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WHICKHAM  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



# Annual Report

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OF THE

## Medical Officer of Health

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AND THE

SANITARY INSPECTOR

**Mr. Geo. E. HOPPER,**

FOR THE


**YEAR ENDING DECEMBER, 1920.**

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SWALWELL,

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# REPORT.

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WHICKHAM,  
1921.

MR. CHAIRMAN & GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1920.

## Population.

The population, as estimated by the Registrar General, is 20,168. This I accept as fairly probable, it would be higher than this during the height of the war, owing to the large numbers who flocked to the great munition centres, and all of these were not dispersed by mid-year 1920.

## Births.

There were registered in the district 525 births, of which 254 were males, and 271 females. In the different Wards the numbers were:— Whickham 74, Swalwell 121, Marley Hill 46, and Dunston 284.

In addition there were born outside the district, to residents of the district, 16, of which 7 were males and 9 females. This gives a total for the district of 541, of which 261 were males and 280 females.

This is 101 more than last year.

This gives a birth rate of 26.82 which is 5.05 higher than last year. It is 3.2 lower than that of the Administrative County of Durham at 30.02, but higher than England and Wales

at 25.4, the 96 great towns, including London, at 26.2, the smaller towns at 24.9, or London at 26.5.

Of the births 516 were legitimate and 25 illegitimate.

### Deaths.

There were registered in the district 190 deaths, of which 101 were males and 89 females.

To these have to be added the deaths of residents which occurred outside the district, chiefly in Public Institutions, to the number of 29.

Of these inward transfers, 11 were at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 8 at High Teams; 3 at the County Lunatic Asylum; 1 at the Isolation Hospital, Norman's Riding; 1 at the City Hospital for infectious diseases, Walker Gate; 1 at the Fleming Memorial Hospital, Newcastle-on-Tyne; and 4 elsewhere.

Against these we deduct 6 deaths of non-residents, which occurred and were registered in the district. These were mostly fatal accidents.

The corrected deaths properly belonging to the area were thus 215, of which 117 were males, and 98 females. For the Wards the figures are:— Whickham 24, Swalwell 53, Marley Hill 20, and Dunston 118.

This is 40 less than last year.

It gives a death rate of 10.66, which is very low. It is 2.48 lower than last year. It is 1.65 lower than the County, 1.74 lower than England and Wales, 1.8 lower than the great towns, 0.7 lower than the smaller towns, and 1.7 lower than London.

### INFANTILE MORTALITY.

There were 48 deaths of children under one year registered in the district, and 2 of residents outside, giving 50 as the total infant deaths, which is 2 less than last year. Of these 30

were males, and 20 females, 49 were legitimate and 1 illegitimate.

This gives an infantile mortality rate of 92, which is 26 lower than last year.

It is 14 lower than the County at 106, though this is the lowest infantile mortality rate ever recorded for the County.

It is, however, still higher than England and Wales at 80, the great towns at 85, the smaller towns at 80, and London at 75.

The registered causes of these infant deaths are Premature birth 11, defective vitality at birth 7, Congenital defects 5, Marasmus 6, injury at birth from difficult labour 2, Bronchitis 1, Broncho pneumonia 7, General tuberculosis 1, Erysipelas 1, Whooping Cough 1 or perhaps 2, if we include a child which died of Intussusception in R. V. I. while it was suffering from Whooping Cough, Diarrhœa 2, Congenital Syphilis 1, and Convulsions 3.

Of all these deaths 23 occurred under 1 month, 21 between 1 and 6 months, and 8 over 6 months.

It will be noticed that the whole group of ordinary infectious diseases is only responsible for two deaths—both from Whooping Cough but it is not likely that one of these would have occurred but for the accident of its getting an Intussusception.

There were only two deaths from diarrhœa, one in a baby only 13 days old and the other a child of 4 months which was not certified by a doctor presumably therefore it had not had treatment.

Considering the very great part which has hitherto been played by diarrhœa as a factor in infant mortality, this is a remarkable result even though the year was not what we call a typical diarrhœa one. It does seem that we have gone a long

way towards eliminating this hitherto potent factor of infant mortality.

The adoption of the Notification of Births Act and the appointment of Health Visitors was the beginning of the decline in infant mortality, and the Whickham Urban District may reasonably congratulate itself that it was the first district in the County to adopt the Act when it was a still voluntary one.

The immediate result was a great increase in breast feeding, and where this was impossible, a vast improvement in the methods of artificial feeding, with the practical disappearance of thrush and a marked improvement in general physique. The epidemic prevalence of diarrhœa also declined, but most markedly so, when a few years ago we also encouraged the use of dried milk, especially in summer and autumn, and introduced its municipal supply.

There were 8 deaths from the Acute Respiratory diseases all in very young children. I have said, and repeated in various reports, that these diseases are largely preventable, and very amenable to medical and nursing treatment, but they, and the deaths from them are not decreasing as rapidly as those from diarrhœa, though the deaths were lower by 2 than last year. There is a great opportunity here for the further exertions of nurses and health visitors, both in instructions to mothers and in actual treatment of cases, if only doctors would promptly call in their assistance.

There was one death from Congenital Syphilis.

There is much reason to believe, however, that this disease plays a large part in the causation of premature births, defective vitality at birth, and marasmus, and it may have something to do with other congenital defects where nature is arrested in its complete work, for most of these are the result of arrested development.

It is with regard to these causes of infant deaths that our powers seem most helpless. They may be classified as the Wasting diseases.

They constitute more than half of the infant deaths and when we add to them still births both mature and immature we realise an appalling waste of potential lives.

It is obvious that in dealing with these we must go further back and deal directly with the parents. Ante-natal Hygiene is a department of medicine that has enormous potentialities and is still largely an unexplored region.

Still we know a good deal and realise that such knowledge is now rapidly accumulating.

If only the knowledge that we already possess could be disseminated throughout the community it would not be long before excellent results would ensue.

It is this knowledge which has made me a persistent advocate of the establishment of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres and has made me insist on the use of the first term.

We want more than a mere Child Welfare Centre to which mothers will bring their children for advice and instruction, more than health visitors to babies under the Notification of Births Act, we want in addition the centre so constituted that expectant mothers will themselves come for advice, instruction and treatment, so that everything possible may be done to ensure the birth at full term of healthy well developed children.

Such a centre should consist of a medical officer of large experience and with faith and enthusiasm, and a staff of nurses and health visitors who will attend the centre and follow the cases to their homes. The staff we possess with such addition as I have frequently urged would suffice.

I consequently urge once more that such a centre be established in the rooms of the Cottage Hospital now approaching completion, which will have the advantage that patients requiring it may be drafted into the hospital for institutional treatment.

## ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

There were 14 deaths from the seven chief Zymotic diseases, viz:—2 from Measles, 1 each at Swalwell and Dunston; 1 from Scarlet fever in hospital from Dunston; 2 from Diphtheria at Dunston; 5 from Whooping Cough, 1 at Whickham and 4 at Dunston; 1 from Erysipelas at Swalwell; and 3 from Diarrhœa under two years, 1 at Marley Hill and 2 at Dunston.

This is equal to a Zymotic death rate of 0.69, which is 0.33 lower than last year.

It is 0.31 lower than the County.

The death rates for the individual Zymotic diseases are:—Measles 0.09; Scarlet fever 0.04; Diphtheria 0.09; Whooping Cough 0.24; Erysipelas 0.04; and Diarrhœa under two years 0.14.

In every case except Whooping Cough, it is lower than the County, and compares favourably with the whole country and its groups of great towns, smaller towns, and London.

When the deaths from Diarrhœa are expressed in terms of number of births, the rate is 5.71 per thousand births which is lower than England and Wales at 8.3, the great towns at 10.4, the smaller towns at 7.8, and London at 9.5.

## TUBERCULOUS DISEASES.

There were registered as pulmonary tuberculosis 17 deaths which is one more than last year, of these 5 were males and 12 females. Three were at Swalwell, 1 at Marley Hill, and 13 at Dunston.

This is equal to a death rate of 0.84 which is 0.02 higher than last year and 0.09 higher than the County.

Of other tuberculosis diseases there were 4 deaths all at Dunston. Of these 2 were certified as general tuberculosis and might be grouped with those of pulmonary tuberculosis, only

their ages, in one case only 5 months and in the other 16 years point to a more acute general infection than we usually associate with pulmonary tuberculosis or phthisis.

The others were one of tubercular broncho-pneumonia and one of Tubercular Meningitis.

Of all forms of Tuberculosis there were then 21 deaths of which 8 were males and 13 females.

Three were at Swalwell, 1 at Marley Hill and 17 at Dunston.

This is equal to a death rate of 1.04 which is 0.19 lower than last year.

This shows that 9.76 per cent of all deaths were due to Tuberculosis in some form.

This is slightly higher than last year, not because the deaths from Tuberculosis were more but because the other deaths were fewer.

## RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

Of these diseases there were 37 deaths, which is the same as last year. Of these 17 were from Bronchitis, 18 from Pneumonia of all forms, 1 from Acute Pulmonary Aedema, and 1 from Empyema, 22 were males, and 15 females.

Five were at Whickham, 8 at Swalwell, 2 at Marley Hill, and 22 at Dunston.

This gives a death rate of 1.83, which is 0.07 lower than last year, and is 0.72 lower than the County.

In considering these more in detail, we find that of the 17 deaths from Bronchitis, 12 were over 65 years of age, which is in accordance with general experience, as when people get old

and feeble, they often get Chronic Bronchitis, which is a common termination of life in the aged. Bronchitis is, however, equally dangerous to the very young, but in these, the disease most frequently develops into Broncho-pneumonia, and the deaths from it are so classified. This probably accounts for the fact that only one death under one year, and 1 between 1 and 5 years are attributed to this cause, while when we note the deaths from Broncho-pneumonia we find that 7 out of the total of 12 are under 1 year. In true Croupous or Lobar pneumonia again we find that deaths are more common in advanced life.

Grouping all the forms of Pneumonia, we find that of the total of 18, 7 were under one year, 1 between 1 and 5 years, 2 between 5 and 15; 6 between 25 and 65; and 2 over 65.

Two were at Whickham, 5 at Swalwell and 11 at Dunston.

### INFLUENZA.

There was no epidemic prevalence of Influenza, but sporadic cases occurred from time to time, and 5 deaths resulted. Two were males and 3 females. Two were at Whickham and 3 at Dunston.

This is equal to a death rate of 0.24 the same as the County.

### HEART DISEASE.

There were 20 deaths from Chronic Heart Disease and 1 from Acute Endocarditis. Of the chronic cases, 10 were males and 10 females. Two were at Whickham, 3 at Swalwell, 1 at Marley Hill and 14 at Dunston.

They were mostly of advanced age.

This is 6 fewer than last year, and is equal to a death rate of 0.99.

**CANCER.**

There were 10 deaths from malignant disease including 1 of Sarcoma and 1 of Rodent ulcer.

Four were males and 6 females, 1 was at Whickham, 3 at Swaiwell, and 6 at Dunston.

This is 3 fewer than last year and is equal to a death rate of 0.49.

There were no deaths from Puerperal Fever or any other conditions associated with parturition.

The causes of all deaths are set forth in the accompanying table.

**CAUSES OF DEATH IN WHICKHAM U. D. 1920.**  
(Civilians only)

CAUSES OF DEATH.	MALES.	FEMALES
ALL CAUSES. ... ..	117	98
1 Enteric Fever ... ..		
2 Small-pox ... ..		
3 Measles ... ..		2
4 Scarlet Fever ... ..	1	
5 Whooping Cough ... ..	3	2
6 Diphtheria and Croup ... ..		2
7 Influenza ... ..	2	3
8 Erysipelas ... ..		1
9 Pulmonary Tuberculosis ... ..	7	12
10 Tuberculous Meningitis ... ..		1
11 Other Tuberculous diseases ... ..	1	
12 Cancer, malignant diseases ... ..	4	6
13 Rheumatic Fever ... ..	1	1
14 Meningitis ... ..		1
15 Organic heart disease ... ..	10	10
16 Bronchitis ... ..	9	4
17 Pneumonia (all forms) ... ..	11	8
18 Other Respiratory diseases ... ..	1	2
19 Diarrhœa, etc., (under 2 years) ... ..	3	
20 Appendicitis and Typhlitis ... ..		
21 Cirrhosis of Liver ... ..		
21a Alcoholism ... ..		
22 Nephritis and Bright's disease ... ..	2	1
23 Puerperal Fever ... ..		
24 Parturition, apart from Puerperal Fever ... ..		
25 Congenital debility, etc. ... ..	12	11
26 Violence, apart from suicide ... ..	13	3
27 Suicide ... ..	2	1
28 Other defined diseases ... ..	34	27
29 Causes ill-defined or unknown .. ..	1	
Special Causes (included above)		
Encephalitis Lethargica ... ..	1	
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age. Total	29	20
Illegitimate ... ..	1	
TOTAL BIRTHS ... ..	261	280
Legitimate ... ..	246	270
Illegitimate ... ..	15	10
POPULATION—		
For Birth Rate ... ..	20168	
For Death Rate ... ..		

## NOTIFICATIONS.

There were 176 notifications of Infectious diseases of which 16 were at Whickham, 24 at Swalwell, 4 at Marley Hill, and 132 at Dunston.

Taking them individually 78 were of Scarlet Fever, 10 of Diphtheria, 13 of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 2 of Malaria, 16 of Pneumonia, 8 of Erysipelas, 1 of Cerebro-spinal Meningitis, 1 of Encephalitis Lethargica, 1 of Acute Polio-myelitis, 4 of Measles, in the third quarter, and 42 of Tuberculosis.

There were no cases of Smallpox or Typhoid fever.

**Scarlet Fever** There were 78 cases, being 43 more than last year, 1 was at Whickham, 5 were at Swalwell, and 72 at Dunston. They were distributed over the whole year though most frequently during the first quarter. The disease was never of epidemic prevalence and there was not a month without a notification from Dunston. In the other wards there was just an occasional sporadic case and at Marley Hill there was none. The type was generally mild and there was only one death — in the Isolation Hospital.

**Diphtheria.** There were 10, being 2 less than last year, 1 was at Marley Hill, and 9 at Dunston

They were isolated cases and there was no epidemic prevalence. There were 2 deaths.

**Ophthalmia Neonatorum.** There were 13 cases being 2 more than last year; 2 were at Whickham; 6 at Swalwell; 2 at Marley Hill, and 3 at Dunston.

This disease is apparently still on the increase. Though not dangerous to life it is one of the most common causes of blindness unless promptly treated, but fortunately it is very amenable to correct treatment requiring generally the co-operation of both doctor and nurse. For this co-operation we give complete facilities.

**Malaria.** There were 2 cases, both recurrences in demobilised soldiers who had contracted the disease abroad on Active Service.

**Pneumonia.** The notifications of Pneumonia of all forms amounted to 16, of which 7 were at Whickham, 3 at Swalwell, and 6 at Dunston.

In my report of last year, I expressed doubt of the regular notification of all these cases, especially of those of Broncho-pneumonia.

This is easily understood because these cases occur mostly in children and there is a regular gradation from simple cold in the chest through simple to severe Bronchitis and from that to well developed Broncho-pneumonia such that it is difficult to say when a notification becomes justifiable. In any case it is quite clear that the doubt was justified for in the year under review the deaths exceed the notifications.

No reliance can thus be placed on these notifications as far as statistics are concerned either as to frequency of attack or as to case mortality. On the other hand notification even if limited to the severe cases is of great value for practical purposes wherever there is an efficient nursing staff such as we possess because successful treatment in these cases depends more than anything on careful nursing. It is obvious that to attain the best results the doctor in attendance should himself, whenever he notices the suggestion of grave developments, send for and secure the services of the district nurse of his area, the same rule should apply wherever Pneumonia or Broncho-pneumonia is threatening as a complication of Measles, Whooping Cough, or Influenza.

I feel confident that if this were done more systematically there would soon be a considerable decline in the mortality of all forms of Pneumonia.

**Erysipelas.** There were notified 8 cases, being 3 more than last year. Two were at Whickham, 1 at Swalwell, and 5 at Dunston. None proved fatal.

Of the rarer of the notifiable diseases there were 3 viz:- One of Cerebro-spinal Meningitis at Swalwell which was proved by bacteriological examination of the cerebro-spinal fluid to be pneumo-coccal in origin, 1 of Encephalitis Lethargica at Swalwell in a demobilised soldier which proved fatal, and 1 of Acute Polio myelitis at Swalwell.

**Measles.** Compulsory notification ceased at the end of 1919 but was revived for the Whickham Urban District in Oct. 1920, on your application to the Ministry of Health on my advice and on reasoned arguments.

This disease was prevalent throughout the second half of 1919 and attained epidemic prevalence during the last quarter. At the end of the year it was declining at Dunston, was at its height at Swalwell, while at Whickham it had been kept well in check and at Marley Hill it was threatening.

In January, 1920, we ceased to get official notifications but through our nurses and health visitors, we were able to follow the progress fairly accurately which was through a rapid decline in all the wards, it was completely arrested in Marley Hill and Whickham and quickly declined at both Dunston and Swalwell.

After notification was revived, we got 1 case at Swalwell in October, and 3 at Dunston in November. As there were none in December, it was evident that these were isolated cases and did not again give rise to epidemic prevalence.

There were 2 deaths, both in January, 1 being at Swalwell and 1 at Dunston.

I remain entirely convinced that with early notification we can take such action through our nurses and health visitors as to greatly mitigate and control epidemics of Measles and very greatly lessen the mortality.

**Tuberculosis.** There were 42 cases notified, being 14 more than last year. Three were at Whickham, 4 at Swalwell, 1 at Marley Hill, and 34 at Dunston. Thirty were pulmonary.

Of the non-notifiable infectious diseases there was no great prevalence, though WHOOPING COUGH occurred in all the wards from time to time and caused 5 deaths, 1 at Whickham, 1 at Marley Hill and 3 at Dunston.

It was not a typical Diarrhoea year and this disease was not very prevalent, though it caused 3 deaths, 1 at Marley Hill, and 2 at Dunston.

There were 72 cases of infectious disease removed to hospital and the others were satisfactorily isolated at home.

### GENERAL SANITATION.

In considering this subject, it is to be noted that much of the excessive overcrowding which occurred during the war years, owing to our proximity to great munition areas, was being overcome. It was still considerable at the beginning of the year, but towards the end, it is probable that we had little more than our normal population.

This still means considerable overcrowding because house building practically ceased throughout the area two or three years before the war, so that no provision was being made for natural increase.

During the year, therefore, the most important work was done in organising schemes of house building and in effecting these in all the wards. Extensive schemes were formulated and approved by the Ministry of Health and have been steadily proceeded with, although not many were completed by the end of the year.

Until a large number of these houses are completed, it is obvious that our ability to condemn and get rid of many houses of a bad and insanitary character is limited.

The utmost endeavours have been made to deal with the worst cases and to get them made reasonably fit for habitation.

We are bound to admit however that something on a more extensive scale will be required to put the whole district in a thoroughly satisfactory state.

Appended is the report of the Sanitary Inspector.

As to the different Wards, I have nothing to add to the suggestions contained in previous reports, but to urge continued activity in the improvement of housing conditions, and in the conversions of ash-closets to water-closets.

One may reasonably hope that the object lesson of the Council houses, with their efficient sanitary system will be taken to heart by private builders in the future, and that present owners also will see that it has become necessary to introduce a similar system into their existing houses.

I am,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ANDREW SMITH,

M.O.H.

# Report of the Sanitary Inspector.

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Health Department,  
Council Offices,  
Whickham.

25th Oct., 1921.

To the Medical Officer of Health,

I beg to hand you the Summary of the work done in this Department during the year 1920.

The past year has been specially marked by the numerous complaints received at the office and on the district.

As usual each complaint was judged upon its merits, and dealt with accordingly.

I still hold strongly to the opinion as stated in previous reports, that personal interviews with Owners and Agents of property has, in the majority of cases, a much more beneficial and speedy result than the serving of notices.

With regard to the Summary of the Work for the past year, I specially select two items:—

1. Housing, Town Planning Etc., Act 1919. Section 28.
2. The general house drainage, including the conversion of ash-closets into water-closets.

1. As matters stand for the past year, a total of 178 inspections have been made. As a result of personally interviewing Owners and Agents 45 houses have been put into a

habitable condition by verbal request and the remaining 9 were in hand. 124 Notices were served, of which 103 had been complied with at the end of the year, and the remainder were being dealt with.

## 2. General house drainage work etc: —

During the year, 21 house drainage systems were tested and found to be in a defective condition.

21 ash-closets, 3 ash-pits and 2 privies have been abolished. 26 water-closets have been provided. A total of 312 yards of defective drains have been removed and 669 yards of new 4" drains laid. 48 anti-bell traps have been fixed and 109 water tests applied to the new works. Each drain was thoroughly bedded in concrete before being allowed to be filled in. No system of drainage whether to house or factory should be covered over before it has been thoroughly concreted.

### **Fish Friers' Licenses.**

Two applications have been before the Council, and both were granted.

### **Factory and Workshops Act.**

Four complaints were received from His Majesty's Factory Inspector, these matters were immediately taken up with the respective Owners, and successfully remedied.

### **Unsound Meat.**

The whole carcass of one cow was condemned as unfit for human food and destroyed.

### **Slaughter Houses.**

There are nine slaughter houses on the register, these are periodically inspected. They are well managed by their respective occupiers.

**Glaxo.**

7847 lbs of Glaxo have been sold, and 262 lbs issued free during the year.

**Workshops.**

There are under this heading a total of 28 in the district.

They are visited from time to time, are well conducted, and are maintained in a clean condition.

**Visits.**

1387 visits have been paid to the various works in hand, and for other purposes.

GEO. E. HOPPER,  
Sanitary Inspector.

## County of Durham.

*SUMMARY of Work done in the Inspector of Nuisances' Department during the year 1920 in the URBAN DISTRICT of WHICKHAM.*

1. PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.	Number of Informal written notices by Inspector	Number of Formal Notices by order of Authority	Number of Nuisances abated after Notice	General Remarks
Dwelling-houses and Schools. { Foul Conditions Structural Defects Overcrowding ...	1		1	
Lodging-houses ...				
Dairies and Milkshops ...				
Cowsheds ...	42		42	re bi-annual limewashing
Bakehouses ...				
Slaughter-houses ...	16		16	re bi-annual limewashing
Ashpits and Privies ...	2		2	
Deposits of Refuse and Manure ...	1		1	
Waterclosets... ..	1		1	
Defective Yard Paving ...	1		1	
House Drainage { Defective Traps No Disconnection from sewers Other Faults	16	2	14	2 cases not yet expired
Water Supply ...	3		3	
Pigsties ...				
Animals Improperly Kept ...	1		1	
Offensive Trades ...				
Smoke Nuisances ...				
Other Nuisances Under P.H.A. 1875, sec. 36 ...	1	34	8	24, remainder in builders hands, 3 dealing with owners.
Under H.T.P. Act, 1919, sec. 28 ...	54	124	103	remainder dealing with owners, and in builders hand.
Visits to ascertain if notices served have been complied with, etc., in addition to other work reported 1387.				
TOTALS ... ..	139	160	193	

*Inspector's Report continued:-*

	Number	Remarks.
<b>II. WATER, FOOD AND DRUGS</b>		
amples of Water taken for analysis		
"      "      condemned as ...		
unfit for use ...		
Seizures of Unwholesome Food ...	1	whole carcase of a cow.
Convictions for exposing or selling Unwholesome Food ...		
Samples of Food and Drugs taken ... for Analysis ...		
"      "      found Adulterated ...		
<b>III. PRECAUTIONS AGAINST INFECTIOUS DISEASE</b>		
Lots of Infectious Bedding stoved or destroyed	109	
Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease	109	
Schools do. do.	1	
Prosecutions for exposure of infected persons or things		
Convictions for do. do do.		
<b>IV. GENERAL.</b>		
Number of New Houses erected during the year ...	9	6 of these are under Housing Scheme.
Number of such Houses occupied during the year	9	6 of these are under Housing Scheme.
Ash-pit privies converted into Ash-closets ...		
do. do. Water-closets		
Ash-closets do. do.	26	
Total number of Water-closets in ... District ...	338	
do. Ash-closets do	3036	
do. Ashpit-privies do		

GEORGE ERNEST HOPPER,  
Inspector of Nuisances.

November 5th, 1921.