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Northallerton Urban District.

NORTHALLERTON,

MARCH 1ST, 1924.

Medical Officer's Annual Report

For the year ended December 31st, 1923.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

This report which I have the honour of presenting is the Third Ordinary Report covering the sanitary administration and vital statistics of your area during the year 1923. No Survey Report intended to deal with matters more fully over a period of years has yet been issued. The order and headings will be arranged as before so as to facilitate reference and comparison. The year on the whole has been a healthy one with no notable epidemic, with the exception of mild Scarlet Fever dealt with later, and considering the cold wet sunless months almost throughout the year, there has been no marked increase of respiratory diseases and few deaths from pneumonia or bronchitis. The ordinary death rate and infantile death rate, as the statistics and tables show, continue to be satisfactory, although not so good as last year. Much of the report covers the same ground as formerly, therefore repetition cannot be avoided.

1. General Statistics.

Area (acres)	...	...	...	3,653.
Population (1921)	...	...	...	4,791.
Number of inhabited houses (1921)	...	...	...	1,101.
Number of families or separate occupiers (1921)	...	...	...	1,101.
Rateable Value	...	...	...	£30,328.
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	£79.

2. Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

	Total	M.	F.		
Births	Legitimate	82	39	43	} Birth Rate (R.G.) 18·90.
	Illegitimate	9	4	5	
Deaths	...	63	39	24	Death Rate (R.G.) 13·08.
Number of women dying in, or in consequence of childbirth					from Sepsis ... Nil.
					„ other causes ... Nil.
Deaths of Infants under one year of age per 1,000 births:—					
Legitimate		87·9.	Illegitimate, 10·9.		Total, 98·8.
Deaths from Measles (all ages) ... Nil.					
„ Whooping Cough (all ages) ... 3.					
„ Diarrhœa (under two years of age) ... Nil.					

There has been no unusual or excessive mortality requiring special mention during the year under review.

The precise causes and ages of the infantile deaths are stated below:—

Legitimate.		Illegitimate.	
Age.	Cause.	Age.	Cause.
½ hour	Premature Birth.	½ hour	Premature Birth.
„	„		
12 hours	„		
18 days	Spina Bifida		
1 month	Whooping Cough.		
1 month	Congenital Deformity		
4 months	Broncho Pneumonia		
8 months	Whooping Cough		
— 8 Total.		— 1 Total.	

One only of the infantile deaths is that of an illegitimate child. No death was due to diarrhœa or enteritis, and none of the deaths were preventable, due to any neglect or bad feeding on the part of the parents.

3. Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths
Diphtheria	Nil.	—	—
Scarlet Fever	26	11	—
Enteric Fever (inc. Paratyphoid)	Nil.	—	—
Puerperal Fever	Nil.	—	—
Other diseases generally notifiable :			
Erysipelas	2	—	—
Other diseases notifiable locally :			
Chicken Pox	1	—	—
Tuberculosis :			
(a) Pulmonary			
{ M.	1	—	1
{ F.	1	—	1
{ Total	2	—	2
(b) Non-pulmonary	1	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	No cases notified.		

The following is the analysis under age groups of the Scarlet Fever cases.

Age.	Age.					
Under 1 year	...	1	7 to 8	...	...	2
1 to 2	...	1	8 to 9	...	...	3
2 to 3	...	2	10 to 15	...	...	7
3 to 4	...	1	15 to 20	...	...	4
4 to 5	...	2	20 to 35	...	...	1
5 to 6	...	1	35 to 40	...	...	—
6 to 7	...	1	65 and over	...	...	—
						Total 26

During the year there were two deaths from tuberculosis, both pulmonary cases. The notification of this disease is now more satisfactory than some years ago.

4. Causes of Sickness.

In all, 29 cases of infectious disease were notified. These consisted of 26 cases of Scarlet Fever, 2 of Erysipelas and 1 of Chicken Pox. The last named disease was made notifiable during the Autumn on account of cases of Small Pox in some of the surrounding counties or districts. Seven of the cases of Scarlet Fever occurred during the early weeks of the year, after which the area was free from this disease for four months. Early in August two cases started immediately on returning home after visiting Redcar and Worsall. From this time the area was seldom free for many weeks. The cases were of a mild type and likely to be overlooked by careless parents—one or two overlooked cases were found after visits and inspections. It is most important parents should know that Scarlet Fever is often mild in type and the rash not vivid in colour, and such cases if overlooked will spread the disease as they are highly infectious. Eleven of the cases were treated in the Fever Hospital and all made a good recovery. Amongst other infectious diseases there were three deaths from complications following Whooping Cough, three deaths after Influenza and two from Pulmonary Tuberculosis. Amongst non-infectious diseases there were nine deaths from Cancer, seven from Cerebral Hæmorrhage, six from Heart diseases, five from Bronchitis, three from Pneumonia and two from Bright's Disease.

5. Nursing Arrangements, Hospitals, etc., available in the district.

As stated in past annual reports, Northallerton Urban district for its size and population is well provided with hospitals, nurses, help in the home, and organised arrangements for the transport of the sick and injured.

Nursing in the Home. (a) For general home nursing there is a visiting district nurse, under the management of a voluntary committee of ladies. For twenty-five years the committee has carried on this useful work. The funds are largely derived from voluntary contributors, supplemented by small annual subscriptions or fees from the patients. Better class patients requiring the nurse's services are charged a fee according to scale. The Red Cross Society sometimes gives a grant towards the expenses. During 1921 a gift of £50 was received from this source.

As the Committee is a small private one, the scheme is run on economical lines, and initiative is not cramped by restrictive regulations. Should there be an excessive amount of illness beyond the powers of a single nurse, an extra nurse could be employed, or

help of a voluntary nature could be easily and quickly organised. For serious cases requiring the whole time services of a trained nurse, the Rural Nursing Association in the town supplies nurses for this purpose. It was originally established for the purpose of nursing the poor in their own homes, but now supplies nurses for all classes of patients. The difficulty of getting nurses for this class of work is not so great as a few years ago.

(b). No provision is made for the nursing of infectious cases in the patient's own home free of charge, but nurses are supplied for this class of case at the usual charge for such work by the association referred to in the above paragraph.

Midwives. The District Nurse acts as midwife for the district, and certified midwives practising in the surrounding districts also attend to such cases by arrangement when required. It has not been necessary to ask the Local Authority for financial assistance.

Treatment Centres. A Tuberculosis Dispensary under the control or supervision of the Tuberculosis Officer is held at the Rutson Hospital each Wednesday at 3 p.m.

There is no provision made in this area for the public treatment of Venereal disease, and a dispensary for this purpose is not necessary here, as the amount of such diseases is so small as not to warrant the establishment of such a centre. Cases from the area attend the dispensaries at Stockton and Darlington.

Hospitals provided or subsidised by the Local Authority or by the County Council.

- (1). Tuberculosis. Three beds are still provided in the Rutson Hospital for non-pulmonary tubercular diseases. They are occupied mostly by tubercular joint and other cases requiring care or extended special treatment and are available for patients from the whole county. These beds are paid for at a fixed rate per week per occupied bed, the financial arrangement being subject to adjustment by agreement between the Rutson Hospital Committee, and those who control the Tuberculosis schemes of the County Council

Pulmonary cases requiring sanatorium treatment residing in this area are sent to Aysgarth Sanatorium, mostly as insured persons under the County Council National Insurance scheme, and younger persons, mostly children, to the Morris Grange Sanatorium under the control of the Tuberculosis Officer and a visiting Surgeon.

- (2). Maternity. Prospective mothers, married or un-married, requiring hospital accommodation, are received into the maternity ward of the Rutson Hospital as private patients. No grant or subsidy is received specially for this purpose from any Authority. Cases chargeable to the Guardians are admitted into the Union Infirmary.
- (3). Children are received into the general wards of the Rutson Hospital. No special ward or special hospital is necessary.
- (4). Fever Hospitals. Two isolation hospitals for infectious diseases are provided. They are erected side by side in an enclosed field in the Urban area about a mile from the town. One is provided by the Urban District and the other by the Rural District Council. They receive patients from either or both areas. By this arrangement it is possible to isolate two classes of infectious diseases, in two sexes, if necessary, at the same time. This method is economical, convenient, and has worked smoothly to the mutual advantage of both Councils for many years. The nursing, cleaning, etc., is under the charge of the Matron of the Rural Nursing Association at a contract price per patient per week, with a small retaining fee to cover expenses, in case the hospitals were unoccupied, or the number admitted should be unremunerative.
- (5). Smallpox. Two small detached buildings erected at the back of the Fever Hospitals could be used for isolating a limited number of Smallpox patients. In my opinion the Urban District is not in a position to isolate Smallpox cases from other areas, as this might upset the small provision made at the very time it might urgently be required. Should these buildings prove insufficient for our requirements, others could be improvised for nurses or patients, or one of the other hospitals utilised to tide over the difficulty. Nurses have been selected and vaccinated in readiness in case of an outbreak, and for months the hospitals were kept empty as a precautionary measure.
- (6). Other Hospitals. The Rutson Hospital, situated in the town, not only receives such patients as above reported, but also admits other general cases which are suitable for cottage hospital treatment. The accommodation is ample for present requirements and the immediate future. Beyond the subsidy received for the three beds reserved for suitable non-pulmonary tubercular cases above spoken of, this hospital is not supported by the Local Authority or the

County Council. During the year 1922, a donation of £200 was received from the Ministry of Health on the recommendation of the Voluntary Hospital Commission after a visit of inspection, and was gratefully accepted by the Committee.

The Union Workhouse Infirmary also receives patients chargeable to the Guardians from both Urban and Rural areas. There is no other institutional provision beyond the Workhouse or the Union Infirmary for un-married mothers on recovery after parturition, and none is necessary. Homeless and other children in charge of the Guardians are received in a home provided for this purpose, and are placed in the charge of a competent caretaker, where the children are well cared for.

(7). **Ambulance Facilities.** (a). For infectious cases requiring removal, a special cab is reserved for this purpose and provided where necessary at the expense of the Urban District Council.

(b). For non-infectious illnesses and accidents, a covered motor ambulance is provided, and attended by Red Cross workers. If a nurse is necessary to take charge of the case, one is provided by the Rutson Hospital. This ambulance is provided free of charge, or paid for in whole or in part, according to the capacity of the patient to bear the expense.

6. Laboratory Work.

No provision is made for work of this nature to be carried out in the town, nor is it necessary for an area like Northallerton to provide laboratory accommodation. Should pathological or bacteriological examinations be required, the Council have given sanction for these to be carried out by institutions making a speciality of this work. Diphtheria antitoxin and other sera are provided by the Council free of charge to those who are not in a financial position to provide their own.

List of Adoptive Acts, Byelaws and local regulations. The 1907 Act and other adoptive acts have not been adopted by this Council. The Byelaws are the Model Byelaws of the Local Government Board. No special local regulations have been framed.

7. Sanitary Administration.

The number of W.C.'s, dustbins, privy ashpits, and those ashpits requiring to be emptied in wheelbarrows and deposited on the

roadway before carting away, existing at the close of 1921, was set out in last year's report as follows:—

	1912.	1920.	1921.
W.C.'s.	370	524	549
Dustbins	223	245	263
Privy Ashpits	578	186	170
Deposited before carting ...	20	20	20

During 1921 to 1923 the following are the changes:—

	1921.	1922.	1923.
W.C.'s provided	25	12	10
Dry Dustbins	18	2	9
Ashpits abolished	16	2	6
Deposited on main road before carting	—	2	—

which leaves the respective numbers at the close of 1923:—

	1912.	1920.	1921.	1922.	1923.
W.C.'s	370	524	549	561	571
Dustbins	223	245	263	265	274
Privy Ashpits	278	186	170	168	162
Deposited on main road before carting	20	20	20	18	18

In addition to the above, the following houses are about to be converted into W.C.'s and dustbins in the place of privy ashpits:—

6 Houses in Thirsk Terrace.

7 Houses, Railway Cottages, North End.

3 Cottages, East Side.

I reported last year, "much requires to be done in this direction, especially with regard to those deposited on the roadway before carting away. This fouling of the surface is objectionable and dangerous to health in any case, but is doubly so of recent years with the increasing dust due to rapid and heavy motor traffic." Many of the ashpits are badly placed, and matters are made worse by the careless habits of householders who persist in throwing objectionable material likely to decay, into these places. With good household management much of this is unnecessary, and can be avoided at no expense and with but little trouble if ordinary care and orderly habits existed. It is with pleasure I notice the County

Council are including "household management" in the subjects taught at School, as I personally think this has been too long neglected, and it is to be hoped this side of household management will come within the scope of instruction. I am convinced if careless habits of this nature and similar ones with regard to sinks and drains are once acquired by the adult, it is too late to amend, and instruction in this matter is more likely to bear fruit when sown in virgin soil.

Sewage Disposal. As reported for several years, practically all the sewage of the town is treated at the Sewage Disposal Works, the small amount not so treated is set out in detail below. These works continue to function exceedingly well, they give no trouble whatever, and turn out an effluent which is everything one could desire. They have now been tested under all conditions, and the result has been uniformly good. The Wiske, where the outfall pipe discharges, is clean and nothing objectionable is to be noted. Provision is made for double filtration, but single filtration is quite satisfactory. These works are sufficient for present and future requirements.

The Sewage from the following four sources is not treated at the above works.

- (1). Drainage from a Tanyard.
- (2). Eight Cottages near the Tanyard.
- (3). Drainage from a private house ("The Mount.")
- (4). Drainage from a few Cottages outside the town ("Layfield's Cottages.")

All these discharge into the Willow Beck. During winter when the flow of water is good, little is to be noticed, but during summer when it is hot and dry and the beck is almost stagnant, it shows signs of pollution and is objectionable. This is made worse on account of extraction of water by pumping, by the Railway Company for their own use where the beck enters the town area. Three years ago the Railway Cottages at the North End were re-drained and connected to the town sewer.

Food Inspection. Places where food is prepared are few in number, and these are visited by the Sanitary Inspector at intervals and when necessary.

Slaughter Houses.

		1914.	1920.	1921.	1922.	1923.
Number	...	6	6	6	6	6

Several are in unsuitable positions and too near houses. They are not of modern construction, are on the whole fairly well kept and are inspected by the Sanitary Officer.

Arrangements for Disinfection. The area has no efficient disinfecting apparatus by superheated steam or other means for thoroughly disinfecting unwashable goods. Fumigation is carried out by formalin lamps and sulphur candles where necessary, or by formalin spraying apparatus. Disinfectants are supplied to suitable householders free of charge. I have never been able to trace any spread of infection due to the want of an efficient apparatus.

Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops. Public attention has been directed during recent years more and more to the importance of cleanliness of the milk supply. There is growing a demand for up-to-date byres of modern construction, or improvements and alterations in the present buildings. During the depressed state of agriculture this is a very doubtful policy to pursue, and it is calculated to drive many milk producers out of the business, as the cost of the alterations in many cases is more than the profits of the trade will allow. Short of structural alterations, great improvement could be made in the meantime in the matter of cleanliness of the byre, and the method of milking and cleaning the animal itself at comparatively small cost or trouble, and would yield immediate results. The cows could be cleaned and groomed at least in their hind quarters, they could be given more bedding, better arrangement could be made for the catching or removal of their droppings, and the whole process of milking could then be carried on with more care and greater cleanliness. In annual reports of past years I have called attention to these conditions, and pointed out the danger of tubercular infection, as well as other germ infection of the milk. Infected cattle often suffer from tuberculosis of the bowel and the udder may be quite healthy. They pass infected motions and the dust and dirt of the byre as well as particles from the hind quarters of a cow, falling into the milk at the time of milking are likely to convey infection.

Instead of pressing for improved buildings, infinitely more good could be done in the immediate future by concentrating on cleanliness. One of the difficulties is undoubtedly the business side. Dirty milk finds a ready market, and there is no better price obtainable for clean milk; even pasteurised milk commands no better price, and has to meet the dirty product on equal terms. There is no standard as to dirtiness, and this is one important matter which should receive attention.

The above paragraphs are repeated from my report for 1922, and another year has confirmed my views on this important subject. As a practical example as to what is possible by care and cleanliness during the milking process, the following facts are noteworthy. Milk from a farm in the rural area was reported as containing an excessive quantity of bacteria, and the men engaged in milking were instructed as to a better and more cleanly method of milking. They took an intelligent interest and altered their ways, with the result that the next samples tested showed a very marked diminution in the number of bacteria present. I think one or two simple lectures by an expert to men engaged in milking, dealing with this branch of the subject and the methods to be employed to improve it, would be received with interest and might lead to much good at very little expense.

The cowsheds in this area will compare favourably with most agricultural centres.

8. Public Health Staff.

The staff consists of one Medical Officer of Health (part time) and one Sanitary Inspector (whole time). The usual contribution is made to the salary of the Medical Officer under the Public Health Acts. There is no necessity in an area of this size and character to appoint assistant officers, specialised inspectors, or special nurses. The Inspector also acts as Surveyor and Water Inspector.

9. Housing.

(a). One house was completed during 1922, but no further houses have been built under the subsidy scheme beyond the four mentioned in the report for 1921, and no further plans were submitted qualifying for the subsidy. Proposals for assisting private enterprise under the 1923 Act are under consideration.

(b). Land was purchased five years ago for the Municipal Housing Scheme. Plans were prepared and tenders received, but owing to the high cost of building then ruling, the scheme was delayed. A new scheme is now under consideration and it is hoped that in the coming year the preparation now being made will result in the erection of twenty houses on this site.

Unfit dwelling-houses.

- (1). Dwelling-houses inspected under the Housing Regulations, 1910 293
- (2). No houses unfit for human habitation were found during inspections, and none not reasonably fit for habitation.
- (3). No legal proceedings were instituted or threatened under Section 28 of the Town Planning Act, Public Health Acts, or Sections 17 & 18, Housing Act, 1909.

10. Water Supply.

The Water Supply continues to be sufficient in quantity for present requirements and excellent in quality. It is derived partly from water caught at the springs as it issues from the hill side in Oakdale after natural filtration through oolitic limestone. This supply is soft, clear and free from risks of contamination. The other portion is a supplementary one, and is impounded water derived from the higher reaches of a moorland beck, held up in the higher reservoir. This water is not so soft or so clear and is mixed with the spring water as occasion demands. The internal scraping of the line of pipes by the "ferret" arrangement, as reported last year, increased the delivery into the town by 60,000 gallons per day, which was an increase by one third on the amount previously delivered. This increase has been maintained. The line of pipes at the crown of the hill on Bullamoor has been surveyed, with the object of ascertaining the gain likely to be derived by making a short detour so as to avoid the higher reaches of the hill. The pipes in the town have also been treated by the scraping method. Many deposits and much incrustation were thereby removed, and a great improvement in the delivery of water effected. This was a tedious and difficult operation, as there were many delays due to the protrusion of pipes into the interior of the mains where the connections were made. The next time this scraping is required, it is hoped all will now be easy. The village of Romanby, in the Rural area on the outskirts of the town, has recently had the town's water mains extended into it, and is about to receive water from Northallerton. It may be necessary to watch the effect of this additional consumption of the town's supply, having in view also the substitution of the water carriage for conservancy methods gradually taking place, together with the extra quantity used in the bath rooms of all new houses built or about to be built.

Again expressing my thanks to the Chairman, Members of the Council, and the Surveyor for the support and help I have received during the year which has closed.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM BAIGENT,

Medical Officer of Health.