive only sufficient money to bring their income up to the level deemed necessary by the local authority. As shown in Table 5.19, p101 most applicants surveyed received 5/- per week or less, and comparatively few received the maximum amount.

(i) 1920s Relief Scales

A comparison with unemployment benefit levels (Table 7.3) shows that in Clydebank poor relief paid by Old Kilpatrick Parish Council was normally more generous than insurance benefit in the earlier part of the inter-war period, though later it more closely approximated to that level, particularly for childless couples. On occasion the rate of support for children was raised considerably above that from central government eg in 1921 and 1926 the rate payable for a dependent child was 3/- or

or 3/6d against an insurance benefit of 1/- to 2/- per week.

Table 7.3 Clydebank Able-Bodied Poor Relief Scales and Unemployment Insurance Benefit (UIB) 1921-1929

Date	Weekly Poor Relief					Weekly UIB	
	Man + Wife	+ 1 Child	+ 2 Children	Additional Children	Maximum Payment	Man + Wife	Dependent Child
Sept 1921	25/-	28/6	32/-	3/6	-	20/-	1/-
Oct 1921	22/6	26/-	29/6	3/6	40/-	20/-	1/-
June 1924	27/-	31/-	34/6	3/-	-	23/-	2/-
Aug 1925	22/6	26/-	29/6	3/6	40/-	23/-	2/-
June 1926	22/6	26/-	29/6	3/6	-	23/-	2/-
Aug 1926	23/-	25/-	27/-	2/-	-	23/-	2/-
Sept 1929	24/-	26/-	28/-	2/-	-	24/-	2/-

NB This table and Table 7.4, p162 give a simplified presentation of relief scales, eg payments were made at a higher level for children aged 14+ who lived at home; single people in lodgings were granted an allowance generally similar to that payable under the Unemployment Insurance Scheme. In addition payments were also made under special circumstances, such as the destitution relief paid to dependents during Singer lay offs in December 1930 and December 1932, and at the Jubilee of 1935 and the Coronation of 1937.

Source: Clydebank Press 1921-29; Old Kilpatrick Parish Council Minutes 1925-29; Glynn and Oxborrow Interwar Britain (London 1976) p 259.

Not only was the able-bodied relief scale at maximum in Clydebank as high or higher than that for unemployment benefit, but it would also seem to have been higher than that paid by parish councils in many other areas of Scotland. The Scottish Board of Health scale for able bodied relief set in 1921 was (a) man 12/6, wife 10/- (b) child under 16 3/6 (c) child over 16 7/6 (d) single man or woman in lodgings 15/- (e) maximum per household 40/- per week. The Old Kilpatrick scale at that time was in excess of this - in October 1920 the Clydebank Press quoted Mr Gunn of the parish council who "did not think there was a bigger scale in any parish in Scotland."⁸ The scale was however reduced to that recommended by the Board in October 1921 when a circular was issued to Parish Councils reminding members that they were liable to be surcharged for any money paid in respect of relief to able bodied unemployed persons in excess of the government scale.⁹

The parish council thus avoided surcharge, but were able to find ways round the government's guidelines as the following extract from a letter from the Board to the council early in 1924 shows.

"It is observed that the parish council in addition to paying the full amount of the September 1921 scale, also grant extras in the form of boots and clothing for children under school age, maternity bundles, and boots to men who are commencing work. It is understood that no deduction is made from the weekly aliment when such extras are granted¹⁰."

Six months later, in June 1924, the parish council increased the scales for the able bodied unemployed. This new scale was described by Mr Davidson of the parish council as "18% higher than any other scale in Scotland¹¹." In August 1925 the scale was reduced to that of September 1921, not as a result of a government threat of surcharge, but as a consequence of financial problems to be described in section 7.5 p.180. Remaining increases in the 1920s were largely tied to increases in unemployment benefit rates.

Not only were the maximum rates in Old Kilpatrick Parish as high and often higher than unemployment benefit or scales set in other areas. There is some evidence that the regulations were interpreted with relative generosity in Clydebank with the result that average payments per week were high. Despite the reductions of the mid 1920s evidence placed before the Blanesburgh Committee on Unemployment Insurance in 1927 indicated that the Old Kilpatrick Parish Council average rate per head per week of relief between September 1924 and June 1926 at 12/6 to 17/- was amongst the highest of 23 parishes for which figures were given¹². The representatives of the adjustment committees of the Parish Councils of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Govan explained the greater amount paid per head as a result of the large numbers of applicants falling outwith the provisions of unemployment insurance and therefore requiring total maintenance.

"In these parishes where the rate is high there has been a larger percentage of those wholly maintained by the parish councils If the persons in receipt of relief only got from the parish councils in supplement of the amount they got from the Labour Exchange the amount would be low per head, but on the other hand, if they are maintained wholly the amount per head or per case would be higher¹³."

However this seems unlikely in an area such as Clydebank where the majority of the workforce was employed in insurable employment. Extended benefit being paid to those who had exhausted their 26 weeks of standard unemployment benefit, total destitution among the long term unemployed seems unlikely to have been a major problem - though it must be admitted that for about half of the period referred to payment of such extended benefit was at ministerial discretion, thus probably reducing the numbers

in Clydebank to whom it was granted. Nevertheless there remains a probability that the Parish Council was administering the poor relief scheme relatively generously.

Figures for Parish Council ordinary poor relief indicate that it too was higher than in many other parts of Scotland. Despite reductions in March 1922 and March 1923, a 1926 survey of relief scales under the 1845 Poor Law Act¹⁴ in 18 parishes including Glasgow, Dumbarton, Old Kilpatrick, Falkirk and Kirkcaldy showed that Old Kilpatrick scales were the most generous. These were:-

Class I	(i)	single old person alone	20/-
Class I	(ii)	old couple alone	30/-
Class II	(i)	old, single with relatives	15/- to 16/-
Class II	(ii)	old couple with relatives - left to discretion of relief committee	

Class III Widow with children

1 child	2,	3,	4,	5,	6,
27/-	27/-	37/-	42/-	48/-	51/6
7,	8,	9,	10,	Maximum	
54/-	57/-	60/-	63/-	63/-	

Class IV Man, Wife and Children (temporary cases)

Man & Wife	1 child	2,	3,	4,	
27/6	30/-	35/-	42/6	47/6	
5,	6,	7,	8,	Maximum	
52/-	56/-	59/6	62/6	62/6	¹⁵

Despite further reductions in the relief scale for the ordinary poor, the Scottish Superintendent of the Poor still felt in 1927 that the scale was "generous"¹⁶.

The comparative generosity of the scales paid in Clydebank to both the able bodied and the ordinary poor gave rise to problems which were acknowledged by the parish council and the Board of Health. The council was well aware that such scales might attract the unemployed from elsewhere and consequently minuted in 1924 that -

"No person who had been resident in the parish less than three months should be entitled to benefit from the emergency scale of relief in force The council's aim is to prevent unemployed people coming to Old Kilpatrick parish from areas where low rates of relief are paid with the sole object of reaping the advantages of a higher relief scale"¹⁷.

By 1930 the residence qualification had been raised to six months.

The Board of Health were concerned too, though for a different reason -

it was worried about the effect on the low paid employed in the area. It wrote to the parish council in 1926 stating that

"It will be observed that the figures (of certain wages in the area eg platers helpers, stagers and labourers) are less than the maximum 40/- allowed under the (able bodied) relief scale. As a person in receipt of relief receives in addition, when required, medical attention and medicines for himself and his family and other forms of additional assistance, he may be placed in a more favourable position than one who is working and maintaining himself and his family the parish council in considering applications from able bodied unemployed persons should steadily bear in mind (i) that the amount of relief should be enough but not more than enough to provide necessary sustentation and (ii) the amount should not be such as would discourage men from accepting employment in their ordinary trades¹⁸."

Soon afterwards the Board wrote and

"insisted on the parish council reducing the scale of relief to the destitute able bodied unemployed to the unemployment benefit scale¹⁹."

This attitude is similar to the recent comments of Benjamin and Kochin on voluntary unemployment referred to in chapter 6 p.116 . As noted in that chapter in relation to national unemployment insurance, there is no strong evidence from the Clydebank area to suggest that this was a particular problem in connection with the Poor Law. In addition, evidence in chapters 5 and 13 indicates that many local inhabitants were reluctant to consider Poor Law Public Assistance relief, except when absolutely necessary, because there was a stigma attached to this type of support.

(ii) 1930s Relief Scales

As shown in Table 7.4, the same comment of high relief scales could be made when the assistance function was taken over by Clydebank Town Council PAC.

Table 7.4/

Table 7.4 Clydebank Able-Bodied Poor Relief Scales and Unemployment Insurance Benefit (UIB) 1930-1939

Date	Weekly Poor Relief				Maximum Payment	Weekly UIB	
	Man + Wife	+ 1 Child	+ 2 Children	Additional Children		Man + Wife	Dependent Child
June 1930	26/-	28/-	30/-	2/-	-	26/-	2/-
Dec 1930	26/-	30/-	33/-	2/-	-	26/-	2/-
Oct 1931	23/3	27/3	30/3	2/-	-	23/3	2/-
June 1934	26/-	28/-	30/-	2/-	-	25/-	2/-
Dec 1934	26/-	30/-	33/-	2/-	-	25/-	2/-
Jan 1936	26/-	30/-	33/-	3/-	-	25/-	2/-

Source:- Clydebank Press 1930-39; Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1930-39; Glynn and Oxborrow Interwar Britain (London 1976), p.259

Though at the beginning of the period relief scales and unemployment benefit levels were similar, by 1934 public assistance scales had again risen above those paid under the national unemployment insurance scheme. As also in the 1920s, relief scales in Clydebank seem generally to have been higher than those elsewhere. In June 1931 Councillor Smart claimed that the PAC scale in Clydebank "was greater than the allowance of any other PAC in Scotland²⁰." The scale paid in certain other burghs was detailed in the Clydebank Press in December 1930 - in Clydebank a man and wife received 26/- (the unemployment benefit level) whilst the rate in Motherwell and Wishaw was 20/-; in Rutherglen 23/-; Airdrie 23/-; Port Glasgow 23/-; Kilmarnock 22/6; Paisley 22/6; there was no maximum in Clydebank as in other towns²¹. In addition the burgh paid emergency relief to those temporarily unemployed by long "holidays" eg Singers workers in December 1930 and December 1932. There were also extra payments in honour of special occasions such as the Jubilee of 1935 and the Coronation in 1937.

In October 1931, following the national example, able bodied relief scales were reduced by 10% to the level of insurance benefit, with the addition of increases in childrens' allowances granted in the previous December. Those on ordinary relief had it reduced to the level of the burgh of Kirkcaldy plus 1/- eg Class II (i) from 16/- to 11/- and class IV man and wife from 26/6 to 21/- (the reason for the choice of Kirkcaldy is not revealed in the sources). This scale was increased slightly in January 1932 and in June and December 1934, benefits were restored to pre 1931 levels for those in receipt of able bodied relief. There were further increases in 1935 in parts of both scales. As with the restoration of the unemployment benefit cuts at about the same time, the fall in prices occurring between 1931 and 1934 meant that the value of the restored scales was increased.

These increases help to explain the findings of the staff of the Town Chamberlain of Hamilton, reported in March 1935, that Clydebank's expenditure on poor relief per head was the largest of eight West of Scotland towns at £6.4.0 in 1933-1934. Hamilton and Ayr came closest to this level at £5.6.0 and £5.1.0 respectively²². In 1936 a comparison was made between Clydebank scales of able bodied relief and those proposed by the UAB - in Clydebank a man and wife received 26/- whilst the UAB proposed 24/-; to a single man the burgh paid 20/- and the UAB suggested 16/-; a single woman received 20/- in the town while the UAB would have reduced this to 15/-²³. It would certainly seem true that the maximum scales payable in the Clydebank area in the 1930s were higher than those paid in many other areas, and were more generous than central bodies considered necessary.

Before considering factors producing this situation, it is necessary to make two points. The first stresses a point already made - only a very few individuals with no other resources actually received the maximum sum payable. Table 5.19 p101 has suggested that comparatively few applicants for town council relief actually received sums close to scale maxima. Secondly, even when the full sum was paid, assuming no other source of income, it did not come very close to the level regarded by Rowntree for "physical efficiency". If the average Clydebank family in the 1930s of man, wife and two children (as revealed in the 1931 Census and the town Medical Officer of Health's report of the same year) received at most 33/- relief in 1938, they still required additional income to bring them up to the level of £2 per week excluding rent regarded as necessary by Rowntree. If it is objected that the local situation in Clydebank was different from that found in York, the report of the Medical Officer of Health for 1931, referred to in chap.5 p 96, contains some relevant information. In it the estimate is made that food alone for the average Clydebank family would cost £1.3.4¹/₂ per week - "the rate of relief being paid to a family of this size is on average about 30/- varying between 27/3 and 33/-, leaving a margin of 4/- to 9/- weekly for rent, rates, fuel and clothing."²⁴

(iii) Factors Resulting in Higher Relief

Generally the applicant for poor relief in Clydebank was treated more generously than elsewhere. It is possible the war time boom and the relative prosperity and lower unemployment rate in that the area for much of the inter-war period created strong political pressures and expectations for higher scales. Yet, as will be seen in chapter 12, there is little evidence that the councils were pushed into granting such scales as a result of the activities of pressure groups such as

the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the 1930s. Council provision by no means went as far as such pressure groups wanted (eg increased relief rates, relief work, exemption from rates, free coal, part payment of rent etc), and always stayed within the bounds of the law.

It is possible that the cost of relief and the average paid per head was higher in Clydebank because more people were wholly dependent on local authority assistance. However the great majority of workers in the area had been in insurable employment. Schemes such as uncovenanted/extended benefit, which operated outwith ministerial discretion after 1927, meant that few people would be wholly dependent on Public Assistance. Confirmation of this comes from a survey made in February 1931 for the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance. This showed that only 81 (10.9%) of a total of 743 unemployed individuals in receipt of outdoor relief in the Clydebank area were uninsured²⁵.

A third possible contributory factor was the relative affluence of the area which, given the pressure of expectation and the level of wages and the cost of living, to be discussed below, produced the political decision to pay rather higher scales. Certainly tables 6.7 and 6.8, pages 143&5 show Clydebank with a higher rateable value per head of population so that any given rate poundage brought in a higher rate revenue per head than in Dumbarton. Clydebank's rate poundages were also higher than Dumbarton, giving the burgh the necessary funds to pay a higher rate of public assistance while still leaving enough for other (town council) projects. The fact that Clydebank burgh rate poundages, which were lower for most of the 1920s than those in Dumbarton jump to a higher figure than the nearby town from 1927-1928 when the burgh took over collection of the parish and education authority rates suggests that the Parish Council too felt able to be more generous. Finance will be discussed below in more detail in section 7.5, p.176 .

The most likely reasons for the higher than average relief scales are connected with the local cost of living and wage rates both of which must have influenced local expectations and so political decisions. Information is not available to allow the construction of a local cost of living index. In particular food, fuel etc costs are not available though, given the proximity of Glasgow, they are unlikely to have been significantly different from those in the city. However the information which is available on rent and rates suggests that at least in these aspects the cost of living was rather higher in Clydebank than in other areas.

Though admittedly a smallish item in the family budget, rate poundages in Clydebank, at least in the 1930s, were higher than some other areas as can be seen in Table 6.7, p.143. R Murray McGregor, organising secretary of the Glasgow Property Owners and Factors Association, complained in 1931 of these high rates which he ascribed, not to high levels of public assistance, but to the uneconomic houses built by the council.²⁶

More importantly, it would seem that local rents were higher than those paid in other parts of the country, in part a result of the relative newness of the burgh housing stock. The following conclusion was reached by Mr James Cunnison, lecturer in Social Economics at Glasgow University, in a report on conditions in Clydebank in 1925 made to the Constable Committee of Enquiry during the rents dispute of the 1920s.

"Rents in Clydebank are much higher than in Anderston for the corresponding size of house and slightly higher than in Port Glasgow. But Clydebank houses are superior to those of Anderston and comparable to the best in Port Glasgow, and it has none of the slums which are so common in the former and still exist in the centre of the latter. Rents in relation to incomes are slightly higher in Clydebank than in the other two places.²⁷"

That comment had been predated by the following exchange in Parliament in 1924. Local Labour MP David Kirkwood commented

"The landlords and factors took advantage of the good times in Clydebank to make it the highest rented town in Scotland".

His colleague Mr Adamson, Secretary for Scotland, replied

"The pre-war position in Clydebank was that there was more trade and higher wages than obtained in neighbouring towns. The result was that the landlords in Clydebank charged much higher rents than were charged in other industrial centres in Scotland with corresponding populations.²⁸"

There is no evidence that this situation altered radically in the 1930s. As will be seen in chapter 12, there were frequent demands at that time for council house rents, related to private rentals, to be reduced. It seems likely that the payment of higher than average relief scales was connected with the burgh cost of living which, in some respects at least, was higher than elsewhere.

It was suggested in the last quote above that Clydebank's wage levels were higher than elsewhere and this too might help to explain the higher rates of poor relief paid in the area. The income discrepancy

between employment and unemployment might have been too great to be borne unless the amounts of assistance available were relatively higher than elsewhere. Yet the evidence on wage levels is not conclusive, though it tends to support the view that wages were rather higher in Clydebank than elsewhere. The Board of Health letter of 1926 quoted above suggested that wage rates, at least for unskilled labour, were not particularly high and the parish council response to this letter agreed that local wages were generally too low. The town council Ejectments Committee set up during the rent dispute, concluded in 1925 that

"the arrears of rent problem for many tenants is nothing more or less than a poverty problem²⁹."

Finally a member of a deputation of the unemployed to the Parish Council in 1924 expressed the view that

"the average employed man of today was in such a state of destitution, even with his earnings, as to require subsidising by local authorities³⁰."

Admittedly some of this evidence comes from a period of depression when wage rates might be expected to be somewhat lower, relates at least in part to unskilled labour and in any case must be considered in relation to data from other areas and to the cost of living - yet it remains relevant.

On the other hand there is also evidence to suggest that average incomes in Clydebank were rather greater than elsewhere. In the 1925 survey by James Cunnison referred to above, he concluded that, though in all three areas surveyed (Clydebank, Anderston and Port Glasgow) family income was low, the Clydebank weekly average of £3.6.4 compared favourably with Anderston and was slightly better than Port Glasgow - though this total included income derived from public sources. Household income in Clydebank seems to have been higher because of the generally greater opportunities for employment available locally. Lord Constable remarked on this during his rent enquiry commenting that

"the disclosure that there were almost two wage earners per family was a remarkable result of this investigation. The committee had been told that in the great majority of cases there was only one wage earner in Clydebank houses³¹."

The following table shows wages paid before deduction to labourers employed in various Glasgow firms in 1931.

Table 7.5/

Table 7.5 Labourers' Wages - Glasgow Area 1931

Firm	No of hours worked per week	Rate per hour	Wage
Stewarts and Lloyds	47	9.96d	39/-
Barclay Curle & Co Ltd	47	10.47	41/-
Beardmore, Parkhead	47	10.47	41/-
Fairfield Shipbuilding Yard	47	10.56	41/4
NB Loco Works	47	10.8	42/4
Wm Dixon Ltd., Crown Street	48	8.75	35/-
Alley and McLellan Ltd	47	9.45	37/-
Blochairn Steel Works	47	10.6	41/7

Source:- Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on
Unemployment Insurance 1931 vol. 2, p 706.

Wage rates in John Browns for 1931 and other years are available, but these are average wage rates before deduction for all employees and would therefore be rather higher than for labourers (Table 7.5).

Figures for labourers alone are not available.

Brown's figures are as follows -

Table 7.6 John Browns - Average Weekly Wage 1919-1939

1919	74/1d	1930	52/10d
1920	81/11	1931	53/4
1921	73/8	1932	60/7
1922	54/1	1933	54/9
1923	48/4	1934	55/2
1924	52/10	1935	53/4
1925	56/8	1936	57/7
1926	51/8	1937	60/2
1927	54/3	1938	63/7
1928	57/-	1939	68/9
1929	55/3		

Source:- UCS 1/523-7, John Brown Paybill Books Average Wages.

Wages remained relatively static between 1922 and 1936, rising in the boom years before and after those dates, and in 1932 when the few employees still being paid were mainly foremen. In 1931 the wages paid in John Browns do appear to be higher than in the firms mentioned in Table 7.4 even when some reduction is made to bring levels to those for labourers.

Some evidence is also available from the Singer Company, though not from 1931. It comes from evidence given by the company to the

Constable Enquiry in 1925 in which it was stated that

"Figures submitted on behalf of the Singer Company showed that in 1914 the average weekly wage of semi-skilled and unskilled (male) workers on time work was £1.10.5, in 1920 £4.6.3 and in 1925 £3.4.3

It was stated by the firm's representative that it had always been their habit to pay more than the standard trade union rates.³²"

Further information on wage rates for unskilled workers comes from the town council minutes. In 1924, after the immediate post-war boom had evaporated, the council increased wages and was then paying street sweepers £2.16.0, lavatory attendants £2.0.0 and general labourers £3.0.0³³, presumably before deductions. Whilst none of this evidence is conclusive it would seem to indicate that wage levels were rather higher than those paid elsewhere, and this must have increased expectations of the level of poor relief paid by the local councils. Given such expectations and an awareness that in some ways at least the local cost of living was greater than elsewhere, it is not surprising that within the bounds laid down, the local councils tried to make the provision of assistance to the poor and unemployed as generous as possible.

Some conclusions can be drawn as to the relative value of payments made by comparison between local wages and relief scales. Single people or those with small families who had only parish council or PAC relief to rely on would find their situation more difficult than that of the average worker - and in the survey referred to in chapter 5, of 506 applicants for town council relief in the 1930s, families of five persons or less made up 78.1% of applications. But except perhaps in those periods when relief was restricted to a maximum of 40/- per week, ie 1921-1924 and 1925-1926, those with large families could be as well off as some workers in local industries.

7.3 Clydebank Town Council, Poor Relief and Central Government

The town council was unhappy about various aspects of its involvement in the provision of relief to the unemployed, and on several occasions complained to the government. In 1932 it made protests against the Means Test on three occasions because of the burden caused to the council by its implementation. It established a sub-committee to obtain support to pressure the government, put on anti Means Test motion before the Convention of Royal Burghs and passed a resolution that

"it was unanimously agreed that the Town Council petition the government to repeal the provisions of the Order in Council regarding Transitional Payments on account of the great privation and hardship which the imposition of a means test was causing among the working classes³⁴."

The means test provoked council action, even if unsuccessful, only in 1932 when its recent imposition was causing most disquiet to the burgh citizens. The major problem about which it complained, the financial burden of relief, existed as a difficulty and as a complaint both before and after 1932. In 1931 the local PAC had made it clear to the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance that it regarded the financial support of the unemployed as a function of national government, and this opinion was being expressed by a committee of the Moderate controlled council. It stated

"All employers and employed persons, irrespective of their occupations, wages or salaries, contribute to a national fund on the basis of the present contribution to the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and that any deficit requiring to be met at the end of the financial year between the amount paid to the recipients of benefit and the amount of contributions received be made by the state³⁵...."

In 1932 the town council wrote to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and the local MP

"urging that the maintenance of able bodied unemployed persons be made a charge on the National Exchequer³⁶,"

and again in 1933 protested, as did other councils, that the government had not accepted full responsibility for the able bodied unemployed in the Unemployment Bill. For, particularly at times of high unemployment, such as the early 1930s, the financial burden was severe and had, of course, to be borne in part at least by local ratepayers in an, at times, severely depressed area. As Parish Councillor Bell stated in 1921

"... the ratepayers had to pay and it was the poor who had to pay for the poor³⁷".

The same sentiment was expressed in 1933 when it was stated that

"a very large proportion of the ratepayers of the town had steadily borne burdens those last two or three years which they were really unable to bear³⁸."

A consideration of some aspects of the finance of poor relief will be given in section 7.5 p.176.

The establishment of the UAB as a result of the Unemployment Act of 1934³⁹ removed the financial support of the majority of the able bodied unemployed from the discretion of town councils. However as mentioned above, the council had complained in 1933 that the government had not accepted full responsibility for these individuals in the Unemployment Bill. The council had to make a financial contribution to the UAB, though no longer dealing with its clients. This was initially to be three fifths of the sum of the savings in expenditure on relief caused to the council by the establishment of the UAB.

The council's link after 1934 with those who had formerly applied to it but were now dealt with by the national organisation was not restricted to finance or medical assistance. It involved itself in the protests which developed on publication of the UAB relief scales. In February 1935 the council agreed to send a protest to the government asking for the permanent withdrawal of the UAB regulations. In September 1936 it convened a public meeting to protest against the UAB relief rates.

The meeting passed a resolution that

"The regulations will have the effect of reducing the standard of living of the unemployed and will tend to break up family life. The government are therefore urged to withdraw the regulations, abolish the family means test and make provision for the proper maintenance of all able bodied unemployed persons."⁴⁰

Clearly the council's commitment to assisting the burgh able bodied unemployed did not end when the direct link with most of them was severed.

7.4 Other Local Authority Action

Local authority assistance was not restricted to the unemployed and their families, nor did it simply take the form of financial help.

An Old Kilpatrick Parish Council minute of 1924 noted that

"in nearly every case the low paid wage earners' families are being provided for from local or educational funds"⁴¹

in the form of supplies of clothing or food - as indicated earlier such welfare support was also available to the unemployed. From March 1920 Clydebank Town Council provided food and milk to expectant mothers and children up to two years old under a Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme.

The qualifications for assistance were as follows:-

A family of two with a net income per head^{per week} of 12/- (total income 24/-).

A family of four with net income per head per week of 9/- (total income 36/-).

A family of five and over with a net income per head per week of 8/6⁴² (total income 42/6).

The following table gives the monthly average number of families helped by this scheme each year.

Table 7.7 Monthly Average No. of Families Aided by Clydebank Child Welfare Scheme 1922-1939

Year	No	Year	No
1922	432	1931	462
1923	379	1932	711
1924	153	1933	699
1925	260	1934	386
1926	366	1935	252
1927	125	1936	238
1928	58	1937	182
1929	70	1938	106
1930	169	1939	44

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1922-1939

A comparison of the table above with Tables 4.4 and 4.8, pages 47 & 53 showing unemployment levels indicates that the numbers assisted closely followed the pattern of unemployment in the area, at its greatest in the early 1920s and 1930s and declining after both dates. Such a pattern can also be seen in the table below which shows the monthly average numbers of mothers and children seen by the doctor at the town council free milk centre. This scheme operated from November 1930, but which time it was clear that the unemployment problem was again growing in size

Table 7.8 Monthly Average Number of Mothers and Children Seen by Doctor at Free Milk Centre 1930-1939

Year	No	Year	No
1930 (December only)	614	1935	300
1931	645	1936	198
1932	607	1937	130
1933	519	1938	78
1934	442	1939 (to September)	56

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1930-1939

However the town council's help to the unemployed was not simply restricted to financial or welfare measures. It made something of an effort to attract employment to the town to break the monopoly of heavy engineering. This need had been recognised for some time - as the Clydebank Press stated in early 1927 after a year in which

unemployment had again risen

"whether the burgh will ever again enjoy a spell of trade which will reduce the workless figure to a negligible quantity is doubtful, but undoubtedly a step in this direction could be taken if some additional industry or industries could be secured. Clydebank cannot live on shipbuilding and sewing machine building alone."⁴³

The council made some efforts to follow this advice. In 1927 an approach had been made to Henry Ford suggesting Clydebank as a possible site for the establishment of his new factory.⁴⁴ In September 1928 the town council agreed to set up a New Industries Committee

"to consider ways and means of attracting new industries to our town."⁴⁵ At the first meeting of this committee in December it arranged for plans to be drawn up showing areas in the burgh suitable for industrial development. It also had posters prepared for display in railway stations, presumably at least in the local area, emphasising ease of access to the town. In June 1931 it was minuted that the committee had met to discuss a proposal by a company to acquire a portion of Beardmore's yard to erect petrol oil tanks. A representative of the owners of the yard, the Secretary of the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd, was to be interviewed concerning the proposal. A further minute of August 1932 reveals the committee preparing to make representations to the Admiralty that Clydebank be given a share of the naval building programme - a proposal which was something of a negation of the Committee's title, though in the depths of depression its action is understandable. A last meeting occurred in December 1934 when the committee asked to see the prospective Special Areas Commissioner for Scotland, Sir Arthur Rose, to discuss the economic and social improvement of the town. These are the only meetings for which information is available in the town council minutes. There is no other mention of the Committee in the minutes (or the Clydebank Press), no information was published on any budget or back up it may have enjoyed and, by the later 1930s, the committee had disappeared from the list of committees published annually in the council minutes. The committee seems to have existed more for show than for action - the lifting of depression and the efforts of private firms would seem to have been more effective in bringing employment to the town.

Indeed criticism of lack of action and success was made by contemporaries, though council representatives stoutly defended the committee. At a 4th Ward Committee meeting in 1930 Mr Bryce questioned Police Judge Bell about the New Industries Committee and the fact that nothing had been heard of it for a year, saying

"I take it this committee was just a bit of window dressing?"

Police Judge Bell replied

"I cannot agree with Mr Bryce on that. I believe it was an honest attempt to do something about the vexed question of unemployment.⁴⁶"

In the following year in a Burns Night speech, Bailie McKendrick, the proposer of the motion which had resulted in the establishment of the committee, was driven to state that

"They had made Clydebank ... known the world over. They had offered facilities in every possible manner to get new industries to the town, told of the advantages of the town with transport services second to none.⁴⁷"

In view of the reported actions of the committee, or rather lack of them, this comment seems rather over-enthusiastic.

Perhaps more importantly, the local authority also instituted public works schemes with government financial assistance, eg from the Unemployment Grants Committee (UGC), usually of 50%-60% of total cost. The following table gives the available information on proposed schemes specifically stated to be for the reduction of unemployment in the Clydebank area - other public works schemes in the town eg housing developments may well have given employment to some of the burgh unemployed, but were not necessarily specifically directed towards that end.

Table 7.9 Proposed Public Works Schemes to Relieve Unemployment in Clydebank 1921-1936

Date	Scheme	Cost	Grant Source	No Employed
Feb 1921	Improve Bandstand	-	UGC	20-50
Feb 1922	-	£45,779	UGC	185
Feb 1923	Widen Dumbarton Road	-	-	-
Aug 1923	Road Improvements	£140,228	UGC+ Ministry of Transport	400
Sept 1923	Yacht Pond	£3,950	-	-
Nov 1923	Widen Dumbarton Road	£6,749	Ministry of Transport	-
Jun 1924	Roadmaking	-	-	-
Nov 1929	Road Improvements	£1,092	Ministry of Transport	-
Aug 1931	Road Widening + Sewerage	-	UGC	-
Feb 1936	Various Town Council Depts	-	-	30?

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Minutes and Clydebank Press 1921-1936

A number of points can be made about these schemes. In the first place it can be seen that on the few occasions when numbers are available, only a small workforce was employed. The words of Councillor Shand in 1921 would seem to be applicable throughout the period -

"It had got to be remembered that there were 4,501 men idle in the town and only 40 men at present employed on the burgh's special schemes. The total number of men that possibly could be employed if every projected scheme of the council were set in operation was also only about 100⁴⁸."

In other words, at times when such schemes were particularly necessary, such as the early 1920s, they could assist only a small proportion of the burgh employed. Not that such employment was necessarily particularly sought after - it was unskilled labour in a town where many of the unemployed could be skilled; at least until 1924 relief was at only 75% of trade union rates and complaint was made, in 1923, that men on relief schemes with large families had their income reduced when they were no longer in receipt of unemployment benefit⁴⁹.

Secondly, there is no indication that such schemes were other than immediate responses to the unemployment problem as it developed after World War I. The town had no recent experience of large scale unemployment at the end of the war, and so had little to build a policy on. In any case at both a national and a local level, unemployment was regarded in the immediate post war years as a temporary misfortune to be endured until the dislocations caused by the war rectified themselves. Thus such temporary relief schemes were concentrated in the early years of the 1920s when unemployment was a severe problem.

Thirdly, the town council had to find part of the finance for these schemes and therefore spend money which conventional wisdom suggested was better used in other ways. This certainly was the government's point of view and led to a change in attitude towards a public works programme as the 1920s progressed.

By the second half of the 1920s there was virtually no public works programme in the town. In part this was a result of improvements in employment opportunities as the decade passed - by 1927 the Unemployment Grants Committee was refusing to give a grant towards the development of a golf course in the town because

"the extent of unemployment in the burgh is not so exceptional as to bring the scheme within the revised conditions for a grant⁵⁰."

The reference to revised conditions also helps to explain why public works to relieve unemployment were largely restricted to the early 1920s. By the second half of that decade it had become clear that unemployment was no transient phenomenon and with the growth in strength of the "Treasury View", a change in national policy took place which made it more difficult for local authorities to obtain grants even if they wished to carry out public works. As noted in chapter 6 this was clearly shown in Clydebank in 1925. In April of that year a circular letter had been received from the UGC

"intimating that the government proposed to continue and encourage the execution of works of public utility during winter 1925-1926 for the assistance of the relief of unemployment and suggesting that the local authority should consider further works to be put in hand during the winter⁵¹."

By December much more stringent requirements for grant aid had been set out. The UGC would give grants in future

"only (i) if the work is of public utility to relieve unemployment
(ii) would not otherwise be undertaken for at least five years
(iii) the unemployment sought to be relieved must be exceptional⁵²."

Central government funds for the relief of unemployment by local public works became more difficult to obtain as the 1920s progressed and had virtually disappeared by the early 1930s when unemployment again became very severe. Except for the layout of a recreation ground with Special Areas financial assistance in 1936 when recovery was occurring there is virtually no evidence of a public works programme in the town to relieve unemployment, though in January and August 1933 and March 1934 there were demands from the National Unemployment Workers Movement that such a programme should be instituted. In the 1930s the town council concentrated mainly on financial and welfare assistance.

A number of minor ways in which the local authorities tried to assist the unemployed and their dependents remain to be described briefly. A policy existed that within the council and, as far as possible, in local firms any available work should be given to local inhabitants. In August 1925 the town council agreed

"that the employment of stairlighters be filled from the Labour Exchange rota and be confined to residents within the burgh⁵³."

In 1929 the council

"had met with representatives of Messrs John Brown & Co Ltd and Messrs Wm Beardmore & Co Ltd, with reference to the employment of local labour and had received an assurance from

these firms and from the Singer Manufacturing Co Ltd that their policy had always been to give preference to local ⁵⁴men."

It would seem unlikely that such a policy could have substantially affected the situation of the unemployed. In addition in 1923 the town council organised a Christmas treat for the children of the unemployed, to be paid for by public subscription. Also, on a number of occasions, it gave its support to charity functions aimed at assisting the unemployed. However it is clear that such actions could have only a peripheral effect on the unemployed and their dependents.

7.5 Finance

A major problem exists in any discussion of financial aspects of poor relief in the Clydebank area, at least in the 1920s. This is the absence of any parish council abstracts of accounts for that period. Also, parish council minutes only exist in Strathclyde Regional Archives in a fragmentary state - the majority but not all of the minutes exist from December 1925 to May 1930. An alternative source of information, the Clydebank Press, treats details of Parish Council finance, when it considers them at all, in a cursory fashion. Accordingly available information on the situation in the 1920s is considerably less detailed than that for the 1930s.

A second point of introduction to a discussion of aspects of finance relates to the figures to be found in Tables 6.6 - 6.9 and the comments based upon them. Briefly, the tables indicated that throughout the inter-war period, except for the early 1930s, Clydebank received a comparatively low level per head of direct government financial assistance, though greater than in the period before World War I. This suggested that the area was relatively affluent. Such a conclusion was supported by a comparison between Clydebank and Dumbarton which showed that Clydebank had a higher rateable value per head and raised more per head in rate revenue than the neighbouring town. This was true even in the period to 1928 when Clydebank Burgh rate poundages were lower than those of Dumbarton. After that date, when the town council began to collect parish and education rates, Clydebank rate poundages rose above those of Dumbarton indicating the greater generosity of the Old Kilpatrick Parish Council than that in Dumbarton. It would seem that Clydebank Burgh was able to raise and spend more money than its neighbour. Some confirmation of this can be found in Table 7.10 which shows the product of a 1d rate in both towns.

Table 7.10 Clydebank and Dumbarton - Product of 1d Rate 1919-1940

Year	Clydebank			Dumbarton		
	Gross RV	Product of 1d Rate	*Product of 1d Rate per Head of population	Gross RV	Product of 1d Rate	*Product of 1d Rate per Head of population
1919-20	£285,415	£1,189	6.1d	£107,511	£448	4.7d
1920-21	287,820	1,199	6.2	112,466	469	4.9
1921-22	365,397	1,523	7.9	114,051	475	5.0
1922-23	371,756	1,549	8.0	143,098	596	6.2
1923-24	375,654	1,565	8.1	146,028	608	6.4
1924-25	383,412	1,598	8.2	146,671	611	6.4
1925-26	388,356	1,618	8.4	147,912	616	6.4
1926-27	396,956	1,654	8.5	147,297	614	6.4
1927-28	403,181	1,680	8.7	149,776	624	6.5
1928-29	407,121	1,696	8.8	152,614	636	6.7
1929-30	412,061	1,717	8.9	153,838	641	6.7
1930-31	420,144	1,751	9.0	157,572	657	6.9
1931-32	418,698	1,745	8.9	157,729	657	7.3
1932-33	425,151	1,772	9.1	154,504	644	7.2
1933-34	421,825	1,758	9.0	153,811	641	7.1
1934-35	419,355	1,747	8.9	157,092	655	7.3
1935-36	418,561	1,744	8.9	154,268	643	7.2
1936-37	419,181	1,747	8.9	156,671	653	7.3
1937-38	416,499	1,735	8.9	160,502	669	7.4
1938-39	413,187	1,722	8.8	169,900	710	7.9
1939-40	441,223	1,838	9.4	186,574	777	8.7

*Calculated on the basis of population figures in the Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921 and 1931.

Source:- Calculated from Abstracts of Accounts of Clydebank and Dumbarton Town Councils 1919-1940.

On this rather crude approximation, the Clydebank area was more able to raise and spend revenue than its neighbour. This, along with the pressures of expectation based on wartime experience of prosperity and the rather higher incomes and possibly cost of living in the town, explains the above average level of council assistance to the unemployed in the area in the inter-war years.

(i) The 1920s

The relative affluence of the Clydebank area was no guarantee against the development of financial problems, as the parish council discovered, though these may in part be attributable to the council's inexperience in the suddenly developing situation of large scale unemployment in the early 1920s. Table 7.11 below gives available information on the parish council rate poundages imposed in Clydebank burgh.

Table 7.11 Old Kilpatrick Parish Council Rate Poundages,
Clydebank Burgh - Total and Poor Rate 1919 - 1927

Year	Total Rate Poundage	Poor Law	Supplementary Poor Rate	% of Total on Poor Law
1919-20	6/1½d	1/4½d	-	22.8
1920-21	7/4½	2/3½	-	31.1
1921-22	8/3½ (8/5½)	2/11½ (3/1½)	2d	35.6 (36.9)
1922-23	6/4	3/2½	-	46.4
1923-24	9/6	5/1	-	53.5
1924-25	7/7½ (9/7½)	3/1 (5/1)	2/-	40.5 (52.9)
1925-26	9/10	5/1	-	51.7
1926-27	12/10	7/7	-	59.1

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Press and Old Kilpatrick Parish Council Minutes 1919-1927

The table suggests that an increasingly large proportion of parish council finance was being spent on the relief of the poor, though this was only one, if the most important, of its functions. On two occasions, 1921-1922 and 1924-1925, it was necessary to change supplementary rates to make up for underestimates of the amount required for poor relief. In 1921 the Board of Health advised the Royal Bank not to extend the Parish Council's overdraft by £40,000, which the council wished to use for the relief of destitution. Instead, in the year in which the relief of the able bodied unemployed became legal, the parish council had to impose a supplementary rate of 2d in the pound. This money was needed because it had borrowed £8,000 more than it was allowed under Section 89 of the Poor Law Act of 1845⁵⁵. There is no evidence of particular problems in collecting this additional rate.

This was not the case when in 1924 falling unemployment, cash in hand because of overbudgeting, and the expectation of a loan from the government's Goschen Committee combined to allow rate poundage levels to be sharply reduced. However, with an again increasing level of unemployment in 1925 and the refusal of loan by the Board of Health because the poor rate as set was too low, a supplementary rate of 2/- in the pound had to be imposed to obtain the hoped for loan. Partly because of the expectation of lower rates and partly because of the then current rent dispute this extra^{rate} proved difficult to collect, though only raising levels to those of the previous year. It was imposed in May 1925 but by the end of July only £4,000 of an expected £31,000 had been raised, and this figure reached only £8,034 by the end of November. In that month the supplementary rate was declared legal in the Sheriff Court and summary warrants issued for non-payment. However some major

firms in the area still refused to pay and it was not until the matter had gone to appeal in March 1926 that the firm of Sir Robert McAlpine could be forced into payment.

Table 7.11 shows that an increasing proportion of parish council rates was taken up by poor relief. This was due partly to alterations in the scales paid, partly to the cost of increasing unemployment and partly to the financial burden of loans which the parish council had to obtain from the government and its Goschen Committee. The following table indicates the loans obtained and the repayments made.

Table 7.12 Loans, Repayments and Debts of Old Kilpatrick
Parish Council to the Exchequer, 1923-1931

Year	Loan	Repayment	Debt
1923-24	£123,500	-	£123,500
1924-25	-	£12,350	111,150
1925-26	21,000	12,350	119,800
1926-27	-	14,450	105,350
1927-28	-	14,450	90,900
1928-29	-	14,450	76,450
1929-30	-	14,450	62,000
1930-31	-	2,100	59,900

Source:- Civil Service Appropriation Accounts 1923-1931

These debts were amongst the largest listed and were incurred at times of sometimes considerable unemployment. In 1923-1924 only three other authorities of 22 listed (Govan Parish Council, Poplar and West Ham Boards of Guardians) obtained larger loans, and although other authorities in West Scotland received money in the same year, none received more than £47,000. This situation remained throughout the period covered by the table and beyond, as part of the debt was taken over by Clydebank Town Council when local government was reorganised. In 1937 the burgh was still repaying £3,242.12.5 per annum to the Exchequer and was requesting that it be relieved of liability.

Some comments can be made about these debts. It was easier to obtain large extra sums quickly by loans than by increasing rates substantially to maintain existing relief levels as there was a point beyond which, as shown in 1924-25, unexpectedly large rate increases would face opposition. Nevertheless capital and interest repayments had to be found eventually through increases in local rates, which in any case were likely to be insisted upon by the government, concerned that the parish council was becoming too heavily indebted. The eventual rise in

rates can be seen in Table 7.11 p. 178. A second point worth making is that acceptance of loans from an outside body gave that body a strong influence over parish council relief policy. This was well illustrated in 1925 when the Goschen Committee indicated its willingness to give a loan to the parish council only under certain conditions including the reduction of the able bodied relief scale to that established by the Board of Health in 1921. The Parish Council had to agree.

Not only was the parish council forced to raise rates and obtain loans, but they had on several occasions to obtain permission from the Board of Health to increase their overdraft with local banks beyond the ordinary legal limit. At its greatest the overdraft was £123,948.4.1 in October 1923, whilst it was frequently over £50,000 in 1923 and 1926-1927, though in 1929 and 1930 there were several months in which there was a credit balance of £15,000.

(ii) The 1930s

In the 1930s the poor relief function was assumed by Clydebank Town Council as a result of local government reorganisation in 1929. This take-over, in addition to its pre-existing activities and commitments, resulted, as seen in Table 6.7 p.143, in substantial increases in rate poundages compared with those levied by the burgh in the 1920s.

A considerable amount of the increased revenue raised by growing rate poundages and rateable values was used for the support of the unemployed as Table 7.13 shows. As a proportion of total expenditure, poor relief in Clydebank was higher than that in Dumbarton. It was also considerably higher than the average figures for Scotland and especially England and Wales. This can also be seen as a per capita basis in Table 7.14 below.

Table 7.13/

Table 7.13 Poor Relief as a Percentage of Total Expenditure
Locally and Nationally 1930-1939

(a)	Clydebank			Dumbarton		
	Total Burgh Expenditure	P.R. Expenditure	P.R. as % of Total	Total Burgh Expenditure	P.R. Expenditure	P.R. as % of Total
Year						
1930-31	£476,017	£ 52,773	11.1	£211,473	£16,111	7.6
1931-32	584,308	68,143	11.7	176,682	21,952	12.4
1932-33	461,506	89,766	19.5	186,688	28,491	15.3
1933-34	446,387	101,213	22.7	193,781	32,298	16.7
1934-35	472,760	106,781	22.6	187,996	35,506	18.9
1935-36	474,333	106,999	22.6	205,087	37,728	18.4
1936-37	501,507	102,175	20.4	245,173	32,404	13.2
1937-38	496,526	83,491	16.8	254,066	22,766	9.0
1938-39	547,432	78,868	14.4	278,779	22,605	8.1

(b)	Scotland			England and Wales		
	*Total Local Auth. Expenditure	P.R. Expenditure	P.R. as % of Total	*Total Local Auth. Expenditure	P.R. Expenditure	P.R. as % of Total
Year						
1930-31	£57.3m	£3.9m	6.8	£432.7m	£32.0m	7.4
1931-32	58.0	4.3	7.4	435.0	30.4	7.0
1932-33	56.5	5.1	9.0	430.3	32.7	7.6
1933-34	57.7	5.9	10.2	433.2	33.9	7.8
1934-35	60.0	6.9	11.5	454.8	36.2	8.0
1935-36	62.6	7.4	11.8	470.9	37.8	8.0
1936-37	64.8	7.1	11.0	484.6	37.2	7.7
1937-38	66.3	5.7	8.6	506.6	34.3	6.8
1938-39	69.0	5.4	7.8	532.8	35.3	6.6

*Total expenditure - rate expenditure alone not available.

Includes spending from trading undertakings on trams, gas, electricity in larger cities, which reduces somewhat the percentage on poor relief

Source:- (a) Calculated from Abstract of Accounts of Clydebank and Dumbarton 1930-1940

(b) Calculated from Mitchell and Deane Abstract of British Historical Statistics (London 1962) pp 418 and 424.

Table 7.14/

Table 7.14 *Per Capita Poor Relief Expenditure 1930-1939

Year	Clydebank	Dumbarton	Scotland	England and Wales
1930-31	22/4d	15/-d	16/2d	16/-d
1931-32	29/-	20/4	18/-	15/2
1932-33	38/2	26/4	21/2	16/4
1933-34	43/2	30/-	24/6	17/-
1934-35	45/4	33/-	28/8	18/2
1935-36	45/6	35/-	30/8	19/-
1936-37	43/6	30/-	29/6	18/6
1937-38	35/6	21/2	23/8	17/2
1938-39	33/6	21/-	22/6	17/6

*Calculated on the basis of population figures in the Report on the Census of Scotland 1931 and the Report on the Census of England and Wales 1931

Source:- As table 7.13

The trends in Tables 7.13 and 7.14 show that local authority expenditure on poor relief was increasing generally, at least until the UAB came into full operation in 1937. This was more noticeable in Scotland than in England and Wales - and this must in part at least reflect the rather worse unemployment situation north of the border. Certainly the very high unemployment levels faced in Clydebank explain why its expenditure on poor relief was highest of all in the first years of the decade. Yet expenditure continued at a comparatively high level even although unemployment began to fall substantially from 1934. This must be a consequence of the increase in relief scales granted at that time of still considerable unemployment in addition to the burden of debt inherited by the town council from the parish. At the same time the numbers of ordinary poor were increasing, which was bound to add to the cost of relief. In addition, as shown in section 7.2 p.157, levels of assistance in Clydebank were normally more generous than elsewhere.

It is also noticeable that expenditure in Clydebank and elsewhere reached its highest level in the mid 1930s, at a time when the unemployment crisis had passed its peak. In part this may reflect the fact that in the burgh at least a significant delay often occurred between loss of employment and application for assistance, as shown in Table 5.10 p.91. More importantly in Clydebank relief scales were increased in 1934 to pre 1931 levels at a time when numbers of ordinary poor were growing and, though falling, the numbers in receipt of able bodied relief were still fairly high.

Whatever the reason, for a large part of the 1930s Clydebank was expending

a considerable proportion of its resources on the poor, yet Table 6.6 p.141 has shown that the burgh received less in direct government grants for most of the inter-war period than other areas. In 1913-1914 the Local Taxation Returns show Clydebank had received only £1,851 in grants from the Scottish Office and other government departments. Though this had increased by 1919 and rose thereafter, the burgh was still in receipt of rather lower per capita grants than elsewhere, except perhaps in the early 1930s. Thus a considerable proportion of the higher spending on poor relief in the area had to come from local sources. However though direct government grants may have been somewhat lower in Clydebank it must not be forgotten that indirect government assistance was received which reduced the local burden of poor relief and allowed more to be spent than would otherwise have been the case.

The derating scheme of 1929 meant that a large proportion of the rates of local industry, whether productive or not, which might have been lost during the depression of the 1930s were paid by central government. This ensured the continuation of a level of income capable of supporting substantial poor relief payments without the necessity of further increasing the rate burden on local inhabitants. In the later 1930s the existence of the centrally funded UAB must also have helped to relieve the financial position of the burgh by reducing the numbers requiring support - though this must be qualified by the fact indicated in Table 7.1 p. 155, that though the numbers of able bodied poor were falling, increasing numbers of ordinary poor had to be supported from local resources.

Clydebank was able to afford greater expenditure on poor relief than many other areas. This was in part a result of direct and indirect government assistance but in large measure was a consequence of the relatively high rate income which could be produced in a normally comparatively prosperous area with relatively low unemployment. In addition the local political decision was taken to use that income in such a fashion even when high unemployment levels meant the cost to the local community was substantial.

7.6 Conclusion

Without doubt the major method by which local authorities in Clydebank responded to the economic changes which affected the town was through comparatively generous financial assistance to the unemployed. Other responses, even public works, were of a minor nature in comparison to this reaction to the situation as it developed. Such assistance was given at high financial cost at times of worst unemployment in the early

1920s and early 1930s - but the cost of such help extended beyond the period of high unemployment because of the necessity of paying off debts contracted when the problem was most acute. It would be true to say that the people of the burgh were aware of this cost and some at least were unhappy about it - as an example the comments of "Harder Hit" in correspondence with the Clydebank Press in 1926 indicate this.

"The beneficiaries of our parish council's generosity are ... much better off than the honest long suffering ratepayer as a whole. Some I know are in receipt of over £2 per week, plus boots and clothing for themselves and family, towards the provision of this struggling ratepayers in receipt of less in wages are compelled to contribute through the medium of taxation. Why be a fool and ⁵⁷work?"

There is however little evidence of a sustained campaign of opposition to the levels of relief provided (other than by some of those in receipt of such relief who considered it too low). There were grumbling letters to the Clydebank Press from time to time, opposition to the supplementary rate of 1925 and requests from local Moderate politicians for economy at times of high unemployment. But there is no evidence, for example, of an overt campaign by local industry against the rates levied for this purpose by claiming that businessmen would be driven from the area and unemployment increased. It is possible however that a potential local campaign against levels of rate poundages for industry was subsumed in a national campaign leading to the introduction of the industrial derating policy in the later 1920s - yet, again, no evidence of this has been found. Nor was the criticism made that diversion of resources to relief meant less available for other aspects of local authority activity. Indeed there is little evidence to suggest that this was the case, though clearly if less had been spent on relief even more could have been spent on other activities - if the local community and its political leadership had judged that to be necessary. At times of very heavy unemployment in the early 1920s and the early 1930s such large sections of the community required local authority assistance that criticism of the proportion of expenditure on this function was unlikely. When unemployment was much less of a problem the local authorities in this relatively affluent area, while still paying for relief granted earlier, established a substantial housebuilding programme, made environmental improvements, developed leisure facilities and continued welfare provision at a generous level.

In sum, there would seem to be evidence that local authority and the

community it served in Clydebank had some reason to feel moderate satisfaction with council responses to the problem of unemployment, relative to the needs and resources of the area and the actions of other local authorities. Old Kilpatrick Parish Council and Clydebank Town Council made significant efforts to assist the unemployed, though more could perhaps have been done if they had been willing to step outwith the bounds of legality or political reality, and this they proved unwilling to do. Where criticism of the response of the local authorities could be made, it is more likely to relate to efforts to prevent the contraction of existing employment or the attraction of new jobs to the town. But such a response was more difficult to achieve at a local level than the provision of financial aid to those already unemployed, and was most immediately necessary only for restricted periods in the inter-war years. The attitude of contemporaries in receipt of assistance towards such actions by the council is one of the matters considered in chapter 12 p.313.

Footnotes

1. A useful but brief introduction to the Scottish Poor Law and its development can be found in the Memorandum of Evidence by the Corporation of the City of Glasgow to the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance (1931), in Minutes of Evidence to the Royal Commission, vol.2, pp. 705-06. See also A A Cormack Poor Relief in Scotland (Aberdeen 1923) and A MacKay Practice of the Scots Poor Law (Edinburgh 1907).
2. 8 & 9 Vict., Ch.83
3. 11 & 12 Geo.5, Ch.64
4. 17 Geo.5, Ch.3
5. 19 & 20 Geo.5, Ch.25
6. Local authorities were able under the Poor Law system to establish what, in local conditions, was a necessary minimum income level for the poor, sick, unemployed, etc. If an individual's or family's income did not reach this level, the local authority could make the amount up to the required level.
7. This was one of the economy measures introduced during the crisis of 1931, by which transitional benefit (paid on the expiry of 26 weeks of standard unemployment insurance benefit) was replaced by transitional payments. Such payments were to be administered by the Public Assistance Committees of the local authorities, though funded nationally, and involved a family means test. This system was reminiscent of the Poor Law and was very unpopular.
8. CP, 1 October 1920
9. Ibid., 21 October 1921
10. Ibid., 25 January 1924
11. Ibid., 27 February 1925
12. Minutes of Evidence to the Unemployment Insurance Committee 1927 (the Blanesburgh Committee), vol.2 p.109
13. Ibid., p.114
14. 8 & 9 Vict., Ch.83
15. Old Kilpatrick Parish Council Minutes, 5 May 1926. The available minutes are held in Strathclyde Regional Archives, accession numbers 3/1/31 - 3/1/35.
16. Ibid., 13 December 1927
17. CP, 8 August 1924
18. Old Kilpatrick Parish Council Minutes, 23 March 1926
19. Ibid., 29 July 1926
20. CP, 12 June 1931
21. Ibid., 12 December 1930
22. Ibid., 8 March 1935
23. Ibid., 11 September 1936

24. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1931, p.12
25. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance 1931, Appendix vol.1, part ii, Table VII, p.95
26. CP, 25 December 1931
27. Ibid., 27 March 1925
28. Ibid., 25 April 1924
29. Ibid., 9 January 1925
30. Ibid., 28 March 1924
31. Ibid., 27 March 1925
32. Glasgow Herald, 4 March 1925
33. CTCM, 16 June 1924
34. Ibid., 21 January, 7 July, 27 December 1932
35. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance 1931, vol.2 p.609
36. CTCM, 4 November 1932
37. CP, 16 September 1921
38. Ibid., 20 October 1933
39. 24 & 25 Geo.5, Ch.29
40. CP, 11 September 1936
41. Ibid., 22 February 1924
42. CTCM, 30 March 1920; 2 May 1922
43. CP, Review of 1926, 7 January 1927
44. Ibid., 14 September 1928
45. CTCM, 13 August; 10 September 1928
46. CP, 17 October 1930
47. Ibid., 13 February 1931
48. Ibid., 16 September 1921
49. CTCM, 24 December 1923; 3 March 1924
50. Ibid., 2 June 1927
51. Ibid., 27 April 1925
52. Ibid., 28 December 1925
53. Ibid., 10 August 1925
54. Ibid., 10 June 1929
55. 8 & 9 Vict., Ch.83
56. The Goschen Committee, chaired by Sir Harry Goschen KBE, had been established in November 1921 to consider government loans to Poor Law authorities. Though it had lapsed, it was re-established in 1925
"to consider and report on any schemes which may be submitted to them for special assistance from the Exchequer to local authorities in necessitous urban and quasi-urban areas."
(letter from Scottish Office in Old Kilpatrick Parish Council Minutes, 23 March 1926)
57. CP, 1 January 1926

PART IV

THE COMMUNITY IN DEPRESSION

The community in inter-war Clydebank was more than simply the sum of the individuals who formed it. A community is by its nature capable of greater vitality in its responses to the stimuli which affect it than an individual would be. In addition official bodies existing within the community such as the town council, could formulate reactions of a wider scale to situations facing the burgh and its inhabitants than could any single individual - for example council action to deal with housing problems is discussed in chapter 8.

The main concern of this section will be firstly, to consider the impact of the town's economic problems in the 1920s and 1930s on the community in its widest sense, and secondly to survey the responses of the community to these problems. The community was not a static entity at this time. Its individual members changed with the passage of time as did the strength of the forces which impinged upon it and grew within it. As a result its reactions varied as time passed. However the developments which took place in the burgh in the inter-war period were not solely the consequence of the town's economic situation. The effects of government actions, developing national trends, changes in the town which occurred independently of economic dislocation must be detailed yet separated, where possible, from those developments which can be attributed to the results of depression.

The standard view of communities in those areas particularly affected by inter-war depression is given by C L Mowat quoting J B Priestley.

"Of Stockton-on-Tees Priestley wrote 'the real town is finished. It is like a theatre which is kept open merely for the sale of drinks in the bars and chocolates in the corridors.' So it was in West Cumberland. So it was in Scotland: in Glasgow perhaps half of the population was unemployed The appearance of the derelict towns varied little. Everywhere you saw shops closed and boarded up, houses with peeling paint and broken slates. Only the pawn shops and the cinemas flourished, only the Labour Exchange drew its shabby crowd¹."

The purpose of this section is to consider the accuracy of such a view in relation to Clydebank in the years 1919-1939. To effect such a consideration the section deals with various aspects of community life in the burgh such as housing, commerce, politics, migration and crime. Evidence already presented in this thesis has shown the standard view of the level of unemployment suffered in Clydebank in the inter-war years to be inaccurate to a considerable extent. It may well be that Priestley's

view of the impact of depression on particular communities was equally inaccurate, at least in the case of Clydebank. This section will consider a more optimistic view of the town and its experience between the wars to judge which picture of the burgh of Clydebank was more realistic.

FOOTNOTE

1. C L Mowat Britain between the Wars 1918-1940 (London 1955)
pp.481-482.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOUSING

The main purpose of this chapter is to investigate the type and extent of the difficulties faced by the citizens of Clydebank in the inter-war years in the areas of housing and to some extent health. Consideration will be given to the actions taken to deal with such difficulties, in particular by the town council within the framework of national legislation. An attempt will also be made to indicate the impact of these problems and of any action taken to deal with them on unemployment and the unemployed in the burgh. For the sake of clarity the chapter has been divided into a number of sections dealing with particular aspects of the topic. Yet it should be remembered that in many ways the issues considered were interrelated - unemployment could make it necessary to move to cheaper, lower quality accommodation, which well might have an adverse effect on health and this in turn could make regaining employment more difficult.

8.1 The Housing¹ Problem

Finding a suitable job and a suitable home at a cost which could be afforded were linked problems for many people in Britain in the inter-war years. Housing was a major difficulty to be tackled after 1918. In England and Wales overcrowding, exacerbated by pent up wartime demand and raised expectations caused by wartime political promises, was the main housing problem. In Scotland this was equalled, and possibly surpassed, by the prevalence of slum conditions ie housing in a physical condition which was unsatisfactory by contemporary standards. The Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban found in 1917

".... gross overcrowding and huddling of the sexes together in the congested industrial villages and towns, occupation of one room houses by large families, groups of lightless and unventilated houses in the older burghs, clotted masses of slums in the great cities²"

In Clydebank the housing problem was mainly confined to overcrowding, unlike the general Scottish urban situation. Slum conditions were not a major issue and, in his report for 1935, the burgh Medical Officer of Health was able to comment that

"The comparative newness of the town renders it difficult to secure areas which might be suitable for slum clearance³."

The major problem of overcrowding, largely a consequence of the influx of labour into the town during its boom period in the early 20th century, was already significant by 1919 when the Sanitary Inspector's report stated that

".... no words or figures are needed to describe the housing shortage as it now exists. People who have been all their days in the burgh are compelled to seek elsewhere for lodgings. Young folks getting married are compelled to live in rooms or with their parents⁴."

This concern reached something of a crescendo in his 1922 report, when the 1921 census figures had become available -

"no figures in the Registrar's tables were needed to emphasise the housing problem. It was known to everyone although possibly it was not realised by everyone that the actual position was so urgent⁵."

Figures from the census reports clearly demonstrated that Clydebank had a disproportionate share of houses of the smallest size, a greater than average proportion of the population living in such houses, and a larger number of persons per room. Table 8.1 compares the proportion of houses of particular sizes and the population living in them in Clydebank, Glasgow, Greenock and Scotland.

Table 8.1/

Table 8.1 Distribution of Population and Houses by Size of House 1911-1931

1911	1 Room		2 Rooms		3		4		5		6		7+	
	% Houses	% Pop.	% Houses	% Pop.	% Houses	% Pop.	% Houses	% Pop.	% Houses	% Pop.	% Houses	% Pop.	% Houses	% Pop.
Clydebank	18.9	12.8	60.2	62.3	13.9	17.1	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2
Glasgow	20.0	13.8	46.3	48.7	18.9	21.2	6.6	7.2	2.8	2.9	1.6	1.8	3.8	4.4
Greenock	14.1	10.0	47.7	48.9	21.6	23.5	6.5	6.9	3.4	3.7	1.4	1.4	5.3	5.6
Scotland	12.8	8.7	40.4	40.9	20.6	21.9	9.3	9.9	5.4	5.6	3.6	3.8	8.2	9.2
1921														
Clydebank	14.8	10.7	59.7	60.2	18.0	19.7	3.4	3.5	2.6	2.6	0.7	0.7	Not Given	
Glasgow	18.1	12.8	48.4	49.8	19.4	20.0	6.1	6.1	3.0	2.9	1.7	1.6		
Greenock	13.7	10.3	47.8	48.0	22.0	21.1	7.1	6.8	3.4	3.0	1.5	1.4		
Scotland	11.8	8.1	40.1	39.3	21.0	21.2	10.1	10.1	5.6	5.5	3.7	3.8		
1931														
Clydebank	12.8	9.9	54.0	53.9	23.2	25.2	6.1	7.1	2.0	2.0	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.8
Glasgow	14.5	11.0	43.6	44.4	24.0	25.4	9.0	9.6	4.2	4.1	1.6	1.7	3.1	3.8
Greenock	10.2	8.1	44.8	45.7	27.6	29.0	7.9	8.0	3.6	3.3	1.7	1.6	4.2	4.3
Scotland	9.5	7.1	36.9	36.9	24.8	26.1	11.9	12.0	6.2	6.2	3.7	3.7	7.0	8.0

Source:- Reports on the Census of Scotland 1911, 1921, 1931

This table shows that, though improvements had taken place both nationally and in Clydebank, in all three census years the town had a considerably larger proportion of one and two apartment houses than was the case elsewhere. In 1911 Clydebank had the second highest percentage of two roomed houses (60.2) of burghs with over 2,000 inhabitants, and was in the same position in 1931. Similarly the table shows that a larger proportion of the burgh population than elsewhere was forced to live in overcrowded conditions in the small houses.

Though the initial overcrowding was a result of the towns spectacular growth in the early 20th century, the problem was aggravated during the economic recession which affected the burgh during the inter-war years. One consequence of unemployment or uncertainty about job security must have been a greater concentration into smaller houses or at least an inability or reluctance to move to larger houses should they be available. This suggestion may gain some support from the fact that, although the proportion of one and two roomed houses in the burgh fell by 12.3% between 1911 and 1931, the proportion of the population living in such houses fell rather less, by 11.3%. Further corroboration may also be found in the report of the Sanitary Inspector for 1932, the year of worst unemployment in the town, where it was stated that

"The poverty of the occupants of the overcrowded houses is the greatest obstacle in the way of effecting an improvement in their conditions."

More statistical evidence of the extent of overcrowding in the burgh can be given when the number of persons per room is considered. This information is shown in table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2 Houses - Persons per Room in Counties and Burghs 1861-1931

	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Clydebank	-	-	-	2.54	2.49	2.32	2.13	1.83
Greenock	1.82	1.91	1.91	1.82	1.80	1.80	1.82	1.61
Glasgow	2.04	2.10	1.94	1.89	1.87	1.85	1.76	1.54
Scotland	1.79	1.67	1.59	1.52	1.48	1.45	1.42	1.27

Source:- Census of Scotland 1931, vol.2, Table 62, p.173.

Again the evidence shows that, although the problem was becoming less acute with the passage of time, overcrowding in Clydebank was more significant than in other areas.

Despite an improvement in the inter-war years resulting from a major building campaign, this Clydebank problem remained. In 1931 the census report noted that, of all the large burghs in Scotland, Clydebank had the sixth highest percentage of the population living more than two to a room and the seventh

highest percentage living three to a room. By 1935, when a survey was carried out under the Housing Act of that year⁷, 40.8% of the town's families (50.0% of the population) were found to be living in overcrowded accommodation by the standard of the Act. Clydebank was the second most overcrowded large burgh, surpassed only by Coatbridge.

The rapid economic growth of the burgh in the pre-war period had attracted labour into the town. This had helped to produce the overcrowding and poor living conditions which became a legacy to the 1920s. Such problems were aggravated by the unemployment of the inter-war years. As the unemployed comprised, at times, a very substantial proportion of those living on low incomes, they would experience the same difficulty as the low wage earner in affording accommodation of a currently acceptable standard, and of a size suited to that of the family, if such was available. In addition, unsatisfactory housing contributed to health problems - as the Clydebank Sanitary Inspector noted in 1919

".... From the health point of view overcrowding and the discomfort involved constitute a serious danger⁸."

The dangers to health of slum conditions, though less in Clydebank than elsewhere, must also have affected health standards. Thus the problems of overcrowded housing, health and unemployment were connected.

There was also a connection between rent and unemployment. An attempt was made by inter-war governments to solve the problem of shortage and poor quality housing by encouraging private enterprise and local authorities to provide more and better homes. This legislation will be surveyed briefly in the following section. In Scotland private enterprise proved reluctant to provide houses, particularly for rental by lower income groups. This was at least in part a result of the government's own Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act 1915⁹. This measure froze the rents of dwellings with a rateable value of £35 in London and less elsewhere to allay fears over rising rent levels caused by wartime inflation. Its maintenance after 1918, necessary though this may have been in a situation of housing shortage, made it unlikely that the private sector would find it financially worthwhile to expand the supply of homes, particularly at the lower end of the market.

Post-war attempts to increase such controlled rentals to take account of inflation were strongly resisted by those affected, and this was evident in Clydebank. Powerful opposition to increased rents came in the town in the first half of the 1920s with the Scottish Labour Housing Association's Rent Strike of 1923-1925¹⁰, following an attempt to raise

private rentals. It is noticeable that this agitation occurred at a time of relatively high unemployment when increased rents would have had a greater effect on the population. The intensity of opposition faded with the passage of time and the reduction of unemployment, reviving again in the depression of the early 1930s.

The situation was made worse by the fact that private rents in Clydebank were said to be higher than those in other areas. The survey made by Mr James Cunnison, lecturer in Social Economics at Glasgow University, for the Constable Committee of Enquiry during the Rent Strike, and referred to in chapter 7, p.165, indicates this. The Cunnison report ascribed slightly higher rents in Clydebank to the fact that Clydebank housing was of a higher standard because of its relative newness. As also indicated in chapter 7, p.165, in the previous year the Labour Secretary for Scotland had put forward a different explanation for higher rents. He suggested that landlords had taken advantage of the higher incomes prevalent in the town during its pre-war boom years to raise general levels of rent above those of neighbouring towns. This latter view suggests a self adjusting reaction to unemployment ie that rents would fall as house demand weakened. However, evidence to be considered later indicates that there were no major alterations in rent levels in the burgh during the period 1919-1939 nor, since average income levels seem to have been roughly static for much of the inter-war period, did rent as a proportion of income vary greatly. Thus it is more likely that the probably higher rent levels of private sector accommodation in Clydebank than elsewhere were a result of the rather better quality of burgh housing.

Rents of houses provided by the local authority during the inter-war period also proved to be a problem. By law such rents had to be related to private rent levels in the area¹¹. Indeed since the housing was built to more modern standards than pre-war private sector houses in the town, this accommodation tended to be of better quality. The result of this was that council house rents were higher than private rentals in the burgh. The effect of such a situation was to bar low income families, of whom the unemployed formed a substantial proportion, from occupying council housing. As Marian Bowley has commented in relation to the national situation

"The market for local authority houses was largely confined to
.... the better off families, the small clerks, the artisans,
the better off semi-skilled workers with small families and
fairly safe jobs¹²."

That this was the case in Clydebank will be shown later.

Though town council housing tended to be restricted to the better off sectors of the working classes and the lower middle classes, it was not unaffected by rent problems. In the early 1930s in Clydebank unemployment was so widespread that even those in hitherto fairly safe jobs were under threat. This was precisely the time when there was a renewal of strong demands for rent reductions, on this occasion also in the local authority sector. At election times, though not when governing, the Labour Party proposed lower rents as did other, more radical parties. Pressure groups were set up, such as the 1932 Clydebank Council of Action and the 1933 Tenants Defence Association, demanding pre-war private rents and a 25% reduction in municipal rents. This type of semi-political action will be considered in more detail in chapter 12, p.337-9.

Such activity in the 1920s and 1930s, activity which diminished in the burgh at times of relative prosperity, concentrated on rents rather than on poor housing conditions. This suggests that slum housing must indeed have been less of a problem in Clydebank than elsewhere in Scotland and, by the timing of the agitation, that there was a close link between unemployment and the rent problem in the town. It is clear that Clydebank shared with much of the rest of the nation housing problems which particularly affected the unemployed: overcrowding, rent levels and the provision of suitable accommodation for low income families. It was fortunate that in respect of slum housing at least it suffered less than did other areas in the country.

8.2 National Legislation¹³

Before considering the actions taken in Clydebank to deal with the problems indicated in the previous section, it is necessary to outline briefly the national legislative framework within which such action was taken. It is not proposed to discuss in any detail all of the many inter-war housing Acts. Instead the table below outlines the major Acts of any significance in the Clydebank context.

Table 8.3/

Table 8.3 Inter-War Housing Legislation

Year	Title	Main Provision	Other Comment
1919	Housing, Town Planning etc (Scotland) Act (the Addison Act) 9 & 10 Geo.5, Ch.60	Expansion of local Authority housing for working classes	Rents to be approved by Board of Health Local authority contribution 4/5d rate - Treasury liable for remaining annual deficit
1923	Housing (etc) Act (the Chamberlain Act) 13 & 14 Geo.5, Ch.24	Subsidy for private housing development	Exchequer Subsidy £6 per house for 20 years
1924	Housing (Financial Provisions) Act (the Wheatley Act) 14 & 15 Geo.5, Ch.35	Expansion of local authority housing	Subsidy £9 per house for 40 years Rents not to exceed "appropriate normal rent" of pre World War 1 working class housing in the area
1930	Housing (Scotland) Act (the Greenwood Act) 20 & 21 Geo.5, Ch.40	Slum clearance	Subsidy £2.10.0 per person rehoused for 40 years
1933	Housing (Financial Provisions) (Scotland) Act 23 & 24 Geo.5, Ch.16	Subsidies under 1923 and 1924 Acts ended	
1935	Housing (Scotland) Act 25 & 26 Geo.5, Ch.41	Reduction of overcrowding by expansion of local authority housing Minimum standard for measuring overcrowding laid down	Rents to be based on market value. Local authority given power to grant rent rebates Subsidy £6.15.0 per house for 40 years

Source:- Compiled from R D Cramond Housing Policy in Scotland 1919-1964 (Edinburgh 1966) pp 8-24, 63-67, 95-102.

Several points can be made about this table. Firstly, the legislation for Scotland was virtually identical to that for England and Wales, and since the provision of additional dwelling units was more urgent in England and Wales, the Acts emphasised this aspect of the effort to deal with the national housing problem. Such a legislative emphasis suited the difficulties facing Clydebanks where overcrowding was a considerably greater problem than slum conditions. In Scotland generally however, with its slow inter-war population increase and large scale emigration, it was perhaps more necessary to improve the existing housing stock through slum clearance and replacement, rather than by new additions.

Secondly, the most successful of these Acts in terms of the number of dwelling units constructed was the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1924. Subsidy provision was withdrawn in the early 1930s at a period of emphasis on the need for economy during the depression, but before this the provisions of the Act helped local authorities to build approximately 75,000¹⁴ of the 121,000 homes built in Scotland between 1919 and 1934. It was under this Act that 1278 of the total over 2,000 houses provided by the local authority in Clydebank in the inter-war years were built.

Thirdly, the Greenwood Act of 1930 was very significant in a Scottish context, accounting for the construction of over 15,000 slum clearance houses in the years 1933-1934 alone.¹⁵ However in Clydebank only 72 slum clearance houses were built, as the general standard of housing in the burgh was not sufficiently low to fall within the terms of the Act.

In the fourth place legislation was unable to provide housing for rental at levels suitable to the poorer sections of the working classes. Indeed the Scottish Department of Health Report of 1934 recognised that in practice housing provided went to the "better off class of worker." It was hoped that the lower paid worker would be able to "filter up" into housing vacated by the skilled worker who had moved into a council house. However in the case of Clydebank at least, with an acute housing shortage and, particularly at times of depression, many unable to afford even a small increase in rent, this was difficult to achieve on a wide scale. A move towards the solution of this problem came in the 1935 Act which gave local authorities the power to grant rent rebates where necessary. This was done in Clydebank, and an increased proportion of low income families occupied council properties in the later 1930s (see p.230).

Next, though financial assistance from central government in the form of Exchequer subsidies was important to local authorities, a considerable amount of money had to be raised by the authorities themselves. In Clydebank large amounts of money to pay for the local authority building programme had to be found by the issue of council housing bonds, etc.

Lastly, legislative emphasis was on the provision of housing by the local authorities - houses built and maintained by private enterprise had proved unsatisfactory in the past as shown by the report of the Royal Commission in 1917. However, grants were made available under the Housing (Additional Powers) Act 1919¹⁶ and the Housing (Etc.) Act

1923 for the private building of housing. It was hoped that much of this building would be for rent to the working classes, but high building costs and low earnings among prospective householders in addition to rent restriction on pre-war houses made the return on rented accommodation an unsatisfactory investment. In any case, after 1933 subsidies were no longer paid to private enterprise as the government concentrated on the provision of homes for the working classes by local authorities. So private enterprise produced only about one third of the houses built in Scotland between 1919 and 1939, most without a subsidy and only a small number for letting.¹⁷

This then was the legislative background against which action was taken in Clydebank to deal with the housing problem.

8.3 Clydebank: The Building Programme

As indicated above, concern by local authorities in Clydebank over the housing problem became particularly intense in the early post-war period because of the severe overcrowding to be found in the town. There were several reasons for this intensification of concern. In the first place the town's population had expanded rapidly in the decade to 1921, from 39,548 in the 1911 census to 46,506 in the 1921 census, as a result of natural increase and migration during the prosperous war years. Yet in the same period only 1,050 houses had been added to the housing stock, far fewer than was required merely to keep pace with the population increase, let alone to allow for the reduction of overcrowding or the removal of sub-standard accommodation. Moreover standards were rising in response to greater affluence in the community and to the enhanced expectations created by the war-time government, for its own political reasons, that improved housing would become available once the war ended. The war too, no doubt, contributed to the shortfall, as resources which might have been used to produce more and better homes were diverted to activities deemed necessary to hasten military victory. The situation which developed at the end of the war also contributed both nationally and in Clydebank to the development of the housing problem. The dislocation caused by the return of peace to the provision of skilled building labour and materials made matters worse. In addition, as indicated, private sector finance for investment in low cost rented accommodation was scarce in view of the continuation of the war time Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act (1915). At a time of substantial inflation such control over rents gave little incentive to speculative construction of working class housing.

Yet the Clydebank housing problem still existed and a large scale response to it came from the local authority. Until the inter-war period local authority involvement in housing provision in Clydebank had been minimal - of 7,318 houses noted in the 1911 census, the town council owned 28 built in Whitecrook in 1906. In 1919 however, following the Addison Act, an ambitious scheme was proposed by the town council, anxious to take advantage of this opportunity to reduce the local problem of scarcity of housing. The Clydebank Press noted a letter to the Local Government Board in which it was stated that

"the council contemplated erecting 204 houses on the 17 acres at Kilbowie Hill and 300 houses on the 25 acres at Whitecrook," and later

"they had undertaken to build 1,500 houses¹⁸."

However, as the Press remarked in its review of 1919 in January 1920

"The Ministry of Health cut the town council's plans to pieces¹⁹." The likely reason for this was the cost, estimated at £750,000, the burden of which would have been carried by the Treasury whilst the town council's liability would have been limited to the product of a rate of $\frac{4}{5}$ d. Instead, the council was given permission for 273 houses at East Kilbowie and Whitecrook, of 3-5²⁰ apartments.

Town council building schemes were brought to a halt by adverse national economic circumstances with the government's change of policy in 1921 which ended building under the 1919 Act on account of the cost of the programme. The change was abrupt. In February 1921 the Board of Health was encouraging changes in future plans when it indicated

"the Board are not prepared to approve of the type plans for the 8.17 acres at Whitecrook and suggest that plans be adopted along the lines at present in use for the Kilbowie Road East Site²¹."

By June Bailie McKenzie had to draw attention to

"the persistent requests from the Board of Health that the (Streets and Buildings) Committee should reconsider the extent of its housing schemes²²."

By August the situation had been clarified.

"A circular dated 15th curt. from the Board of Health has been submitted stating that the government had decided to limit for the time being the number of houses to be constructed under the scheme of state subsidy and that no further tenders would be approved by the Board meantime and no further commitments except with the sanction of the Board should be incurred in completing the acquisition of land, etc.²³"

Despite the pleading of a deputation that the burgh should be regarded as a special case, the decision was not reversed.

The suspension of the building programme in 1921 proved to be only temporary, and with the development of new government schemes to assist the growth of the housing stock nationally with the 1923 and 1924 Acts, the town council building programme was resumed. Table 8.4 gives information on the numbers and sizes of houses built under particular Acts during the inter-war period. Map 8.1 shows areas in the town where such building was carried out.

Table 8.4 Growth of Clydebank Town Council Housing Stock 1920-1939

<u>Area*</u>	<u>Year</u>	Act under which <u>constructed</u>	<u>2 apt.</u>	<u>3 apt.</u>	<u>4 apt.</u>	<u>5 apt.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
E. Kilbowie	1920	1919	-	42	94	18	154
Whitecrook	1920	1919	-	40	69	10	119
"Kane Brickwood"+	1926	1924	-	60	-	-	60
W. Kilbowie	1927	1924	34	82	54	-	170
"Dennis Wilde"+	1927	1924	-	60	-	-	60
"Atholl"+	1927	1924	-	100	-	-	100
Whitecrook	1928	1924	-	32	-	-	32
Parkhall (1st Develop.)	1930	1924	88	190	66	-	344
Parkhall (2nd Develop.)	1931	1924	80	160	80	-	320
Mountblow	1931	1924	48	104	40	-	192
Slum Clearance	1934	1930	-	54	18	-	72
N. Kilbowie	1938	1935	-	24	27	7	60
<u>Purchased from government -</u>							
Munitions Houses	1925				100	-	100
TOTAL			250	948	550	35	1783
<u>Figures not available -</u>							
Workers Dwellings	pre-1919						42
N. Kilbowie	1938						330
Grand TOTAL							2155

*See map 8.1

+ Name described type of house, not area of construction

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Rent Rolls 1920-1939

Clydebank Town Council Abstracts of Accounts 1925-1939

Clydebank Jubilee Brochure 1936, pp 113-114

Map 8.1 Clydebank Town Council Housing Stock

- A=Workmen's Dwellings
- B=East Kilbowie
- C=Whitcraoch
- D=Munitions Houses
- E="Kane Brickwood"
- F=West Kilbowie
- G="Dennis Wilde"
- H="Atholl"
- I=Whitcraoch 32
- J=Parkhall (1st Development)
- K=Parkhall (2nd Development)
- L=Mountblow
- M=Slum Clearance (Napier St. Improvement Scheme)
- N=North Kilbowie

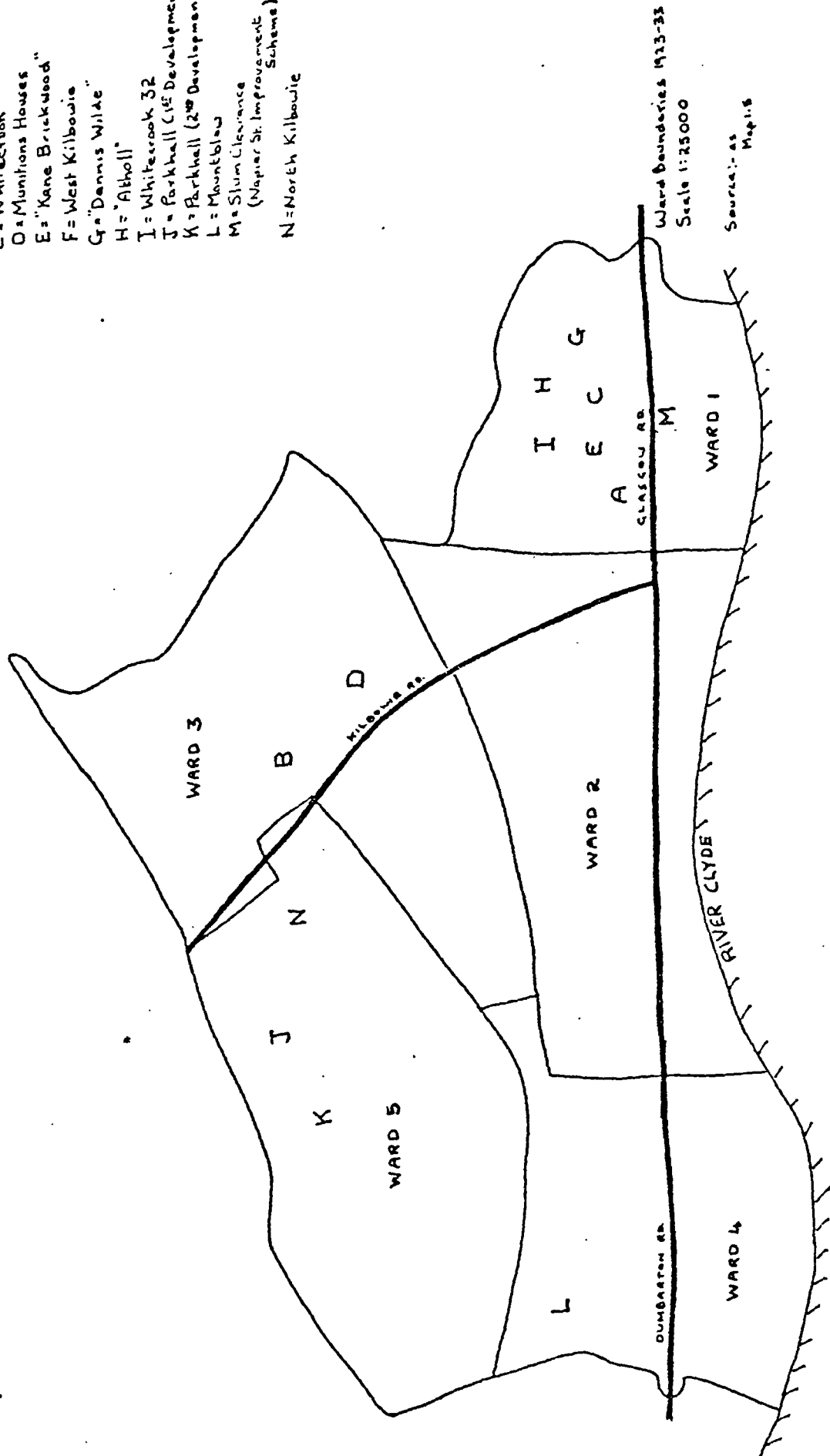


Table 8.4 shows the insignificance of slum clearance in the town, with only 72 slum clearance houses being built under the 1930 Act. This was 3.3% of all town council houses built during the inter-war period. The basic reason for this was that there was little need for slum clearance in the burgh. Police Judge Bell pointed out in October 1931 "regarding the development of the slum clearance scheme, the difficulty was to get areas which conformed to the Act²⁴."

The Medical Office of Health's comment of 1935 has already been noted - since few of the town's houses were much more than 40 years old they were in too good a condition to be defined as slums by contemporary standards.

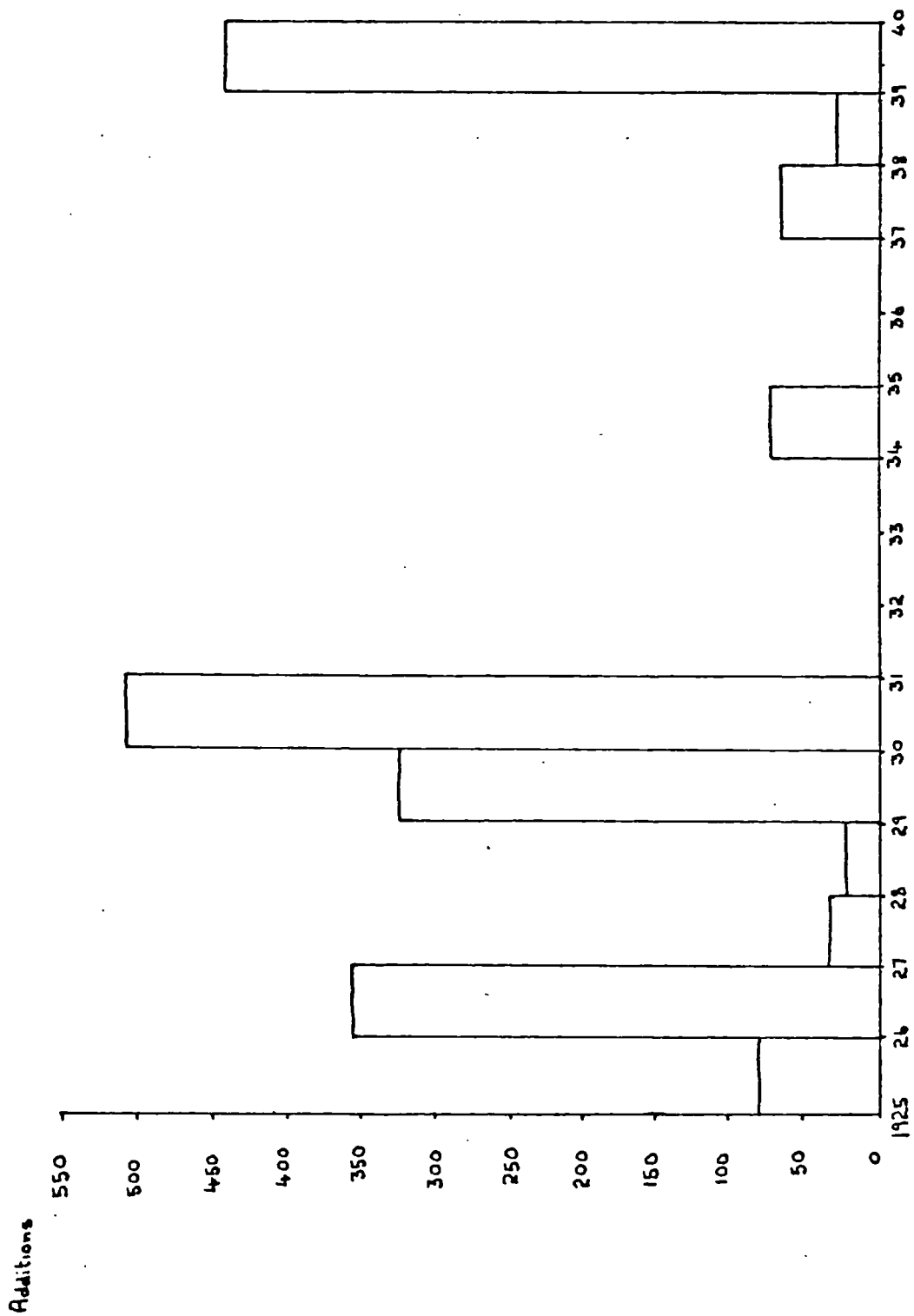
More importantly, the table shows that most of these council houses were built under the provisions of the 1924 Act, before those were withdrawn in 1933. This, and the change in legislative emphasis towards slum clearance, led to a sharp reduction in building, shown on graph 8.2, p.203. Such a cut-back following government withdrawal of subsidies, had also taken place in the early 1920s. Yet chapter 4 has shown that these were precisely the periods when building work would have been most useful to the local unemployed. A counter-cyclical programme of public work, particularly necessary in the early 1930s, could not be funded following the ending of government subsidies and the increasing need to direct available local funds towards the immediate support of the unemployed. In any case, given prevailing ideas on the need for economy, there was no substantive discussion of such a programme. The local authority made no strong attempt in either period of cut-back to press for a change in policy - not surprising given the majority of councillors desire for economy in time of depression, described in chapter 12, pp.328-9. Employment on public works might have been available to clear slums, but as indicated, few properties in the town fell into this category.

However, a further government policy change in the 1935 Act, when economic recovery was beginning, towards the reduction of overcrowding, allowed work on the North Kilbowie scheme to begin. The overcrowding survey under the 1935 Act

"provided the town council with sufficient information to approach the Department of Health and receive permission to proceed with the first instalment of 55 houses on the North Kilbowie site²⁵."

The proposal to build at North Kilbowie had first been mooted, and refused, in 1932 when depression was severe.²⁶ This might be seen as some evidence to suggest that the council was aware of the possibilities of public

Graph 8.2 Annual Additions to Number of Clydebank Town Council Properties 1925-40



works. Yet it did virtually nothing of this nature on its own initiative, even in the field of direct labour where the establishment of its own building department might have had some, admittedly small, impact of the unemployment situation. For town council houses were erected by contract labour, often from outside the town. Initially it had been the intention of the town council to build by direct labour, but in 1920 the Board of Health had refused a request to allow the second instalment of houses to be built by this method²⁷. The council made no further effort to have this decision overturned, though it did set up a small direct labour force and some work was done in its housing schemes, eg in connection with road making. Town council attempts to help unemployed tradesmen such as painters also involved some work on council houses as they were built. However the great majority of work seems to have been the responsibility of outside contractors such as Leslie Kirk, a fact which caused problems at times because of the slowness of contractors to complete their work. However pressure for work to be done by direct labour did not disappear and in May 1935 a Works Department was set up following a decision taken in 1933. The department would have been inadequate for any major building operation, comprising as it did a Master of Works, general foreman, 4 joiners, 1 slater and plasterer, 1 electrician and 4 painters²⁸.

Yet overall table 8.4 indicates that the house building activities of the town council were substantial. In 1911 28 houses or 0.4% of the housing stock of the burgh belonged to the town council. By 1939 of the 11,745 houses noted in the police census 2,155 or 18.3% were owned by the town council. This was indeed a considerable addition to the housing stock.

One area relating to the building activities of the council remains to be surveyed, and this concerns the size of house built. The prevalence of small houses had long been a major problem in Scotland. In 1911 73.5% of Scottish houses had three rooms or less²⁹. In Clydebank the position was even worse - 93% of houses fell into this category, yet traditionally, whether from financial causes or free choice, families in Scotland lived in small houses. Inter-war government policy involved an attempt to improve this situation which was contributing substantially to overcrowding. Table 8.5 below indicates the percentages of houses of particular sizes built in each housing scheme by Clydebank Town Council between 1919 and 1939.

Table 8.5 Distribution of House Size by Local Authority Housing Scheme

Scheme	Year of Construction	2 apt.	3 apt.	4 apt.	5 apt.
E. Kilbowie	1920	-	27.3%	61.0%	11.7%
Whitecrook	1920	-	33.6	58.0	6.5
Munition Houses	(purchased 1925)	-	-	100.0	-
"Kane Brickwood" +	1926	-	100.0	-	-
W. Kilbowie	1927	20.0%	48.2	31.8	-
"Dennis Wilde" +	1927	-	100.0	-	-
"Atholl" +	1927	-	100.0	-	-
Whitecrook 32	1928	-	100.0	-	-
Parkhall (1st Develop)	1930	25.6	55.2	19.2	-
Parkhall (2nd Develop)	1931	25.0	50.0	25.0	-
Mountblow	1931	25.0	54.2	20.8	-
Slum Clearance	1934	-	75.0	25.0	-
N. Kilbowie	1938	-	40.0	48.3	11.6
Overall		14.0	53.2	30.8	2.0

+ Name describes type of house, not area of construction

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Rent Rolls 1920-1939;

Abstracts of Accounts 1925-1939

Under the Addison Act the government had made an attempt in the period 1919-1921 to encourage councils to build larger homes as a measure to deal with overcrowding. The original intention was that, of the subsidised houses 50.5% should have more than three rooms, 48.2% have three rooms and the remainder two rooms.³⁰ As Tables 8.4 and 8.5 show Clydebank, with its particular overcrowding problem, built considerably more large houses than the government had proposed, with over 70% of houses in the East Kilbowie and Whitecrook schemes of 4 or 5 apartments. This was far better than the national average of 41%.

However a number of influences combined to prevent the maintenance of this level of building of 4 and 5 apartment homes. In 1929 the Department of Health agreed that 25% of houses built under the Wheatley Act might have two rooms.³¹ Locally there was pressure for a larger number of smaller houses to be built, mainly because of the higher rent levels of larger houses. At a ward meeting in 1930 Council Ward said he

"had many people asking him why the town council could not built more two apartment houses and the answer to that was that the government would only allow town councils to build 25% of two apartment dwellings in each scheme."³²

As can be seen from Tables 8.4 and 8.5 it is at this point that the

majority of two apartment houses were built at a time when increasing unemployment might be expected to encourage demands for cheaper ie smaller accommodation.

Towards the end of the inter-war period a further change took place. Continued pressure from the Health Department and the findings of the overcrowding survey under the 1935 Act encouraged both nationally and in Clydebank the building of a larger proportion of bigger homes. Nationally, by 1938 28% of local authority houses had over three rooms, 61% three rooms and 11% less than three³³. In Clydebank the corresponding figures were 33%, 53% and 14%. The slight emphasis in the burgh on smaller and larger homes may be the result of pressure for lower rented accommodation and of the very bad overcrowding to be found in the town.

Of course, building in Clydebank in the inter-war period was not solely restricted to the town council. The following table gives some indication of the extent of private building in the town.

Table 8.6/

Table 8.6 Owner Occupied and Rented Properties 1923-1924, 1937-1938

Area	Total No of Rateable Properties		No occupied by Proprietor		Rented		Private Rental		Local Authority Rental	
	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8
Ward 1	2,100	2,401	242	159	1,858	2,302	1,830	1,860	28	442
Ward 2	2,501	2,882	101	277	2,400	2,605	2,377	2,552	23	53
Ward 3	2,208	2,480	123	231	2,085	2,249	1,932	1,850	153	399
Ward 4	2,149	2,567	39	123	2,110	2,444	2,110	1,960	-	484
Ward 5	2,210	2,614	121	121	2,089	2,493	2,088	2,101	1	392
TOTAL	11,168	13,044	626	911	10,542	12,093	10,337	10,323	205	1,770

Source:- Calculated from Valuation Rolls of the County of Dunbarton, Parish of Old Kilpatrick, 1923-1924, 1937-1938

NB: (a) A proportion of properties, overall perhaps 10%, were commercial, industrial etc.

(b) there was a slight alteration to ward boundaries between the two dates.

These figures can also be given in percentage form.

Table 8.7 Percentage of Owner Occupied and Rented Properties 1923-1924, 1937-1938

Area	% of town Properties per Ward		% occupied by Proprietor		% Rented		% of Total Private Rental		% of Total Local Authority Rental	
	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8	1923-4	1937-8
Ward 1	18.8	18.9	11.5	6.5	88.8	93.5	87.1	75.6	1.7	18.0
Ward 2	22.4	22.2	4.0	9.6	96.0	90.4	95.0	88.5	0.9	1.8
Ward 3	19.8	18.5	5.6	9.3	94.4	90.7	87.5	74.6	6.9	16.0
Ward 4	19.2	19.7	1.8	4.8	97.7	95.2	97.7	76.4	-	18.9
Ward 5	19.8	20.1	5.5	4.6	94.5	95.4	94.5	80.4	0.06	15.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	5.6	7.0	94.4	93.0	92.6	80.4	1.8	13.6

Source:- As table 8.6.

The figures show that housing in Clydebank was almost exclusively rented - the owner/occupier sector was small, less than 10%. Within the rented sector, the increase in rented properties between the two dates can basically be accounted for by town council building. Given that the figures register properties, not only houses, it does not mean that there was no private building for rental in the inter-war period. It does mean that, as might be expected given the problems of speculative building for private rental, the proportion of any such building was small in comparison with that of the local authority.

As far as owner/occupier building is concerned, the increase of 385 properties between the two dates presumably reflects mainly housebuilding. Even here the town council played a part. By 1936 119 houses erected by private enterprise had received a subsidy via the town council under the Housing (Etc) Act, 1923 and the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1924³⁴. An example of such subsidisation is the 1926

"grant of £100 to Mr John Taylor, builder, Yoker under the town council scheme to assist private enterprise in respect of each of six houses he proposed to erect at Edward Street, Yoker³⁵."

The council also helped to secure land eg in 1925 it decided to set aside part of the area it proposed to acquire at Mill Road and the Parkhall site for the provision of owner/occupied houses³⁶.

Clearly there was a considerable response in Clydebank to national legislation aimed at improving the poor housing conditions to be found throughout the country. Indeed the legislative emphasis in the major Acts of the period was better suited to the prevailing situation in the burgh with its lack of slums than to Scotland generally. The record of the provision of some 2,000 new homes between 1919 and 1939 is one of which Clydebank Town Council could feel a measure of pride.

However two qualifications require to be made. In the first place, significant though the construction of these homes was, it by no means solved the overcrowding problem. Secondly, and more pertinent to the subject of this research, there is no evidence that the building programme of the town council was directed towards the reduction of unemployment and the assistance of the unemployed. The halting of the building programme at times of severe economic dislocation in the early 1920s and early 1930s, when the need for jobs locally was greatest, is in part attributable to the action of the government in withdrawing subsidies and permission to build, though the introduction

Of new legislation aimed at slum clearance also played a part. Nevertheless there is no evidence of any real effort on the part of the local authority to change this situation and thus give assistance to at least some of the unemployed, either through strong pressure on the government or the establishment of a considerable direct works department. Indeed such action would have gone against the economic and political beliefs of many of those on the council at that time, considered in more detail in chapter 12. Further evidence that the council was, perhaps, unwilling and in practice unable to do much for the low income earner, a considerable proportion of whom were unemployed, will be found in later consideration of letting policy, rent policy, and the type of tenant occupying council property.

8.4 Housing Finance

Such a substantial programme of building cost the town council a considerable amount of money. Initially, at least in certain quarters, cost was subsidiary to the need to provide housing quickly. It was reported in 1921 that Police Judge Williamson considered

"the financial side (of the housing question) did not interest him in the least. The great thing for him was to get the houses built³⁷."

This may have reflected his social conscience, his awareness of the size and potential political consequences of the town's housing problem, or, as in the case of a number of national politicians such as Addison himself, a concern that unrest was possible if something was not seen to be done. An attitude favouring the provision of houses whatever the cost may help to explain councillors' opposition to financial supervision of the council by the Board of Health eg in 1927³⁸.

The following table gives an indication of the capital costs incurred by the town council in connection with its housebuilding programme by 1939-1940.

Table 8.8/

Table 8.8 Clydebank Town Council - Capital Expenditure on Housing

<u>1919-1940</u>	<u>£</u>
Housing of the Working Classes	9,233.19.2
Under the 1919 Act	229,473. 3.5
Munitions Houses	36,006. 0.0
Under the 1923 Act	10,340. 0.0
Under the 1924 Act	575,546. 0.7
Under the 1925 Act	1,320. 0.0
Under the 1930 Act	28,099. 1.5
Under the 1935 Act	<u>299,703.11.2</u>
TOTAL	<u>£1,190,721.15.9</u>

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Abstract of Accounts 1939-1940

Finance had to be found to pay for the costs of the building programme. In the early 1920s the council hoped that some at least of the costs could be funded through the formation of a Municipal Bank. This function was made clear in 1920 during debates on the establishment of such a bank. Police Judge McKenzie stated

"Their position as public authorities was that they were making every effort to get money and they could not get it. They had large schemes on hand, and for the success of these schemes money was necessary. The orthodox methods of procuring money had failed in order to push forward the necessary schemes of improvement, in order to make progress with the housing which was absolutely essential, they must get money ... (the bank) was to be a convenience for the municipality ... in order that money might be acquired for the purpose of public utility.³⁹"

However the amounts raised by the scheme were small, as will be seen in the following chapter.

The considerable costs of the housing programme were beyond the town council's immediate resources. Though annual government grants under the various Housing Acts were available, they were not capital grants. Government finance was used to help pay loan charges⁴⁰ on the large sums borrowed by the council, with the sanction of the Board of Health. This was not always easy to obtain and on particular occasions the government, through the Public Works Loans Board, proved unwilling to assist the town with its financial problems. On the 1927 occasion mentioned above, the Treasury through the Board indicated that it was not willing to help burghs where the valuation exceeded £250,000.

Nevertheless loans were obtained to finance housebuilding and this

resulted in an increasingly large loan debt. The following table gives the debt in regard to housing.

Table 8.9 Clydebank Town Council - Annual Total Bonds and Loans
Outstanding at the End of Year, 1919-1940

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1919-20	-	1930-31	£584,405.10. 3
1920-21	£ 9,525	1931-32	636,265.14.11
1921-22	24,245	1932-33	793,850.18. 9
1922-23	n.a.	1933-34	808,399.19. 3
1923-24	n.a.	1934-35	830,525.19. 8
1924-25	204,539. 9.5	1935-36	817,129. 4. 8
1925-26	243,466. 1.5	1936-37	793,730. 8.10
1926-27	255,742. 7.3	1937-38	801,258.13. 1
1927-28	448,917.14.2	1938-39	885,284. 5.11
1928-29	515,923. 1.2	1939-40	935,580.14. 7
1929-30	565,532. 1.1		

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Abstract of Accounts 1919-1940

What were the sources of these loans? Many referred to in the town council minutes were in small amounts, so might well have come from private individuals. However, major single sources were the Public Works Loan Board, banks and insurance companies. Table 8.10 below gives an indication of the size and source of some of the larger loans obtained by the town council for housing purposes during the inter-war years.

Table 8.10 Clydebank Town Council - Sources of Housing Loans

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Security</u>	<u>Source</u>
1925	£ 36,000. 0. 0	Public Health Assessment	Public Works Loans Board
1928	£196,868.10. 0	Public Health Assessment	Six Insurance Companies
1929	£103,390.17. 9	Public Health Assessment	Local Bonds
1931	£199,008. 0. 0	Public Health Assessment	Local Bonds
1934	£ 26,558.10. 0	Public Health Assessment	Local Bonds

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1925-1934.

The burden of this capital expenditure and loan repayment occurred at a time when periods of depression could affect the town to a considerable extent. Some critical comment might have been made about such expenditure, though no substantial evidence of this has been found. Any such comment would ignore the fact that housebuilding did not take place during periods of severe depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s - Table 8.9 shows that in the mid 1930s the housing debt fell after the completion of houses planned in the late

1920s period of relative prosperity. It is also true that consideration must be given to the value of these capital investments to the town both financially and in the social sense. The provision of better quality housing helped at least some of the town's citizens, either by giving work in the building phase or a higher standard of housing on completion of construction. In addition the houses provided income, not only in the form of rent, but also in the form of government aid under the various Housing Acts and in local contributions such as rates. Table 8.11 gives an indication of the annual income from housing owned by the town council.

Table 8.11 Clydebank - Income from Housing 1919-1940

Year	Rent £	$\frac{4}{5}$ d Rate	Government Grants	Local Authority Contribution	TOTAL £
1919-20	540	-	-	-	540
1920-21	547	907	-	-	1,454
1921-22	1,597	1,145	915	-	3,657
1922-23	-	-	-	-	-
1923-24	-	-	-	-	-
1924-25	6,316	1,169	4,000	-	11,485
1925-26	10,219	1,156	6,702	-	18,077
1926-27	11,828	1,407	7,037	-	20,272
1927-28	19,597	1,276	13,486	-	34,359
1928-29	21,878	1,249	13,816	-	36,943
1929-30	22,755	1,255	13,764	-	37,774
1930-31	27,451	1,057	14,162	-	42,670
1931-32	34,064	1,022	18,275	-	53,361
1932-33	43,452	1,035	19,494	-	63,981
1933-34	44,684	1,054	20,836	-	66,574
1934-35	45,212	1,061	19,087	-	63,360
1935-36	45,348	-	20,096	£ 6,910	72,354
1936-37	45,341	-	19,893	9,408	74,642
1937-38	45,423	-	19,572	8,821	73,816
1938-39	46,935	-	19,875	9,641	76,451
1939-40	51,172	-	28,003	13,570	92,745

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Abstracts of Accounts 1919-1940

The total income from all tabulated housing sources between 1919 and 1940 was less than the burgh's capital expenditure on housing in the inter-war period. Awareness of this may well have contributed to the Council's decisions on letting and rental policies, discussed in sections 8.5 and 8.6 below.

Unfortunately, lack of all relevant Abstracts of Accounts means that figures for the entire inter-war period cannot be given, yet clearly housing was becoming an increasingly important source of council income. The increase in rent income shown in the table is a reflection of changes in the number of houses controlled by the town council, not, as will be seen, because of changes in rent levels.

Income from housing was becoming a considerable proportion of the burgh's annual revenue, as Table 8.12 shows. Revenue figures total the major sources of income ie housing, government grants and local rates. As in Table 8.11 figures for housing income do not include the amounts raised by rates on council properties.

Table 8.12 Clydebank - Housing Income as a Percentage of Municipal Revenue 1919-1940

Year	1 Housing	2 Total	1 as % of 2
1919-20	£ 540	£ 82,098	0.7
1920-21	1,454	115,068	1.3
1921-22	3,657	120,028	3.0
1922-23	-	-	-
1923-24	-	-	-
1924-25	11,485	120,316	9.5
1925-26	18,077	126,651	14.3
1926-27	20,272	150,850	13.4
1927-28	34,359	319,522	10.8
1928-29	36,943	322,891	11.4
1929-30	37,774	336,886	11.2
1930-31	42,670	287,683	14.8
1931-32	53,361	303,719	17.6
1932-33	53,361	334,524	19.1
1933-34	63,981	334,524	19.1
1934-35	66,574	365,810	18.2
1935-36	66,574	379,839	17.2
1936-37	65,360	379,839	17.2
1937-38	72,354	391,564	18.5
1938-39	74,642	396,672	18.8
1939-40	74,642	379,873	19.4
	73,816	387,592	19.7
	76,451	472,234	19.6
	92,745		

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Abstracts of Accounts 1919-1940.

The percentages for 1927-1930 are rather lower since in those years the town council collected certain revenues for the parish council and these are included in the total municipal revenue. Otherwise the trend

is for an increase in the proportion of total revenue from practically nothing at the beginning of the inter-war period to almost 20% by its end. Much of this rise occurred from the later 1920s to the early 1930s when the second phase of council building was coming to an end. It was not until the late 1930s when building resumed after the break of the early to mid 1930s that an upward trend in proportion resumed.

8.5 Letting Policy

Lack of information means that little can be said of letting policy in the private sector. Presumably financial considerations - the ability of the individual to pay the rent asked for the available property - played a large part. In addition, the type of individuals able to occupy a particular quality of housing would be affected by the various inter-war Rent Acts as they restrained or permitted alterations in rent levels. The increasing availability of town council housing, into which certain families moved, might also be expected to encourage a "filtering up" process. In fact, there is some evidence in the increase in unoccupied houses shown in Table 8.22, p.242 to suggest that, in the deep depression of the early 1930s at least, this "filtering up" did not occur to any great extent⁴¹.

In the local authority sector the situation was complicated by the fact that, in addition to finance, social factors had also to be considered. Not surprisingly given the overcrowding problem in a town with a large proportion of skilled and semi-skilled workers, there was a demand for town council housing, with 1,156 applications in 1922, 2,000 in 1926 and over 3,000 in 1931. By the end of the 1930s however numbers had fallen to 962 in 1937 and 353 in 1939. It seems possible that this was in part a result of the extensive building operations of the town council providing, by then, local authority housing for many of those who wished and could afford it. However a change in the method of application at that time requiring re-application every six months probably also played a part.

In a situation of considerable demand throughout most of the inter-war period there is evidence to support the assertion made in the Clydebank Press in 1926 that

"The demand for new houses is so great that the letting of the few available has caused heartburning and not a little discontent in some quarters⁴²."

Some examples of this can be given. In January 1926 a correspondent signing himself "Reveille" wrote to the Press.

"The debate on housing on Monday 11th gives little satisfaction to house applicants and no enlightenment as to why people get

houses who are not entitled to them. I refer to strangers to the district as well as having only one child, while good ratepayers with big families and long resident in the district are kept suffering⁴³."

Councillor Smart was reported in 1931 to have said

"There was a feeling among the applicants for the burgh houses that they had not received fair and equal treatment⁴⁴,"

and finally, in 1937 the Amalgamated Wards Committee wanted Bailie Braes

"to explain in detail the methods used in letting of burgh houses by ballot, as there is considerable dissatisfaction existing among the citizens as to the method used meantime⁴⁵."

Who, then, let town council houses, causing this dissatisfaction, and what method and policy did they follow? In the final analysis responsibility lay with the whole town council. However in the 1920s, in practice, letting was carried out by the town chamberlain, acting as a factor, under the supervision of the Finance Committee which also acted as an appeals committee⁴⁶. This arrangement was altered for a short time in 1925-1926 when the Finance Committee itself let the houses. From 1931 houses were let by ballot⁴⁷; this process was carried out in public from 1939⁴⁸. Again the procedure was under the supervision of the Finance Committee, after town officials had drawn up a short list of those to be balloted, from those fulfilling letting requirements. The way in which the officials made this choice was not clarified.

The basic reason for discontent, of course, was that there were more applications than houses available, and the result of this was, as the Medical Officer of Health noted, that

"the clamour for new housing and the pressure brought to bear on those who are supposed to have influence in disposing of the new houses are very great⁴⁹."

As a result there were frequent accusations that town councillors exerted influence in favour of unworthy applicants going back as far as 1921, and culminating in the later 1930s in the admission by some town council members that the successful use of influence was not unknown, though not, of course, on their part.

The rules under which lets were to be made varied as time passed, becoming more complex and specific in an attempt to cover all eventualities and assuage public discontent. The first set of rules, of 1921, when proposed increases in private sector rents were causing concern at a time of high unemployment, stated

"1. Preference should be given to applicants who are threatened with ejection from their present houses and

2. to local applicants with the largest families."

Clearly this earliest set of rules reflected the social concerns of the town council as it wrestled with the town's housing problem, and no mention was made of financial considerations. The principle behind rule 2 continued throughout the inter-war period, but rule 1 was soon abandoned. In 1925 homeless people encamped at Kitchener Street, Dalmeir as a result of the non-payment of rent during the 1923-1925 (private) rents dispute were offered railway carriages as temporary shelters by the town council. The town council decided to recommend to the Finance Committee that

"special consideration be given to homeless people who may be in a position and willing to pay the rentals of the burgh houses⁵¹."

Since presumably they were homeless because they felt unable to pay the rent of their previous home, it seems unlikely that many could pay rents of burgh houses which, as will be seen, were higher than those in the private sector. The consideration that the applicant be able to pay the rent appears here for the first time, possibly as a result of problems experienced during the operation of the earlier, more liberal rules. This official change was significant in view of its impact on the chance of the unemployed and low wage earner becoming a council tenant.

The next set of rules was more specific, produced in 1926 for guidance of the factor. They were - 1. Applicants were to be resident in the burgh at the time of application. 2. the number in the household at the time of application, excluding lodgers, was to be not less than 4 (amended 8 months later - 2 apartment houses were only to be let to those with not more than 4 in household). 3. the Factor was to be satisfied that the applicant was in a position to pay the rent demanded⁵². Here houses are restricted to those in Clydebank; there is concern to reduce overcrowding; but the most important from a policy point of view was rule 3. Effectively it prevented most of the poorer working classes including the unemployed being allocated a council house, and this was a positive decision on the part of the town council. There is no evidence of serious consideration being given then to ways of helping such people obtain a council house - the social concern of the early 1920s had weakened while financial considerations grew stronger as the council itself became a more important landlord.

New rules in 1930 further tightened allocations and became more

restrictive - 1. Two apartment houses were to be allocated to those with not more than 4 in the household and 3-5 apartments to those with not fewer than 4. 2. An applicant had to have resided in the burgh for 5 years at any time or to work there. 3. Applications from those working in Clydebank were to be considered by the Finance Committee, not the factor as in other cases⁵³. Here the new element is the residence qualification, though such a suggestion had been put forward inconclusively in 1926. By 1936 a more substantial set of rules had been drawn up, some of which had become more vague eg number 3 which stated that

"houses were to be let on the broad principle of length of residence, length of time the application has been lodged and the suitability of the tenant."

This change must reflect popular dissatisfaction, as did rule 6 -

"the list of applicants to receive first preference is to be strictly adhered to by officials⁵⁴."

There was too the customary concern about overcrowding - not surprising since this was the town's main housing problem - rule 4 provided that the number in a household was not to be in excess of the number allowed under the Housing Act 1935.

A final set of rules was produced in 1937, based on the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1935, the most significant of which were numbers 1 and 2. The first rule stated that

"reasonable preference would be given to persons occupying insanitary or overcrowded houses, subject to the restriction that a number of houses, equal to the numbers of houses erected by the council under the 1930 and 1935 Housing Acts, shall be reserved for low wage earners."

Rule 2 stated that

"a house shall not be let except to a person the size of whose household would justify the number of apartments let in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1935⁵⁵."

Here for the first time special provision was being made for low wage earners, a fact which was soon reflected in the tenancies of new houses.

Letting policy based on legislation had excluded the poorer sections of the community from burgh houses for much of the inter-war period. The lack of slums in the town meant that there were virtually no slum clearance schemes which might have catered for them otherwise. Effectively the legislation of the inter-war period, as it applied to Clydebank, which was more concerned with the number of houses rather than with low rents, and the letting rules of the town council,

excluded sectors of the community most in need of assistance, the low income groups including the unemployed, from better housing. Until specific provision was made for poorer families, the only exception to this was through the process of "filtering up" into better housing vacated by those who had moved into town council accommodation. But the prevalence of the overcrowding problem, and the demand for better homes renders this an explanation unlikely to have affected a large proportion of those on low incomes, especially at times of worst depression. Thus the actions of central and local government made it unlikely that the unemployed individual or low wage earner in Clydebank would be able to obtain the reasonable quality housing being built by the town council, at least until the end of the inter-war period. To a large extent the problem was caused by the fact that applicants had to be able to afford the rent charged for council homes, and it is to the rent problem in the burgh that attention now turns.

8.6 Rents

That rent was a problem which affected Clydebank, and the unemployed particularly, has been indicated at the beginning of this chapter. The response of the community generally and the unemployed particularly at times of severe depression was to develop pressure groups concerned with housing and especially with rents. The activities of these pressure groups and their effects are described in chapter 12, pp.337-9 concerning politics in Clydebank. Accordingly the greater part of this section will consider actual rent levels in the town and the effect these had on the community.

The rents which affected most of the working classes in Clydebank were those paid to private landlords. As was shown at the beginning of the chapter there is some evidence that private rents in the town were rather higher than those paid elsewhere, even in relation to income. This was indicated in the independent survey carried out by Mr James Cunndison on behalf of the Constable Enquiry into the Rent Strike, and had been stated in 1924 by the Secretary for Scotland. At the same time David Kirkwood, the local Member of Parliament, had asserted

"The landlords and factors took advantage of the good times in Clydebank by making Clydebank the highest rented town in Scotland."⁵⁶

It has already been shown in Table 8.7, p.207 that well over 90% of properties were rented in Clydebank and the great majority of such properties were privately rented. The figures in that table accord

fairly closely with the results of the survey of the town made under the 1935 Housing Act which discovered that 84.4% of houses with a rateable value of under £45 were privately owned⁵⁷. Most of these low cost houses were for letting and few had been built after World War 1. Not surprisingly there was great concern in the town over any attempt to change these rents, and the town council reflected this interest, objecting on behalf of the citizens to rent increases resulting from parliamentary legislation.

This interest was particularly keen during the depressed period of the early 1920s. In June 1920 the town council passed a resolution⁵⁸ against the government's proposed Increase in Rents Bill; in 1923 it objected to the retrospective aspects of the rent increase bill⁵⁹ in parliament; in 1924 another resolution was passed against the government's action in allowing a 25% increase in pre-war rents in the Rents Bill⁶⁰. However such an interest in steadying and perhaps even reducing rents is not so obvious in the later 1920s and the 1930s when the town council itself was a major landlord - no action seems to have been taken in 1931 when the Amalgamated Wards Committee suggested that the town council petition the government for the reduction of rents⁶¹.

The most obvious example of local concern over the level of private rents came in the long and complex rents dispute⁶² centred in the years 1923-1925, a period of considerable though decreasing unemployment. This resulted from Parliament's action in passing the Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest Restriction Act (1920)⁶³, and began with the eviction in 1922 of Dugald Bryde, Union Street, for non-payment of increased rent. This precipitated a campaign of opposition which had been developing since the 1920 Act, led by the Scottish Labour Housing Association. The Association claimed a local membership of 4,000 in 1921⁶⁴ and its actions included a rent strike and demonstrations. Meanwhile a House of Lords decision in favour of Mr Bryde in October 1922 resulted in the passage of the Rents (Notices of Increases) Act 1923⁶⁵. This further complicated an already complex issue since those who had paid the rent increases up to the Lords case were not able to recover any of their money whilst those who had not paid had their arrears ignored. Increased rent was supposed to be paid by all from December 1922. At the same time the anti-rent increase campaign in the town continued, and so did the evictions. The number of these evictions would seem to have been substantial, although the only available figures come from December 1925, at the end of the action, when in one week over 100 persons were evicted⁶⁶. The crisis dragged on

with complicating decisions from the Dumbarton Sheriff Substitute, conferences, visits by delegations of Scottish Labour MPs and the Scottish Secretary, and the establishment by the government of a Court of Enquiry under Lord Constable, which achieved nothing. The dispute was finally settled in their favour on appeal by the property owners to the Court of Session, where decisions of the Dumbarton Sheriff Substitute were reversed, and tenants slowly began to pay the new rents. It should be noted that this problem and its attendant unrest, which drew often unfavourable national attention to the burgh, was ended in the mid 1920s when unemployment was being reduced in the town as it moved into what were probably its most prosperous years in the inter-war period.

But what were the rents paid by tenants to private landlords? The rateable value, which legally was set by reference to rental value, of most of the privately rented property was lower than that of town council property. The table below gives a somewhat subjective assessment of the approximate values.

Table 8.13 Ranges of Rateable Values of Rented Accommodation in Clydebank 1923-1938

	Privately Rented		Local Authority Rented	
	1923-24 £	1937-38 £	1923-24 £	1937-38 £
Ward 1	8-30	9-39, majority under 23	17-25	26-34
Ward 2	9-29	9-35, majority under 25	-	18-26
Ward 3	12-52, majority under 25	12-33, majority under 20	26-34	22-34
Ward 4	6-44, majority under 30	10-30, majority under 25	-	21-30
Ward 5	9-93, majority under 25	8-33, majority under 20	-	21-32

Source:- Valuation Rolls of the County of Dunbarton, Parish of Old Kilpatrick 1923-1924, 1937-1938

It can be seen from this table that on the whole the rateable values, and therefore presumably also the rents, of private properties were lower than those of the town council. More detailed information on rents can be obtained from the survey of unemployed applicants to the town council for extra relief in the period 1931-1938, described in chapter 5. Of 506 applicants surveyed, 40 (7.9%) gave addresses at the time of application in streets in which the town council was the sole

landlord. Thus the rent information obtained from the survey relates predominantly to private rentals. In the survey 76.5% of applicants paid between £13 and £26 per annum in rent and 5.7% paid less than £13. Only 8.3% of those surveyed paid £26 per year or more (for details see Table 5.9 p.90). These figures are almost all exclusive of rates as far as is known, though a few in the higher bracket are known to include rates. The figures thus obtained compare closely with those in Table 8.13.

Further evidence of the level of private rents can be obtained from, an admittedly very small, random sample from the valuation rolls for 1923-1924 and 1937-1938 in Table 8.14. Lacking detailed figures on actual private rental levels, the assessor's figure should at least give some broad indication of the position, though it must be emphasised that actual rentals were not necessarily identical with the figures found in the valuation rolls. Since rateable value was legally set by reference to rental value, rent increases should result in increased rateable values. If this does not happen it can be concluded that there was no major shift in rentals over the period of the table. The figures for 1923-1924 give yearly rent or value and those for 1937-1938 gross annual value (being yearly rent or value) for a number of tenement properties. Unfortunately no information is available on the size of the particular properties.

Table 8.14 Clydebank - Private Property Rateable Values
1923-1924, 1937-1938

Area	Property	1923-24	1937-38
Ward 1	65 Clyde Street	£ 9.14.0 pa	£ 9.14.0 pa
		14.14.0	15.10.0
		13.10.0	13.10.0
		8.19.0	9. 0.0
		13.10.0	14.15.0
		14. 4.0	14. 4.0
		11. 4.0	11. 4.0
		12.14.0	12.14.0
		12.14.0	12.14.0
		15.10.0	12. 8.0
Ward 2	72 Glasgow Road	18.12.0	12. 8.0
		11. 7.0	9. 2.0
		18.12.0	12. 8.0
		15.10.0	12. 8.0
		11. 7.0	9. 2.0
		15.10.0	12. 8.0
		15.10.0	12. 8.0
		11. 7.0	9. 2.0

Area	Property	1923-24	1937-38
Ward 3	36 Radnor Stree	£17. 6.0	£17. 6.0
		17.12.0	17.12.0
		17. 6.0	17. 6.0
		10.16.0	10.16.0
		12. 7.0	12. 7.0
		17.12.0	17.12.0
		17.12.0	17.12.0
		12. 7.0	12. 7.0
		17.12.0	17.12.0
		17. 6.0	17. 6.0
		12. 0.0	12. 0.0
		15.14.0	15.14.0
		12.14.0	12.14.0
		16. 9.0	16. 9.0
Ward 4	11 Burns Street	16. 9.0	16. 9.0
		14. 5.0	14. 5.0
		16. 9.0	16. 9.0
		16. 9.0	16. 9.0
		14. 5.0	14. 5.0
		16. 9.0	16. 9.0
		15.14.0	15.14.0
		14. 5.0	14. 5.0
		15.14.0	15.14.0
		15. 2.0	16. 4.0
Ward 5	63 Crown Avenue	15. 2.0	16. 4.0
		15. 2.0	16. 4.0
		16.10.0	17. 4.0
		15. 2.0	16. 4.0
		16.10.0	17. 9.0

Source:- Valuation Rolls of the County of Dunbarton, Parish of Old Kilpatrick 1923-1924, 1937-1938

The levels of rent suggested by this table fit well into those found in the survey of applicants for extra town council relief. Of the rents indicated in Table 8.14, 9 (18.75%) increased between the two dates given, 30 (62.5%) remained the same and 9 (18.75%) were reduced.

Such a result, if applicable generally, does not suggest the widespread, large rent increases, at least from 1923 onwards, which the activities of pressure groups and contemporary sources might suggest.

The only other source of information which has been found relating to private rent levels comes from the Cunnison report to the Constable

Enquiry in 1925, referred to above, but the information in this source includes rates with rents. The report found that of 258 families surveyed, rent and rates ranged from 4/6d to 19/6d per week (£11.14.0 - £50.0.0 per annum). Ten households paid 4/6d - 5/6d per week and one 19/6d. The predominant rent lay in the 8/6d to 9/6d group, approximately £23 per annum, in which there were 73 houses. Again, taking into account the inclusion of rates, such rent levels seem fairly close to the others noted above.

The other rented sector was of course controlled by the town council and here there was considerable government involvement in setting rent levels. Those houses built under the 1919 Act had to have their rents approved by the Board of Health, the intention being to prevent the letting of houses at below the local rent average as this would discourage private enterprise building⁶⁷. Under the 1924 Act subsidies were granted so long as rents did not exceed the "appropriate normal rents" of working class houses erected in the area before 1914 plus any deficit incurred beyond the rate contribution of £4.10.0 per house⁶⁸. The other Act which affected rent levels in Clydebank was the 1935 Act under which local authorities were to

"take into consideration the rents ordinarily payable by persons in the working classes in the locality⁶⁹."

Essentially such legislation meant that local authority rents had to be at least at the level of rent of similar private accommodation and, given that the houses were often larger and of better quality, would be higher than those paid to private landlords.

Government involvement in the establishment of rent levels in Clydebank was particularly direct under the 1919 Act. In 1920 the Finance Committee of the town council decided, according to the Act, that rents at East Kilbowie should be judged on the rents of surrounding similar properties⁷⁰. Their suggestions in 1921 of rent levels of £26.10.0 and £30 did not meet with the approval of the Board of Health which wanted £30 and £34⁷¹. In April of that year the Finance Committee agreed to the higher rents, having heard Mr Wylie, chief housing inspector for the Board of Health, who said

"the rents proposed by the town council compared unfavourably with rents of houses with similar accommodation in other burghs⁷²",

a statement which seems to diverge somewhat from the principles of the Act. In February 1922 the Board of Health wrote suggesting a review of rents at a time of substantial unemployment in the burgh. The Finance Committee replied that

"this council is of the opinion that the time is not appropriate to increase the rents of its houses, and cannot recommend any increase for the following reasons:- wages are falling, most tenants find difficulty in paying the present rents; to increase rents would increase the cost of living; to increase the rents of new houses would stabilise the rents of old houses at their present extortionate figure; with a falling market future housing schemes will be carried through at much less cost and will compensate for any loss on present schemes; a further increase would deter people from occupying better houses and therefore nullify the efforts of the Board of Health in attempting to set a better standard of health in the community⁷³."

In May the Board agreed that it would not press for an increase.

The rents which were set in the early 1920s produced the pattern for the remainder of the inter-war period. Rents were not raised, or lowered, before 1939 and were not related to the geographical area of the scheme, but to the type of accommodation provided. Table 8.15 illustrated this.

Table 8.15 Clydebank - Local Authority Annual Rentals

<u>Excluding Rates</u>				
Area	2 apt	3 apt	4 apt	5 apt
E Kilbowie	-	£26	£30	£34
Whitecrook	-	£26	£30	£34
Munitions Houses	-	-	£28.12.0	-
"Kane Brickwood" +	-	£26	-	-
W. Kilbowie	£22	£27	£32	-
"Dennis Wilde" +	-	£26	-	-
"Atholl" +	-	£26	-	-
Whitecrook 32	-	£26	-	-
Parkhall (1st Development)	£21	£26	£30	-
Parkhall (2nd Development)	£21	£26	£30	-
Mountblow	£21	£26	£30	-
Slum Clearance	-	£11	£13	-
N. Kilbowie	-	£26	£30	£34

+ Name described type of house, not area of construction

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Rent Rolls 1925-1939

Annual rents of 2 and 3 apartment flats were £21 and £26 respectively, £27 was the rent of a 3 apartment cottage, £30 a 4 apartment flat, £32 a 4 apartment semi-detached and £34 a 5 apartment semi-detached. The rents at the slum clearance scheme were considerably lower because

of the larger government subsidy.

The rents as described led to considerable dissatisfaction, particularly evident in the early 1930s when unemployment or the threat of unemployment was very widespread, even in sections of the community able to obtain council housing. The effects or rather lack of effects, of the pressures are described in chapter 12 on politics in Clydebank.

Though the council had shown itself sympathetic in the early 1920s to the idea of lower rents than those eventually established, it later refused requests for a reduction in rent which were particularly prevalent in the depression of the early 1930s. Presumably, by then, as an important landlord with a large burden of debt it had to balance financial reality and social desirability. As a result rents did not change at a time of generally falling prices. In 1931 Councillor Low saw a sub-committee appointed to consider his motion that the council

"should go into the question of fixing the rents of the burgh houses with a view to rents being reduced⁷⁴." Despite support from the Amalgamated Wards Committee the sub-committee report early in 1932⁷⁵ recommended no alteration.

Similar demands and refusals or deferrals took place in August 1932, February 1934 and February 1935 - thereafter no further similar actions have been noted, suggesting that the return of more prosperous times in the mid 1930s again made the rent issue less immediately significant.

It was alleged in the early 1930s that the rents charged were higher than local authority rentals elsewhere. As a result the Clydebank Press produced a table which does seem to give some credence to this claim. The published table was as shown in Table 8.16.

Table 8.16/

Table 8.16 Comparison of Scottish Municipal House Rents (1931)(a) Housing (1919) Addison

	3 apt Flats £	3 apt Cottage £	4 apt Semi-detached £
Clydebank	26	27	32
Dumbarton	21	22	25
Airdrie	-	24.10.0	28.10.0
Coatbridge	24.10.0	25.10.0	30
Glasgow	27 + 29	30 + 33	34 + 38
Greenock	25	26	29
Hamilton	26	27	29
Kilmarnock	23	24	29
Port Glasgow	27.10.0, 26	22.10.0, 26	26. 29.10.0
5 Apartment semi-detached - Clydebank £34, Glasgow £45, Airdrie £32, Hamilton £32, Dumbarton £28.			

(b) Housing (1924) Wheatley

	2 apt Flats £	3 apt Flats £	4 apt Flats £
Clydebank	21	26	30
Dumbarton	15	21	25
Airdrie	-	23.10.0	-
Coatbridge	20	24.10.0	30 Cottage
Glasgow	-	27, 29	33, 34
Greenock	18.9.0, 19.9.0 19.19.0	25	29 Cottage
Hamilton	17.10.0	25	29
Kilmarnock	16.10.0	19.10.0	25 Cottage
Port Glasgow	-	22.10.0, 26.10.0	26, 29.10

Source:- Clydebank Press, 4 December 1931

In this league table Clydebank was in the upper half, charging higher rents than Coatbridge, a town with an even worse housing problem. Yet perhaps this finding should not have been surprising if in fact private rents, on which local authority rent levels were based, were rather higher in Clydebank than in other towns.

Thus it seems clear that rents in Clydebank, in both the private and the municipal sectors, were higher than in many other areas. It is not perhaps surprising that private landlords should attempt to obtain the maximum return from their properties, in the form of higher rents, when this was made possible by the government. The fact that this

occurred in the early 1920s at a time of severe economic dislocation, goes far to explain the troubles of the Rent Strike, which helped substantially to produce Clydebank's radical reputation. The prevalence of unemployment at that time in a hitherto comparatively prosperous community in which the great majority of citizens occupied privately rented accommodation would naturally cause problems if attempts were made to increase rents. Though the return of relative prosperity in the later 1920s muted complaints on the private rents issue, it reappeared in the depression of the early 1930s, as will be seen in chapter 12.

It is the response of the local authority on the rent issue which is rather more problematic. On one hand, in the early 1920s it showed some support for those who objected to increased private rents, and chapter 7 has indicated that throughout the period 1919-1939 the local authorities were relatively generous to the unemployed of the area. Yet on the other hand this concern and generosity did not extend into the area of rents. Admittedly, for much of the inter-war period the establishment of council rent levels above those which could be afforded by the low paid and the unemployed was a consequence of national legislation and when rent rebate schemes became legally permissible the council introduced them. However, once the town council became a substantial landlord, there is no evidence of any official attempt to put pressure on the government for change in the legislation, nor of any positive response to the demands of housing pressure groups on this question which, as chapter 12 p338 will show, were particularly strong during the depression of the early 1930s. Again, as in the case of the timing of the construction of municipal housing schemes, it would seem that in practice the council did little to use its housing programme as a means of helping the unemployed, preferring financial orthodoxy and the maintenance of the legal status quo. This assertion gains further support from the material in the following section.

8.7 Local Authority Tenants

The level of rents of council houses helped to give rise to an associated and much discussed problem. Perhaps two extracts can illustrate this. The first, from 1926, is from an election address by Mr J Peacock, a candidate in the 5th ward. Council housing schemes

"did not supply houses at suitable rents to suit working men. Most of the tenants in burgh houses could well have bought houses of their own."

The second comes from the Sanitary Inspector's Report for 1931

"A large number of houses still contain two families.

These houses are mostly situated in the poorer portions of the town. Poverty and continued unemployment prevent a large section of the population from expending more than about 6/- weekly on rent. Unless houses are provided in large numbers at very low rents, this problem will continue to exist⁷⁷."

As apparently was the case in other areas of the country, the suggestion is that council housing went to those rather less in need of it, the relatively well off. The unemployed, the low wage earner, the couple with a large family, found it difficult if not impossible to pay the rents of local authority housing and yet were probably the sector in the town's population most in need of improved accommodation. If 6/- per week was the maximum many could pay, the town council's rents prevented them from occupying its houses, since the cheapest local authority non-slum clearance house cost 8/- per week exclusive of rates. As a result of this, considerable numbers of families were forced to live in unsuitable, overcrowded, privately rented accommodation for lack of any alternative. This explains the comment in the Medical Officer of Health's report for 1934 that

"It was found in (poorer working class) areas that overcrowding was very bad and that while for years the general standard of the town had risen, the standard for those areas had not made the same progress and that the figures as regards overcrowding had remained on a basis almost equivalent to that of the whole town 30 years ago⁷⁸."

The council seems to have had a double standard on this problem. On the one hand, as shown in its letting rules in the 1920s, it wanted to make sure that its tenants could pay the rents asked, thus effectively barring a considerable section of the inter-war community. It was difficult to reduce rents - they were government supervised and, as the property was built to a higher standard than private pre-war housing, a higher rent was required by market forces than that paid by the majority of the townspeople. On the other hand, the council was aware of this problem and, when legal circumstance made it possible, eventually did seek to solve it, though it seems to have done little to hasten any change. This awareness can be seen in the council minutes for 1931 which note that

"Councillor Downie referred to the necessity of the provision of houses for low wage earners and the Convenor of the Housing Committee undertook to give the matter consideration⁷⁹."

However, the problem was that, under the legislation, the only way low rent housing could be provided was as part of a slum clearance scheme, but as already pointed out few areas in the town qualified. The dilemma was shown in the following dialogue which took place at a First Ward meeting in 1930.

"Mr David Sutherland ... asked why the council did not build houses at a reasonable rent to suit the working men similar to some in the Scotstoun district. Councillor Muirhead said the house referred to were only erected in place of slum tenements in Glasgow and explained that the council were only allowed to erect houses of a certain type. Before allowed a slum clearance order the Board of Health had to have proof that the houses were slums. The council were trying to get clearance orders, but this was no easy matter⁸⁰...."

However, as will be seen, from 1934 onwards new town council housing was provided for a considerably higher proportion of low income families, presumably including the unemployed, than had been the case earlier. The main reason for this change was an alteration to the legislative basis on which the council was acting. In the slum clearances scheme at John Knox Street rents were of the same order as those paid privately, so lower wage earners could afford them. This was a result of changing government policy emphasis under the 1930 Act which gave local authorities a subsidy of £2.10.0 per person rehoused for a period of 40 years, so compensating for reduced rent paying capacity⁸¹. In addition the council had eventually found an area which complied with the requirements of the Act. Similarly there was an increased proportion of low wage earners in the North Kilbowie scheme from 1937 on. This was a result of the change in council letting rules, following the 1935 Act, which then specified that a portion of the houses should be reserved for low wage earners. Secondly, a rent rebate scheme was introduced based on the Housing (Rent Rebates) Regulations (Scotland) 1937. The scheme was not available to those earning over £3.10.0 per week, those occupying a house larger than needed or who were in receipt of assistance from the Unemployment Assistance Board. The level of rebate depended on income and size of family. Though no absolute figures can be given, the effect of these two measures can be judged by the changes in percentages shown in Table 8.17 below.

In principle the main Clydebank problem of overcrowding could be reduced if not eliminated by the government legislation of the period which encouraged building to add to the housing stock. But the con-

comitant problem of poverty which exacerbated the housing difficulties of a proportion of Clydebank citizens was not solved, and was only reduced at the very end of the period. The only possible solution prior to the actions taken in 1937, that of slum clearance, was not really available in the town. The local housing problems would accordingly seem to have been rather more difficult to solve than those elsewhere, forcing many to remain outwith local authority housing provision. Evidence for this can be seen in the following table.

Table 8.17 Clydebank - Status of Council Tenants 1925-1940

Area	Professional		Skilled/ Semi-skilled		Service/ Distrib		Labourer/ Unskilled		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Whitecrook	-	-	29	67.4	9	20.9	4	9.3	1	2.3
"Kane Brickwood" +	3	5.0	38	63.3	10	16.6	7	11.6	2	3.3
W. Kilbowie	4	2.5	111	68.9	33	20.5	3	1.9	10	6.2
"Dennis Wilde" +	2	3.4	40	68.9	16	27.6	-	-	-	-
"Atholl" +	3	2.8	75	70.1	20	18.9	4	3.8	4	3.8
Whitecrook 32	1	3.7	17	62.9	7	25.9	-	-	2	7.4
Parkhall (1st Dev)	1	0.3	237	74.1	60	18.8	19	5.9	3	0.9
Parkhall (2nd Dev)	8	2.7	172	57.9	86	28.9	14	4.7	17	5.7
Mountblow	1	0.5	138	70.4	39	19.9	8	4.1	10	5.1
Slum Clearance	-	-	28	40.0	5	7.1	29	41.4	8	11.4
N. Kilbowie	-	-	162	60.0	15	5.5	77	25.8	16	5.9
OVERALL	23	1.4	1047	65.1	300	28.1	165	10.3	73	4.5

+ Name describes type of house, not area of construction.

NB. This table was constructed after a survey of all tenancies in the burgh rent rolls. By comparing it with Table 8.4 p.200 any change in the type of tenant with the passage of time and the growth of the housing stock can be detected, eg it is not until the Slum Clearance Scheme of 1934 and the North Kilbowie Scheme of 1938, that significant proportions of labourers or unskilled individuals obtain tenancies for reasons detailed in the text.

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Rent Rolls 1925-1940;
Valuation Roll of the County of Dumbarton, Parish of Old
Kilpatrick 1935-1936.

Some example of the types of work included under the table headings might be useful. Professional includes architects, teachers, bank accountants, solicitors, etc. Skilled/semi-skilled describes plumbers, bakers, machinemen, riggers, platers, operators, etc. Those included under the

heading Service/Distribution were salesmen, travellers, policemen, chauffeurs, clerks, etc and Labourer/Unskilled categorised labourers, street sweepers, platers helpers, staggers, etc. Other covers retired, widows and housewives.

It would seem obvious from these figures that, as elsewhere, legislation and practice meant that local authority housing, until at least the mid 1930s was generally the preserve of the better off sections of the Clydebank community. It was they who were anxious to obtain council housing because they could afford the higher rents asked - the combined columns 2 and 3 in Table 8.17 show that council housing was a preserve of the upper working class and the lower middle class. It was not until the sole slum clearance scheme and the 1935 Housing Act that the council was able and willing to include significant numbers of poorer working class families including the unemployed in their accommodation. Until then there seems to have been no pattern of allocation to particular areas, merely disqualification by inability to pay.

Further evidence can be produced. Reference has already been made to the survey of applicants for additional town council relief detailed in chapter 5. Almost 8% of applicants came from streets in which the town council was the landlord. Some suggestions can be made to explain the comparatively small number of applications from council properties which by 1939 comprised over 18% of the housing stock of the town. It is possible that the predominantly skilled and semi-skilled individuals in council housing were less affected by unemployment. However, in view of the extent of unemployment in the early 1930s at least it is likely that, if affected by unemployment, council tenants had greater resources and thus were either disqualified from relief or were too proud to apply.

In the same way information on this subject may be obtained from the following table.

Table 8.18/

Table 8.18 Number and Percentage of Changed Tenancies in
Town Council Properties 1925-1939

Year	Number	% of Total Properties
1925-26	16	3.6
1926-27	-	-
1927-28	46	5.2
1928-29	-	-
1929-30	41	4.4
1930-31	80	6.4
1931-32	110	6.2
1932-33	131	7.4
1933-34	136	7.7
1934-35	113	6.1
1935-36	-	-
1936-37	100	5.4
1937-38	-	-
1938-39	70	3.6

Source:- Clydebank Town Council Rent Rolls 1925-1939

It can be seen that, as depression reached its peak in the early 1930s, the number of changed tenancies increased. This is presumably, at least in part, a response to depression - some tenants move away or give up their tenancies because of inability to pay the rent demanded. Yet even at its peak of 7.7%, the great majority of tenants retained their tenancy, suggesting that they were not as badly hit by prevailing economic conditions as they might have been.

In fact it was argued that some at least of the town council's tenants had not need of such accommodation and could have bought their own homes. Dr Strang, Medical Officer of Health, in a rather outspoken portion of his 1924 report stated that

"It seems to be a characteristic of the times that everyone expects someone else to provide a house for him, and few are ambitious to possess a house of their own ... Many families could with a little effort purchase houses of the value of £400 or £500 by yearly payments ⁸²..."

Reference has already been made to the remark of the municipal candidate in 1926 that

"Most of the tenants living in burgh houses could well have ⁸³bought homes of their own."

Whether in fact such statements were accurate is less important than the effect they must have had in stimulating increased discontent. The problem continued until 1938 when the Amalgamated Wards Committee wrote

to the town council suggesting that it should consider

"the advisability of compelling tenants of burgh houses with salaries exceeding £300 per year to vacate their houses⁸⁴."

On the whole tenants of different social backgrounds were distributed in approximately equal ratios to all town council schemes before 1934, and no evidence has been found in the council minutes or the local press to suggest that any scheme was less desirable than another. Yet even in this new housing, occupied by the better off sections of the community, old problems continued to exist, though at a lower level than in the private sector. When a survey on overcrowding was made under the 1935 Act, the slum clearance scheme at John Knox Street was found to have the second lowest level of houses overcrowded, 5.5%. The worst figure of 29% was for the "Atholl" group of houses, and the then largest schemes, Parkhall 1st and 2nd Developments, had respectively 12.2% and 10% overcrowded. This gave an overall total of 13.3%, considerably less than the 45.2% of private housing which was over-crowded⁸⁵.

It seems clear that letting policy and rent levels of council accommodation together prevented some sectors of the local community from benefiting from the better housing the council might have made available. Though "filtering up" could occur, it could not compensate for the size of the remaining problem of inadequate, overcrowded housing which still affected many of the town's inhabitants including some of the better off members of the community. Only in the late 1930s with the rent rebate scheme introduced as a consequence of national legislation did a situation develop which would have allowed assistance to be given to many of those who were still unemployed to obtain council housing - though by this time unemployment had become a relatively minor problem. However since the problem of poverty and low incomes still remained, the scheme was a move in the right direction.

8.8 Housing and Health

There can now be little doubt that a relationship existed in the inter-war years between unemployment, housing and health. Poverty and poor housing conditions accentuated health problems, and illness may well have led to loss of employment, poverty and the inability to afford housing adequate for the individuals needs. It might be expected that the relationship outlined above would have an adverse effect on health standards in the burgh of Clydebank in the inter-war period - overcrowded housing was common and, particularly in periods of severe depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s, so were low incomes.

Yet at an official level at least, as Webster points out,⁸⁶ there was a contemporary reluctance to accept such a diagnosis. Indeed official figures suggested that, with a few minor reservations, health standards were improving between the wars, and this view has been accepted by modern historians to a considerable extent. Webster however has recently commented on the differences in health standards when considered on a geographical and class basis.

Certainly provision for the treatment of ill health was much more widely available in the inter-war period than ever before. As noted in chapter 6, p124 the National Insurance Act 1911⁸⁷ had established a system of health care for those involved, workers earning £250 per annum or less, and this system continued after World War 1. The insured worker was provided with sickness, disablement and maternity benefits, as well as the services of a GP. However dependents of the insured individual were not covered nor was hospital treatment. Other pre-war measures aimed at improving the nation's health, which had been introduced for political and military reasons, continued in operation, such as the school meals service and the school medical service. Indeed official interest in health matters had been shown to have been strengthened by the establishment in 1919 of a Ministry of Health to supervise health services.

Many of these services were provided by local authorities under legislative permission and encouragement from central government. In inter-war Clydebank the school meals and medical services were operated by Dunbartonshire County Council, while the burgh council alone or in conjunction with others provided a range of different services. The burgh's Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme had been set up in 1920 under the provisions of the Notification of Births Act 1915 and the Maternity and Child Welfare Act 1918⁸⁸ - the considerable number of families then assisted is detailed in Table 7.7, p.171. In late 1930 at a time of rising unemployment a Free Milk Centre for mothers and children, was set up and well used (see Table 7.8, p.171). Indeed by the later 1930s the council had established a system of health visitors, antenatal consultations, child welfare consultations, special treatment centres for teeth, eyes and tonsils and a Child Guidance Clinic.

This concern for the health of burgh citizens was not restricted to mothers and children. All citizens suffering infectious diseases could be catered for in the Renfrew and Clydebank Joint Hospital at Blawarthill which had been opened before 1900. In addition, by the later 1930s, following considerable local pressure, the decision had

been taken to establish a new General and Maternity Hospital jointly with Dumbarton Burgh and Dunbartonshire. This was to be given a substantial grant of £200,000 by the Special Areas Commissioner - but the outbreak of war put paid to the scheme.⁸⁹

Some provision was also made particularly for the low paid and unemployed when on 1 April 1936 the "free choice" system of medical service for the sick poor was inaugurated. Before 1936 those unable to afford medical attendance had to go to the Poor Law doctor - thereafter they were free to choose any doctor in the town thus removing any stigma attached to the old system and ensuring continuity of treatment.⁹⁰

The brief survey in preceding paragraphs has highlighted only a part of the investment made by central and local government in the provision and extension of services to improve the health of the community. Nor has any mention been made of the parallel national and local attempts to relieve the unemployed or to provide an improved quality of housing. Given this investment it is not perhaps surprising that official comment on government statistics should emphasise progress in health even at times of economic dislocation - in 1933 the Minister of Health, Sir E Hilton Young reported to the House of Commons

"there is no available medical evidence of any general increase in physical impairment sickness or mortality as a result of the economic depression or unemployment."⁹¹

The Minister was referring to the situation in the nation generally, but a similarly more optimistic view was expressed in 1936 by the municipal authorities in Clydebank. In the Souvenir Jubilee Brochure it was claimed that

"Clydebank has had for many years the distinction of having the lowest death rate of all comparable places, lower even than that for the rural areas of Scotland. This applies in most years even to the infantile death rate."⁹²

The remainder of this section will consider the validity of the more optimistic outlook of the council when compared to the comment in the 1936 Report of the Medical Officer of Health on tuberculosis levels that

"It is improbable however that any permanent diminution in the incidence or death rate can be obtained, until the overcrowding in the burgh has been relieved and better housing conditions are made available for these patients."⁹³

This more sombre attitude was reflected in his report for 1938, written after the outbreak of war, in which the statement is made, describing

the 1930s, that

".... too often time was spent in the clinics ameliorating conditions due fundamentally to an imperfect social and economic environment.⁹⁴"

Before giving the statistical evidence on health to be considered, it is perhaps necessary to restate comments to be found in relation to Tables 2.5 and 13.2, pp.21 & 366. which give information on the comparative age structure of the burgh population. Firstly the age structure of the Clydebank population in the period 1911-1951 was consistently younger than that in other urban areas considered. Secondly, during the period of these tables the age structure of the burgh population was ageing more rapidly than in towns such as Greenock, or in the nation generally. The differences in the age structure of the areas tabulated in the inter-war period may well have had an impact on the health experience of the areas.

Infant mortality figures were regarded by contemporary epidemiologists as

"the most sensitive index we possess of social welfare and of sanitary administration.⁹⁵"

Accordingly Table 8.19 gives information on this sensitive indicator of health standards in the community by comparing Clydebank with a number of other urban areas.

The figures are expressed on a quinquennial basis in the table, but are shown annually in graphs 8.3 - 8.8 pp.246-51.

Table 8.19/

Table 8.19 Quinquennial Averages of Infant Mortality per 1000 Births
1920-1939

	1920-24	1925-29	1930-34	1936-39	% change 1920-24/ 1935-39
Clydebank	78	81.4	78	78.2	+ 0.3
Greenock	107.2	103.4	98.4	86.6	-19.2
Glasgow	105	106.4	102.8	95.6	- 9.0
Dundee	114	114.2	90	77.4	-32.1
Paisley	100.4	98.8	94.4	89.6	-10.8
Scotland	92.1	86.9	82	75.6	-17.9

Source:- Calculated from Reports of the Registrar-General for
Scotland 1920-1939.

In so far as the rate of infant mortality in Clydebank was consistently lower than for the other areas tabulated to the mid 1930s, the comment of the town council in the Jubilee Brochure quoted above was correct. However the figures also show that elsewhere in the inter-war years infant mortality levels were improving slowly, whereas they remained roughly static in Clydebank, ie Scotland was improving relative to Clydebank - and this was particularly evident in the years from 1935.

Why should the Clydebank figures normally be superior to those for other areas, and for Scotland as a whole? The most likely explanation of this is that conditions in Clydebank for much of the inter-war period were relatively better than in many other areas of Scotland, somewhat reducing the likelihood of infant mortality. Except in the early 1920s and early 1930s unemployment was relatively low, so the problem of poverty would have been somewhat reduced. In the area of housing, though overcrowding was a major problem, slums were not, as a result of the fairly recent growth of the burgh and of the town council's housing developments. In addition the town council made considerable provision for family welfare and provided comparatively more generous relief to the unemployed. Also, as shown in table 13.5, p.378 birth rates in Clydebank, with its ageing population, were falling more rapidly than elsewhere - and a falling birth rate tended to be associated with lower infant mortality.

The second area requiring some explanation is the worsening of the position in Clydebank vis-à-vis Scotland as a whole, particularly evident in the later 1930s. It is possible that there was a deterioration in the family welfare services provided by the town council, yet this does not seem very likely when, as shown above, the range of these services

was being extended and they were receiving considerable use. Indeed it is quite likely that death rates would have worsened, particularly in years of high unemployment, had it not been for council action in the provision of an increasing number of services aimed at the welfare of mothers and children.

A more likely explanation of the relative deterioration in the Clydebank infant mortality would relate this partly to the relatively good position by Scottish standards, from which the burgh began the inter-war period. Improvement from a rather better original base rate would be more difficult in Clydebank than in other areas with greater scope for improvement. Equally important must have been the depression of the early 1930s. In the 1920s Scotland generally had been slowly catching up with Clydebank, whilst the particularly severe depression in the early 1930s in the burgh accelerated the process. The cumulative, pernicious effects of poverty and unemployment and their attendant problems of poor diet, debilitation, etc on sectors of the population living in overcrowded conditions are surely a significant explanation of the lagged death rates found in the figures and graphs. Such a cumulative effect may help to explain the otherwise rather surprising fact that this relative deterioration was at its worst in the later 1930s when depression was lifting from the town.

In considering the general death rate per 1000⁸⁶, Clydebank again tended to show a lower figure than that for other large burghs, giving further support to the remark from the Jubilee Brochure quoted earlier. The figures, corrected for transfer and adjusted for age and sex distribution are given in quinquennial averages in table 8.20 below, and on graphs 8.3 - 8.8, pp.246-51.

Table 8.20 Quinquennial Averages of Death Rate per 1000 (Corrected for Transfer and Adjusted for Age and Sex) 1920-1939

	1920-24	1925-29	1930-34	1935-39	% Change 1920-24/ 1935-39
Clydebank	13.0	13.9	13.4	14.3	+10.0
Greenock	16.6	15.8	15.2	14.9	-10.2
Glasgow	17.4	17.1	15.7	15.7	- 9.8
Dundee	15.9	15.9	14.2	13.9	-12.6
Paisley	15.4	15.1	14.6	13.9	- 9.7
Scotland	14.0	13.5	13.2	13.2	- 5.7

Source:- Calculated from Reports of the Registrar-General for Scotland 1920-1939

A similar picture emerges from this table to that from table 8.19. The position in Clydebank was better than in most other areas for much of the inter-war period, but the town was not sharing the general improvement in death rates to be found elsewhere. The better initial position in Clydebank probably resulted from the fact that it was a relatively new "boom" town in the immediate pre-1919 period, and the effects of this were carried over into the 1920s. The provision of council health services probably also played a part in reducing the likelihood of health problems, as did the relative affluence of a town with a comparatively low unemployment rate for a considerable portion of the period.

Yet, particularly in the later 1930s, Clydebank citizens were not sharing in the general downward trend in death rates experienced elsewhere. It would seem reasonable to suggest that this situation of a lag in death rates was the result of the cumulative efforts of depression which had hit the town in the early 1930s more severely than in other areas. The worsening of the death rate must, in part at least, be a result of the debilitating physical and mental affects of serious economic dislocation. Unemployment increased pressure on the health of many in the Clydebank community who were forced through poverty or pressure of demand to live in overcrowded, unsuitable accommodation.

Such a suggestion gains some support from a consideration of death rates from tuberculosis, regarded in the above quotation from the Medical Officer of Health's report for 1936 as, at least in part, a result of overcrowded housing conditions. The figures are given below.

Table 8.21 Quinquennial Average Deaths - All Tuberculosis per 1000
Population 1920-1939

	1920-24	1925-29	1930-34	1935-39	% change 1920-24/ 1935-39
Clydebank	1.14	1.07	0.97	0.82	-28.1
Greenock	1.60	1.29	1.10	1.06	-33.8
Glasgow	1.50	1.26	1.11	1.09	-27.3
Dundee	1.37	1.12	0.87	0.82	-40.1
Paisley	1.27	1.14	0.94	0.81	-36.2
Scotland	1.19	1.00	0.78	0.72	-39.5

Source:- Calculated from the Reports of the Registrar-General for
Scotland 1920-1939

Again it would seem that although Clydebank began the inter-war years from a relatively good base rate, the burgh did not share to the same extent the reduction in tuberculosis which was occurring in most other areas tabulated. This is more likely to have been a consequence of unemployment and the continuing problem of overcrowding than of any particular medical failure on the part of the authorities.

Though morbidity statistics might give a more detailed picture of community health, they are not as widely available as the mortality statistics quoted above - and these mortality figures seem adequate to outline the history of the health of the community in Clydebank. To the extent that the figures show the Clydebank position to be comparable to or better than other urban areas, there was indeed some justification for the Town Council to suggest in the Souvenir Jubilee Brochure that the health standards of the burgh had been and were relatively good. Nevertheless the less optimistic remarks of the Medical Officer of Health in his reports for 1936 and 1938 quoted above highlight the fact that available statistics indicate a comparative worsening in the health standard of the burgh, particularly in the 1930s.

Equally, the causes of this relative worsening now seem reasonably clear. When the Medical Officer of Health referred in his 1938 report to these

"conditions due fundamentally to an imperfect social and
economic environment"⁹⁷,

he was referring to the effects on health of unemployment and low income, and of overcrowded housing. To a greater or lesser extent these interlinked problems existed in interwar Clydebank.

The considerable efforts of the local authority helped to prevent the situation becoming worse. The extension of medical facilities and services, additional relief to the unemployed, the provision of better quality housing - most of which followed national legislation on the subject - all contributed to maintaining to a considerable extent the average health standards of the burgh. Nevertheless the scale of the problems of unemployment, low income and unsuitable housing were, to a greater or lesser degree, such that they made improvement on the already relatively good standard of health in the burgh, very difficult. Webster's suggestion that care should be taken when claims for improving health standards in the interwar period are made gains support when consideration is given to the Clydebank experience. After all, Clydebank was comparatively favoured for much of the period by

contemporary Scottish standards. Perhaps more local research would show other cases of divergence from the pattern of improvement shown in many national average statistics.

8.9 Conclusion

Perhaps the best way of concluding a consideration of housing specifically is to look at the situation in the town at the end of the period to see what changes had taken place between 1919 and 1939. One important area of change had been in the house building activities of the town council, which had become the major provider of new housing in the burgh - over 2000 properties had been constructed by the end of the 1930s and the council was then probably the largest single landlord controlling 18% of the town's housing. This great increase from virtually nothing is perhaps the most obvious change. New building in the town was largely the province of the town council; there was little or no private building for letting and not a great deal more for sale.

But the problem of overcrowding had been by no means as effectively dealt with as the provision of extra housing might imply. The survey of the burgh under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1935 revealed that 45.2% of private housing in the burgh was still overcrowded by the standards of the Act, and this was found to be predominantly in low income one and two apartment homes where respectively 62.8% and 52.9% were overcrowded - yet this was precisely the sector which town council housing provision failed to help to any significant degree. Even 13.3% of local authority houses were found to be overcrowded. It was estimated that to end overcrowding 2,958 new 3-5 apartment homes were required.⁹⁸ These facts gave Clydebank the unenviable position of second most overcrowded large burgh in Scotland, being overtaken only by Coatbridge.

Nor, as the 1930s progressed, did the scarcity of suitable houses seem to be reduced. The following table, compiled from police census reports, gives the number of unoccupied houses in the burgh.

Table 8.22/

Table 8.22 Clydebank - Unoccupied Houses 1926-1938

Year	Number
1926	69
1929	122
1930	198
1932	318
1933	228
1934	126
1935	51
1936	71
1938	36

Source:- Police Census Reports in Reports of the Medical Officer
of Health of Clydebank 1926-1938

The increase in the number of unoccupied homes in the early 1930s partly reflects an improvement in the situation as a considerable number of council houses were completed at that time. It is also likely that the figures give an indication of the numbers of people forced by economic circumstances to leave the town or who, through inability to pay rents asked, had to share with other families, worsening overcrowding. These suggestions gain confirmation from a portion of the Medical Officer of Health's report for 1931 in which it was stated that

"A certain anomaly exists in local housing conditions. Portions of the population are still indifferently housed, and yet there are a fair number of modern houses empty. The continued construction of houses by the local authority has increased the quantity and raised the quality of the housing accommodation available, but the prolonged depression in trade with its resultant poverty has prevented the populace from taking complete advantage of the improvement ... Lack of present means and future prospects have prevented many families from moving into better houses."

The situation in the burgh caused the Sanitary Inspector to note in 1938

"The supply of houses during the year fell very short of the needs or demands for them. It is doubtful if the scarcity has ever been greater at any time in the history of the burgh The scarcity of houses has been so great that 16 families are now occupying empty shops as
100
houses."

By this time scarcity was a result of natural increase in the population, migration into the town with improved economic conditions and the growth in the number of smaller families seeking accommodation. The problem was not merely overcrowding. Though outright slums seem to have been few, the condition of many houses could have been better - despite efforts to improve standards there were still in 1938 2,877 houses¹⁰¹ using common Wcs.

Perhaps the most useful summing up of the strenuous efforts made in the inter-war years to solve the housing problem in Clydebank comes from the Sanitary Inspector's report for 1939. He wrote

"It is evident from the continuous enquiry for houses and from observation that there is an insufficiency of houses in the burgh and that this insufficiency tends to increase. Despite the provision of 192 local authority houses which, though used for decrowding purposes, released an equal number of smaller houses for occupancy, the demand for housing is still insistent and acute."¹⁰²

Such a comment echoes the remark quoted at the beginning of this chapter from the Sanitary Inspector's report for 1919.

The legislative policy emphasis which developed nationally in the inter-war years reflected the English situation in its concern to provide additional houses rather than the Scottish position where slum clearance was at least as necessary. Such a policy was better suited to the Clydebank situation with its gross overcrowding and lack of slums. Yet this policy and its interpretation in practice in Clydebank through letting rules and rents meant that for most of the period housing policy catered for a sector of the community which was not most severely affected by housing problems. Little was actively done to help the poorer sections of the working classes, amongst whom the unemployed were prominent, until the later 1930s and, given the severity of the overcrowding problem, "filtering up" could only affect a portion of those living in overcrowded conditions. Thus a not insubstantial group in the Clydebank population had to continue to live in housing conditions which would be unlikely to promote an improvement in health standard. The effects of this are indicated by the lack of improvement in the burgh's position in health matters shown in tables 8.19 - 8.21.

There is no evidence that, either nationally or locally, housing policy, timing and development was influenced by the trauma of economic dislocation, to give assistance to the unemployed as part of a public works programme. When depression became particularly severe the reverse occurred - there

was a contraction of building as part of an alteration of emphasis, available resources instead of being directed towards the immediate alleviation of the symptoms of poverty and unemployment. However it is probably unrealistic to imagine that, given the economic beliefs prevalent in the inter-war period, a housebuilding programme could suddenly be adjusted in Clydebank, or elsewhere, to assist in compensating for the severe economic problems of the early 1930s.

Thus in Clydebank housing developments were of little assistance to the unemployed. Growth in the housing stock was not used as a counter-cyclical public works programme, by the choice of both central and local government. The letting policy of the town council for most of the inter-war years made it unlikely that an unemployed individual would be able to obtain municipal housing. In any case such a person would be unable to afford municipal rents set by national legislation at a higher level than those in private accommodation which was already causing considerable dissatisfaction at times of economic stress. The evidence suggests that in practice the local authority in Clydebank saw little connection between its housing policy and the problems of the unemployed, despite attempts by individuals and pressure groups to draw its attention to such a connection.

This does not mean that the council was totally unsympathetic to the problems of the low wage earner and the unemployed - this would be unlikely given the local record on poor relief. When legislation made it possible, it introduced measures to assist this group in the community such as a rent rebate scheme - though there is no evidence to suggest that the council exerted any pressure to accelerate the introduction of such measures. In addition it tolerated a growth in rate arrears in the early 1930s - these rose from £12,329 in 1930-1931 to £19,173 in 1933-1934 and fell with increasing prosperity to £6,881 in 1939-1940.¹⁰³ However such sympathy did little to help the poorer sections of the community to obtain better housing. For most of the inter-war period it was likely that the unemployed and the low wage earner in Clydebank would have to live in unsatisfactory accommodation and such accommodation would do little to lessen the strength of the connections between poverty, poor housing and ill health.

The material in this chapter has demonstrated a considerable connection between unemployment, housing and health in Clydebank. Unemployment made it difficult for some, and at times many, to afford better quality housing, should it be available as a result of the building activities of the town council. Unemployment, poverty and living in overcrowded conditions go far towards explaining the relative worsening of health

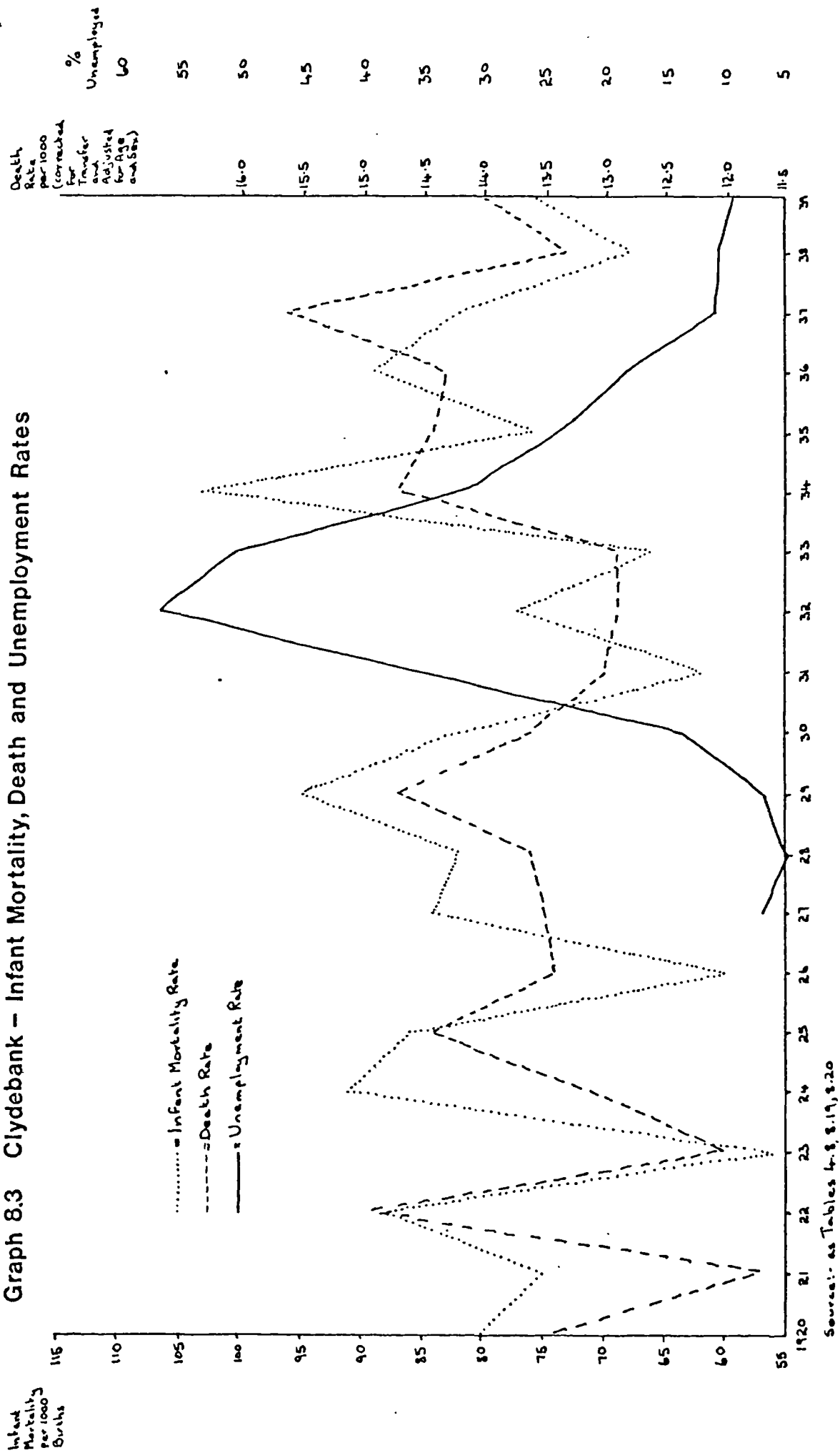
standards found in inter-war Clydebank, particularly in the 1930s.

Both central and local government were aware of the problems of housing and health, though they were perhaps less willing to see a connection between them and with unemployment. Within the legislative framework promoted by inter-war governments, Clydebank Town Council took action to deal with these problems. Major housing development took place and there was a considerable extension of medical services to burgh citizens. However the problems and the solutions adopted in the burgh were not clearly seen as related.

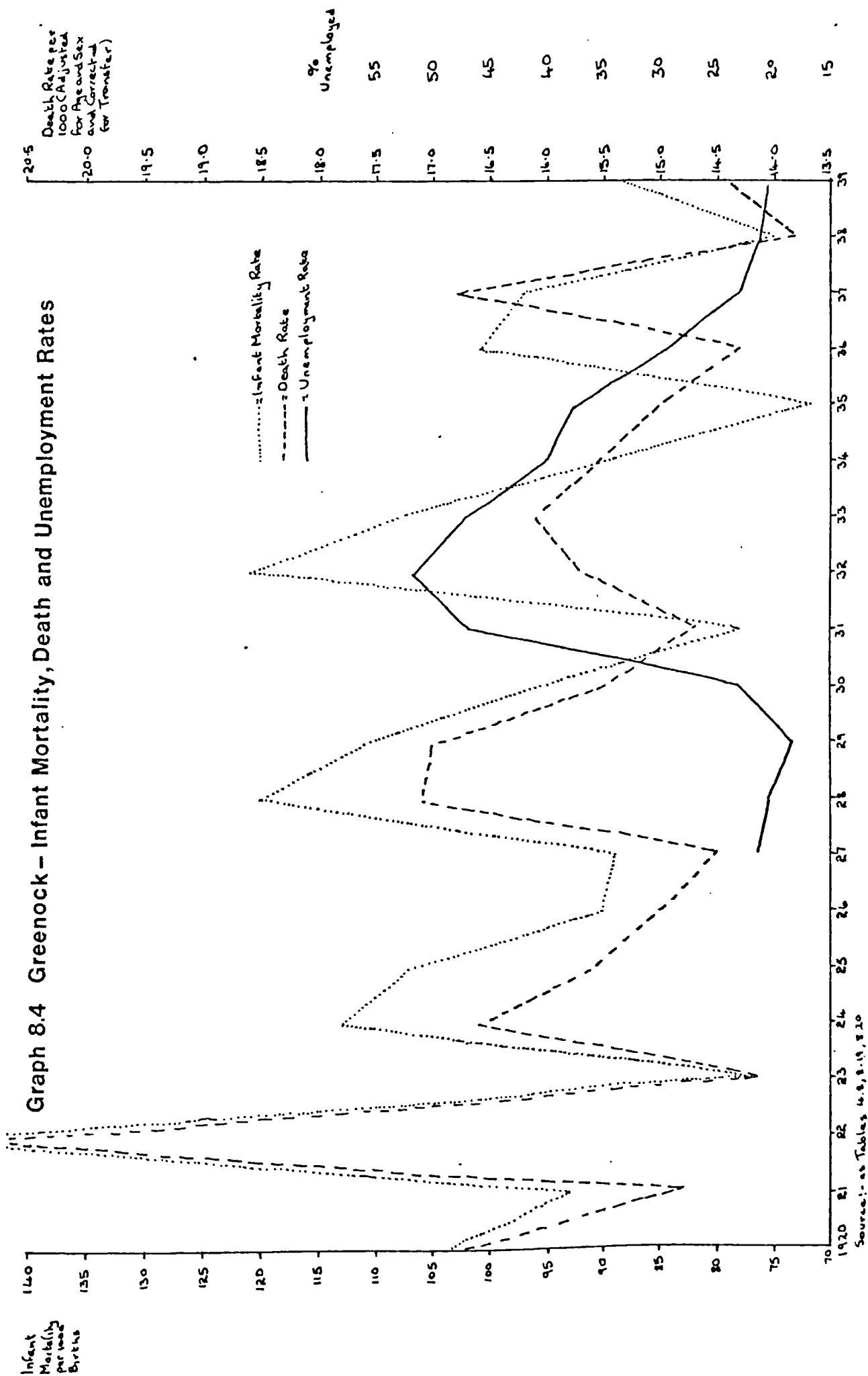
The extension of the housing stock was not, in practice, for much of the inter-war period, used as a method of assisting the unemployed and the low paid. The timing of housing developments meant that they could not be used to provide employment so necessary at this time of particular depression. Rental and letting policies were not used as means to assist the groups in the community who might most benefit from council housing. The practical results of these attitudes may well be partly reflected in the relative worsening in the town's health standards as overcrowding had its effect on the unemployed, the low wage earner, the large family, etc. Other factors must have also contributed to the health position in the burgh, most directly the wide scale and enduring unemployment of the early 1930s.

However it must be admitted that in the spheres of both housing and health Clydebank Town Council, with the backing of national legislation, made considerable efforts to deal with the problems facing the town. In some ways the council could feel a measure of pride in its achievements in the face of considerable pressure - general burgh housing quality was improved by the substantial municipal housing programme, and the fairly good health standards in the burgh were, on the whole, maintained if only at an absolute level. The community was facing up to its responsibilities and making some progress in dealing with them.

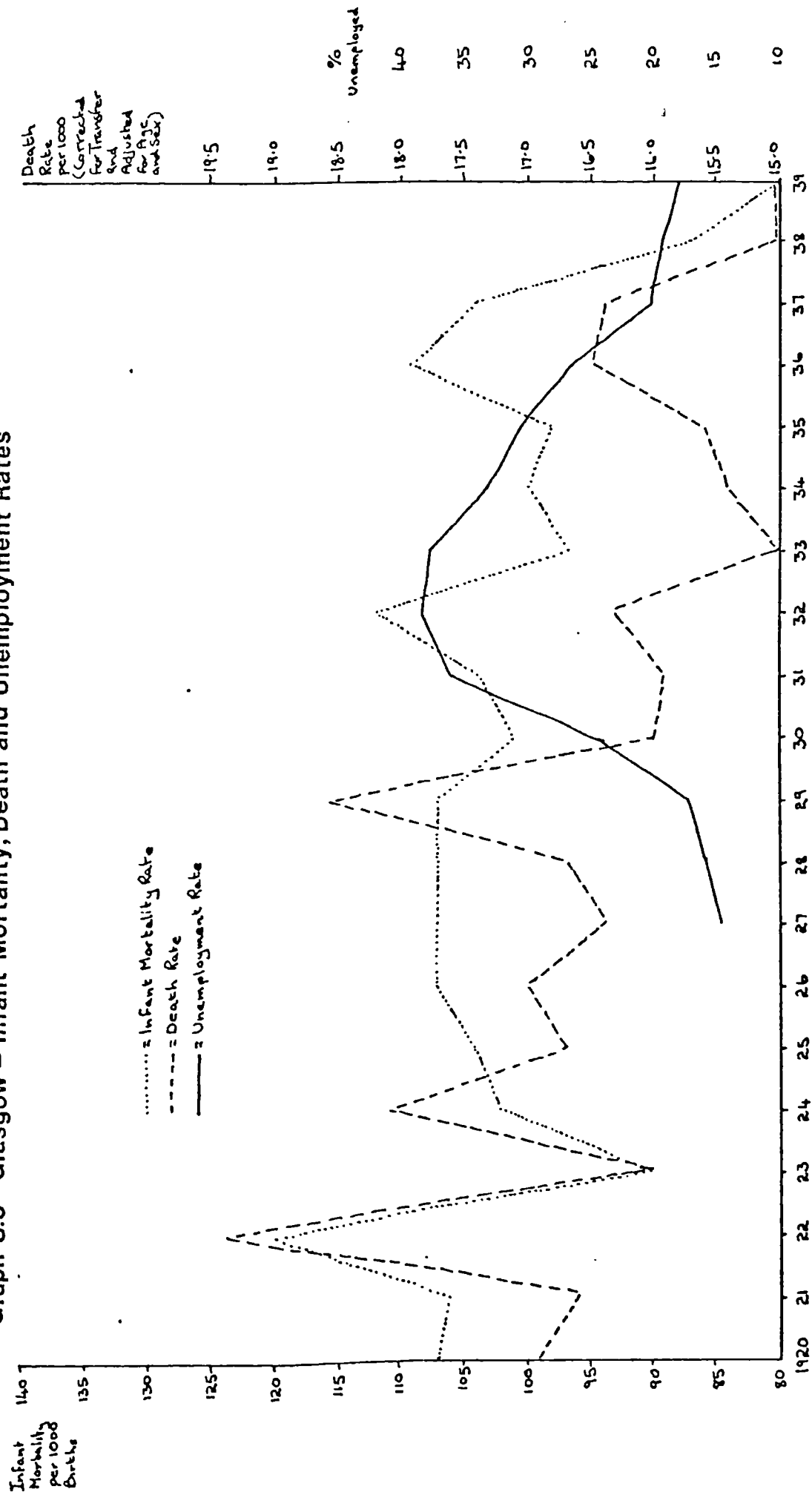
Graph 8.3 Clydebank - Infant Mortality, Death and Unemployment Rates



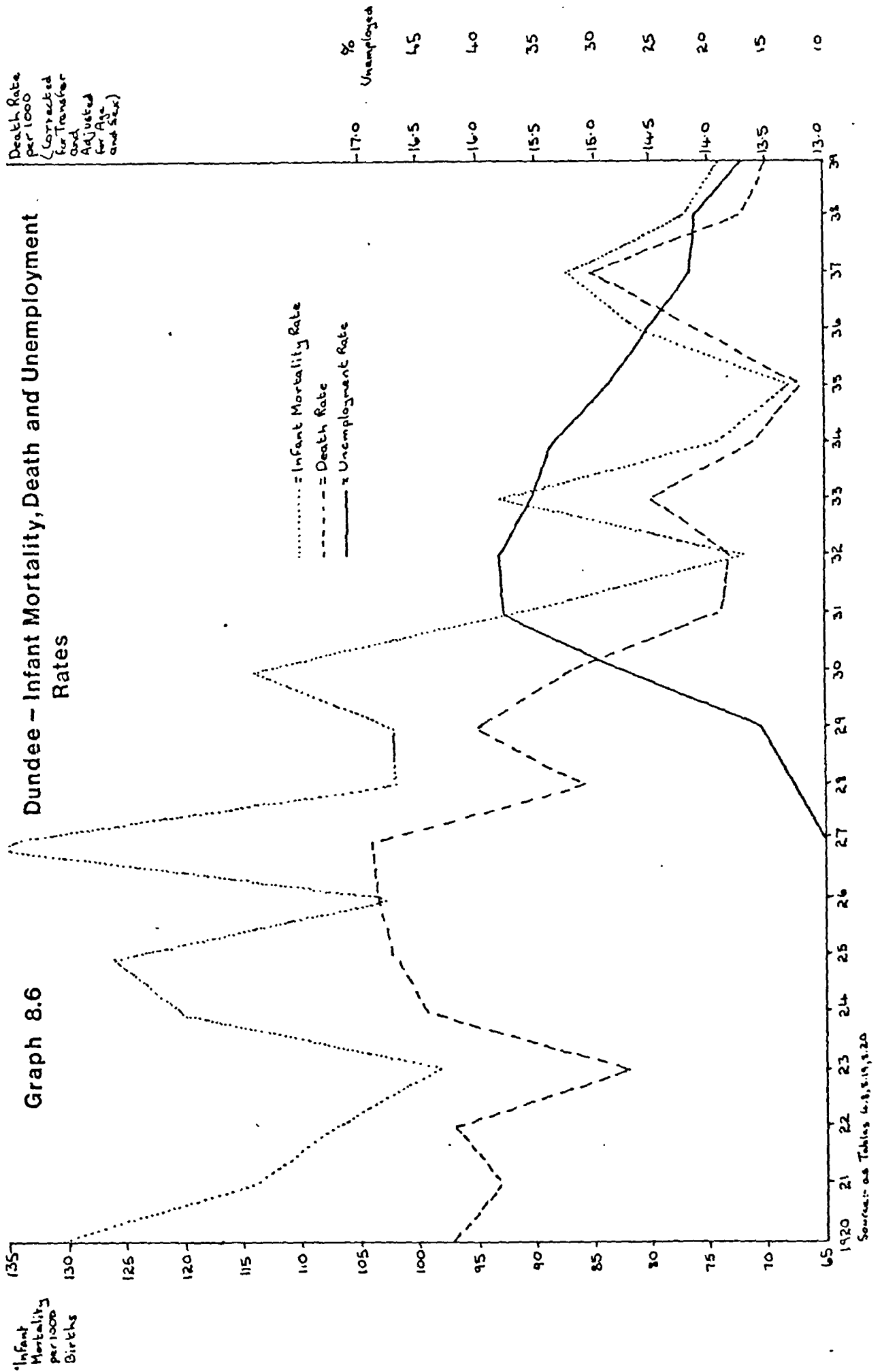
Graph 8.4 Greenock – Infant Mortality, Death and Unemployment Rates



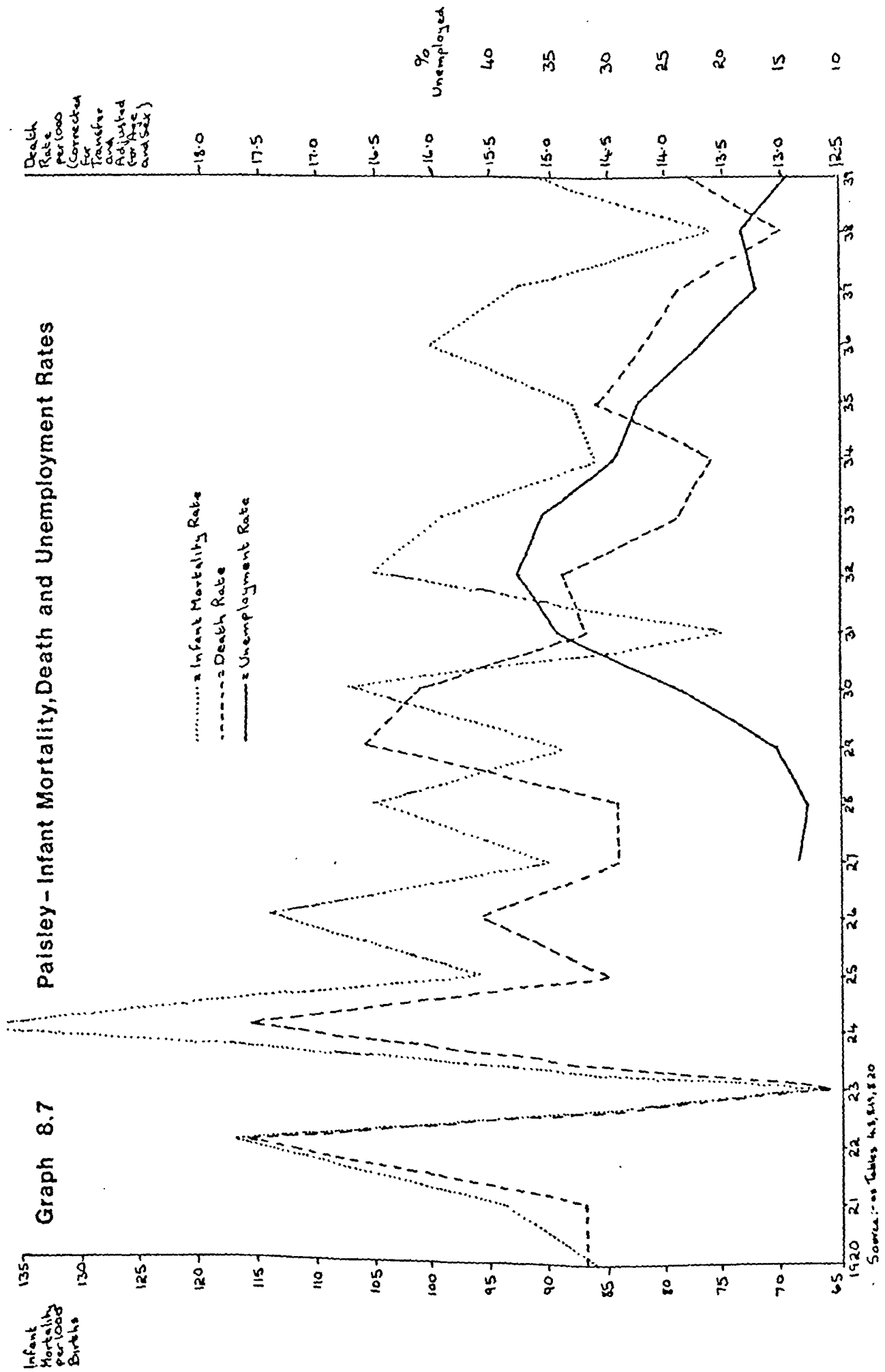
Graph 8.5 Glasgow – Infant Mortality, Death and Unemployment Rates



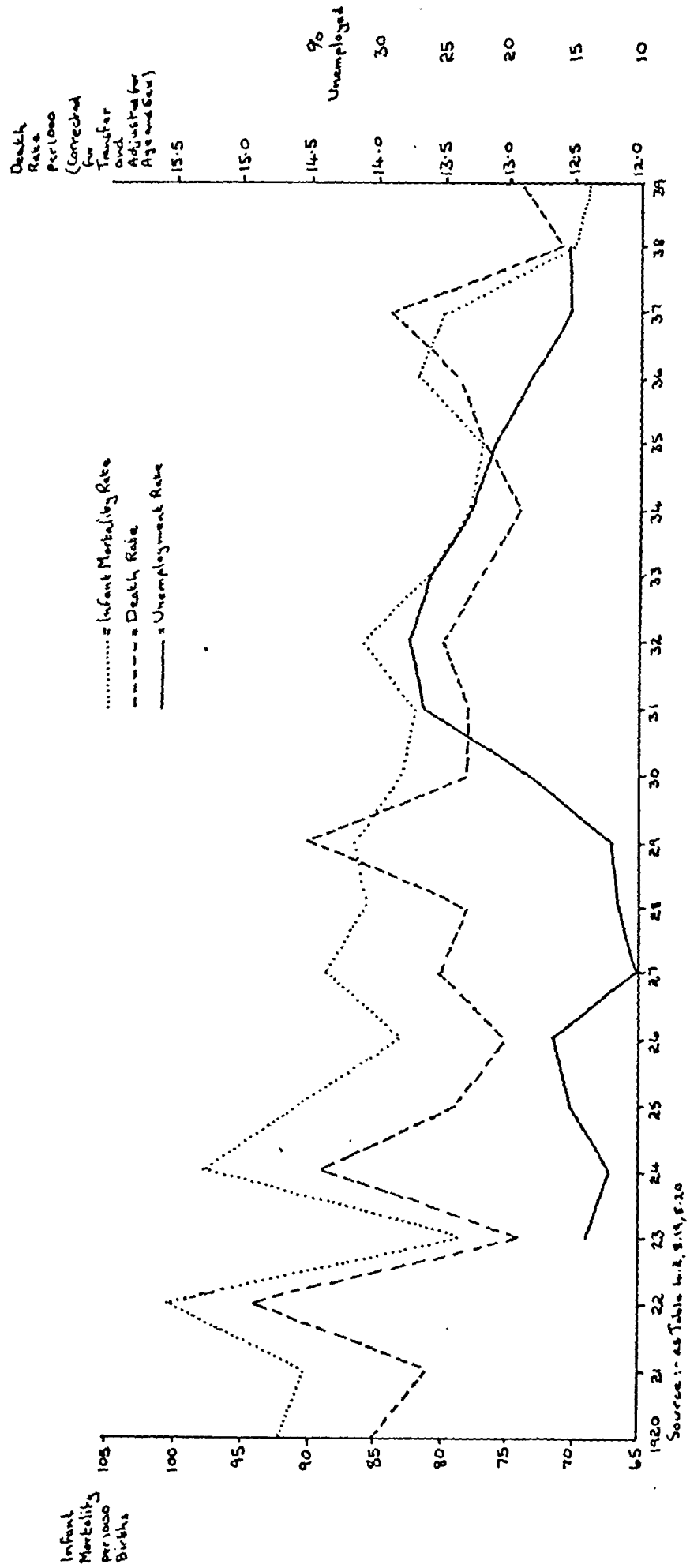
Source: as Tables 4.8, 5.9, 6.20



Graph 8.7



Graph 8.8 Scotland – Infant Mortality, Death and Unemployment Rates



FOOTNOTES

1. For a general discussion of the problem and of government action to deal with it see M Bowley Housing and the State 1919-1944 (London 1945) - appendix one refers specifically to Scotland. From a purely Scottish viewpoint, the most recent work in R D Cramond. Housing Policy in Scotland 1919-1964 (Edinburgh 1966). See also W M Ballantine Rebuilding a Nation (Edinburgh 1944).
2. Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Industrial Population of Scotland Rural and Urban (Cd 8731), 1917, p.346.
3. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1935, p.7.
4. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1919, p.8.
5. Ibid., 1922, p.9.
6. Ibid., 1932, p.40.
7. Housing (Scotland) Act 1935, 25 and 26 Geo.5, Ch.41. See note 98.
8. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1919, p.8.
9. 5 & 6 Geo.5, Ch.97.
10. For a recent view of the Rent Strike from the point of view of the tenants, see S Damer Rent Strike! (Clydebank 1982)
11. For a discussion of this aspect see Cramond, op. cit., pp.61-70.
12. Bowley, op. cit., p.129.
13. A useful survey of this legislation can be found in Cramond, op. cit., pp.8-24, 63-67, 95-102. Comments on this section are based largely on this source.
14. Cramond, op. cit., p.15.
15. Idem, p.19.
16. 9 & 10 Geo.5, ch.99.
17. Cramond, op. cit., p.99.
18. CP, 13 June 1919.
19. Ibid., 9 January 1920.
20. Idem.
21. CTCM, 28 February 1921.
22. CP, 17 June 1921.
23. CTCM, 22 August 1921.
24. CP, 23 October 1931.
25. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1935, p.6.
26. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936, p.113.
27. CTCM, 24 May 1920.
28. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936, p.114.
29. Bowley, op. cit., p.261.
30. Idem, p.263.
31. Idem, p.263.
32. CP, 17 October 1930.
33. Bowley, op. cit., p.264.

34. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936, p.6 (Copies are held in the Local History Collection of Clydebank Public Library).
35. CTCM, 21 June 1926.
36. Ibid., 13 November 1925.
37. CP, 14 January 1921.
38. CTCM, 16 May 1927. The minutes reveal a suggestion that "strong representation be made to the Board of Health re the difficulties over financial arrangements."
39. CP, 18 June 1920.
40. See Cramond, op. cit., pp.14-24, passim.
41. Bowley considers that this process operated to a lesser extent in Scotland generally during the inter-war period than in England and Wales. See Bowley, op. cit., p.265.
42. CP, 8 January 1926.
43. Ibid., 22 January 1926.
44. Ibid., 15 May 1931.
45. Ibid., 3 December 1937.
46. CP, 15 January 1926.
47. CP, 15 May 1931.
48. CTCM, 13 February 1939.
49. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1926, p.6.
50. CTCM, 1 April 1921.
51. Ibid., 5 October 1925.
52. Ibid., 1 March 1926.
53. Ibid., 3 March 1930.
54. Ibid., 12 October 1936.
55. Ibid., 30 December 1937.
56. CP, 25 April 1924.
57. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1936, p.21.
58. CTCM, 21 June 1920.
59. Ibid., 9 April 1923.
60. Ibid., 10 March 1924.
61. Ibid., 7 December 1931.
62. See Damer, op. cit., and Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936, pp.63-66.
63. 10 & 11 Geo.5, Ch.17.
64. CP, 15 April 1921.
65. 13 & 14 Geo.5, Ch.13.
66. CP, 1 January 1926.
67. Cramond, op. cit., p.63.
68. Idem, p.65.
69. Idem, p.68.
70. CTCM, 4 October 1920.
71. Ibid., 15 April 1921.

72. Ibid., 29 April 1921.
73. Ibid., 6 February 1922.
74. Ibid., 7 September 1931.
75. Ibid., 1 February 1932.
76. CP, 22 October 1926.
77. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1931, p.34.
78. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1934, p.9.
79. CTCM, 14 September 1931.
80. CP, 24 October 1930.
81. Cramond, op. cit., p.18.
82. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1924, p.4.
83. CP, 22 October 1926.
84. CTCM, 25 April 1938.
85. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1936, p.21.
86. C Webster "Healthy or Hungry 30s?", History Workshop, Issue 13, Spring 1982, pp.110-129.
87. 1 & 2 Geo.5, Ch.55.
88. 5 & 6 Geo.5, Ch.64; 8 & 9 Geo.5, Ch.29.
89. Report of the Commissioner for the Special Areas in Scotland, September 1937 - September 1938, Cmd. 5905, p.23.
90. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936, p.107.
91. Sir E Hilton Young, House of Commons Debates, 7 July 1933, vol.280, 1932/33, cols.657-8.
92. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936, p.105.
93. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1936, p.32.
94. Ibid., 1938, p.7.
95. "Infant and Child Mortality. Supplement to the 39th Annual Report of the Local Government Board", 1909-10, Cd.5263, p.74 (Report by Sir Arthur Newsholm).
96. For a general consideration of Scottish death (and birth) rates in the 19th and 20th centuries see ed. M Flinn Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s (Cambridge 1977), pp.355-420.
97. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1938, p.7
98. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1936, pp.21-2.
99. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1931, p.5.
100. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1938, p.33.
101. Idem, p.38.
102. Ibid., 1939, p.6.
103. Compiled from Clydebank Town Council Abstracts of Accounts 1930-1940.

CHAPTER NINE

SHOPPING AND SAVINGS PATTERNS

The conventional picture of a shipbuilding town in West Central Scotland in the inter-war years, referred to in the introduction to this section, implies that depressed economic circumstances would have a deleterious effect on commercial and financial aspects of community life. It should be expected that a reduction would occur in the variety, extent and vitality of the retail sector; that changes for the worse would occur in consumption patterns among those members of a predominantly working class community affected by low wages and/or unemployment; that most, if not all, of available income would require to be used for immediate day-to-day needs, leaving little for the anticipation of future requirements in the form of savings. It might be expected that national trends in the retail and banking sectors would be weak at best, even when the effects of government policy, especially the provision of financial relief to the unemployed, were taken into consideration.

It is against the background of these expectations that this chapter will survey shopping and saving patterns in Clydebank in the years between the wars. Consideration will be given not only to the evidence of the impact of economic dislocation on these areas of town life, but an attempt will also be made to cover the effects of national trends and government policy on changes affecting the burgh community. Does the available evidence suggest that these aspects of the social fabric of the town underwent considerable change for the worse, reinforced or mitigated by national developments or government action?

9.1 Shopping Pattern

In Britain as a whole employment in the service sector expanded during the inter-war years, and this was particularly noticeable in the areas of wholesale and retail distribution and miscellaneous services such as catering and hairdressing. The impression that nationally a wider variety of service trades and outlets was increasingly prominent gains some support from evidence of development in the forms of¹ organisation in this sector. Chain stores with a relatively wide range of goods and services became more significant - as D H Adcroft comments

"Between 1910 and 1939 the number of separate branches (that is of firms with 10 or more branches) more than doubled, from 19,852 to 44,487, while the number of firms rose from 395 to 680. By the latter date they were responsible for some 18-19 per cent of the retail trade²...."

Did Clydebank share these trends and to what extent were any changes the result of the unemployment which affected the town in the inter-war years? One piece of evidence comes from a survey of the commercial sector of the town, detailed in Appendix 3, pp.437-39. Clydebank had no Chamber of Commerce in the period 1919-1939, nor were any surveys made of commerce in the town. Accordingly, any description of the town's commercial sector, and the impact of economic problems on it, can perhaps best begin with information obtained from commercial directories of the period. For this purpose a comparison was made between the types of burgh businesses listed in McDonald's Scottish Directory and Gazetteer for the years 1925-1926, 1932-1933 and 1939-1940. The results of the survey are fully tabulated in Appendix 3, but an outline is given below.

Over the entire period surveyed the total number of businesses remained roughly static. In 1925-1926, 294 businesses were mentioned; in 1932-1933 this had risen to 296 and by 1939-1940 the number had fallen to 286. Within this overall pattern, particular areas of growth and decline were visible. The most significant increases in provision were butchers, fishmongers, hairdressers, newsagents and pawnbrokers; the main losers were boot and shoe makers, confectioners, dairies, fruiterers and restaurants.

More particular comments based on the survey statistics can also be made. Reductions in provision seems to have hit those businesses such as shoe repairers, restaurants, drapers, etc., where the public could either itself provide the goods or services, or at least do without them for a considerable period. Of course not all such businesses were so affected. However such a downward trend seems likely to reflect the filtering through to areas of the tertiary sector of the effects of the early 1930s depression in the secondary sector of the town's economy.

Another point of interest concerns the rise in the number of pawnbrokers. There were two in the town in 1925-1926, but the number had risen to four in 1932-1933 and remained at that level to 1939-1940. Such an increase by 1932-1933 occurred at precisely the time when the need for such businesses would be greatest. The mass unemployment.

of the early 1930s would strengthen the need for family income to be increased by whatever means was available. It is also significant that, despite improving employment opportunities, there was still sufficient need for the pawnbroker's services in 1939-1940 to require the same number as had been the case in the depth of depression. This suggests either the acquisition of a habit or, more likely, a pool of low paid and unemployed individuals who still needed the services of the pawnbroker.

At a different social and economic level, a similar point might be made about the number of accountants to be found in the burgh. The number rose from one in 1925-1926 to four in 1932-1933 and fell to three in 1939-1940. It seems possible that the need for accountants may be a further reflection of the effects of depression which hit the business^{sector} in the early 1930s.

Lastly, the purveyors of forgetfulness, the amusement and liquor trades, do not seem to have been badly affected by depression at least in terms of numbers. Such a conclusion would fit with comments to be made in Chapter 11, p.301. The need to distance oneself somewhat from the realities of unemployment may have helped to ensure that such comparatively non-essential businesses survived the depression relatively unscathed.

However before drawing any final conclusions from the survey statistics a note of caution must be struck. It should be remembered that businesses in a commercial directory do not necessarily comprise a full list of all those in the town. Where they can be checked, as in the case of spirit dealers, a comparison with the figures given in the annual reports of the Chief Constable of Dunbartonshire³ indicates that the directory lists approximately 70 per cent of licensed premises. In its turn this suggests that some reliance can be placed on the appendix statistics. Secondly, that fact that one type of business disappears from the directory need not mean that it no longer exists - the owner may simply have changed emphasis, given alterations in public taste, while retaining the service within a broader trade description. Thirdly, some businesses could and did appear under different headings - in 1939-1940 John Browns appeared separately under the headings of Engineers and Shipbuilders. Fourthly, it cannot be assumed that the opening and closing of businesses is related solely to local or national economic conditions - other factors include retirements and, in the case of food shops, tougher public health standards. Fifthly, changes in the types of shops in

the town may have been caused by the introduction of different retailing patterns, eg the availability of cheap, ready made shoes may have resulted in a need for fewer shoe makers.

A last problem connected with the use of these statistics is related to the national trend towards the growth of multiple outlet retailing. A reduction in the number of outlets in the town may not be particularly significant if the total provision is maintained or increased by the expansion of the remaining units. This is a difficult problem to quantify in Clydebank, but the impression given by the directories is that the great majority of businesses and shops in the town were small and independent, not parts of chains either local or national. In 1925-1926 the only known chain store operating in the area was the local cooperative society. By 1939 this had been joined by branches of the City Bakeries, Ross's Dairies and Galbraith Stores.

Some conclusions can be drawn from the surveyed Directory evidence, though admitting that it is not, in itself, wholly satisfactory. The evidence suggests that, though the commercial fabric of the town could not be described as buoyant, it did maintain itself overall throughout much of the inter-war period. The severe depression of the early 1930s did not cause a major disruption to the town's service and distribution sector. This left the community with the same range and choice of outlets. In the maintenance of considerable commercial activity the town comes closer to the national trend of growth than might be expected given the conventional concept of inter-war Clydebank as a town afflicted by depression. National and local government policy must have contributed to this situation. The commercial sector was kept relatively healthy in part by greater community financial resources resulting from the extension of unemployment insurance and the provision of comparatively generous local public assistance. This must have blunted the impact of the early 1930s depression.

Yet the major reason for this situation can only have been the fact that, for much of the inter-war period, Clydebank's secondary sector was affected by depression to a considerably smaller extent than might have been expected. Comparatively low levels of unemployment in the burgh resulted in relative prosperity in the community which in turn contributed to the maintenance of the service sector.

Some local vitality in the commercial sector may help to explain why the burgh did not follow the national trend in the opening of chain

store branches. Local individuals and resources could provide for local needs. This may be surprising, since in the nearby town of Dumbarton the directories give the impression of a larger number of chain outlets in what was a smaller town. This finding probably partly reflects a reluctance on the part of such chain stores to open branches in Clydebank where transport facilities and relative proximity to Glasgow made shopping easier than for those living in Dumbarton. However it may also be a consequence of such stores avoiding areas believed to be suffering from particular economic dislocation.

Directory evidence leads towards the conclusion that the depression of the early 1930s at least did not have a very severe effect on the provision of retail outlets. More detailed information from one local business, the Cooperative Society, supports this view.

⁴ Unfortunately records are patchy and incomplete so a full description is not possible; however the following paragraphs and tables give the available information. In that the society operated a variety of types of outlets, claimed in the town's Souvenir Jubilee Brochure of 1936 to number 92 in Clydebank and surrounding districts, it would seem a good exemplar of the commercial history of the period and may be used to fill out comments above based on commercial directory evidence.

The historian of the society, W E Lawson⁵, argues that the effect of depression on the society was worse in the early 1920s than in the early 1930s. Any lessened impact of depression in the latter period was probably partly a result of experience gained in the earlier years since, as will be seen, the society then changed its response to the towns economic problems, for example by introducing price cuts.

A variety of evidence supports the suggestion of greater economic dislocation in the early 1920s than in the 1930s. In January 1923 the Society's president responded to criticism of the low dividend by saying

"The low purchasing power of the membership was the primary cause of the decrease of the dividend trading difficulties due to the long period of industrial depression, abnormal expenses occurred by the increase of rents, rates and taxes⁶"

played a part. However in April 1933 the president reported

"despite the trying times through which we are passing our financial position is of a most satisfactory nature⁷."

The relative accuracy of such comments can be seen in Table 9.1 and Graph 9.1.

Table 9.1 Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd - Total Sales and Total Sales at Constant Prices 1919-1937 (1930 = 100)

Year	(a) Actual Sales ('000s)	Sales Index	(b) Retail Price Index	Sales at Constant Prices
1919	£1040	144	136.1	106
1920	1270	176	157.6	112
1921	894	124	143.0	87
1922	573	79	115.8	68
1923	442	71	110.1	55
1926	468	65	108.9	60
1928	647	89	105.1	85
1930	723	100	100.0	100
1931	660	91	93.4	97
1932	621	86	91.9	94
1933	595	82	88.6	93
1934	705	98	89.2	110
1935	808	112	90.5	124
1937	956	131	97.5	134

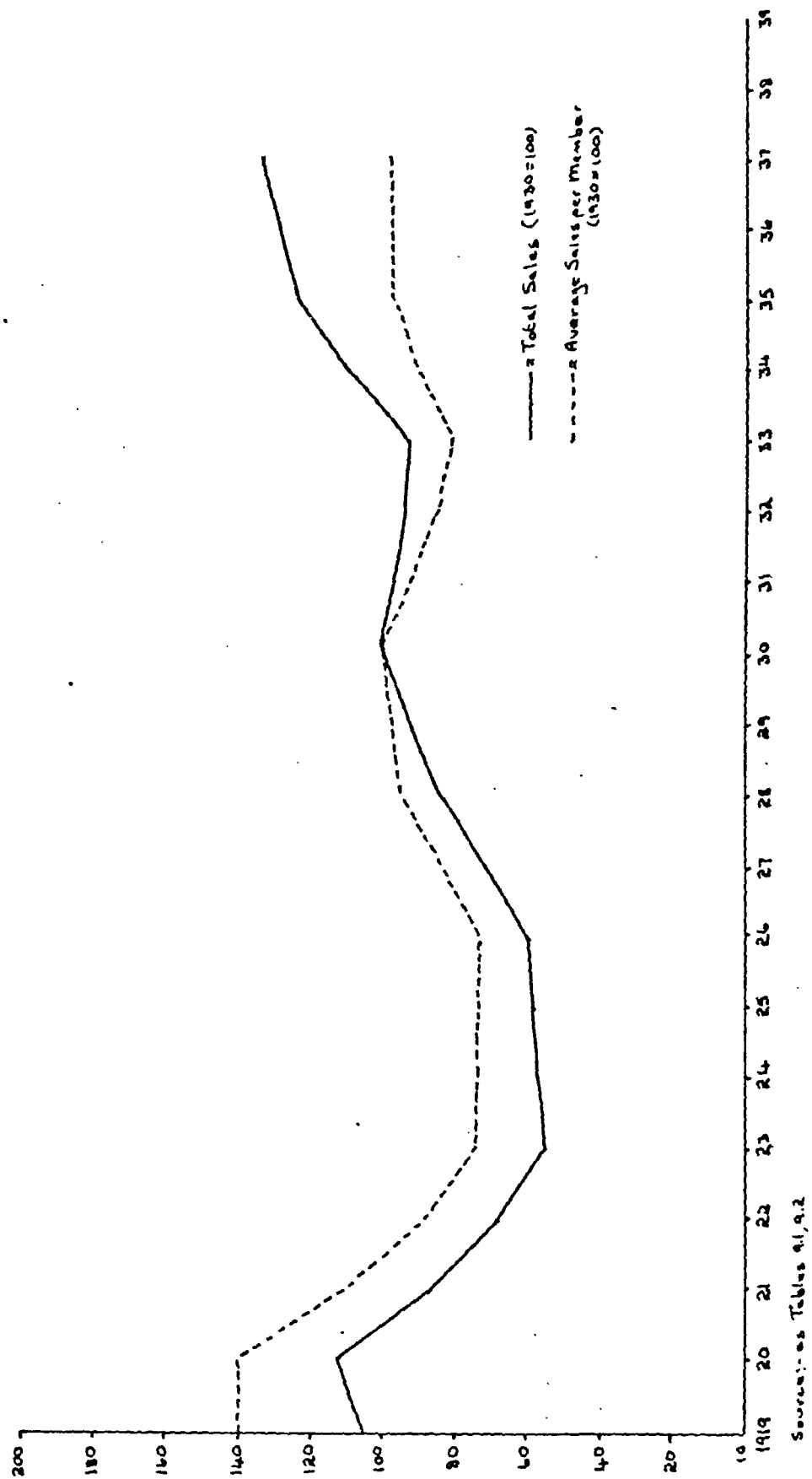
Source:- Calculated from (a) Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd. Reports and Balance Sheets 1919-1937.

(b) D H Aldcroft The Inter War Economy : Britain 1919-1939, London 1970, p.352

There are compatability problems in using incomplete local sales figures and a national retail price index. Yet admitting that the resulting data may not be completely accurate, they can at least indicate trends. There was a very substantial fall in sales at constant prices of 57 per cent between 1920 and 1923 when the town was badly affected by depression. Recovery took place thereafter but in the next depressed period 1930-1933 the fall in sales was only 7 per cent, while the number of unemployed was greater at this time, and so the effect might be expected to have been more considerable.

Two factors can be identified as having a bearing on this pattern. As Table 9.2 p.263 will show, there was a substantial increase in membership of the Society in the 1930s, from 13,864 in 1930 to 16,786 in 1934 and 19,149 in 1937. Thus any reduction in the amounts spent by individual members was largely offset by the increase in total membership. During the depression of the early 1920s on the other hand, with its period of inflation followed by deflation and wage cuts, membership remained static at 10,000/11,000. Policy changes, particularly price cuts exceeding the general fall in prices, introduced by the society in the early 1930s help to explain its

Graph 9.1 Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd. - Total Sales and Sales per Member at Constant Prices



attraction for a number of members who might otherwise be described as marginal potential customers.

Such a local response on the part of the society must have been complemented by changes in government policy in the period. In the later period, though suffering more from unemployment, townspeople were able to obtain greater financial assistance from central and local government - and this was at a time when world trade factors were producing lower price levels than had been the case in the early 1920s, improving the real position of unemployed and employed alike. In the 1930s the insured unemployed no longer suffered gaps in the periods of payment of benefit which existed under the Unemployment Insurance Acts of the early 1920s. In addition, dependents' benefits, at lower rates than in the 1930s, were only paid from November 1921 onwards. Legally parochial relief for those able bodied unemployed outwith the state insurance scheme could only be paid from 1921 (see ch.6 p.111 and ch.7 p.153).

Thus it seems clear that the explanation of the better position of the society in the early 1930s lies in a combination of local and national factors. These were changing relief policies, the fall in price levels, adaptations by the society to prevailing economic conditions and an increase in membership.

Yet some evidence that individual members were rather more severely affected by depression than a consideration of the society's financial position might indicate comes from a survey of average amounts spent per member. These fell, at constant prices, rather more than did sales, as can be seen in Table 9.2 and Graph 9.1 p.261.

Table 9.2/

Table 9.2 Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd - Members Annual
Average Purchases at Current and Constant Prices
1919-1937. (1930 = 100)

Year	(a) No. of members	(a) Current Sales (‘000s)	Annual Average per member	Annual Average Sales Index	(b) Retail Price Index	Annual Average per member at Constant Prices
1919	10,432	£1040	£99.69	191	136.1	140
1920	11,059	1270	114.83	220	157.6	140
1921	10,853	894	82.37	158	143.0	110
1922	10,793	573	53.09	102.	115.8	88
1923	10,399	442	42.50	81	110.1	74
1926	11,278	468	41.50	80	108.9	73
1928	12,282	647	52.68	101	106.0	95
1930	13,864	723	52.15	100	100.0	100
1931	14,599	660	45.21	87	93.4	93
1932	15,374	621	40.39	77	91.1	85
1933	15,785	595	37.69	72	88.6	81
1934	16,786	705	42.04	80	89.2	90
1935	17,630	808	45.83	88	90.5	97
1937	19,149	956	49.92	96	97.5	98

Source:- As Table 9.1

At constant prices, the annual average purchase per member fell by 66 per cent between 1920 and 1923 and by 19 per cent between 1930 and 1933, whilst concurrently membership fell by 6 per cent in the earlier period then rose later by almost 14 per cent. A fall in membership and a substantial reduction in sales per member were major causes of the collapse of sales in the depression of the early 1920s. This would not be unexpected at a time of high unemployment when migration from the town was occurring as indicated in Chapter 13, p.363. In the early 1930s the number of members rose, probably as a response among "fringe members" who wished to take advantage of the Society's developing policy, eg on price cuts. At the same time there was a smaller reduction in the amount spent per member for reasons suggested above. Thus the reduction in total sales was less in the early 1930s.

There were several reasons for the increasing membership in the 1930s. As indicated above, a major reason seems to have been the policy of price cuts, commented upon by Lawson, which had not been a ^{major} feature of trading in the early 1920s. In the early 1930s prices generally were falling and the Society seems to have matched and gone beyond this

trend, particularly in certain essential commodities such as bread.⁸
As the Society's auditor noted in 1933

"The only item calling for attention is the decrease in sales.

This however is only a money decrease, in commodities you are
still selling the same.⁹"

Another attraction at this time may have been the grants which the
Society gave to 359 members in extreme distress.¹⁰ Furthermore the
Society was willing to extend credit to its members. As the president
remarked in March 1932

"There never was a time when some of our people were in such
difficulties and to many the Society has proved a great friend
and has enabled them to maintain their credit and carry on.¹¹"

Table 9.3 indicates the credit extended through the Mutuality Club,
initially set up in 1927 for drapery, boot and furnishing purchases.
Column 1 shows the balance in the club account. This indicates the
amount of money paid into the club by the members in advance of
purchases. Column 2 shows the amount owing for goods, which was the
extent of the credit advanced to the members by the Society for the
purchases they made. Column 3 shows the ratio of column 2 to column 1,
and attempts to show the changing level of credit the Society was
willing to extend by comparing the amount of credit granted with the
amount of money paid to the Society by members in anticipation of
purchases over six monthly periods.

Table 9.3/

Table 9.3 Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd - Mutuality Club 1928-1939

	1. <u>BALANCE IN</u> <u>CLUB ACCOUNT</u>	2. <u>OWING FOR</u> <u>GOODS</u>	
Half year to	(= advances on sales by members to Society)	(= credit advanced to members by Society)	RATIO 2:1
March 1928	£4558	£12,685	2.8:1
March 1929	6406	14,160	2.2:1
March 1931	5357	15,162	2.8:1
Sept. 1931	5848	13,609	2.3:1
March 1932	5728	16,166	2.8:1
Sept. 1932	5268	14,100	2.7:1
March 1933	6022	14,699	2.4:1
Sept. 1933	6653	13,117	2.0:1
March 1934	8062	14,543	1.8:1
Sept. 1934	9382	13,079	1.4:1
March 1935	10,621	14,943	1.4:1
Sept. 1935	8433	13,597	1.6:1
March 1936	8756	14,507	1.7:1
Sept. 1936	9030	14,392	1.6:1
March 1937	10,059	15,251	1.5:1
Sept. 1937	9512	12,981	1.4:1
March 1938	10,243	12,771	1.2:1
Sept. 1938	9908	11,022	1.1:1
March 1939	10,658	13,589	1.3:1
Sept. 1939	10,120	16,477	1.6:1

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd.,
Reports and Balance Sheets 1928-1939.

The figures show that the extent to which the Society was willing to give credit beyond the amount it collected in advance on sales remained at approximately the same level in the depressed early 1930s that it had been in the relatively prosperous late 1920s. It was only from the period of recovery beginning in 1934 that the ratio of credit advanced to money collected began to fall. This may have been a result of a change in policy by management, though there is no evidence of this. The fact that the amount owing for goods remained relatively static, whilst from 1934 the amounts paid into the club in advance of purchases began to increase suggests that changes in the local community rather than in the Society may have been responsible. It is possible that from 1934, when recovery began, there was a reaction amongst these more prosperous individuals against continuing debts at levels similar to those which had to be endured during the adverse circumstances of the depression period.

Some further evidence of the response of the community to depression may come from a comparison of average weekly purchases per cooperative member and local average weekly wages, exemplified by those paid in John Brown & Co Ltd. Such a comparison is difficult to make and can at best indicate possible trends which may gain support from other evidence. The figures are set out in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4 Average Weekly Purchases and Local Wages -
Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd and John Brown & Co Ltd
1927-1939

Year	(a) Average Purchase	(b) Average Wage	(a) as % of (b)
1927	16/2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d	53/3d	29.9
1928	20/1	57/-	35.2
1929	22/-	55/3	39.8
1930	20/-	52/10	37.8
1931	17/1 $\frac{3}{4}$	53/4	32.0
1932	15/4 $\frac{3}{4}$	60/7	25.4
1933	14/3 $\frac{1}{2}$	54/9	26.1
1934	16/0 $\frac{1}{2}$	55/2	29.1
1935	17/6 $\frac{1}{2}$	53/11	32.5
1936	18/4	57/7	31.8
1937	18/8 $\frac{3}{4}$	60/2	31.1
1938	18/9 $\frac{1}{2}$	63/7	29.6
1939	18/8	68/9	27.2

Source:- Calculated from (a) Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd
Reports and Balance Sheets 1927-1939.

(b) John Brown & Co Ltd Pay Bill Books
UCS 1/52/3-7.

The table suggests that in the early 1930s when membership was rising there was a reduction in the percentage of weekly wages spent in the Cooperative Society. The large size of the group then forced to rely on what was often felt to be inadequate levels of central or local government assistance to the unemployed must have contributed to the reduction in the average level of weekly purchases at a time when wages for those still in work were relatively stable. Further factors in this reduction were probably the attraction to "fringe members" of the price cuts then being put into operation, as well as generally falling price levels.

A change in spending patterns probably also contributed to the reduction in average purchases. It is likely that there was a reluctance or inability to spend on more expensive items such as furniture whilst

concentrating on the purchase of essentials such as some foods. A survey of sales by major departments in the Cooperative Society gives support to this suggestion. These are expressed as annual figures in Table 9.5(a) and as annual percentages in Table 9.5(b).

Table 9.5(a) Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd - Net Sales by

	<u>Department 1928-1939</u> ('000s)							
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
$\frac{1}{2}$ year to	Grocery	Fleshing	Dairy	Fish	Boots	Drapery	Furniture	TOTAL
March 1928	£129	£24	£42	£10	£12	£37	£12	£266
March 1929	162	30	51	12	15	42	16	328
March 1931	149	34	50	9	13	38	12	305
Sept. 1931	139	28	46	7	12	40	10	282
March 1932	139	27	49	9	10	39	11	284
Sept. 1932	136	25	47	8	10	37	9	272
March 1933	132	24	48	8	9	39	9	269
Sept. 1933	128	22	44	7	10	41	8	260
March 1934	146	27	50	10	11	48	11	303
Sept. 1934	156	27	54	9	12	55	12	325
March 1935	171	32	51	12	14	61	17	358
Sept. 1935	168	30	58	11	13	59	15	354
March 1936	185	34	61	14	15	66	20	395
Sept. 1936	180	31	62	12	15	63	17	380
March 1937	195	35	67	14	16	69	23	419
Sept. 1937	200	33	72	12	16	69	20	422
March 1938	203	36	76	14	16	72	26	443
Sept. 1938	198	33	72	13	16	69	21	422
March 1939	210	36	79	15	17	69	27	453
Sept. 1939	207	33	73	14	16	69	22	434

Source:- Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd

Reports and Balance Sheets 1928-1939.

Table 9.5(b) Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd - Percentages of Net Sales by Department 1928-1939

$\frac{1}{2}$ Year to	FOOD (ie a+b+c+d)	BOOTS	DRAPERY	FURNITURE
March 1928	77.0	4.7	13.7	7.3
March 1929	77.8	4.5	12.8	4.7
March 1931	79.6	4.1	12.5	3.9
Sept. 1931	78.3	4.1	14.2	3.4
March 1932	78.7	3.6	13.8	3.8
Sept. 1932	79.5	3.5	13.8	3.2
March 1933	78.7	3.4	14.4	3.5
Sept. 1933	77.5	3.7	15.7	3.0
March 1934	76.9	3.5	15.8	3.7
Sept. 1934	75.6	3.7	17.0	3.6
March 1935	74.4	3.8	17.0	4.8
Sept. 1935	75.3	3.7	16.6	4.3
March 1936	74.3	3.8	16.8	5.0
Sept. 1936	74.9	3.9	16.7	4.5
March 1937	74.3	3.7	16.5	5.6
Sept. 1937	75.2	3.8	16.4	4.7
March 1938	74.2	3.6	16.3	5.8
Sept. 1938	74.8	3.7	16.3	5.0
March 1939	75.2	3.7	15.2	5.9
Sept. 1939	75.2	3.8	15.9	5.1

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd
Reports and Balance Sheets 1928-1939.

The figures in Table 9.5(b) show that the proportion of sales in various departments in Clydebank Cooperative Society was similar to those found nationally in this organisation. D H Alderoft, describing the national position, writes

"By the end of the (inter-war period) period (the Cooperative's) main strength lay in food, household goods and clothing, the first of which accounted from some three quarters of all sales. They were also slow to develop modern and attractive methods of display and the quality of their products did not improve very much. In effect therefore they continued to cater for the low income groups.¹²"

In Clydebank, a working class town, food comprised approximately 75 per cent of sales.

More importantly, the evidence gives significant information on the standard of living in Clydebank in the 1930s - though allowances must

be made for changing price levels, eg the fall of the early 1930s, when considering the sales figures in Table 9.5(a). The value of all sales increased considerably during the decade, implying an improving standard of living. This accords well with the suggestion made elsewhere that, for much of the inter-war period, Clydebank was, by Scottish standards, relatively prosperous. In particular food sales, especially dairy foods, were increasing, contributing to a more varied diet and a general maintenance, if not improvement, in health standards. This local development mirrored a national trend - John Burnett indicates this in his comment that

".... a comparison of per capita consumption before the war with 1924-1928 and 1934 shows substantial increases in practically every food, greatest in the case of fruit, vegetables, butter and eggs, least in that of potatoes and wheat flour¹³."

However it must not be forgotten that the unemployed and those in receipt of low wages were considerably less able to share in any improvement in living standards - and even in the more prosperous late 1930s there were still many individuals falling into those categories in the burgh (see Tables 4.4 p.47 , 7.1 p.155 and 7.2 p.156).

In this connection, sales figures in all departments fell during the depressed period of the early 1930s, suggesting a reduction in the standard of living at that time. Table 9.5(b) indicates that a greater proportion of total sales were on food in those years whilst rather less, perhaps 5 per cent, was being spent on relative luxuries such as furniture than in the more prosperous years in the latter part of the decade. Specifically within food departments, there were changes in the pattern of sales which emphasise the difficulties faced by the burgh community at that time. Consumption of fresh meat fell considerably between 1931 and 1933 whilst sales in other food departments, though reduced, were less badly affected. Even allowing for deflation these figures indicate a real fall in living standards for a very considerable proportion of the burgh population.

A variety of factors influenced Clydebank Cooperative Society during the inter-war period. Overall it was able to share, to a growing extent, in the relative prosperity enjoyed in the burgh in these years. If, however, it shared the relative prosperity of the community, it also shared in the effects of the sharp depressions of the early 1920s and early 1930s. The depression of the early 1920s, though rather less severe in terms of numbers of unemployed, affected the society and presumably the community on which it depended to a greater extent

than that of the early 1930s. In fact directory and cooperative evidence both suggest that, contrary to what might be expected, the overall impact on retail outlet provision and perhaps in individual businesses was comparatively less significant in the early 1930s.

This finding can be explained in a number of ways. Central and local government action through the wider provision of unemployment relief must have played a part. At the same time the national deflation in prices rather than wages contributed to the lessened effect of depression, whereas in the 1920s price cuts were accompanied by falling wage rates. In addition cooperative membership was rising, probably attracted by changes in policy by which the society adapted to the local situation - these were price cuts, assistance to members in distress and the maintenance of credit. However suggestions of a relatively lessened effect of depression in the 1930s must not hide the fact that at an absolute level the community was suffering considerably, as the sales figures showing a reduced standard of living at this time suggest. Additionally, though conditions in the community between 1919 and 1939 were generally good by Scottish standards, many families were still affected by unemployment or low wages even at times of relative prosperity. Such individuals were less able to share in the improving standard of living revealed in the cooperative data.

9.2 Savings Pattern

A further attraction of a Cooperative Society in a working class environment must have been its savings aspect. The purchase of goods now resulted in the payment of dividend in the future and was thus a form of saving. Savings opportunities increased during the inter-war period in friendly societies, cooperatives, the National Savings movement and banks. This opportunity was taken advantage of - Aldcroft notes that

"Small savings grew rapidly in the inter-war period."

However he continues

".... (this) was not necessarily incompatible with the absence of any savings among a significant sector of the working class community since only the better paid working class families were in a position to save."

The following survey of saving in Clydebank will note both these trends.

The material in this section relating to the burgh itself concerns the Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd. This Savings Bank was set up by the

town council in 1921 and appears to have provided a service for small savers. It seems unlikely that the bank was used to any extent by business men since its services were restricted and it did not lend money to the public. Indeed, in line with Aldcroft's suggestion that nationally only a proportion of the working classes were in any position to save at all, in terms of numbers of depositors the Municipal Bank was not well used despite offering a higher rate of interest than an ordinary savings bank (see Table 9.7, p.274) As shown in Chap.8 , p.210 the deposits made were invested with the town council to be used for the benefit of the town in various ways, particularly to assist in the financing of the housing programme. The experience of the bank must then reflect the financial situation of those members of the working and perhaps lower middle classes in the community with money to save.

Before considering the evidence relating to the Municipal Bank itself, the trends in Scottish commercial banking generally at current and constant prices have been indicated in Table 9.6 and Graph 9.2.

In Scotland generally deposits, at current prices, stagnated then declined modestly in the 1920s but increased sharply after 1931. In constant prices the gain was continuous, ie allowing for price changes there was an increase in the real value of deposits throughout the period as a whole. In the Royal Bank, which had a branch in the town, deposits increased rapidly in both current and constant terms - presumably the Royal Bank was particularly attractive to depositors.

Table 9.6/

Table 9.6 Scottish Banking System and Royal Bank of Scotland -
Deposits at Current and Constant Prices 1919-1938 (1930=100)

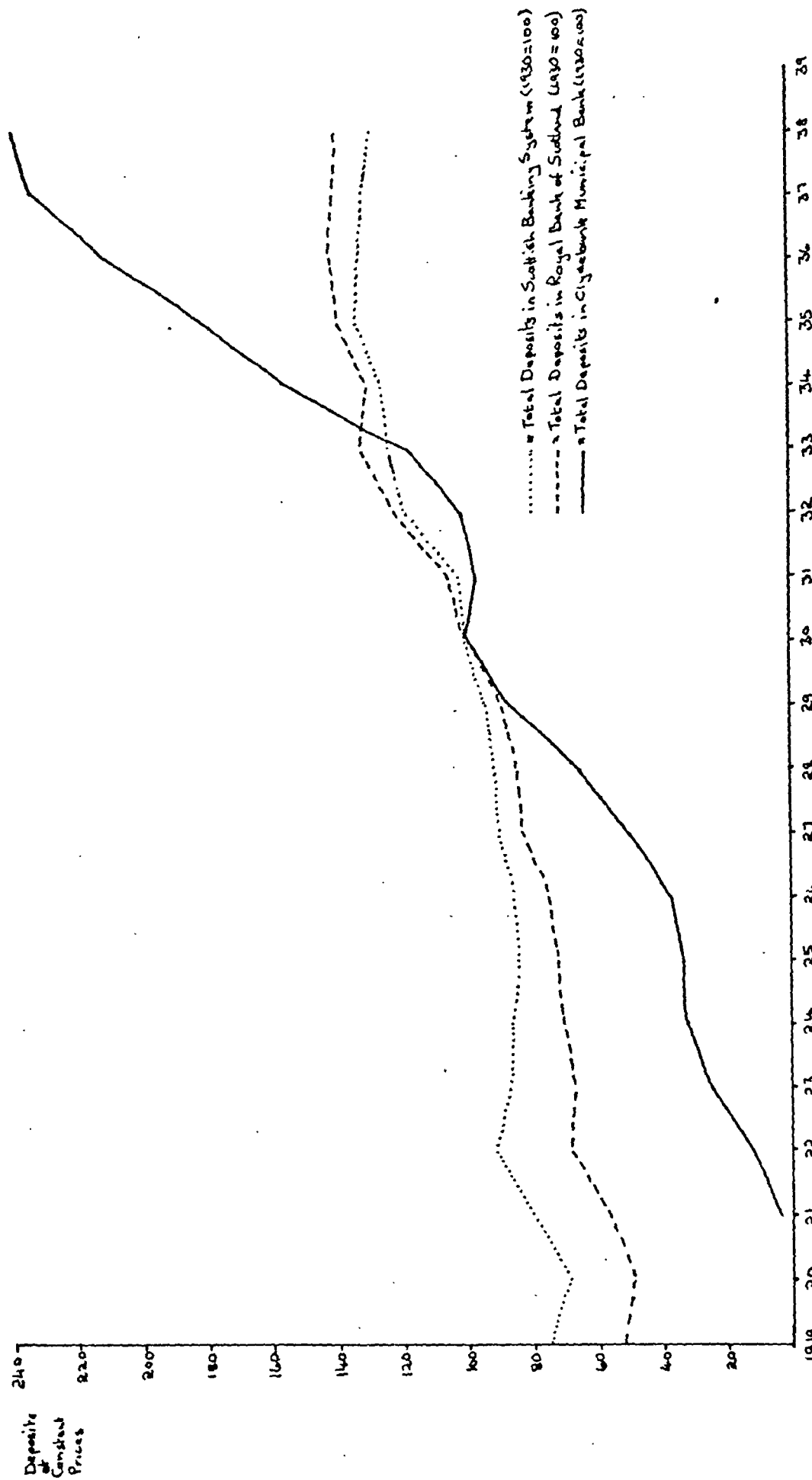
Year	BANKING SYSTEM			ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND		
	(a)		Deposit at	(b)		Deposits at
	Deposits	Deposit	Constant	Deposits	Deposit	Constant
	(millions)	Index	Prices	(millions)	Index	Prices
1919	£259.61	102	75	£35.55	71	52
1920	279.23	109	69	39.11	78	49
1921	291.06	114	80	40.74	81	57
1922	267.79	105	91	40.27	80	69
1923	247.23	96	87	37.88	75	68
1924	242.57	95	86	39.72	79	71
1925	240.94	94	84	40.80	81	73
1926	238.82	93	85	40.46	82	75
1927	241.97	95	90	44.19	88	83
1928	248.80	97	92	44.67	89	88
1929	250.85	98	94	46.24	92	89
1930	256.08	100	100	50.39	100	100
1931	243.57	95	102	49.42	98	105
1932	276.46	108	119	55.90	111	122
1933	281.68	110	124	59.26	118	133
1934	286.69	112	126	58.95	117	131
1935	308.50	121	134	64.01	127	140
1936	317.31	124	133	66.80	133	143
1937	330.45	129	132	69.67	138	142
1938	325.25	127	129	69.92	139	141

Source:- Calculated from (a) S G Checkland (Scottish Banking: A History 1695-1973) Glasgow 1975, p.745.
 (b) Bankers Almanac and Year Book 1920-1939.

The experience of the Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd, is described in Table 9.7 and Graph 9.2. For comparative purposes less significance should be attached to the figures for the first few years of the bank as this was the period it was establishing itself.

Table 9.7/

Graph 9.2 Bank Deposits at Constant Prices - Scotland and Clydebank



Source: as Table 9.1, 9.7

Table 9.7 Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd - Accounts, Deposits and Withdrawals 1921-1939

Year	Number of Accounts	Annual Total Deposits	Annual Total Withdrawals	Annual Net Balance	Total Balance	Total Balance at Constant Prices (1930=100)
1921-22	48	£ 3,382	£ 1,416	+£ 1,966	£ 1,966	3
1922-23	112	6,284	2,606	+ 3,677	5,643	12
1923-24	189	10,351	5,147	+ 5,204	10,846	24
1924-25	334	10,573	7,050	+ 3,523	14,370	32
1925-26	441	10,542	9,686	+ 856	15,226	33
1926-27	556	11,642	10,538	+ 1,103	16,330	37
1927-28	988	16,820	11,171	+ 5,650	21,980	50
1928-29	1002	21,219	14,743	+ 6,476	28,455	66
1929-30	988	24,301	15,736	+ 8,538	36,987	87
1930-31	1024	25,718	20,516	+ 4,157	41,144	100
1931-32	1041	19,477	23,235	- 3,758	37,395	97
1932-33	927	17,468	17,206	+ 262	37,657	101
1933-34	1036	28,381	14,957	+ 5,406	43,063	119
1934-35	1174	34,273	20,730	+ 13,543	56,606	155
1935-36	1249	34,591	22,870	+ 11,721	68,327	183
1936-37	1342	40,347	22,732	+ 12,615	80,942	212
1937-38	1410	42,716	29,635	+ 13,087	94,023	235
1938-39	1453	33,751	30,234	+ 3,517	97,540	240

Source:- Calculated from 1921-1927 Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd. Balance Sheet 1927.

1928-1939 Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd. Annual Reports.

Given the small scale in which it operated, involving only a small proportion of burgh citizens, it is clear that the rise in deposits at constant prices in this bank was considerably sharper than in the major commercial banks, particularly in the later 1930s. This might well be explained as an example of the ingrained savings habit of the local working and lower middle classes at times of relative prosperity in the burgh, strengthened by the experience of severe depression earlier in each decade. Perhaps rather more than the type of individual who was a customer of a commercial bank, the working classes in Clydebank with money to save felt it necessary to prepare for possible future economic hardship, when this could be done. Furthermore, as in Table 9.1, p.260 showing Cooperative Society sales, Table 9.7 indicates the effect in the community of the early 1930s depression. A negative annual net balance occurred in 1931-1932 and a very small positive balance in the following year. This is also reflected in the total balance at constant prices where, unlike the commercial banks, the period 1930-1932 saw a fall, albeit small, for the only

occasion in the period to 1939. Presumably at least some depositors were being forced to rely on accumulated savings at a time when unemployment was affecting the town even more harshly than the nation generally. However, particularly from the mid 1930s with the return of relative prosperity, the trend in deposits was sharply upwards. Table 9.8 gives some further information.

Table 9.8 Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd. - Number and Average Amount of Deposits and Withdrawals 1928-1940

Year	Number of Deposits	Change	Average per Deposit	Number of Withdrawals	Change	Average per Withdrawal
1928-29	6084	-	£3.48	1423	-	£10.36
1929-30	6730	+ 646	3.61	1709	+ 286	9.22
1930-31	5406	-1324	4.57	2155	+ 446	9.52
1931-32	4333	-1073	4.50	1942	- 213	11.96
1932-33	4104	- 229	4.18	1986	+ 44	8.66
1933-34	4963	+ 860	4.11	1674	- 312	8.94
1934-35	6052	+1088	5.66	1763	+ 89	11.76
1935-36	6631	+ 597	5.22	1974	+ 211	11.59
1936-37	6573	- 58	6.14	1973	- 1	14.06
1937-38	7360	+ 787	5.80	1968	- 5	15.06
1938-39	6956	- 404	4.85	2245	+ 277	13.41
1939-40	6555	- 401	6.03	2053	- 192	15.04

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Municipal Bank Ltd Annual Reports 1928-1940.

A number of conclusions may be drawn from the table. Firstly there is some evidence for Keynes' suggestion that in times of economic stress people tend to save - the average deposit in the early 1930s was rather higher than in the late 1920s. However the number of deposits fell sharply between 1929-1930 and 1933-1934, from 6730 to 4964, a fall of 1766 or 26 per cent. This must result from unemployment. Those still with a job in the skilled/semi-skilled upper working class and the lower middle class continued to deposit. The amount deposited must have increased since the average deposit level remained static while the number of depositors fell. At the same time the unemployed in all sectors of the community, unskilled, skilled, lower middle class, no longer made deposits. Such a situation may also help to explain the static number of withdrawals when comparing 1929-1930 with 1933-1934, and the high withdrawal of 1930-1931 followed by two years of slightly lower withdrawals. In a situation of a relatively stable number of depositors the figures for 1929-1930, 1933-1934 and 1934-1935 may be expected to show an approximately average number of withdrawals. The excess over

this number in the years 1930-1933 must reflect the effect of unemployment on those forced to fall back on accumulated reserves.

Evidence of the level of deposits in the Municipal Bank shows that there was increasing prosperity throughout much of the inter-war period for at least a proportion of the local community. However this prosperity was checked, though only briefly, during the period of severe depression in the early 1930s.

9.3 Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter it was suggested that the conventional picture of a town such as Clydebank in the inter-war years would show considerable depression in the commercial sector. The extent and variety, as well as the vitality, of the sector would be curbed by the effects of the economic dislocation affecting the town at that time. It would be expected also that depression would have an effect on the consumption patterns in the town and that little would be available for savings.

In fact the experience of the burgh of Clydebank does not fit the expectation closely. The range and variety of retail outlets and other businesses available to the community did not alter significantly during the inter-war period. There were changes within the overall provision, but no catastrophic decline even during the early 1930s depression. Such a pattern suggests that the overall impact of inter-war economic conditions in the area was considerably less severe than expectation might suggest and was closer to what might be found in more favoured areas of the country. In the same way the expectation that the organisation of the commercial sector might reflect the growing national trend to multiple outlet retailing proved to be false.

This relative vitality of local commerce must indicate that business life and the community on which it depended were, overall, by no means chronically sick. Such a conclusion gains support from the continuing upward trend revealed in the local Cooperative sales figures. Evidence of such unexpected comparative health must result from the usually relatively low levels of unemployment in the town as well as, in the early 1930s at least, the development of central and local government assistance to the unemployed.

The evidence of a commercial sector which maintained and perhaps

improved its relative health cannot hide the fact that the severe depressions of the early 1920s and early 1930s made an impact. A check in the growth of savings in the Municipal Bank, the fall in Cooperative sales at constant prices, evidence of changing consumption patterns and a fall in the standard of living - all of this shows that depression affected the community severely in the early 1930s. The available Cooperative evidence on sales suggests that the depression of the early 1920s, when less provision was made for the unemployed at a time of falling wage rates, affected the commercial sector and presumably the community to a greater extent.

In addition it must not be forgotten that any evidence of some local prosperity over the whole period 1919-1939 conceals the fact that a proportion of the community, the unemployed and the low paid, were able to share this prosperity to a more limited extent. Surveys on poverty made elsewhere in those years, eg in Bristol, London, Merseyside, and by Rowntree in York, showed this problem to be considerable. On this basis D H Aldcroft suggests that

"in most large towns and urban areas in the decade or so before 1939, some 15-20 per cent, sometimes less sometimes more, of the working class population were unable, in spite of assistance from welfare services, to afford a diet that would prevent illhealth."

Though the evidence of relative prosperity in the town for much of the period suggests that the average level of poverty would tend towards the lower end of the scale, this problem must have affected many individuals and families. Certainly, comparatively few Clydebanks citizens were able to invest in the Municipal Bank - though to some extent this may have been compensated for by the existence of other forms of investment opportunity such as the Cooperative Society or the National Savings movement.

With the caveat that poverty certainly existed in the town it would seem reasonable to conclude that, compared to other areas, the conventional picture of Clydebanks at this time requires adjustment when evidence in shopping and savings patterns is considered.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a consideration of general inter-war trends in retailing, such as the growth of the Cooperative movement, of multiple retailers of department stores and the position of the independent retailer see J B Jeffreys Retail Trading in Britain 1850-1950 (Cambridge 1954), Ch.2 pp.40-100. Chapters 5-19 survey particular trades within the sector over the 100 year period.
2. D H Aldcroft The Inter-war Economy : Britain 1919-1939 (London 1970), p.233.
3. Held by Strathclyde Police "L" Division, Overtoun, Dumbarton.
4. Available records of the Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd are held in the Society's Head Office, Hume Street, Clydebank.
5. W E Lawson A History of Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd (Glasgow 1949).
6. Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd., Minute Books, 11 January 1923.
7. Ibid., 20 April 1933.
8. Lawson, op. cit., p.82.
9. Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd., Minute Books, 19 October 1933.
10. Lawson, op. cit., p.82.
11. Clydebank Cooperative Society Ltd., Minute Books, 17 March 1932.
12. Aldcroft, op. cit., p.232.
13. J. Burnett Plenty and Want (London 1966, Pelican edition 1968), p.298.
14. Aldcroft, op. cit. p.380.
15. Idem, p.377.

CHAPTER TEN
RECREATION

The proposition that the situation in Clydebank in the inter-war years would lead to deprivation in social conditions might be expected to be particularly relevant to recreation and its provision¹. That less recreational provision would be made because of the economic situation to be found in the burgh is a suggestion which would fit well into a picture of the degenerative effects of sustained depression on a local community in West Central Scotland. Paradoxically perhaps, contrary pressure might be expected at times since wide scale unemployment would merit the establishment of more recreational facilities. In this chapter an attempt will be made to consider the extent to which Clydebank reflected such patterns. It is divided into two sections. The first deals with municipal provision of recreational facilities, and thus may be regarded as a continuation of chapter 7, p.153 on local authority responses to economic dislocation. The second considers other recreational responses in the burgh in the inter-war period. In both sections an attempt will be made to suggest the origins of any impetus towards change in this area occurring during the 1919-1939 period.

10.1 Municipal Provision

As a rapidly expanding working class town, Clydebank was only moderately well endowed with municipal recreational facilities in 1919. The free Public Library had been established before World War I after the receipt of £10,000 from Andrew Carnegie. Public baths had been built in Hall Street in 1902, and the 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of Dalmuir Park were opened to the public in 1906.² It is not surprising therefore to find pressure being exerted locally after World War I for the extension of leisure facilities in an area lacking provision commensurate with its importance and population. Town council action would be necessary to bring Clydebank to the standard enjoyed by other relatively prosperous areas.

More importantly, the experience of the inter-war years made this provision more necessary and in some ways, more difficult. The extent of unemployment in the early 1920s and early 1930s increased pressure for the maintenance by the town council of existing facilities and the provision of new ways of passing enforced leisure time. It was also clear that special arrangements would be necessary to enable the

the unemployed with their low incomes to make use of council leisure services. Yet this extension and special provision for the unemployed was most needed at times when financial constraints were strongest. Consequently the council had to balance financial considerations with the knowledge that the construction of leisure facilities would provide some work and, on completion, help the unemployed to spend their compulsory leisure time rather more satisfactorily.

Thus at least three forces will be seen to operate in the field of leisure provision in the burgh of Clydebank in the period 1919-1939. Firstly there was a need to extend recreational facilities because of the relatively limited inheritance of such facilities from the pre-war period. Secondly the comparative prosperity enjoyed by the burgh community for much of the inter-war period made financial provision for the construction of such facilities rather easier than might have been expected. Thirdly severe depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s intensified the need for better leisure provision on occasions when finance was perhaps more of a problem than at other times.

(i) Library Facilities

Clydebank Public Library was a well used leisure facility throughout the entire inter-war period - indeed it would seem to be true that the town library was generally used to a greater extent than those in other areas. The considerable extent of library use was a major factor in the change made to the open access system in 1928 when the burgh librarian noted, in relation to the number of readers who might then, according to a contemporary textbook, be expected,

"Clydebank must be abnormal. We have a population of 50,000 approximately. Since last October we have issued 8631 readers tickets and new applications are being dealt with daily, so that instead of 8 per cent (as suggested in the textbook) we have 17.2 per cent of the population as readers are still registering."

Clearly then, particularly after the introduction of the open access system at a time of relative prosperity, the community made considerable use of the local library during the inter-war years.

Evidence of this can be found in Table 10.1. However this table also indicates the effect of depression on library use by the town's citizens since substantial increases in book issue were recorded in the early 1920s and early 1930s. It is not surprising that considerable use was made of a free leisure service - indeed as will be seen increased use of the

library was on a greater scale than in the case of other municipal facilities for which payment was required. The figures are tabulated below, giving the annual issue of books during the inter-war period.

Table 10.1 Clydebank Public Library - Annual Issue 1919-1939

Year	Issue	Year	Issue
1919	124,237	1930	328,150
1920	128,000	1931	429,039
1921	170,018	1932	487,184
1922	219,817	1933	442,750
1923	209,156	1934	371,393
1924	191,080	1935	269,930
1925	202,403	1936	255,583
1926	228,095	1937	232,554
1927	178,295 (11 months)	1938	234,139
1928	124,001 (7 months)	1939	258,839
1929	262,258		

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Public Library Quarterly Librarians Reports 1919-1939

Clearly one of the ways in which the unemployed in the early 1920s and especially the early 1930s occupied their time was in reading. The librarian commented on this in 1936.

"A reason for the thronging of all departments in 1932 from morning to night was the lack of employment in the burgh due to the great depression. It was fortunate that the library was there to meet such a clamant need. We came to regard our issues as a sort of trade barometer at that time."

The fact that considerable numbers of books were actually issued shows that the library was not merely being used as a place of shelter.

(ii) Sporting Facilities

The maintenance of an existing well used facility, the library, was by no means the only action taken by the council at this time. It actively sought to expand leisure, particularly sporting, facilities. There were at least two reasons for this - firstly to improve the general quality of life of the citizens and secondly, from time to time, as a form of public works programme, to provide some work for the unemployed. It should be noted however that most of these schemes were planned, if not actually executed, well before the depression of the early 1930s hit the town. Thereafter the maintenance of existing facilities and the extension of their use by the unemployed was a

greater requirement than the provision of new facilities - though this never entirely ceased.

Finance for these schemes came from both the local authority and central government. Three examples can be given which illustrate this. In 1923 a yachting pond was built at a cost of some £4000. The council provided £2700 from its own resources, and the government contributed the remaining £1300, since the work qualified as a grant earning unemployment relief scheme. The construction of a golf course in 1927 was entirely the financial responsibility of the town council. A request for central government assistance was turned down on the grounds that the local level of unemployment was not great enough to qualify for such aid. However the situation changed in the 1930s. In May 1936 the Parks Committee heard from the Special Areas Commissioner that they would receive a 75 per cent grant towards the estimated cost of £8000 for the provision of sports facilities (football, hockey, cricket, running track, pavilion) to the west of the new housing area at Mountblow. Clearly, though a considerable part of the cost of extending municipal leisure facilities was found locally, a proportion was funded by central government as part of its attempts to deal with unemployment (see chap.7, page 173)

But what were the facilities provided by the town council for the use of employed and unemployed residents of the town? A considerable proportion was provided in the first part of the 1920s, at a time when unemployment was high and the need for better facilities as a measure of environmental improvement more pressing. Two putting greens were opened in 1921 and in 1922 two bowling greens, a putting green and a childrens' playground were built at the Livingston Street Open Space⁵ - with the council stipulation

6

"Local unemployed men were to be engaged in this work."

As mentioned above, in 1923 a yachting pond was built at the Whitecrook Open Space. By 1936 the Council's Souvenir Jubilee Brochure could list the provision of municipal bowling greens at Livingston Street Open Space; tennis courts at Dalmuir Park, Thomson Street Open Space and Whitecrook Open Space; hockey and football at Livingston Street and football at Mill Road and Clyde Street Open Spaces. There were also the sporting facilities being developed in that year at Mountblow with the assistance of the Special Areas Commissioner (see ch.6 p.135)

Special provision was made for the unemployed in the municipal undertakings. From the mid 1920s, an unemployed person, and later his wife, could make use of the facilities at particular times at reduced rates.

In 1924 the council minutes note that

"It was agreed that all unemployed persons, on production of an unemployment insurance card, be allowed the use of the bowling greens on Monday, Thursday and Friday between the hours of 2 and 4.30 pm at half the usual charges⁷."

Such concessions were also given to the unemployed on the municipal tennis courts, golf course and swimming pool.

The most complete statistics pertinent to the question of the use of these facilities made by the unemployed, and the employed, relate to the Municipal Baths. By 1928 it had become clear that the accommodation at the old Hall Street Baths was inadequate and new baths would be needed. At this time of relative prosperity for the town plans were drawn up and new baths were opened in Bruce Street in 1932. They comprised a swimming pool, 20 slipper baths, a suite of Turkish and Russian baths, sunray, foam baths and a complete laundry. Tables 10.2 and 10.3 indicate the numbers of tickets sold for the old and new baths. Separate figures for the unemployed are only available to 1932.

Table 10.2 Hall Street Baths - Monthly Average Number Using Pond 1919-1932

Year	(a) ALL PATRONS	(b) UNEMPLOYED	(b) AS % OF (a)
1919	3599	-	-
1920	3371	-	-
1921	5068	-	-
1922	5017	1452	28.9
1923	5517	1130	20.5
1924	4424	340	7.7
1925	5497	373	6.8
1926	5096	-	-
1927	4797	-	-
1928	5066	-	-
1929	5575	-	-
1930	6206	168	2.7
1931	5787	529	10.2
1932	5894	910	15.4

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1919-1932

Table 10.3 Hall Street and Bruce Street Baths - Monthly Average Attendance, All Facilities 1933-1939

Year	Hall Street	Bruce Street	Total
1933	6292	7302	13,594
1934	6368	7773	14,141
1935	6755	8035	14,790
1936	6243	8115	14,358
1937	5900	8047	13,947
1938	5810	8560	14,370
1939	5080	7862	12,942

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1933-1939

It is evident from the tables that both the old and new baths were well patronised by the Clydebank public. It is also clear that the proportion of the unemployed was considerable in the two periods of severe depression. The substantial reduction in numbers in the earlier period between 1923 and 1924 is not a consequence of increased charges and must be assumed to be, in part at least, a result of improving employment opportunities. However paradoxically the proportion of the unemployed in the early 1930s was lower than in the early 1920s when unemployment was rather less widespread. This may be in part a result of the spread of available recreational facilities between the two dates.

One such additional facility which existed from the later 1920s was the municipal golf course. As indicated in chap. 7, p.174, in 1927 unsuccessful attempts were made to obtain a central government grant towards the cost of its construction. Since this was refused on the grounds that local unemployment was not high enough to qualify, the scheme had to be funded by the town council itself. When the course was completed the unemployed were given concessionary rates. In 1931

"Bailie Peters referred to the hours during which unemployed persons had the use of the golf course at reduced charges, and it was agreed to recommend that in future, on production of an unemployment insurance card, the charge for unemployed persons every day from the opening hour to 12 o'clock noon, except Saturdays and public holidays be 6d per round, and at all other times the usual charge will apply."

Table 10.4 gives information on the numbers of ordinary, ie 9d tickets and unemployed, ie 6d tickets sold.

Table 10.4 Clydebank Municipal Golf Course - Tickets Sold 1927-1939

9 HOLE COURSE

Year	9d tickets
1927 (Sept - Dec)	1065
1928 (Jan - June)	8433

18 HOLE COURSE

Year	Sunday	9d tickets	6d tickets	Total	% of 6d tickets
1928 (June - Dec)	-	10,752	50	10,802	0.5
1929	-	20,473	57	20,530	0.3
1930	-	27,239	86	27,325	0.3
1931	-	32,611	3416	36,027	9.5
1932	-	27,975	4557	32,532	14.0
1933	-	27,704	2166	29,870	7.3
1934	-	26,094	1181	27,275	4.3
1935	-	23,306	965	24,271	4.0
1936	-	24,175	591	24,766	2.4
1937	3088 (6 months)	25,604	359	29,051	1.2
1938	11,656	27,866	929	40,451	2.3
1939	11,750	26,827	655	39,232	1.7

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1927-1939.

The table shows the general trend of increased use made of the golf course from its opening in 1928. This trend was substantially assisted by Sunday opening from 1937. Sunday opening was not favoured by the Moderate group on the town council, but Labour took power locally in 1935 and proved willing to accommodate changing attitudes towards the Sabbath by permitting the opening of the course. In addition, Sunday opening aided burgh finances, since tickets cost 1/- and no concessions were made, as well as widening facilities for the public.

It is clear that considerable use was made of the course by the unemployed in the early 1930s when depression was at its peak. The maintenance of a particularly high level of sale of full price tickets at that time suggests that the unemployed may well also have used the course at times when they were not eligible for concessionary rates. This in turn may reflect the somewhat better financial provision for the unemployed at that time with widening central and local government support.

The creation of a municipal golf course improved the general quality of life in the burgh. However it particularly benefitted the unemployed in two ways - employment was available in its construction in the late 1920s and in the early 1930s it provided a way of using compulsory leisure time.

In the inter-war years Clydebank Town Council improved municipal recreational provision substantially from the relatively low base level of 1919. There was throughout the period, though most obviously in the early 1920s, a recognised need to improve leisure facilities as part of a general environmental improvement, and the council was able to make use of the comparative prosperity of the area for much of the period to finance this development. Superimposed on this general policy were forces which arose during periods of severe depression to maintain and if possible extend the provision of leisure facilities, particularly for the benefit of the unemployed. Government financial assistance helped the local authority to pay for a small public works programme, providing employment in the construction of leisure facilities, though this was basically restricted to the 1920s. On construction, concessions were granted in those municipal undertakings which sold tickets to allow their greater use by the unemployed. Thus the community and its official representatives were responding to the general need of the town and the particular need of its unemployed citizens for better leisure provision.

10.2 Other Provision

The sources of recreational provision other than the town council were many and varied and their motivation in providing such facilities was equally varied. Groups of local enthusiasts such as bowling or football club members existed throughout the inter-war period because of their interest in a particular form of recreation. Commercial provision, such as the local football team or greyhound track, existed or developed to take advantage of such local enthusiasms. The fact that commercial recreational provision existed and, as will be seen, grew in the burgh during the period 1919-1939 must show that private enterprise at a local and national level regarded the area as sufficiently prosperous overall to warrant increasing investment in leisure facilities.

Periods of depression meant greater use of existing and new forms of recreation - where the unemployed individual's finances allowed this. They also produced a further group entering the leisure sector. Local self-help organisations, most of which developed out

of existing groups, appeared to assist the unemployed to make more profitable use of enforced leisure. Such groups were often part of or received assistance from national movements aimed specifically at helping the unemployed.

Consideration will first be given to those areas of recreational provision not specifically associated with depression.

(i) Sport

There were a number of opportunities to spectate at or participate in sporting occasions which could be enjoyed by both employed and unemployed individuals. In the period 1919-1931 Clydebank had a senior football team which was on the whole rather unsuccessful - in 1919-1922, 1923-1924 and 1925-1926 it was in the First Division, but in other years was relegated to the Second Division. At home games average attendances reported in the Clydebank Press seem to have been in the region of 2000-5000, though on 23rd January 1925 a gate of 17,648 was reported for the game against Queens Park.⁹ What interest in and solace from watching senior football the inhabitants of Clydebank enjoyed was possibly reduced after 1931 when the team reverted to the Junior League where it remained until the war. Here it joined a number of other local teams such as Duntocher Hibs and Yoker Athletic - but no information is available on the extent of local support for such teams.

Another participatory or spectator sport enjoyed in the area was bowling. There were several independent clubs and some connected with local employers such as Old Kilpatrick, Albion, Dalmuir, Yoker, Radnor Park, Clydebank and Singer. As a form of relaxation this sport must have been enjoyed on a considerable scale, though the size of club membership is not known.

Examples of commercial provision of recreational opportunities during the inter-war years can also be given. From the mid 1920s the new sport of greyhound racing was introduced into Britain. Shortly after its introduction, in 1930, the Clydebank community was thought sufficiently prosperous as an area for investment for the Clydebank Greyhound Racing Co Ltd, to begin to hold meetings in Yoker.¹⁰ Indeed greyhound racing provided not only a source of recreational activity but with its associated betting a source of excitement. Such excitement may have helped to lessen the dispiriting impact of unemployment and its associated problems. Contemporary opinion certainly gave credence to such a belief - in

the words of the Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting of the early 1930s,

The drab social conditions under which many people live create a demand for some relief by way of excitement which is sought in gambling.¹¹"

(ii) The Cinema¹²

However a more widely enjoyed form of commercial leisure provision throughout this period was the cinema. The period 1919-1939 saw a national expansion in cinema provision particularly after the introduction of the 'talkies', from 1927. As will be seen in Table 10.5 Clydebank shared in this trend. An important explanation of the trend both nationally and in the burgh was suggested by the Clydebank Sanitary Inspector in his report for 1939. He stated that

"In these days when workmen are cooped up in grim factories and employed at the most monotonous of tasks, and at night time decanted into dim and dismal tenements, a night at the pictures is one way that these workers try and get away from their somewhat worrying and monotonous existence."¹³

Table 10.5 Clydebank - Cinemas and Theatres 1925-1939

CINEMAS	1925	1931	1937	1939
Empire	*	*	*	*
Palace	*	*	*	*
Kinema	-	*	*	*
Regal	-	*	*	*
Bank	-	*	*	*
Pavilion (theatre to 1930)	-	*	*	*
Municipal Pictures (Town Hall)	*	*	-	-
Dalmuir Picture House	*	-	-	-
Co-operative Hall	*	-	-	-
La Scala	-	-	-	*
TOTAL	5	7	6	7
THEATRES				
Pavilion (Cinema from 1930)	*	-	-	-
TOTAL	1	-	-	-

Source:- Clydebank Press 1925, 1931, 1937, 1939.

The 1930s must have seen a considerable increase in demand with the appearance of additional and purpose built cinemas. The fact that these cinemas replaced some general public halls must have resulted in increased seating capacity. Indeed the La Scala with over 2000

seats was one of the largest cinemas in the country. The increased number of commercial cinemas and the increase in seating capacity both suggest that, overall, conditions in the town were not so bad as to preclude outside commercial investment in leisure facilities.

Unfortunately little information is available about these cinemas with the exception of the Municipal Pictures in the Town Hall. Indeed the information available about it may not necessarily apply to the other cinemas, since its performances took place only on a Saturday. The increase in the number of cinemas by the 1930s does suggest a substantial potential audience, and this seems to be confirmed by the information available from the Municipal Pictures. The Clydebank Press stated in its review of 1919 that the Town Hall cinema was "most successful" and had made a handsome profit in its first year. Further evidence comes from the Municipal Pictures accounts for the years 1929-1930 and 1930-1931, unfortunately the only ones still available from the local council. In 1929-1930 drawings from the weekly performances came to a total of £1020.3.4¹₂ or approximately £19.10.0 per week. As tickets cost a maximum of 9d, those drawings suggest a minimum average audience of 520. The following year's drawings had fallen to £936.13.6¹₂ or about £18 per week implying a drop in the minimum audience size to 480 per week.¹⁴

These data lead to a consideration of the problem of the composition of cinema audiences in the town and the impact of depression on them. In terms of audience size the information given above from the Municipal Pictures, if reflected in the receipts of other cinemas, would suggest that deepening depression was making it more difficult for those affected to enjoy an evening when they might

"get away from their somewhat worrying and monotonous existence."¹⁵

On the other hand the form and nature of the Municipal Pictures was unusual, and a fall in audience size at this time is more likely to have been affected by such factors as choice of programme or competition from the newly opened Pavilion. The fact that a number of new cinemas such as the Pavilion were opened at about this time, and remained in business, does not suggest any substantial fall in audience demand due to depression. In this Clydebank was following the national trend since between 1927 and 1935 the rate of cinema building averaged 160 per year.¹⁶

But, was the increased audience made up of those in work who visited the cinema more frequently, or were the unemployed able to participate to any extent? No direct evidence from Clydebank is available.

However given the extent of unemployment in the town in the period 1931-1934, it seems reasonable to suggest that the unemployed and their dependents must have formed a considerable proportion of the audience. This is especially likely since the cinema provided both warmth and the chance to forget pressing problems. Evidence from Carnegie UK Trust investigations in Glasgow at about this time showed that up to 80 per cent of unemployed youths went to the cinema at least once a week.¹⁷ Though supported financially to a rather greater extent by the 1930s, the cost of a cinema visit must have been a problem to many unemployed individuals. However maximum and minimum prices in 1929 of 1/- and 4d had fallen to 9d and 3d by 1932 in the local cinemas so the advantage in terms of warmth and forgetfulness probably meant that a considerable proportion of cinema seats were occupied by the unemployed and their dependents.

In Clydebank in the 1920s and 1930s the cinema grew in importance in the leisure sector. The numbers and size of cinemas increased, encouraged by the relative prosperity of the town for a considerable part of the inter-war period. Evidence from the depression of the early 1930s shows that it had no effect on cinema provision and indirect evidence suggests that, even at this time, the unemployed were able to take advantage of this form of commercial recreational activity.

(iii) Responses to Economic Dislocation

Some recreational facilities were developed in the community as a direct response to the problems generated by economic dislocation.¹⁸

An opportunity was given to the unemployed to make constructive use of their spare time with the formation in 1932 of the Mutual Service Association (MSA). However the purpose of the Association was not simply to provide an outlet for the energies of the unemployed, so numerous at the time of its formation. Its creation was also a response to the potential problems of apathy, loss of self respect and division in the community between the employed and the unemployed. Formed by representatives of many groups within the community under the chairmanship of Dr William Boyd of the University of Glasgow, its purpose was to

"enlist in the good work of every section of the community
and unite employed and unemployed in the bands of good
citizenship."

It was

- "to provide (1) recreational activities, games, PE, etc.
(2) handicraft activities, boot repairing, woodwork, etc.
(3) activities that might lead to new employment, eg pottery, salesmanship, electrical engineering, story writing, etc.
(4) artistic activities, eg drama, choir, orchestra, sketching
(5) educational activities, eg current affairs, classes for literature, science, economics, history, etc.¹⁹"

Instruction was to be given by those with a skill, whether employed or unemployed, who were able to pass on that skill to others. Initially funds came from gifts, collections and a grant from the Pilgrim Trust.

Within three months the Mutual Service Association had a membership of 600 and soon expanded beyond its original three premises.²⁰ By 1934 it was offering the unemployed sketching, design, embroidery, dressmaking, sewing, knitting, woodwork, french polishing, motor mechanics, boot repair, wireless, pottery, French, German, Esperanto, shorthand, mathematics, choirs, concert party, swimming, photography, allotments, camping, badminton, football and ²¹golf. As depression lifted, membership amongst the unemployed fell with improved employment opportunities. The Association's response in the later 1930s was to initiate evening courses so that those now employed could continue to benefit from its facilities. It also began to plan a community centre, to build on the foundations laid in the earlier part of the decade.

Yet the Mutual Service Association was not without its critics. As part of its assistance to the unemployed it attempted to move into a more political arena when it tried to represent the unemployed at a meeting of the Public Assistance Committee. This development was opposed by the town council, the National Unemployed Workers Movement already filling such a role. In addition the Mutual Service Association came into conflict with some local interests. In 1933 it had to answer complaints that teaching sewing, boot making, etc., would dilute trades when the depression lifted. Its response was that the idea was not to turn out professional carpenters, etc., but to produce capable amateurs to work at home.²² In spite of such opposition and a comparatively small membership, the Mutual Service Association did provide opportunities for all the people of Clydebank to make constructive use of their leisure time, and must be seen as a positive response to the problems facing the town in the 1930s. Yet given the size of the unemployment problem of the early 1930s it must be remembered that community response to the opportunities

offered by the Mutual Service Association was not great.

One of the activities provided by the Mutual Service Association was allotments, and the allotment movement certainly received a good deal of attention in the town at times during the inter-war period. There were several allotment associations in various parts of the town, and the town council had an Allotment Committee. It was felt that work on allotments would provide some occupation for the unemployed, as well as extra food, and was at least a partial, temporary solution which the community might encourage, to the problems created in periods of economic dislocation. Such action was supported by Sir Thomas Bell, Managing Director of John Brown Ltd., in his memorandum of evidence to the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance (1930-1931). He stated that he

"would like to see the unemployed trained in agricultural and horticultural matters if they are in trades that are particularly depressed,²³" the costs to be borne centrally.

The difficulty about this form of action was that some capital was needed to establish an allotment, yet those most in need of such activity were precisely those whom long unemployment had rendered least able to find the necessary finance. Nationally, the government introduced the Agricultural Land (Utilization) Act of 1931²⁴ which aimed to enable persons wholly or partly unemployed to obtain allotments and necessary seeds, fertilizers and equipment at less than cost price. In the burgh itself the town council made some efforts to assist the allotment movement, eg in 1934 it decided it would fence and lay on water for the Mill Road allotments.²⁵ Yet such actions did not solve the basic problem of finance.

The private initiative of John Browns probably came nearest to dealing with this problem. Sir Thomas Bell's interest in the movement extended to the establishment of allotments in Clydebank for unemployed ex-workers in 1932. The company leased a suitable piece of land to occupy 150 men. It then convinced the town council to set aside 15 acres of its land for more allotments with the result that

"this will supply some occupation at any rate for another 500 families in the district."²⁶

Seeds and equipment were obtained from the English Allotment Association of the Society of Friends, which Bell and some colleagues had joined.

Despite such actions by a firm which played a major part in the local community, only a relatively small proportion of the unemployed could

be assisted in this way. After the scheme had been established, Sir Thomas Bell's explanation of the reason for the company's action must have remained largely unchanged -

"The streets of Clydebank make a terribly depressing sight with crowds of men loafing about the whole day long.²⁷"

(iv) The Licensed Trade

The purpose of recreation particularly for the unemployed, must have been to a considerable extent, to get away from their "worrying and monotonous existence". As a result it is intended to give some consideration in this chapter to the drink trade since, though liquor is qualitatively different, it can be regarded as an aspect of leisure in that, as with other forms of recreational activity, it may take the mind off immediate problems. Local responses to this aspect of leisure provision will be discussed in the following chapter.

Nationally there seems to have been some movement from expenditure on drink to other forms of recreation in the inter-war period. Aldcroft comments that

"the amount spent on alcohol fell sharply from £426.5 million in 1920 to £306.4 million in 1938 (at 1938 prices) whereas expenditure on entertainment and recreation rose from £195.1 million to £262.5 million over the same period, a good part of which no doubt represented a transfer of expenditure from drink."²⁸

In Clydebank any "transfer of expenditure" did not affect the number of retail outlets, as shown in the following table.

Table 10.6/

Table 10.6 Clydebank - Licensed Premises 1919-1938

Year	Public Houses	Licensed Grocers	Year	Public Houses	Licensed Grocers
1919	29	2	1929	28	1
1920	29	2	1930	29	1
1921	25	1	1931	29	1
1922	25	1	1932	29	1
1923	25	1	1933	29	1
1924	26	1	1934	29	1
1925	27	1	1935	29	1
1926	28	1	1936	29	2
1927	28	1	1937	29	2
1928	28	1	1938	29	1

Source:- Reports of the Chief Constable of Dunbartonshire 1919-1938.

For most of the period the provision of licensed outlets was basically static, with perhaps one per 1500 population. The exception to this was the fall of the early 1920s caused not by depression, but by the temperance movement in the town whose temporary success will be described later. Though to some the availability of alcohol must have helped deaden the effects of depression, its relative availability at times of hardship was a target of criticism. It is not perhaps coincidence that the greatest inter-war success of the temperance movement occurred in the period 1921-1923 at a time of severe depression. Yet this success was only temporary. In 1925 one of the arguments used in the licensing court was that

"The cost of living had not been lowered recently to any appreciable extent and if the court increased the number of licenced premises under such circumstances it meant a diversion of money towards what was a luxury and a very expensive one. It would be generally admitted that the great majority of the people in the district had not got money for such luxuries just now."²⁹

The court paid little heed to this attempt to save the citizens from themselves, granting four new licenses.

Despite the apparent strength of the temperance movement in the early 1920s at least, there would seem to have been a view in the community on the appropriate level of provision. When this was re-established in the latter part of the 1920s, not even the severe economic dislocation of the early 1930s produced a repetition of the reduction of the early 1920s - or for that matter an increase. The fact that in the 1930s the number of licenses remained stable at a time when unemployment was very wide-

spread and the argument that drink wasted an individual's resources could be used again, suggests that temperance attitudes had been somewhat weakened in the community. This would tend to confirm other evidence to be discussed in the following chapter.

It is difficult to estimate the effects, if any, on the social fabric of the town that the comparative availability of liquor may have had. On the one hand the argument quoted above may have meant that life was made more difficult for at least some families at times when money was particularly scarce. On the other hand such availability may have made life more bearable for some of those affected by unemployment. Certainly drink does not seem to be mentioned in the Dunbarton shire Joint Police Committee minutes as being a more than generally significant factor in causing crime in the burgh. Though in 1919 five policemen were injured by hooligans, the minutes merely remark

"This form of rowdyism has been evident in Clydebank for some time and is increasing³⁰."

Similarly in 1930 when the committee asked for one police constable to be made a detective constable

"owing to the prevalence of juvenile crime, petty thefts and shopbreaking in the burgh of Clydebank³¹,"

no mention was made of drink being an unusually prominent factor.

10.3 Conclusion

The accepted view of an economically dislocated town in West Central Scotland such as Clydebank would suggest a restricted quality of life in relation to recreational provision. The evidence in this chapter does not support such a view - and it has not dealt with many aspects of leisure existing in inter-war Clydebank such as the burgh band, amateur dramatics, recreational clubs associated with local churches and employers, the rambling movement, and so on.

As part of a long term policy the local authority attempted to improve the quantity and quality of its recreational provision given the fairly restricted nature of such provision prior to 1919. The resources for such extension of provision were found locally and, at times, in central government aid. Mention of this aid leads to the second important casual factor in the changes affecting leisure in the town in the inter-war period, economic dislocation. Centrally provided finance came to assist the burgh to create a public works programme of leisure provision in the early 1920s. With the realisation that

unemployment was not a short-term phenomenon nationally this policy was scrapped, and in Clydebank the depression of the early 1930s did not see a revival. At this time local concentration was on the maintenance of existing facilities and ensuring their use by the unemployed.

In the private sector the extent of unemployment must have made some impact on profits - but this impact was not sufficiently great to limit investment in what was for much of the period a relatively prosperous area. New forms of entertainment such as cinema and greyhound racing grew and existing forms such as football or bowling continued. The main response to depression of the private leisure sector in the burgh seems to have been the creation of organisations such as the Mutual Service Association specifically catering for the unemployed and their needs. Yet in the early 1930s the numbers involved in such groups compared to the size of the problem was relatively small. The unemployed in the town seem to have preferred to make use of the existing leisure facilities. They were able to do this because of the special provision made for them in municipal facilities. In addition developing central and local government policies, eg on financial relief, must have made it rather easier for the unemployed to enjoy some of the recreational opportunities in the town than would have been the case in earlier years.

Thus the quality of life in the town, even for the unemployed in the period of deep recession in the early 1930s, was not as limited and basic as it had been in earlier years. Despite economic dislocation the community made increasing provision for recreation and leisure, and the unemployed were able to take some advantage of this.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a popular general description of leisure and recreation in the inter-war period - see R Graves and A Hodge. The Long Weekend (London 1940 Penguin edition 1971). See also N Branson and M Heinemann Britain in the Nineteen Thirties (London 1971) chapters 16 and 17 pp.234-256, and W Allan "Mass Entertainment" in The Baldwin Age ed J Raymond (London 1960), pp.218-234. Brief mention of leisure developments can be found in D H Aldcroft The Inter-War Economy : Britain 1919-1939 (London 1970), passim and C L Mowat Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940 (London 1955) passim.
2. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936 pp.77, 93, 97.
3. Clydebank Public Library, Librarians Quarterly Report, November 1928 - January 1929. These reports are held in Clydebank Public Library.
4. Clydebank Souvenir Jubilee Brochure 1936 p.79.
5. CTCM 1 August 1921; 1 September 1922.
6. Ibid., 30 October 1922.
7. Ibid., 3 June 1924.
8. Ibid., 1 September 1931.
9. CP, 23 January 1925.
10. Ibid., 23 May 1930.
11. Quoted in Aldcroft, op. cit., p.241.
12. See Graves and Hodge, op. cit., pp.129-137, 340-342; Branson and Heinemann, op. cit., pp.251-255.
13. CP, 26 May 1939.
14. Municipal Pictures accounts for 1929-1931 are held in the Finance Department of Clydebank District Council.
15. CP, 26 May 1939.
16. Aldcroft, op. cit., p.240.
17. Quoted in S Constantine Unemployment in Britain Between the Wars (London 1980), p.37.
18. For a contemporary study of the development in the 1930s of clubs and societies primarily for the unemployed see Report to the Pilgrim Trust Men Without Work (Cambridge 1938), Part V, pp.272-396. This deals with six particularly depressed areas in England and Wales such as Liverpool and the Rhondda.
19. CP, 22 April 1932.
20. Ibid, 15 July 1932.
21. Ibid, 27 April 1934.
22. CP, 3 February 1933.
23. Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, 1931, Appendix vol. 2, p.499.

24. 21 and 22 Geo.5, Ch.41.
25. CTCM, 21 May 1934.
26. John Brown & Co Ltd, Clydebank, Board Papers, 31 May 1932, UCS1/5/30.
27. Loc. cit.
28. Aldcroft, op. cit., p.241.
29. CP, 23 October 1925.
30. Minutes of Dunbartonshire Joint Police Committee, 15 August 1919.
These are held by Strathclyde Police, "L" Division, Overtoun,
Dumbarton.
31. Ibid, 1 January 1930.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
SOCIAL PROBITY

We have thus far reviewed institutional responses to economic dislocation in terms of housing, leisure and recreation. Social attitudes and patterns of behaviour might also undergo change in conditions of prolonged economic distress. Prominent indicators to social probity are to be found in attitudes to drink, especially in terms of the temperance movement; in religious observance, particularly in terms of church attendance and activity; and in the attitudes to law and order, especially in the rate of crime. Thus it is to these aspects of life in the Clydebank community in the inter-war period that attention now turns.

11.1 Temperance¹

No clear view of the temperance movement in Clydebank before the inter-war period is available, but in the mid 1920s there were six Rechabite Tents and five other temperance organisations regularly holding meetings in the town. These are indicated in the table below.

Table 11.1 Branches of Temperance Organisations in Clydebank in Mid 1920s

(a) Rechabite Tents

Lily of Clyde

Hamilton Memorial Band of Hope and Rechabite Tent

Hope of Kilbowie

Hope of the Hill

Independent Order of Rechabites

Home Guard Rechabite Tent

(b) Others

Bank Street Womens' Temperance Association (BWTA)

Beacon Light Lodge

Radnor Park BWTA

Hope of Yoker Lodge International Order of Good Templars (IOGT)

Union Band of Hope

Source:- Clydebank Press

Such groups held the well known Victorian moralistic view that the working man (and still more the working man out of work) was an easy prey to the temptation of drink. This view certainly found expression

in the licensing courts when in 1925 it was argued that any increase in licences

"meant a diversion of money towards what was a luxury and a very expensive one"

and

"the great majority of the people in the district had not got money for such luxuries just now²."

This opposition to the extension of licensed premises was perhaps the most consistent of the temperance groups activities. The groups certainly came together³ to form the "Clydebank No License Committee" (CNLC), and it was this body which organised the attempts to reduce and eliminate the provision of alcohol in the town by use of the veto poll.⁴ In 1920 they achieved a partial success, the Glasgow Herald reporting that

"Of the five wards, in three there was a majority of no change, in one a majority for limitation and one ward, Radnor Park, has decided in favour of no licences⁵."

The main outcome was a reduction in licensed premises from 31 to 26 (see table 10.6 p.294). In addition to this, the temperance movement seems to have had enough influence with local councillors to ensure that the new housing estates built in the 1920s and 1930s remained "dry".⁶ Indeed several councillors, such as Bailie Miss Rae and Provost Martin were members of the movement.

The evidence suggests a concern for the health and morals of the working classes and a desire to encourage them to adopt temperance attitudes. Yet it is not clear that the hardship experienced in the burgh during the inter-war years resulted in an invigoration of the movement; conversely it seems that support for the temperance movement was limited and its overall influence in the community at large was diminishing at a time when it might have been expected to be increasing.

Olive Checkland's work suggests that the Victorian influence and importance of the movement was over, and that in the 20th century

"increasingly temperance became an affair dominated by the churches and supported by women and children⁷."

The evidence in Clydebank supports Checklands argument; the movement in the town was dominated by churchmen, and the local branches were mainly run by women who drew on juvenile assistance at meetings.

As a result, if the temperance movement had hopes from the unemployed

in Clydebank in the inter-war years, they were largely in vain. Meetings were sparsely attended; 70 took part in the 25th Anniversary meeting of the Hope of the Hill Rechabites in 1925⁸. Tables for 240⁹ were laid at the opening social of the West UF Church branch of the BWTA in 1928. Nine years later in 1937, a combined outing of five Rechabite Tents involved some 700 persons¹⁰. The scanty evidence suggests a probable average membership of 100-200 in each of the local groups, perhaps 1500 members in all Clydebank. Moreover the support for the movement appeared to be waning in the 1930s. There was no repetition of the partial success of the 1920 veto poll in later years. The local Labour Party was regarded by some in the 1920s as connected with the drink trade, and it was said that this reduced its support¹¹. However any such attitude must have weakened in the early 1930s. At this time of depression there was an increasing trend of support for the party which culminated in the Labour take-over of the town council from the Moderates in the mid 1930s (see chap 12 p. 316). Additionally there seems to have been less press interest in a reduced number of temperance activities. Certainly there were considerably fewer reports of temperance meetings in the 1930s - though this may reflect in part a change in the "Clydebank Press" to a more "popular" format in tune with the needs of the times, emphasising to a greater extent cinema and radio entertainment, domestic hints and tips¹², etc.

Why was the movement apparently so lacking in support in Clydebank, in this period? One partial factor was the contradiction of a movement run and dominated by middle class moralists, ill equipped to understand the values and problems of the working classes operating in a working class environment. Another factor was the growth of alternatives which could provide comfort and meaning for men and women out of work: the cinema, the dance halls, the expanding recreational facilities described in chapter ten - the appeal of the "Tent" could only suffer in comparison. Whatever the reasons, the temperance movement was largely an irrelevance to the unemployed in Clydebank between the wars.

11.2 The Churches¹³

The Church is the traditional source of comfort and support, spiritual and material, in times of personal and general adversity. As a result it might be expected that the troubles of the burgh would be reflected in some aspects of the Church establishment in Clydebank.

Clydebank was indeed a "well churched" community. The Souvenir Jubilee Brochure of 1936 listed some 19-20 churches in addition to numerous missions. All the main denominations were represented.

There were several Church of Scotland congregations, eg St James, Kilbowie, Boquhanran, Dalmuir Parish; Roman Catholic, eg Our Holy Redeemer, St Stephens, St Marys: Union United Free: Hamilton Memorial: Salvation Army: Free Church (Gaelic): Ross Memorial: Baptist: Wesleyan: St Columbas Episcopal, and a number of evangelical missions. Certainly, in terms of numbers, Clydebank was well provided with churches.

Table 11.2 below gives figures of the number on communion rolls, not necessarily active communicants, in three local Church of Scotland Churches. Numbers are only available for the Church of Scotland and these three parishes were chosen as representative, with medium to large sized congregations.

Table 11.2 Church of Scotland Communicants in Three Clydebank Churches 1919-1939

Year	St James	Boquhanran	Kilbowie	Total
1919	1280	576	930	2786
1920	1301	598	948	2847
1921	1304	664	928	2896
1922	1284	661	909	2854
1923	1277	608	820	2705
1924	1230	570	835	2635
1925	1198	603	852	2653
1926	1171	574	844	2589
1927	1144	587	837	2568
1928	1091	615	880	2586
1929	1016	610	886	2512
1930	1119	630	887	2636
1931	1290	618	888	2796
1932	1420	644	880	2944
1933	1440	639	903	2982
1934	1459	606	945	3010
1935	1350	612	951	2913
1936	1387	557	958	2902
1937	1404	523	961	2888
1938	1357	493	937	2787
1939	1364	413	915	2692

Source:- Calculated from Reports of the Schemes of the Church of Scotland (1919-1928).

Church of Scotland Year Books (1929-1939)

As mentioned above, the figures give the number of communicants, not necessarily active members, in these Clydebank churches during the inter-war years. This was generally a period in which the town's

population was static and ageing, though by the later 1930s a considerable number of the children born during the period of increased birth rate just after World War I were reaching communicant age, and might thus be expected to join the churches. However, if the table can be regarded as representative of the numbers of communicants in all burgh churches (and it refers only to Protestant churches in a town with a large Roman Catholic population), the figures show a general decrease, reversed in the periods of worst depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s. The time of greatest employment in the town, the later 1920s, saw the year 1929, when membership fell to its lowest point: the years of worst unemployment when migration might be expected to have an impact on the figures, show the greatest number of communicants. Thus there would appear to be an inverse relationship between the size of church membership and employment levels in the town.

The factors resulting in an increase in the number of communicants at times of depression are difficult to generalise since presumably they varied from individual to individual. However some possibilities may be mentioned. Social pressures to attend church may have strengthened for some at times when it was necessary to maintain, where possible, a facade of normality. It may also have been true that particular adversity in the form of unemployment strengthened religious faith. A third, and strong, possibility is that the social function of the Church as a supportive group played a part.

Some further information on the effect of unemployment on church members may be gained from Table 11.3.

Table 11.3/

Table 11.3 Clydebank - Contributions per Church of Scotland Parish
and per Communicant to Christian Liberty 1919-1939

Year	St James	Boquhanran	Kilbowie	Total	Average per communicant
1919	£1759	£460	£634	£2853	£1.0.5d.
1920	1480	485	1324	3289	1.3.0.
1921	1487	540	937	2964	1.0.5.
1922	1107	596	836	2539	0.17.10.
1923	956	532	877	2365	0.17.5.
1924	1192	649	1016	2857	1.1.7.
1925	1068	597	843	2508	0.19.0
1926	904	503	1043	2450	0.19.0.
1927	641	637	648	1926	0.15.0.
1928	903	499	1180	2662	1.0.7.
1929	749	505	1036	2290	0.18.2.
1930	857	540	927	2324	0.17.7.
1931	1120	427	800	2347	0.16.10.
1932	1170	642	706	2518	0.17.2.
1933	-	459	791	1250	0.16.2.
1934	1330	679	786	2995	1.0.0.
1935	1148	641	967	2756	0.19.0.
1936	1274	617	890	2781	0.19.2.
1937	1113	586	751	2450	0.17.0.
1938	1310	571	930	2811	1.0.2.
1939	941	456	789	2186	0.16.0.

Source: Calculated from Reports on the Schemes of the Church of
Scotland 1919-1929
Church of Scotland Year Books 1930-1939

Since donations to a church are not necessarily solely affected by the individual's economic circumstances, it is difficult to state that there was a definite connection between the two. Nevertheless it is noticeable that periods of falling or low average donation occur in the early 1920s and early 1930s when depression was particularly severe. However equally low and lower average donations occurred in other years of relative prosperity, so any connection would not seem to be close. Information on contributions in the three Roman Catholic parishes for certain special purposes such as foreign missions, the only ones for which information is available, show a similar relatively random pattern. There was some fall in 1922 and in 1931-1932, as the following table shows, but lower levels were reached in other years.

Table 11.4/

Table 11.4 Clydebank - Roman Catholic Special Collections 1919-1939

Year	Total	Year	Total
1919	£34	1930	£33
1920	34	1931	30
1921	34	1932	29
1922	29	1933	32
1923	33	1934	30
1924	31	1935	24
1925	32	1936	26
1926	32	1937	28
1927	31	1938	41
1928	31	1939	43
1929	36		

Source:- Calculated from Catholic Year Book 1919-1939.

The information contained in Tables 11.2 - 11.4 gives support to the suggestion that for much of the inter-war period there was a gradual loss of members to and presumably interest in the churches in Clydebank. However during the depressions which occurred in the early parts of both inter-war decades, adversity seems to have encouraged some at least to turn to the Church.

But what proportion of the Clydebank population was then connected in some way to a local church? No figures are available for this, but an estimate may be produced using Table 11.2, though this cannot be regarded as particularly accurate. If three medium to large sized churches had at most 3000 communicants, then the twenty churches in the town in 1936 may have had a combined roll of 15,000/20,000 at maximum. To this figure must be added a considerable number of children attending Sunday Schools, etc. Thus anything up to two thirds of the population may have been connected at some time with a church. However a proportion of such individuals would inevitably have been peripheral members only, whilst one third and possibly more of burgh citizens may have had no official connection with the Church at times of depression or otherwise.

The preceding paragraphs have considered the reaction of the community in Clydebank to the Church at times of depression and relative prosperity. Brief consideration will now be given to the reaction of the Church to the economic problems which affected the town during the inter-war years.

Consideration will be brief because there is no evidence of a sustained, active campaign by the churches in the burgh against unemployment at

times of depression. The only available evidence of Church activity comes from the early 1930s. In March 1932 Sir Thomas Bell reported to the Board of John Brown Ltd that

"The various churches and similar organisations in Clydebank have granted our men the use of their halls during the ¹⁴week."

At that time the local press confirmed that two church halls had been opened to unemployed members and friends for reading, writing and playing games. In addition, church representatives were involved in the formation of the Mutual Service Association¹⁵.

Yet such minor action was ameliorative rather than curative of unemployment. There is little evidence of churches participating in protest meetings, establishing allotments, encouraging cooperative ventures, etc. On only one occasion did the churches act on the unemployment which hit the town in the early 1930s. This was in December 1931 when a group of Clydebank clergymen wrote to the President of the Board of Trade to ask for assistance for the town and its people in view of the cessation of work on the 534 "Queen Mary"¹⁶. This lack of action may have resulted from a lack of will, from a feeling that action on unemployment was outwith permissible bounds of church activity or was a problem better left to those more expert in its solution. Whatever the explanation it is true that the churches of the town seem to have done little actively to confront the unemployment problem when it affected the town.

An overall view of all the evidence leaves the impression that, through the inter-war period, the Church in Clydebank was in something of a decline. This accords more closely with the suggestion that the town was relatively prosperous than with the picture of a community on the verge of breakdown as a result of high and sustained levels of unemployment. It is noticeable that periods of severe unemployment in the early 1920s and early 1930s saw something of a rally in Church membership which was not maintained as increasing levels of prosperity returned to the burgh. Even when membership was rising concurrently with unemployment the Church as an organised body made only a restricted attempt to extend its role towards a greater involvement in the social problems afflicting the community. It is not surprising perhaps that under those circumstances a considerable proportion of burgh citizens seem to have had tenuous connections at best with organised religion.

11.3 Criminality

There is a welldeveloped literature¹⁷ outlining the causal relationship between increasing unemployment and an increase in the incidence of crime, notably in housebreaking and other acts of felony. Given the periods of severe distress which afflicted Clydebank during the inter-war years, the trend in reported crimes should give some view of the reactions of the community in conditions of prolonged unemployment. Surprisingly, the relationship appears to be inverse in Clydebank - the numbers of reported crimes appear to have moved in inverse relationship to the degree of unemployment. The larger the numbers out of work, the smaller the number of reported crimes, and vice-versa. In addition Clydebank appears to have had proportionately a rather higher ratio of offenders to total population than in the country as a whole.

The figures are given in Tables 11.5 and 11.6 below, but before considering them two points require to be made. Firstly, they relate to crimes, eg housebreaking or robbery, and not to offences such as drunkenness or breach of the peace. Secondly, the figures are affected by such factors as the method and accuracy of the recording of statistics in different police districts, or public confidence in the police. As a result, the figures are probably inaccurate to an extent - but they are sufficiently accurate to reveal trends.

The Scottish crime figures show a generally rising trend for much of the inter-war period which accelerated in the years of worst depression in the early 1930s. The figures are given in Table 11.5.

Table 11.5/

Table 11.5 Scotland - Unemployment and Indictable Offences Made
Known to the Police 1924-1938

Year	1		2	1 as % of 2
	(a) Unemployment %	(b) No of Offences	Census Population	
1924	12.4	32,527	4,882,497 (1921)	0.7
1925	15.2	33,070		0.7
1926	16.4	38,478		0.8
1927	10.6	31,204		0.6
1928	11.7	33,506		0.7
1929	12.1	35,501		0.7
1930	18.5	36,723		0.8
1931	26.6	38,401	4,842,980	0.8
1932	27.7	48,734		1.0
1933	26.1	49,834		1.0
1934	23.1	51,951		1.1
1935	21.3	59,753		1.2
1936	18.7	59,407		1.2
1937	15.3	58,806		1.2
1938	15.7	58,976		1.2

Source:- (a) Calculated from B B Gilbert British Social Policy
1914-1939 (London 1970) Appendix 1, Table 3.

(b) Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom 1924-1938.

These figures, showing a sharper than normal rise in the early 1930s, lend support to the suggestion made earlier that economic adversity tends to encourage crime.

The figures for Clydebank however would not give particular support to such a suggestion. They are given in Table 11.6.

Table 11.6/

Table 11.6 Clydebank - Unemployment, Reported Crimes and Police
1920-1939

Year	(a) Unemployment %	(b) Reported Crimes	1 Census Population	2 1 as % of 2	(c) No of Burgh Police
1920	-	1585		3.4	50
1921	-	1097	46,506	2.4	50
1922	-	849		1.8	50
1923	-	672		1.4	50
1924	-	879		1.9	50
1925	-	983		2.1	50
1926	-	812		1.7	50
1927	6.5	1058		2.3	58*
1928	4.8	944		2.0	58
1929	6.3	982		2.1	58
1930	12.4	1092		2.3	57
1931	34.6	871	46,952	1.8	56
1932	50.4	807		1.7	56
1933	43.5	752		1.6	55
1934	29.6	678		1.4	55
1935	23.5	862		1.8	54
1936	18.5	888		1.9	55
1937	11.5	1044		2.2	57
1938	11.5	1162		2.5	59
1939	10.8	1884		4.0	-

* increased as a result of the extension of burgh boundaries and the development of council housing schemes (see Dunbartonshire Joint Police Committee Minutes 15th October 1926, 25th October 1926, 30th May 1927.)

Source:- Calculated from (a) Local Unemployment Index 1927-1939

(b) Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1920-1939

(c) Information from Strathclyde Police, "L" Division, Overtoun, Dumbarton

Tables 11.5 and 11.6 suggest that, though in both cases the trend was towards an increase, crime was rather more prevalent throughout the inter-war period in Clydebank than in Scotland as a whole. This would not be surprising as Clydebank was a large industrial burgh and, as noted by Mack, "The incidence of crime increases with density of population.¹⁸" Yet this would ignore a number of possible problems in connection with a comparison of the figures, eg the average rate at which crimes were made known to the police might vary,¹⁹ and the type and severity of crime committed is not known, at least for Clydebank.

However the main point is clear. At times of severe depression in Clydebank in the early 1920s and early 1930s reported crimes fell, and this fall in the early 1930s may help to explain the reduction in the number of police personnel in the burgh at that time. The rising crime rate which occurred in Scotland throughout the inter-war years could only be seen in Clydebank in periods of relative prosperity.

This result is difficult to explain. However a number of contributory factors may be suggested. It is possible that the extreme severity of unemployment in the early 1930s caused the community to draw more closely together and thus lessen the likelihood of crimes being committed. On the other hand widespread poverty resulting from severe economic dislocation may have encouraged at least some Clydebank criminals to operate outwith the town in rather more profitable areas. Thirdly, the collection of statistics on petty crimes may then have been ignored to a greater extent in Clydebank than in other areas, though why this should occur only during part of the inter-war period is unclear.

The overall impression left by available evidence is that conditions in Clydebank for much of the inter-war period were encouraging the same trends in crime as in the nation generally - and Scotland in those years was, on average, less badly affected by economic dislocation than, in the standard view, were shipbuilding towns in West Central Scotland. Indeed it is only when conditions in Clydebank were considerably worse than in the nation as a whole that a marked divergence between the two trends occurred.

11.4 Conclusion

The indication of social stress outlined above all point in the same direction. Clydebank survived the dislocation of the depression with few outward signs of social strain or breakdown. Temperance, the guardian of working class morality, diminished in importance and influence. The Church, the historic foundation of the community in Scotland, visibly dwindled and played little active part in local affairs. Criminality fluctuated more in line with work and income than with distress, and showed no community in crisis in these years. Relative stability rather than rapid change is reflected in all these areas of Clydebank life in the 1920s and 1930s.

FOOTNOTES

1. The temperance movement in inter-war Scotland has not been extensively researched. For the historical background to the movement see O Checkland Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland (Edinburgh 1980), especially pp.95-100. For the inter-war period in Britain see G P Williams and G T Brake Drink in Great Britain 1900-1979 (London 1980), pp.31-130. For contemporary inter-war attitudes to temperance, see Mass Observation The Pub and The People (London 1943) pp.314-335.
2. CP, 23 October 1925.
3. Ibid., 6 February 1920.
4. For a discussion of this legislation see G B Wilson Alcohol and the Nation (London 1940), pp.120-21.
5. Glasgow Herald, 18 November 1920.
6. For the attitude of local authorities to licences in new housing areas see Mass Observation, op.cit., pp.331-34, and Wilson, op.cit., pp.179-81.
7. Checkland, op.cit., p.100.
8. CP, 9 January 1925.
9. Ibid., 21 September 1928.
10. Ibid., 3 September 1937.
11. For a brief comment on this point see ch.12 p.342.
12. On the nature of the popular press in the inter-war period see R Graves and A Hodge The Long Weekend (London 1940; Penguin edition 1971), pp.51-59; N Branson and M Heinemann Britain in the Nineteen Thirties (London 1971), pp.248-250; and F Williams "Challenge by the Press Lords" in The Baldwin Age, ed. J Raymond (London 1960), pp.160-178.
13. For a discussion of the Churches in Britain generally in this period see G Howard "The Churches" in ed. J Raymond, op.cit., pp.143-159, and C L Mowat Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940 (London 1955), pp.222-225. For the position in Scotland see J Highet "The Churches" in ed. A K Cairncross The Scottish Economy (Cambridge 1954), pp.297-315. For a sociological approach but dealing mainly with the post 1945 period see J Highet The Churches in Scotland Today (Glasgow 1950), See also J G Kellas Modern Scotland (2nd Edition London 1980), ch.4 pp.35-53.
14. John Brown & Co Ltd., Clydebank, Board Papers, 30 March 1932, UCS1/5/30.
15. CP, 22 April 1932.
16. Ibid., 18 December 1931.

17. Such as H Jones Crime in a Changing Society (London 1965) ch.2 pp.24-39 or J B Mays Crime and the Social Structure (London 1963) ch.2 pp.30-51. For the inter-war period see H Mannheim "Crime and Unemployment" in ed. W G Carson and P Wiles The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency in Britain vol.1 (London 1971), pp.44-52.
18. J Mack "Crime" in ed. A K Cairncross, op cit., p.236.
19. Ibid., pp.229-31, 243-44 for a discussion of the problems of interpretation of crime statistics.

CHAPTER TWELVE
POLITICS IN CLYDEBANK

12.1 Politics¹ and the Burgh 1919-1939 - An Overview

Elections and the political processes surrounding them are one quantifiable way in which community feeling may be expressed. Such an expression of attitude may be influenced by many factors, some of which have been noted in earlier chapters. Developing public attitudes, eg on temperance may well, as will be seen, have had an impact on local politics. In the same way the central government policy framework and its implementation at a local level, eg on housing provision, had an effect on the community and provoked a political response². A third exemplar of factors affecting local politics was the legacy of the boom years of the burgh's development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, for example in the area of recreational provision and the reaction to this legacy of the local authority³.

Interlinked with these factors was another, that of the economic dislocation affecting Clydebank in the inter-war years. The impact of unemployment had an independent influence on local politics, but more often acted in concert with other influences which themselves could operate independently. These related influences can clearly be seen in the two areas on which this chapter will concentrate, unemployment and housing. The link between them has been discussed in chapter eight, but was essentially the need to provide adequate accommodation for the low income family, of whom the unemployed formed a considerable part, at a rent level which could be afforded. On the other hand part of the political debate on housing was not related to unemployment, but arose from the post-war housing shortage and new view on reasonable rents which made private building for rental unattractive⁴. In the same way financial and other provision made for the unemployed at a local level had an independent influence on political behaviour in the town.

If the standard view of the great extent and impact of depression on shipbuilding towns in West Central Scotland is correct in the case of Clydebank, it might be expected that the influence of economic dislocation on politics in the burgh would be considerable. In such circumstances at least three possible scenarios for politics in the town can be sketched out. A first possibility is that poor economic

conditions would produce a shift to conservatism, as happened in Britain nationally in the early 1930s.⁵ Secondly it may be that politics was seen as something of an irrelevance since

"unemployment seemed to induce in most of its victims a political apathy akin to the physical langour from which so many suffered."⁶

A third possibility is that the damaging effect of depression on the social and economic fabric of the town would encourage the development of radical political alternatives in an effort to find new ways of rebuilding what was being broken down.⁷

Certainly the town of Clydebank has had something of a reputation for radicalism in politics - in recent years the events at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders have demonstrated this.⁸ In the inter-war period too the town had a similar reputation for which a good deal of evidence from a variety of sources, both within and outwith the town, can be cited. A Times leader on the Rent Strike of the first half of the 1920s described the strikers' "Communitistic and cut-throat policy" and maintained that

"There is undoubtedly an active conspiracy on the part of certain political agitators to forment and prolong"⁹ the rent dispute. Edward Shiels, a local author, whose novel was published in 1937, wrote, describing a platform party at a launch in Beardmores yard,

"Now and again some of the ladies would come to the platform and stare curiously at the mob of workers below. They had read and heard so much of these Wild Men of the Clyde. Bomb throwers, Bolsheviks, razor slashers and what not."¹⁰

In a similar vein, though from a different viewpoint, John Wheatly MP, in a speech in the town in 1929, remarked that

"he always regarded Clydebank as the headquarters of Clydeside Socialism they had in this burgh more convinced, class conscious socialists to the acre than in any part of Europe."¹¹ Lastly, a correspondent, "Sensitive", wrote to the local newspaper suggesting that Clydebank change its name to Hilltown because Clydebank "has become a synonym with revolution and Bolshevism to the world at large."¹²

The use of such emotive language does indeed bolster the impression that the town was a hot-bed of extremist politics.

There is however evidence to suggest that such a general conclusion would be at best superficial and at worst totally wrong. As an example of this, Clydebank was barely touched by the General Strike

of 1926. Although the shipyards were not called out until the last day of the strike, there was a very poor response from Singers factory workers. The only unrest noted in the burgh was when

"one window was broken in a bus in Clydebank when passing along the street¹³."

Similarly a local Communist, William Waddell, writing in 1929 in response to Wheatley's remark quoted above, described local May Day celebrations.

"Clydebank with no first of May procession, and a few hundred people gathered round a lorry for two hours, then home to bed¹⁴."

One of the major purposes of this chapter will be to consider to what extent the differing views expressed above were correct. Was one result of those problems faced by citizens in Clydebank to force them to take a radical or extreme stance in politics? To do this it is proposed to divide the chapter into two major parts. The first will deal with local town politics and the second with Clydebank's contributions to national politics.

12.2 Local Politics

(i) Elections

National elections in the inter-war years saw the appearance of the Labour Party which replaced the Liberals as one of the alternative parties of government. However the Labour Party was in power only for a short period, in 1923-1924 and again in 1929-1931. At other times Britain was basically governed by the Conservative Party¹⁵. Indeed it is noticeable that swings to Conservatism occurred at times of general depression in the early 1920s and, particularly, the early 1930s. Many factors may have contributed to these voting patterns, amongst which were the expectations raised, eg on housing during and just after the war; the policies put forward to deal with unemployment; foreign and defence policies, etc. A consideration of the results of local government elections in Clydebank burgh will show whether the town was following the national trends.

Clydebank was divided throughout the inter-war period into five wards. Wards 1, 2 and 4 contained most of the older areas of the town near the river, and wards 1, 3 and 5 most of the inter-war housing developments (see maps 1.5 and 1.6 pp.9 & 10). Though a change in ward boundaries in 1933 resulted in ward 4 extending into some of the new housing areas, the pattern described above remained substantially unchanged. The results of the November local elections, in which normally one third, or from 1930 one quarter, of the council retired each year, are summarised in Table 12.1

Three points may be made about this

table. In the first place the years mentioned refer to the years following the November elections. Secondly, except for Labour members, it has not proved possible definitively to assign town council members to particular parties or groups in the early 1920s. Thirdly, the total number of town council members was increased in 1929 from 15 to 20. Consideration of the turnout at these elections will be given in Table 12.4, p.323.

Table 12.1 Clydebank Town Council Membership 1920-1939

Year	Moderate	Labour	Independent	Communist	Other	Control of Council
1920	10?	5	-	-	-	Moderate
1921	11?	4	-	-	-	M
1922	12?	3	-	-	-	M
1923	10?	4	-	-	Housing Ass/ 1 Lab	M
1924	6?	8	-	-	" 1 "	Labour
1925	5	9	-	-	" 1 "	L
1926	9	5	1	-	-	M
1927	11	3	1	-	-	M
1928	12	2	1	-	-	M
1929	12	3	-	-	-	M
1930	13	5	2	-	-	M
1931	13	5	2	-	-	M
1932	13	4	3	-	-	M
1933	11	6	3	-	-	M
1934	10	8	2	-	-	M/Indep
1935	7	11	2	-	-	Labour
1936	6	12	1	1	-	L
1937	7	13	1	1	-	L
1938	5	13	1	1	-	L
1939	5	12	3	-	-	L

Source:- Clydebank Press; Clydebank Town Council Minutes;
Clydebank Town Council Abstract of Accounts 1919-1939.

Table 12.1 indicates one very significant fact. Clydebank was under Labour control for only seven of the inter-war years (1924-1925 and from 1935). When its reputation for radicalism was being confirmed, in the early 1920s and early 1930s, local government was mainly under Moderate control. Yet, as will be seen, for almost all the inter-war years the town was represented at Westminster by David Kirkwood, a left wing Labour MP. The question of why a dichotomy should exist between local and central government elections in voting behaviour may be answered

with several possibilities. It could be that the local voter was generally unwilling, except in the particular circumstances of 1923-1925, to vote for Labour in Clydebank elections until that party had clearly proved itself at a national level to have taken over from the Liberals as the radical alternative to Conservatism¹⁶. It may be that General Elections pulled out Labour voters who normally abstained in local elections to a greater degree than adherents of other parties. It is perhaps more likely that the elector saw little real connection between parties at central and local level - while voting Labour at general elections to put his point of view to the more powerful central government, he preferred at a local level to vote for personalities or substantial citizens whose group had performed reasonably well in the past, eg in the field of housing¹⁷. Such a suggestion has recently been supported by Finlay Hart¹⁸, a local Communist politician in the period, who has commented on the personal influence exercised by Moderates who tended to be businessmen or professional people. In addition he considers that personality, appearance and background were as significant as policies locally. He has also suggested that the Labour movement developed a national before a local machine - yet it remains puzzling why such a national machine could ensure the election of David Kirkwood yet could not bring about the establishment of a Labour controlled town council until 1935. It may be that at a local level the voter agreed with David Kirkwood's comment on the 1929 election in his autobiography.

"A Socialist government cannot carry on a capitalist system better than the capitalists. The men bred by a capitalist system are men of affairs who understand their business. They are not apprentices If the system is to remain I prefer that the men in control should be men who can do the job."¹⁹

It is also possible that other factors, to be discussed below, such as national political events, temperance or religion might affect local voting patterns. The most likely explanation of this dichotomy would seem to be that, nationally, voters felt a radical Labour MP like earlier Liberal representatives, was more attuned to their wishes and needs. Locally the Moderates formed an anti-Labour group who in the 1920s maintained support because of their local influence and generally satisfactory performance in the areas then under their control such as housing. In the 1930s such influence faded as dissatisfaction grew with their activities. This resulted in a pattern similar to that in Glasgow at the same period.

The first Labour administration in Clydebank's history coincided

with the Rent Strike of 1923-1925 (see Ch.8 pp.219-20), and the election of a Housing Association representative to the town council at a time of considerable depression. It would seem likely that these events help to explain Labour's temporary rise to power, as the Moderates were too closely associated in the popular mind with the property owners. As the Rent Strike faded, so older political loyalties began to reassert themselves. In addition, sentiments seem to have developed similar to those expressed in the following extract from a letter from "Another Trades Unionist" to the Clydebank Press (itself no great supporter of the Labour cause).

"When one comes to think of the promises made for securing of votes and compares it with the work done, he is forced to compare the Labour Party's attitude in our council with the pawnbroker's shop - full of unredeemed pledges.²⁰"

Probably the permanent swing to Labour which, as will be seen in Table 12.2, began in the early 1930s could be explained as partly a desire for change, partly a reflection of opposition to central government policies and, more immediately, a feeling that, given the Moderate emphasis on economy in the situation in which the town then found itself, Labour policies would be better for the burgh's citizens. Not only did the Moderate controlled council reduce relief scales for the unemployed in 1931, but it virtually halted the local authority house building programme, raised rate poundages and refused to cut council house rents. Labour election propaganda opposed such actions. This weakening of old political allegiances can be seen in Tables 12.2 and 12.3.

Table 12.2/

Table 12.2 Voting Trends in Clydebank 1920-1938

Year	MODERATES			LABOUR		
	Votes Received	Number of Candidates	Average per Candidate	Votes Received	Number of Candidates	Average per Candidate
1920	-	-	-	6,728	7	969
1921	-	-	-	3,771	5	754
1922	-	-	-	2,632	4	658
1923	-	-	-	6,129	5	1,226
1924	3,783	3	1,261	3,461	3	1,154
1925	7,577	5	1,515	4,404	5	881
1926	6,428	5	1,286	4,684	5	937
1927	6,151	5	1,230	2,871	4	718
1928	4,362	4	1,091	4,063	4	1,016
1929	9,871	11	897	6,046	7	864
1930	6,634	5	1,327	4,959	5	992
1931	5,126	5	1,015	5,517	5	1,103
1932	4,833	5	967	4,917	4	1,229
1933	5,828	6	971	5,824	4	1,456
1934	6,985	6	1,164	8,050	6	1,342
1935	5,459	5	1,092	7,379	5	1,476
1936	5,251	5	1,050	6,279	5	1,256
1937	3,330	3	1,110	7,950	5	1,590
1938	3,722	3	1,240	6,730	6	1,121

Source:- Calculated from Clydebank Press 1920-1938.

It is clear that from 1931 Labour's share of the vote increased and overtook that of the Moderates, though this was not immediately reflected in control of the council. The causes of this change, a result of the policies adopted by the controlling Moderate group on the council from 1931, have been discussed briefly above. Thus the political response of the people of Clydebank to the problems facing them in the early 1930s and to the actions of central and local government was to shift allegiance to bring their views on local politics more into line with those on national politics. Yet this was happening at a time when in the national political arena there was a move towards conservatism.

The gradual switch from Moderate to Labour can also be seen in Table 12.3 which shows the result by ward of local elections. The years in which a particular party was unsuccessful are indicated by a dash, and each asterisk represents a successful candidate. In the 1920s five wards of three councillors made up a council of 15 with one third of the councillors in each ward normally retiring each year. In 1929 the size

of the council was increased as a result of local government reorganisation so that thereafter each ward had four councillors with one quarter retiring on a new rota basis. However in certain years more than one councillor was elected in a number of wards. There were several reasons for this. The election of 1919 marked the resumption of political activity, suspended during the war when retirements, resignations and deaths had occurred among the council members. Such occurrences explain other multiple elections in the inter-war period, except for 1929 when the increased size of the town council, from 15 to 20, resulted in additional contests.

Table 12.3 Clydebank Local Election Results by Ward 1919-1938

	Ward 1			Ward 2			Ward 3			Ward 4			Ward 5		
	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>O</u>
1919	*	-	-	*	-	-	No Contest			-	**	-	-	***	-
1920	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-
1921	-	*	-	**	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	*	-	-
1922	-	*	-	-	*	-	*	-	-	-	*	* ^o	-	*	-
1923	-	*	-	-	*	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-
1924	No Contest			-	*	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-
1925	*	-	-	**	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-	* ⁺
1926	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-
1927	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-
1928	No Contest			*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-
1929	-	-	** ⁺	**	-	-	**	-	-	**	*	-	-	**	-
1930	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-
1931	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	* ⁺
1932	-	-	* ⁺	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-
1933	*	-	-	-	*	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	*	-
1934	*	-	-	-	**	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	*	-
1935	-	*	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	* ^x
1936	No Contest			*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	*	* ^x
1937	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-	-	*	-
1938	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	*	-	-	-	* ⁺	-	*	* ⁺

NB (a) M = Moderate L = Labour O = Other

(b) + = Independent o = Housing Association x = Communist

(c) In the first half of the 1920s candidates suggested by evidence of other political activity to be Moderates were not labelled as such when the results of the November elections were printed in the local press. Accordingly there is a slight element of uncertainty about the political allegiance of some of those successful candidates labelled Moderate in the above table in those years.

Source:- Clydebank Press 1919-1938.

The switch from Moderate to Labour occurs in all wards in the 1930s, but is particularly obvious in Ward 4. Moderate support seems to have been strongest in the 1920s in Wards 2, 3 and 4, whereas the switch to Labour from about 1930 was strongest in Ward 4 and, as throughout the 1920s, Labour support was strong in Ward 5. Wards 4 and 5 contained much of the town council housing stock, though town council housing was also to be found in Wards 1 & 3. These newer areas in Wards 4 and 5 were generally occupied by more skilled, and therefore presumably more affluent individuals. In such a situation it might be expected that support would have been given to the Moderates who were responsible for much of the inter-war housing development in the town. This would however ignore the effects of Moderate policies in the early 1930s such as their termination of the housebuilding programme, their increase in rate poundages and particularly their refusal to lower council house rents. Such actions would certainly seem to have gone against the interests of those living in council housing, but should not necessarily be seen as the only explanation of the change. Given the extent of unemployment in the town in the early 1930s when even skilled men became unemployed, the Council's relief policy must also have had an effect on support.

The evidence considered so far suggests that in local politics at least, the Clydebank electorate could hardly be said to be radical in view of its lack of support for extreme parties. For much of the period Moderates controlled the town council, and even when Labour took over, its policies and actions could not be described as radical - as will be seen below and in sub-section (ii) p.326.

But how involved was the electorate in these elections? Did the undoubted problems faced by the burgh produce an electorate closely concerned with the actions of the major local parties? The average turnout at general elections in the Dumbarton Burghs constituency (Dumbarton and Clydebank) was ²¹70%-80%, and this was as high as that in neighbouring constituencies such as Dunbartonshire or Greenock. It would also seem to have been about average for the period.

The evidence at a local level is less conclusive. Certainly the political groups in the town felt interest warranted contesting almost all local elections - as shown in Table 12.3 there were only four occasions in the inter-war years when there was no election in any one of the local wards. To such an extent there is evidence of interest in local politics. However the turnout at local elections was considerably less than at general elections, another example of the divergence between the two

types of politics found in the burgh. If the Clydebank electorate was particularly involved in local politics it might be expected that the turnout at the November local elections would be high. Yet this does not seem to have been the case. Polls in local elections seldom exceeded 55% (see Table 12.4 p.323) and on a number of occasions the Clydebank Press remarked on a disappointingly low turnout, eg in 1923 it noted that

"a considerable proportion of the electorate refrained from going to the poll", in 1934 there was a "poor poll" and in 1936 the "poll was a low one."

David Kirkwood at a 1930 Labour party meeting to choose municipal candidates recognised the problem when he said

"if the electorate turned out in force these candidates would²² be returned to the council."

This may be in part a suggestion that low polls did not help the local Labour Party, yet Table 12.4 would only give partial support to such a view. It may also give slight evidence, read with unemployment data, (see Table 4.8, p.53), of turnout rising with unemployment, particularly in the early 1930s. However for reasons given in the table it can at best only give a very approximate idea of the levels of turnout.

Table 12.4/

Table 12.4 Percentage Turnout at Local Elections 1919-1938

	1	2	3	4	5
	Total Votes	Contested Seats	Estimated Number of Electors Voting (b)	Total No on Electoral Register of Contested Wards (a)	% Turnout in Contested Wards
1919	12,460	7	7,467	17,266	43.2
1920	10,911	5	10,911	21,833	50.0
1921	10,184	6	8,876	21,532	41.2
1922	16,020	6	13,023	22,067	59.0
1923	12,017	5	12,017	21,443	56.0
1924	9,806	4	9,806	17,459	56.2
1925	14,852	6	12,367	22,091	56.0
1926	12,099	5	12,099	22,644	53.4
1927	9,912	5	9,912	22,666	43.7
1928	9,096	4	9,096	18,669	48.7
1929	23,221	11	10,311	27,272	37.8
1930	12,702	5	12,702	27,189	46.7
1931	13,809	5	13,809	27,701	49.9
1932	14,702	5	14,702	28,283	52.0
1933	15,905	5	15,905	28,523	55.7
1934	16,525	6	13,880	29,115	47.7
1935	14,565	5	14,565	29,089	50.1
1936	14,065	5	9,980	23,495	42.5
1937	13,297	5	13,297	29,009	45.8
1938	14,831	6	12,517	29,160	42.9

NB: Construction of this table faced three major problems.

- (a) Electoral registers do not clearly distinguish between the totals of those entitled to vote in parliamentary and local elections and those who could only vote in one or the other. Accordingly figures in column 4 must be inaccurate by at least several hundreds.
- (b) Where more than one seat was contested in a particular ward the voter had more than one vote, but need not have used each vote available. To give comparability throughout, figures for votes cast in wards with, for example, two contested seats have been divided by two on the assumption that each voter did cast both votes. A final number of votes has been given in column 3 on the basis of one contested seat per ward. As a result the most accurate figures in column 5 must be those for years in which there was actually one contested election per ward.
- (c) An extension of the franchise in national elections occurred in 1928 resulting in a substantial increase in the numbers on the electoral roll.

Source: Calculated from Clydebank Press 1919-1938 and Electoral Register of the Burgh of Clydebank 1919-1938.

Table 12.4 cannot be completely accurate. However it suggests that, with a maximum of 59 per cent in 1922, a year of considerable agitation over the Rent Strike, the turnout at local elections generally varied between approximately 45 per cent and 55 per cent. This accords reasonably well with turnout figures published on eight occasions in the period by the Clydebank Press, which varied between a minimum of 49 per cent in 1937 and a maximum of 53 per cent in 1935.

On the basis of these figures at least two comments can be made. An average turnout of approximately 50 per cent suggests the electorate was less involved in local than in national politics. Yet there does seem to be a slight increase in turnout in the early 1920s and early 1930s at a time when economic problems might be expected to quicken any interest in the remedial activities of local politicians. Secondly it was suggested that a low poll hampered the Labour Party locally. This may have played a part in the 1920s, but Labour gained power locally in the mid 1930s when poll levels were roughly similar to those of earlier years. As a result the reason for the swing to Labour in the 1930s must be sought elsewhere than an increased turnout at the polls, probably in the policies adopted by the Moderate and Labour groups.

Once the council was elected there seems to have been a twofold attitude towards the activities of the party on it. On the one hand there was the view that party politics should play no real part in local government. On the other hand on many occasions party seems to have decided voting behaviour on the council. There is a good deal of evidence that the theory of non-party local government existed throughout the inter-war period. In 1923 a correspondent to the Press stated

"for obvious reasons it has been a recognised principle in our council chamber that politics were barred out."²³

whilst in 1938

"Judex" wrote "... there now seems to be a definite desire to keep party leadership out of our local administration."²⁴

In 1926 a specifically non-party candidate, John Bryce, stood in the November elections and in 1935 the election literature of S Mitchell, a Moderate candidate in Ward 3, stated that he

"does not represent any one particular party, sect or ²⁵Creed."

Moreover anecdotal evidence from the former Communist Councillor, Findlay Hart (1935-1936) shows that cross-party activity, for whatever

reason, did take place. He remarked that his two best friends on the council were "Tories" who at times sided with him to get money for services they were interested in.²⁶ This did not however apply to Labour councillors who acted as a group, a group moreover which he described as conservative, since it was reluctant to spend any money outwith the budget its members had agreed upon. Indeed there is some independent evidence of this united Labour party activity. In 1937 the Moderate councillor, McKenzie, said that

"a section of the council could only regard themselves as spectators while a charmed circle determined elsewhere what was to be done in the civic chamber.²⁷"

In 1939 the Independent Councillor Robertson commented

"when he put up anything in the council he found he was up against a group of people who were supposed to be representing the working people of Clydebank a block on the council who had their minds already made up on the matter.²⁸"

Whether under cross-party, Moderate or Labour control, the guiding principle of the town council in action was legality. Whilst it was willing to take as much advantage of the law as it could, eg in the growth of its housing stock under the various Housing Acts, and to press for change if it felt that this was necessary eg the abolition of the Means Test, it was not willing to go further than the law allowed. This attitude was as strong among Labour as among Moderate councillors. Indeed in March 1938 the Labour Convenor of the Housing Committee explained that a reduction in council house rents was not possible because of the Act which stated that municipal rents had to be at the level of the rents of other local working class housing.²⁹ Individual members of the council were considerably irritated by suggestions in the 1930s that their treatment of the unemployed should exceed the limits of the law. In 1934 Moderate Provost Smart was driven to remark

"that the members of the council did not require to be tutored by the NUWM in the duties that lay before them.³⁰"

The evidence of local elections given here does not suggest that Clydebank in the inter-war period was a town where radicalism flourished. Moderates controlled the town council for much of the two decades and their Labour successors, as will be seen, made no great policy changes or attacks on the law of the land. To the extent of support for a relatively conservative point of view, Clydebank was following the national trend.

However a change in council control began during the early 1930s leading to the Labour take-over in 1935. This was taking place at a time when national support for conservatism was being strengthened. The causes of this change in Clydebank were partly connected with unemployment - the Moderate Council's policy on Public Assistance Committee relief must have played a part (see ch.7, p.162).

However other, often related factors, such as the decision to end council house building and to refuse a reduction in municipal rents also played a part (see ch.8, pp.202, 225). The influence of such decisions and the growth of pressure groups to oppose them will be discussed in section (iii) below. The temporary Labour success of the mid 1920s must also be seen as a consequence of a combination of factors, particularly unemployment and rents.

Thus in Clydebank political change reflecting community views was partly a result of the impact of economic dislocation. However other factors also played a significant part in the trend away from the Moderates and towards the (moderate) Labour Party.

(ii) Political Parties

The relative continuity in outlook between controlling groups on the burgh council can perhaps more clearly be seen in a consideration of political parties in the burgh. In addition the proposals put forward by these political parties may give some idea of those areas considered to require action of some kind. This in its turn may well indicate the concerns motivating the political parties and, presumably, at least that portion of the burgh community from which they gained their support.

A brief survey of the political parties in the town should perhaps begin with the Moderate Party. Though made up largely of Conservative supporters, the Moderate Party cannot be identified wholly with the Tory Party. A number of Moderate councillors were involved in the burgh Liberal Party and, as already mentioned, one Moderate candidate claimed he did not represent any party. Another, in 1938, claimed he had been a trade unionist all his life³¹. Thus it would seem safer to equate the Moderate Party with an anti-socialist political party.

The organiser of the burgh Moderate Party was the Citizen's Council, made up mainly of small businessmen, whose chief political function seems to have been the selection or recommendation of Moderate candidates at local elections. However the monthly meetings of the Citizen's Council were not exclusively political, but also social and educational.

Each year a social was held organised by the Social Committee, and at the monthly meetings various lecturers spoke - in February 1931 the Assistant Sanitary Inspector read a paper on the adulteration of food.³² The numbers involved in this group are not clear. The only available evidence comes from December 1930 when it was reported that, of a membership of 80, the average attendance at meetings was³³ 25.

In some ways the electoral policies put forward by this group were not greatly different from those of the Labour Party. In the election material of most Moderate candidates there was reference to more house building, a suitable level of rents, improved public health as well as, from councillors seeking re-election, a recital of the benefits of their activities.

Some indication of this continuity in policy and actions is given in Table 12.5 below.

Table 12.5 Party Action - Clydebank 1919-1939

(a) HOUSING/

Table 12.5 Party Action - Clydebank 1919-1939(a) Housing

<u>Year of Scheme</u>	<u>Town Council Control</u>
1920	Moderate
1926	Moderate
1927	Moderate
1928	Moderate
1930	Moderate
1931	Moderate
1934	Moderate/Independent
1938	Labour
Rent Rebate Scheme 1938	Labour

(b) Able Bodied Poor Relief under Town Council Control ie 1930 on

<u>Year</u>	<u>Full Scale Increase</u>	<u>Full Scale Decrease</u>	<u>Part Scale Increase</u>	<u>Part Scale Decrease</u>	<u>Control</u>
June 1930	*	-	-	-	Moderate
Dec 1930	-	-	*	-	Moderate
Oct 1931	-	*	-	-	Moderate
Jan 1934	-	-	*	-	Moderate/Independent
June 1934	-	-	*	-	Moderate/Independent
Dec 1934	-	-	*	-	Labour
Jan 1936	-	-	*	-	Labour
Dec 1937	-	-	*	-	Labour

(c) Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme - set up in 1930 under Moderate control.

Source:- (a) Clydebank Town Council Minutes 1919-1939

(b) Clydebank Press 1919-1939

It is not of course possible to suggest on the basis of the above information that one party was more or less "caring" than the other since the Labour Party had considerably less time in control of the Town Council than the Moderates did, and under somewhat different economic circumstances. Nevertheless it does see possible to suggest that, within the constraints of legality, Moderate actions were not very far divorced from what Labour might have done, had it been in control of the Town Council for longer in the inter-war period.

Nevertheless there was at least one fundamental difference between the electoral propaganda and actions of the Moderate and Labour Parties. Particularly at periods of worst depression, Moderate councillors laid far more stress on the need for economy and efficiency. In 1931 Lawrence Campbell emphasised the need for strict economy except in housing; in 1932 J A McDiarmid favoured economy and efficiency, though he was not for reducing relief scales³⁵; and in 1933 J McKenzie suggested that

"The time is not opportune for any grandiose municipal schemes."³⁶
This concern for economy can be seen in the town council meeting of October 1931 which decided on cuts in local relief scales, wages, etc. Eleven Moderates and one Independent voted for the cuts, two Moderates abstained, whilst five Labour and one Independent voted against³⁷. If one single action by the Moderate group can be said to have begun the erosion of their controlling position in burgh politics, then this was it - an erosion which took place despite the good work, described by Findlay Hart as progressive, which the Moderate group had performed in the building of large numbers of town council houses in the 1920s.

Their successors, Labour, appeared in local authority, and parliamentary constituency, politics for the first time on any scale in the inter-war period. The first Labour majority, and Provost, was in 1924-1925, and the permanent eclipse of the Moderates took place from 1935. The Dumbarton Burghs Labour Party was described in 1918 as

"composed of some 70 odd branches of trade unions in the burghs of Dumbarton and Clydebank and two branches of the ILP"³⁸
and presumably the party in Clydebank itself reflected the same make-up. This combination of TU and ILP elements seems to have been more fragile than the corresponding Moderate grouping, or its differences were more publicly visible.

Splits occurred on a number of occasions. Early in 1925 an unsuccessful attempt was made to expel Provost McDonald and Bailie Kelly from the ILP. This occurred because these councillors had not voted with other Labour members against a proposal that the Town Council should appeal to tenants to pay increased rents in lieu of the re-establishment of a Rent Tribunal to deal with hardship cases during the Rent Strike. Such a split indicates differing views in the Labour Party on the Rent Strike. In September of the same year the Clydebank Press reported that Provost McDonald and many of his colleagues had broken away from more radical elements to form a new branch of the ILP.³⁹ At about the same time Bailie Miss Rae broke away from the Labour group to become an Independent, probably over Temperance.⁴⁰ This division was referred to in 1927 by David Kirkwood in his May Day speech. After the Moderate Town Council's refusal to allow a meeting on Sunday on town property because it was a political gathering, he said

"How do they manage to flourish their power before the majesty of Labour's power at the moment? It is because you are divided and quarrelling among yourselves."⁴¹

A further split took place in the early 1930s when the local ILP branch, following the national lead, disaffiliated itself and began to oppose

Labour candidates at some local elections, eg in 1933.

In the 1930s the local Labour Party seems to have been united on at least one matter. There was a reluctance to become involved with the Communist Party. In the mid 1930s the local Communists began to seek close cooperation with the Labour Party to form a united front against Fascism, unemployment, etc. On 2nd November, 1934, Findlay Hart informed Clydebank Press readers of his attempt to get Labour agreement that only one "workers" candidate should stand in each ward. A decision on whether such a candidate should be Communist or Labour was to be decided by a public meeting, if agreement could be reached on certain matters such as lower rents, no Means Test, and a united front against Fascism and war. This the Labour Party refused to do because it could not agree to ignore the Means Test and was attempting to put many of the other suggestions into operation. Similar approaches and refusals were reported in 1933 and 1936.

Though some of the electoral policies put forward by the Labour Party were similar to those of the Moderates, there were a number of differences. The simplest and most obvious of these was that all Labour candidates showed their group unity by subscribing to the same programme - each Moderate's election address was superficially different⁴². Secondly there was frequent reference to the establishment of a Works Department, TU wages on relief schemes, fair wage clauses, improved education, the need for a burgh hospital and adequate maintenance for the unemployed, all of which were usually missing or far less prominent in Moderate propaganda⁴³. Thirdly there was an emphasis on the necessity of central government accepting responsibility for the adequate relief of the unemployed, and lastly a proposal for lower rents. Unfortunately this last aspect of the Labour programme became something of an embarrassment, as the following extract from a letter to the Press in 1936 shows.

"We have had a Labour majority on the council for a number of years and in all their election addresses, houses for the workers at rents they could afford to pay was one of their main points. Why don't they reduce rents?"⁴⁴

Rents were not reduced, the reason given in 1938 being that under the relevant Act

"The rents of all local authority houses would be fixed at market values."⁴⁵

The/

The other major political party, in terms of activity if not council membership, was the Communist Party. The Clydebank branch had been set up on 24th July, 1922 with 9 members, after discussion between younger ILP and Socialist Labour Party elements in the burgh. It grew to 80 members by 1923 but as a result of internal wrangling the membership had fallen to 10 in 1926. This rose again to approximately 60 in 1928⁴⁶, with perhaps 200 members in the 1930s, though not all were active. At first the party concentrated on TU activity, such as the engineers and shipbuilders strikes in the early 1920s, but in 1927 put forward its first candidate in the local elections. At the same time it was becoming closely connected with the cause of the unemployed through its involvement in and electoral pact with the National Unemployed Workers Movement⁴⁷. By 1931 the Clydebank Press was remarking after the November elections

"That the Communists and the NUWM are making headway is a fact that cannot be ignored"⁴⁸

though their candidates were still bottom or near to bottom of the poll. The Communists' first and only success came in 1935 when Findlay Hart became a councillor for Ward 5. He attributes this partly to his policies but also to personal factors such as his appearance and that, coming from a Protestant family, he could not be accused of being a "bad Catholic" as some members of the party could. When he left to work for the party in England his colleague Mrs Hyslop was coopted to the council, but lost the election of 1937. Such a poor electoral success does little for the town's radical reputation.

The policies put forward were naturally considerably more radical than those of the major political groups. The Communists proposed work or full maintenance, reduced rents, an end to the Means Test, relief schemes at TU rates, a united front, free medical services, direct labour and the provision of sports facilities - all of which was to be paid for, if necessary, by increased rates. However this programme gained comparatively little support in a town badly hit by depression in the early 1930s. This may be a reflection of the strength of support for more established political parties - though the Moderates were eventually replaced by Labour, both these parties were within the town's traditional political framework by then. Alternatively lack of support for the Communist cause may be a recognition that their programme would have been difficult to operate in the condition which existed in the community. It is also possible that the comparatively good conditions which existed in the town in the later 1920s and later 1930s meant less pressure to support more radical proposals. It is likely, at least in the early 1930s, that, though a leftward political

shift to Labour was taking place at the time, the growing strength of conservatism resulting from depressed conditions weakened any support for more radical solutions. This at least was occurring nationally at the time and has been noted by Glynn and Oxborrow who comment that

"... in the short run (unemployment) strengthened vested interests and the forces of reaction rather than producing left-wing militancy on a large scale."⁴⁹

There was in Clydebank a number of minor political parties which were of little real significance in the 1920s and 1930s. The Liberal Party was weak throughout the inter-war period. Proposals to unite with the largely moribund Dumbarton Party, might have strengthened Liberalism in the parliamentary constituency, but Dumbarton could not be brought to agree. The local Liberals discussed putting up a Parliamentary candidate on several occasions, but either could not agree among themselves, lacked funds or were unable to find a suitable candidate. In any case they were unhappy with the idea of splitting the non-Labour vote and so in practice supported Conservative candidates. As previously mentioned, at a local level Liberals seem to have functioned as part of the Moderate Party.

From 1926 onwards, when a Scottish Home Rule Association meeting took place, there was some growth in Scottish National Party support in the burgh. By 1931 this had become strong enough for a local branch of the party to be opened with a membership at the end of that year of 150.⁵⁰ In 1932 four Nationalist candidates came bottom of the poll and this was the only active venture into politics by the Nationalist Party during the period. There was a propaganda drive in 1933, and in 1935 a SNP candidate, T W Campbell, was chosen to oppose David Kirkwood at the General Election. His candidature was withdrawn later that year because the local organiser felt that

"his organisation was not complete."⁵¹

The fact that there was no support for this alternative form of more radical solution to the problems facing Clydebank, and Scotland, again confirms the comparatively moderate nature of the Clydebank electorate.

A final minor party which played a part in the political life of the burgh from 1934 onwards was the Independent Labour Party, which occupied a position between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. Its politics were certainly more radical than the local Labour Party, calling for action to aid the unemployed and improve housing, action against private rent increases, and slum clearance. However they did

not go as far as the Communist Party - in 1932 it was stated that "The ILP recognised that if the council had acceded to that request (to refuse to operate the Means Test) that Commissioners would come here and operate it without the concesssions the council gave, thus placing the people in the burgh affected by the Means Test in a worse position than at present⁵²."

No ILP candidate was successful in local elections.

The policies put forward by political parties in the burgh show the areas of concern in the community. Naturally, at times of unemployment in particular, aid for those without work was important. Equally however housing and especially rent levels were prominent in political manifestos of all shades. There was also considerable attention given to environmental improvements ranging from public health to recreation.

Differences between parties arose partly over the relative significance place on particular policy areas. More importantly there were differences on how these aims were to be achieved - Moderates emphasised the need for economy, Labour wanted more intervention while Communists were prepared to see the law broken. In a sense Clydebank followed the national trend by rejecting radical ideas and concentrating on the solution of problems by more traditional means - in the words of Stephen Constantine,

"It is clear that extremist political action attracted only a handful of the unemployed; demonstrators asked for more liberal relief, not for social revolution."⁵³

Yet in the burgh this did not mean the confirmation of Moderate control - though a moderate party remained in power there was a definite political shift to the left from the early 1930s leading to the Labour take over of 1935. In large measure this was a response to the actions of the Moderate group on unemployment and associated problems, and did not parallel events at a national level in the early 1930s.

(iii) Pressure Groups⁵⁴

Political activity was not restricted to party political groups. Pressure groups appeared in the burgh on a variety of issues ranging from dangerous railings to unemployment. Perhaps surprisingly, there is no evidence of any organised group concerned with rate poundage levels which were rising throughout the inter-war period. Since housing and unemployment were at times major problems for the town, the most prominent pressure groups grew up demanding action to deal with them. These groups appeared in the community in response to the situation as it developed both locally and nationally. Perhaps the

more significant in terms of political activity were those concerned with the situation of the unemployed.

In 1921 the Clydebank Unemployed Workers Committee (UWC) was set up, though no information is available on who were the organisers. Its purpose was

"to bring the utmost pressure on those responsible for the provision of work or maintenance for unemployed men and women."⁵⁵

It did this partly by maintaining morale through the provision of social facilities. It gave advice through a Complaints Committee to those who felt aggrieved at their treatment by the Parish Council and, through a Housing Association representative, helped those faced with problems of rent or eviction. It did not restrict its actions to a passive role but played an active part in politics through the organisation of a number of deputations, marches and demonstrations to put its ideas on the treatment of the unemployed to the Parish Council. Such actions took place in September 1921, August 1923, March 1924 and August 1925.⁵⁶ An indication of the wishes of this group can be seen in the proposals put forward in March 1924 when a deputation asked the Parish Council for an increase in able-bodied relief to 36/- for a man and wife, 5/- per child to age 16, 15/- for children aged 16-18, payment of actual rent up to 15/- per week and a weekly allowance of 1 cwt of coal or its equivalent in gas.⁵⁷ None of the requests were agreed to.

Yet it seems that this organisation received less support than it might have hoped from the unemployed, since before the demonstration of March 1924 the Committee were

"quite confident that an increase will be granted if the unemployed will rally to their support at the critical moment."⁵⁸

Though local apathy may be a partial explanation of the lack of support, a more likely explanation may be that Clydebank, as indicated elsewhere, was then becoming less badly affected by unemployment than some other areas. Indeed the unemployed as a prominent political pressure group seem largely to have disappeared from local politics until the appearance of a National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM) delegation to the town council in March 1930. This hiatus in activity by the unemployed does indeed coincide with a period of low local unemployment.

The NUWM of the 1930s was of course a national organisation and the membership of the Clydebank branch seems to have been rather larger

than the UWC of the 1920s. This would not be surprising in view of the depth of depression affecting the town in the early 1930s - yet even at this time the numbers involved were rather less than might have been expected. In September 1931 membership was stated to be between 500 and 600,⁵⁹ and in September 1932 a NUWM representative remarked that

"the number present at their meetings varied - sometimes there were 40, sometimes 300 or 400."⁶⁰

Such figures would represent a hard core of active members according to Findlay Hart. He estimates that up to half of the burgh unemployed would contribute 1d per week membership due at the Labour Exchange, even if unemployed for only a few weeks, in return for the services provided by the movement such as advice on unemployment insurance or PAC responsibilities.

Such non-committed individuals would be rather less likely to become involved in the local political activities of the NUWM. To put pressure on the authorities it organised marches, such as the large Anti-Means Test demonstration of April 1932 when anything up to 6000 people took part.⁶¹ At another demonstration in August 1931 some of its members attempted to rush into the council chamber and were arrested.⁶² The purpose of such demonstrations was to encourage the town council to accede to NUWM demands which were many and varied, perhaps helping to explain their comparative lack of success. As an example of this, in January 1933 the council was asked for (a) 1/- per week extra for all dependent children, (b) one bag of coal per week per household (c) free boots and shoes to those unemployed over six months (d) free milk to children under school age and (e) work schemes to relieve depression.⁶³ Generally their initial demands concerned improvement of relief scales and the provision of work for the unemployed. In 1932 and 1933 they sometimes extended these demands to include suggestions which were legally or practically outwith the power of the town council such as the abandonment of the Means Test or putting pressure on the responsible authorities to restart work on the Cunarder. When it became apparent that the town council either would not or could not take action on such matters, and with a gradual decline in unemployment, attention again reverted to the improvement of relief scales, the provision of work, Christmas treats or works of social improvement in the burgh such as the building of a Maternity Hospital. As with the UWC of the early 1920s the demands were basically for a more liberal relief policy rather than, in most cases, for radical change in forms and methods of assistance to the unemployed.

The Moderate Town Council which faced this pressure frequently heard the NUWM delegations, but any action taken seems to have occurred when the council wished, not in response to particular pressures. On occasion the NUWM delegates were ignored - in February 1935 a group was refused admittance to the council for procedural reasons when

"Provost Smart pointed out these matters had all been dealt with by the council within the last six months"⁶⁴ and so were inadmissible for reconsideration.

One possible reason for the town council occasionally ignoring the NUWM and certainly not giving way to its demands was the more overtly political nature of this group compared to the UWC of the 1920s. In fact, so obvious did this seem that in 1933 Provost McKenzie, Bailie McKendrick and others on the Halls and Baths Committee opposed the letting of the town hall at reduced cost to the NUWM because it would be a political let.⁶⁵ Similarly in 1931 they had refused a free let of the town hall largely because

"the unemployed committee, it was said, had once taken advantage of their unemployed brethren by asking for a collection to provide for a speaker to come down - a Communist speaker - and criticise the actions of the town council."⁶⁶

It was apparent Communist involvement, whether official policy of the Communist Party and NUWM or not, which made the NUWM locally and nationally even more of a political organisation than its function would suggest. At an official level locally no Labour politician was willing to become involved with the NUWM because of its Communist connections. On 16th October 1931 the Clydebank Press reported a comment by David Kirkwood MP at a public meeting that he was not in favour of the NUWM. So close were these Communist connections that they have brought Findlay Hart to remark that it was difficult to tell a non-Communist NUWM activist from a Communist active in the NUWM. Not only were known Communists such as Findlay Hart often participants in NUWM delegations to the town council, such as that of September 1932, but when NUWM candidates stood in three wards in the local elections of 1931, they did so in conjunction with Communist candidates in the other two. The Clydebank Press published their joint programme calling for an end to the cuts, an increase in relief scales and no reduction in wages.⁶⁷ It was not new for the unemployed to put forward their own candidates, as had happened in 1921 and 1924. What was new was the official Communist connection, though it was of little use to the candidates who, as in the 1920s, came bottom of the poll.

The combination of demands and Communist involvement, if not control, helps to explain the attitude expressed towards the NUWM by some of the more conservative inhabitants of the burgh. The Moderate, Bailie McKenzie is reported as saying of an NUWM deputation in 1931

"... they are what Mr Baldwin said regarding the press - they want power without responsibility.⁶⁸"

In 1933 T Baird Duffy wrote to the Clydebank Press claiming,

"Revolution. That is what the NUWM advocate. That is their ruling passion and principle.⁶⁹"

Without doubt the NUWM provoked apprehension in some quarters in Clydebank - yet this would seem to reflect a fear of the possible rather than actual demands and achievements of the NUWM which seem to have been fairly modest, particularly with declining unemployment from 1934.

The other major area of pressure group activity was housing. Here, unemployment was by no means the only reason for the appearance of such groups.

The growth of council housing as a result of central and local government policy decisions was an important factor, and pressure groups arose to represent the needs of the growing number of council tenants. In addition there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the methods of allocation of council houses expressed in an apparently unorganised series of letters to the local press at times in the inter-war period (see ch.8 p.21⁴). In the private sector local landlords' attempts to raise wartime controlled rents in line with government legislation gave strong impetus to the growth of a protest movement in the town.

Nevertheless if other factors could be said to be amongst the causes of the growth of housing pressure groups, unemployment was the occasion on which they came to the fore.

Housing as a major local issue tended only to appear at times of depression when rent rather than housing conditions became the main area of complaint. Consequently the major periods of agitation on housing came in the early 1920s and early 1930s, when the effects of large scale unemployment made rent a particularly pertinent issue. The Clydebank branch of the Scottish National Labour Housing Association was in existence by 1920, by which time it was said to have had over 2000 members, having risen from 340 in 1918 and reaching 4000 in 1921.⁷⁰ It was more concerned with private rent levels than housing conditions, reflecting a generally better quality of housing in Clydebank than in

other places and also the effect of the growth of unemployment in those years. The Association's purpose was to protect tenants against landlords by the provision of advice, legal if necessary; by the organisation of large meetings and demonstrations, such as those of June and August 1920, against rent increases; and above all by the organisation of the Rent Strike of 1923-1925. The overt purpose of this strike was stated by the Association to be

"the recognition of pre-war rent as the basis of any settlement of the rent trouble in Clydeb⁷¹ank."

This followed attempts by private property owners to increase controlled rents with government approval, though as indicated in section 12.1, this stated aim of the Association would not have been accepted by all. The close connection between the Housing Association and the Labour Party is indicated by its name and the comments of March 1923 that

"their best friends had been the men in the Labour movement⁷²s."

In 1927 Mr Leiper, the Association leader, said that it was

"endeavouring to get a working arrangement with the local Labour Party" on

"the continuance of the Rent Restriction Act and a return to pre-war rents⁷³."

However this connection only went so far and did not prevent criticism of the actions of the local Labour Party by the Association. This can be seen in a letter from Mr Leiper to the Clydeb⁷⁴ank Press in September 1924 in which he stated that

"If Councillor Kelly and the Labour Party are really sincere in their advocacy of pre-war rents then they must accept the Housing Association policy of rent control or else offer an alternative policy. The passing of pious resolutions won't bring about pre-war rents⁷⁴."

Nor did they rely on Labour candidates to express their views at local elections. One Housing Association candidate stood in 1921, one in 1922, one against Labour in 1924 and one in 1925 and 1926 - only Mr Leiper in 1922 was successful. According to the Clydeb⁷⁵ank Press, in this one victory

"It is generally considered that the rent test case decided by the House of Lords in favour of the tenant a few days before the election had a good deal to do with the result⁷⁵"

With the settlement of the Rent Strike in 1925-1926 the Association seems to have faded away, again at a time when the problems resulting from considerable unemployment were fading in the later 1920s.

It was revived, though in a different form, in the severely depressed times of the early 1930s. In July 1932 a group calling itself the

Clydebank Council of Action put forward a demand for pre-war rents for private houses and a 25 per cent reduction in municipal rents.⁷⁶ According to Findlay Hart, who was involved in this group, it was a united front organisation with representatives from various bodies such as the ward committees. However in the 1930s Labour refused to take part in such housing pressure groups because of the involvement of Communists in them. This was also the attitude to the Tenants Defence Association, set up in 1933, though David Kirkwood, who had been deeply involved in the formation of the Scottish Labour Housing Association, did speak at their meeting in March of that year because of the strength of his personal position. But it was not only Communists who were involved in the Association with its demand for pre-war rents and a reduction of 25 per cent in municipal rents. At an Association meeting, its Secretary, Mr J Adams,

"explained that there were 25 organisations represented in the Association and nearly every Trade Union except one."⁷⁷

Though it attempted to achieve its aims through public meetings and deputations to the town council, it was unsuccessful.

Equally unsuccessful in its attempts to get municipal rents reduced by 25 per cent was the Parkhall Tenants Association, which was in existence from at least 1931.⁷⁸ The town council proved unwilling or unable to reduce rents despite the demands of the Association's membership, which had risen by 1939 to 434 in Parkhall and 50 in North Kilbowie.⁷⁹ However the Association did not exist solely for this semi-political purpose, but to bring the attention of their landlord, the town council, to repairs which were necessary or facilities which could be added to these areas of new housing.

Other examples of organisations which were involved in politics can be given, and perhaps the most important of these were the Ward Committees. In the early days of the burgh, according to the Clydebank Press,

"... the Ward Committees ... were second in importance and in their active interest in the work of the town council to that body itself."⁸⁰

These representative organisations of ratepayers in each ward had lost some of this importance by the inter-war period, though they were still the bodies to which councillors gave stewardship reports before each election. The functions of the Ward Committees varied, some being political, some social - at their monthly meetings there would be reports on the various activities of the town council and its committees. Areas where town council action was necessary could

be raised, the information being forwarded to the appropriate official, and discussion on social activities such as entertainments or outings would take place. However their involvement in politics was not always as successful as they might have wished. In 1920 the 2nd Ward Committee's candidate for cooption to a vacant town council seat was ignored.⁸¹ On several occasions dissatisfaction was expressed at the way the town council dealt with their complaints. This happened in 1920, and in 1933 the 5th Ward Committee discussed

"the scant treatment which, it was alleged, the correspondence from all the Ward Committees received from the town council .. and action is to be taken to have this rectified."⁸²

This action proved to be less than successful since the same complaint was heard in the following year.

The Trades and Labour Council was the body through which trade union political activity was carried out, since local political activity by individual trade unions was uncommon especially after the General Strike. This was an area where Communist influence could be exercised, as in Scotland, unlike in England, Communist trade union delegates were allowed to participate. This body helped to organise the giant demonstration against the Means Test in 1932 and was involved in other demonstrations by the unemployed eg October 1921.⁸³ Its involvement in electoral politics was shown in the recommendation of candidates at municipal elections such as 1927, when it worked alongside the Labour Party. That it would go further can be seen in its unsuccessful attempts to obtain the resignation of Councillor Bryce in 1921 because of his lack of support for one of their favoured candidates at the recent municipal elections.⁸⁴

There were a number of ephemeral organisations which, according to Findlay Hart, would be set up for a particular purpose and then disappear. Examples of these semi-political organisations are the Clydebank Workers Council which aimed to obtain council assistance for the dependents of Hunger Marchers in 1932,⁸⁵ and the United Front Workers Council of Clydebank which was initiated by the Communist Party to prepare for the Hunger March of 1934.⁸⁶ The involvement of members of the Communist Party in all of these pressure groups is worthy of comment and can be explained largely by the fact that they were the activists who, perhaps more often than they would have liked, came to the fore for want of anyone else prepared to take on the job of organising these bodies.

Several points are worth making in conclusion. Pressure groups in

the burgh could at times be very vocal in support of the cause they had espoused, and certainly there were occasions when they were given considerable attention, not just by the media. Yet vocal as these pressure groups were, their memberships were comparatively small - only at times of great emotion were they able to involve large numbers in their activities. The majority of the ordinary people of Clydebank took little active part in such pressure groups, with the apparent exception of the Housing Association and its Rent Strike. Why this issue, more than unemployment, should have attracted relatively large scale action in the town is not clear, but the influence of widespread unemployment in producing conditions in which protests about the actions of landlords and central government arose must have been significant - thus in a sense the Rent Strike may have been in part a protest against sudden and unexpected economic dislocation after a period of prosperity. The cause of the rent protests in Clydebank was probably related to post war expectations and their disappointment at this time of depression when memories of the wartime rent strike in Glasgow were still relatively fresh. In addition the landlord/factor as a person was a more suitable opponent than the more impersonal forces which might be seen to be causing unemployment. It may be that such action was restricted to the 1920s depression period as in the following decade people had lost some of the spirit which might otherwise have encouraged political activity.

Not only were pressure groups usually restricted in membership - their influence was also restricted. The main pressure groups of the period, on unemployment and housing, did not see their aims, even when far from radical, carried out despite considerable efforts. However their actions in bringing such problems to the fore may have gone some way to preventing the problems they were concerned with becoming even greater for their members. By bringing the feelings of dissatisfied members of the community to local, and national, authorities in an organised fashion they performed a useful function.

The causes of the development of such pressure groups were varied. Yet it must be clear that their activities reached a peak at times of worse depression. Thus it would seem reasonable to suggest that economic dislocation was a basic contributory factor in the rise of organised protest in the burgh of Clydebank in the inter-war years.

(iv) Other Influences

Two important, though general and difficult to quantify, influences on politics in Clydebank in the inter-war period remain to be reviewed. These are temperance and religion. The temperance movement was indeed a force in Clydebank during the inter-war period, though seeming to decline in importance as time passed as indicated in chap. 11 p.301. Even in years of severe economic dislocation the temperance argument that the individual's diversion of resources to drink was a waste proved at best a temporary attraction. There were many local branches of such temperance organisations as the Rechabites, the Band of Hope and the International Order of Good Templars. In the early 1920s they had some temporary success in a local veto poll when, for a short time, the 5th Ward went "dry". An umbrella organisation, the "Clydebank No Licence Committee," organised the propaganda work, meetings etc before the poll - but was unable to repeat its success even in the depths of the early 1930s depression when the diversion argument was surely at its strongest.

As far as temperance involvement in actual politics is concerned, the Labour Party seems to have been most affected. The Party officially supported the temperance cause - at a local election meeting for Labour candidates in 1929 David Kirkwood said

"He hoped Clydebank, as it expanded its housing schemes, would see to it that, like Glasgow, there would be no licences granted there.⁸⁷";

and at a similar meeting in 1930 he stated that

"The man who would vote for a licence in Clydebank would not get a vote from David Kirkwood.⁸⁸"

Prominent members of the town Labour Party such as Bailie Miss Rae in the 1920s and Bailie, later Provost, Martin in the 1930s were closely involved with the temperance cause. Yet there is considerable evidence, confirmed by Findlay Hart, that in the public mind the Labour Party was associated with support for the licensed trade. Mr Hart believes that this may help to explain the Labour Party's comparative lack of electoral success, at least in the 1920s. One of the reasons for Bailie Miss Rae leaving the Party in 1925 was because other Labour councillors, "bacchanalians", were drunk at town council meetings.⁸⁹ In a similar vein, a letter to the Press from "ALD" said

"Although it has never been said in so many words, there has been a very well defined opinion that the blessing which we enjoy in Clydebank of an extra supply of liquor licenses is due to a Labour magistracy on the licensing bench.⁹⁰"

By 1939 this subject was causing another split in Labour ranks when the Divisional Labour Party felt it necessary to write to the Clydebank Press after the Licensing Court had granted a license in Radnor Park.

"In view of the opinions expressed and the actions taken by three Labour magistrates, it was necessary to make it widely known that such opinions and actions were entirely personal and in no way represented the Labour Party position on this question. That on the contrary the Party disapprove of the opinions expressed and dissociate themselves with the action taken.⁹¹"

That temperance was an important, though declining, background factor in politics can be seen in the fact that, according to Findlay Hart, a Communist municipal candidate had to be withdrawn from the November elections because he stumbled at a public meeting after visiting a pub.

The last influence on politics can be considered is religion,⁹² though its influence is probably even less quantifiable than that of temperance. That religion was an issue in Clydebank and not just in politics, can be seen in the following quotation from Edward Shiel's local novel, Gael Over Glasgow -

"And Brian was just beginning to realise the wide gulf that separated Catholicism from the other beliefs and non-beliefs on the Clyde. Already he had experienced that ostracism, sometimes subtle and veiled, sometimes crudely aggressive, but always there. You could be the finest fellow in the world - but, you were a Catholic.⁹³"

That religion was involved in politics can be seen in the necessity for the Chairman of the Tenants Defence Association to assure his audience at a public meeting that his organisation was "non-political and non-sectarian"⁹⁴, and by the reported remarks of at least one municipal candidate in 1933 that he

"did not represent any one political party, sect or creed."⁹⁵
If further evidence is necessary, it comes in a letter from G W Johnstone of the ILP to the Clydebank Press attacking the town council

"representatives who are more concerned about bowing the knee to religious denominations for vote catching purposes, than they are in answering the demands of the community."⁹⁶

For practical purposes the effect of this religious division seems to have been to produce, at least in the early part of the period, majority Protestant/Masonic/Orange support for the Moderate Party and minority Catholic support for the Labour Party. Perhaps this

is reflected in the fact that, despite official Catholic distaste for Communism, one of the participating groups in the 1932 anti-Means Test demonstration along with the Communist Party and the NUWM, was the Ancient Order of Hibernians - though Liberal and Unionist Parties had been invited to send delegates, none came.⁹⁷ Admittedly this is only one piece of evidence, but it confirms the anecdotal evidence of Findlay Hart.

Factors such as temperance and religion played a part, or were believed to play a part, in local politics in Clydebank. Yet there is considerable evidence to suggest that any such influence was declining in the inter-war years. In chapter 11 it was shown that the Temperance Movement was becoming less significant with the passage of time, gaining its only real success in the early 1920s. As for religion, the fact that the Labour Party managed to gain a council majority in 1924-1925 and from 1935 suggests that, as with temperance, any religious divide in politics was weakening between 1919 and 1939.

The reasons for such a decline in influence are varied. Over the two decades, with at least periods of relative prosperity, attitudes were changing. Other problems arose which seemed more pressing, and which may have required a different outlook - amongst these must be counted housing and unemployment. The reaction of the political parties in the burgh to such difficulties must have overcome the weakening forces of traditionalism represented by Temperance and the politico - religious divide.

12.3 Clydebank and National Politics

The purpose of this section is to consider the extent to which Clydebank followed national political trends such as the replacement of the Liberals by Labour as the other party of government, and the conservative trend seen particularly at times of depression such as the election of 1931. It will also give attention to the extent to which Clydebank fulfilled the image of itself created in the town and in other parts of the country, that is as a good example of "Red Clydeside". Lastly consideration will also be given to the ways in which the burgh made a contribution to politics at a national level.

Clydebank and Dumbarton formed the inter-war parliamentary constituency of the Dumbarton Burghs. The following table shows the number of electors in each burgh in selected years between 1919 and 1939.

Table 12.6 Voters in the Parliamentary Constituency of the
Dumbarton Burghs 1919-1939

Year	(1) CLYDEBANK	DUMBARTON	(2) TOTAL	(1) as % of (2)
1918-19	21,116	11,411	32,527	64.92
1923-24	22,309	11,468	33,777	66.05
1928-29	23,657	10,976	34,633	68.36
1933-34	28,523	12,789	41,312	69.04
1938-39	29,160	13,377	42,537	68.56

Source:- Electoral Registers of the Burghs of Clydebank and
Dumbarton.

Despite changes caused by the extension of the franchise, alterations in general burgh populations and slight statistical differences between those allowed to vote in local and national elections, the situation is clear. Approximately two thirds of the constituency electors lived in Clydebank, giving it a predominant voice in the election of the local Member of Parliament. This may partly explain the fact that the first post-war MP, John Taylor, had been provost of Clydebank. Table 12.7 gives the inter-war general election results in the constituency.

Table 12.7 Dumbarton Burghs - General Elections 1918-1935

Year	Turnout	Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Votes
1918	70.4%	J Taylor	Coalition Liberal	11,734	52.6
		D Kirkwood	Labour	10,566	47.4
1922	76.2	D Kirkwood	Labour	16,397	64.3
		J Taylor	National Liberal	9,107	35.7
1923	68.0	D Kirkwood	Labour	13,472	61.3
		W B Munro	Conservative	8,520	38.7
1924	76.1	D Kirkwood	Labour	14,562	59.2
		W B Munro	Conservative	10,027	40.8
1929	77.1	D Kirkwood	Labour	19,193	63.1
		C Milne	Conservative	11,275	36.9
1931	80.7	D Kirkwood	Independent Labour	16,335	51.6
		N I McCracken	Conservative	15,338	48.4
1935	78.7	D Kirkwood	Labour	20,409	65.2
		N I McCracken	Conservative	10,909	34.8

Source:- F W C Craig British Parliamentary Election Results
1918-1949 (Glasgow 1969), p.576.

Table 12.7 indicates a number of important points. The first is that, as elsewhere, there was a post-war swing away from the traditional Liberal voting pattern towards the Labour Party. Even

in the election of 1918, the first contested by the Labour Party, their candidate made a very considerable impression - national factors must have played a part in this, but the successful candidate suggested in his victory speech that

"The Labour Party had organised it for years, while the others did not, having loyally observed the truce ⁹⁸...."

The permanent eclipse of the Liberals occurred in 1922 and a number of reasons can be put forward for Labour success in that and later years. In 1922 itself the growing problem of depression must have contributed to the loss of support for John Taylor, the sitting MP. In addition, as will be seen below, Taylor faced an organised campaign of opposition orchestrated by the Labour Housing Association over his attitude to rent increase bills. However a number of other factors which had an influence beyond 1922 must be listed. As indicated above local organisation undoubtedly played a part in explaining the success of the Labour Party in general elections from 1922. There was not only a divisional party, but a Clydebank party and ward parties, and it was certainly active in holding meetings and participating in local affairs. Labour success might also be explained by the undoubted personal support established by David Kirkwood, as well as the policies he stood for. It is also possible, that in a constituency with a considerable Irish Catholic population, there was a switch of Liberal working class votes to the growing radical party, Labour, especially after the establishment of the Irish Free State.⁹⁹ It has also been suggested that high polls tended to benefit the Labour Party. Certainly in Clydebank general election poll turnouts were higher than those for local elections, and equally the party's results were better at a national than a local level for most of the inter-war period.

In addition to Labour strengths, Liberal weaknesses must also be considered. Nationally the Liberal Party faced problems as a result of the wartime split. The local Liberal Party was unable to unite and organise itself eventually leading to its support for Conservative candidates. In 1924 it was announced that

"The Dumbarton Burghs Liberal Council resolved to do all in their power to further the return of Mr W B Munro,¹⁰⁰" the Conservative candidate. As a result, no Liberal candidate stood in the inter-war years.

A second point worthy of note in Table 12.7 is that Conservative candidates received a considerable measure of support throughout

the period, not surprising, at least in the 1920s, in view of the local support for the Moderate Party. However, whether this was actually support for Conservatism or a vote against Labour in the absence of an alternative candidate is not clear. What is clear is that only once, in the special circumstances of 1931, did the Conservative candidate come near to unseating Kirkwood. Perhaps the surprising fact about the 1931 election is that Kirkwood retained his seat at all, as the following table indicates.

Table 12.8 General Elections - Labour Party in Scotland 1918-1935

Year	No of MPs	% of Vote
1918	6	24.7
1922	29	32.2
1923	34	35.9
1924	26	41.1
1929	36	42.4
1931	7	32.6
1935	20	36.8

Source:- J G Kellas The Scottish Political System (2nd edition Cambridge 1975), Table 17, pp 98-99.

The Labour Party's percentage of the vote was always higher in Clydebank than nationally but in the depression of 1931 even Clydebank shared the swing away from Labour, and Kirkwood's percentage of the vote fell by 11.5% against a national drop of 9.8%. However it seems likely that his comparatively stronger base of support in the constituency helped to ensure his survival, unlike many of his colleagues. Thus, though Clydebank participated in the national swing away from Labour at this time, it did not go so far as to reject its Labour MP, as happened elsewhere in Scotland.

It would seem that a survey of general election results would suggest that, if voting Labour can be regarded as radical in the inter-war period, then Clydebank in national political terms was radical. Such a conclusion might be supported by a consideration of the attitudes of the individual so consistently elected as MP.¹⁰¹ His wartime background as a leading member of the Clyde Shop Stewards Movement, his anti-war views and his resulting "exile" to Edinburgh for a period during the war¹⁰² might have caused concern to someone of conservative political views. Kirkwood's activities and utterances once elected would have done little to dispel any such concern.

In January 1923 he remarked in Clydebank that

"the Labour Party were not in Parliament for the fun of the thing They were there to take over the British Empire for the British worker."¹⁰³

Even worse, in a Commons Committee in the same year he

"concluded his speech with a threat that the Socialist republic would be established at the point of the bayonet."¹⁰⁴

A prominent member of the ILP, he became treasurer of the left-wing Maxton-Cook group of Labour MPs in 1928. He attacked the Labour government in 1929, saying that

"They now had a Labour government in power and it was behaving exactly as a Tory government."¹⁰⁵

He was involved in scenes in the House of Commons in 1923, 1925 and 1937, and was suspended on several occasions. All in all it would seem that the man elected by the citizens of Clydebank as their representative fitted in well with the picture of the town as a hot-bed of radicalism.

Yet, as in local politics, the generally accepted view requires to be amended. Kirkwood became less of an activist as time passed, eventually becoming a member of the House of Lords - though there were occasional bursts of activity throughout his career. In 1929 the local communist William Waddell attacked him for not being radical enough, and certainly Kirkwood replied to a question in a Clydebank meeting, saying,

"I am not a Communist."¹⁰⁶

That his radicalism did not extend to Communism was confirmed in the following year when, at a conference in Germany of the League Against Imperialism, it was reported that

"Mr Kirkwood denounced the Communists and said that they did not represent the working classes."¹⁰⁷

In the same way, and probably for the same reason, he opposed the NUWM publicly on several occasions eg in October 1931,¹⁰⁸ and refused in May 1932 to support a local campaign for non-cooperation with the Means Test.¹⁰⁹ As a last piece of evidence, he refused to join his colleague and friend Maxton when the ILP split from the Labour Party because

"union is the only hope of the working classes."¹¹⁰

It would be incorrect to describe Clydebank's representative as in practice an extremist, though without doubt he was well to the left in the Labour Party, and his robust activities must help to explain the considerable support he enjoyed from "his people" throughout the inter-war period and beyond.

Of course Clydebank's involvement in national politics was not restricted to Parliamentary elections and the activities of its MP. At both an official and unofficial level Clydebank made some contribution to the national political scene. The Moderate Provost Young, in welcoming Prime Minister Baldwin to the town in 1928, described the town council as the most progressive and democratic in Scotland,¹¹¹ and indeed there is evidence to suggest that the town council was democratic in the sense of representing the opinions of the townspeople to central government on matters of great local concern such as housing and, particularly, unemployment relief. Since privately rented accommodation was occupied by the majority of inhabitants of the town, the town council went on record on several occasions to object to national legislation on that subject eg in 1924 it passed a resolution against the government's action in allowing a 25% increase in pre-war rents in the Rent Bill.¹¹² In the same way in 1932 it attempted to indicate the feelings of the citizens when

"it was unanimously agreed that the town council petition the government to repeal the provision of the Order in Council regarding Transitional Payments on account of the great privation and hardship which the imposition of a Means Test was causing among the working class of the town."¹¹³

In 1936 it held a public meeting to protest against the new Unemployment Assistance Board Regulations, sending a resolution to the government that the UAB allowances were inadequate and requesting the abolition of the family means test.¹¹⁴

The representation of the citizens' opinions to central government was not carried out on any party basis. What neither of the major local political groups was prepared to do was to take action which, by breaking the law, would force central government to respond on a particular problem. In the 1930s it was frequently suggested that the town council should refuse to operate the Means Test. The standard response to the type of suggestion was given by Councillor Fleming (Labour) - the town council opposed the Means Test

"but it was unfortunately quite true if they refused to operate it a commissioner would be sent down to Clydebank to do so"¹¹⁵ and the citizens would find themselves in a worse position.

Some local groups which played a part in national political events were less concerned with the basic legal position, though willing to make use of the machinery of the law, where possible, to emphasise their attitude. The best example of this was the Rent Strike of 1923-1925.¹¹⁶ The organisation leading the strike and demanding pre-

war rents was the Labour Housing Association. The point at issue was rent, but it would seem that in some quarters at least the fight had a wider political significance. Representatives of the Housing Association said in 1924

"Their agitation had been focussed on the policy of abolishing private property in working class houses in favour of communal ownership."¹¹⁷

This long and complex dispute involved evictions, appeals to the House of Lords, the passage of the Rents (Notice of Increase) Act 1923, conferences with the Scottish Secretary, visits from a delegation of Labour MPs and a Commission of Enquiry under Lord Constable (see ch.8 pp.219-20). Eventually after appeals by the property owners to the Court of Session, the tenants began to pay the increased rent. But the Rent Strike had involved a great deal of political activity in Clydebanks and beyond and had made a considerable contribution to the impression of Clydebanks as a centre of "Bolshevism."

The Housing Association was also said to have played a part in the defeat of the Coalition Liberal MP John Taylor in 1922. He was accused of going back on a campaign promise to oppose measures resulting in rent increases, and was subjected to pressure by the Association as a result. Taylor published correspondence with the Association in 1920 in which he wrote

"Dear Sir, I have received 890 post cards from members of your association calling attention to a poster issued by me during the election 'Vote for Provost Taylor and No Increase in Rents' and asking me to fulfil my promise and vote against any increase in rent."¹¹⁸

The campaign against rent increases, and incidentally the MP, continued with meetings, marches, etc, and the Kerr v Bryde test case in the House of Lords in late 1922.¹¹⁹ Of the general election which followed in November 1922 the Clydebanks Press commented

"Unemployment being so rife and the decision in the House of Lords in the Clydebanks rent test case no doubt played a part in deciding the issue, for the result was a complete reversal of 1918 ..."¹²⁰

Other political organisations were involved directly or indirectly in the national political scene. Perhaps the most significant was the NUWM, some of whose demands could not be dealt with at local level and were really aimed at changing national policy. The best example of this was the desire to see the Means Test abolished. The demand was presented to the town council on several occasions such as September 1932, August 1933 and October 1933.¹²¹ The rationale

behind the request was put forward by an NUWM delegate who wanted the town council

"to give a lead by refusing to operate it ... to set the ball rolling."¹²²

The town council's reaction has already been indicated.

In another way some of the Clydebank unemployed took part in national political activity through their involvement in and support for Hunger Marches. In September 1932 the Clydebank Marchers Council asked the town council to maintain the dependents of marchers to London during their six weeks absence and to supply the marchers with underclothing and boots.¹²³ This request was remitted to the PAC. On 18th December 1933 the town council gave permission for the Hunger March Committee to hold a street collection in aid of funds and on 26th December they were given the use of the town hall at 50 per cent of cost to raise funds through a concert in aid of the Clydebank contingent of marchers to London.¹²⁴ However the town council's comparatively sympathetic attitude had altered by 1935, possibly as a result of the improvement in employment. In that year

"letters were read from the Clydebank 5th Ward Committee, the 4th Ward Committee and the Clydebank Cooperative Womens Guild protesting against the decision of the council in connection with the application for the use of the town hall and the provision of meals (for marchers). The letters were ruled out of order."¹²⁵

In national politics Clydebank took part in the trend which increased the importance of the Labour Party, and yet as elsewhere saw a considerable loss of Labour support during the depression of the early 1930s. But this loss of support, which had not occurred in the depression of ten years earlier, did not go so far in Clydebank that its Labour MP lost his seat. This happened in 1931 to many other Scottish Labour MPs, so why not to David Kirkwood? The personal support he enjoyed must go a considerable way to explaining this fact, but the strength of his party organisation, which was lacking in other political groups, must also have played a part. In addition, Clydebank had been enjoying some prosperity in the years before 1931 and by the general election in October, depression had yet to make its greatest impact on the town with the virtual closure of John Browns. This probably meant that the forces of conservatism were, at that point, rather less strong in Clydebank than elsewhere, and thus the policies put forward by Kirkwood were more attractive.

Clydebank's radical reputation was greatly strengthened by two factors. Firstly, the actions and statements of David Kirkwood on a local and national stage must have greatly contributed to producing this impression. Yet, though ^{left-wing, Kirkwood was not an extremist in his actions. It was} his statements which, to a considerable extent, created an impression fitting the preconceptions of a national political establishment disturbed by the sudden arrival in the early 1920s of the Clydeside group of socialist MPs to which Kirkwood belonged. The second contributory factor was the Rent Strike which caused a great deal of political disturbance at both a local and national level. Radical political activists were involved in this action and probably had aims going beyond a wish to see the return of pre-war rents. Yet most of those involved no doubt limited their aim to a reduction in rent. In this sense the Rent Strike was not radical in its objective though it was in the means adopted to reach this goal.

Unemployment contributed to bringing Clydebank to the fore in national political terms. It helped to bring about the election of David Kirkwood in 1922. It played a major part in causing the Rent Strike, though of course the actions of the landlords and central government in producing rent rises were at least as important. In the 1930s a small proportion of the Clydebank unemployed became involved in the NUWM's national political actions such as the Hunger Marches. Thus when Clydebank came to prominence in national political terms economic dislocation was a substantial contributory factor. However other factors also influenced the relationship between Clydebank and the national political scene. Most important amongst these was the continuing election of David Kirkwood as MP, as a result of his policies, personality, the weakness of the opposition, Labour Party organisation etc. Also significant, at least to the inhabitants of the town, were attempts made by the town council to influence national policies, particularly in housing and unemployment relief.

Clydebank then contributed to national politics in the inter-war period. In many ways this contribution was, in reality, less radical than has been assumed. The economic dislocation which affected the town at times was one of a number of causes of the part played by the burgh in national political terms in the period 1919-1939.

12.4 Conclusion

Political changes took place in Clydebank in the inter-war years at both a national and a local level. In first national then local politics the influence of the Labour Party increased. The burgh

developed a reputation for radicalism. Pressure groups appeared to put the case for particular changes. In all of these areas the consequences of economic dislocation played a part - yet unemployment and its associated problems were not the only causes of political change in the town. The influence of the council housebuilding programme through the creation of new (and relatively more prosperous) interest groups contributed to inter-war political developments in the burgh. The declining strength of established interests such as temperance and religion, central and local government policy and action, the organisational strength of political groups, personal factors, and above all the housing problem also played a part. Though to some extent these factors depended on prosperity or lack of it in Clydebank, they were in many ways independent of the economic situation in the burgh.

Unemployment and housing were probably the most important of all these factors, and considerable links existed between them. The community's political response to these problems must indicate its reaction to the difficulties it faced at that time. One reaction was the growth of pressure groups. The synchronous development of pressure groups representing the unemployed and those living in rented accommodation at times of severe depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s is clear. Yet neither the Housing Association, with a maximum of perhaps 4000 members, or the NUWM of the early 1930s could claim to represent a majority of Clydebank citizens, despite the significance of the problems with which they attempted to grapple. Nor, perhaps as a result of their relatively small support, were they successful in achieving their stated aims.

It would seem that on the whole more "official" political activity in Clydebank could legitimately be described as moderate, in all likelihood a result of the comparatively reasonable housing, employment, health and recreational conditions to be found in the town through much of the 1919-1939 period. The town had small, vocal political groups of a left wing tendency, but in practical terms they had little effect. Both the Moderate and Labour Parties were unable or unwilling to indulge in large innovative policies, except perhaps in housing - and even here the action was within the legislative framework established by central government. Despite, at times, severe economic dislocation, there was no substantial support for extremes of left or right in Clydebank - though a change eventually took place to support for Labour in local government, largely the result of unemployment related problems and council reaction to them,

the middle of the road policies of the earlier Moderate group continued in practice with little change. This political change in the town in the 1930s could be described as cosmetic since there was no substantial policy change. Although particular issues at particular times raised the political temperature, there was no twenty year conflagration. The reputation which the town acquired seems to have been largely undeserved.

Consideration of the evidence given in this chapter suggests that none of the potential scenarios for politics in a depressed West of Scotland shipbuilding town fits the actuality found. There was no enduring shift to conservatism, though without doubt politics remained moderate throughout the inter-war years. There was no sustained apathy - the inhabitants of the burgh participated in the political process to a considerable extent and occasioned a number of changes. Nor, despite its reputation, is there any real evidence of the burgh as a hot-bed of radicalism. Though many influences must have played a part in this, such as the relative newness of the town in which political attitudes were rather less than firmly established, economic conditions, both prosperity and unemployment, contributed to a large degree to the political situation which existed in the town and to developments which took place in the period 1919-1939.

FOOTNOTES

1. There are many standard textbooks which describe British politics in the years between the two world wars such as A J P Taylor English History 1914-1945 (Oxford 1965) or C L Mowat Britain Between The Wars 1918-1940 (London 1955). There are also a number of reliable sources of information on particular aspects of inter-war politics, eg R Skidelsky Politicians and the Slump (London 1967) which describes the history of the Labour Government of 1929-1931. For Scotland more specifically see W Ferguson Scotland 1689 to the Present (Edinburgh 1968) chap.12 pp.359-82; J G Kellas The Scottish Political System (2nd edition Cambridge 1975) chap.6, pp.91-115, and Modern Scotland (2nd edition London 1980) chap.9 pp.122-53.
2. As will be seen in the text below p.318 one factor explaining Moderate loss of control of Clydebank Town Council was the decision taken in the early 1930s to halt the construction of local authority housing and to maintain the existing level of rents at a time of economic adversity. Both these decisions were influenced by central government action and legislation. See also chap. 8, pp.202,225.
3. See chap.10 pp.279-86.
4. See chap.8 p.193
5. In the general election of October 1931, at a period of severe economic crisis, the Labour government was heavily defeated and replaced by the National Government which had 471 Conservative supporters in the House of Commons out of a total support of 556 MPs. See J Stevenson and C Cook The Slump chap.6, pp.94-113.
6. S Constantine Unemployment - Britain between the Wars (London 1980) p.43.
7. A discussion of the considerable involvement of Communist and Independent Labour supporters in Clydebank can be found in the text below pp.331, 332-3.
For Communist activity at both a national and local level in the 1930s see Stevenson and Cook, op. cit., ch.8 pp.127-44.
8. The workers sit-in of the early 1970s led by individuals of left wing sympathies attracted wide coverage and a certain notoriety in the media.
9. The Times, 16 August 1924.
10. E Shiels Gael over Glasgow (Glasgow 1937), p.60.
11. CP, 26 April 1929.
12. Ibid, 2 October, 1931.
13. Dunbartonshire Joint Police Committee Minutes, Report on the General Strike, May 1926.
14. CP, 17 May 1929.

15. The Lloyd George Coalition Government of 1918-1922 was supported by 138 Coalition Liberals and 358 Coalition Unionists and Conservatives. From 1922 until 1929, with the exception of the period December 1923 to October 1924, the Conservative Party formed the government under Bonar Law then Baldwin. The period of Labour government under McDonald from 1929 to 1931, was followed by the formation of the National Government under McDonald, Baldwin and Chamberlain. In the elections of 1931 and 1935 the Conservative Party gained over 400 seats and formed the main parliamentary support of the National Government. See C Cook and J Stevenson The Longman Handbook of Modern British History 1714-1980 (London 1983), pp.69-70, 76-77.
16. For the development of Labour support in the West of Scotland see R K Middlemass The Clydesiders (London 1965) ch.1-4, pp.17-113; and J G Kellas Modern Scotland (2nd Edition London 1980) pp.127-144.
17. For housing growth, mainly during periods of Moderate Control, see ch.8, pp.198-209.
18. In a tape recorded interview with the author.
19. D Kirkwood My Life of Revolt (London 1935), pp.245-46.
20. CP, 16 May 1924.
21. ed. F W S Craig British Parliamentary Election Results 1918-49 (Glasgow 1969) p.576.
22. CP, 19 September 1930.
23. Ibid., 26 October 1923.
24. Ibid., 18 November 1938.
25. Ibid., 1 November 1935.
26. See note 18.
27. CP, 15 October 1937.
28. Ibid., 28 April 1939.
29. Ibid., 18 March 1938.
30. Ibid., 14 December 1934.
31. Ibid., 28 October 1938.
32. Ibid., 27 February 1931.
33. Ibid., 26 December 1930.
34. Ibid., 30 October 1931.
35. Ibid., 28 October 1932.
36. Ibid., 3 November 1933.
37. CTCM, 13 October 1931.
38. CP, 25 October 1918.
39. Ibid., 18 September 1925.
40. Ibid., 13 March 1925.
41. Ibid., 6 May 1927.
42. This can be seen in a comparison of the extracts from candidates

42. Cont'd
election addresses published in the "Clydebank Press" prior to the November local elections. Each Moderate candidate issued his or her own electoral address, while Labour candidates issued one common set of proposals.
43. For example see CP, 2 November 1934.
44. Ibid., 27 November 1936.
45. Ibid., 18 March 1938.
46. Information supplied by Finlay Hart.
47. CP, 30 October 1931. A joint NUWM/Communist electoral address was published with NUWM candidates in Wards 1 - 3 and communist candidates in Wards 4 and 5.
48. Ibid., 6 November 1931.
49. S Glynn and J Oxborrow Interwar Britain : A Social and Economic History (London 1976), p.167
50. CP, 20 November 1931.
51. Ibid., 18 October 1935.
52. Ibid., 13 May 1932.
53. Constantine, op.cit., p.43.
54. For a discussion of the NUWM, though mainly at a national level, see Stevenson and Cook, op.cit., ch.9, pp.145-65. W Hannington Unemployed Struggles 1919-1936 (London 1936) gives the point of view of an activist in the unemployed workers' movement between the wars.
55. CP, 7 October 1921.
56. Ibid, 30 September 1921; 3 August 1923; 28 March 1924; 14 August 1925.
57. Ibid., 28 March 1924.
58. Ibid., 21 February 1924.
59. Ibid., 18 September 1931.
60. Ibid., 16 September 1932.
61. Ibid., 8 April 1932; 15 April 1932.
62. Ibid., 14 August 1931.
63. CTCM, 9 January 1933.
64. CP, 15 February 1935.
65. CTCM, 26 September 1933.
66. CP, 13 March 1931.
67. Ibid, 30 October 1931.
68. Ibid., 17 April 1931.
69. Ibid., 20 January 1933.
70. Ibid., 4 June 1920; 15 April 1921.
71. Ibid., 8 August 1924.
72. Ibid., 9 March 1923.
73. Ibid., 11 February 1927.
74. Ibid., 12 September 1924.

75. Ibid., 5 January 1923.
76. Ibid., 1 July 1932.
77. Ibid., 17 March 1933.
78. Ibid., 20 November 1931. This was the first occasion on which the Association was mentioned in the "Press", building in the area having only begun in 1930. The members were meeting to object to certain aspects of the rating situation.
79. Ibid., 14 April 1939.
80. Ibid., 9 March 1928.
81. Ibid., 17 December 1920.
82. Ibid., 3 February 1933.
83. Ibid., 7 October 1921.
84. Ibid., 7 January 1921.
85. Ibid., 16 September 1932.
86. Information from Finlay Hart. Information on the marches themselves can be found in P Kingsford The Hunger Marchers in Britain 1920-1940 (London 1982).
87. CP, 1 November 1929.
88. Ibid., 19 September 1930.
89. Ibid., 18 September 1925. Miss Rae claimed this situation helped to explain the slow rate of construction of burgh houses.
90. Ibid., 3 September 1926.
91. Ibid., 28 April 1939.
92. For a discussion of this issuee see Kellas Modern Scotland (2nd edition London 1980) pp.51-3 and Middlemass, op.cit., pp.35-9, 105-06, 210.
93. Shiels, op.cit., p.12.
94. CP, 17 March 1933.
95. Ibid., 3 November 1933.
96. Ibid., 11 June 1937.
97. Ibid., 8 April 1932.
98. Ibid., 3 January 1919.
99. See Kellas Modern Scotland (2nd edition London 1980), p.142.
100. CP, 17 October 1924.
101. For Kirkwood's life and work see D Kirkwood op. cit. See also R K Middlemass op. cit. for a description of the work of the Clydeside group of Labour MPs Kirkwood was a member of - however this concentrates on national politics post-1922.
102. For details see D Kirkwood, op. cit., passim.
103. CP, 19 January 1923.
104. Ibid., 20 July 1923.
105. Ibid., 27 September 1929.
106. Ibid., 9 November 1928.
107. Ibid., 16 August 1929.

108. Ibid., 16 October 1931.
109. Ibid., 6 May 1932.
110. Ibid., 27 January 1933.
111. Ibid., 27 January 1928.
112. CTCM, 10 March 1924.
113. Ibid., 21 January 1932.
114. CP, 11 September 1936.
115. Ibid., 6 May 1932.
116. For a recent survey of the Rent Strike in Clydebanks see S Damer Rent Strike! (Clydebanks 1982). This pamphlet details the course of the rent strike from the point of view of the tenant.
117. Glasgow Herald, 25 April 1924.
118. CP, 2 July 1920.
119. The House of Lords upheld the decisions of Lower Courts that the tenant, Dougald Bryde, did not have to pay the increased rent demanded, as no "Notice of Removal" had been served along with the "Notice of Increase" of rent. See Damer, op. cit., p.6 and Clydebanks Souvenir Jubilee Brochure, 1936, pp.63-67.
120. CP, 5 January 1923.
121. CTCM, 12 September 1932; 14 August 1933; 9 October 1933.
122. CP, 16 September 1932.
123. CTCM, 12 September 1932.
124. Ibid., 18 December 1933; 26 December 1933.
125. Ibid., 22 March 1935.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO ECONOMIC DISLOCATION

Some of the responses of individuals such as in spending patterns, temperance or politics, which collectively brought community changes in inter-war Clydebank have been dealt with in previous chapters. These chapters have suggested that there was growing, though interrupted, prosperity in the town, that recreational opportunities were increasing, that conventional bonds such as temperance were weakening and that moderate political change breaking away from the established pattern was taking place.

The causes of such change were many and varied. It has been suggested that increasing prosperity played a part in weakening existing social patterns, that central and local government actions helped to stimulate changes which occurred, that the burgh shared in national trends such as the eclipse of the Liberal Party and so on. Yet throughout the preceding chapters it has been clear that a major, though not the only, cause of the developments taking place in the town was the economic problems faced at times during the inter-war period. Unemployment played a major part in changing consumption patterns in the early 1930s, in stimulating the provision of municipal leisure facilities, in temporarily halting the trend away from organised religion, in encouraging the appearance of local pressure groups and in accelerating the growth in support for the Labour Party locally.

The main concern of the present chapter is the changes occurring and the responses made at an individual or family level in the burgh. The action, or lack of action, of an individual can have many causes only some of which may be related to the impact of economic dislocation. The attempt is made in this chapter to focus primarily on a group of actions by individuals or families in Clydebank which may be related directly or indirectly to the economic situation of the burgh. These are migration; commuting; birth, marriage and suicide rates and housing and budgeting. Lastly, in this chapter an attempt is made to gauge the attitudes of individual Clydebank citizens towards some of the major problems facing the burgh in the inter-war period. This has been done through the medium of a limited survey of older inhabitants carried out in 1981.

1
13.1 Migration/

13.1 Migration

Conventional wisdom would suggest that, given the long term economic problems of the inter-war period affecting communities such as Clydebank whose employment structure was based mainly on heavy industries, one clear response to such problems at an individual or family level would be to leave the town to seek employment and a better life in more prosperous areas elsewhere. Thus migration might be expected to be a continuing and severe problem for a town believed to be particularly badly affected by depression in the inter-war period. Though lack of employment was by no means the only factor likely to encourage such a response, its significance must have been considerable. As a result the establishment of migration patterns from Clydebank to other parts of Britain or abroad, should help to indicate both the impact of economic dislocation and an individual response to it. The timing and extent of any such migration would tend to suggest the ebb and flow of the severity of the problem affecting the town at the time.

(i) Trends in Migration

The general trend in migration from inter-war Britain is given by D H Aldcroft who writes that

"During the 1920s overseas migration provided some relief for redundant workers, but in the following decade this traditional safety valve was closed and a net inward movement of population occurred²."

Internal migration was also taking place, though Glynn and Oxborrow note that

"despite very high unemployment in some parts of the country and much lower rates in others, the rate of internal migration was not particularly high by historical standards³."

These comments suggest that generally migration within Britain was occurring during the inter-war period, though at a lower level than might have been expected. At the same time, migration from Britain tailed off as the 1920s progressed and was replaced by an influx of population in the following decade.

More detailed statistical evidence is however not completely available because any attempt to estimate levels of migration is complicated by the lack of a census in 1941. As a result in Table 13.1, which attempts to indicate migration levels from Clydebank and other areas, use has been made of the population estimates of the Registrar General for Scotland for mid 1939, before World War II could have any effect on the population structure. These estimates were based on previous

census figures annually adjusted by the excess of births over deaths and by an estimate of net migration. Yet such figures were by no means wholly accurate. The Medical Officer of Health for Clydebank noted in 1935 that

"The Registrar-General estimates our population at 780 more in the middle of 193⁴ than the police found it to be at the end of the year."

Thus at best Table 13.1 can suggest trends in the second inter-war decade.

Table 13.1/

Table 13.1 Migration in the Inter-War Period

(i) 1921-1930

	Census Population 1921	Natural Increase '21-'30 (Corrected for Transfer)	1 Notional Total 1931	2 Census Population 1931	1 minus 2 ie number Emigrating	% Emigration 1921-1930
CLYDEBANK	46,506	5,868	52,374	46,952	- 5,422	-11.7
GREENOCK	81,123	8,180	89,303	78,849	- 10,354	-12.8
DUNDEE	168,315	11,298	179,613	175,585	- 4,028	- 2.4
PAISLEY	84,837	7,106	91,943	86,445	- 5,498	- 6.5
GLASGOW	1,034,174	92,726	1,126,900	1,088,461	- 38,439	- 3.7
SCOTLAND	4,882,497	376,252	5,258,749	4,842,980	-415,769	- 8.5

(ii) 1931-1939

	Census Population 1931	Natural Increase '31-'39 (Corrected for Transfer)	1 Notional Total 1939	2 Registrar General's Estimate mid 1939	1 minus 2 ie number Emigrating	% Emigration 1931-1939
CLYDEBANK	46,952	2,867	49,819	48,118	- 1,701	-3.6
GREENOCK	78,949	4,601	83,550	81,366	- 2,184	-2.8
DUNDEE	175,585	5,908	181,493	178,013	- 3,480	-2.0
PAISLEY	86,445	4,057	90,502	92,072	+ 1,570	+1.8
GLASGOW	1,088,461	52,461	1,140,922	1,128,473	- 12,449	-1.1
SCOTLAND	4,842,980	189,057	5,032,037	5,006,689	- 25,348	-0.5

NB (a) 1921 Census was held in June, thus having an impact on population figures, especially in those areas with a substantial proportion of middle class individuals in the population who might then have left on holiday.

(b) Glasgow's population was increased by a boundary extension in 1925. Clydebank's boundaries were also extended in the same year, though this had little effect on population which increased by 100.5

Source: Calculated from the Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland 1921-1939.

The figures in Table 13.1 show that there were generally considerable levels of migration in the 1920s which had fallen substantially by the 1930s. This accords well with D J Robertson's comment that

"From 1931 to the beginning of the war the Registrar General for Scotland consistently had cause to comment on the favourable balance of migration from countries overseas - all the more worthy of comment since it followed on a decade of heavy emigration.⁶"

The burgh of Clydebank would seem to have followed this trend of considerably lower levels of emigration in the 1930s than in the 1920s. Yet in both decades the movement from the town was greater than almost anywhere else tabulated. Migration from the town in the decade to 1930 was 5422 (11.7%) or 92% of the natural increase. According to the report of the Medical Officer of Health in 1925

"most of the emigration from Clydebank took place two years ago"⁷

ie during the depressed period of the early 1920s. In the 1930s the migration figure had been reduced to 3.6% but was still almost 60% of the natural increase.

Despite this substantial migration in the decade to 1930, the population of Clydebank rose, against the Scottish trend, by 446 (1.0%) between the census of 1921 and that of 1931. In the same period the Scottish population fell by 39,517 or 0.8%, though the level of migration from the country as a whole was less than that from the burgh. This situation must reflect the high natural increase in the Clydebank population with a relatively higher birth rate than in the nation generally and low death rate at that time. The considerable level of migration must in part result from the scarcity of employment locally, in the depression of the early 1920s. In the period of relatively low unemployment in the later 1920s a larger than normal number of children came on to the labour market, because of Clydebank's experience in the first part of the 20th century as a boom town, when their parents had been attracted in large numbers to the burgh. It is likely that a proportion of these young people would find difficulty in obtaining suitable work against the competition of their numerous peers, and so would be encouraged to leave the town, thus continuing some migration in the later years of the decade despite more prosperous conditions in the burgh.

Table 13.1 suggests that migration in the 1930s was no longer the problem it had been in the previous decade either in Clydebank or

elsewhere. Indeed in Scotland generally immigration was occurring as Robertson's remark above indicates. In Clydebank too immigration took place, certainly after the period of most severe unemployment in the early 1930s, as shown in the report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank. In 1935 he stated

"During the year overcrowding became more severe than it had been for some time. Improved trade appears to have drawn more residents to the town, and the demand for houses has exceeded the supply available.⁸"

Despite this improvement, Table 13.1 suggests that migration from Clydebank in the 1930s was at a greater level than elsewhere. The likely causes of this are firstly, the severe economic dislocation of the early 1930s when unemployment was very high. Secondly, as indicated in Table 4.14, p.65 the problem facing young people in obtaining employment in Clydebank worsened as the decade passed until by 1935 onwards juvenile unemployment rates of almost 50 per cent were recorded - yet this was at a time when adult unemployment rates were improving. Such a situation might well have encouraged young people to leave the town.

Some support for the migration pattern suggested in the above paragraphs can be found in consideration of available census data. Marginal evidence for the incidence of migration from the town may be indicated in the proportion of males and females in the population in census years. In 1921, of a total of 46,506 citizens, 23,947 (51.5%) were male and 22,558 were female. By 1931, in the total population of 46,952, there were 23,775 males (50.6%) and 23,197 females (49.4%). This slight change in proportion between males and females might be in part a consequence of male migration from the town.

More significant evidence comes from a consideration of the age structure of the population. The number of males in the age group 15-44 (the most likely to migrate) fell from 11,647 (48.6% of all males) to 11,197 (47.1%) between 1921 and 1931, suggesting some migration from the burgh. A more detailed description of the age structure of the Clydebank population is given in Table 13.2 where comparison is made with a number of other large burghs and with the nation as a whole. Lack of a census in 1941 makes it impossible to complete this series. In the table figures from the 1951 census have been used in the hope of giving some indication of general trends. However death, migration etc resulting from the effects of World War II make it unlikely that these figures complete the table with great accuracy.

Table 13.2 Age Structure by Percentage Age Groups 1911-1951

<u>1911</u> (both sexes)	<u>0-14</u>	<u>15-44</u>	<u>45-64</u>	<u>65+</u>
Clydebank	37.1	49.2	11.3	2.1
Greenock	32.7	48.1	14.6	4.5
Glasgow	31.3	49.7	15.2	3.8
Dundee	30.6	47.6	16.7	5.1
Paisley	31.9	48.7	15.2	4.1
Scotland	32.3	46.7	16.0	5.4
 <u>1921</u> (both sexes)				
Clydebank	33.2	48.4	15.4	2.7
Greenock	31.6	47.5	16.3	4.5
Glasgow	29.3	48.4	18.0	4.2
Dundee	27.4	46.4	20.1	6.1
Paisley	29.1	48.4	17.7	4.8
Scotland	29.5	46.2	18.6	6.0
 <u>1931</u> (both sexes)				
Clydebank	29.4	47.4	18.7	4.5
Greenock	30.6	44.9	18.7	5.8
Glasgow	27.3	47.4	19.7	5.6
Dundee	25.9	45.6	20.8	7.5
Paisley	27.1	47.5	19.1	6.3
Scotland	26.9	45.8	20.2	7.3
 <u>1951</u> (both sexes)				
Clydebank	26.2	46.2	19.8	7.7
Greenock	26.7	43.6	21.0	8.8
Glasgow	24.8	44.1	22.5	8.6
Dundee	24.2	42.4	23.0	10.4
Paisley	24.8	43.4	22.7	9.0
Scotland	24.8	43.0	22.2	9.9

Source: Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1911-1951.

Several comments can be made about Table 13.2. In the first place the age structure of the Clydebank population was consistently younger than that of the other areas tabulated. Prior to World War I this was probably partly an effect of migration of younger individuals and families to the town in search of employment in the boom period. However this cannot adequately explain the inter-war situation when the burgh was suffering periods of depression. Two possible explanations for this can be given. It may be that the fairly high share of younger people in the town reflects a greater problem than found elsewhere in adjusting the birth rate in changed economic circumstances. However, as will be shown in Table 13.5, p.378, the inter-war birth rate in Clydebank fell rather more rapidly than that in other urban areas. It seems more likely that this situation was, at least in part, a result of the migration of those aged over 14 years from the town, particularly during the depression of the early 1920s and early 1930s.

Such a conclusion receives support when consideration is given to the general ageing of the population structure evident in the table, in which Clydebank shared. However Clydebank's proportion of those aged 45 years and over increased at double the rate of Scotland as a whole in the first inter-war decade. In 1921, 24.6% of the Scottish population was aged 45 or more, against 18.1% in Clydebank. By 1931 in Scotland there had been an increase of 2.9% to 27.5%, but in Clydebank this increase was 5.1% to 23.2%. The increase in Greenock was 3.7%, in Glasgow 3.1%, in Dundee 1.1%, and in Paisley 2.9%. This much larger increase in older age groups in Clydebank must reflect a substantial movement of younger people and families from the town in the 1920s. In the period 1931-1951 the percentage of those aged 45 or more increased in Clydebank by 4.3%, in Greenock by 5.3%, Glasgow 5.8%, Dundee 6.1%, Paisley 6.3% and Scotland 4.6%. Though it is difficult to put much weight on these figures in view of the effects of World War II, it may be that the lower rate of increase in Clydebank resulted in part from the reverse migration to the town which other evidence suggests occurred in the more prosperous period of the later 1930s.

(ii) Factors Causing Migration

In the previous sub-section an attempt was made to establish the net migration pattern for the burgh of Clydebank in the 1920s and 1930s. The evidence put forward seems to suggest a pattern which varied slightly from that of the nation generally. In Britain outward migration seems to have been greatest in the early 1920s.

The rate then fell until in the 1930s it was replaced by an inward population flow. Migration within Britain complicates any discussion of the migration pattern of Clydebank. However the evidence suggests that the town suffered two main periods of outward migration, in the early 1920s and the early 1930s, though migration in the latter decade was less severe than in the former. By the later 1930s there is evidence of a reversal of this outward flow.

The causes of this pattern have, to some extent, been considered in sub-section (i), but an attempt will now be made to restate and amplify this discussion. As stated in the introduction, the causes of migration are many and varied, some of which are bound to relate only to the individual. However general causes can be distinguished affecting the situation nationally and in Clydebank. General economic conditions, not just in Clydebank, played a very significant part. High migration in the 1920s coincided with a boom period in the United States of America and Canada, and there can be little doubt that the attractions of these countries were a major cause of migration from Britain at that time. The onset of severe depression in North America from 1929 virtually closed these areas as recipients of migrants from this country, and helps to explain the inward flow of migrants in the 1930s. Empire destinations, particularly primary producing countries, had attracted migrants in the 1920s, and the collapse of primary product prices in the 1930s also helps to explain the return of would-be farmers to this country. Empire migration was also encouraged by government schemes, referred to in chapter 6, pl22 by which assistance was given to certain prospective migrants. There is no evidence of this official scheme having any impact in Clydebank and in any case it was limited for any success to periods of prosperity in the country of destination.

Migration within Britain also occurred between areas of depression and relative prosperity. Many of those leaving Clydebank in the depression of the early 1920s and early 1930s must have been seeking better prospects elsewhere, just as the inward flow of migration to the burgh in the later 1930s was a consequence of enhanced employment opportunities at that time. Nationally a minor contribution to such internal migration was made by the government's Industrial Transference Scheme of 1928, to assist migration from more depressed to relatively prosperous areas. But, as shown in chapter 6, pl22 the scheme had little impact, and there is no evidence of it contributing to migration from or to Clydebank.

General economic conditions and government policy helped to produce the migration patterns seen in Britain and Clydebank. However one further contributory factor, related specifically to Clydebank, can be mentioned. This was the high birth rate in boom times prior to 1920. It seems likely that migration would be encouraged among a proportion of the large numbers reaching employable age during the inter-war years. Periods of depression coupled to the large numbers of this age group seeking work led to high levels of youth unemployment, particularly evident in the mid 1930s. Thus, in a sense, economic conditions in the town before 1920 were contributing to migration in the 1920s and 1930s.

The evidence therefore suggests that migration from Clydebank did take place on a considerable scale in the inter-war period. This migration was largely associated with the economic situation of the burgh. Such a migration did not occur at a steady rate throughout the inter-war years. It was most significant in the 1920s, especially the early 1920s, and, though increasing in the early 1930s, was partly cancelled by some inward migration in the later 1930s. Generally Clydebank seems to have suffered more from migration in those years than other areas of the country. This must in large measure be a consequence of the very severe economic difficulties found in the burgh at times in the period 1919-1939, though the migration of younger elements may also be regarded as partly a legacy of the boom years of the early 20th century.

13.2 Commuting⁹

Another response from those living in an area particularly affected by unemployment and its attendant problems would be, while continuing to live in the town, to seek employment in relatively less badly affected areas. In such a case the commuting patterns would clearly indicate a build up of commuting from such an area outwards to surrounding towns and cities. In Clydebank, continuing severe economic dislocation would presumably result in an outward commuting flow, especially to Glasgow.

In this section an attempt will be made to estimate any changes in net commuting flows during the inter-war period in the Clydebank area. However before considering the evidence found and conclusions reached it must be stated that such an attempt faced a number of problems resulting from a lack of evidence. The most obvious source of evidence, timetables, proved only to be available in quantity for rail and tram travellers, and even these were not readily available for the early 1920s. Though bus travel became increasingly significant

in the inter-war period, almost no timetables, eg from Glasgow Corporation Transport Department or the Central Scottish Motor Transport Company were available. Secondly load factors are unknown and so have not been given consideration. This is a problem which affects particularly rail transport. Thirdly information on ticket policy is not available, and yet such matters as the provision of workmen's trains or trams must have affected commuting patterns to some extent. Fourthly only sources of information located in Scotland have been used, but, for example, LMS passenger figures, may be available in England. As a result the evidence in this section is incomplete, and the conclusions reached must be regarded as tentative.

Evidence discussed in chapter 5 indicates that commuting from Clydebank occurred and to a considerable extent. Table 5.14, p95 shows that, of 314 applicants for additional town council relief who gave the information, 96 (30.6%) indicated that they had worked outside the burgh. In addition, of those definitely known to have regained employment, 91 named their new place of work. Here 31 (34.1%) were employed outwith the burgh. Thus it would seem reasonable to suggest that up to approximately one third of the burgh workers commuted to employment outside the town at some time in the 1930s.

The establishment of commuting trends from available data is, however, rather more difficult. In view of the employment experience of the town, with very low unemployment in the later 1920s, a very sharp increase in the early 1930s then an improvement again in the later 1930s, it might be expected that changes in the local pattern would occur. The periods of least commuting out of the town (and most into the town) might be expected to be the later 1920s and later 1930s. The earlier 1930s would be likely to see a change in direction towards commuting from the town to areas rather less affected by depression. Indeed there is some evidence which might support this view. In the first place, the survey of applicants for relief referred to in chapter 5 shows that, of 173 individuals applying in the year 1931-1932 whose place of work is known 32 or 18.5% had last worked outside the town. By 1933-1934, of 116 applicants, a considerably greater number, 57 or 49.1%, had last worked outside the town. Later figures are less reliable because of the small numbers involved and the effects of the establishment of the Unemployment Assistance Board in 1935. This pattern suggests growing outward commuting as the depression deepened.

The timetables of Glasgow Corporation Tramways, as published in Murray's Diary, show some evidence of an alteration in commuting trends from the mid 1930s. The published frequency of trams on the Dalmuir - City route, which had been 4-6 minutes from 1923, was changed in 1934 to 8-12 minutes. At the same time the frequency of the Queen Street - Dalmuir service remained 4-6 minutes throughout the period 1923-1937. Though complicated by the growth of bus competition, this change in frequency might indicate some reduction in the need to transport individuals from the Clydebank area in the later 1930s. Additionally another service from Alexandra Park to Dalmuir West and return had begun in 1926 but was discontinued by 1930. This too might suggest a need to transport workers to the Clydebank area which was no longer necessary by the early 1930s. That this service was to take Glasgow residents to work in Clydebank rather than vice versa is indicated by the fact that the first tram on this route ran from Alexandra Park at 6.40 am, with the first departure from Dalmuir not until 7.44 am.

As noted above, the problem of changing load factors complicates the use of train and tram timetables as a source of evidence. A further problem is that changes in frequency or numbers of vehicles on routes through the burgh were not necessarily only the result of the economic situation in Clydebank itself, since the town is part of a larger conurbation and transport network. Nevertheless, the evidence given above, and to follow, does tend to suggest that the commuting pattern in the Clydebank area was affected by the town's employment experience. This can be seen in a survey of relevant London Midland Scottish and London North Eastern Railway timetables.

Table 13.3 has been constructed after a survey of timetabled trains halting at stations in the Clydebank area in January on the London Midland Scottish (LMS) and London North Eastern (LNER) railway routes between Glasgow and Balloch and Glasgow and Helensburgh at peak commuter times of 7-9 am and 4-7 pm. The table attempts to give some indication of commuting into Clydebank from the major population centre, Glasgow, by totalling the numbers of trains moving westwards into the Clydebank area in the morning and out again eastwards in the evening. Commuting out of Clydebank has been estimated by reversing the procedure.

Table 13.3/

Table 13.3 Commuting Into and Out of Clydebank - Numbers of
Trains at Peak Periods 1923-1939

Year	Into Clydebank (Westbound am + Eastbound pm)	Out of Clydebank (Eastbound am + Westbound pm)
1923	23	28
1925	27	28
1927	28	29
1929	31	30
1931	29	29
1933	26	26
1935	27	30
1937	27	31
1939	33	31

Source:- Calculated from LMS and LNER Timetables 1923-1939

Commuting into Clydebank peaked in the late 1920s and again in 1939. In 1929 there were 31 trains, a 34.8% increase in number in the period 1923-1929, from 23 to 31. Commuting from Clydebank in the same period was considerable, but fluctuated less and rose with generally improving economic conditions by 7.1% from 28 to 30 trains. The fall in commuting from Clydebank in the period of worst depression between 1929 and 1933 was 4 trains or 13.3%. This was less sharp than the reduction in trains carrying commuters into Clydebank of 5 or 16.1%. The increase in the number of trains at a time of improving economic conditions in the later 1930s was greater in the case of commuting into Clydebank. The number of trains rose from 26 in 1933 to 33 in 1939, a 26.9% increase, against a rise in commuting from the burgh of 5 (19.2%) in the same period. This suggests there was rather less need to move people out of the burgh than in - though outwards commuting also increased by a substantial amount.

These figures support the view that commuting patterns changed somewhat in the inter-war years, mirroring the economic state of the town. In the relatively prosperous economic conditions of the later 1920s Clydebank residents did commute to find employment - but the increase in commuting by train from the burgh was at a considerably lower level than the increase amongst those commuting into the town, suggesting less need for outwards commuting. In the depressed conditions of the early 1930s when the town was more severely hit by unemployment than other areas of West Central Scotland, the percentage reduction in trains carrying residents to work outside the burgh was less than the reduction in trains carrying commuters

to work in the burgh. This must suggest that the town's economic problems were relatively more severe and that there was need for inhabitants to seek available work in other areas where unemployment was somewhat less of a problem. In the more prosperous days of the later 1930s the pattern reverted to that of the later 1920s.

Less conclusive evidence of this pattern comes from a consideration of workingmen's, ie third class only, trains, and trains for which workers' tickets were sold at peak period. The figures are tabulated below.

Table 13.4 Workingmen's Trains: To 9 am and 4-7 pm (1927-1937)

Year	COMMUTING INTO CLYDEBANK		COMMUTING OUT OF CLYDEBANK	
	Trains Available for Workers	% Change	Trains Available for Workers	% Change
1927	16	-	9	-
1929	18	+12.5%	11	+22.2%
1933	10	-44.4%	8	-27.3%
1937	12	+20.0%	12	+50.0%

Source:- Calculated from LMS and LNER Timetables 1927-1937

The numbers of trains used by those workers commuting from Glasgow into Clydebanks were larger in 1927 and 1929 than the numbers for outward commuters, suggesting a greater need for inwards commuting. Yet in percentage terms the increase in the number of trains between the two dates at a time of relative prosperity was greater for commuters from the burgh to Glasgow, implying that the increased need to transport workers by such trains was greater in the direction of the city than of the burgh. This does not accord well with the evidence from Table 13.3, p.372. Though the need for workers' trains fell substantially between 1929 and 1933, the percentage fall was greater for trains carrying commuters into the burgh than those moving out. This might be expected in view of the particularly severe economic dislocation affecting the burgh in those years, and the need to find employment in relatively less badly affected areas. With increased economic activity, the need for transportation into and out of the burgh had resulted in more workers' trains generally by 1937 but again the percentage increase was greater for commuters out of the burgh than in.

However some suggestions can be put forward to help explain these rather unexpected findings. In the first place the impact of

developing bus services and their convenience to workers in particular geographical locations may have played a part. Secondly the appearance of two class trains and special concession tickets may also have contributed to these findings. Thirdly and most importantly, the growth of white collar, clerical, city centre employment in the inter-war period must help to explain the rather greater percentage increase in commuting from the town by 3rd class trains in the later 1920s and later 1930s. Table 3.4, p.29 has shown a 10% increase in male tertiary sector employment among Clydebank citizens between 1921 and 1931, and for such workers rail transport to the city centre would be the fastest and most convenient.

Thus a consideration of rail timetables would suggest that Clydebank citizens generally had less need to commute from the burgh in the relatively prosperous late 1920s and late 1930s. In the early 1930s this pattern was reversed as it became necessary to find work elsewhere. Specifically workingmen's trains do not show precisely the same pattern. Nevertheless the slight differences in pattern may be explained by a number of factors, particularly the growth of tertiary employment in Glasgow city centre. Such trains would be particularly suitable to that increasing, though still relatively small, number of Clydebank citizens working in such employment.

Similar explanations may underlie the fact that figures for early morning trams for workers do not all support the initial suggestions on the commuting pattern above. There were two early morning Glasgow Corporation tram services into the Clydebank area from 1923, from Bridgeton Cross to Clydebank and from Bridgeton Cross to Dalmuir. In 1923 the first tram to Clydebank left at 6.27 am, but by 1925 this had changed to 4.34 am, suggesting additional need to transport workers into the town. The service to Dalmuir began throughout at approximately 4.30 am. The Clydebank service ended in the summer of 1931 and that to Dalmuir in January 1933 implying substantially less need for commuting into the burgh at the period of worst depression. Yet surprisingly, given improving economic conditions, neither of these services had restarted by the end of the inter-war period - perhaps a result of increasing competition from buses.

As for early trams from Clydebank into the Glasgow area, that from Clydebank to Partick had two timetabled departures at 5.50 am and 6.32 am in 1923, 1925 and 1927. In 1929 and 1931 this had risen to seven departures between 4.46 am and 6.07 am suggesting an increased need for commuting out of the town at a time when economic conditions were beginning to worsen. Presumably as a result of the general

economic climate, this service too ended in the summer of 1931. The only early tram service which ran throughout the period was that from Dalmuir West to Queen Street. As with other services, timetabling information is unsatisfactory in the 1920s when Murray's Diary reveals only that early trams ran from approximately 5.10 am to 6.30 am - no frequency is indicated. In 1933 eleven trams were scheduled to run between 5.13 am and 6.42 am, whereas in 1935 and 1937 this number had fallen to nine. This might suggest a reduced need for commuting out of the burgh at a time when economic conditions in the town were improving. It may also reflect a growing number of city centre tertiary sector workers for whom very early trams were unnecessary.

As noted earlier little evidence was found relating to bus transport. Yet in Britain generally bus transport increased in significance in the period 1919-1939. As C L Mowat notes

"The impact of the development of bus services on the railways was heavy. The London, Midland and Scottish Railway calculated that, between 1923 and 1927, passenger receipts for distances up to 10 miles (excepting workingmen's tickets) decreased 27 per cent; for distances of 11 - 20 miles 23 per cent, 21 - 50 miles 9 per cent: but for distances over 50 miles receipts increased 2 per cent.¹⁰"

Thus it might be expected that the development of bus services in the Clydebank area would make an impact on commuting between the burgh and Glasgow. However this impact was probably rather less than it might have been. In the first place many commuters must have used workingmen's or season tickets, and the extract above suggests that the impact of bus development on this type of travel, even over comparatively short distances, was less than on other forms.

Secondly Glasgow Corporation's legal rights over the collection and disembarkation of passengers in the Glasgow area made it somewhat more difficult for independent operators to establish commuter-type routes between Clydebank and the city. Such operators tended in practice to be restricted to rather longer routes such as Balloch to Glasgow.

Yet such independent operators did attempt, at least in the 1920s, to set up commuter routes between Clydebank and the city, in competition with Corporation trams. The Glasgow General Omnibus Company initiated a service to Dalmuir and Old Kilpatrick in December 1926. Between 1926 and 1928 there were at least two other unsuccessful attempts by independent bus companies to break the monopoly of Glasgow

¹²
Corporation. It may have been these attempts which encouraged the Corporation to begin their own route 9 bus service between Dalmuir or Radnor Park and George Square in July 1929 - though in November 1929 the Dalmuir section was cut.

The establishment, or attempted establishment, of these services, in the later 1920s at a time of relative prosperity in the burgh, is surely evidence of a commuting flow into the town. This may also be said of the second Glasgow Corporation service to Clydebank, number 11a, which began in December 1934 when employment prospects in the town were beginning to brighten. No information on times of these services is available until 1938 when on route 9 the first bus to Clydebank left the city at 6.44 am and on route 11a at 6.46 am. The first buses to the city from Clydebank left at 7.20 am and 6.54 am respectively. This suggests that at least in the later 1930s there was a greater need to move individuals to Clydebank than to the city, though it may also be connected with the growth of tertiary sector employment in the city among the inhabitants of Clydebank. Such individuals would begin work at a rather later time than the workers in the burgh shipyards and would have less need of early transport.

Thus it would seem that the small amount of available information on bus services gives support to the comments above on the commuting pattern in the Clydebank areas, based on train and tram timetables.

It must be stated that by no means all of the required information on commuting is always available nor are the data totally consistent. As a result, conclusions drawn in the section above must be tentative. Yet there would seem to be some evidence of greater increase in inward commuting to Clydebank in the later 1920s than in outward flow, a reversal of this situation in the early 1930s, and some return to more inward commuting in the later 1930s - but even at this time of economic recovery, the level of outward commuting remained relatively high, as it had been throughout much of the inter-war period. If such is the case, it would fit the pattern of unemployment experienced by the town with comparatively higher levels of job availability in the burgh in the later 1920s and later 1930s, and a relatively lower level in the early 1930s, and thus is at variance with the pattern of continuing outward commuting which might be expected in the conventional view.

13.3 Birth, Marriage and Suicide Rates

In an economically dislocated town a natural response to the problems facing the family and the individual would be to reduce the birth and marriage rates. If the dislocation was particularly severe the reduction might be expected to be greater than in other areas, possibly bringing the rates below those elsewhere. In the same way the stress of severe, continuing depression might be expected to contribute to a higher than average suicide rate in an area so affected. Certainly, as will be seen, changes in these areas took place in Clydebank in the inter-war years, but need these developments all have been associated with the town's economic problems?

13

Attention will first be given to the birth rate in the town. In Table 13.5 and graphs 13.1 to 13.6, pp.399-404 comparison is made between the rate published by the Registrar-General for Clydebank, a number of Scottish industrial towns and cities and Scotland as a whole.

Table 13.5/

Table 13.5 Birth Rate per 1000 Population (corrected for transfer)

Year	1 Clydebank	Greenock	Glasgow	Dundee	Paisley	2 Scotland	Difference between 1 & 2
1919	26.0	28.7	23.2	18.7	21.8	21.7	+ 4.3
1920	31.6	33.3	31.7	29.9	29.6	28.1	+ 3.5
1921	28.8	30.2	28.7	26.5	26.3	25.2	+ 3.6
1922	25.6	27.7	27.3	24.6	24.8	23.3	+ 2.1
1923	23.6	27.0	25.6	24.6	23.5	22.8	+ 0.8
1924	22.4	24.2	24.1	22.6	21.6	21.9	+ 0.5
1925	23.7	24.5	24.6	21.8	22.5	21.3	+ 2.4
1926	23.0	23.9	23.5	21.9	22.4	20.9	+ 2.1
1927	21.3	22.2	22.4	20.4	20.6	19.8	+ 1.5
1928	22.6	24.1	22.3	20.3	20.2	19.8	+ 2.8
1929	20.6	22.2	21.2	20.9	20.5	19.0	+ 1.6
1930	20.5	23.8	21.5	20.0	20.7	19.6	+ 0.9
1931	20.5	23.4	20.9	19.5	20.4	19.0	+ 1.5
1932	20.1	21.5	20.6	18.5	18.8	18.6	+ 1.5
1933	17.8	20.6	19.3	17.5	17.5	17.6	+ 0.2
1934	18.2	20.9	19.6	18.7	18.1	18.0	+ 0.2
1935	18.7	21.2	19.7	17.9	17.7	17.8	+ 0.7
1936	17.9	20.3	20.0	17.7	18.8	17.9	0.0
1937	17.9	21.6	19.8	17.6	18.9	17.6	+ 0.3
1938	18.2	20.2	19.5	17.6	18.7	17.7	+ 0.5
1939	17.7	20.3	19.2	15.8	18.4	17.4	+ 0.3

Source:- Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland 1919-1939.

The figures in Table 13.5 show that Clydebank followed national trends with an increase in the rate just after World War I, a fall thereafter and a levelling off towards the end of the decade. In the early 1930s there was a further reduction in the rate followed by an uncertain increase. However there are dissimilarities between the national trend and that in Clydebank. At the beginning of the inter-war period the birth rate in the burgh was higher than that in the nation as a whole. Two reasons for the high rate can be suggested. In part it was a legacy of the past, the boom years of the early 20th century when many young individuals and families migrated to the town in search of work. It is also possible that the higher birth rate was partly the result of the larger proportion of Roman Catholics living in the burgh than in some other areas - the Registrar General's reports show that in the inter-war years the proportion of Roman Catholic marriages in Clydebank was consistently in excess of 20 per cent of all marriages.¹⁴ This was double the figure for Scotland and higher than the rate in Glasgow, Dundee and Paisley, though not Greenock. The Report of the

Committee of the Council on Education in Scotland for 1923-1924 (Cmd 2174), the last year for which figures are available, shows that 24.3% of pupils in Clydebank were enrolled in Roman Catholic schools.¹⁵ This compares with figures of 23.4% for Glasgow, 19.5% for Dundee, 23.3% for Paisley and 33.5% for Greenock.

Throughout the inter-war years the birth rate in Scotland was falling but that in Clydebank was falling more rapidly, so that from an excess of 3.5 per thousand over the Scottish rate in 1920 the figure dropped to 0.3 by 1939. The fall in the Clydebank rate seems to have been more rapid than in most other urban areas - between 1920 and 1939 the rate fell by 13.0 per thousand in Greenock, 12.5 in Glasgow, 14.1 in Dundee and 11.2 in Paisley as against 13.9 in Clydebank. This fall was occurring despite the factors mentioned above as contributing to a high initial birth rate. In addition the birth rate in the burgh tended to be below that of other large towns.

Several explanations can be put forward for this. As shown above p.366-7 the population was ageing rather more rapidly in Clydebank than elsewhere. Secondly the comparative affluence of the town for much of the inter-war period must have contributed to the fall - wage levels were somewhat higher and many workers were skilled or semi-skilled; unemployment was relatively low; the housing stock was fairly new and lacked slums, though it was by no means free from overcrowding; local authority welfare services were comparatively generous. In what could be described as an "upper working class" town, the larger proportion of the better off working classes was more likely to use birth control methods at a time of relative prosperity enjoyed by the town in the later 1920s and later 1930s.

Thirdly the effects of economic dislocation in the early 1920s and early 1930s accelerated this fall. A reduction in the birth rate occurred throughout Scotland on these occasions, but the fall in Clydebank was amongst the sharpest tabulated. Between 1920 and 1924 the Clydebank rate fell by 9.2 per thousand, in Greenock the rate fell by 9.1, in Glasgow by 7.6, in Dundee 7.3, in Paisley by 8.0 and in Scotland by 6.2. Between 1929 and 1933 the Clydebank rate was reduced by 2.8; in Greenock by 1.6; in Glasgow by 1.9; in Dundee by 3.4; in Paisley by 3.0 and in Scotland by 1.4. The severity of the depression affecting Clydebank must be reflected in the substantial reductions in an already falling birth rate. The smaller reduction in the early 1930s when depression was most severe is partly a statistical effect of a comparison with the immediate post World War I

increase in the rate. However, it is also possible that the relatively more generous treatment of the unemployed in Clydebank during the early 1930s depression, in a town with an improving environment, may have contributed somewhat to preventing the birth rate reduction being even more severe than it was.

In conclusion it would seem that economic conditions in the town had an effect on the birth rate. The periods of relative prosperity encouraged a reduction in the birth rate which fell to a greater degree in Clydebank than in most other areas in the inter-war period. By the end of the period this process had brought Clydebank to a position in which the level of births per 1000 population was close to the national average. The periods of intense depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s helped to produce an acceleration in the reduction in the birth rate which was greater in Clydebank than in most other parts of the country. Thus both affluence and depression contributed to reducing the birth rate and of these two, social factors related to relative prosperity were probably the more important. Yet chronologically depression initiated the fall.

Though there was a rather higher birth rate in Clydebank than nationally, the reports of the Registrar General suggest that the marriage rate per 1000 was lower. The published Clydebank rate was invariably lower than the national rate, and almost always lower than that for other large burghs. Table 13.6 indicates this fact, which is rather surprising in view of the relative prosperity of the burgh at the time. It also shows the fall in the rate which occurred in the years of worst depression in both the early 1920s and early 1930s. An increase in the rate can be seen following those periods of depression, as relative prosperity returned to the burgh.

Table 13.6/

Table 13.6 Marriage Rate per 1000 1919-1939

<u>Year</u>	<u>Clydebank</u>	<u>Greenock</u>	<u>Glasgow</u>	<u>Dundee</u>	<u>Paisley</u>	<u>Scotland</u>
1919	6.7	8.9	11.7	10.6	8.0	9.0
1920	7.2	9.7	13.2	12.4	10.3	9.6
1921	5.6	7.4	10.7	10.0	8.3	8.0
1922	4.3	6.3	9.1	8.7	6.8	7.0
1923	4.7	6.6	9.6	8.3	7.5	7.2
1924	4.5	6.0	8.4	7.6	5.9	6.6
1925	4.5	5.5	8.5	7.6	7.1	6.6
1926	5.0	5.4	8.3	7.7	6.2	6.3
1927	5.2	4.9	8.5	7.4	6.7	6.6
1928	5.6	5.9	8.7	7.8	6.8	6.7
1929	5.5	5.8	8.5	7.7	7.0	6.8
1930	6.2	6.7	8.6	7.7	6.4	6.8
1931	5.0	5.6	8.4	7.2	6.1	6.7
1932	5.9	5.3	8.3	7.3	6.4	6.8
1933	6.0	5.9	8.4	7.9	6.6	7.0
1934	6.6	6.9	9.2	8.7	8.4	7.5
1935	7.5	7.3	9.6	8.9	8.2	7.7
1936	7.4	7.4	9.3	8.2	8.4	7.6
1937	7.0	6.8	9.5	8.6	7.4	7.7
1938	6.5	6.9	9.7	7.9	7.1	7.8
1939	7.7	8.1	11.7	10.3	9.7	9.2

Source:- Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland 1919-1939.

Several explanations can be put forward for the lower marriage rate in Clydebank than elsewhere. It is possible that the generally somewhat younger age structure of the population of Clydebank contributed to the rather lower marriage rate. However there is little evidence of this in a survey of percentages in particular groups who were married, widowed or divorced in Clydebank and other large burghs. The level in Clydebank was generally similar to, or rather higher than, that of other large burghs. The figures are given in Table 13.7. Unfortunately lack of a 1941 census makes it impossible to complete the table for the whole inter-war period.

Table 13.7/

Table 13.7 Percentages Married, Widowed and Divorced 1921 and 1931 -
by Age Groups

<u>1921</u>		<u>Males</u>				
% married etc in age group	<u>Clydebank</u>	<u>Greenock</u>	<u>Glasgow</u>	<u>Dundee</u>	<u>Paisley</u>	
15 - 24	6.8	8.4	8.3	8.2	7.9	
25 - 34	61.3	59.2	57.9	62.0	58.3	
35 - 44	81.6	77.2	78.2	83.2	80.7	
45 - 54	86.4	81.0	82.4	88.3	85.0	
55 - 64	90.4	84.2	86.1	91.2	89.0	
65 - 74	93.9	88.3	89.8	92.6	91.8	
75 - 84	98.8	92.0	93.6	94.6	91.7	
85+	100.0	86.7	92.9	98.3	95.2	
<u>1921</u>		<u>Females</u>				
% married etc in age group	<u>Clydebank</u>	<u>Greenock</u>	<u>Glasgow</u>	<u>Dundee</u>	<u>Paisley</u>	
15 - 24	15.0	18.2	14.4	12.8	12.2	
25 - 34	74.7	67.7	61.5	53.0	56.1	
35 - 44	90.4	80.7	78.6	71.9	73.5	
45 - 54	94.3	83.4	84.0	76.5	79.1	
55 - 64	94.8	84.8	85.3	76.3	81.7	
65 - 74	94.9	87.1	87.3	77.9	82.4	
75 - 84	94.5	88.5	88.3	83.3	85.1	
85+	100.0	84.4	88.1	86.8	80.2	
<u>1931</u>		<u>Males</u>				
% Married etc in age group	<u>Clydebank</u>	<u>Greenock</u>	<u>Glasgow</u>	<u>Dundee</u>	<u>Paisley</u>	
15 - 24	9.4	7.6	7.0	7.6	6.4	
25 - 34	58.6	58.3	57.8	61.8	60.3	
35 - 44	83.5	81.9	82.0	86.9	82.3	
45 - 54	85.2	83.2	83.6	88.5	86.3	
55 - 64	87.2	82.8	84.5	89.8	87.0	
65 - 74	92.1	86.2	87.3	92.1	87.7	
75 - 84	94.5	87.0	91.1	93.0	93.8	
85+	100.0	94.9	92.2	90.0	97.1	
<u>1931</u>		<u>Females</u>				
% married etc in age group	<u>Clydebank</u>	<u>Greenock</u>	<u>Glasgow</u>	<u>Dundee</u>	<u>Paisley</u>	
15 - 24	13.3	15.6	13.2	12.8	12.0	
25 - 34	66.6	65.3	59.7	56.9	56.6	
35 - 44	88.0	80.2	77.8	71.6	72.5	
45 - 54	91.0	81.5	81.3	75.4	76.3	
55 - 64	93.4	81.5	83.6	76.3	78.5	
65 - 74	93.7	83.0	83.5	75.9	80.7	
75 - 84	95.1	86.9	85.5	75.1	83.3	
85+	100.0	81.9	86.2	82.6	72.8	

Source:- Calculated from Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921, 1931.

It is more likely that Table 13.6 does not fully represent the true situation in the burgh. The Registrar-General's figures are for marriages taking place in the burgh. As a result, it is possible that in a relatively new community, ties to churches elsewhere or the fact that the many who commuted may have married where their work was, could have reduced the Clydebank rates, for example, in comparison with Glasgow. This gains some confirmation from Table 13.7 where the proportion of married etc individuals was as high or even higher, in Clydebank than elsewhere, not lower as might be expected in view of the marriage rate. It is also possible that in periods of relative prosperity employment opportunities were available in the town for skilled men, ie of an age to have already married. This too would tend to reduce the marriage rate. Some confirmation of this comes from the Sanitary Inspector's report for 1938 where he states

"Overcrowding is still a grave and acute problem ... The type of overcrowding caused by this influx (of families to the town) is the occupancy of houses only intended for one family by two and in some cases more families¹⁶."

This does not conflict with the migration of young, possibly single people from the town at the same time. This would be necessary in view of their lack of training for available skilled work. Competition from the larger than average numbers of young people seeking employment in a town with an above average birth rate, at least until this period, would further encourage migration. Such a movement of younger individuals would also help to explain the lower marriage rate in the burgh.

Thus in at least two ways the economic dislocation of the inter-war period had an effect on the marriage rate in Clydebank. Firstly migration amongst younger individuals was stimulated probably leading to some reduction in the rate. Secondly the rate clearly fell in the early 1920s and early 1930s when depression was at its most severe in the town. However between 1920 and 1924 the reduction in the Clydebank rate of 2.7 was lower than that experienced elsewhere - in Greenock the fall was 3.7, Glasgow 4.8, Dundee 4.4 and Scotland 3.0. Though there was a substantial reduction in the Clydebank rate between 1930 and 1931, over the whole period of depression in the first half of the 1930s the rate remained relatively static or rose a little as occurred elsewhere. However the full impact of the reduction at times of higher unemployment may be hidden in the crude figures available because they do not reflect changes in the numbers reaching marriageable age, resulting from the town's higher birth rate earlier in the century.

Bearing this statistical problem in mind it would seem reasonable to suggest that the economic dislocation of the inter-war period had an effect on the marriage rate in Clydebank, but this was less evident than the effect of poor economic conditions on the birth rate.

Chapter 8, pp233-40 has suggested that the health of the Clydebank population was not improving at the same rate as other areas in Scotland in the 1930s, though admittedly Clydebank tended to start from a rather better base level. There seems little reason to doubt that a major cause of this was the depression which afflicted the town in the early 1930s. Although, of course, other factors must have played a part, the stress of this period of severe depression should be seen as a significant cause of the increase in the suicide rate throughout Scotland which was evident also in Clydebank. This information is given in Table 13.8 in which the rate per 1000 has been given, calculated on the basis of the census population of 1921 and 1931.

Table 13.8/

Table 13.8 Suicides 1920-1939

Year	CLYDEBANK			GREENOCK			DUNDEE			PAISLEY			GLASGOW			SCOTLAND		
	No.	Population	Per 1000	No.	Population	Per 1000	No.	Population	Per 1000	No.	Population	Per 1000	No.	Population	Per 1000	No.	Population	Per 1000
1920	3	0.06		5	0.06		10	0.06		4	0.05		61	0.06		236	0.05	
1921	2	0.04		4	0.05		14	0.08		5	0.06		51	0.05		273	0.06	
1922	0	-		1	0.01		17	0.10		2	0.02		73	0.07		276	0.06	
1923	0	-		1	0.01		21	0.12		4	0.05		81	0.08		327	0.07	
1924	2	0.04		3	0.04		23	0.14		3	0.04		107	0.10		340	0.07	
1920-																		
1924	7	0.15		14	0.17		85	0.50		18	0.21		373	0.36		1472	0.30	
1925	4	0.09		4	0.05		30	0.18		7	0.08		72	0.07		372	0.08	
1926	3	0.06		5	0.06		21	0.12		6	0.07		123	0.12		424	0.09	
1927	3	0.06		4	0.05		22	0.13		6	0.07		137	0.13		503	0.10	
1928	1	0.02		6	0.07		36	0.21		9	0.11		108	0.10		474	0.10	
1929	2	0.04		7	0.09		29	0.17		6	0.07		116	0.11		474	0.10	
1925-																		
1929	13	0.28		26	0.32		138	0.82		34	0.40		556	0.54		2247	0.46	
1930	5	0.11		6	0.07		23	0.14		17	0.20		130	0.13		495	0.10	
1931	7	0.15		5	0.06		25	0.14		12	0.14		122	0.11		493	0.10	
1932	2	0.04		6	0.08		28	0.16		8	0.09		123	0.11		500	0.10	
1933	4	0.09		6	0.08		39	0.22		5	0.06		120	0.11		523	0.11	
1934	3	0.06		6	0.08		25	0.14		6	0.07		122	0.11		532	0.11	
1930-																		
1934	21	0.45		29	0.37		140	0.80		48	0.56		617	0.57		2543	0.53	
1935	6	0.13		4	0.05		34	0.19		10	0.12		112	0.10		467	0.10	
1936	1	0.02		6	0.08		35	0.20		11	0.13		114	0.10		496	0.10	
1937	2	0.04		8	0.10		30	0.17		10	0.12		98	0.09		453	0.09	
1938	3	0.06		4	0.05		31	0.18		8	0.09		95	0.09		460	0.09	
1939	4	0.09		2	0.03		31	0.18		10	0.12		94	0.09		459	0.09	
1935-																		
1939	16	0.34		24	0.30		161	0.92		49	0.57		513	0.47		2335	0.48	

Source:- Calculated from the Reports of the Registrar General for Scotland 1920-1939.

Before commenting on the table it should be pointed out that the small numbers involved in the individual town and cities may mean that conclusions drawn from such statistics are rather less reliable than those for the nation as a whole. However, bearing this point in mind, it would seem that over the twenty year period of Table 13.8 the general trend in the suicide rate was rising, though there is some evidence in Clydebank, Greenock, Glasgow and Scotland generally of a reduction in the increase in the latter half of the 1930s. In addition, in most cases, the suicide rate per 1000 population reached its peak in the depressed period of the early 1930s when social stress might be expected to contribute most to suicide.

Yet beyond these points it is difficult to draw conclusions from the table. In the case of Clydebank the severe depression of the early 1920s was accompanied by a much lower suicide rate than that of the even more widespread depression in the early 1930s. A possible explanation of this may be that the depression of the early 1920s followed the stressful period of the First World War which would be likely to have already affected those prone to suicide as a result of stress. On the other hand the high level of suicide by local standards in Clydebank in the early 1930s followed a period of some prosperity for most of the community in the later 1920s. Thus the stresses of economic dislocation in the early 1930s may have contrasted more strongly with recent experience than ten years before when the impact of World War I has to be taken into account.

The greatest proportional change in suicides in Clydebank took place in the later 1920s, a period of prosperity in the burgh. This may be because prosperity raised expectations beyond what could be realised, particularly among the, relatively small, group of unemployed. Under such circumstances the individuals aggression may be directed inward thus increasing the likelihood of suicide. In the early 1930s many more were affected by the stresses on the community and so, in terms of absolute figures, there was a likelihood of a large number of suicides. On the other hand, the proportional increase in the suicide rate might be less than expected if expectations had been lowered in the community generally at a time when aggression could be directed outward against the forces causing social stress.

These suggestions are vague because the figures, in detail, are inconclusive. Yet it does seem clear that the severe unemployment of the early 1930s at least must have had significant effects on the mental as well as the physical well being of the townspeople. Such

Such effects of long lasting depression were summed up by the British Medical Journal of April 1981 where the statement is made that

"Continuing unemployment has an enduring effect on the personality. It is also associated with increased rates of both mental and physical illness. For example Brenner¹⁷ found increased death rates from heart and kidney disease, cirrhosis and homicides, and more admissions to mental hospitals and prison sentences among the unemployed; and it was not those with previous mental disorder and hospital admissions who accounted for the increase. Moreover, in both the United States and Britain the rate of unemployment and the state of the economy have been correlated with various measures of mental and physical ill-health; and those affected also appear to be more vulnerable to chronic disease processes, notably of the cardio-vascular system."¹⁸

Changes were occurring in the birth, marriage and suicide rates in Clydebanks during the period 1919-1939. One of the factors causing such changes was undoubtedly depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s. Yet changes were not confined to these years, and seem at other times to be likely to be a result of the comparative prosperity enjoyed in the burgh. Thus the Clydebanks experience may have been similar to, but was not identical with that found nationally. Equally, though superficially the changes in these rates might correspond to what the conventional picture of the burgh in depression suggests, factors other than depression played a part in causing these changes.

13.4 Housing and Budgeting

One response to unemployment which an individual can make is to alter the pattern of his or her spending. An aspect of such a potential response has already been considered in chapter 9. pp.267-69. A study of local Cooperative Society data showed that the depression of the early 1930s occurred simultaneously with a check to the upward movement of sales. Within this depressed period there was evidence of a concentration on more essential items such as food, and within food sales a shift away from the purchase of, more expensive, fresh meat.¹⁹

A second area in which changed expenditure patterns could occur, and for which some information is available, relates to housing. Such a response to economic dislocation involved moving into lower rented accommodation or into lodgings. This section will consider

the second of these two alternatives.

One problem involved in such a consideration relates to the definition of "lodging" by contemporary standards. This was made clear by the Burgh Sanitary Inspector in 1922 who seems to equate lodging with overcrowding. In his annual report he wrote

"Overcrowding in the past was mainly due to 'houses let in lodgings'. Today that aspect is changed, many of these houses being unable to get lodgers. On the other hand the new overcrowding is largely caused by grown up sons and daughters, or by married couples often with children, occupying 'Furnished Apartments'.²⁰"

In the brief comments made below, lodging will be taken to refer to any families or individuals beyond childhood, living in accommodation which was not their own, whether with relatives or not and whether causing overcrowding or not.

The only available statistical information on this subject comes from the survey referred to in chapter 5 of applications by the unemployed to Clydebank Town Council for additional relief. This showed that, in the period surveyed, 1931-1938, of 506 applicants 147 (29.1%) were lodgers (see chapter 5, p.88). This figure does not include 16 applicants who lived in the Benbow Hotel, a workingman's lodging house. The establishment of the Unemployment Assistance Board in 1934 makes this survey most reliable in its first two years. In 1931-1932 of 206 applicants, 24 or 11.7% were lodgers. In 1933-1934 the number had risen to 51, 33.3% of the 153 applications surveyed in that year. The number of lodger applicants in 1935-1936 was 46, 56.1% of the total for that year, and in 1938-1939 of 65 applicants surveyed 26 (40.0%) were lodgers.

Even in the more representative years 1931-1934, it is not clear to what extent these applicants can be regarded as typical of Clydebank citizens. Applicants tended to be, on average, poorer, living in cheaper housing. Nevertheless the figures do suggest an increasing trend towards lodging as the severe depression of the early 1930s progressed. The maintenance of a high level of lodging after 1934 can partly be explained as a consequence of an increase in the proportion of young single applicants living with relatives, and a reduction in applications from married men as a result of the appearance of the Unemployment Assistance Board.

Few applicants admitted receiving income from a lodger - of 506

applications surveyed only 18 (3.5%) gave this information, far fewer than the number of those claiming to be lodgers. This discrepancy has several causes. Many younger applicants living with parents or parents living with children, wished to establish themselves as independent in order to qualify for some assistance, and so claimed to lodge. On the other hand those applicants in receipt of income from 'lodging' would be less likely to admit this in case it affected the result of their application. In addition, since applicants tended to occupy smaller houses than the population generally with whom lodger applicants might live, the applicant for relief was less able to take a lodger in his smaller home.

Thus clearly lodging occurred in the burgh at times of economic dislocation and seems to have been increased by problems associated with unemployment. This was made clear by the Medical Officer of Health in his 1933 report when, in a period of severe depression, he noted

"Many houses are occupied by more than one family -
11 per cent of births notified in the year occurred in
houses so occupied. This is almost solely due to
inability to pay rent."²¹

However depression was not the only reason for lodging. In the early part of the inter-war period at least, with a stock of houses too small for the needs of the burgh citizens, lodging could equally easily be a response to inability to find accommodation suitable either in size or cost. The report of the Burgh Sanitary Inspector for 1919, a time of relative prosperity, shows that overcrowding was caused in part because

"Young folks getting married are compelled to live in rooms
or with their parents."²²

In the same way, in 1935, when recovery was beginning, overcrowding, caused partly by lodging by contemporary definition, was still widespread. In that year a survey under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1935²³ showed that 42.5 per cent of private housing and 13.3 per cent of local authority accommodation in the burgh was overcrowded by the standards of the Act. In this way it seems clear that the existing shortage of suitable housing in the town also contributed to overcrowding, and this problem was exacerbated at times, such as the later 1930s, when relative prosperity encouraged migration into Clydebank.

In conclusion it would seem legitimate to suggest that there were

several reasons for lodging in Clydebank. Housing shortage throughout the inter-war period played a part in creating this situation, as did periods of relative prosperity which attracted migrants to add to the existing number of those looking for houses. Similarly low wage earners in the town may well have had difficulty in affording existing accommodation at any time and so have been forced to lodge. Lastly, there can be no doubt that periods of depression forced many to lodge who otherwise would have lived in a home of their own. It appears that lodging was normally a response as much to the general housing problem of the burgh as to economic dislocation.

13.5 The Clydebank Survey 1919-1939

As part of the present research a sample survey was undertaken of those still living in Clydebank who had experienced conditions in the town during the inter-war period. The survey was carried out in 1981 and an example of the questionnaire used is included as Appendix 4. Figures on that questionnaire give the totals and sub-totals of those completing each question and part of a question. Participants were asked to answer 28 questions mainly by ticking standard multiple choice responses to make comparison easier. The survey, which concentrated on unemployment and housing, was distributed through friends and relatives of the author who had contacts in the town, and by visits to local old folks clubs.

The results of the survey are given below.

Question 1 - Date of Birth - A considerable proportion of those in the survey came to adulthood during the inter-war years; 15 (30%) were born in the years from 1911, 25 (50%) between 1900 and 1910 and 10 (20%) prior to 1900. This affected the information from other parts of the questionnaire such as housing. Most of those born after 1911 and some of those born before stayed in the parental home, with the result that less information was available on rents.

Question 2 - Sex - In the survey 21 participants (42%) were men and 29 (58%) were women. It had been anticipated that the preponderance of women would be higher, but even so the ratio found led to problems. As will be seen, a considerable number of women claimed to be housewives which reduced the amount of information available on employment and unemployment.

Question 3 - Marital Status - A change from single to married was made by 8 (16%), 20 stated that they were married during the period and 22 (44%) were single. It is possible that attempts made to simplify the questionnaire might have resulted in fewer indicating a change in status than were actually involved.

Question 4 - Dependents - Only 34 (68%) answered this question with the most frequently occurring number of dependents being 1 (8), then 3 (7) then 2 (6). Thus 62% of those answering the question lived in households of 2-4 persons. This compares with 50% overall in the Socio-Economic Survey of applicants for town council relief.

Question 5 - Place of Residence - The most frequently occurring place was Radnor Street where 10 of those answering (49 out of 50) lived for part or all of the period. This was followed by the main streets of the town, Glasgow Road and Kilbowie Road, with 5 participants each. The remainder was distributed in 31 other streets in the town.

Question 6 - Status - 16 (32%) lived only in the parental home, 16 (32%) only in privately rented accommodation and 6 (12%) only in local authority housing. Five others had combined another response with the fact that they too had lived in local authority accommodation. Thus approximately 20% of those in the survey had lived, by their indication, in town council housing, and this corresponds fairly well with the fact that 18% of local housing was town council owned by 1939.

Question 7 - Rent - Only 24 (48%) answered this question. Of these 18 (75%) paid between 26/9d and 43/4d per month, and 6 (25%) more than 43/4d. Since the question did not distinguish between rent and rates, it is possible that some of those in the higher bracket include rates. The 75% in the 26/9d - 43/4d bracket compares closely with the 76.5% in this bracket found in the Socio-Economic Survey.

Questions 8-10 - Rent Levels - Between 18% and 42% did not answer these questions. Of those who did the majority in all questions answered that rents were reasonable - 61% of those answering said town council rents were reasonable, 68% that rent compared to income was reasonable and 80% that their rent against that of similar properties was reasonable. This was a rather surprising finding given the level of inter-war rent agitation, particularly at times of depression. Either such agitation was restricted to a comparatively small sector of the community, those in the survey had little real contact with such matters or the passage of time had altered the views of those participating.

Question 11 - Reasons for High Rents - Only 16 (32%) answered this question, and several indicated that more than one reason was correct. Of those answering, 4 ascribed high rents to the scarcity of houses alone with two others indicating this was a factor. Four felt the government had established rent levels, with three others indicating this was a factor. In addition, one participant indicated, under the heading of "Other", that specified government legislation such as the Housing Acts of 1919 or 1924 was responsible for high rents. One person felt that the town council could not agree to lower rents with

three others seeing this as a factor. Two individuals felt that high (council) rents resulted from the provision of better amenity housing. The response to this question seems to indicate a general feeling that the responsibility for high rents lay rather more with central government.

Questions 12 and 13 - Allocation of Council Housing - Some confusion seemed to exist as to the method of allocation among the 37 (74%) answering this question. Ten felt this was done only on a points system, 10 by open ballot and 6 by length of residence. The remaining 11 indicated a combination of these methods. Such a combination occurred at various times, and the relative inaccuracy of some responses may reflect difficulty in remembering, the fact that their youth meant little connection with such allocation or the fact that the majority of people in Clydebank at this time did not become involved with municipal housing provision. Of the 37 who answered question 13, 23 (62%) felt the system was fair, 11 (30%) the best in the circumstances and 3 (6%) unfair. In view of the complaints in the inter-war period of unfairness in allocation, this result is rather surprising. However it may well again reflect the factors mentioned above.

Question 14 - Occupation - Only three people did not answer this question. The most frequently occurring description was housewife (13) followed by clerk (5) and engineer and plumber (3). Nineteen other occupations were given, several of which were connected with major local employers of the inter-war period.

Question 15 - Employer - This question was answered by 37 people (74%). Not surprisingly, most frequently occurring were Singer, 13, predominantly women, giving only Singer and 3 Singer and other employers, followed by John Browns (7 Browns only and 3 in combination) and 4 giving Beardmores only. The remainder was spread among 16 local secondary and tertiary employers.

Question 16 - Unemployment 1919-1939 - Five did not answer this question. Of those who did 20 (44%) said they had been unemployed during this period and 25 (55%) that they had not. This rather surprising finding can be explained if the figures are re-examined on the basis of sex. Of males responding 15 had been unemployed (68%) and 7 (32%) had not. The figure for females were 5 (22%) and 18 (78%) respectively - included in this latter group were many of the 13 housewives, reducing the number of those who had actually lost employment to a minimum of 5 (50%); though some of the housewives may have given up work as a result of marriage. Such a high percentage of unemployed may reflect the small size of the sample, but could also indicate the widespread nature of unemployment in the town at times in the inter-war period.

Question 17 - Frequency and Scale of Unemployment - Only 27 individuals answered even part of this question, perhaps a consequence of the

relatively difficult form it took. Rather unexpectedly the frequency of unemployment was low - 11 of those answering had lost jobs once, one twice, none three or four times and five more than four times. Of those giving information on length of unemployment, 2 were unemployed for less than one month, 3 for 1-3 months, 2 for 4-6 months and 5 for one or more years. Thus 42% of those answering were long term unemployed, emphasising the extent of this problem and comparing fairly closely with the 51.8% of long term unemployed found in the Socio-Economic Survey. Few gave information on the year of loss of employment. Of those who did, not surprisingly the most frequently occurring year was 1932 with 4. This was followed by 1923 with 2. On a five yearly basis, 3 lost employment between 1920 and 1924, 2 between 1925 and 1929, 7 between 1930 and 1934 and none between 1935 and 1939. This pattern reasonably closely approximates to the employment experience of the town, with unemployment at its worst in the early 1920s and early 1930s.

Question 18 - Source of Financial Assistance when Unemployed -

Twenty three people answered all or part of this question.

Unemployment insurance benefit was claimed by 16, but 5 did not claim. Only one individual had received assistance from the P.A.C. Those not claiming unemployment insurance must either have been outwith the scheme or be mistaken. The very low number admitting to P.A.C. help may result from the fact that many of those involved were not independent agents at the time, a reluctance to admit to such help or a failure to understand the question.

Questions 19 and 20 - Adequacy of Assistance - Question 19 on unemployment insurance benefit was not answered by 9 individuals and question 20 on the P.A.C. by 11. Of those answering there was almost total unanimity - 40 (98%) in question 19 and 38 (97%) in question 20 felt that assistance was inadequate. Clearly this was a strongly held opinion on a wide scale.

Question 21 - Reason for Inadequacy of P.A.C. Assistance - This question was answered by 24 individuals (48%). Exactly half, 14, felt that the only reason for inadequacy was government control, while a further two felt that this was one of several reasons. Two felt that the sole reason was that rates would increase too much if levels of assistance were improved, while 5 felt that the town council could not agree. Clearly the inadequacy of the P.A.C. assistance was blamed on central government rather than local government or circumstances.

Questions 22-24 - Attitudes to the Unemployed - Despite the fact that the reason for P.A.C. financial stringency was blamed on the government, there was obvious dissatisfaction with the way the Committee performed within the legal and financial bounds allowed. It was regarded as unsympathetic to the unemployed by 25 (66%) of the 38 who answered

question 23. The government was regarded as even less sympathetic - 30 (81%) of the 37 who responded ticked unsympathetic to question 24. It would seem that government and particularly central government became unpopular whatever it did to deal with the situation facing it. This was not the case with regard to the town's employed population - only 4 (9%) of the 46 who answered question 22 felt the employed were unsympathetic to the unemployed. This may give some support to Professor Adrian Sinfield's comments in his recent ²⁴ book where he argues that the division between the employed and the unemployed has widened recently. However sympathy should not be taken to imply action on behalf of the unemployed by the employed. The great majority of the inhabitants of Clydebank, employed and unemployed, did not become actively involved with activities which might have put pressure on government. This is indicated in the answers to the following questions.

Questions 25 and 26 - Organisations - Various organisations involved 35 of the 45 who answered question 25. Of these, the most frequently mentioned was the church with 16 involved solely in it and a further 13 participating in other organisations as well. Almost as popular, and more so with men, were recreational groups with 9 involved solely and 9 partly in them. Youth groups, the MSA, and the Parkhall Tenants Association involved fewer individuals, 4 each, while more overtly political groups such as the NUWM or the political parties involved 3 or fewer. It seems that in the period under discussion the people of Clydebank were involved in the church and recreational organisations rather than anything else.

Before considering conclusions which may be drawn from the survey a number of comments must be made. In the first place, why was the survey carried out? It was felt that it might help to cross-check aspects of data from other sources, mainly on unemployment and housing. It was also hoped that information on individual attitudes to inter-war experiences might be forthcoming, though the possibility of distortion of attitude by distance from the event had to be considered.

Secondly a number of problems arose in connection with the exercise. In the first place the multiple choice format of the survey limited responses somewhat. More importantly, though it was hoped that a minimum of 100 individuals would take part, despite considerable effort only 50 did so. Thus the small size of the survey may reduce the validity of any conclusions reached. Next, the author was often absent when the survey was conducted and its relative complexity of form and content meant that a number of individuals found difficulty in completing it. In addition those involved frequently had problems

remembering facts and opinions accurately with the result that almost none of those replying gave full answers to all the questions. Lastly, in the inter-war period many were still young and were not leading independent lives for all or part of the time. This meant that answers to a number of questions, such as on rent levels, were often not possible as the individual had no real connection with such matters at the time. This meant that answers to a number of questions, such as on rent levels, were often not possible as the individual had no real connection with such matters at the time. These problems make the validity of the survey uncertain. At best it may indicate a few trends, but great weight cannot be placed on its relatively fragile structure.

The survey set out to consider two main problems of the period, unemployment and housing. If the current picture of the town at that time as a depressed and depressing place in which to live is correct, the findings of the survey on those matters should reveal considerable unhappiness. It might also be expected to show evidence of action taken by burgh citizens in an attempt to alleviate these long-standing and serious problems.

Perhaps surprisingly, the findings seem to indicate some satisfaction with the housing situation at the time eg over rents and some aspects of council housing. Yet this may simply be a result of the fact that a large proportion of those involved played no or a limited personal part on the housing scene. It certainly does not fit well with the impression received from other sources of considerable dissatisfaction over housing, particularly at times of high employment. As for unemployment, the survey supports the evidence that it could be very widespread, and that there was much dissatisfaction with provision made to deal with it. As in the case of housing problems, blame was attached to a greater extent to central than the relatively nearby local government. Nevertheless it was the community at large rather than local government which was seen as sympathetic to the unemployed. Lastly the survey gives some support to the view, suggested by other sources, that, despite periods of severe recession, few individuals were encouraged to take an active part in attempts to solve the town's problems by direct action such as through the NUWM. The Church and recreational groups were the bodies people in the survey turned to whether in times of relative prosperity or severe depression.

In sum the impression made by the survey results is that, despite periods of difficulty caused mainly by depression, burgh inhabitants found that conditions in the town were generally acceptable in the inter-war years. It must be admitted that strong reliance cannot be

placed on the survey alone, but it gains some credence from its association with other evidence tending also to such a conclusion.

13.6 Conclusion

This survey of evidence at an individual or family level has confirmed a picture of the burgh of Clydebank in the inter-war years which by no means accords fully with that which conventional wisdom might suggest. With the standard view of the history of depressed ship-building/engineering towns in West Central Scotland, it might be expected that migration would be fairly substantial during the whole period as individuals and families moved to find a more promising area in which to live. At the same time those still living in the burgh increasingly would be forced to seek alternative employment in somewhat more prosperous parts of the Glasgow conurbation. The impact of depressed conditions on births, marriages and suicides might be expected to be considerable, and force major changes in expenditure patterns such as in housing. The general consequence of living in such a community would be to produce great amounts of dissatisfaction and a propensity towards either apathy or action.

However the accepted view of the effect of economic dislocation on those areas of the country affected by inter-war depression has been challenged and modified, in the case of Clydebank at least, by the material in the preceding chapters dealing with the response of the community as a whole. The developing situation in the burgh was not, in general, one in which the quality of life was permanently and substantially circumscribed. On a housing, recreational and political level the community's responses to the economic problems affecting Clydebank have shown that for many life was of a reasonable quality by contemporary standards, during much of the inter-war period.

The material in this chapter has given further support to such a conclusion. There were periods in the early 1920s and early 1930s when severe depression encouraged substantial migration from the town, increased the proportional outward flow of commuters, affected birth, marriage and suicide rates and exacerbated the long standing housing problems caused by overcrowding. Yet evidence and explanations have been put forward to support the view that at other times in the inter-war decade these developments were absent, considerably reduced in importance or had explanations other than economic collapse.

The figures show that migration from the burgh was considerable in the years between the wars, and would have had a more serious effect

on population levels but for the town's initially relatively high, though falling, birth rate. However such individual action was concentrated in the periods of severe economic dislocation. In the later 1920s the migration rate was reduced with the return of relative prosperity to the town and indeed in the later 1930s this outward flow of population was at least partly reversed.

It cannot be an unexpected finding that a large minority of the working population commuted from a town which is part of a much larger conurbation. Nevertheless its significance for the town's citizens who could find employment seems to have increased during the depression of the early 1930s. In the relatively prosperous years on either side of this period the increase in general economic activity seems to have stimulated a more substantial rise in commuting into the burgh than from the burgh ie employment opportunities became relatively more available in the town than in surrounding areas.

Economic conditions generally seem to have had an effect on the town's birth rate. Prosperity encouraged a decline in the rate which was accelerated at times of particular economic adversity. The impact of economic conditions on the marriage rate is less clear, but depression seems to have produced a reduction in the early 1920s and early 1930s. In most years suicides per head of the population were less frequent in Clydebank than elsewhere which gives some support to the view of the town as generally facing cumulatively rather less severe problems than other areas. The period of severe depression in the early 1930s saw the greatest level of suicides in the inter-war years - though the rather less severe economic problems of ten years earlier did not produce the same effect. However the small size of the sample involved makes the forming of reliable conclusions from these data uncertain.

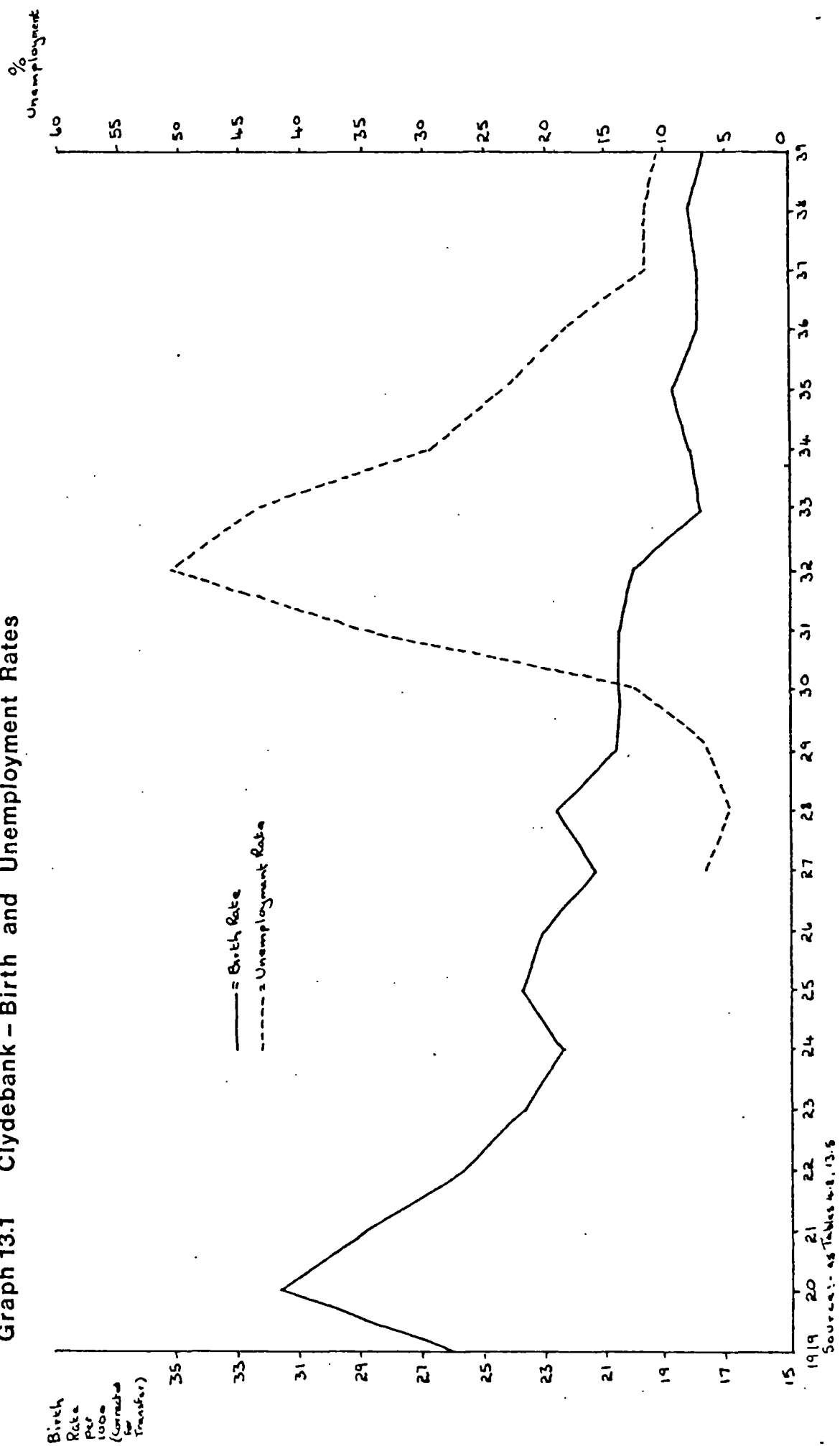
The available evidence on lodging, largely equated by contemporaries with overcrowding, suggests that it was widespread throughout the period, but increased in periods of depression.

The restricted survey made of individual responses to certain problems affecting the town at this time has suggested that town inhabitants were rather less dissatisfied with their conditions of life than might be expected if economic dislocation and its effects had produced major problems throughout the period.

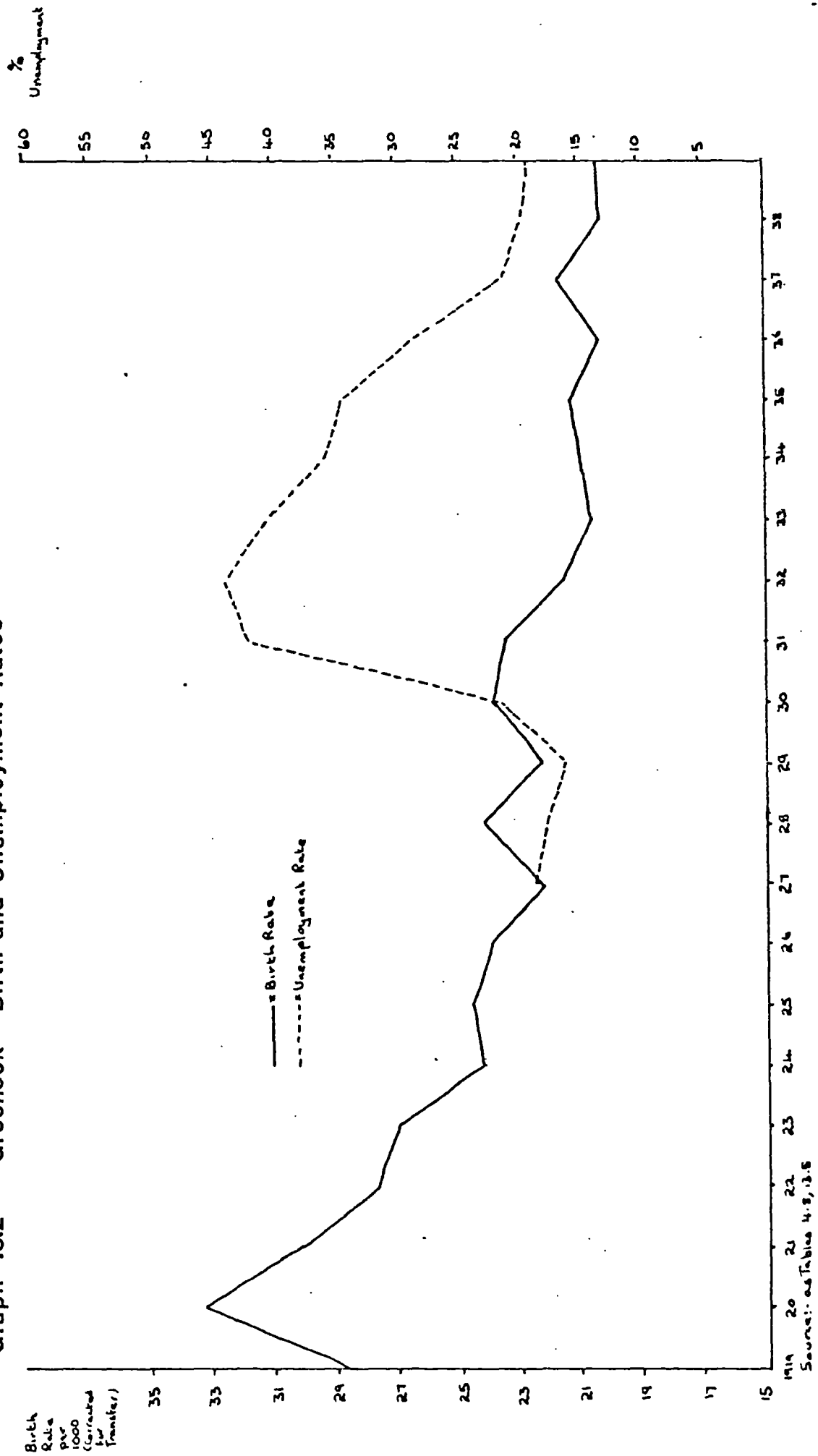
Clearly such a small survey on its own cannot indicate that the degeneration in the quality of individual and community life which

might be expected to result from prolonged and severe depression, was considerably less prominent a problem in inter-war Clydebank than conventionally might be believed. Yet the findings give support to the view expressed throughout this work that the conventional picture of the burgh in the years between the wars is, at best, partial and incomplete. The reactions of the individual and of the community of which he or she was a part show that bouts of severe depression do not necessarily result in the breakdown of the social fabric and of the bonds holding an urban community together.

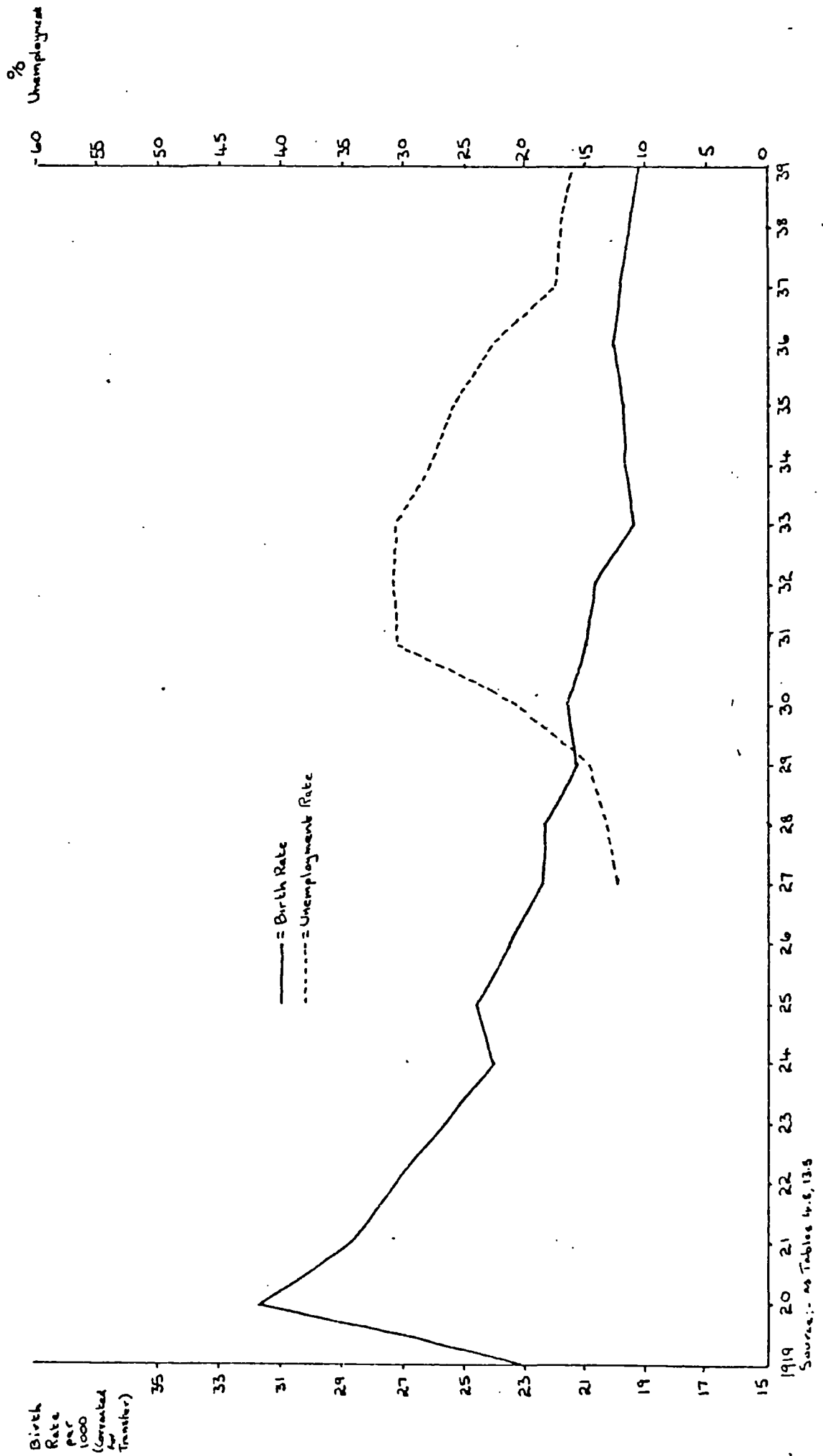
Graph 13.1 Clydebank - Birth and Unemployment Rates



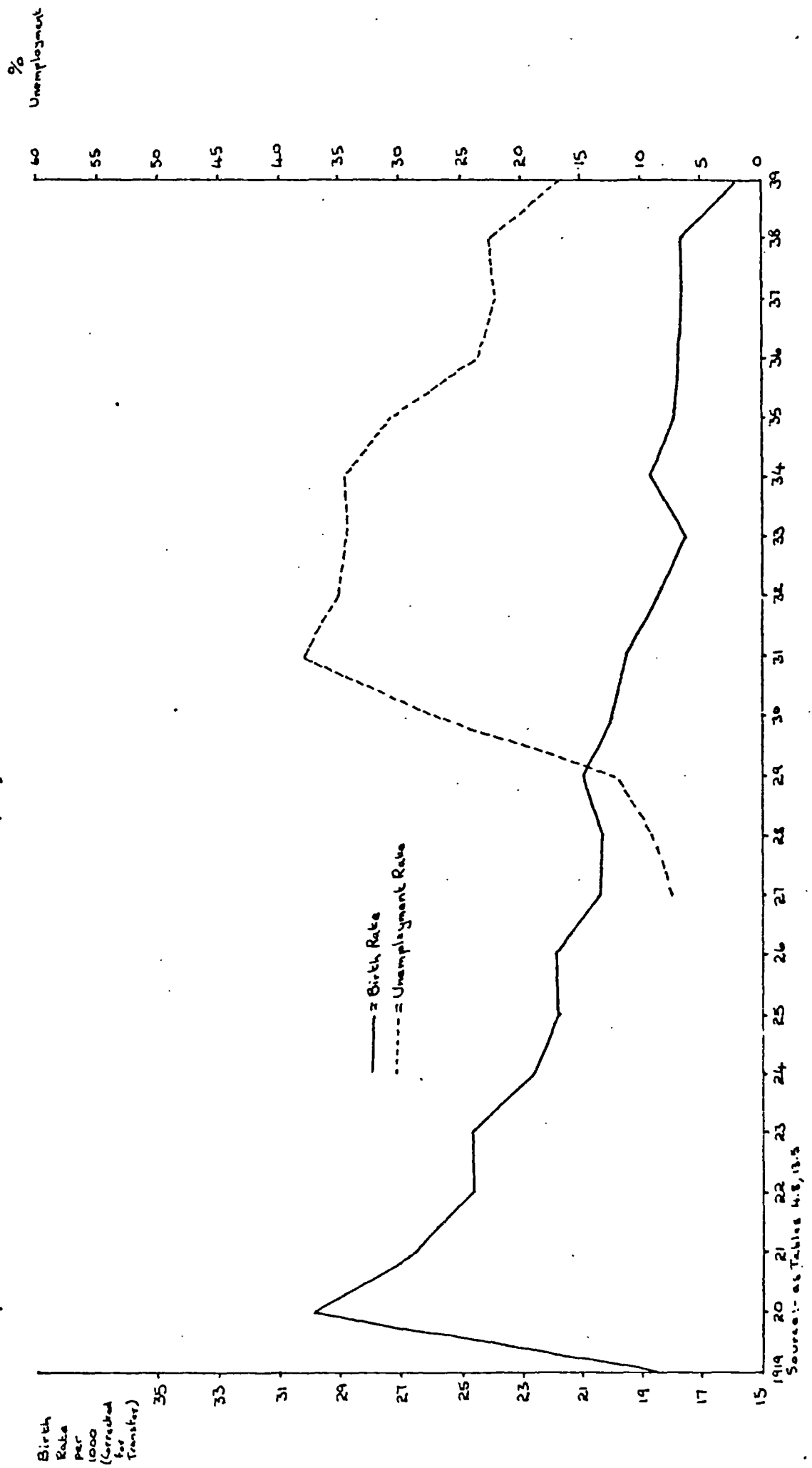
Graph 13.2 Greenock - Birth and Unemployment Rates



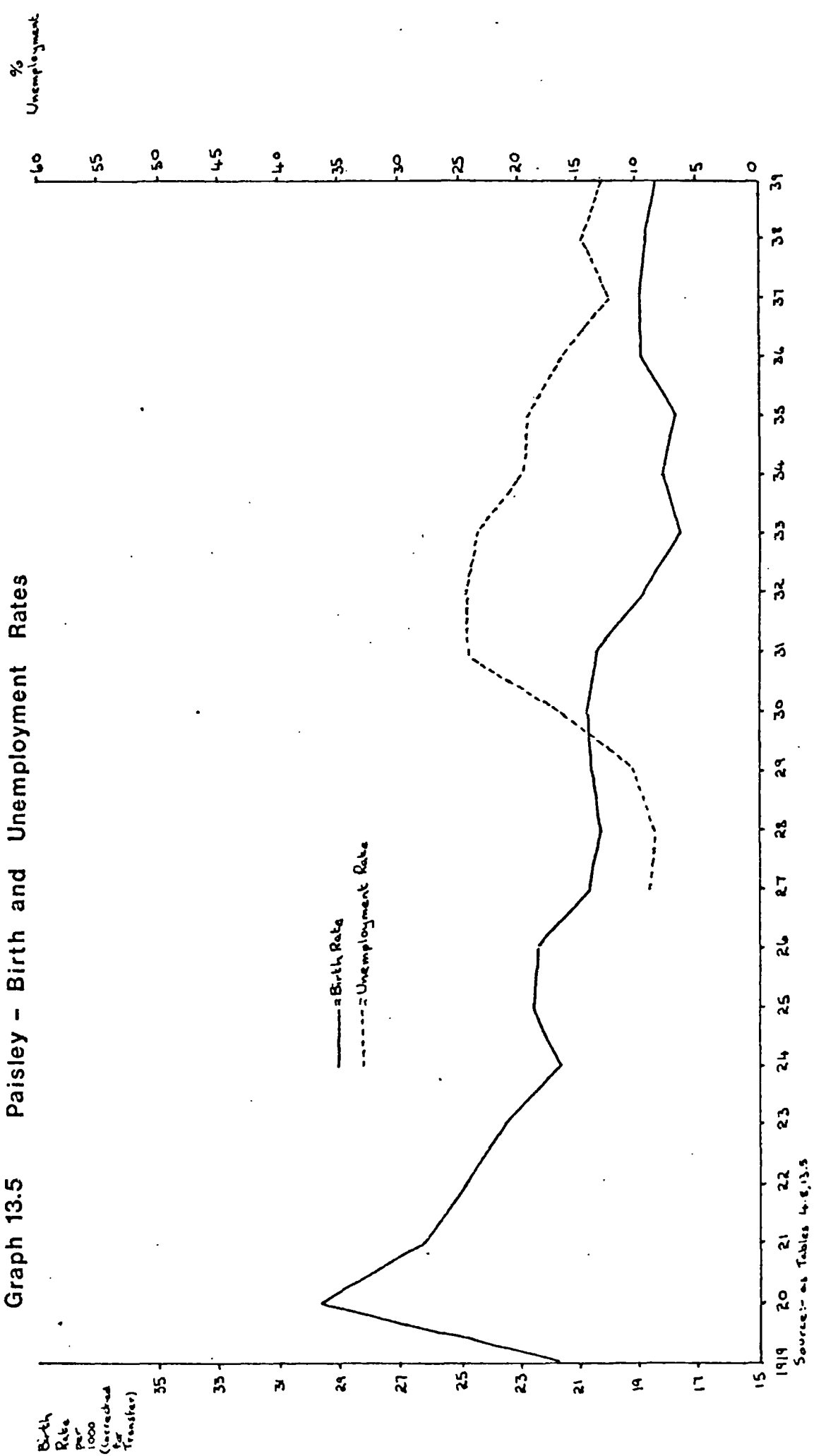
Graph 13.3 Glasgow - Birth and Unemployment Rates



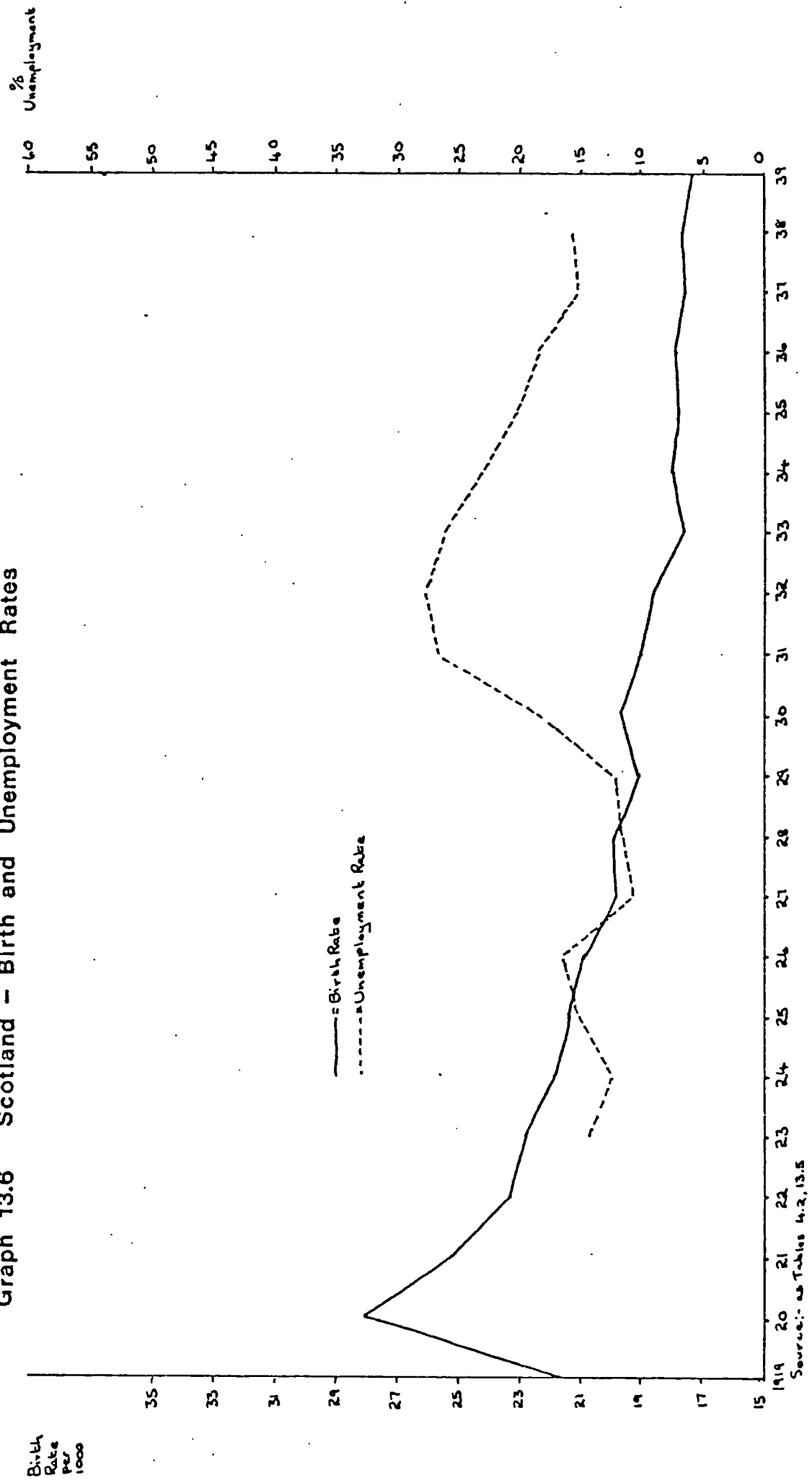
Graph 13.4 Dundee - Birth and Unemployment Rates



Graph 13.5 Paisley - Birth and Unemployment Rates



Graph 13.6 Scotland - Birth and Unemployment Rates



FOOTNOTES

1. For a detailed discussion of emigration, immigration and migration from Scotland during the inter-war period see ed. M Flinn Scottish Population History from the 17th Century to the 1930s (Cambridge 1977), Part VI pp.439-482. For mid 19th to mid 20th century trends see R H Osborne "The Movements of People in Scotland", Scottish Studies 2, 1 (1958), pp.1-46.
2. D H Aldcroft The Inter-war Economy : Britain 1919-1939 (London 1970), p.101.
3. S Glynn and J Oxborrow Inter-war Britain : A Social and Economic History (London 1976), p.208.
4. CP, 19 July 1935.
5. ed. M S Dilke Third Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. vi (Glasgow 1959), p.240.
6. D J Robertson "Population Growth and Movement", The Scottish Economy, ed A K Cairncross, (Cambridge 1954), p.14.
7. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1925, p.3.
8. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1935, p.38.
9. Some consideration of this subject generally can be found in Department of the Environment : Research Report 10, "British Cities : Urban Population and Employment Trends, 1951-71" (1976), especially pp.4-16; R D P Smith "The Changing Urban Hierarchy in Scotland", Regional Studies, vol. 12 No.3, 1978, pp.331-51; and T W Freeman The Conurbations of Great Britain (2nd edition London 1966), esp. chapters 1 and 11.
10. C L Mowat Britain Between the Wars 1918-1940 (London 1955) p.234.
11. Glasgow Corporation had a monopoly over the collection and disembarkation of passengers within the city boundaries which prevented other companies picking up and putting down passengers purely in the city. See S M Little A Handbook of Glasgow Corporation Motorbuses 1924-1971 (Glasgow 1971), pp.4-6.
12. Little, op.cit., p.4.
13. ed. M Flinn, op.cit., pp.355-420 which discusses changing Scottish birth (and death) rates in the 19th and 20th centuries.
14. See chap.2, p.18
15. See chap.2, p.19
16. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1938, p.35.
17. M H Brenner "Mortality and the National Economy. A Review, and the Experience of England and Wales, 1936-76", Lancet 1979, 1, pp.568-73.
18. British Medical Journal, vol.282, xxxx, 11 April 1981, p.1179.
19. See ch.9, p.269
20. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1922, p.9.

21. Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Clydebank 1933, p.5.
22. Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1919, p.8.
23. 25 and 26, Geo.5, Ch.41. For details see Report of the Sanitary Inspector of Clydebank 1936, pp.21-23.
24. A Sinfield What Unemployment Means (Oxford 1981), p.151.

PART V
CONCLUSION

14.1 Clydebank 1919-1939 - The Conventional Picture

Where the problem is given any consideration, the generally accepted view of Clydebank in the years between the wars seems to be of a town particularly badly hit by depression, where unemployment was an unavoidable reality with an impact on many aspects of town life. After all, Clydebank is a town in West Central Scotland, an area which experienced a considerably higher level of unemployment than Britain as a whole at that time. In addition the town relied heavily on shipbuilding and so must inevitably have faced additional problems as that industry contracted.

Such a view is not restricted to general folklore. It can be found, at least by implication, in standard textbooks on the period, in which Clydebank is given as an example of types of towns particularly affected by the economic problems of the inter-war years. An illustration can be drawn from Glynn and Oxborrow's Interwar Britain: a Social and Economic History, where consideration is given to regional unemployment rates throughout the inter-war period. The comment is made that

"a severe problem of regional depression emerged affecting a group of old staple industries (textiles, shipbuilding, coal and iron and steel)....In the old industrial areas economic deceleration was diffused by linkages between basic and other industries so that regions as a whole slid into persistent depression with unemployment rates well above the national average. In the Midlands and South East new and expanding industries produced an opposite effect leading to prosperity and expansion. In this way the prosperous South and depressed North emerged and Britain became, in some ways, two nations. In general coal was the most badly affected industry and Wales was the area which suffered most. The regional unemployment rates conceal phenomenal rates of unemployment in certain industrial areas where dependence on declining industries was very heavy and where structural decline was reinforced by cyclical depression. In January 1933 in the North of England, 91% of the insured labour force was unemployed at Saltburn, 77% in Jarrow and 64% at Cleator Moor; in Scotland 70% at Stornoway, 60% at Wishaw and 54% at Clydebank; in Wales 82%

at Taff Wells, 72% at Pontycymmer and 66% at Abertillery."

In the context of this paragraph it is clear that Clydebank was regarded as persistently suffering higher than average levels of unemployment within a region already afflicted with a greater unemployment problem than the more prosperous parts of the country.

If such a conclusion is accepted, then by implication other consequences are taken for granted. First, as a town badly affected by unemployment Clydebank must have faced severe strains on its social fabric, particularly when comparison is made with the boom period it enjoyed in the first part of the century. Second, it would be expected that the town's industrial structure would be severely affected, and outward migration would be at an above average level as a result. Third, the health of the burgh community would suffer. Fourth, social development such as the housing and recreational programme would face substantial problems as the financial basis for municipal activity shrank with the decline of industry and the outward movement of population. Fifth, as a consequence the commercial sector of the town would contract as the large numbers of unemployed were less able to spend. Further, the large numbers of unemployed, many of whom would lack work over long periods of time, would face particular problems when their entitlement to central government assistance expired. The local Poor Law and later the Public Assistance Authority, forced to rely on the decreasing ability of local citizens to pay rates, would then have to restrict its expenditure on the poor and unemployed. All of these difficulties flowing from an economic collapse locally would lead either to considerable apathy among those forced to remain in the area, or provoke tension and possible dissention between the unemployed, the employed, local and central government.

The present research suggests a need for substantial revision of the conventional view as outlined above. The general areas in which revision is clearly necessary are to be found in unemployment, local prosperity, leisure provision, migration and political attitudes. Those, and other, aspects are considered in the sections below.

14.2 Unemployment

Substantial levels of unemployment certainly did exist in Clydebank, as shown in chapter 4, pp.46-59. At its maximum in 1932 an average of over 50% of insured workers in the area of the burgh labour exchange were unemployed - and at the peak of unemployment in July 1932 60.5%³ of workers had no job. The high levels of the early 1930s were an intensification of the considerable problem which had existed ten

years earlier during the depression of the early 1920s. At that time the maximum numbers of unemployed suggest a percentage rate closer to 30%, the level experienced in 1934 when recovery had begun, rather than 1932 when unemployment was at its maximum.

Unexpectedly however it has been discovered that the levels of unemployment experienced in the burgh outwith the very depressed periods of the early 1920s and especially in the early 1930s were generally lower than Scottish averages and usually lower than figures for neighbouring towns or for more distant towns with a similar industrial structure. In fact at times such as 1928 the low unemployment levels in the burgh meant that a more accurate comparison would be between Clydebank and communities in South East England where a considerable proportion of "new" industries were located. For a large part of the inter-war period unemployment was rather less of a problem, and sometimes much less of a problem, for the members of the burgh community than was the case in the rest of Northern Britain. A consequence of this was that long term unemployment in Clydebank was also less serious than experienced in some other parts of the country.

The above comments should not however be taken as an attempt to minimise what was a very serious problem. Unemployment existed throughout the period. In the early 1920s and early 1930s the exceptionally high levels of unemployment did place severe stress on the community generally and on its members individually. Though unemployment levels of 50% must have had an effect on all sectors of Clydebank citizens, information in chapter 5, pp.75-102 gives a more detailed picture of the type of unemployed individual most seriously affected. This was the group forced by particular weight of circumstances to apply for additional financial assistance from the town council. The evidence shows that prolonged unemployment was rather more likely to force application from younger individuals with small families living in low cost, private rental accommodation who had lost a local, unskilled job than other groups in the town.

There is also evidence to suggest that the experience of women and juveniles, was rather worse than that of adult males, at least in the mid and later 1930s. Yet for the majority of the local workforce this thesis has demonstrated that unemployment was a pervasive problem only in the early years of each inter-war decade - and this conflicts with the conventionally accepted view of Clydebank at that time. A number of factors contributed to this, the most important being the relative success of the two major local employers, John Browns and

Singers, in maintaining substantial employment levels through much of the inter-war period. This resulted from the rather higher demand for the consumer and consumer related products of the Singer Company and, in the case of John Browns, from specialization in passenger - and cargo - liner construction as well as, in the later 1930s, their success in obtaining naval orders. These firms seem to have been reluctant to dispense with the services of skilled workers until the last possible moment. Further, though less important, factors in explaining the generally below average levels of unemployment in the burgh are the availability of jobs in the neighbouring Glasgow area and, in the later 1930s, the arrival of some new industry to the town.

It is clear that for much of the period 1919-1939 unemployment was considerably less prevalent in Clydebank than has been accepted hitherto.

14.3 Local Circumstances

If the generally accepted view of Clydebank's inter-war unemployment problem is inaccurate, then common assumptions concerning the impact of widespread economic dislocation may also require revision. The town did not descend into prolonged economic stagnation and social decay. There were areas of community life which experienced little change, whilst others were significantly altered. Continuity and change went hand in hand.

One area in which there is little evidence of a particularly severe impact of depression is health. In general, community health standards in Clydebank seem to have remained roughly static during the inter-war years though some deterioration can be discerned in the early 1930s. Infant mortality and death rates in the burgh were similar in 1939 to those of 1919; as Scottish rates generally were improving this meant a relative deterioration in the town's position. However the burgh's relatively better base level in 1919 meant that its health standards between the wars were not worse at an absolute level than those found in the nation generally.

In the same way there was little change in total population levels in the burgh at this time, and in this Clydebank was not following the national trend; there was however the general Scottish trend toward an ageing in the population structure. There was also little change in the employment structure of the town. While there was a small increase in

tertiary sector employment amongst the towns citizens, the great majority continued to find work in the engineering and shipbuilding sector for which the burgh was famous. The closure of Bearmores in 1930 and the appearance of some new firms from the mid 1930s did little to change the town's employment structure.

There was also little change in the attitude of the burgh employed to the unemployed. Periods of considerable unemployment do not appear to have generated any strong feelings of antipathy to the unemployed in the community at large. No evidence has been found to suggest that the community was split into opposing factions of employed and unemployed. Divisions of opinion between the local unemployed and the town council as representatives of the whole community on levels of assistance did occur. Yet the evidence of the survey of surviving inhabitants in chapter 13, and the lack of substantial contrary evidence, does suggest that the local community was not riven by dissention on this issue. Unemployment and the treatment of the unemployed did not provoke a crisis locally, partly because the problem was generally less severe in Clydebank than elsewhere and partly because, when unemployment did strike, it was so pervasive as to affect the whole community either directly or indirectly.

Yet there were other aspects of community life in Clydebank where significant changes did occur. These are set out below, and in the following section the relationship to unemployment and economic dislocation is explored.

One major area of change was in the physical expansion of the town with the growth of its housing stock. This extension was almost wholly the work of the town council, whereas prior to World War I virtually all housing had been provided by private sector developers. However although there was a growth of municipal housing, the great majority of homes were still privately rented in the inter-war period; and in another sense continuity with the past existed in the form of overcrowding and rent problems. These varied in intensity with the passage of time and affected privately rented accommodation in particular - but they were by no means restricted to this sector. They extended into the new municipal housing estates which were largely the domain of upper working class members of the town community.

A second development was that opportunities for leisure, both private and municipal, were widened at this time with, for example, the opening of putting greens, a yachting pond, new baths, a golf course, a

greyhound racing track and cinemas. In addition clubs and societies appeared which widened community opportunities to participate in recreational activities such as the allotment associations and the Mutual Service Association. Though not all citizens necessarily participated in such activities, they were at least increasingly available.

Increased leisure provision appeared at a time when some of the young town's social bonds were beginning to weaken. Temperance was less influential in Clydebank by the 1930s than it had been in the immediate post war years. Similarly there is evidence in chapter 11 that religious sentiments were no longer as strong as they had been, and contemporaneously crime was becoming a greater problem. Yet in the case of religion and crime at least a reversal of the trend occurred in the early 1930s.

Such reversals of trends can also be seen in other areas of change. Before World War I migration into Clydebank had been taking place - after 1919 this pattern was reversed with substantial migration from the town particularly in the early 1920s but also in the early 1930s. At other times during the inter-war years this outward flow slackened and indeed there is some evidence of a change to inward migration in the later 1930s. In the same way commuting patterns changed with the passage of the inter-war decades. The emphasis changed from a net inward flow into the burgh in the latter part of the 1920s, to an outward flow in the early 1930s with a further reversal in direction in the second part of the 1930s when the net inward flow resumed.

Change was evident in other areas of community life. Political change occurred at a local and a national level - Labour's David Kirkwood took over permanently as MP in 1922, breaking the traditional Liberal hold on the seat while the permanent Labour take-over from the Moderates on the town council was delayed until 1935 - though this was hardly a radical change. A brief period of Labour power locally in 1923-1924 occurred simultaneously with the appearance as a significant force in the town of a major pressure group, the Housing Association. The Association's Rent Strike was symptomatic of the concern which the rent problem evinced in the burgh, and indeed in the 1930s other pressure groups concerned with this aspect of town life arose. Other political pressure groups developed such as those of the early 1920s and early 1930s concerned with the problems of the unemployed.

Thus overall while there were elements of continuity in the Clydebank

community in the years between the two wars, there were significant areas of change, only some of which would be clearly evident to a contemporary observer. Change and development were important factors in the experience of the members of the burgh community in the inter-war years.

14.4 The Generation of Change

Change was an aspect of life in inter-war Clydebank - but what caused such considerable modifications to the pattern of community life which had developed since the establishment of the burgh less than forty years before the beginning of the period? The conventional picture of the town would suggest that the economic dislocation understood to have occurred in these years was a major causal factor. Indeed unemployment and its associated economic problems can be seen as influential forces in moulding inter-war Clydebank. It is not fortuitous that periods of severe depression in the early 1920s and early 1930s coincided with a number of community changes. The developing prosperity of the town, as revealed in the local Cooperative and Municipal Bank data discussed in chapter 9, was checked at these times and alterations forced on spending and saving patterns.

The leisure developments which took place can also be associated with attempts by local and central government to assist the unemployed. New facilities were produced as part of a public works scheme, at least in the early 1920s, while in the 1930s administrative changes were made to permit easier access for the unemployed to municipal recreational facilities. The early 1920s depression saw a temporary success for the Temperance movement while in the early 1930s the position of the local churches was strengthened. As chapter 11 section three suggests, whatever the causal factors, an assumed link between crime and unemployment is not proved by the Clydebank figures which indeed show evidence of a reduction in the early 1930s period of depression.

At these times too there is evidence from the statistics that the worsening of infantile and other deaths rates was connected with depression, as was an acceleration in the decline of the town's birth rate. In such circumstances it is not surprising that migration and commuting patterns reflect the town's employment experience - migration was greatest in the early 1920s and early 1930s and increased commuting from the town is evident in the later period when burgh citizens were forced to seek employment or a better life elsewhere.

It is also obvious that unemployment and its effects played a part in

local political change. Growing support which led to a Labour takeover of the town council in the mid 1930s can clearly be traced to the previous Moderate administration's economy policies of the depression period. In addition periods of severe unemployment were precisely the times when local pressure groups developed. Periods of depression saw the appearance of vociferous groups attempting to improve the lot of the unemployed. At the same time wide scale unemployment also encouraged the growth of organisations attempting to ameliorate the difficulties of those renting their housing by demanding reduced rentals.

Yet housing development in the inter-war burgh was an area which shows that unemployment was only one factor, and probably not the most important, in explaining the changes which occurred in the town at that time. Indeed it would seem true to say that in many ways community change was independent of economic stress, though clearly at times of particular difficulty the nature of this stress had some influence on the extent and timing of social and political change in the burgh.

Unemployment and low incomes generally helped to encourage the growth of housing pressure groups - but other developments in the area of housing show the great variety of factors involved in causing change in the town, most of which were at best marginally connected with unemployment. The most visible change in housing in Clydebank was the building of municipal housing estates. The growth of unemployment in the early 1920s and early 1930s which forced the adoption of economy policies by central and local government may have had an influence on the timing of decisions to build or not to build council housing. Yet the involvement of the burgh council in the provision of housing was not related to unemployment as a proto-Keynesian public works policy. It was due to a number of factors, most important of which was government legislation which made such building feasible. The significance of government legislation can be seen in the fact that the hiatus in council building in the early 1930s was only partly attributable to economic problems in the nation and the town, for a switch in national legislation from the provision of additional housing units for the reduction of overcrowding to the elimination of slums also played an important part.

The council's building programme was part of a national trend which occurred as a consequence of central government legislative activity. However a number of other factors were also involved. As elsewhere, an expectation of better housing conditions had arisen because of

government promises during World War I, and the burgh council was acting to implement these expectations. In addition the legacy of the past - substantial overcrowding as a result of population pressures - made it necessary for the council to take part in the national housebuilding programme. The relative prosperity of the area for much of the period made it possible for the council to raise the financial resources necessary to embark on a considerable building programme - though it must not be forgotten that such building had not solved the town's housing problems even by 1939, and that tenancy was basically restricted to the better-off sections of the burgh's population.

Housing as an exemplar of change in inter-war Clydebank has given clear indications of other factors involved in developments in the town in those years - national trends, central government decisions, post-war expectations, the legacy of the town's past and its comparative prosperity during much of the inter-war period.

The relative prosperity of the area goes far towards the provision of an explanation of the growth in spending and saving which must have affected a large proportion of the town's population for a considerable part of the inter-war period. Similarly without such prosperity it would have been difficult for the council to fund the growth in leisure facilities, such as the construction of a golf course, which took place at this time. Nor can there be any doubt that commercial concerns such as the Greyhound Racing Company or cinema proprietors were attracted more by prosperity than depression. In addition prosperity attracted migrants to the town at least in the later 1930s and certainly helps to explain the inward commuting flows of the later 1920s and later 1930s. The growth of prosperity and leisure facilities also contributed to the general decline in influence of the Temperance movement and the churches, and may have helped to encourage the growth in crime evident during much of the period.

The legacy of the community's brief past - the comparative lack of recreational facilities - also played a part in the council's decision to establish new leisure provision in the inter-war years. The expectation of a better life generated during World War I helped to put pressure on the local authority to improve the town's quality of life in such ways.

These factors were basically restricted to Clydebank but there can be no doubt that change in the burgh is explained partly as a result of national trends in which the town participated. Considerable migration was not restricted to Clydebank during the inter-war decades. A reduction in the birth rate was experienced throughout the country - though causes specific to the burgh were also involved here, such as relative prosperity and the severity of the early 1930s depression. The Labour Party became prominent throughout Britain in the inter-war years. Crime and suicide rates were rising everywhere while there was no real gain in strength for religion or Temperance at this time in the nation as a whole. National legislation also helped to produce change in Clydebank - legislative attempts to alter controlled pre-war rent levels were influential in encouraging the growth of local protest groups such as the Housing Association of the 1920s, itself part of a national body.

Clydebank was not a static community between the wars. There were elements of continuity with the burgh's earlier history, but local citizens were involved in numerous changes affecting the town at this time. There can be little doubt that unemployment was a contributory cause of the changes, and was certainly significant in the timing of developments which occurred. Nevertheless there can also be little doubt that other explanations of the changes are required and that cumulatively these factors were more important when judging the inter-war period as a whole than was unemployment.

14.5 Clydebank 1919-1939 : An Overview

The evidence shows that for the majority of the inhabitants of Clydebank the inter-war period was generally a time of improvement in the community's history. For much of the time the burgh was relatively prosperous - real spending was increasing. An altered life style developed with a growth in variety and choice in leisure activities. The local authority achieved some success in improving the quality and quantity of housing. There was no sustained fall in health standards. Indeed the town seems to have had the ability at times to attract a considerable number of people to live or work within its boundaries.

In addition social welfare measures introduced by both central and local government contributed to making life better for burgh citizens than their parents had experienced. Expanding central assistance for the unemployed and the sick was augmented by above average support from the local authorities through the medium of

the Poor Law or the Public Assistance system of the town itself.

The growth of such welfare services and the improved social amenities to be found in the burgh help to explain why there was no break up of the local community and no continuing mass exodus during the period. The town saw no great changes in attitude, eg to work, to law and order or to politics. Indeed the burgh citizens seem to have been sustained by the strengths of the working class community in which they lived. A general satisfaction with the standard of life at the time may be found in two questionnaires from the survey made in 1981 in which the respondents commented that Clydebank was a "friendly Christian community" and that they "have always been very happy and contented in our residency (60 years) in Clydebank."

Yet neither of the individuals had been unemployed - and this brings attention to the other side of the coin remarked on in a third questionnaire where the statement is made,

"Personally a happy experience but felt it was a very hard time for the others unemployed."

Finally, two other questionnaire comments were "Times very distressing - especially in early twenties" and "Times very hard." There can be no doubt that the widespread unemployment of the early 1920s and early 1930s has contributed to a bitter image of the inter-war period in Clydebank and in the nation generally.

Poverty caused by unemployment affected very large segments of the burgh population during these periods of particular depression, but unemployment existed throughout the period. It exacerbated the problem of poverty faced by low wage earners in a generally skilled working class town, particularly amongst the unskilled and those with large families. Such individuals were more likely to face the problems of overcrowded, poor quality private housing and inadequate diet which followed from their situation, with its consequent effects on health.

Nor was the central government's social security system all-embracing so that many felt impelled to seek help from the Poor Law/Public Assistance safety net provided by the local authorities - and had to accept the connotations attached to help from that source.

The community in Clydebank must have been divided between those more and less able to share in its relative affluence and widening social amenities. This is the paradox of progress and poverty. Yet such a division in life style does not seem to have produced as extensive

an impact on community attitudes as might have been expected. There is no evidence of division between haves and have nots, of opposition to assistance to the unemployed, of attacks on property. Differences of opinion and attitudes existed but were never so serious as to threaten to cause real disruption to the local society. This was probably a result of the relatively low levels of unemployment in the comparatively prosperous town for much of the period, and the very extensive nature of the problem in the early 1920s and early 1930s. The community generally could feel sympathy for either the small or very large proportion of its members who faced the problem of unemployment during the inter-war period.

In the sense of general prosperity with an undertow of poverty rising to something of a crescendo at times, Clydebank would appear to be something of an anomaly in inter-war Scotland. The picture usually presented is of relative prosperity with comparatively low levels of unemployment in the areas of "new" industry in Southern England. This is contrasted with the depressed nature of the Northern part of Britain where the problems of poverty and unemployment were much more prevalent. In inter-war Clydebank elements of both these pictures appear with prosperity more in evidence than poverty. This does not accord well with the expectations generated by the town's geographical location, so that an anomalous situation has arisen between reality and expectation. Yet Clydebank's inter-war history may not be so abnormal since there would seem to be a considerable lack of detailed local studies with which comparisons might be made. Perhaps further research will show that relative prosperity occurred more frequently in the depressed areas than has hitherto been believed.

14.6 Clydebank in a National Context

It is perhaps worth giving some brief, further attention to the ~~apparently~~ a typical history of Clydebank between 1919 and 1939. It is not that pockets of prosperity in areas of depression did not exist. This is commented on by Constantine when he notes that

"regional rates of unemployment disguised variations between towns in the same region. Workers were more liable to unemployment and especially to long term unemployment if their town was heavily dependent on a single industry whose markets were severely reduced. A more diversified local economy with alternative occupations or a local industry whose products remained popular offered more favourable employment prospects. This could create prosperous towns even in depressed areas⁴..."

The Clydebank experience does not fit neatly into any of these categories. Clydebank was certainly heavily dependent on the depressed engineering and particularly shipbuilding industries - yet its rates of unemployment were shown in chapter 4 to be considerably better than in other shipbuilding towns. In 1927 Clydebank's unemployment rate was 6.5% whilst in Greenock the rate was 18.6% and in South Shields 24.3%. Even in 1930 the burgh rate of 12.4% was considerably less than the 21.7% and 32.2% of Greenock and South Shields respectively. By 1936 the towns' average rates were 18.5%, 28.4% and 38.5% while in 1939 the Clydebank rate of 10.8% was approximately half that of Greenock and one third that of South Shields. Only in the particular circumstances of 1932 and 1933 were the burgh's unemployment rates higher than in these other towns. In addition chapters 4 and 5 have suggested that long term unemployment was less of a problem and in Clydebank than in many other areas.

The economy of Clydebank was not diversified to any great extent during the inter-war years. New industries were established in the 1930s, but these tended to be in the engineering sector and small scale in any case. Certainly there was some growth in the proportion of the population employed in tertiary industry, but the increase was not great and much of this expansion was occurring outwith the burgh in the Glasgow conurbation. Nor can it be argued that prosperity existed because of the general popularity of the products of the shipbuilding industry, though it would seem that Singer Company products continued to sell reasonably well throughout much of the inter-war period.

Clydebank then does not fit snugly into the pattern which might, according to Constantine, have made it an island of relative prosperity in the surrounding sea of depression in North Britain. However it does not fit into the received explanation of comparative prosperity in Southern Britain either. Admittedly at times the Clydebank unemployment rate was comparatively close to that experienced in areas such as Luton. Yet the Clydebank rate in 1932 of over 50% compares with a rate of 7.9% in Luton and 14% in Birmingham. Nor had Clydebank any share in the "new" industries such as vehicle manufacturing which had been established in these towns. Clearly the employment and unemployment experience of Clydebank does not follow that found in areas of the south.

An explanation of the town's position combining elements from depressed and prosperous areas can be given. John Browns management

succeeded in obtaining sufficient contracts, against industry trends, to hold on to a considerable proportion of their workforce. Only in the depths of the depression of the early 1930s was there a total collapse in employment in the yard. At the same time the products of the Singer Factory continued to sell reasonably well throughout the period and thus offer employment to a considerable proportion of the local workforce. Even in the early 1930s when short time working was introduced there was no sudden catastrophic reduction in employment. At the same time the relative prosperity of Clydebank within the Glasgow conurbation helped to make it possible for burgh citizens to take advantage of growing tertiary sector opportunities in the city.

And yet unemployment struck hard at Clydebank at times, and the relative prosperity of much of the inter-war period must have made the contrast particularly difficult to bear. It can seldom have been easy to endure unemployment in Britain between the wars, but in some ways it must have been unusually onerous for the very large numbers of burgh inhabitants affected in the early 1920s and early 1930s. Despite these particular stresses there was, as elsewhere, a considerable cohesion in the community. There was no disastrous breakdown of spirit at these times leading to complete apathy or social disturbance. The reasons for the burgh's ability to weather the storm must lie in its newness and relative prosperity. There was almost no slum housing by contemporary standards. New local authority housing was built for at least a section of the population. Absent leisure facilities were created between 1919 and 1939. Assistance to the unemployed was amongst the most generous in the country. Employment was normally easier to obtain than in many other areas. Problems certainly existed, eg overcrowding, a relatively higher cost of living, but even when augmented by very serious unemployment, they did not prove powerful enough to damage severely the social fabric of the community.

14.7 Conclusions

The present research on inter-war Clydebank has demonstrated a number of findings. Firstly the generally accepted view of Clydebank in the inter-war years is in need of revision. It is indeed true that severe unemployment affected the burgh, but above average levels of unemployment were restricted to the early 1920s and early 1930s - at other times it was less of a problem than has been believed. The community was more prosperous and considerably less radical than in the received version of those years. Secondly, pockets of

relative prosperity can exist in areas of general depression for a variety of reasons. In the case of Clydebank this was in large measure a result of the particular inter-war experience of the major local employers. Thirdly, at its worst unemployment in Clydebank affected all sectors of the community, though over the whole period the low paid/unskilled worker tended to suffer more. Indeed this particular group in the community was least able to share in local affluence, eg through inability to afford rentals of high amenity local authority housing built in the inter-war years and was thus forced to occupy poorer quality, often overcrowded private accommodation. Relative poverty existed alongside comparative prosperity in inter-war Clydebank.

Fourthly, volatility in employment levels can contribute a considerable impetus to initiating change in a community so affected. However change has other causes, some originating in aspects of the local community such as the legacy of its past and its present needs, some related to national developments such as general trends or central legislation. In Clydebank unemployment seems to have been no more important in causing change than other factors, though its significance in the timing of change was probably more important. Fifthly, the actions of central government related to the unemployed and in other areas can have a considerable impact on a depressed, and not so depressed, area. In Clydebank central government legislation or action concerning, for example, housing, the recommencement of work on the 534 "Queen Mary", the extension of support for the unemployed or the rearmament policy of the later 1930s, all had a significant effect on the individual and the community experience of life in inter-war Clydebank.

Next, the burgh's history in the period 1919-1939 makes it clear that extreme contrasts in employment levels and substantial long term unemployment need not fundamentally damage a local community's ability to sustain itself against serious stress. Though unemployment and its attendant pressures affected a very large proportion of Clydebank citizens at times in the inter-war years, and a smaller proportion throughout the period, community life did not break down to any noticeable extent. Change was encouraged by this experience but the town's social fabric was not destroyed.

Lastly, it would seem that further research on a local level requires to be carried out to confirm whether Clydebank's history in the inter-war years was as abnormal as it would appear to have been by contemporary

standards at least in West Central Scotland.

Can the findings of this research have relevance to Britain or Clydebank today? It can be dangerous to draw weighty conclusions in attempting to apply the lessons of a detailed study of a historical community to that community, or any other, in a different time in a changed situation. There are certainly perils in attempting to apply the particular to the general.

However it is certainly true that, currently, frequent comparisons are made between the situation of the early 1980s and that of the inter-war years.⁵ Indeed a number of similarities between the two periods have been indicated. The absolute number of the British unemployed at the peak of the early 1930s depression was of the same order of magnitude as that of early 1983. It is also true to say that, as in the 1930s, unemployment levels tend to be worse today in Northern than in Southern Britain. Similar causes of unemployment have been suggested in both periods - world depression, the government's deflationary monetary and fiscal policies, a high exchange rate and international debt. In the 1930s, as today, demands came from some quarters for reflationary action to deal with the problem and certainly the standard of living of the employed in both periods has been little affected by economic dislocation.

Similarities are drawn between the impact of unemployment on the community then and now. Individuals are again willing to consider migration - where possible. Newspaper reports contain headlines such as that in the Observer of 3rd April, 1983,

"Misery of the dole that ends in suicide" -

an echo of the 1930s. Relative poverty resulting in poor housing and deleterious effects on health is remarked upon. Protest marches take place.

Yet in other ways the similarity between the inter-war and contemporary depressions is not close. The official unemployment rates of the early 1980s have not reached the levels of the early 1930s since the insured workforce has grown in size. The differential between regional rates of unemployment is considerably less today than in the 1930s - today the "new" industries of the 1930s are also suffering. In the early 1930s British unemployment rates tended to be lower than those of her competitors, while the reverse is true today. As yet there is no coordinated mass movement of the unemployed such as the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the inter-war years. The contemporary

inflation problem had no counterpart in the depression of the 1930s. As a last example the division in attitude between the employed and the unemployed is said to be wider at the present time than in the inter-war period.⁶

Equally in the case of Clydebank itself particular similarities and dissimilarities exist between the two periods. As in the inter-war period the burgh is suffering to a great extent from unemployment with the recent closure of Browns, Singers and other important employers.⁷ It is also a time when there seems to be an increase in migration from the town partly as a result of the relative poverty suffered by burgh citizens. Nevertheless differences do exist. Though the number of the unemployed had risen from an average total of 3574 in 1972 to 6166 in 1982⁸ this was much less than the numbers affected in the early 1930s. The employment structure of the burgh in the 1930s had virtually disappeared 50 years later and, with the creation of an enterprise zone, there were specific government attempts to aid the town.

Clearly the particular circumstances of inter-war Clydebank considered in this research were in some ways exceptional, eg the newness of the community, the particular history of major local firms, and are unlikely to be paralleled exactly today. This circumscribes the direct relevance of the town's past experience to today. Yet an awareness of the similarities and differences between the two periods may also have a value - it clarifies the issue in considering present concerns and may suggest priorities and avenues of approach to deal with today's difficulties.

A second point of general significance to emerge from this research is that the accepted macro-economic picture can be too easily applied at a micro-economic level. It is too simplistic to assume that uniformity of experience occurs throughout a particular geographical or economic area. There may well therefore be a need for emendation of existing beliefs on both the inter-war and current position based on local studies.

Thirdly, severe economic dislocation lasting several years need not cause the breakdown of a local community. However such an outcome may well depend on the ability of that community, either by itself or with the aid of central government, to provide for people's needs as they perceive them - or at least be clearly seen to be attempting so to do. In connection with this resilience, a community in a relatively new

town may well be better able to withstand the stress of economic dislocation because it has fewer problems to inherit from the past and thus stress may be lessened somewhat.

In the fourth place, government policy even when aimed directly at a particular area, is unlikely substantially to affect the unemployment situation which is influenced more by general economic factors. Yet government policy not directly aimed at unemployment, eg in the area of housing, may well contribute not simply to ameliorating unemployment, but to lessening the strains on the community fabric caused by poor quality housing, exacerbated by unemployment.

The overriding conclusion is that the Clydebank experience in the inter-war years (and it seems likely also at present) demonstrates a clear need for a reappraisal of the impact of prolonged economic dislocation on particular communities. Conclusions drawn from national trends can be at considerable variance with local conditions, and if policies designed to aid areas in distress ignore such local variation, then their effectiveness is likely to be diminished. Clydebank in particular emerges as a community with a brighter and more hopeful prospect in the inter-war years than could possibly be envisaged from an acceptance of national average conditions.

FOOTNOTES

1. D H Aldcroft The Interwar Economy : Britain 1919-1939 (London 1970), p.384.
2. S Glynn and J Oxborrow Interwar Britain : A Social and Economic History (London 1976), pp.151-53.
3. Local Unemployment Index, July 1932.
4. S Constantine Unemployment in Britain Between the Wars (London 1980), p.19.
5. A number of articles have appeared recently comparing the two periods, for example, S Glynn and A Booth "Unemployment in Interwar Britain : A Case for Re-learning the Lessons of the 1930s?", Economic History Review 2, vol.xxxvi, no.3, August 1983, pp.329-348; H Rose "Another Look at the Interwar Period", Barclays Review, vol.LVIII no.1, February 1983, pp.1-9; J Tomlinson "Unemployment and Policy in the 1930s and 1980s", The Three Banks Review, no.135, September 1982, pp.17-33; and T Wilson "1929-33 - Could It Happen Again?", The Three Banks Review, no.128, December 1980, pp.3-20.
6. A Sinfield What Unemployment Means (Oxford 1981), p.151.
7. For a brief description of the town's contemporary economic decline and possible future see M Brownrigg "Clydebank : The Economics of Decline", The Planner, vol.69 (3), May / June 1983, pp.85-7.
8. Figures supplied by the Manpower Services Commission.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION IN THE CENSUS OF SCOTLAND 1921 AND 1931

Reports on the censuses provide a useful source of information on employment in Clydebank during the period to 1931. However certain problems exist with the use of these data, since they relate to people rather than the town. Not all of those enumerated in the census as living in the town necessarily worked there - nor need all who worked there have lived there. Consequently information on numbers employed in and the relative importance of particular industries in the town can only be regarded as approximate. Commuting to work was relatively easy as Clydebank was situated close to Glasgow and had good transport facilities. Some information on this conurbation problem comes from material described in detail in chapter 5 which concerns the survey made of approximately 500 unemployed persons applying for additional relief to Clydebank Town Council. Of the 314 applicants who gave the information, 30% had been employed outside the burgh. As a result it is possible to state that a large proportion of Clydebank's working population was employed outwith the town.¹ One of the effects of this may be seen in the relative weakness of the tertiary sector of the town which is discussed in chapter 3, p.30.

A second comment concerns the unemployed. In the 1931 census "persons in specified industries who returned themselves as 'Out of Work' are included in these industries"² ie the unemployed were not there enumerated separately. However some unemployed may have returned themselves in the category of "Unoccupied". A similar situation existed in 1921 when the unemployed could have returned themselves either in the industry in which they had worked or as in no specified industry. When considering the relative significance of particular industrial sectors in Clydebank, this is not a particularly important point. Nevertheless it does increase slightly the element of uncertainty produced by the first problem mentioned above.

FOOTNOTES

1. Since the majority of outside employment opportunities were in Glasgow, the figure of up to 30% suggests that Clydebank had been incorporated into the fringe of the metropolitan labour area and was dominated by Glasgow. See Department of the Environment

Research Report 10, "British Cities: Urban Population and Employment Trends, 1951-71", (1976), especially pp.4-16. See also R D P Smith "The Changing Urban Hierarchy in Scotland", Regional Studies, vol.12 no.3, 1978, pp.331-51 and T W Freeman The Conurbations of Great Britain (London 1959), especially chapters 1 and 11. See also chap.13 pp.369-76.

2. Report on the Census of Scotland 1931, vol.i p.547, Table 23, note.

APPENDIX TWO

THE PROBLEMS OF DATA

" ... it is necessary to face up to the fact that unemployment is almost impossible to define in realistic statistical terms.¹"

This comment by Booth and Glynn highlights the difficulty of attempting to quantify inter-war unemployment levels. In the first place, what is unemployment? "

"Unemployment can be used to describe a condition - being not at work, an activity - seeking work, an attitude - desiring a job under certain conditions, or a need - that of needing a job.²"

The unemployed include those who have lost existing jobs and are looking for other work. They also include those who have never had jobs, eg school leavers coming into the job market, housewives seeking to augment the family income, but who are actively attempting to gain employment. One of the problems of definitions lies in the intensity of the desire to seek work. People can fail to appear on unemployment registers because they see little point in registering or because they realise that they would not qualify for unemployment relief. For these reasons and due also to a desire to measure the full labour potential of an area, economists have become more concerned with "activity rates", ie the percentage of those in the age groups from school leaving to retirement actually in work.

It is against the background of this difficulty in definition that unemployment in Clydebanks must be considered. But even assuming an acceptable definition can be agreed on, the provision of statistics to support that definition is, if anything, more problematic in the inter-war period.

There are several sources of statistics for national and regional levels of unemployment. A first source is the figures published from 1888 to 1926 by the Ministry of Labour Gazette³ showing the percentage of members of certain trade unions who were unemployed at the end of each month. A number of problems makes the use of these figures rather unsatisfactory. Since not all trade unions contributed returns to the Board of Trade, the published figures do not necessarily reflect the unemployment situation as it affected all trade unionists, let alone all workers at a time when most workers were not trade unionists. In addition those included in the figures

tended to come from sectors of the economy such as shipbuilding or coalmining where unemployment was more affected by seasonal demand, cyclical fluctuations or structural change - yet the returns ignored trades in which employment was considerably more stable such as agriculture or domestic service.

Much more important for the inter-war period are the statistics published in the Ministry of Labour Gazette at a national or local level based on the work done by local labour exchanges in connection with the developing unemployment insurance schemes and the placement of the unemployed in work. These figures would seem to give a more satisfactory measurement of the levels of unemployment; yet there are a number of problems associated with their use. Firstly there is the problem of the intensity of the desire of the individual to seek work, as indicated above. Exchanges relied on voluntary registration by those who qualified under the scheme - and the numbers who thus considered themselves suitable for inclusion would depend on the regulations under which the scheme operated (which varied), the severity with which they were administered, the benefits to be obtained by registering etc. Consequently there seems little doubt that some of those who might have registered did not do so, the statistics produced must be regarded in some ways as minimum figures, whether at national or local level.

Secondly the published Gazette figures could relate to two groups of unemployed individuals, the insured unemployed and those on the "live register". The insured unemployed comprised workers in industries covered by the unemployment insurance scheme which qualified them to receive unemployment benefit. At its inception in 1911 there had been approximately two million workers in the building and construction, shipbuilding, mechanical engineering, iron founding, vehicle construction and sawmilling industries covered by the scheme. In 1916 insurance cover was extended to a further 1.5 million workers in industries such as munitions and chemicals, but it was in 1920 that a very substantial extension of the scheme took place. In that year the numbers insured rose to approximately 12 million. The scheme now applied to all workers aged 16 and over, employed in a contract of service and earning no more than £250 per annum if their work was non-manual. Yet significant groups nationally were still not covered, eg workers in agriculture and domestic service, those in military service, teachers, police, civil servants, etc. Since such groups were thought less likely to suffer unemployment than the insured sector of the workforce, insurance statistics give particular emphasis to groups of workers

who were more likely to suffer unemployment than the workforce generally. Although some of the excluded groups entered the scheme later, there was no further major extension of cover in the inter-war period. Accordingly statistics based on figures of insured unemployed must overstate the true unemployment position nationally to some extent. Feinstein has recently suggested that insurance figures overstate the true rate of unemployment in the workforce as a whole by 20% in the inter-war years on the basis of his comparison between the reported figures and data found in the 1931 census. Garside however is unsure of the accuracy of this claim in view of the fact it is based on data obtained in 1931, a year of severe cyclical unemployment, and on a number of assumptions relating to unemployment rates among groups excluded from insurance schemes.⁴ In Clydebank figures of insured unemployed are unlikely to be significantly inaccurate for the reasons described above, particularly in the case of male unemployed, since the great majority of inhabitants of the town worked in industries such as shipbuilding and engineering, sectors long covered by insurance.

There are further problems about the use of insurance statistics. Workers on short time could lodge their unemployment book at the labour exchange and so be counted as unemployed. However from 1926 the Gazette distinguished between the numbers of "wholly unemployed", ie those without a job and those "temporarily stopped", ie those on some type of short time, before giving total figures for unemployment, ie both figures combined. Such differentiation was not standard procedure before 1926, nor was this ever published at a local level. As a result there is no substantial official long term body of evidence giving indications of the extent of short time working in the Clydebank area, constituting a significant problem in a review of the local situation.

In addition, figures of insured unemployed include those in the "Two Months file", ie the unemployment books of those no longer receiving benefit and no longer attending the labour exchange to maintain their registration, which were included in the unemployment figures for a period of two months after the individual had last contacted the exchange. Such an individual need not necessarily still have been unemployed or, for that matter, have been available for employment. Though from 1926 on, the numbers of those in the "Two Months file" were published separately in the Gazette, this was not done at the local level and so its effect on the Clydebank figures is unknown. However at a national level official comment

suggested that the file was unlikely substantially to affect the accuracy of published figures.

In the same way problems arise with the use of "live register" figures, ie the numbers of those registering at an employment exchange as seeking employment, whether insured or not. Though these figures might seem to be more useful since they included persons outwith the scope of unemployment insurance such as agricultural workers, domestic servants, etc they do not necessarily give an accurate picture of unemployment levels. They exclude those in the "Two Months file" and those working in industries with special schemes for unemployment (banking and insurance) unless they were registering to apply for work. In addition the "live register" included those still in employment but seeking another job. "Live register" figures were given in the Gazette at both national and local levels. In Clydebank at least the figures are probably substantially accurate since the "Two Months file" would seem to have had little effect, few in the town worked in banking or insurance, and, given the prevailing employment position in the town for much of the inter-war period, it seems unlikely that substantial numbers of workers would register to look for other work.

A further difficulty in assessing true levels of unemployment arises in estimating the proportion of those who are voluntarily out of work. Two American economists, Benjamin and Kochin, have recently suggested that, throughout much of the inter-war period, this was a substantial problem resulting from high levels of unemployment benefit relative to wages.⁵ They state

"Our estimates imply that in the absence of the unemployment insurance system the overall unemployment rate during this period would have averaged 7% instead of nearly 14%.⁶"

Their view is based on the less generous benefit provision and lower unemployment rates for juveniles and for married women after the introduction of the Anomalies Regulations in 1931. Yet there are problems about accepting this view because of the inadequacy of many juvenile unemployment statistics. There is also the conflicting evidence that three million claims for benefit were refused between 1921 and 1930 on the grounds that the applicants were not making all possible efforts to obtain work.

In addition to the problems indicated above concerning the use of national insured unemployed and live register figures, there are difficulties in assessing the local unemployment levels at Clydebank.

From 1923 the Ministry of Labour Gazette published a monthly table of registered unemployed at a number of local labour exchanges including Clydebank. The national problems indicated above exist for these figures, but several local difficulties also arise. The area covered by the Clydebank exchange was not restricted to the burgh. As well as Clydebank it dealt with Dalmuir, Old Kilpatrick, Yoker, Scotstoun West, Drumchapel, Hardgate and Duntocher. In 1931 however the manager of the exchange stated that

"figures for the burgh alone may be obtained by deducting one eighth - experience has shown that approximately one eighth of the total numbers reside outwith the burgh⁷."

Another problem arises from the probability that the unemployed would register at the exchange nearest their home, even though their actual place of work could be some distance away. Thus the local figure in the Gazette reflects the number of unemployed living in the area rather than the intensity of job contraction in local employment. As part of the interlinked economy of the Glasgow conurbation, Clydebank had significant numbers of people who lived in the town and worked elsewhere, and local workers who resided outside the town. Unfortunately no figure is available for the numbers in the latter category, but it₈ would seem that up to $\frac{1}{3}$ of local inhabitants worked outside Clydebank. The impression is that, without the relative availability of work elsewhere, unemployment in the town would have been worse. Yet this problem is not a major difficulty in any attempt to assess the impact of unemployment on the community in Clydebank and its response to that impact. Where the unemployed individual had worked is probably less important for the present survey than the fact that he or she was unemployed.

A third difficulty relating to local figures concerns the percentage rates given in the Local Unemployment Index, published monthly by the Ministry of Labour from 1927 and giving the percentage rates of unemployment in over 600 towns and county areas in Britain. To 1937, this rate was calculated by expressing the numbers of those registered of all ages as a percentage of those insured in the age group 16-64 - calculated in such a manner the rates are somewhat misleading and exaggerate the level of unemployment. From 1937 all uninsured persons, the insured aged 14-15 and those insured under the new Agricultural Scheme were excluded, so that the rate reflected unemployment among the insured in the age group 16-64 - again a method which cannot give a true unemployment rate. In the case of Clydebank the rate is, however, unlikely to be substantially inaccurate, since, according to the census, most employees worked in insured industries, and agriculture

was practically non-existent.

One last important source of national and local unemployment statistics in the inter-war period is the 1931 census where, for the first time, explicit information was requested on unemployment. But here too difficulties arise in the interpretation of the data which are not wholly comparable to those published in the Ministry of Labour Gazette. The census figures of those who returned themselves as "out of work" included some individuals who, though unemployed, were not covered by state insurance, did not register at an employment exchange and are therefore missing from the Gazette figures. In the same way, though the temporarily stopped are included in the Ministry figures, those involved would not necessarily return themselves as "out of work" in the census. Direct comparability with the Ministry figures for that one particular period is thus not possible.

The comments made so far relate to the general scale of unemployment at both national and local levels. However further difficulties emerge in an attempt to review the structure and pattern of unemployment, eg the age distribution of unemployed, etc. In the first place such official information as is available on these matters relates to national or regional figures, not the local area (except that the Gazette and Index split the unemployed into males, females and juveniles when indicating figures and rates for local exchanges). Detailed information on the pattern of unemployment at a local level tends to come from non-governmental surveys of particular localities at particular times, and Clydebank was not one of the towns so surveyed. Secondly at a national or regional level, the official information tends to come from the 1930s when monthly figures on the age of the unemployed, duration of unemployment, etc, begin to be published in the Gazette. In the 1920s such material comes from 1% sample surveys carried out in various years by the Ministry of Labour. However strict comparability between these surveys, and with later figures, is difficult since they were not necessarily compiled in the same way and on the same basis.

In conclusion it would seem that any examination of the scale and pattern of unemployment can only provide approximations, even if fairly close approximations, to the actual situation in view of the problems associated with such evidence as is available. Yet the present work does not and cannot aim to give a totally accurate and detailed picture of the scale and pattern of unemployment either nationally or in Clydebank. The available figures can give, with

reservations, a good picture of the scale of unemployment and certainly of the changes taking place with the passage of time. In this way at least the data, though not perfect, are quite adequate.

FOOTNOTES

1. A E Booth and S Glynn "Unemployment in the Inter-War Period: A Multiple Problem", Journal of Contemporary History, October 1975, p.611.
2. W H Garside The Measurement of Unemployment (Oxford 1980), p.3.
3. The title varied - The Labour Gazette to 1905, the Board of Trade Labour Gazette 1905-17, the Labour Gazette 1917-22, the Ministry of Labour Gazette 1922-68, the Employment and Productivity Gazette 1968-70, the Department of Employment Gazette from 1970.
4. Garside, op.cit., pp.58-59.
5. D K Benjamin and L A Kochin, "Searching for an Explanation of Unemployment in Inter-War Britain", Journal of Political Economy, vol.87 No.3, June 1979, pp.441-78.
6. Benjamin and Kochin, "What Went Right with Juvenile Unemployment Policy Between the Wars: A Comment", Economic History Review, 2 November 1979, p.525. See also chap.6, pp.116-120.
7. CP, 2 January 1931.
8. Figures based on a sample of applicants for extra relief to Clydebank Town Council (see chapter 5, p.95). Of 314 applicants giving identifiable workplaces between 1931 and 1938, 218 (69.4%) worked in Clydebank and 96 (30.6%) elsewhere.

APPENDIX THREE

CLYDEBANK - A COMMERCIAL SURVEY 1925-1940

		Numbers of Business Recorded in McDonalds Directory of Particular Types		
1.	<u>Businesses Increasing in Number</u>	<u>1925-26</u>	<u>1932-33</u>	<u>1939-40</u>
	Accountants	1	4	3
	Amusements (Cinemas + Theatres)	-	6	6
	Bakers	6	7	9
	Banks	6	7	7
	Builders	-	3	4
	Butchers	7	13	12
	Carriers	1	2	2
	Chemical Manufacturers	-	3	3
	Chemists and Pharmacists	5	6	6
	Chiropodist	-	-	1
	Drysalter	-	-	1
	Engineers	5	8	6
	Fishmongers	2	4	4
	Hairdressers	3	8	6
	Housefurnishers	1	2	2
	Ironmongers	-	3	3
	Ladies and Childrens Outfitters	3	5	4
	Market Gardeners	-	-	1
	Motor Engineers	1	1	2
	Music Teachers	-	-	1
	Newsagents	8	11	11
	Pawnbrokers	2	4	4
	Plumbers	6	8	8
	Radio Dealers	-	-	3
	Shipbuilders	-	-	1
	Solicitors	3	4	4
	Spirit Dealers	19	19	20
	Upholsterers	1	2	2
		<u>80</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>136</u>

2. <u>Types of Business Decreasing in Number</u>	<u>1925-26</u>	<u>1932-33</u>	<u>1939-40</u>
Blacksmiths	3	2	2
Booksellers and Stationers	13	11	12
Boot and Shoe Makers	10	9	5
Carting Contractors	1	-	-
Coal Agents and Merchants	2	2	1
Confectioners	23	19	15
Corset Maker	1	-	-
Costumier	1	-	-
Cycle Agent	2	-	-
Dairy Keeper	17	9	9
Dentist	5	4	4
Draper	10	9	8
Electrical Engineer	1	-	-
Fancy Goods Repositories	4	3	1
Fruiterers and Greengrocers	12	8	8
Grocers	20	22	17
Hardware Dealers	4	3	1
Hotels	1	1	-
Jewellers	1	-	-
Joiners	5	4	3
Laundries	2	1	1
Milliners and Dressmakers	2	-	-
Photographic Dealers	2	-	-
Printers	3	3	2
Restaurants	12	5	2
Tobacconists	13	9	9
Umbrella Makers	1	-	-
Wardrobe Dealers	1	-	-
Watchmakers	3	1	1
	<u>175</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>101</u>

3/

3. <u>Types of Business Remaining Static in Number</u>	<u>1925-26</u>	<u>1932-33</u>	<u>1939-40</u>
Dental Surgeons	4	4	4
Funeral Undertakers	2	2	2
House and Estate Agents	4	5	4
Insurance Companies	2	2	2
Music Sellers	1	2	1
Newspapers	1	1	1
Opticians	2	2	2
Painters	3	2	3
Slaters	4	4	4
Tailors and Clothiers	5	6	5
Miscellaneous	11	11	11
	<u>39</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>39</u>

Source: McDonalds Scottish Directory and Gazeteer -
Clydebank 1925-1926, 1932-1933, 1939-1940

APPENDIX FOUR

CLYDEBANK SURVEY 1919-39

Please tick the box or fill out the blank space in the answer column

Question No	Question	Answer
1	Year of Birth 50 <small>RESPONSES TO THIS QUESTION</small>	1
2	Sex 50	2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female
3	Marital Status in the Period 1919-39 50	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Married <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single <small>8 MULTIPLE RESPONSES</small>
4	Number of Dependents eg Spouse, Children, Parents, Other Relatives 34	4
5	Place or Places of Residence eg Dumbarton Road 1919-32, Kilbowie Road 1932-1939 49	5
6	What Was Your Status As An Occupier of This House or These Houses? 50	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Parental Home <input type="checkbox"/> Lodger <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Rental <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority Rental <input type="checkbox"/> Owner/Occupier <small>12 MULTIPLE RESPONSES</small>
7	If You Paid Rent, Approximately How much Was This Per Week Or Per Month? 24	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
8	In Your Opinion How did Your Rent Compare With Your Income 31	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low

Question No	Question	Answer
9	In Your Opinion, Was Your Rent Compared To Other Property Of A Similar Type 29	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
10	Generally, Do You Think That Town Council Rents Were 41	10 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
11	If You Answered 'High' To Question 8, 9, Or 10, Was This Because (a) Houses Were Scarce and Difficult to Find (b) The Level of Rent Was Set By Central Government (c) The Town Council Was Unable To Agree To Reduce Rents (d) Other Reasons:- Please Specify Below 16	11 .. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 4
3 MULTIPLE RESPONSES		
12	Were Town Council Houses Allocated (a) On a Points System According to Family Size and Need (b) By Open Ballot From a Waiting List (c) By Length of Residence in the Town (d) Other Reasons:- Please Specify Below 37	12 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11 MULTIPLE RESPONSES		
13	In Your Opinion, Was This Method Of Allocating Town Council Houses (a) Fair (b) Unfair (c) The Best in the Circumstances 37	13 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Question No	Question	Answer
14	What Was Your Occupation, eg Joiner Housewife, In This Period 47	14

15	Name of Employer(s) and Period(s) of Employment. (Please Specify In Order eg John Browns 1924-28, Singers 1929-35 etc)	15
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37

16	Were You Unemployed At Any Time Between 1919 and 1939? 45	16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20 Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25 No
----	--	----	--	---

17	If Yes, Please Indicate The Following For <u>Each Time</u> You Were Unemployed.	17	Once	2	3	4	Over 4
(a)	Number Of Times Unemployed	(a)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5
(b)	How Long You Were Unemployed on Each Occasion	(b)					
(i)	Under One Month		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii)	One - Three Months		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii)	Four - Six Months		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv)	Seven - Twelve Months		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v)	One - Two Years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(vi)	Over Two Years		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c)	Please Indicate The Year In Which Each Period of Unemployment Began eg 1921, 1933 etc 27		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18	If You Were Unemployed, Did You Receive Help From	18
(a)	Unemployment Insurance Benefit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 16 Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 No
(b)	Clydebank Town Council Public Assistance Committee 23	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 No

SEVERAL MULTIPLE RESPONSES

Question No	Question	Answer
19	Whether You Were Employed or Unemployed, In Your Opinion Was Unemployment Insurance Benefit (a) Adequate (b) Inadequate	19 (a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 41
20	Whether You Were Employed or Unemployed, In Your Opinion Was The Public Assistance Committee Benefit (a) Adequate (b) Inadequate	20 (a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 39
21	If You Answered That The Sums Paid By the PAC Were Inadequate, Was This Because (a) Higher Scales Would Have Increased Local Rates Too Much (b) The Scales Were Set By the Government, Not the Town Council. (c) The Town Council Could Not Agree That It Was Necessary to Increase Scales (d) Other Reasons:- Please Specify Below	21 (a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (c) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (d) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 24 3 MULTIPLE RESPONSES
22	How Did People Who Were Employed Regard The Problems of the Unemployed in Clydebank? (a) Very Sympathetically (b) Sympathetically (c) Unsympathetically	 (a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (c) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 46
23	How Did The Public Assistance Committee Regard the Problems of the Unemployed in Clydebank? (a) Very Sympathetically (b) Sympathetically (c) Unsympathetically	23 (a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (c) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 38

Question No	Question	Answer
24	How did the Government Regard the Problems of the Unemployed?	24
	(a) Very Sympathetically	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	(b) Sympathetically	(b) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	(c) Unsympathetically	(c) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	37	
25	Were you at any time between 1919 and 1939 an <u>Active</u> member of any Local Organisation?	25 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	45	
26	If you answered "Yes" to Question 25, please indicate the Organisation you were a member of, with dates if known.	26
		Yes Dates
	(a) Church	(a) <input type="checkbox"/> 16
	(b) Youth Group	(b) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(c) Allotment Association	(c) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(d) Mutual Service Association	(d) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(e) Labour Housing Association	(e) <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	(f) Parkhall Tenants' Association	(f) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(g) Recreational Group e.g. Football Club, Choir, Bowling Club, Band etc.	(g) <input type="checkbox"/> 9
	(h) National Unemployed Workers Movement	(h) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(i) Labour Party	(i) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(j) Independent Labour Party	(j) <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	(k) Communist Party	(k) <input type="checkbox"/> 1
	(l) Conservative Party	(l) <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	(m) Liberal Party	(m) <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	(n) SNP	(n) <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	(o) Other Organisation:- Please specify below	(o) <input type="checkbox"/> 0
	44	12 MULTIPLE RESPONSES
27	If you have any other personal comment to make on your experiences in Clydebanks between the Wars, please write it below	27
	5	
28	Date of Answering this Questionnaire	28

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