

1912.—No. 5.]

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,
ALDERMEN AND BURGESSES OF DUBLIN.

REPORT
OF THE
IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE,

*Re proposed Scheme for the clearance of the insani-
tary area bounded by Church Street, Stirrup
Lane, Beresford Street, Mary's Lane, and the
erection thereon of Workmen's Dwellings under
Part I. of the Housing of the Working Classes
Act, 1890, and the Housing of the Working
Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908.*

COUNCILLOR JOHN SCULLY, *Chairman.*

DUBLIN:
SEALY, BRYERS & WALKER,
MIDDLE ABBEY STREET,

1912.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,
ALDERMEN AND BURGESSES OF DUBLIN.

REPORT

OF THE

IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE,

*Re proposed Scheme for the clearance of the insani-
tary area bounded by Church Street, Stirrup
Lane, Beresford Street, Mary's Lane, and the
erection thereon of Workmen's Dwellings under
Part I. of the Housing of the Working Classes
Act, 1890, and the Housing of the Working
Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908.*

Your Committee's attention has been called to the derelict and insanitary condition of the area bounded by Church Street, Stirrup Lane, Beresford Street, and Mary's Lane. Portion of the area is already completely derelict, the houses there having been demolished.

When the Committee's attention was first directed to the condition of this area, a Sub-Committee was appointed to inspect and report upon it. The Sub-Committee, accompanied by the responsible officers, made a most exhaustive examination of the site on 12th October last and found that the conditions of human existence in all the Courts and passages comprised in the area are most deplorable. Apart from the insanitary condition of the houses on the boundary streets of the area, the place is honey-combed with narrow lanes and Courts, occupied by several families. These lanes

and courtways are close and narrow, thereby shutting out the necessary amount of light and air required for healthy conditions of human existence. The houses situate in these places have no backyards, and in some instances there is only one convenience for several families. A very large proportion of cases of small-pox during the epidemic of 1902 were taken from the houses on this site and its immediate surroundings. This fact in itself would tend to prove that the unhealthy housing conditions in this district must have greatly assisted the spread of the epidemic.

Sir Charles Cameron, who accompanied the Inspection Sub-Committee, unhesitatingly expressed the opinion that the entire area is an unhealthy one, and signified that he was prepared to make an official representation to that effect. We thereupon instructed the Borough Surveyor and the City Architect to have a survey and plans prepared with a view to acquiring the area for the purpose of a housing scheme. Sir Charles furnished the following official representation in accordance with Section 4 of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, Part I. :—

"I hereby certify that within the area bounded by the following streets, viz., on the North, by the south side of Stirrup-lane; on the South, by the northern side of Mary's-lane; on the East, by the western side of Beresford-street; and on the West, by the eastern side of Church-street; all the houses, courts and lane-laneways are unfit for human habitation; and that the evils connected with same, and the sanitary defects in such area, cannot be effectively remedied otherwise than by an improvement scheme for the rearrangement and reconstruction of the streets and houses within such area.

" Dated this 29th day of December, 1911.

" CHARLES A. CAMERON,

" Medical Superintendent Officer of Health."

The law respecting "unhealthy areas" is, that if the Corporation has before it in legal form an official representation from the Medical Officer of Health that any particular area is an unhealthy one, the Municipal Council is bound to take into consideration such representation, and if satisfied of the truth thereof, and of the sufficiency of its resources, to declare by resolution the area to be an unhealthy area, and that an improvement scheme ought to be made in respect of same. After passing said resolution the Council must proceed to make a scheme for the improvement of the area. It is quite evident from the information we have obtained, and the foregoing official representation of Sir Charles Cameron, that the area in question is an unhealthy one, and that in the interests of public health the clearing of it under Part I. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, and the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908, should be taken in hands immediately.

We, therefore, recommend that the following resolution be adopted, and the City Seal affixed thereto:—

"Whereas, the Superintendent Medical Officer of Health has made an official representation that within the area bounded by the following streets:—On the North, by the south side of Stirrup-lane; on the South, by the northern side of Mary's-lane; on the East, by the western side of Beresford-street; and on the West, by the eastern side of Church Street; all the houses, courts and lane-ways are unfit for human habitation; and that the evils connected with same, and the sanitary defects in such area, cannot be effectively remedied otherwise than by an improvement scheme for the rearrangement and reconstruction of the streets and houses within such area:

'It is hereby declared that the said area is an unhealthy area, and that an improvement scheme ought to be made in respect of said area.'

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT SCHEME.

The scheme which your Committee propose for the improvement of the area consists of the acquisition of all the property within the area bounded by the streets named in the resolution, the clearance of the entire site so acquired, and the building upon same of houses suitable for the Working Classes. All the lands proposed to be acquired are proposed to be acquired compulsorily. The details of the scheme, so far as same are not contained hereinafter, are set forth in the maps, particulars, and estimates, which will be laid upon the table of the Council Chamber when this report comes up for the consideration of the Council.

DETAILS OF THE SCHEME.

(1) Acquire all property within the area :

(2) Clear site so acquired :

(3) Construct upon the site :—

(a) 90 three-room two-storey cottages, at £130 per cottage;

(b) 156 three-room two-storey cottages, at £120 per cottage;

(4) Construct five new roads—each 40 feet in width—on the site;

and increase widths of the existing boundary roads as follow :—Stirrup Lane, from an average of 18 feet to an average of 33 feet 6 inches; Church Street, from an average of 34 feet to an average of 46 feet; Beresford Street, from an average of 21 feet to an average of 36 feet 6 inches; Mary's Lane, from an average of 23 feet to an average of 46 feet 6 inches.

ESTIMATED CAPITAL OUTLAY.

	£
90 cottages at £130,	11,700
156 cottages at £120,	18,720
Acquisition of site and law expenses	9,000
Clearance of site,	2,000
Roads and Sewers,	3,300
Clerk of Works and Quantities,	600
Engineering expenses	200
	<hr/>
	£45,520

BALANCE SHEET.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

BERESFORD STREET AND CHURCH STREET AREA.—LOAN £45,520.

Estimated Annual Expenditure.		Estimated Annual Income.		
	£		£	s. d.
*Interest and Instalment of Principal, third year.	2,371	66 Cottages, at 5s., . .	858	0 0
Rates,	694	156 Cottages, at 4s. 6d.,	1,825	4 0
Maintenance,	123	24 Shops, at 10s., . .	624	0 0
Superintendence,	80	Loss,	35	16 0
Insurance,	25			
Vacancies,	50			
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	£3,343		3,343	0 0

* Annual reduction, £27 8s. 0d.

EDMUND W. EYRE,
City Treasurer.

4/1/'12.

Each cottage will have a separate yard and W.C., and will contain three rooms of the following dimensions :—

“ A ” Class at £130 each.

Living Room—19 ft. 0 in. x 11 ft. 3 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. high.

Floor area—214 super. feet.

Cubic content—1,812.

Bedroom No. 1—11 ft. 3 in. x 9 ft. 6 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. high.

Floor area—107 feet super.

Cubic content—910.

Bedroom No. 2—9 ft. 0 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. high.

Floor area—76 feet super.

Cubic content—646.

“ B ” Class at £120 each.

Living Room—17 ft. x 11 ft. 3 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. high.

Floor area—191 feet.

Cubic content—1,624 feet.

Bedroom No. 1—8 ft. 6 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. x 8 ft. 6 in. high.

Floor area—72 feet.

Cubic content—614 feet.

Bedroom No. 2—11 ft. 5 in. x 8 ft. 0 in. x 8 ft. 6 in.

Floor area—91 feet.

Cubic content—776 feet.

The calculation of principal and interest as shewn in the balance sheet is made on the assumption that the loan will be obtained from the Board of Works.

As the instalments on foot of loan are being repaid interest becomes chargeable against the reduced amount; consequently the loss of £35 16s. 0d. will disappear in the fourth year, and from that onward the scheme will produce a profit annually, accumulating at the rate of £27 8s. 0d.

In the recent reports adopted by Council dealing with the Cook Street and Lurgan Street Schemes a fair rent was set down as the annual payment on foot of the acquisition of the site instead of instalment of principal and interest on the capital sum in respect of such acquisition. The reason for this was advanced by the Borough Surveyor, who holds that any building scheme can only be compared and judged on the basis of the fair market site value of an unhealthy area, after same has been cleared of the insanitary dwellings on it, and that it would not be fair that the financial aspect of a housing scheme should be judged, while at the same time being burthened with the annual charges resulting from the compensations and other expenses involved in clearing the unhealthy area, which should strictly be a Public Health Charge. The City Treasurer, on the other hand, contends that a rent should not be substituted on foot of the cost of acquisition, and that the building scheme should be debited with the principal and interest upon the entire capital outlay—including cost of acquisition, clearance and erection of buildings, etc. As there is only one fund in existence to which all expenses in connection with Housing Schemes are chargeable, viz. :—the Housing Fund—your Committee hold the view that the latter method of setting out the balance sheet, and which is

followed in this report, is the simplest and least complicated. The question being one of book-keeping does not contain any principle—material or otherwise, which can have the smallest effect on the ratepayers' interests. For instance, if the annual expenses on foot of acquiring and clearing an unhealthy area are kept in a separate account, while a housing scheme carried out on such area charged with a rental of so much per foot might show a profit to the eye of the ratepayer, he may not be aware that this profit would be absorbed in the loss which would appear on the other side of the account in respect of charges for acquisition and clearance.

NOTES ON THE SCHEME.

The area comprises about $3\frac{3}{4}$ acres, and has the advantage of being almost rectangular, so that it presents a most appropriate site for a building scheme. An additional advantage is that the area is bounded by existing roads, which tends to lessen the capital outlay. The site is a most suitable and convenient one for the working classes—being in close proximity to such large centres of employment as Jameson's Distillery, Jameson and Pim's Brewery, Midland Great Western Railway Co., Crean's Soap Works, Corporation Workshop in Stanley Street, the City Markets, etc., besides many other minor industries in the locality. As we have already pointed out in previous reports relating to housing reform, the City Treasurer has advised us that the block system of dwellings has proved most objectionable; they are unpopular with the working classes, and from the ratepayers standpoint they are uneconomic. The cottage system therefore at once commends itself as the preferable one and

accordingly we recommend self-contained cottages for adoption.

It is proposed that pillars about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high shall be erected at the entrances to the new roads in order to prevent vehicular traffic passing through, and the streets will thereby answer the purpose of playgrounds for the children. The shutting out of vehicular traffic will also have the effect of lessening the cost of maintenance. It has been suggested by the City Architect that a row of trees in the centre of each of these new roads, with seats interspersed between them, would considerably improve the general aspect and amenities of the scheme. We may also mention that the total open space area which the new roads will provide, will amount to over an acre.

The following is an approximate census of the area as it exists at present :—

Area.	Families.	Popula- tion.	Rents of Tene- ments.		Rooms un- occupied.	Number of Houses.
			1 room.	2 rooms.		
3a. 3r. 5p.	308	1540	2/-, 2/6, 2/9 & 3/-	3/6 & 4/6	61	121
			COTTAGES. One room, 3/- Two room, 3/6			

Calculating on the total capital outlay on the scheme now proposed—covering the cost of acquisition of site, the erection of buildings, and road construction—

The cost per room will work out at	£61
The cost per person re-housed,	£37
The cost per family re-housed	£185

The following comparisons will show that the proposed scheme outlined in this report will compare very favourably with what has already been approved by the Municipal Council and the Local Government Board, and what has been done in the big Cities in England under Part I. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890 :—

Scheme.	Estimated cost per room.	Estimated cost per person rehoused (average of 5 to a family).	Estimated cost per family rehoused.
	£ s.	£	£
Cook Street Area (approved by the Local Government Board).	61 10	37	185
Lurgan Street Area (approved by the Municipal Council).	56 10	34	170
Liverpool (Hornby Street Area).	114 0	56	280

The cost per head of re-housing in large English Cities under Part I. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, averages £77 15s. 0d. The cost of acquiring the Hornby Street Area in Liverpool, exclusive of compensation for licensed property, was £7,986 per acre. The estimated cost of acquiring the Beresford Street and Church Street Area is £2,400 per acre.

We find that at present there are 31 shops within the boundaries of the site, exclusive, of course, of the public-house at the corner of Church Street and Mary's Lane. On the question of shop accommodation we

consider that 24 shops can, with advantage, be distributed over the area. Besides the absolute necessity of providing adequate shop accommodation for the very large number of people that will be re-housed, we are informed that the demand for these small shops where all the minor necessities can be conveniently obtainable will be sufficient to warrant the Committee in submitting this proposal for the consideration of the Municipal Council. If, however, it is found that the demand for them is not sufficient, the shops remaining unlet can be set as ordinary dwellings at the lower rent, the expense of re-conversion being still very small. The cost of constructing a shop will not materially differ from the cost of erecting a cottage, but, on the other hand, the increased revenue which is calculated to be derivable from the shops, *i.e.*, 10s. per week each, has considerably reduced the estimated loss on the scheme.

It may be mentioned that the Local Government Board have already approved of shop tenements in the Townsend Street Scheme, and it appears to be not unusual to provide shop accommodation in large schemes carried out in England under Part I. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.

At the recent Local Government Board Inquiry our Secretary strongly advocated our views that the period for the repayment of the loan on foot of acquisition of site should be extended to the full term of 80 years as provided by the Clancy Act, and the Memorandum drawn up by the Board of Works for the guidance of Local Authorities in the matter of borrowing from

that Board for the purposes of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908. This view was impressed upon the Inspector on the ground that while 60 years might appear a reasonable term for a loan on houses, the land upon which they are built is good security for a longer period, if not for all time. If the Corporation succeeds in getting the period of repayment on foot of the cost of acquisition of land extended there would be no initial loss at all on the scheme.

We therefore ask the authority of the Municipal Council, after the adoption of this report, to apply by Petition to the Local Government Board for a Provisional Order, and also for a loan of £45,520.

The Law Agent and Town Clerk to be empowered to publish advertisements, serve notices, and take all steps necessary to comply with the statutory requirements, including the sealing of the requisite documents.

As it is desirable that this scheme should be proceeded with without delay, we recommend that Standing Order No. 12 be suspended to enable the Council to consider and deal with this report at its next meeting.

All of which we beg to submit as our Report, this 4th day of January, 1912.

JOHN SCULLY,

Chairman.

City Hall, Dublin.