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IRLAM URBAN DISTRICT.

1919.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

WITH


SEPARATE

REPORT ON HOUSING.



JUNE, 1920.

A. J. Wright & Sons, Printers, Cadishead.



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REPORT
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health

For the Year ended Dec. 31st, 1919.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Irlam Urban
District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1919.

I have compiled it in accordance with the Memo. 9/Med. issued by the Ministry of Health. In Circular 66 issued with the above-mentioned Memo. the Ministry suggest that the Council should take steps, through the local press and otherwise, to bring the contents of this Report effectively to the knowledge of the people in order to engender a popular interest in the sub-

ject, and obtain an enlightened public opinion which shall support the Local Authority in realising its high responsibilities for the health of its area.

Concisely put this Report brings into prominence the following features:—

The greatest WANT you have is best expressed by the one word HOUSES.

The outstanding feature was the satisfactory extension and progress of your Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme, though as a dark spot in that work was the very high infantile death rate, which perhaps came as a blessing in disguise to act as incentive to further progress!

In the Sanitary Department the greatest improvement was the provision of a 3-ton motor waggon ensuring the more efficient removal of refuse throughout the District.

I am, Sirs,

Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH W. ROBERTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

Council Offices,
Irlam.

June, 1920.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Population.—The 1911 Census gave the population as 6,308. For 1919 the Registrar General has estimated the civilian population at 8,806 (used in estimating the death rate), and a birth rate population of 9,173 (which has been made up of the death rate population plus a non-civilian element proportionate to the estimated civilian population).

Physical Features and General Character of the District.—The Urban District of Irlam is roughly square with sides over $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length; being bounded on the south by the Manchester Ship Canal; on the east by Barton Moss; on the west by a small stream called the River Glaze; and on the north by land belonging to the Borough and Rural District of Leigh.

Its area in 1919 was 4,529 statute acres, about half of which is peaty (a portion of the great Chat Moss), and the other half clayey, or sandy. The whole area is nearly flat averaging about 55 feet above sea-level. The natural drainage is slow and towards the Ship Canal.

The District is decidedly damp.

The moss portion is almost all under the cultivation of market produce, and is thus rural in character; whilst the remainder, through which runs the main Manchester-Liverpool Road parallel to the Ship Canal, is urban, the works being situated mostly between Liverpool Road and the Ship Canal.

For Local Government purposes the District is divided into two wards—Cadishead and Irlam.

Recreation.—I would recommend the provision

for general public use of football grounds, and open-air swimming baths as soon as possible; also the planting of avenues of such hardy trees as sycamore.

Social Conditions.—The District is wholly industrial, and its estimated population gives no idea of the number of people employed in it at the extensive works, since large numbers journey every day from Manchester, Warrington and other places to their work here.

The chief works were:—

- The Partington Steel Works ;
- C.W.S. Soap, Glycerine, Starch and Candle Works ;
- C.W.S. Margarine Works ;
- Royles Ltd., Engineers ;
- Manchester Ship Canal Company's Coal Tips, etc.
- Koppers Coke Oven Co. ;
- Kinder, McDougal and Company's Wall Paper Works ;
- Hulme Match Co. ;
- Irlam Engineering Co. ;

most of which were developing to a great size.

Women and children over 13 years of age were largely employed, mostly at the C.W.S. Works. Their interests, physical and moral, were splendidly cared for by the Lady Superintendent of the C.W.S. Welfare Department. It is to be regretted that children so young should go to works at all for it is undoubtedly detrimental to their mental and physical development.

An excellent feature of the District was the very small number of married women employed in works.

The trying conditions—heat, gases, etc.—of a

steelworks led to a good deal of ill-health in men, as did also in women the dry soap dust and, at any rate until lately, too laborious work such as candle making, and the very wet conditions obtaining in the margarine works.

Perhaps some of these conditions are in part the cause of the miscarriages and still-births which rather too frequently occur when these women marry.

There was little or no real poverty in the District, the amount of Out-door Relief only totalling £216 4s. during the year.

The overcrowding is specially referred to in that section of the Report on Housing on page 4. The seriously overcrowded state of the houses, and the facility of removal to the splendidly equipped hospitals of Manchester, caused the medical men to send practically all serious cases, especially those requiring operation, to those hospitals. The overcrowding also necessitated removal of as many as possible of the infectious cases.

VITAL STATISTICS.

IRLAM.—	Per 1,000 OF POPULATION.				Rate of Deaths under 1 year to 1,000 Births.
	Birth-rate.	Death-rate.	Epidemic Death-rate.	Phthisis Death-rate.	
1919	17·6	12·1	0·34	0·34	129
1918	22·6	13·7	0·47	0·82	55
Mean of 10 years 1909-1918.....	24·9	12·0	1·11	0·60	97
Increase or decrease in 1919 on—					
Previous Year...	-5·0	-1·6	-0·13	-0·48	+74
Ten years' average	-7·3	+0·1	-0·77	-0·26	+32

The birth rate in 1919 seriously decreased, and compared unfavourably with 18·5 per 1,000 of total population for England and Wales.

The death rate was also lower than in 1918, but slightly higher than the mean of 10 years 1909-1918 ; for England and Wales it was 13·8.

The epidemic death rate in 1919 shows a decided decrease, as does also that from phthisis.

The worst feature of these statistics is the large increase in the deaths of infants under 1 year of age ; the figure for 1919 is 129 per 1,000 births and is the highest ever recorded here. This is the more disappointing as this rate had decreased so greatly in 1918, when it was 55 ; the mean of 10 years 1909-1918 was 97 ; the rate for England and Wales in 1919 was 89.

I have analyzed the causes of death in these infants and find that :—

6	were due to	Bronchitis ;
6	„ „	Conjenital Debility ;
5	„ „	Prematurity ;
3	„ „	Diarrhoea ;
1	was due to	Intussusception ;

—
21—Total.

Of the 21—5 did not live more than 15 days, and 10 not beyond 1 month.

I think I can say that the majority were due to avoidable causes.

The 6 Conjenital Debility, and 5 Prematurity suggest Venereal Disease, though as previously mentioned, the large number of girls employed in works may be a contributory cause.

Of the total deaths—107 at all ages—the following may be noted :—

18	were due to	Pneumonia ;
15	„ „	Bronchitis ;
8	„ „	Cancer ;
7	„ „	Influenza ;
5	„ „	Tuberculosis (including 3 pulmonary) ;
4	„ „	Heart disease ;
5	„ „	Violence (including 1 suicide) ;
1	was due to	Bright's disease ;
1	„ „	Meningitis.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water.—The Manchester Corporation supplies water on the constant system to every house in the district with few exceptions, most of which are supplied from the Warrington Corporation mains. The water is adequate in quantity and of good quality ; no suspicion of plumbo-solvent action was suggested.

Rivers and Streams.—The Manchester Ship Canal formed the southern boundary of the district approximately, and its waters are decidedly polluted and malodorous.

The small River Glaze runs along the western side of the district and empties itself into the Ship Canal. As it receives the effluent of sewage works in its upper reaches, in addition to that of this district, and also untreated drainage from a number of houses on its course, it is not of the sweetest description. It will no doubt be improved when your new Sewage Works are constructed.

All streams are under the jurisdiction of the Mersey and Irwell Joint Committee.

Drainage and Sewerage.—The Chief County Sanitary Inspector made a survey of the drainage and sewerage of this district for the County Medical Officer of Health's Special Report of 1918, and I will quote from remarks made in that Report :—"The sewers, which are mainly on the partially separated system, extend to all the populous parts of the district. They are ventilated by open covers at the level of the street, and are regularly flushed with hose-pipes.

The length of main sewer is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. All the sewers are circular in section. The pipe sewers vary in diameter from 6in. to 21in., and the circular brick sewers from 2ft. to 2ft. 9in. There are 227 man-holes and 50 lamp-holes at the changes of direction and gradient in the system.

In a few cases the brickwork was found to be defective, some bricks loose and open-jointed, and the shafts of the man-holes too small in area."

From the observations of your own Surveyor, by means of a "Lea Recorder" at the outfall works, the opinion was formed that a quantity of subsoil water was entering the sewers, owing to their defective construction.

Because the Roscoe Road drainage had been a source of trouble since the building of houses in that area, a sewer was constructed during 1919.

The sewage from the district which was approximately 255,000 gallons per day in dry weather, was dealt with by sedimentation pits and land filtration. The whole arrangement has been totally inadequate, and unsuitable to the needs of the district, and will become an impossibility as the number of houses increases.

In 1915, your Surveyor prepared a sewage scheme on a modern plan, designed for a popula-

tion of 15,000. This was inquired into by the Local Government Board, but owing to war conditions borrowing powers were not granted for the scheme. Very recently the Council decided to employ the services of a leading sanitary engineer to advise in this matter.

Most of the house drains were constructed, ventilated, and trapped according to modern requirements. Efficient testing was made by your Surveyor of all new drains, the proper construction of which was essential under the by-laws of the Council.

Closet Accommodation.—The following table gives full information regarding privies, water, and other closets in the district :—

Number of privies 836, with 781 middens attached, emptied once in 6 weeks, some by day others by night.

Number of pail closets 90, emptied once a week.

„ „ cesspools—0.

„ „ fresh water closets 1,196.

„ „ waste water closets 50.

„ „ ashpits, excluding middens, 443, and 6 tubs.

„ „ ashbins 973.

Only fresh water closets were permitted in substitution or in new property.

Conversions.—

	Privies and pails to fresh water closets.	Fixed receptacles to ashbins.
1914	50	49
1915	0	0
1916	79	1
1917	0	0
1918	0	0
1919	8	8

The rapid conversion of privies and pail closets

to fresh water closets was delayed owing to war conditions, for a scheme, prepared by your Surveyor in 1914 for all conversions and passed by the Local Government Board, was in the first instance retarded by local delay and then, in 1915, by the refusal of the Local Government Board to sanction the necessary loan.

Scavenging.—See Report on Housing III. Page 5.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.—

(a) Number and nature of inspections made by the Inspector of Nuisances during the year—285 ; generally speaking, these were all ordinary nuisances of minor importance.

(b) Number of statutory notices served during the year—18.

Number of informal notices served—106.

(c) The result of the service of such notices—94 abated, and the remainder in hand.

Premises and Occupations which can be controlled by By-laws or Regulations.—Offensive trade—1 soap boiler and tallow melter ; there was no action needed.

Houses let in lodgings.—Most of the houses contained lodgers, but no action was taken owing to the extreme house shortage.

There was no By-law regulating the letting of lodgings, but such is now required.

There were no underground sleeping rooms.

Other Sanitary Conditions requiring Notice.—Special excreta pails were provided for certain infectious diseases, and drains were tested and flushed in such cases, in addition to efficient routine flushing.

Schools.—There was a public elementary Council School, including Infant Department in each

ward—Cadishead and Irlam—which, being modern, were satisfactory in every way. There were also three voluntary elementary schools—one in Cadishead, and two in Irlam, which, being of older construction, were not so satisfactory.

Water supply to all schools was from the Manchester Corporation mains, and of the best quality, and ample quantity. The School Medical Service was under County Administration. No school closure was necessary during 1919, although Influenza was prevalent during the first quarter. The health and cleanliness of the scholars was fairly satisfactory, but Scabies was too prevalent, and eyes and teeth required more attention.

FOOD.

(a) *Milk Supply*.—The Local Food Control Committee very wisely fixed a maximum price slightly above that of surrounding districts, thus ensuring an adequate quantity. It is wholly distributed by private enterprise. Its quality generally is fair, but its condition as to cleanliness is far from good and is the cause of many complaints. You are right in hoping that legislation will very shortly enable a clean milk supply to be ensured.

There are 4 cowkeepers, and 3 dairymen and milk purveyors, all registered.

Eight inspections were made under the Local Regulations of Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops' Orders.

No veterinary inspection of dairy cows was arranged for, and no action with regard to tuberculous milk taken.

Milk (Mothers and Children) Order, 1918.—At the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in a few necessitous cases mothers and children were given

orders for milk to be supplied by their own dealers and charged to the Committee.

(b) *Other Foods*.—No inspections with regard to unsound food were taken. There were no slaughterhouses in the district, all meat being brought from Salford Public Abattoir, and of course was inspected there.

Fried fish shops were kept clean and satisfactory.

The condition of the bakehouses was only fair.

The C.W.S. Margarine Works was hardly completed, but being a thoroughly modern place everything was satisfactory for the preparation of foodstuff.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Infectious Diseases generally.—The following table gives the number of notifications of the chief infectious diseases received during each quarter of 1919 :—

	1st qtr.	2nd qtr.	3rd qtr.	4th qtr.	Total
Diphtheria	0	1	0	2	3
Scarlet fever ...	0	1	5	13	19
Measles	0	7	3	7	17
Pneumonia	7	6	4	2	19
Malaria contracted abroad ...	0	0	1	2	3
Cerebro-spinal fever	0	1	0	0	1
					—
					62

Influenza was prevalent during the first quarter, and 7 deaths from it were registered during that time. A supply of Influenza antitoxin was obtained, but as the epidemic quickly subsided little

was used. As desired by the Ministry of Health, handbills on Influenza embodying the specimen sent, as well as large posters, were very widely distributed throughout the district.

There were no return cases of Scarlet Fever.

Diphtheria antitoxin was kept at the Council Offices, and was available at all times on application at the Health Office, or when closed, to one of the officials.

The weekly returns of the incidence of disease in schools was scrutinized, and any points requiring attention were noted. The School Attendance Officer was interviewed frequently.

On the whole, cases of tuberculosis were notified by medical practitioners as soon as they diagnosed them.

Posters were exhibited worded as follows :—

Any person whilst carrying infection of an Infectious Disease who exposes himself or herself, or allows any such child to be exposed, in any place such as a Public Conveyance, Picture Palace, School, or Neighbour's House will be prosecuted.

Tuberculosis and Venereal Diseases.—The treatment of these diseases was undertaken by the County. County Tuberculosis Dispensaries were available for the district at both Eccles and Stretford.

Small-pox.—No case occurred, and no primary or re-vaccinations were performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations, 1917.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

(1) Supervision and inspection of midwives under

the Midwives Acts, 1902 and 1918, was carried out by the County Authority.

(2) In all working and extension of this work the County Medical Officer of Health was consulted, and his co-operation sought; his assistance was made freely available to us.

In a letter dated 2nd April, 1919, the Local Government Board intimated that they were prepared to sanction your scheme for the extension of Maternity and Child Welfare work. This included the appointment of a full-time Health Visitor, of one or two Salaried Midwives, of Home Helps, of a Lying-in Home for ordinary cases, and of the renting of a house in a suitable locality where convalescent mothers and their children could go for a change of air. The last-mentioned was the only part which was not in working order during 1919, for, though considerable time was spent in trying to find a suitable place, success was not attained.

The supply of extra food where necessary was provided for under your original scheme, as also was accommodation for the children of deserted and widowed mothers if such was required.

With regard to the provision of beds in hospitals, it was decided to subscribe to and send cases to the Manchester Children's Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital for Women.

The scheme includes all mothers and expectant mothers, and children up to 5 years of age.

The charges made were subject to reduction or remission in necessitous cases at the discretion of the Medical Superintendent, with the approval of the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee.

Health Visitor.—A full-time Health Visitor was appointed and began work in July, 1919. Pre-

viously the appointment was a half-time one (on a birth rate of 200 per annum), but the duties were extended to cover the home nursing of Puerperal Fever, Ophthalmia Neonatorum, Epidemic Diarrhoea, or other Infectious Diseases affecting mothers or children. She was also responsible for the supervision of the Temporary Maternity Home.

In the ordinary course of her work she visited expectant mothers, children up to 5 years of age, all still-births ascertained and infant deaths, and also all houses from which a notification of an infectious disease had been received. She also attended the Child Welfare Centres held each Wednesday, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Council Infant Schools in Cadishead and Irlam alternately.

At the Centres babies were weighed and inspected, and mothers advised with regard to their own or their children's health, but no treatment was given, as cases requiring it were referred to their own doctors. "Chymol" was sold at cost price.

Salaried Midwife.—A Salaried Midwife was appointed and began work on June 1st, 1919. She attended 40 cases up to December 31st, 1919. A fee of one guinea was fixed for her services, to be paid to the Council, but collected by the Midwife.

Home Helps.—Your salaried Home Help was appointed, and commenced work on August 1st, 1919. She took the place of a mother whilst that mother was confined. She was permitted in no case to act as midwife, even if a doctor were engaged, though, of course, she had the care of the mother and baby when the midwife was not present. The Council made a charge of 12/6 per week for her services, and she boarded at the house at which she was employed, where also she slept unless the conditions were unsuitable, in which case she slept at her own home.

As the demand was soon too great for one Home Help to supply your Maternity and Child Welfare Committee granted permission to engage as required from time to time one or more Temporary Home Helps at the same rate of remuneration per week as the permanent one, and also under the same working conditions.

No Home Help was allowed to do washing, this rule having been made at the instance of the women members of the Committee, for undoubtedly you could not have obtained Home Helps willing to undertake laundry work. As to working hours no definite ones could be fixed owing to the nature of the work, but a give-and-take arrangement was made with those for whom the service was being given, and, as in all matters, any cause of complaint was referred to the Medical Superintendent, whose decision was final.

It appears that, as far as Maternity Home Helps are concerned, one is required for about 3,000 of an industrial population. As a result of practical working I consider your arrangement of a salaried Home Help together with the engagement, according to requirements, of temporary ones, is very good, and avoids unnecessary expenditure whilst ensuring a maximum service.

Maternity Home.—The premises 186 Liverpool Road, Cadishead, were lent for the purpose of a Temporary Maternity Home on August 22nd, for three months, though possession was retained for nearly five months. On the advice of the Solicitor, the Beneficiary under a Will vacated the house pending the offer by public auction of this and eight adjoining houses, and the Trustees under the Will kindly lent the house, provided the Council paid the 6/6 per week allowance which was made to the Beneficiary whilst out of the house.

The occupation of this temporary accommodation was owing to extreme urgency and the absolute impossibility of getting even two rooms otherwise. Your Health Visitor brought forward a case of a woman about to be confined in a house with only two bedrooms in which were 16 people. This was only one of many similar cases, and conditions are now no better.

In the temporary premises two bedrooms for lying-in cases and another for the Home Help in charge were furnished. There was a bathroom with hot and cold water on the ground floor, and a lavatory basin both on the ground and first floors, a large kitchen with range, a separate scullery and larder ; the remaining rooms were not used. The premises, being situated in a garden, were pleasant and quiet, although close to the main road.

For each patient a single bed, cot, bedside table, rocking chair, ordinary chair, all bedding, towels, and all washing utensils for mother and baby were provided. The Health Visitor arranged for the Home washing, and the patients for their own personal washing to be done. Crockery and kitchen utensils were also provided as well as furniture for the kitchen. The coal shortage prevented the provision of a separate sitting-room. Gas was laid on for lighting and also for boiling water in an emergency.

The salaried Home Help was put in charge if not engaged elsewhere, otherwise one of the temporary ones was employed. When no case was in, the daughter of the salaried Home Help attended to the Home daily and lighted fires. Your Health Visitor supervised the Home and paid at least one visit a day. The Home was rarely without a patient and once had two in at

the same time. Of course, with only such temporary arrangements it was only desired to take in the most urgent cases. Two of the County Medical Officer's Staff visited the place under working conditions, and expressed their satisfaction with it.

Below are the rules and conditions governing the Home, revised as experience in working has suggested :—

Any expectant woman, who resides in the district may be confined at the Maternity Home.

Each patient to be attended by her own doctor, or registered midwife.

Each patient to pay 15/- per week for the services of the Home Help, and to provide herself and the Home Help with proper food to the satisfaction of the Medical Superintendent; otherwise she must pay an inclusive fee of £4 5s. for a fortnight, which includes all food.

Half the charges become due and are to be paid on engaging a Home Help or for the Home, the remainder at the commencement of the second week.

These charges may be reduced or remitted in necessitous cases.

Clothes for the use of mother and baby in the Home will be provided, but each patient must provide a sufficiency of clean baby clothes for use on leaving the Home.

Relations and friends—not more than two on any one day—are allowed to visit on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

The doctor in attendance may suspend at his discretion the above two rules relating to visiting.

No alcohol is allowed on the premises, unless it be

ordered by the written prescription of the doctor in attendance.

No money or present of value is allowed to be received by any employee of the Council.

All disputes to be referred to the Medical Superintendent, whose decision shall be final.

Application for admission to be made to the Health Visitor at the Health Office, Council Offices, Irlam, from 2 to 3 p.m. except Wednesdays and Saturdays, or at the Home.

Personally I feel that in working a Maternity Home for ordinary cases, as far as possible the patients should be made to feel that they are at home and not in an institution. So far the mothers who have availed themselves of your Home have expressed that such was the case there.

In all Maternity and Child Welfare work no distinction was made whether a mother was married or not, or whether a child was legitimate or not, the same attention and benefits were for all, and every member of your Committee had particular sympathy for the dependants of men returned from the war.

There were no voluntary societies who worked in this district in connection with Maternity and Child Welfare work.

The Centres being held in the Infant School buildings brought the babies to the notice of the teachers, and in a way aroused a certain amount of interest in the school children, especially as some of them had a baby brother or sister coming to the Centre.

(3) No case of Puerperal Fever was reported in 1919, but three of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, both eyes affected in every case, but all recovered without any permanent injury. Seventeen cases of

Measles were reported, but no deaths occurred from it. There was some Whooping Cough, but no deaths. Epidemic Diarrhoea was not prevalent, though Diarrhoea caused three deaths during the year. The work done by your Health Visitor in connection with all these diseases has been noted above.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

(1) *Staff, etc.*---Your Surveyor acted as part-time Sanitary Inspector.

Your Health Visitor holds the Sanitary Inspector's Certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute, and was actively engaged as an Assistant Sanitary Inspector frequently accompanying your Sanitary Inspector when making inspections. She was constantly being informed of defects when visiting babies and children at their own homes, and reports of these defects she passed on to the Sanitary Inspector.

During the year a separate office was furnished for the Health Department in the Council Offices.

(2) *Hospital Accommodation.*---For Small-pox £40 was paid per annum for two beds in the Salford Hospital, under agreement, and so far this has proved more than sufficient; there were no cases of Small-pox notified during 1919.

For other Infectious Diseases the Ladywell Sanatorium of the Salford Corporation was used, and, though there was no agreement, that Authority always with extreme promptitude removed any cases to their Hospital and treated them most satisfactorily. Two cases, 1 Diphtheria and 1 Cerebro-spinal Meningitis, were so removed during 1919, but owing to the overcrowded state of the houses, the number of removals to hospital will have to be increased.

(3) *Local Acts, etc.*—The following had been adopted and were enforced :—

By-laws relating to—

New streets and Buildings ;
Nuisances ;
Common Lodging-houses.

Acts—

Regulations under Order of the Local Government Board respecting Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops were made January 8th, 1912.

The Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act, 1890.

The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890. (Parts II. and III.)

The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907.

(4) *Arrangements for chemical and bacteriological work* were made with the Manchester University Public Health Laboratories, but during 1919 only two sputums were submitted for examination.

Alteration of Boundary.—The important matter of changing the southern boundary of the district from the centre of the old extinct River Mersey to the centre of the Ship Canal was finally settled after many years' endeavour ; in becoming effective this will greatly facilitate local administration.

OTHER SERVICES.

A Voluntary District Nursing Association in conjunction with the Queen's Nursing Association had been established and two nurses were employed during the year.

IRLAM URBAN DISTRICT.

1919.

REPORT

ON

HOUSING

BY THE

Medical Officer of Health,



JUNE, 1920.

A. J. Wright & Sons, Printers, Cadishead.

HOUSING.

(I.) *General housing conditions in the district :—*

(1) Total number of houses, 1,751, of which the major portion were for the working classes.

The whole of the new houses built, in course of construction, or contemplated are for the working classes.

During 1919 no houses were built by the Council, but a contract for 64 houses was let and building was begun. Two houses were built by private enterprise.

The Ministry of Munitions continued the building of the 164 houses begun in 1917.

(2) Population, 8,806.

The return of discharged and demobilised sailors and soldiers considerably increased the population during 1919, and their marriage in a number of cases increased the demand for houses.

A very large increase in population will take place as soon as houses are available.

(3) (a). The shortage of houses, acute in previous years, was almost hopeless in 1919, and daily becomes worse.

(b). As to the measures taken or contemplated to deal with this appalling shortage, I have gleaned

the following information from your Housing Surveyor's Report, presented in May, 1920 :—

Early in the year 1919 a Lay-out Drawing was prepared for the erection of 474 houses on a site at Higher Irlam, which had been previously acquired with the sanction of the Ministry of Health.

This lay-out allowed for 16 different types of working class dwellings, together with appropriate provision for public buildings and shops, and recreation on ground least suitable for building purposes.

The Housing Surveyor advised that, by the construction of a railway siding onto this site from the neighbouring railway belonging to the Manchester Ship Canal Company, rapid transport of materials would be secured with an estimated saving of £20,000 on carting. The siding and level crossing over the main Liverpool to Manchester road cost by employing direct labour £2,710 3s. 9d., showing a saving of £165 6s. 3d. on the estimate.

The accepted tender for the construction of roads and sewers for this site amounted to £40,728. An approximate saving of £2,000 on this contract being secured by the adoption of the Twin Manhole System.

The plans of all these houses and their drainage, together with the requisite quantities were submitted to the Ministry of Health and approved by December 15th, but owing to labour difficulties no definite contract has been completed up to the present.

Concurrently with the above scheme, three sites were acquired in the Cadishead Ward with the approval of the Ministry of Health, viz. :—Victory Site, Lords Street Site, and Albert Street Site.

Lay-outs for these were prepared and approved by the Ministry of Health, but owing to similar difficulties to those appertaining to the Higher Irlam Scheme negotiations are still proceeding between the Ministry and the contractors.

Plans and estimates for roads and sewers for these three sites, and a railway siding onto the Victory site, similar to that for the Higher Irlam site, were submitted to the Ministry of Health.

In 1914 a small Council Housing Scheme was commenced, but only partially completed ; in 1919 the remainder of this scheme was thoroughly revised in all particulars, and the contract let to Messrs. Gerrard and Co., of Swinton, Manchester, but only slow progress was made ; not one house of this contract being completed by December 31st, chiefly owing to difference in the conditions of tender as compared with those of the Ministry of Munitions Housing Scheme of 164 houses in Irlam.

The possibility of concrete construction was not overlooked, and designs were submitted to the Ministry of Health for the erection of 8 houses by direct labour, but have not yet been approved.

All the above schemes were for working class dwellings only, and were in a state to commence building in January, 1920, but owing to the high average cost per house compared with other districts, which is the outcome of shortage of labour and competitive demands made by Warrington and Manchester, the Ministry of Health have not approved of any new scheme in its entirety. This is all the more regrettable since a really determined effort has been made to cope with the acute overcrowding of the district, Irlam having in fact, in proportion to its population, the largest housing scheme in Lancashire, and one of the largest in the kingdom.

(II.) *Overcrowding* :—

(1) Extent.—The population of 8,806 was accommodated in 1,751 houses, giving an average of 5·02 persons per house, but as the County Medical Officer of Health remarked in his Special Report of 1918, approximately one-eighth of the total number of houses was inhabited by about one-quarter of the population. Bringing figures to date the increase of population during the years 1901-19 was 4,471, but the number of houses erected during the same period was only 772, not taking into account a few demolished ; calculated on the usual basis of 4·5 persons per house these dwellings would have been sufficient to accommodate 3,474 people only. In addition, considerable numbers of undisclosed lodgers were taken in.

(2) Causes.—Increase in number and size of works without any corresponding increase in housing accommodation during recent years.

(3) Measures taken or contemplated to deal with overcrowding.—Only when sufficient houses are available in which the overplus of persons per house can be accommodated, and only *then*, can anything be done to relieve the overcrowding.

(4) Action taken.—It was found impossible to deal with any cases of overcrowding during the year for the above-mentioned reasons.

(III.) *Fitness of houses* :—

(1) (a). General standard of housing in the district.—Very fair, except for disrepair owing to the difficulties caused by the state of war.

(b). General character of the defects found to exist in unfit houses.—Want of paving of back yards, passages and side streets. In the houses

themselves roofs, spouts and sanitary accommodation.

(2) Action taken as regards unfit houses under

(a) The Public Health Acts.—None.

(b). The Housing Acts.—After complaint by occupier, representations were made by me to the Council that a certain house was unfit for human habitation and beyond repair, and a closing order was made in 1920. One of the Council houses which became vacant was let to the occupier.

(3) Difficulties in remedying unfitness.—Owners of property were ready enough to give out repair work, but contractors were unable to do it owing to labour shortage.

(4) Conditions, so far as they affect housing, as regards water supply, closet accommodation, and refuse disposal, together with measures taken during the year in these matters.—The water supply was quite satisfactory, except in a few isolated instances, mostly on out-lying farms.

A scheme for the conversion of privy and pail closets to fresh water closets was before the Ministry of Health. All new property must, under the bye-laws, have fresh water closets.

Refuse disposal.—Dry refuse was collected by the Council's 3-ton Austin motor tipping waggon, supplemented by horses and carts, and tipped on the sewage farm. The collection was satisfactory, but a destructor of some kind will shortly be required as the population increases.

A new sewage works—an urgent necessity—was under active consideration.

(IV.) *Unhealthy areas* :—

(1) Action taken as regards areas represented

before the beginning of the year under Part I. or Part II. of the Housing Act of 1890.—None.

(2) Particulars of, and action taken as regards, areas represented during the year.—None.

(3) Information as to complaints made during the year that areas were unhealthy and action taken.—No complaints were made.

(V.) *By-laws relating to houses let in lodgings, and to tents, vans, sheds, etc. :—*

(1) As to working of existing by-laws.—There are none.

(2) As to need for new by-laws or revision of existing one.—There was need but it would have required more staff to carry out the inspections.

(VI.) *General and Miscellaneous :—*

No action was taken by the Irlam Urban District Council bearing on the public health under either the Housing or the Public Health Acts in connection with overcrowding, insanitary property, and housing beyond that enumerated in the report of the Inspector of Nuisances.

(VII.) *Appendices. Statistics for the 12 months ended 31st December, 1919 :—*

(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which complaints were made by householders that they were unfit for human habitation—1.

(2) *Action under Section 17 of the Housing Act of 1909 :—*

(a) Number of dwelling-houses inspected under and for the purpose of the section—1.

(b) Number of dwelling-houses which were considered to be unfit for human habitation—1 ; this was closed in 1920.

(c) Number of dwelling-houses the defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders—0.

(3) *Action under Section 28 of the Housing Act of 1919* :—

(a) Number of orders for repairs issued—0.

(b) Number of cases in which repairs were carried out by the Local Authority—0.

(c) Number of dwelling-houses voluntarily closed on notice by the owner that they could not be made fit without reconstruction—1.

(4) *Closing Orders* :—

(a) Number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to the making of closing orders—1.

(b) Number of closing orders made during 1919—0.

(c) Number of dwelling-houses in regard to which closing orders were determined on the houses being made fit for human habitation—0.

(5) *Demolition Orders* :—

(a) Number of demolition orders made—0.

(b) Number of houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders—0.

(6) Number of dwelling-houses demolished voluntarily—1.

(7) *Obstructive Buildings* :—

(a) Number of representations made (Section 38 of the Housing Act of 1890)—0.

(b) Number of buildings demolished—0.

(c) Number of representations still under consideration—0.

(8) *Staff* engaged in housing work with, briefly, the duties of each officer:—

The Inspector of Nuisances also acted as Surveyor to the Council, and had one assistant and one typist.

The New Housing Department employed a Housing Surveyor, three assistants, and one typist.

