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FORTY-THIRD

ANNUAL REPORT



ON THE

SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

URBAN DISTRICT OF WATFORD

FOR THE YEAR

== 1915, ==

BY

DR. ARTHUR KING, D.P.H.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

WATFORD :

PRINTED BY C. H. PEACOCK, LTD., 101, HIGH STREET.

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REPORT
ON THE
SANITARY CONDITION
OF THE
URBAN DISTRICT OF WATFORD
FOR THE YEAR 1915.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
WATFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report of the Sanitary Condition of the Watford Urban District for the year 1915.

A. NATURAL AND SOCIAL
CONDITIONS.

The Natural Conditions remain much the same as described in previous reports, but the Social Conditions have undergone material alteration owing to the War. The almost uninterrupted billeting of about four thousand Soldiers has more than compensated for the loss of population by enlistment, and has also been of benefit to the trade of the town. The erection of munition works has entailed the absorption of all the available workers, and has contributed

largely to raising the average rate of payment in the majority of employments.

B. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Analysis of the Water Supply has been satisfactory during 1915, and there has been an adequate supply, notwithstanding the extra consumption by the troops stationed in Watford.

Considering the growing needs of the town and the slender margin over the quantity required for present necessities, it is a matter of great importance to push on with the new scheme, notwithstanding the restrictions on expenditure necessitated by the War.

The Council have obtained special sanction to continue the work up to a certain point, which will ensure an adequate supply for the future under all circumstances, and the exact position will be seen from the following report by the Engineer, Mr. Waterhouse:—

“Progress with the New Water Scheme has, under the circumstances, been satisfactory. The Pumping Station buildings and the Softening Works are practically complete, and the remaining work in connection with the Pumping and Boiler Plant and Pipe Lines, so far as they have been sanctioned by the Treasury, it is anticipated will be completed during the year. After the new wells have been cleared and satisfactory tests carried out, the new supply of softened water will be connected to the town mains, but until the remainder of

the pumping and delivery mains and the reservoir are completed, the full advantage of the whole scheme is deferred."

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Nothing of importance has occurred in this connection during 1915.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The work of remedying defects in house drains and their reconstruction where necessary has continued during the year. Nuisances from defective drains were abated in 61 instances, and from choked drains in 177 cases. The further details of drainage work will be seen in the Sanitary Inspector's report at the end.

The work on the sewers, for which the application for a loan of £3,500 was granted in 1914, continued during the early part of 1915, but was entirely discontinued at the end of April.

The work done consisted of a complete overhauling and re-laying of the sewer in a portion of Queen's Avenue and in High Street from Queen's Road to Church Street. New Manholes were placed where necessary.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Nothing to report under this heading.

SCAVENGING.

This has gone on satisfactorily during 1915, and the additional arrangements necessitated by the presence of the troops continued to meet the requirements of the situation.

The following gives the result of the working of the Destructor during the year 1915:—

Van-loads of refuse from Town			
destroyed during year	...	...	6,265
Van-loads of Refuse from old heap			
destroyed during year	...	...	478
Cart-loads of Refuse from old heap			
destroyed during year	...	...	2,190
Dogs destroyed	...	...	169
Diseased Carcases destroyed	...	...	15
„ Organs	„	...	Numerous

The following was done for the Military Authorities:—

One load of Straw destroyed,
159 Horse Collars,
A quantity of Harness,
2 cart-loads of Bacon.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

The details of Sanitary Inspection will be found in the report of the Sanitary Inspectors at the end.

I myself have made frequent visits of inspection both as a matter of routine and when specially requested by the Inspectors.

No alteration in Common Lodging Houses has taken place. This matter is due for consideration when the reconstruction of the Ballards' Buildings again comes forward.

As a result of the adoption of New Byelaws for Offensive Trades, it has been possible to enforce the fixing of the latest pattern of Fish Frying Ranges in all the shops engaged in the Trade.

SCHOOLS.

The sanitary condition of the different school buildings are reported on to the Education Authority at the end of each year, and certain things that were absolutely necessary have been done during 1915.

In connection with the Medical Inspection of school children, useful work has been done in examination of cultivations of swabs from the nostrils of school children suffering from Chronic Rhinitis apparently of an infective character. Again a large number of these cases showed the presence of organisms presenting the characteristics of Diphtheria Bacilli, and further progress was made in ensuring proper treatment being carried out until the nasal discharge has ceased to be infective. One hundred and twenty swabs were examined during the year.

The results of Medical Inspection in respect to the Treatment of Defects found were, on the whole, satisfactory considering that no means are taken to compel treatment.

A large number of samples of hair from cases of suspected Ringworm was examined, and in this direction progress has been made in preventing the spread of the disease amongst school children.

The numbers representing the percentage of cases receiving Notices that have been treated go as high as 80 per cent., and only in two groups of defects are they below 50 per cent. The average of all defects treated is 52 per cent.

The effort that was made during a portion of 1914 to cope with some of the Dental Defects found, made good progress during 1915, and the following extracts from the Report of the Voluntary Dental Treatment Centre Committee will give some idea of the amount done.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORT OF DENTAL TREATMENT
CENTRE FOR WATFORD'S CHILDREN.

“ During 1915 the work undertaken was carried out on the same lines as in the previous year, the main effort being directed to the six to eight age group, with the special purpose of saving the six-year-old permanent first molar from decay.

“ For a really satisfactory and complete supervision of the six-year-old molars it would be necessary for re-inspection not only of those already treated, but of those who, at the original inspection, were found to need no treatment.

“ It is felt by the Committee that the importance of full details of the condition of the six-year old molars before treatment, the necessary work carried out, and their condition afterwards, cannot be over-estimated; and during the current year efforts are being made to keep fuller records than before.

“ The condition of the mouth of each child is now roughly charted, and it is proposed that at all the schools special cards shall be supplied and filled in—cards giving a continuous history of the child’s dental apparatus during its school career.

“ The following gives a resumé of work done during the year 1915:—

Attendances of Dentist	51
Number of New Cases	526
Number of Attendances of Children ...	777
Temporary Teeth Extracted	821
Teeth Filled	376
Teeth Extracted (Anæsthetic)	687
Number of Administrations of Anæsthetics	247
Other Operations	50

“ The parents of the children in most cases are not only willing but gratified to pay the small fee of 1/- for treatment, and their fees have been of some service in supplementing the voluntary help, and have formed a reliable, if small, source of income during the year. Indeed, it is only these small contributions that have enabled the Committee to keep the work going for just two years on the original subscriptions, without making another appeal to the public.

“ The Committee have no doubt that after the conclusion of peace the educational influences of the War will have worked a sufficient change in public opinion to ensure proper treatment not only for Dental, but for other defects—treatment that will be insisted on by the State, and paid for out of the Public Fund.

“In the meantime the Committee again make an urgent appeal for temporary help.”

It will be seen from the above extracts that valuable work is being done, but that more support is required to enable the necessary extension of activities to be made. It is of the utmost importance that it should be thoroughly realised that had the Dental and other defects occurring amongst school children been systematically treated for the ten years previous to the outbreak of the War this would have ensured much better recruiting material being available, and would have saved the nation a very serious expenditure on the Dental Treatment of Soldiers at a time when we can least afford it.

That Inspection and Treatment should go hand in hand is a principle that should have been acted on by our legislators long ago in order to promote the physical well-being of the nation in times of peace, and now an irresistible demonstration of its necessity has been given if we wish to be adequately prepared for times of War.

FOOD.

(a). *Milk Supply.*

Twenty samples of milk were taken and examined Bacteriologically for evidence of Tubercle.

Only in one instance was the milk found to be Tuberculous. The dairyman was communicated with, and he in turn informed the farmer who supplied the milk.

It was found on investigation that a suspected cow had been got rid of between the taking of the sample and the result of the examination being known. Where this cow went to it was impossible to ascertain, as the farm was outside our district.

The suspension of the Tuberculosis Order (Animals), soon after the declaration of War, has had a very bad result on such cases as this.

The Order provided for the slaughter of suspected animals and the compensation of the owner when the animal was found diseased, and this fair arrangement to a large extent did away with the attempt to sell the meat of such animals for human food.

The suspension of the Order at a time when the supply of cattle tends to be restricted naturally encourages the unscrupulous to place tuberculous meat on the market, and although a considerable sum may be saved by the local authorities by the abolition of compensation, it is a saving of doubtful benefit when the health of the community is jeopardised in order to save its pocket.

(b). *Ice Creams.*

Nine samples of ice-creams were taken and examined; seven of these were found satisfactory, the other two were only of medium quality.

The makers of the latter were communicated with, and improved care in production was promised.

(c). *Other Foods.*

The few cow-sheds still existing in Watford were satisfactorily kept during the year, and, as reported last year, the provision for storing the milk has certainly improved.

The conditions of the newer slaughter-houses have been quite satisfactory during the year, and the older ones have been kept as well as their structural condition will allow.

The supervision of slaughtering is as complete as possible, and the details at the end of the report of the carcasses examined and the food condemned and destroyed gives evidence of the thorough way in which this work is done.

Still it is quite possible—and even probable—that certain unsound food gets through without the Inspector's knowledge, and undoubtedly the only way to avoid this is to have all slaughtering done at a Public Abattoir.

During the year a bad case of attempting to put the meat of a tuberculous beast on the market was discovered by the Inspector. As this was a deliberate attempt to conceal the diseased condition, a prosecution was undertaken, a conviction was obtained, and a fine of £40 was inflicted. As this was not the first conviction the butcher's license was cancelled.

I have in previous reports drawn attention to the want of co-ordination between the work of the Board of Agriculture and the Sanitary Department in the question of food inspection.

In Watford the difficulty is partly got over by the cordial co-operation between the County Authority's Local Veterinary Surgeon, and the Council Inspector. When, however, the area is declared an Infected Area, due to the occurrence of some infectious disease amongst domestic animals, a veterinary surgeon from a distance generally comes down, and, practically speaking, the whole control of the measures taken remain in his hands or those of the local police.

It appears to me that it is for the Board of Agriculture to see that the proper methods are adopted to prevent the spread of the complaint, but that the Local Sanitary Authority should have the power to step in and regulate the slaughtering of all animals that have been exposed to infection. It is their province to guard the food supply of their district and all questions of slaughtering of any animal ordinarily used for human food should be entirely in their hands.

HOUSING.

This matter has been almost at a standstill during 1915, as the Council have been unwilling to take action against owners while the strain of the War existed.

The work that had been done in the past had not left any defects of an urgent character requiring action to be taken, so that no serious result is likely to occur in consequence of this temporary relaxation of effort. The proceeding with a scheme for "Ballard's Buildings" and the erection of 78 municipal cottages have both been hung up owing to the War; both of these matters will probably be got on

with amongst the first undertakings after the War, and I do not think any serious harm will result from the delay.

New Building Byelaws are under consideration, and if these are adopted in the immediate future it will facilitate the granting of permission for the scheme after a Local Government Board's Inquiry has been held.

In the present condition of uncertain tenure of houses in many cases where the father of the family has, or will shortly, join the Army, it would be quite out of the question to push for the provision of any extra houses for the working classes.

The tendency will increase for two families to combine their house-keeping, but at present there has been no evidence of increase in the number of empty houses suitable for the requirements of the working classes.

All the houses of larger size have been secured by the Military Authorities for the soldiers.

No closing orders have been served on owners during 1915 with regard to house property, but certain work has been done, of which the following is a record:—

32 to 58, Hagden Lane: General repairs throughout.

6 Houses in Merton Road, 72 to 82: New drainage, yards paved, roofs repaired, outside walls re-pointed, and general repairs throughout.

- 2 Houses in " Three Crown " Yard: Thoroughly repaired after voluntary closure. These are quite fit for habitation.
- 2 Houses in Court 12, High Street: Demolished.
- 1 House in Cassio Road: Put into habitable repair after closing order. The latter now removed.
- 30 to 40, Sutton Road: Re-drainage and general repairs.
- 51, 53, and 55, Sotheron Road: Re-drainage and general repairs.
- 3 and 5, Shaftesbury Road: General repairs throughout.

Grove Place has been purchased with a view to demolition, but at the time of writing nothing more has been done.

The building of new houses one would expect to have been at a standstill owing to the War, but this has not been the case.

During the year 1915, plans were passed for 83 houses, but only 25 of these were completed during the year. There were, however, 80 houses completed and occupied from plans sent in during the year 1914, so that the total of new houses built during 1915 amounted to 105. This leaves 58 houses for which plans were passed in 1915 left to be completed.

TABLE SHOWING NEW HOUSES OCCUPIED FOR THE YEAR 1915.

	WARDS.				Oxhey. Totals.
	King's.	Queen's.	St. Andrew's.	St. Callow Land.	
Plans passed, 1915 ...	53	—	6	17	7 83
Houses not completed, 1915 ...	31	—	6	14	7 58
Houses built, 1915 ...	22	—	—	3	— 25
Houses built but not occupied ...	—	—	—	—	— —
Houses built and occupied ...	22	—	—	3	— 25
Houses built and occupied from 1914 Plans ...	62	1	—	14	3 80
Total New Houses occupied, 1915 ...	84	1	—	17	3 105

C. SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION.

This is satisfactory, and has been largely utilised for the purposes of accommodation of soldiers as well as for the Civil Population during 1915.

CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL WORK DURING THE YEAR.

At the Laboratory, Diphtheria swabs, suspected sputum, and specimens of supposed cases of Ringworm have been examined.

There have been during 1915 260 swabs; 20 specimens of sputum, and 36 specimens of Ringworm.

The examination of water, milk, and ice-creams have been carried on as before.

TROOPS IN WATFORD.

During the whole of 1915 there have been 4 or 5 Battalions of troops billeted in Watford. During the first few months these belonged to the City of London Division. They were succeeded by some from the East Anglian Division, and since July we have had men belonging to the Notts and Derby Division in the town.

The condition of health of all these men has, on the whole, been good, the period of greatest freedom from disease being the months during which the men belonging to the North Midland Division were under canvas in the Park.

Before then we had cases of Measles, Scarlet Fever, Sore Throat (Diphtheritic or otherwise), and an occasional case of Cerebro-Spinal Fever ; but while under canvas there was hardly a case of notifiable disease amongst the men.

In October last they came into billets, which largely consisted of Public Halls, Schools, other large Public Buildings, and large empty houses, and since then we have had cases of infectious diseases, including Cerebo-Spinal Fever amongst them.

With regard to the last disease, I consider its occurrence due to the billeting of men in empty houses and public buildings, and I think the chances of its occurrence would be slight if the men were entirely accommodated in private billets in winter time and were placed under canvas during summer.

The segregation of a number of men in buildings without due accommodation, even if there is not overcrowding according to the Military scale of air space, is calculated to give rise to surroundings that are very favourable for developing carriers of this disease.

The presence of dirty floors, on which the men recline for sleeping purposes at night, the impossibility of getting proper ventilation without a draught, and the absence of proper arrangements for drying the clothes of the men after long marches in the wet, all provide favourable conditions for the passage of the Meningococci from a few permanent carriers that may be present, to a large number of men who may then become temporary carriers of the

disease. When a large number of the latter exist it is no matter for wonder that one here and there develops the disease or passes it on to some civilian in whose house he may at a later period be billeted.

I have during the whole time troops have been in Watford set my face against billeting in empty houses and Public Buildings, but the Military Authorities are a law unto themselves, and pay but little attention to local opinion in making their arrangements.

Where men are billeted in private houses they have the advantage of entirely different sleeping conditions. Instead of sleeping in their clothes on a dirty floor, breathing air impregnated with germs from the same dirty surface—air that may be further contaminated by the evaporation from the damp and dirty surface of recently wet clothing—the men have the benefit of being able to go to bed in the ordinary way in a room kept properly clean by the mistress of the house.

His clothes in this way are cleaner, and when they have got very wet can easily be dried at the kitchen fire. Under these conditions the individual soldier has far fewer opportunities of picking up germs and harbouring them in favourable situations, and thus becoming a carrier.

It has been said that an epidemic of Cerebro-Spinal Fever, is an epidemic of temporary carriers, and that the actual cases of the disease are only demonstrations of the existence of the former. If this is so one can

understand the frequent association of this complaint with the presence of troops, and at the same time the conclusion is forced upon you that this need not be, if greater consideration were given to their housing while under training.

The cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever that occurred in Watford bear out these conclusions.

D. PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The Notification of Infectious Diseases were more than three times as many in 1915 as in 1914. This is entirely accounted for by the large number of Measles Cases that occurred in 1915, the notifications of this disease alone amounting to 995, where, as in 1914, only 24 cases were notified.

Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria cases were both less numerous in 1915 than in the previous year. Of the former 100 cases were reported, against 116 in 1914, while the Diphtheria notifications only amounted to 75 instead of 89, the number recorded in the previous twelve months.

Enteric Fever was only notified in three instances; Puerperal Fever, instead of 11 cases, was notified in four only; and Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis contributed two.

Tuberculosis cases show a still further falling off, the reduction being from 132 to 89, while three cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum

were notified during 1915. Although in 1914 the Scarlet Fever wave appeared to have a rising tendency, this did not continue during the year under consideration.

The year commenced with 20 cases during the month of January, 17 of which were in King's Ward, and again in March there were 20 more, 14 of these still being in King's. These little outbursts were due to local causes, and to several families having nearly all their members affected, but during the rest of the year the average number of cases occurred showing no particular feature either with regard to locality or season. The Ward showing greatest seasonal variation is King's, where 37 cases occurred in the first quarter; five in the second; only one in the third quarter, and 10 in the last three months of the year.

With regard to Diphtheria, we had a wonderful uniformity in the number of cases notified in the first three quarters of 1915, the numbers being 15, 13, and 15, but during the Christmas Quarter there was a rise to 32 cases.

This increase was due to school influence, a number of cases occurring at Parkgate School. Swabs were taken of all children with suspicious nasal discharge at this school; those found infectious were excluded from school and treated and the cases subsided quite suddenly.

As has been previously pointed out in recent years, the notifications do not altogether give a correct record of the incidence of the disease, as so many mild and doubtful throats

are now notified, as well as many cases found on Bacteriological examination to be infectious, although exhibiting no clinical symptoms of disease.

Of the three cases of Enteric Fever, one was a well-marked case, but no source of infection could be found in the District. The man, however, worked outside our boundaries, and it is possible that he may have contracted the disease away from home.

The other cases were very doubtful, and no source of infection could be discovered at the homes of the patients.

Only four cases of Puerperal Fever occurred, and in no case was there evidence of infection from outside. It appeared probable that in each instance it was a matter of self-infection.

Although a number of Military cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever occurred in Watford, only two cases were notified among the civil population.

One was a newspaper boy, whose father and sister were both found to be carriers. The father had suffered some little time before from a severe attack of influenza, and it is possible that this was a milder manifestation of Meningococcic infection.

The second case was the wife of a soldier staying with her husband, where it was found out afterwards that a soldier who was a carrier was also billeted. The patient had not been in

Watford more than a week before she fell ill, but as she came straight from a country village in Norfolk where no cases of the disease existed, it seems probable that she contracted the complaint after she came to Watford.

Measles were very prevalent during 1915, the notifications amounting to 995, compared with 24 in 1914 and 945 in 1913.

It appears to visit Watford biennially, and, judging by the last two outbreaks, notification has very little effect in reducing the number of cases occurring. As I pointed out in my 1913 report, the most satisfactory result of including this disease in the list of those that are notifiable is the reduction of the number of fatal cases.

Out of the 995 cases, only 11 deaths occurred, and 9 of these were children under 5 years of age. The case mortality is therefore only just over 1 per cent., and this might be further reduced in future epidemics if some help were given to mothers in the nursing of severe cases, or the more serious ones were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

This latter question was favourably considered by the Council when the Local Government Board's last order on the Notification of Measles was before them, and it was decided to approach the Hospital Board at the commencement of the next epidemic with a view to getting some help in Home Nursing or the provision at the Hospital for the reception of the more serious cases of the disease.

E. PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF TUBERCULOSIS.

Tuberculosis notifications showed a further decline during 1915. There were only 89 cases notified of all forms of the disease, and of this number there were 75 Pulmonary cases.

The requirements of the War have rather interfered with any further progress being made in the perfecting the arrangements for the stamping out of Tubercle. The County Assistant Tuberculosis Officer has been absorbed by the Army, the building of the Sanatorium has been postponed, and the Tuberculosis Dispensary is now only open one afternoon a week instead of two.

Still, the looking up of contacts and other possible early cases continues, and if one may judge by the continual drop in the number of notifications each year the work that has been done is already producing a beneficial effect in reducing the prevalence of the disease.

All the cases notified have been visited by the Health Visitor, who is able to impress upon the patients and the relatives the importance of recognising the infectious nature of the complaint, and taking necessary precautions against its spread.

This is a part of the campaign which has undoubtedly been very productive of good results. Instead of the previous total disregard of precautionary measures, the good effect of fresh air, not only as a curative agent, but as a preventative measure, is beginning to be

recognised, and were the accommodation at the backs of cottage property better for the purpose, we should have no difficulty in finding patients anxious to utilise the six shelters the Council provided. As it is, only three are now in use, but during the summer months it is most probable that they will all be occupied.

During 1915 there were 149 rooms disinfected that had been used by Consumptives.

Of the 89 cases named above, 10 were treated at a Sanatorium, 15 in Hospital, 2 in the Infirmary, 26 at home or Dispensary, 3 had shelters, 9 removed from the district, and 24 died during the year.

Twenty specimens of sputum have been examined for Tubercle Bacilli, and although this is not a large number, it is in excess of the year previously, and there appears likely to be a still further increase in the number of specimens sent for examination in the current year.

F. MEANS OF PREVENTING MORTALITY OF CHILDBIRTH AND IN INFANCY.

During 1915 considerable progress was made in this work, notwithstanding the retarding influence introduced into all departments by the War.

The Ladies' Committee has taken a strong lead in pushing on this work, and as a result of great determination and the exercise of considerable patience, all the points of antagonism

existing between the Mothers' Welfare Committee and the County Nursing Association have been satisfactorily adjusted, and an amalgamation of effort has resulted. In many ways this has been a great advantage in ensuring success, and especially has this been the case with regard to Expectant Mother Work.

The association with an institution attending women in their confinements is a help in getting in touch with expectant mothers, and although the afternoons for mothers are not so well attended as the Baby Weighing afternoons, we are making it more widely known amongst the expectant mothers that there is an afternoon for them, where they can have simple advice and be taught to make garments for the coming baby. This has already improved the attendance.

The result of the united effort, generally speaking, has been most satisfactory, a better atmosphere pervading the whole working arrangements.

The Health Visitors now feel that they can look for help when required from the Staff of the Home, and the mothers have no longer to make a somewhat invidious choice as to which organisation they should select for the weighing of the babies.

The placing of the whole arrangement in the hands of a Committee of the Urban Council has brought out the fact that the care of mother and baby is a part of Public Health Work to be undertaken by the Local Public Authority; that it does not stop at weighing the baby at stated intervals, but aims at doing everything

possible in the way of advising mothers both before and after confinement so as to maintain the health of the baby from the earliest time ; that the centre is a sympathetic agency to which mothers can go not only when baby is ill, but during the whole time of baby's growth, for advice as to the best surroundings and the best methods to be adopted to promote the healthy growth and development of the coming generation.

The awakening of the mothers' minds to the above principles was greatly helped by an exhibition held under the auspices of the Infant and Mothers' Welfare Committee at the end of the year 1915. +

It was held at two different centres in the town, and was largely attended in each district, the interest displayed by the mothers in the exhibits and the subject, being very great.

A practical outcome of the Exhibition was the expression of a desire for a separate centre in Callow Land, and the Committee at once made an attempt to secure the necessary accommodation.

Unfortunately the presence of troops in the town has for the moment rendered it impossible to find anywhere suitable, but it is hoped to do so before next winter.

G. VITAL STATISTICS.

The expectation of an increase in the population has not been realised owing to the unnatural conditions brought about by the War.

Instead of the extension of our boundaries taking place, we have lost a large proportion of our population by enlistment.

Owing to the exceptional factors at work in deciding the number of inhabitants in 1915, the Registrar-General has compiled a figure for each town of any size, and it is on such a basis of population that the Vital Statistics are to be worked out. He calculates the population of Watford for the last year to be 41,640, a figure very little above that for 1911.

It will be impossible to get statistics on this basis that will compare properly with those for previous years.

The men we have lost to the Army are men amongst whom, in the natural course of events, there would be the minimum of sickness and hardly any deaths. Their ages represent the healthiest and most vigorous time of life, and where any exception to this rule exists the men are refused for the Army, and left to still further deteriorate the quality of those remaining at home.

Considering that all during the year we had a number of soldiers billeted in Watford, more than equal to the number who had joined the Army, from the town's population I think it would have been fair to allow us to estimate the number of inhabitants in the usual way, when the figure would probably work out nearer 46,000 than 41,640, as given by the Registrar.

The number of houses unoccupied by ordinary residents was about the same as in 1914,

and there were practically none empty of a low enough rental to be available for the working classes. All the larger empty houses have been occupied by the Military for the greater part of the year.

New houses built during the year numbered 105.

BIRTHS.

The number of births during 1915 was rather higher than in 1914, and as the birth rate is calculated on the lower population figure it works out at 20.9, against 19.3 the year before.

DEATHS.

The deaths during the year were heavier than usual, there being 510, comparing with 450 in 1914.

The actual number registered in the district was 520, but there were 55 of these that did not belong to us, and, on the other hand, 45 of our residents who died were registered outside, giving a net number of 510. The net death rate is 12.2, a higher figure than we have had for some time. This is partly due to using the lower population figure and to the fact that there was a greater mortality than usual amongst persons aged 65 and upwards.

I am glad to say the Infantile Mortality has not risen in the same manner, the number of deaths of children under 1 year of age being 63, exactly the same figure as in 1914; the death rate of 72.4 being practically the same also.

Taking the deaths generally, Respiratory Diseases gave rise to 86, compared with 56 in the previous year; Heart Disease to 48, compared with 43; Cancer 52, instead of 58, and 12 from Nephritis and Bright's Disease, against 6 the year before. There were 11 violent deaths and 5 suicides.

With regard to Infantile deaths under one year, out of the 63 there were 25 connected with prenatal conditions; 13 from Pneumonia; and 6 from Bronchitis. †

The total number of deaths from the usually recorded Zymotic diseases was 33, compared with 27 in 1914.

The number of each disease will be seen from the following list:—

Small Pox	...	...	...	0
Measles and German Measles	...	...	...	11
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	2
Diphtheria and Croup	...	...	...	7
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	6
Fevers. Typhus	...	...	...	0
Enteric	...	...	...	1
Others	...	...	...	0
Epidemic Diarrhoea	...	...	...	6
				—
	Total ...	...	...	33
				—

The Zymotic death-rate is higher than in 1914, it being 0.7 instead of 0.6 per thousand.

H. FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Two hundred and twenty-four visits have been made; special attention has been given to the provision of extra Closet accommodation where females have displaced male labour, also to fire exits and appliances.

Notices for cleansing and whitewashing as necessary were served.

I. ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

A still larger number of cases were admitted to Hospital during 1915 than in the previous year, the number amounting to 304, compared with 281 in 1914. This was due, however, to the Hospital Board deciding to admit soldiers suffering from Measles and German Measles, the number of such admissions amounting to 41 during the twelve months.

The admission of seven supposed cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever also contributed to swell the number of cases in Hospital; in addition to the Military cases of Measles, we had a few soldiers admitted for Scarlet Fever and Diphtheritic Throats.

On January 1st, 1915, there were 60 patients in Hospital, who were suffering from the following diseases:—

Scarlet Fever, 44; Diphtheria, 13; Erysipelas, 1; Enteric Fever, 1. On January 1st, 1916, the number had sunk to 25 patients as follows:—Scarlet Fever, 14; Diphtheria, 8; Enteric Fever, 2; German Measles, 1.

The following will show the number in Hospital during 1915:

In Hospital, January 1st, 1915	...	60
Admitted during 1915:—		
From Watford Urban District	...	209
„ Watford Rural District	...	36
„ Rickmansworth Urban District	... ..	48
„ Bushey Urban District	...	10
„ Chorleywood Urban District		1
	Total...	<u>364</u>

The following are the results at the end of the year 1915:—

Discharged during 1915	... ..	324
Died in Hospital	... ..	15
Still in Hospital, January 1st, 1916		25
	Total...	<u>364</u>

If it had not been for the presence of the soldiers in Watford, the number of cases admitted from this district would have been slightly fewer, as was the case in all the other districts which supply the Hospital with patients.

The most notable reduction in number of patients was in the district of Chorleywood, which only had one patient in Hospital, compared with 11 in 1914.

The cases of Scarlet Fever, as a whole, were again not of a bad type, but a certain number of septic cases occurred, and in two of these the disease proved fatal.

Out of the 159 cases sent in as suffering from Scarlet Fever, 23 were very doubtful. A good many of the Diphtheria Cases were mild ones, two were not suffering from the disease, but were in an infectious condition, and only came in to have the infection removed.

Still, here we had a certain number of very bad cases, as will be seen by the deaths, amounting to 7, in most of these cases the fatal termination being due to heart failure.

Seven cases had the disease in a Laryngeal form, and were serious enough to necessitate the operation of Tracheotomy. Of these, however, six recovered and only one died.

Four cases were sent in as Enteric Fever; of these only one was an undoubted case, and he made a good recovery. Of the other three cases, one died, and the other two were discharged quite well.

Seven cases were admitted as suffering from Cerebro-Spinal Fever, ~~four~~ ^{two} of whom were soldiers, and the third was the wife of a soldier. Two turned out to be suffering from another disease, and of the remaining three one came from Watford, one from Rickmansworth, and the other from Bricket Wood. In all five cases the disease proved fatal.

The complications arising amongst the cases treated during the year do not require any special mention, as they were only of the usual type, and were of average frequency.

I have again omitted the usual tables in order to condense the report as much as possible.

In the appendix will be found the various tables and reports from the other Officials of the Public Health Department.

I have the honour to remain,

Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

ARTHUR KING.

REPORT OF THE HEALTH VISITOR.

During the year our Infant Weighing Centre has made great progress. We have nearly doubled the attendance of individual mothers from last year. The number that attended last year was 106; this year 176 have attended, with a total of 955 visits. This is most encouraging, as the mothers that attend have a real wish to do what is right for their children.

We have also had a fair attendance at our Sewing Class on Thursday afternoons, but hope for more to attend.

Owing to my being away, doing Red Cross work, for nearly ten months, I can only give a short report and the statistics of the work that was so splendidly done by Miss Farrington and Miss Webb. Below is a table giving the number of Births notified, &c:—

Number of births notified during		
1915	...	771
(a) Attended by Doctors	...	311
(b) Attended by Midwives	...	460
Still births	...	19
Illegitimate Births (included)...		21
Received from Registrar's Returns	...	127
		—
Total number of births during 1915	...	898
		—
Number of Primary Visits paid to births...		714
Number of Re-visits paid to births	...	3,684

NOTIFICATION OF TUBERCULOSIS.

Number of cases notified ...	...	...	89
Visits and Re-visits	...	...	410

NOTIFICATION OF MEASLES.

Number of Measles cases notified ...	...	995
Houses Infected	...	496
Number of visits paid ...	...	680

Miscellaneous visits were paid re:—Other Infectious Cases, Council Cottages, Public Lavatories, and Schools, &c.

TABLE I.—VITAL STATISTICS OF WHOLE DISTRICT DURING 1915
AND PREVIOUS YEARS. WATFORD URBAN DISTRICT.

YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.			TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN DISTRICT.		TRANSFER- ABLE DEATHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Uncorrected Number.	Nett.		Number.	Rate.	Of Non-Residents registered in the District.	Of Residents not registered in the District.	Under 1 year of age.		At all ages.	
			Number.	Rate.					Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.
1910	39805	...	887	22.3	386	9.5	23	12	59	66.5	375	9.4
1911	41200	900	907	22.0	414	10.0	38	42	85	93.7	418	10.1
1912	42570	894	897	21.0	410	9.6	41	20	55	61.3	389	9.1
1913	43670	885	885	20.2	435	9.9	32	31	70	79.0	434	9.9
1914	45000	874	969	19.	458	10.1	40	32	63	72.5	450	10.0
1915	41640	870	872	20.9	520	12.4	55	45	63	72.4	510	12.2

AT CENSUS, 1911.

Total population at all ages	...	...	40,939
Number of inhabited houses	...	...	9,148
Average number of persons per house...			4.38
Area of District in acres (land and inland water)	...	...	2,061

TABLE II.—CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1915.
WATFORD URBAN DISTRICT.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.								TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED IN EACH LOCALITY.					TOTAL CASES REMOVED TO HOSPITAL.		
	At all Ages.	At Ages.							King's Ward.	Queen's Ward.	St. Andrew's Ward.	Gallow Land Ward.	Oxhey Ward.			
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 45.	45 to 65.	65 and upwards.								
Small-pox .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cholera (C) Plague (P) .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria (including Membranous Croup)	75	18	46	9	1	11	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	62
Erysipelas	24	1	2	1	6	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet Fever	100	11	75	7	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	94
Typhus Fever .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever	3	..	..	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Relapsing Fever .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Continued Fever .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever	4	..	..	1	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	2	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Poliomyelitis .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	75	1	8	26	28	11	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other forms of Tuberculosis	14	2	4	2	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles	995	39	428	30	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Totals	1295	45	618	77	67	22	4	490	247	82	378	98	161			

Isolation Hospital or Hospitals, Sanatoria, &c.:—Watford Joint Isolation Hospital, Watford District Hospital Watford Union Infirmary.

TABLE III.—CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING
THE YEAR 1915. WATFORD URBAN DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	DEATHS IN WHOLE DISTRICT AT SUBJOINED AGES.								DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.	
	All Ages.	Under 1.	1 and under 2.	2 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 45.	45 and under 65.		65 and upwards.
All causes { Certified ..	503	61	20	16	25	18	53	104	206	134
{ Uncertified ..	7	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	4	..
Enteric Fever.. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Small Pox .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles	11	1	4	4	2	..	..	..	..	1
Scarlet Fever	2	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	2
Whooping Cough	6	3	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Diphtheria and Croup	7	1	1	1	4	..	..	..	..	7
Influenza	12	..	..	1	..	1	4	6	..	5
Erysipelas	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
Phthisis (Pulm'ry Tubercul's)	34	..	..	..	2	8	13	10	1	10
Tuberculous Meningitis	2	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other Tuberculous Diseases	10	2	2	..	2	1	3	..	..	3
Cancer, Malignant Disease	52	..	..	..	..	1	6	19	26	6
Rheumatic Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Meningitis	7	1	3	..	2	1	..	..	..	6
Organic Heart Disease	48	..	..	..	2	3	8	12	23	11
Bronchitis	42	6	2	1	..	..	1	3	29	12
Pneumonia (all forms)	37	13	4	4	2	1	3	4	6	5
Other Diseases of Respira- tory Organs	7	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	3	..
Diarrhœa and Enteritis	9	6	..	1	..	..	..	..	2	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Cirrhosis of Liver	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..
Alcoholism .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nephritis & Bright's Disease	12	..	..	..	..	..	2	4	6	2
Puerperal Fever .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Other accidents and diseases of Pregnancy & Parturition	3	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	..
Congenital Debility and Mal- formation, including Pre- mature Birth	25	25	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide	11	..	..	1	2	1	3	2	2	5
Suicide	5	..	..	..	..	..	2	2	1	..
Other Defined Diseases	163	4	3	4	2	7	39	104	..	53
Diseases ill-defined or un- known	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Totals	510	63	20	16	25	18	54	104	210	134

TABLE IV.—INFANT MORTALITY DURING THE YEAR 1915.
WATFORD URBAN DISTRICT.

Deaths from stated causes at various Ages under 1 Year of Age.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 4 weeks.	4 weeks & under 3 months.	3 months & under 6 months.	6 months & under 9 months.	9 months & under 12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
	All causes { Certified ...	18	3	1	5	27	9	10	11	4	61
{ Uncertified ...	2	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	1	2
Small-pox ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Chicken-pox ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
Scarlet Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Whooping-Cough ...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	3
Diphtheria and Croup ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Erysipelas ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tuberculous Meningitis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Abdominal Tuberculosis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2
Meningitis ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Convulsions ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Laryngitis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bronchitis ...	...	...	...	1	1	1	3	1	...	6
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	1	1	...	...	2	2	3	3	3	13
Diarrhoea ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	2
Enteritis ...	1	...	...	...	1	1	2	...	...	4
Gastritis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Syphilis ...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Rickets ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Suffocation, overlying ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Injury at Birth ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Atelectasis ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Congenital Malformations	5	1	...	...	6	...	...	1	...	7
Premature Birth ...	8	...	1	1	10	1	...	...	...	11
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus ...	3	1	...	2	6	...	1	...	...	7
Other Causes ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Totals ...	18	3	1	5	27	9	11	11	5	63

Births in the Year :—Legitimate, 848 ; Illegitimate, 24.

Deaths in the Year :—Legitimate Infants, 60 ; Illegitimate Infants, 3.

REPORT OF WORK CARRIED OUT
BY SANITARY INSPECTORS
DURING THE YEAR, 1915.

Visits to Common Lodging Houses	...	...	...	128
„ Courts and Alleys	...	...	...	443
„ Infected Houses	...	...	...	1203
„ Work in Progress	...	...	...	863
Houses Inspected	...	...	...	264
Houses Re-Inspected	...	...	...	126
Houses Inspected (Housing and Town Planning Act)	...	...	...	36
Houses Re-Inspected (Ditto)	...	...	...	256
Workshops Inspected	}	...	...	224
Bakehouses				
Factories				
Inhabited Vans Inspected	...	...	...	7
Urinals	...	...	...	27
Manure Pits	...	...	...	830
„ „ Sprayed	...	...	...	1097
Visits to Schools re Infectious Disease	...	...	...	37
Smoke Observations	...	...	...	3
Ice Cream Manufacturers	...	...	...	27
Nuisances Investigated	...	...	...	244
Miscellaneous Visits	...	...	...	759
House Drains Tested	...	...	...	127
Scavenging Superintended.				
Visits to Open Billets	...	...	...	1,695
Inspections, Petroleum Acts	...	...	...	75
Samples of Milk taken	...	...	...	20
Samples of Ice Cream taken	...	...	...	9
Samples of Water	...	...	...	4

Inspections of Yards re Provision of Sanitary Dust Bins	22
Re ditto ditto ditto ...	17
Preliminary Notices Served	313
Legal ditto ditto	163
Letters sent	679
Notices sent to Schools (re Infectious Diseases)	202
No. of Licenses granted under Petroleum Acts	30
Cowsheds and Dairies Inspected ...	52
Milk-shops Inspected	312
Slaughter-house Visits	2,214
Visits to Market	285
Offensive Trades	33
Visits to Food Preparing Places ...	298
„ Fish Shops	363
„ Butchers' Shops	493

FOOD INSPECTION.

CARCASES EXAMINED.

Beasts.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Calves.
6,827	15,123	4,788	675

DISEASED AND UNSOUND MEAT, FRUIT AND VEGETABLES CONDEMNED AND DESTROYED.

13 Beasts & all Organs	7 Pigs' Lungs
373 „ Livers	7 „ Spleen
196 „ Lungs	10 „ Plucks
47 „ Udders	4 „ Mesenteries
11 „ Heads	34 st. Cod Fish
14 „ Other Organs	32 st. Cat Fish
1 Hindquarter Beef	34 st. Whiting

90 st. Bruised and Unsound Beef	20 st. Mixed Fish
10 Calves (immature)	1½ Barrel Apples
4 Sheep & all Organs	4 Boxes Oranges
15 Sheeps' Plucks	4 Baskets Plums
14 st. Unsound Mutton	2 Cases Bananas
5 Pigs and all Organs	19 Boxes Tomatoes
15 Pigs' Heads	6 Tins Preserved Beef
7 „ Livers	1½ tons Bacon

NUISANCES.

	Abated.	Out- standing.
Defective Drains	61	1
Choked Drains	177	
Defective W.C.'s	89	2
„ Soil Pipes	17	1
„ Gullies	41	
„ Flushing Fittings	41	
„ Sink Pipes	25	
„ Eaves Gutters, &c.	25	3
„ Fresh Air Inlets	33	1
„ Roofs	39	
„ Inspections Chambers	5	
„ Chimneys	3	
Yard Paving Repaired, &c.	16	
Offensive Accumulations	66	
Whitewashing, &c.	153	12
Filthy Houses	7	
Dampness	34	2
Dirty Closets and Yards	25	
Overcrowding	3	
Workshops Limewashed	74	

General Repairs	...	...	...	80
Cellars Paved	...	...	...	4
Poultry Improperly Kept	...	...	...	9
Animals Improperly Kept...	...	...	...	3

DISINFECTION.

Rooms after Infectious Disease	...	...	...	301
Rooms after Phthisis	...	...	...	149
Rooms for Vermin	...	...	...	53
Rooms after Cancer	...	...	...	18
School Rooms	...	...	...	15
Hospital Wards	...	...	...	32
Army Billets	...	...	...	335

BEDDING, &c., DISINFECTED.

Palliasses	...	41	Curtains	...	6
Mattresses	...	84	Carpets	...	15
Beds	...	76	Cloaks	...	4
Pillows	...	168	Coats	...	9
Bolsters	...	90	Boys' Suits	...	2
Blankets	...	201	Rugs	...	18
Sheets	...	52	Dresses	...	3
Bed Quilts	...	41	Sundries	...	40
Counterpanes	...	34	Cushions	...	30
General Body Linen	21		Bedcovers	...	10
Tablecloths	...	11			

BEDDING, &c., DESTROYED.

Palliasses	...	2	Quilts	...	1
Beds	...	2	Sundries	...	12
Bolsters	...	4	Pillows	...	12



