

Fabian Tract No. 103.

# OVERCROWDING IN LONDON

## AND ITS REMEDY

A SPEECH

BY

W. C. STEADMAN, M.P., L.C.C.

[REPRINTED FROM HANSARD, WITH A FEW CORRECTIONS.]

WITH THE TEXT OF THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES  
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# NATIONAL HOUSING REFORM COUNCIL

FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

*(Established in connection with the Land Nationalisation Society.)*

*Office :* **432 West Strand, London.**

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## OBJECTS.

To advocate and work on non-party lines for practical **Housing Reform** ; *e.g.*, the usage and extension of the powers already possessed by local authorities ; the conferring on local authorities power to acquire (and hold) land at a price based on the assessment of such land to local and imperial taxation ; the extension of co-operative enterprise in regard to house supply ; the taxation of land values ; the amendment of the Parish Councils Act in such a way as to secure the provision of small holdings, with power to build houses thereon ; and the increase, quickening, and cheapening of the means of transit by tram and rail.

## METHODS.

The arrangement of Conferences and Public Meetings ; the organization of local committees to work for Housing Reform ; the preparation of petitions ; the issue of special literature ; the establishment of a central bureau of information for the use and guidance of Housing reformers ; and the organization of support for more thorough Housing legislation.

A **National Scottish Council** is also being formed to federate and act in co-operation with the above Council.

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*THE CO-OPERATION OF ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE  
HOUSING PROBLEM IS CORDIALLY INVITED.*

# OVERCROWDING IN LONDON AND ITS REMEDY.

A SPEECH ON THE SECOND READING OF THE GOVERNMENT "BILL FOR AMENDING THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ACT, 1890, PART III.", DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON MAY 10TH, 1900, BY W. C. STEADMAN, M.P. AND L.C.C. FOR STEPNEY.

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## The Government's Little Bill.

IN rising to second the Amendment that has been moved by the hon. and learned member for Shields (Mr. W. S. Robson, Q.C.), I should like to say to the right hon. gentleman the Secretary to the Local Government Board, who introduced this Bill under the Ten Minutes Rule, that there was one thing alone in which I agreed with him, and that was when he stated that the Bill was of a very modest character. Compared with the magnitude of the subject, I do not think that the Bill could be more modest. Three months, nearly, have now elapsed since the Bill was introduced, and I was in hopes that this afternoon we should have had a speech from the right hon. gentleman in moving the Second Reading, and that from that speech we should have been able to learn that he himself had come to the conclusion that this Bill was one which would not at all grapple with or solve the problem. I understand that during the Easter vacation the right hon. gentleman has done a little slumming in the East-End of London. I am only sorry that he did not call at my modest residence, because within a few hundred yards of that residence I should have shown him some slums that I consider would have opened his eyes as to the places in which the workers of London are living at the present moment. It was my hope that the right hon. gentleman would have put his own Bill on one side, believing that it was useless, and would have accepted, on the part of the Government, the Bill introduced by myself, as a Bill more likely to deal with the subject than his own.



### Some Ancient Housing Acts.

The subject under discussion this afternoon is no new one. On May 8th, 1847, *The Times* came out with a very lengthy and able leading article on the question of the housing of the people. Parliament has been trying to deal with it by Acts passed during the last fifty years. In 1851 we had the Act of Lord Shaftesbury; in 1868 we had the Act of Mr. Torrance; in 1875, 1879, and 1882 we had three Acts passed by Mr. (now Lord) Cross. In 1884 the present Prime Minister—and that is the reason why I am surprised that the Government have introduced this very modest Bill—moved in the House of Lords for a Royal Commission, and on that occasion he was supported by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. In the same year, in the House of Commons, the late Mr. Gladstone appointed the most powerful Commission that has ever been appointed by any Government to go into this subject, and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was a member of that Royal Commission. In 1890, when Lord Salisbury and his party were in office, as the result of the Report of that Royal Commission, Parliament passed the Housing Act.

### The Act of 1890.

But what was that Act? It was merely a consolidation of the previous Acts which I have already referred to, with perhaps one or two slight amendments. It was divided into three parts—Lord Shaftesbury's Act being Part III., Mr. Torrance's Act Part II., and Lord Cross's Acts Part I. Under Part III. municipalities are allowed to acquire land to build workmen's dwellings upon. Under Part II. municipalities or county councils can, in conjunction with the local authority, clear an area at joint expense—the county council getting one portion and the local authority the other portion. Under Part I. county councils can themselves clear an area and find the whole cost of that clearance. Now, although this Act has been passed, yet at the same time the question is more difficult to solve now than it ever was.

### Overcrowding in London.

The mover of the resolution has referred to the question of overcrowding, and I am going to deal for a moment with the question as far as it affects London. I take my authority not from any books, pamphlets or articles that have been written, but from Dr. Shirley Murphy, the medical officer of health to the London County Council, and in doing so I consider that I can find no higher authority on that question. He tells us that we have no less than 400,000 human beings in London to-day living in one-roomed tenements. Nine thousand people are living seven in one room, and 3,000 are living eight in one room. This state of things is not confined only to the East-End of London. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—a gentleman

who, at the present moment, should have some weight and influence with Her Majesty's Government—one Sunday afternoon preached a sermon on this subject at St. James's Hall, and stated that one of his colleagues knew of a case not very far from where he was preaching where one house was occupied by forty-three people. In one room was a man and his wife and eight children; in another a man and his wife and seven children, and the eldest son was married and lived in the same room.

### **In St. Pancras and St. James.**

In St. Pancras, not far from Regent's Park, 2,370 persons live in overcrowded one-room tenements. The medical officer of health in Kensington—the aristocratic part of London—states that he knew of a case where five adults, females, all occupy one bedroom—three sleeping on the bed and two underneath; and another case of five persons—one man and two children, and two women who in this case also slept under the bed.

One of the vestrymen—and I place some reliance on our vestrymen in London in these matters, because I consider they are, above all, the persons who know exactly how and under what conditions the people live—one of the vestrymen of St. James's Vestry declared that he knew of a room, let at £1 a week, where twelve persons were living and sleeping together. In Camberwell, which is on the south side of the river, there is a case where no less than seventeen people live and sleep in one room; and in another case two families occupied one room, a sack forming the partition which divided the room into two.

### **In East-End Workhouses.**

But in the East-End of London there are even worse cases, because there the beds are often let out on the eight-hours system. Some men start their work at ten at night; and when they go to work somebody else goes to bed who has to be at work at six in the morning, and when he goes to work another man occupies the bedroom; in some cases, in consequence of the want of house accommodation, working men, in employment, are obliged to take their wives and families into the workhouse, and pay for them until such time as they are able to find accommodation for them outside. That has been done in Poplar. My colleague on the London County Council has told the President of the Local Government Board of cases coming under his notice where this has occurred. The Rev. A. W. Jephson, a member of the Newington Vestry, on the south side of the river, could tell you of instances in that neighborhood.

### **Overcrowding Never Worse.**

There never was a time in the history of this country when house accommodation was harder to get or rents higher. Such a state of things has never been known since the Great Fire. Where formerly



six people occupied a house we have now on an average twenty-four people, and in order to accommodate the number of persons who to-day are living under conditions contrary to the provisions of the Public Health Act we should want to build something like from 400,000 to 500,000 rooms, or 50,000 to 60,000 eight-roomed houses. Does the right hon. gentleman assume, because he is going to give powers to the London County Council to purchase land outside the County of London itself, that we are going to find accommodation for this great number, one-fifth of the total population, living in overcrowded tenements? The mover of the resolution referred to the cubic space, but that is not an Act of Parliament, but a bye-law under the London Health Act, and refers to London alone, and all it lays down is that every person should have 400 cubic feet of space in the room in which he lives. Professor Huxley, himself at one time a medical officer of health, stated that at least 800 cubic feet of space was necessary if people were to grow up in health. In the Army you allow 600 cubic feet, and 450 for the police, and the poor in the workhouses, according to the law, are entitled to 500 feet. I have referred to the medical officer of health for Kensington, but he is not the only one. The right hon. gentleman in his Department is supplied with all this information. Let him look at the reports of the local medical officers of health for Islington and for Lambeth, and he will find they are equally as strong as that of the medical officer of health for Kensington.

### No Room to Live.

A woman, the wife of a working man, some month or two back, applied to the Lambeth County Court. She had been living in a house, and the landlord wanted to get her out; neither she nor her husband had been able to find a suitable place to which to go, and the landlord, in order to get them out, took down the door and removed the windows. She applied to Judge Emden for protection, and he was so struck by the hardship which they had endured by the harsh action of the landlord that he immediately consented to allow them a month longer in which to find accommodation. In answer to a question he put to this woman, she stated that not only was she not in arrears with her rent, but when she tendered it her landlord refused to take it. But, Sir, there is even a worse case than that: a case of suicide. An inquest was held in the month of November last year, and at that inquest it was stated by the husband that he had been married fourteen years and had eight children. For very nearly four years he and his wife and family had lived in a first floor front room, but of late only his wife and himself and four children occupied the room, the three younger children having been removed. The wife was confined, and during her confinement the landlord told her that they would have to clear out, as they were living contrary to the provisions of the Public Health Act. Her inability to find accommodation elsewhere so preyed on the poor woman's mind that she committed suicide.

## Failure of the Public Health Act.

It is true that the local authorities have the power in their hands at the present time under the Public Health Act to prevent overcrowding; but I maintain that under the Act you may hunt the poor from pillar to post, turn families out of one place and drive them into another, and still you will never sweep away the overcrowding problem. As a member myself of a vestry in the East-End of London, I am opposed, and shall always be opposed, to putting into operation the provisions of the Act against overcrowding, because I know it is useless to do so until we can find proper accommodation for the people we shall have to turn out.

## Born and Bred in the Slums.

There is another side to this subject, and, from my point of view, a very important side, namely, the death-rate among the working classes arising out of this overcrowding. What has the Government had to do? I do not know from memory how many years, but during a certain number of years, on two occasions, you have had to reduce the standard of height for men entering the army. Does it stand feasible that the sons of working men, born and bred in these slums which we have in London to-day, are going to grow up healthy and sound, and with fine physique, in order that they may undergo the severe strain which our soldiers are put to at the present time in South Africa? It is a matter of impossibility, and the Government recognized that when they reduced the standard height for the army. The late Sir Benjamin Richardson once laid it down that no city could be healthy with more than twenty-five persons living to the acre.

## The Three St. Georges'.

In Wandsworth there are eighteen persons to the acre, while in St. George's-in-the-East we have no less than 256 persons to the acre. Now we will take the death-rate in two places. In St. George's-in-the-West the overcrowding is 10 per cent., in St. George's-in-the-East it is 40 per cent., and in St. George's-in-the-South it is 35 per cent. In St. George's-in-the-West the death-rate per 1,000 is 13·2, while in St. George's-in-the-East it is 26·4, so that you see the death-rate in St. George's-in-the-East, where there is overcrowding, is just double what it is in St. George's-in-the-West. According to the returns of St. George's-in-the-West there were 1,064 deaths in one year, and 264 of these were children. In St. George's-in-the-East there were 1,259 deaths, and 661 were children. The medical officer in Central London stated that the death-rate in one house was equal to 129 in the 1,000. Dr. Shirley Murphy, the medical officer of health for the County Council of London, in the last report issued, states that the mortality from phthisis at each age increases with overcrowding.



## Lunatic Londoners.

Then lunacy is on the increase in London, so much so, that the County Council is spending thousands of pounds to build lunatic asylums. If we take the average over the whole of London, the increase is 1·9, but if we take it in the densely-populated districts it is 10·1. The total number of pauper lunatics admitted into our asylums from overcrowded districts is something like 2,700, all told, and the cost to the ratepayers 10s. per week for each lunatic. I have dealt with the subject so far as public health is concerned with overcrowding. Now I want to deal with another subject which bears upon this question, namely,

## The Increase in Rents.

On March 17th, last year, I called the attention of the right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury, by a question, to the fact of the increase of rents in London. His reply to me was that he had no information on the point, nor had he any means of obtaining it. I followed that question by another on March 24th: I asked him whether, in order that he might have full information of how rents had been increased in East London, and of the results of overcrowding thereby, he would appoint Commissioners, whose duties should be to investigate to what extent rents had been increased during the last two years, and the causes and results of such increases upon the working classes. The right hon. gentleman replied: "I agree with the hon. gentleman that the question of overcrowding is one of the most important that can be considered in connection with the urban problems that face us, but I do not think that much is to be gained from the course suggested by the hon. gentleman." If the First Lord of the Treasury was in his place now, I should give him some facts from my own personal investigation as to where rents had increased in East London only during the last two years. The figures are not taken from anything I have read, but from my own personal inquiries, addressed to the tenants on the spot.

## Rents in Stepney and Whitechapel.

I find that in some cases in my own constituency rents have increased within the last two years from 13s. to 18s. per week; in another street from 11s. 6d. to 16s.; in another street from 9s. 6d. to 16s.; in another street from 5s. 6d. to 10s. 6d.; and from 9s. 6d. to 15s. This morning, not a hundred yards from where I am myself living, a widow stopped me. She has six children to support, and the rent of her house was 14s. per week. She gets her living by letting the house to lodgers and doing a day's washing or charing. That woman, with tears in her eyes, told me that the landlord had increased the rent from 14s. to 18s. What could the woman do? There is no accommodation in Stepney. Every place



is taken up and overcrowded. The worst cases we have of increasing rents are in Whitechapel, where five-roomed houses have gone up from 15s. or 16s. per week to 21s.; two-roomed houses, which fetched 10s., have gone up to 16s. to 21s.; six-roomed houses, which were let at £4 4s. per month, are now fetching 42s. per week. Other houses have gone up from 16s. to 20s., and from 19s. to 30s. In another case the rent is £45 a year, no less a sum than 30s. per week. Most of these places are inhabited by the casual laborer, and in many cases key money is demanded, varying from £1 up to £15 and £20.

Rents have increased all over London. Whether you go east, west, north, or south, you will find the same tale told: that rents have gone up. At Plumstead, Bermondsey, and other parts of London, the increase is 50 per cent.

### Landlords: Good and Bad.

How do the landlords work this dodge of increasing the rents? First of all, they know that there is a greater demand for accommodation than there are houses to put the people in. I do not say that every landlord is a bad landlord: I know estates in the East-End where the landlords have not increased rents a farthing for years past. The landlord I have lived under for seventeen years has not increased my rent a farthing, while rents all round the district have increased. I believe in speaking of people as I find them. I am not here to attack good landlords or good employers, but the bad landlords and bad employers are my line of attack. A young fellow, a friend of my own, who has written some very useful articles on this subject, and published them in a pamphlet entitled "No Room to Live," in order to ascertain how certain landlords took advantage of the great demand for accommodation, got up early one morning and went to a house agent in the East-End of London, who was advertizing a house to let. When he got there, there were a number of people at the place before him. He let them go in one after another, and at last he went in and asked the man the rent of the house. The agent told him that the woman who had just gone out offered 15s. per week, but if he liked to give him 16s. per week he could have it. The agent admitted that he had allowed these people to bid up against one another until he got 15s. for a house which was previously let for 7s. 6d. A certain section of men had come to be so unscrupulous as to practise legalized robbery—robbing working men of their wages by demanding such exorbitant rents. Working men had a right to step in and ask Parliament to protect them against unjust landlords.

### Fair Rent Courts.

There is only one way, in my opinion, of solving this problem, and that is a system of fair rent courts, for you may build as much as you like outside, there will always be a great demand for house

accommodation inside the County of London. Thousands of workmen have removed outside during the last few years, and landlords have taken advantage of this to increase their rents. I may be told that the time is inopportune to discuss the question of fair rent courts in London, or in any other part of the country. I never knew yet when the time was opportune to discuss legislation that had for its object benefit for the working classes of this country. Some politicians are termed opportunists. They sit on the fence and wait to see which way the cat is going to jump. When a question becomes a burning one, they drop down on the side of popularity. I hope I am not, and never shall be, one of those politicians. It is immaterial to me whether the question is popular or unpopular if it is just and right to take it up, for the interest of my own class is paramount with me over the interests of all other classes. Why not? Working men may be deluded by some of your promises for a short time; but they find you out. The question which is not popular to-day may be some day, and perhaps there will be many more Members of Parliament prepared to take it up than now. Five-and-twenty years back the land question and the rent question in Ireland was unpopular. The Irish members in this House were denounced when they advocated fair rent courts for Ireland, but to-day they are a reality. I hope they will be reality so far as we are concerned.

### What the L.C.C. has Done.

The right hon. gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, when he replies to-night, may turn round and accuse me of being one of the members of the London County Council who could do more in reference to this problem than they had already done; but I have an answer to that. The London County Council is restricted on all hands by your Board and the Home Office. What has been our experience? In ten years we have spent no less than £2,000,000, and housed 42,000 people with it. The schemes we have carried out under Part I. have cost £851,456, and out of that sum no less than £282,406 has gone into the pockets of men who, instead of being compensated for their rotten property, should have been prosecuted. At the present moment, if we undertake a scheme under Part I., we have to build in accordance with the regulations of the Home Office and the Local Government Board. Personally I do not object to that. I believe if a municipality is going to build, it should build well or not at all. We have to make the land a charge upon the buildings. We have to borrow money in accordance with the fluctuations of the market. It may be  $2\frac{7}{8}$ , 3, or  $3\frac{1}{8}$  per cent. We have to take into our calculations the cost of the land, the cost of the clearance of the buildings, etc., and we have to base our rents to provide a sinking fund of 3 per cent. in order to repay the capital and the interest of the loan. What happens? The result is that our rents are so high— [Hear, hear?] It is not our fault. It is the fault of the law and not the



fault of the municipality. Our rents are so high that the places rebuilt do not come within the purview of the poor unskilled worker or general laborer, and, therefore, we are accommodating people to-day who could find not better but other accommodation elsewhere, and the poor people are entirely neglected. That is our own experience.

### What is Needed: Lower Interest.

I maintain that, in the first place, the Government should give us facilities for borrowing money at a lower rate than  $2\frac{7}{8}$  or 3 per cent., as the case may be. You can find money to carry on the war. Is not this question as important to you as the war in South Africa, if not of more importance? Where do you get your soldiers and sailors from? Why, you get them from the ranks of the workers. Aye, and what is more important still, where do you get the industrial workers from who produce the wealth without which this and no other Government could go on? From the workers. That being so, you have a right to protect them in every shape and form, and to find them better accommodation than we are able to find them now. Then we should have opportunities for borrowing money at the lowest rate possible. Instead of having to repay the money in sixty years the time should be extended to a hundred years. Our property is not slum property. I was a member of the Housing Committee myself for five years. I inspected some of the houses we built. We had timber enough in the roof to frame a ship. Our houses will last 200 or 300 years. At the end of sixty years all the money we have expended will have come back ten times over, and that will be a great relief to the ratepayers of that period.

### Extending the Period of Loans.

If our houses are going to stand 200 or 300 years, surely it is no hardship to extend the period for the repayment of the loan from sixty to a hundred years. If that was done the County Council could do more in the way of providing house accommodation than they are able to do at present. It is no use saying we have no opportunities of building in London. We have 14,000 acres of land to-day in London which could be built on provided the County Council had better opportunities than now. We have a little patch here and there and all over the place, and if we cannot build it is because the patches are so small that the rents would be three times as costly as are charged to the tenants now. You compel the County Council to charge such rents. The poor tenant has to pay rent not only for the cost of the land on which the house is built but for the building also. If all London is going to reap the benefit of our housing policy in fifty years time, then all London ought to pay for it, and the land ought to be an asset instead of being, as now, a charge on the building. There is another difficulty the London Council has to contend with.

### The Wily Landowner.

If the owner comes to know that it is the County Council who are going to purchase, what does he do? He doubles his price in a moment. The result is that we have to negotiate through some outside gentleman in order that the owner of the land should not know that it is the County Council who are anxious to purchase. We had a case only last year where negotiations were going on for some land. A question was asked in the Council about it, and from the answer it leaked out that the County Council were negotiating for the purchase, and up jumped the price at once, with the result that the Council had to drop the negotiations. We have not only to pay the value of the land, but we have to pay an extra ten per cent. over the value. [Cries of "No."] Yes, Sir, we have to pay ten per cent. for compulsory purchase under Part III. I am referring to Part III.

### Taxation of Vacant Land.

All vacant land should be taxed, and if that were done the owner would then be very ready to sell his land for the first offer he could get for it, whereas now, through vacant land being untaxed, he can keep it as long as he likes. It becomes the more valuable the more years he keeps it, and the result is that he gets a price for the land that he really is not entitled to. The slum-owner, as I have already stated, under the existing law is allowed full compensation. Take Boundary Street—one of the worst in London, where the death-rate was double that of any other part of London. It was well known that the owners of property in that area were prepared to sell the property for a bagatelle, but the moment they found the County Council was going to purchase they demanded their full pound of flesh—they demanded the full price for their rotten bricks and mortar. A few weeks back an inquest was held on the death of an infant child which took place at 10 Windsor Court, Strand. The father admitted that three children had died in his two-roomed house, and that an inquest had been held on each one.

### Prosecution for Slum-Owners.

The law allows the landlord to go scot-free, it allows the slum-owner to go free, while it allows the local authority to prosecute the fishmonger for selling bad fish, and the butcher for selling bad meat, and all tradesmen for selling adulterated food. If it is right to prosecute the fishmonger and the butcher, the same thing should be done in the case of the slum-owner who is responsible for the deaths of little infants in his rotten slums. I am fortified in this opinion by a speech delivered by the right hon. gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies. He once stated in a speech that the law should make it an offence punishable by a heavy fine to let property not fit for human habitation, but instead of having such a law as that to-day



we are compelled by the law to compensate the owners. Mr. Blashill, for twenty years chief architect to the Metropolitan Board of Works, who has vast experience and knowledge on this subject, states that at least the slum-owner should be compelled to pull down and rebuild at his own expense without any compensation at all. With reference to your Bill, he says it is not worth the paper it is written on so far as solving this problem goes.

### Something Must be Done.

I maintain that it is a very serious problem, and I also admit that it is a very difficult one. At the same time I consider that it is a problem that deserves, above all things and all parties, the serious consideration of Her Majesty's Government. We know that working men and women are stunted in their growth, that consumption is on the increase, and that disease and death lurk in every corner and every street where there is slum property.

### Peers on the Problem.

Lord Rosebery, in a speech, stated: "The facts that are presented to us are daily coming to the minds of the people, and, they hope, ultimately to our statesmen." Lord Carrington stated that he welcomed the fact that the working men were waking up on this question, and that it was unjust to them to have to pay such excessive rents. Lord Tweedmouth stated that London had grown according to the sweet will of the ground landlord and the jerry-builder, and London was now faced with a problem infinite in its magnitude and most difficult to deal with. Above all, the Prince of Wales, in opening the Boundary Street area in March last, said: "There is no question at the present time of greater social importance than that of the housing of the working classes." I hope Parliament may be able to deal with the case of those who are responsible for insanitary property. In dealing with this matter it is not my desire to deal with it from a party point of view, or as a means of attacking Her Majesty's Government. I admit I have referred to speeches delivered by gentlemen belonging to this side of the House: if I have not referred to speeches delivered by gentlemen on the other side of the House the fault is not mine but theirs, because they have made no speeches on the subject. I know that the Government have a very difficult task on their hands in the war in the Transvaal, but, at the same time, they have no Bill before the House of Commons of any magnitude whatsoever, and I fully expected, when the housing of the working classes was referred to in the Speech from the Throne we should have a Bill which would deal with the problem from its very roots. Instead of that we get

### A Paltry Bill,

which, so far as we in London are concerned, consists of one clause, enabling the London County Council to purchase land outside its

own area. This measure will no more solve the problem than a glass of water will float one of Her Majesty's rams—which, for the benefit of those who have had no experience of shipbuilding, I may explain is a warship. The longer the problem exists the more difficult will the solution become. I trust the Government are serious in this matter. After all, the working classes do not care a rap whether it is a Conservative Government or a Liberal Government which deals with the question; they only require that it shall be dealt with effectually and practically. At the last Trade Union Congress, representing 1,250,000 working men, a very important resolution on this matter was passed, and a mass meeting was held in Hyde Park last autumn on the subject, at which something like 100,000 men were present. It is in their name, not in my own, that I speak on this subject, and I voice their grievances and desires that something practical should be done to remedy and solve this important problem.

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The following is the text of the amending Act as passed on 8th August, 1900 :—

An Act to amend Part III. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.

1.—Where any council, other than a rural district council, have adopted Part III. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890 (in this Act referred to as “the principal Act”), they may, for supplying the needs of their district, establish or acquire lodging houses for the working classes under that Part outside their district.

2.—(1) The council of any rural district may, with the consent of the county council, adopt Part III. of the principal Act, either for the whole of their district or for any contributory place or places therein.

(2) In giving or withholding their consent under this section, the county council shall have regard—

(a) to the area for which it is proposed to adopt the said Part; and

(b) to the necessity for accommodation for the housing of the working classes in that area; and

(c) to the probability of such accommodation being provided without the adoption of the said Part; and

(d) to the liability which will be incurred by the rates, and to the question whether it is, under all the circumstances, prudent for the district council to adopt the said Part.

(3) The principal Act is hereby repealed to the extent mentioned in the third column of the schedule to this Act.

3.—(1) Any expenses incurred by the council of a metropolitan borough under Part III. of the principal Act, whether within or without the borough, shall be defrayed as part of the ordinary expenses of the council, and in that Act the expressions “district,” “local authority,” and “local rate” shall, for the purposes of Part III. of the Act, include a metropolitan borough, the council of the borough, and the general rate of the borough.

(2) Where the council of a metropolitan borough adopt Part III. of the principal Act, the power of the council to borrow for the purposes of that Part shall be exercisable in the like manner and subject to the like conditions as the power of the council to borrow for the purposes of Part II. of that Act.



4. Where land acquired by a council under Part III. of the principal Act is appropriated for the purpose of re-housing persons displaced by the council under the powers of any other Part of that Act or of any other enactment, the receipts and expenditure in respect of that land (including all costs in respect of the acquisition and laying out of the land), and of any buildings erected thereon, may be treated as receipts and expenditure under that Part or enactment, but shall be accounted for under a separate head.

5.—(1) The local authority, if not a rural district council, with the consent of the Local Government Board, and if a rural district council with the consent of the county council, may lease any land acquired by them under and for the purposes of Part III. of the principal Act to any lessee for the purpose and under the condition that the lessee will carry the Act into execution by building and maintaining on the land lodging houses within the meaning of the Act; and the local authority shall insert in every lease all necessary provisions for insuring the user of the land and buildings for lodging houses within the meaning of the Act, and in particular the local authority shall insert in any lease provisions binding the lessee to build on the land as in the lease prescribed, and to maintain and repair the buildings, and securing the use of the buildings exclusively as lodging houses within the meaning of the Act, and prohibiting any addition to or alteration of the character of the buildings without the consent of the local authority; and also a provision for the re-entry of the local authority on the land on the breach of any of the terms of the lease; and every deed or instrument of demise of the land or buildings shall be endorsed with notice of this subsection.

Provided that in the case of a council in London, the consent of a Secretary of State shall be substituted for the consent of the Local Government Board.

(2) Sections sixty-one and sixty-two of the principal Act shall not extend to any lodging house to which this section applies.

6.—The council of any administrative county, if a parish council shall resolve that a rural district council ought to have taken steps for the adoption of Part III. of the principal Act, or to have exercised their powers under that Part, and have failed to do so, may, if satisfied after due inquiry that the district council have so failed, resolve that the powers of the district council for the purposes of that Part shall be transferred to the county council with respect to the parish, and they shall be transferred accordingly, and the resolution shall, if necessary, have effect as an adoption of that Part by the district council, and, subject to the provisions of this Act, section sixty-three of the Local Government Act, 1894, shall apply as if the powers had been transferred under that Act.

7.—Where land is acquired under Part III. of the principal Act otherwise than by agreement, any question as to the amount of compensation which may arise shall in default of agreement be determined by a single arbitrator to be appointed and removable by the Local Government Board, and subsections (5), (7), (8), (10), and (11) of section forty-one of the Act shall apply as in the case of an arbitration under that section. Provided that in the case of a council in London a Secretary of State shall be substituted for the Local Government Board.

8.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1900, and the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, 1890 to 1894, and this Act may be cited together as the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, 1890 to 1900.

(2) This Act shall not extend to Scotland or Ireland.

#### SCHEDULE (THIRD COLUMN).

Parts of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, repealed:—The proviso to section fifty-four. Section fifty-five. In section sixty-five, the words from "and save where" to "bear such expenses," and the words "at the time of the publication of the certificate" and "who publish the same."

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