

Contributors

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ANNUAL REPORT

ON

THE HEALTH

OF THE

URBAN DISTRICT OF WALMER,

FOR THE YEAR

1919,

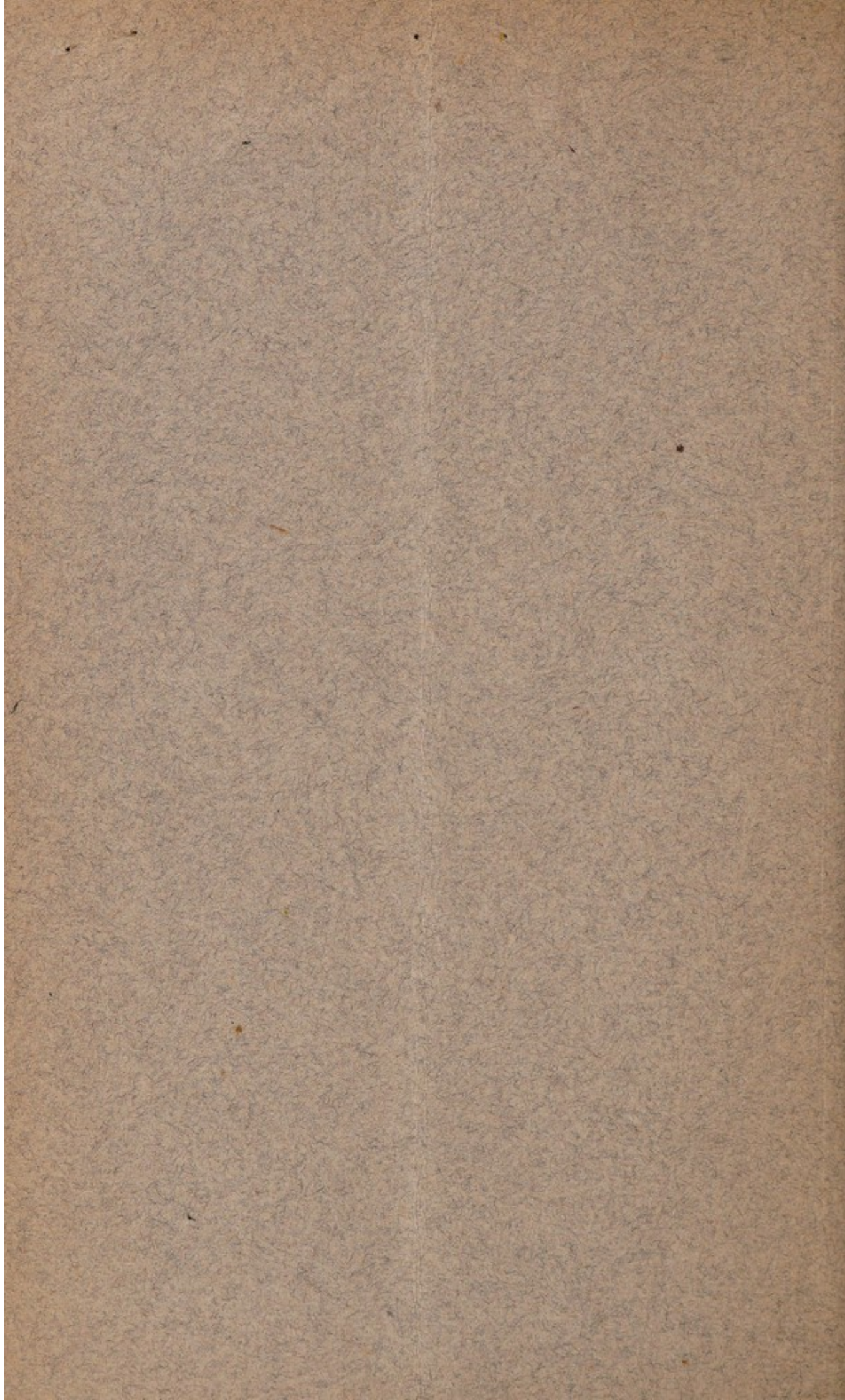
BY

JOHN WOOD, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Acting Medical Officer of Health.

DEAL,

MINERVA PRINTING WORKS, OAK STREET.



URBAN DISTRICT OF WALMER.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR 1919.

TO THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WALMER.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honour to present for your consideration my annual report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the Urban District of Walmer during the twelve months ended December 31st, 1919.

POPULATION.

The population in 1911 according to census was 5,347. My estimate of the population at midsummer 1919 is 5,240.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Walmer has a frontage to the sea of about two miles.

The ground-levels vary from about 20 feet to 100 feet above ordnance datum.

The subsoil is chalk, but it varies from about one foot below the surface of the ground on the higher levels to eighteen feet below in the low level area near the sea. In the latter case the chalk is generally covered by a bed of brick-earth, but here and there one finds a considerable layer of sand and pebbles.

Owing to the favourable levels, and to the nature of the soil, the whole of the built-up portion of the district is free from dampness. Even after periods of persistent and heavy rainfall the ground in practically the whole of the district dries within a very few hours. In the one very small portion of the district where surface-water is held up owing to the ground levels and the character of the soil, the Council have valves and pipes by which any accumulation of water can be drained into the sea. This small area is remote from the built-up portion of the district.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The civil population consists chiefly of persons of independent means and others employed by them directly and indirectly. A number are employed at a local brewery, and

others are employed in the building and allied trades in this and the surrounding districts.

There is no staple trade in Walmer.

VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.

The number of births in this district during 1919 was 75—39 males and 36 females.

This figure calculated on a population of 4,120 (which is the figure supplied by the Registrar General) gives a rate of 18.20 per 1,000, as compared with

68 giving a rate of 17.70 „ „ in 1918

62 „ „ „ 16.25 „ „ „ 1917

53 „ „ „ 18.20 „ „ „ 1916

The Birth-rate for England and Wales during 1919 was 18.50.

DEATHS.

The number of deaths registered in this district during 1919 was 52. Of these 3 belonged to other districts. There were 14 inward transferable deaths, so that the nett total was 63. Deaths among Marines are not included in this figure.

Calculated on a population of 3,955 (which is the number of non-military residents according to the Registrar General's return) 63 gives a rate of

15.93 per 1,000 for 1919

compared with 46

which gave a rate of 11.70 „ „ in 1918

The death rate for England and Wales during 1919 was 13.8 per 1,000.

The causes of death were certified as follows :

	Males.	Females.
Measles	1	
Influenza	1	3
Pulmonary tuberculosis	2	2
Cancer, malignant disease	2	4
Organic heart disease	5	3
Bronchitis	2	1
Pneumonia (all forms)	1	
Other respiratory diseases	2	1
Diarrhoea, etc. (under 2 years)		1
Nephritis and Brights disease	1	
Congenital debility	2	1
Violence, apart from suicide	2	
Suicide		2
Other defined diseases	12	12

POOR LAW RELIEF.

The extent of the Poor Law relief in this district may be judged by the fact that only £2 4s. 2d. is paid out each week to aged and infirm persons in Walmer.

GENERAL HOSPITAL.

The General Hospital in Deal, which is supported by voluntary contributions by the residents of Deal, Walmer and surrounding districts, and also by small charges from patients according to their means, is fully utilised for acute cases.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply is obtained from deep wells sunk in the chalk to a depth of about one hundred feet. The Pumping Station is situate on high ground on the western boundary of the Deal district. It is controlled by a Joint Board composed of an equal number of members appointed by the Deal Corporation and the Walmer Urban District Council respectively.

The quantity of water taken by Walmer during 1919 was 55,092,400 gallons.

The available supply is adequate to maintain a constant supply under pressure to all parts of the district, and, apart from the question of hardness, the water is of excellent quality.

Samples of water taken from the mains are sent to the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine and to the Clinical Research Association alternatively every three months by the Walmer Council and the Deal Corporation.

The following is a copy of the last report : —

19th December, 1919.

General Characteristics.

Clear and free from smell.

Analytical Data.

Parts per 100,000.

Suspended matter	—
Dissolved solids	36.5
Chlorine	3.1
Alkalinity	22.0
Total Hardness	28.5
Permanent Hardness	6.7
Free and Saline Ammonia, absent	
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.0045

	Parts per 100,000.
Nitrogen as Nitrites	absent
Nitrogen as Nitrates	0.61
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate at 80 degs. F.	
(a) 15 minutes	—
(b) 4 hours	0.030
Lead	absent

Bacteriological.

No. of organisms per c.c. growing
on agar

at 37 degs. C. in 2 days ... 16

at 22 degs. C. in 4 days ... 9

No glucose or lactose fermenters were found in quantities
of 100 c.c. or less.

No B. coli were found in quantities of 100 c.c. or less.

The sample is satisfactory chemically and bacteriologically.

(Signed) Robert Robison.

M. M. Barrett.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

There are no rivers or streams in the Walmer district,
therefore the question of pollution of them does not arise.

DRAINAGE.

Every house in the built-up portion of the district is drained
through stoneware pipe drains into the public sewers. All the
drains are properly trapped off from the sewers. With very few
exceptions the drains are laid clear of the houses, and are known
to be working well.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

With the exception of a group of isolated houses south of
Walmer Castle, the whole of the district is properly sewered.

A scheme of drainage for the portion of the district south of
Walmer Castle was approved by the Local Government Board
in 1913, and was about to be put in hand on the outbreak of
war. Consequently nothing has been done, and the houses
continue to be drained into cesspools.

The present sewerage system was only completed in 1915.
The sewage gravitates to a large storage tank and is discharged
through cast-iron outfall pipes into the sea once a day at a
distance of one thousand feet from low-water mark of ordinary
tides. Adequate means are provided for flushing the whole of
the system, which is done regularly.

Throughout the year no trouble has been experienced with the drainage system, or with the disposal of the sewage, and no complaints have been received since the scheme was carried out.

Manholes are built at frequent intervals, at every change of direction, and at all road junctions.

The whole system is sufficiently ventilated.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Except for two or three houses built in isolated positions, every house is provided with a water-closet, but there are still a considerable number of hand-flushed closets. These are inspected at frequent intervals, and whenever one is found in such a condition as to justify such action, steps are taken to compel the provision of flushing apparatus.

There are no privies in the district.

SCAVENGING.

The house refuse is collected by the Council's staff.

At one time and until the last three months considerable difficulty was experienced in disposing of the refuse ; a large heap had accumulated, and the Council were very concerned about it. The Surveyor was instructed to inquire into the question of erecting a refuse destructor, but the enormous increase in the cost of installing such a plant caused the Council to consider other alternatives. The Deal Corporation were asked if they would be agreeable to a joint scheme, but, after considering the matter, replied that although in sympathy with the idea they did not feel justified in embarking on such a scheme under the present difficult conditions.

Since then, however, the demand for the refuse has revived and not only is the refuse being taken by farmers and market gardeners as fast as it is collected, but the accumulation referred to has been entirely cleared away.

In order to facilitate the work of collection the Council applied to the Local Government Board for sanction to a bye-law insisting on the provision of a properly covered ash-bin at every house, but the Board replied that the time was inopportune.

The number of ash-pits remaining is very few indeed. These add to the labour of collection, and it is to be hoped they will soon be replaced by sanitary ash-bins.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS.

382 Inspections were made by the Inspector of Nuisances during the year. This figure includes the 136 dwelling houses referred to in connection with house-to-house inspection.

In addition to the above it is the practice of your Inspector to make a general inspection of the district at frequent intervals.

Arising out of these inspections :—

2 Formal notices were served, and 40 Informal notices.

As a result

2 Drains, serving two houses, were taken up and relaid.

3 „ serving three houses, were uncovered and repaired.

12 Flushing cisterns were fixed in existing W.C.'s.

5 Defective flushing cisterns were repaired.

7 Sinks and slop-drains were provided.

3 Sink-waste pipes were trapped.

2 Back-yards were paved, and a number of minor defects were remedied, and nuisances abated.

At the end of the year there were still outstanding

2 Formal notices and

14 Informal notices dealing with 28 dwellings, but in the majority of cases minor defects are dealt with without the service of a notice, that is, by the Inspector approaching property owners.

The large proportion of outstanding notices is due almost entirely to the difficulty of getting such work done. In several of the cases the owners concerned placed the necessary orders some months since, but so far have not been able to get the work executed.

I should mention that, in addition to the regular sanitary inspections, advantage is taken of visits to houses for the purpose of inspecting water fittings. Generally speaking, all the sanitary fittings are inspected at the same time, and advice given or further action taken as may be necessary.

OFFENSIVE TRADES, ETC.

There are no offensive trades, or common lodging houses in the district, and no underground rooms ordinarily used as sleeping rooms.

SCHOOLS.

In addition to private schools there are two public elementary schools. The schools are in good order, have a constant supply of water from the public mains, modern latrines, and are drained

through stoneware pipe drains into the public sewers. In case of an outbreak of infectious disease among the scholars, the schools are at once visited, enquiries instituted, and the school-master or mistress put on their guard.

FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.

Almost the whole of the milk sold in this district is locally produced. The cowsheds and dairies within the Walmer area are inspected by the Inspector at frequent intervals, and I have inspected all of them during the year. All the buildings are in good order, most of them brick-built, and have a constant supply of water from the Council's mains. They are limewashed at regular intervals, and are kept in a clean condition.

BAKEHOUSES AND SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

The six bakehouses and four slaughter-houses in the district have been inspected several times during the year by the Inspector of Nuisances and once by myself. All are in good order. Two of the bakehouses are old-fashioned and dark, but they are kept clean.

All the slaughtering is done in private slaughter-houses. There are no special arrangements for inspecting meat at the time of slaughter, but advantage is taken of the opportunity to inspect the meat if slaughtering is going on when the Inspector makes his ordinary visit.

Three lots of imported meat were condemned as unfit for human consumption, and the meat was destroyed.

No carcasses or parts of carcasses were condemned for tuberculosis.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

11 cases of notifiable infectious disease were notified during 1919. This figure includes several cases from among the women and children residing within the barrack areas, but infectious diseases among the male population within the barracks is not notified to me, and my figures are exclusive of any cases which might have occurred among them.

The total figure is made up as follows:—

Scarlet Fever	seven
Enteric ..	two
Tuberculosis	two

I have purposely omitted measles because no notifications have been received since the notification of measles ceased to be compulsory, and the records are therefore incomplete.

One of the enteric cases was undoubtedly imported. I went to some trouble in trying to discover the source of infection, but my correspondence led to no definite result.

Apart from tuberculosis there were no deaths from infectious disease during the period covered by this report.

13 houses were fumigated during the year.

As soon as a case of infectious disease is notified the premises are visited, and the case is investigated. Where satisfactory means of isolation are not available at the patient's home, the patient is removed to the Isolation Hospital. The rooms are then fumigated with formaldehyde, after which the bedding, wearing apparel, carpets, and similar materials are taken away for treatment in the steam disinfectors.

Bacteriological aids to diagnosis have been fully utilized either through private laboratories or through the laboratory managed by the County Medical Officer of Health.

With regard to the non-notifiable infectious diseases, these are investigated by myself, and where there are more than a few cases, suitable action is taken, such as closing the schools or excluding young children from kinemas.

The school intimations of disease are also investigated.

TUBERCULOSIS.

With regard to tuberculosis there is no scheme made or proposed for this district. Patients avail themselves of the tuberculosis centre, which is at Sandwich, and they are visited at their homes when necessary by the County Tuberculosis Officer.

VENEREAL DISEASES.

No individuals of either sex suffering from venereal diseases have applied to me for guidance or treatment.

No medical practitioner in this area is qualified to receive free supplies of salvarsan and therefore none has been supplied by the Council.

No action has been taken in this district under the Venereal Disease Act, 1917.

SMALLPOX.

No primary or re-vaccinations have been performed by me under the Public Health (Smallpox Prevention) Regulations, 1917, during the year.

The buildings at Hammill acquired in 1914 by the respective Councils, and fitted up as a joint emergency smallpox hospital for the Urban Districts of Deal, Walmer and Sandwich, and the Rural Districts of Eastry and Bridge, have not been used during the year.

MATERNITY AND INFANT WELFARE.

The Maternity and Infant Welfare Centre, which is worked as a joint undertaking by the Councils of Deal and Walmer, has been continued throughout the year. Mothers are encouraged to take their infants to the centre on Friday afternoons, when helpful advice is given regarding the general welfare and feeding of the infants, and infants' food is supplied at a reduced price to such parents as are found, on enquiry, to be too poor to pay the full cost.

A medical practitioner is in attendance every fortnight.

The Welfare Nurse also attends this centre. This enables her to keep in touch with many infants whose homes she has previously visited. The nurse visits the homes of all newly born children, inspects the premises, and gives advice to the parents.

There is no doubt that many infants have derived great benefit from advice and assistance given to parents at the centre.

The number of attendances at the clinic from Walmer during the past year is 423.

The number of visits made by the Welfare Nurse in Walmer during the same period is 296.

The work of safeguarding the health of expectant and nursing mothers and children is carried out as far as possible at the maternity centre.

In a number of cases milk is being supplied by the Urban Council free of cost, for expectant and nursing mothers and for infants.

MIDWIVES.

The provisions of the Midwives Acts, 1902 and 1918 are administered by the Kent County Council.

PUERPERAL FEVER.

With regard to puerperal fever and ophthalmia neonatorum, no cases have occurred in this district during the year.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

Accommodation for isolating infectious diseases is provided by the Infectious Diseases Hospital which is jointly maintained by the Councils of Deal and Walmer.

This hospital stands on high ground on the southern boundary of the Deal district. The site is perfectly dry.

There are no other buildings within a considerable radius of the hospital.

The main building is constructed of timber framing covered on the outside by felt packing and corrugated iron sheets, and on the inside with match-boarding. It has two wards, with kitchen and nurses' quarters in between. Each ward has six beds, is heated by a central stove, and has separate sanitary accommodation, disinfecting pan, and bath.

A small detached building of similar construction provides the means of isolating a second disease.

A new brick building is provided as a residence for the caretaker and his wife.

The drainage from the hospital is discharged through a stoneware pipe drain into the Deal drainage system.

The water supply is drawn from the Deal water mains.

HOUSING.

GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS.

The total number of dwelling houses in the district of Walmer at the end of 1919 was 1098. Of these 38 were empty, and 17 furnished but unoccupied.

A number of the empty houses have recently been sold, and are now being prepared for early occupation.

One new house suitable for a working-class family was completed during the year, and 2 more of the same class are now nearing completion.

Of the 1098 houses referred to above 685 are occupied by people of the working classes.

POPULATION.

Owing to demobilisation, and also to the fact that residents who left the district to escape dangers arising out of the war were by then returning to their homes, the civilian population of the district at Midsummer 1919 shewed a substantial increase as compared with the figures for the previous year.

According to figures supplied by the Food Office the number of residents, exclusive of persons residing within the barrack boundaries, to whom food cards were issued was 3980.

On the other hand, but also because of demobilisation, the population within the barrack areas shewed a very considerable decrease. The official figures give the population inside the barracks as

All ranks, including officers but not including women and children	1110
Assuming the number of women and children to be	150

the total barrack population at Mid- summer last was	1260
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which is rather more than half what it was last year.

The sum of these figures therefore gives the total population at Midsummer 1919 as 5240, as against 6057 at Midsummer 1918.

The figures supplied by the Registrar General are

Population for Birth rate	4120
„ „ Death rate	3955

If the number of persons living in barracks is added to the latter figure the population so obtained will be practically the same as my estimate.

The actual population as ascertained by the census of 1911 was

Civilian	4003
In barracks	1344
Total	5347

HOUSING ACCOMMODATION.

When considering the needs of the district as to housing it is most important that the changes taking place in the barracks should be taken into account.

Reference to my previous reports will shew that the barrack population has varied from time to time from about 1200 to 2400.

The Inspector of Nuisances has received a letter from the Barrack Authorities in reply to an enquiry by him which states that "The probable population living in barracks from the 1st January 1920 onwards is approximately 600." This must mean that the numbers of Officers, N.C.O.'s and men allowed to live out of barracks will be correspondingly reduced, with the result that the houses they vacate will be available for civilians.

At a number of meetings during the past year the Council have had the housing question under consideration. The

Surveyor prepared a special report on the subject which was considered at a special meeting. The Council ultimately came to the conclusion that the local conditions are not such as to justify the preparation of a housing scheme. Subsequent changes in the local conditions have tended to strengthen that view, and up to the present no special measures have been taken and none are contemplated.

OVERCROWDING.

There are no cases of overcrowding, that is, in the sense that the word "overcrowding" is understood when it is used in connection with thickly populated manufacturing towns. Cases are common where two families reside in one house, but it is not at all likely that the provision of new houses would alter this practice. The occupants are almost invariably married Marines, who have obtained permission to reside out of barracks. As they are not able to afford to pay the rent of a house, or are not disposed to do so, they share a house with another Marine to reduce expenses. Often enough the second Marine is only in the district for an uncertain and possibly very short time, owns little or no furniture, and would not occupy a new house if one were offered to him.

This practice will be reduced, if not done away with, by the reduction of the Marines. The married-quarters in barracks will then suffice for the married Marines, and I think the barrack authorities might very well be appealed to to see that all married-quarters are occupied before permission is given for families to reside outside.

In my opinion the suggestion that the East Barracks should be converted into flats for the working-classes is not practicable, even if the Admiralty would agree to the suggestion, which is most improbable.

FITNESS OF HOUSES.

As regards fitness, the dwelling-houses in this district are generally in good order. All are brick-built, with slated or tiled roofs, have a constant supply of water under pressure, and are properly drained.

With two exceptions all have at least one water-closet, although some of these closets are still hand-flushed.

The two exceptions refer to cottages built to accommodate aged couples. In these cases one closet is shared by the occupants of two cottages.

The house refuse is removed from all of them once each week.

The Inspector of Nuisances is constantly striving to improve

the condition of working-class houses. His method is to approach owners personally instead of serving notices. His efforts have met with a considerable measure of success, and that entirely without friction. Of course there are occasionally instances where it is necessary to serve a formal notice, but so far it has not been necessary to carry the matter further than that.

UNHEALTHY AREAS.

There are no unhealthy areas in this district therefore no action has been taken under Part 1 or Part 2 of the Housing Act of 1890.

BYE-LAWS.

It is urged by some that the existing bye-laws governing the erection of new buildings are too stringent, and tend to discourage the erection of new houses. The Council have given instructions for a special report to be prepared, and when this is ready the matter will no doubt be carefully considered.

HOUSE TO HOUSE INSPECTION.

The systematic inspection of dwelling-houses was continued during the year by Mr. H. W. Barker, the Council's Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances.

Details of the inspections and the result of any necessary action are entered in special registers.

Houses inspected :

In 1915	...	...	...	...	125
„ 1916	...	...	...	...	118
„ 1917	...	...	...	...	80
„ 1918	...	..	...	...	130
„ 1919	..	...	...	...	136

A number of formal and informal notices were served on the owners of properties inspected. In the majority of cases the notices were complied with. In other cases the owners have undoubtedly given orders for the work to be done, but owing to the difficulty of getting the orders executed it has been impossible for the owners to get the work done. Your Inspector will no doubt report to you any instances of undue delay or neglect to carry out the required improvements.

CLOSING ORDERS.

No closing orders have been made during the year. There is not a house in the district in such a condition as would justify the issue of a closing order.

There are still a number of hand-flushed closets in the district. The number has been steadily diminished as a result of steps taken by the Inspector of Nuisances, but I think all hand-flushed closets should now be dealt with as being insufficient.

HEALTH OF THE DISTRICT.

The Council are to be congratulated on the very satisfactory condition of the health of the district. The amount of illness has been quite small, and there has been an entire absence of anything in the nature of an epidemic.

JOHN WOOD,

Acting Medical Officer of Health.

March 31st, 1920.

There are two copies of this letter in the
original. The original is in the possession of the
Library of the University of Toronto. The other
copy is in the possession of the Library of the
University of Michigan.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER

The Commission has been organized on the 1st day
of January, 1900. It has since that time been
actively engaged in the study of the subject of
the proposed new law, and has held several public
hearings on the subject.

THE COMMISSION

The Commission is composed of the following
members: Mr. J. H. ... and Mr. ...