

Health Dept
March 15th, 1929.

• Report of Dr. T. H. Whitelaw,
Medical Health Officer.

Re: Ross Acreage & Spruce Centre.

In response to your request, I today with the Chief Sanitary Inspector, made a personal inspection of the area known as Ross Acreage and Spruce Centre and beg to report as follows:

In the portion south of Connors Road there are 24 occupied premises on the lower level close to Mill Creek, one of which is in Spruce Centre immediately south of the Ross Acreage and 8 others on the higher level up the hill to the East. Of these 32 premises, there are only about 6 reasonably good dwellings, one of which only has sewer and water installed getting sewer connection to the Mill Creek sewer. Two other houses have water service only but the owners of these three houses have provided this water service at their own expense from the Strathcona Road. There is therefore no City water service provided or fire protection except from a hydrant situated at a considerable distance on the Strathcona Road near its junction with Connors Road.

The balance are for the most part very poor structures which are inhabited because the occupants are in practically all cases too poor to provide or to pay the rental of better quarters elsewhere. On the North side of Connors Road near the Anderson brick yard there are about 25 small houses or shacks of a somewhat better type and situation than those to the South in the lower level along Mill Creek. From a residential standpoint it would be difficult to find a more undesirable place to live than this latter location. Access by scavengers to the whole area under consideration is either impossible or very difficult to the majority of these shacks or houses. Except for a few houses facing Connors Road, there is no orderly arrangement as regards the location of the houses or shacks which have many years ago been allowed to be built in a haphazard fashion without any relation to neighboring dwellings or provision for streets or lanes. It is difficult to suggest any immediate and practicable remedy for the conditions which exist except by the City assuming the responsibility for the expenditure which would be necessary to remove or dismantle the majority of these poor dwellings and at the same time provide other quarters for the present occupants who are in most cases quite unable financially to improve or change their living quarters, in which they have their small means invested, paying a ground rent to the City of \$2.00 per month. In one case the owner pays an annual tax of \$7.00 to the City in addition to the ground rent.

Such conditions as exist in this area cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely and some remedy must be provided. Under no circumstances should permits be given for any additional buildings on this property which has come into the City's possession unless some plan is evolved which will provide at least the semblance of orderly arrangement and make scavenging service possible to the dwellers in the area involved. Probably the best final disposition of the property would be to have it reserved for a small park area or sold for market gardens.

Of the residents in Ross Acreage, five or six families have been in receipt of assistance from the Relief Officer during the last year.