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NORTHAMPTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1921.

APRIL, 1922.

To the Chairman and Members of the Northampton Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my REPORT for the year 1921. The delay in the publication of this Report has been due to the Census being postponed from April to June, the Registrar General has been unable to complete his figures and at the same time get out his figures for births and deaths. Even now the figures for the population of the whole district only have reached me, and not any for the villages.

The health of the district has been good, with no serious outbreaks of disease. One of the most important Schemes for the district in recent years is now nearing completion, namely, the extension of the town sewage scheme to Weston Favell. This will prove a great boon to that village.

The area of the district is 16,218 acres.

The 1921 Census returns of the population makes it 7,360. In 1911, it was 6,699. In 1920, the Registrar General computed it at 5,830. These figures seem to show a surprising increase, but when the various building schemes in Weston Favell and Duston have been considered, also the building of houses at Abington by the Borough outside the Borough boundary, most of these are in excess of local requirements and have been tenanted by families from Northampton. These considerations will probably account for the increase of 661 since the 1911 Census.

The number of inhabited houses in the district is 1,669.

The number of families or separate occupiers is 1,774.

The Rateable Value for the district is £60,993.

A sum represented by a penny rate is £208.

BIRTHS. Legitimate—58 Male ; 59 Female. Illegitimate—4 Male ; 3 Female. Making a total of 124 and a ratio of 16·8 per 1,000.

In 1920, the births were 4 more, with a ratio of 21·9. For England and Wales the birth-rate is 22·4 per 1,000 population.

There does not appear to be any corresponding increase in the number of births in spite of the increase in population. Much of this may be put down to depressed trade conditions and expense of living.

DEATHS. Male—37 ; Female—28. Total—65. Making a ratio of 8·8 per 1,000 : the lowest ratio yet recorded.

Last year the deaths were 61, with a ratio of 10·4 per 1,000. This was the previous lowest ratio recorded. For England and Wales the death-rate is 12·1 per 1,000 population.

There were no deaths of women in child-birth or in consequence of it. Deaths of infants under 1 year numbered 6 : 4 male and 2 female—equal to a ratio of 4·8 per 1,000 births. All of these were legitimate. Three of them died from prematurity or maldevelopment ; 3 from disease of the chest. Two deaths were in people over 90 years of age ; 8 were over 80 ; and 8 over 70 years.

There were no deaths from Measles ; 1 death in an infant, aged 1 month, from Whooping Cough ; 1 death from Diarrhoea in a child of 2 years ; Tuberculosis deaths (Pulmonary)—3 male, 2 female ; 1 from Tuberculosis other than Pulmonary.

Cancer claimed 9 victims—5 male and 4 female; Diabetes 2; Diseases of the Heart 8—3 male and 5 female; Disease of Arteries 6; Disease of Lungs other than Tuberculosis 12—7 male and 5 female.

Four deaths from suicide occurred in people all over 40 years of age; 1 from cocaine poisoning in a visitor, and 3 from suicide by drowning. Two of these belonged to Northampton and one had no fixed abode.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES :—

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Diphtheria ...	7	1	0
Scarlet Fever ...	6	5	0
Enteric ...	6 (5 at Berry Wood Mental Hospital)	0	0
Pneumonia ...	2	0	6
Tuberculosis (Pulmonary)	10 (6 at Berry Wood)	0	4

Two cases of Diphtheria at Gt. Billing. No cause was found for the first case; the second case was a contact from the first. One case from Weston Favell attended a school at Northampton where there had been some cases. Two cases at Upton—swabs of the throats were taken from the whole household; the nurse was found to be carrying the germs, although she had no symptoms of the disease herself. One mild case at Harpole took a long time to get rid of the organisms from her throat.

One case of Enteric Fever at Harpole, without any doubt, contracted the disease in Belgium. There were 5 cases at Berry Wood; the cause is practically always obscure. The Medical Superintendent thought it possible that three cases in May might be possible contacts from a case that was admitted and died a few days later—this might have been Enteric. One case in July developed the disease 11 days after admission from Orlingbury. The Medical Officer of Health for that district was communicated with, his reply stated that there had been no cases in that village or district. The other case no cause was found.

Scarlet Fever: One case at Upton contracted the disease before arrival, probably in the train; she was removed to the Fever Hospital at Hardingstone. No cause was found for a case at Heyford. There were 4 cases at Duston—1 case from contact with a previous case, she sat next to her at school. Two doubtful cases were notified and visited, they were found not to be Scarlet Fever. These 4 cases were removed to Hospital. The removal of these cases to Hospital and prompt disinfection of the rooms appear to have successfully checked what might otherwise have proved a more extensive epidemic.

There were no cases of Tuberculosis other than Pulmonary, and no cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum. Two cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis have died in the year; no deaths from non-notified cases were reported.

Nursing arrangements in the district for general cases, no provision is made by the Council. Each village or two adjacent villages subscribe to the Nursing Association for a nurse. All those people who have subscribed are then entitled to her services for the year whenever required; she also does maternity cases as well, and as such, is under the authority of the County Council. There are three Certified Midwives.

For infectious diseases no arrangements have been made by the Council. The District Medical Officer of Health, can if necessary, call in a nurse with the authority of the County Medical Officer of Health, from the Northamptonshire District Nursing Association in Measles cases. When possible, these nurses, if Measles are not very prevalent, can be used for special cases of Whooping Cough and Diarrhoea in young children, and in cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum. Cases of Tuberculosis are treated at Rushden Sanatorium—a new Sanatorium recently opened for the County.

Urgent maternity cases, children, and any emergency cases of any nature are sent to the Northampton General Hospital for treatment, where they are admitted on receipt of an in-patient letter.

The Council do not possess a Fever Hospital. They have an agreement with the Hardingstone Rural District Council whereby they can, if room is available, send their fever

cases to Hardingsstone Fever Hospital, but not Small-pox cases. This agreement has worked very well up to now. For Small-pox cases a tent is kept.

There are no ambulance facilities in the District, the Hardingsstone ambulance is borrowed for the removal of fever cases.

All pathological and bacteriological examinations are undertaken by the Pathological Department at the Northampton General Hospital.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.—There are at present 36 registered Dairies and Cowsheds in the district, an increase of two during the year. 72 inspections have been made. Nine informal notices served, all *re* lime-washing. These were complied with. During the latter part of the year your Medical Officer of Health, with Mr. Wilcox (Sanitary Inspector), inspected about half the dairies in the district. 19 were visited, the rest will be inspected this year. All the sheds were fairly good and the flooring. One or two required the cobwebs and dust cleaning away. A few required the walls washing and then white-washing, but taken on the whole those dairies visited were in good order. The same cannot be said for the cows. Their hind-quarters in every case were crusted with filth, and, generally speaking, I was not impressed with the efforts of the owners to keep them clean.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.—There are six, the same number as last year. 16 inspections have been made. Two informal notices have been served *re* lime-washing and cleansing. These were complied with. In addition, calls are often made when slaughtering is likely to be going on. No unhealthy carcasses were surrendered or found.

BAKEHOUSES number 7. These are quite small places, the occupier generally being the only person employed. 14 inspections were made. No defects were found calling for attention. There are no underground bakehouses.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—There are five factories in the district. 10 inspections were made. No defects found calling for attention. There were four small workshops employing more than two persons. Six inspections were made. One informal notice was served *re* limewashing, which was complied with. In addition to the above there are a number of small workplaces, such as blacksmiths' shops, carpenters' shops, and outworkers' shops in the boot trade—generally used by one person and never more than two. These are inspected from time to time when making periodical inspections of the district.

NUISANCES UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS :—

			Informal Notices.	Statutory Notices.
Insanitary Closets and Ashpits	...	39	39	—
Defective and Choked Drains	...	15	15	—
Defective Roofs	... ..	4	4	—
Defective Water Supply	... ..	2	2	—
Defective Plaster in Living-room	... ..	3	3	—
Overcrowding	... ..	4	1	3
Dangerous Structures	... ..	1	1	—

The dangerous structure was a chimney at Harpole.

The defective water supplies were :—1 pump out of repair ; the other, a well which badly needed cleaning out. Both were rectified on an informal notice being served.

With regard to one of the cases of overcrowding, which took place at Duston, 12 children were sent by the Children's Country Holidays Fund, London, to Duston for a fortnight's outing. Arrangements for their reception were made by their own Country Correspondent and they were installed with two families. On investigation, one cottage contained six rooms, three of them bedrooms, ordinarily occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. H— and his brother, three girls over 10, and a Mrs. E— and 1 boy aged 12 months. Six children were added to these eight people and were all put in one small parlour downstairs.

The other cottage was not so bad. Mr. and Mrs. C— and three boys in one room ; the six children in one large bedroom. The Sanitary Inspector quite rightly discovered this

gross overcrowding. Mrs. H— was especially warned that this must not occur again.—The Country Correspondent was informed and the Secretary of the Society.

DISINFECTION.—17 houses have been disinfected during the year—2 after cases of Scarlet Fever, 5 Diphtheria, 4 Phthisis, 1 Enteric Fever, 2 after fatal cases of Cancer.

WATER SUPPLIES.—The villages of Duston, Dallington and Weston Favell are supplied by mains from Northampton. Nether Heyford and Kislingbury have public supplies of their own. Little Billing and Upton are supplied by pipes from private supplies. The remainder of the villages are supplied by wells, the majority of which are shallow ones. There was a serious shortage on one part—the principal part—of Nether Heyford supply. The Council have seriously considered this matter. Should there again be a shortage this summer, steps will be taken forthwith to increase the supply, by an extension of the mains from the supply which is giving ample water. Everything is ready for this work to be put in hand at short notice.

Mr. Wilcox and your Medical Officer of Health, with Mr. Holding, the Architect, met Mr. Adams, the Chairman of Heyford Council, at Heyford, in June. Three wells or springs were examined. (1) a new well just sunk with plenty of water coming from a bed of rock; (2) the supply for the main part of the village, and at that time only giving about 600 gallons daily; (3) a spring supplying a tank and overflowing freely at that time. Samples were taken of all three. The report was that (1) was contaminated, (2) was less contaminated, (3) was pure chemically and bacteriologically; this last was supplying the lower portion of the village and from this it was suggested that the whole village should be supplied if necessary.

THE SEWAGE SCHEMES have been working satisfactorily. In August, Mr. Brightmore, of the Ministry of Health, held an inquiry about the borrowing of money for Weston Favell sewerage. After discussion, he was shown round the whole village, all of which he inspected most thoroughly. His report was favourable for the Scheme and the whole plan is now nearing completion.

SCAVENGING.—A weekly collection of the contents of pail-closets is made in the villages of Bugbrooke and Nether Heyford, twice weekly in Dallington and Weston Favell, this was started in October, previous to this a weekly collection was being made. A weekly collection of household refuse is made in Weston Favell. A quarterly collection of indestructible refuse is made in each of the other villages.

Plans were passed during the year for 4 bungalows to be built of bricks at Weston Favell; 2 army huts to be converted into bungalows at Duston and one at Harpole; 1 cottage at Nether Heyford. These, for the most part have been completed; the work on the others is well in hand.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF.—Medical Officer of Health, part-time; Sanitary Inspector.

HOUSING.—Number of new houses erected during 1921 :—

Total	...	...	...	...	...	176
As part of Municipal Housing Scheme	...	...	...	...	...	162

1. Unfit Dwelling Houses. Inspections :—

Total number of houses inspected for housing defects	...	...	60
Number of houses inspected and recorded under Housing Regulations of 1910	...	...	19
Number of houses found to be so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation : 2 at Kislingbury, 1 at Duston	...	...	3
Number of houses found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	20

2. Remedy of defects without service of formal notice :—

Number of dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action	20
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3. Action under Statutory Powers. Under Section 28 Housing Town Planning Act, 1919 :—

(a) Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...	...	9
Number of houses rendered fit—	...	...	...
By owners	...	...	9
By Local Authority in default of owners...	...	...	0
Number of houses in respect of which closing orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close	...	...	0

(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	20
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Number of houses in which defects were remedied—							
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By owners	20
By Local Authority in default of owners...				0

(c) Proceedings under Sections 17 and 18 of Housing—Town Planning Act, 1909 :—

Number of representations made with a view to the making of closing orders	...	...	...	...	...	3
Number of houses in respect of which closing orders were made	...	...	...	...	...	3
Number of houses in respect of which closing orders were determined, the houses having been rendered fit	...	...	...	...	...	1 at Duston.

4 & 5. No demolition orders were made.

Numbers of the Council's subsidised houses occupied :—

Weston Favell	...	...	...	43 out of 50.
Duston	...	...	...	38 " 50
Dallington	...	...	...	20 " 20
Kislingbury	6 " 6

Built by Northampton Corporation—in Weston Favell Parish	...	87
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The remainder of the houses at Weston Favell and Duston are now nearing completion. The six houses at Great Billing have been completed but not occupied, so they have not been counted in this report.

I beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

H. F. PERCIVAL.

