



# Housing of the Working Classes Act 1885

## 1885 CHAPTER 72

An Act to amend the Law relating to Dwellings of the Working Classes. [14th August 1885]

WHEREAS it is expedient to amend the law with reference to the provision of suitable dwellings for the working classes:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

### *Labouring Classes Lodging Houses*

#### **1 Adoption of Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts**

- (1) The Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, may be adopted—
  - (a) for the city of London by the Commissioners of Sewers of the city of London;
  - (b) for the metropolis, exclusive of the city of London, by the Metropolitan Board of Works if one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State approves of such adoption;
  - (c) for any urban sanitary district by the urban sanitary authority of such district in accordance with section ten of the Public Health Act, 1875 ; and
  - (d) for any rural sanitary district, by the sanitary authority of the district upon such certificate published by the Local Government Board, and after such delay as herein-after mentioned.
- (2) A rural sanitary authority in any district desiring to adopt the said Acts may apply to the Local Government Board for the certificate required for such adoption, and shall specify in such application the area in which they consider that accommodation is necessary for the housing of the labouring classes, and thereupon the Local Government Board shall direct a local inquiry to be held by one of their inspectors, and if after such local inquiry the inspector shall certify that accommodation is necessary

in such area for the housing of the labouring classes, and that there is no probability that such accommodation will be provided without the execution of the said Acts, and that having regard to the liability which will be incurred by the rates, it is under all the circumstances prudent for the said authority to undertake the provision of the said accommodation under the powers of the said Acts, the Local Government Board may if they think fit publish that certificate in the "London Gazette," and thereupon the sanitary authority may adopt the said Acts: Provided that—

- (a) unless the Local Government Board state in publishing such certificate that, by reason of the date of the next ordinary election of members of such authority or otherwise, an emergency renders it necessary to adopt the Acts immediately, such adoption in pursuance of the certificate shall not take place before the ordinary election of members of such authority which is held next after the date of the local inquiry; and
  - (b) after the end of twelve months from the date of the certificate the Acts shall not be adopted without a fresh certificate; and
  - (c) no land shall be acquired, nor buildings erected under the said Acts outside of the area mentioned in the certificate, except after a fresh application, inquiry, and certificate.
- (3) Where the rural sanitary authority think it just that the burden of the expenses of the execution of the said Acts should be borne by some contributory place or places only in their district, instead of by the whole of their district, the authority may in their application to the Local Government Board request permission to limit the burden of such expenses to such contributory place or places, and thereupon the justice of such limitation shall be inquired into at the local inquiry, and the Local Government Board, if satisfied after the local inquiry that the circumstances of the contributory place or places and of the rest of the district render such limitation just, may make an order to that effect, and thereupon the expenses of the execution of the said Acts in the area mentioned in the order shall be borne by the contributory place or places named in the order instead of by the whole district. The provisions of this enactment with respect to the burden of the expenses shall apply upon every application for a fresh certificate.
- (4) When the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, have been adopted by the Metropolitan Board of Works, or by any sanitary authority, or by the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London, then
- (a) such board or authority or Commissioners shall have power to carry the said Acts into execution within the area for which they are adopted, subject in the case of a rural sanitary authority to the foregoing provisions with respect to rural sanitary authorities, and for that purpose may exercise the same powers whether of contract or otherwise as in the execution of their duties under the Metropolis Management Act, 1855, and the Acts amending the same, or under the Public Health Act, 1875, or under the Acts conferring powers on such Commissioners of Sewers respectively;
  - (b) all expenses incurred by such board or authority in the execution of the said Acts shall be defrayed—
    - (i) in the case of the Metropolitan Board of Works, out of the Dwelling House Improvement Fund under the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875;
    - (ii) in the case of an urban sanitary authority, as part of the general expenses of their execution of the Public Health Act, 1875; and
    - (iii) in the case of a rural sanitary authority, as special expenses incurred in the execution of the Public Health Act, 1875, and, save where the

burden of such expenses is by order of the Local Government Board to be borne by one contributory place only, shall be deemed to be incurred for the common benefit of all the contributory places liable to bear such expenses : Provided that if on the application of the rural sanitary authority it is so declared at the time of the publication of the certificate by the Local Government Board, then the said expenses of the rural sanitary authority shall be defrayed as general expenses of the said authority in the execution of the Public Health Act, 1875, and if such expenses are not to be borne by the whole of the district, shall be charged to the contributory places which are to bear the same as an addition to the general expenses otherwise chargeable thereto;

(iv) in the case of the City of London, out of the Dwelling House Improvement Fund under the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875;

- (c) all receipts under the said Acts shall be paid to the fund out of which such expenses are payable, and the accounts of such receipts and expenses shall be audited in like manner and with the like incidents and consequences respectively as the accounts of the general or special expenses above mentioned;

but separate accounts shall be kept of the receipts and expenditure for the purposes of the said Acts ;

- (d) such Board and Commissioners may borrow for the purpose of the execution of the said Acts, in like manner and subject to the like conditions as they may borrow for the purposes of the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875, and every such authority may borrow for the purpose of the execution of the said Acts in like manner and subject to the like conditions as for the purpose of defraying the above-mentioned general or special expenses ;

- (e) in the application of the said Acts to the City of London, " district" shall mean the City of London, and " board " the Commissioners of Sewers of that city; and in the application of the said Acts to the metropolis, "district" shall mean the Metropolis exclusive of the City of London, and " Board " the Metropolitan Board of Works; and in the application of the said Acts to a rural sanitary district, " district" shall mean the said district, and "board" the rural sanitary authority. In any case where an urban sanitary authority does not levy a borough rate or any general district rate, but is empowered by a Local Act or Acts to borrow money and to levy a rate or rates throughout the whole of their district for purposes similar to those or to some of those for which a general district rate is leviable, it shall be lawful for such sanitary authority to defray the expenses incurred in the execution of the said Acts by means of money to be borrowed, and a rate or rates to be levied, under such Local Act or Acts.

## **2 Definition of purposes of Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts**

- (1) The expression " lodging-houses for the labouring classes " when used in the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, shall be deemed to include separate houses or cottages for the labouring classes, whether containing one or several tenements, and the purposes of the said Act shall be deemed to include the provision of such houses and cottages.
- (2) Land for the purposes of the said Acts as amended by this Act may be acquired by the Metropolitan Board of Works, by the Commissioners of Sewers of the city of London,

and by any sanitary authority in like manner as if those purposes were purposes of the Public Health Act, 1875, and sections one hundred and seventy-five to one hundred and seventy-eight, both inclusive, of that Act (relating to the purchase of land), shall apply accordingly, and shall for the purposes of this Act extend to the metropolis in like manner as if the Commissioners of Sewers and Metropolitan Board of Works respectively were a local authority in the said sections mentioned, and one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State were substituted for the Local Government Board.

### **3 Provision respecting sites of certain metropolitan prisons**

In the event of the removal from their present sites of Millbank Penitentiary or Pentonville Penitentiary, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty, on the recommendation of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, and subject to such conditions as they may think reasonable, and in the event of the removal from its present site of Coldbath Fields Prison, or House of Detention, Clerkenwell, it shall be lawful for the justices of the peace for the county of Middlesex if the justices think fit so to do, to sell and convey those respective sites or any part or parts thereof to the Metropolitan Board of "Works, at a fair market price.

#### *Amendment of Artizans Dwellings Acts*

### **4 Amendment of 31 & 32 Vict. c.130**

The owner of any premises who is required by an order of a local authority made under the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Act, 1868, to execute any works on or to demolish any premises, shall cease to have the power to require the local authority to purchase such premises.

#### *Amendment of Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts*

### **5 Amendment of 38 & 39 Vict. c.36 s.8 and schedule; 42 & 43 Vict. c.63; 45 & 46 Vict. c.54, schedule**

- (1) The Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1882, shall extend to all urban sanitary districts.
- (2) In either of the following cases :
  - (a) Where an officer of health has reported to any local authority in the metropolis, exclusive of the City of London, either in pursuance of the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Act, 1868, that any premises are in a condition or state dangerous to health, so as to be unfit for human habitation, or in pursuance of section eight of the Artizans Dwellings Act, 1882, that the pulling down of any obstructive buildings would be expedient, and such authority resolve that the case of such premises or buildings is of such general importance to the metropolis that it should be dealt with by a scheme under the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1882; or
  - (b) Where any such official representation as mentioned in section three of the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875, has been made to the Metropolitan Board of Works in relation to any houses, courts, or alleys within a certain area, and the Metropolitan Board of Works resolve that the

case of such houses, courts, or alleys is not of general importance to the metropolis, and should be dealt with under the Artizans Dwellings Acts, 1868 to 1882 :

such local authority or board may submit such resolution to one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, and thereupon the Secretary of State may appoint an arbitrator, and direct him to hold a local inquiry, and such arbitrator shall hold such inquiry, and report to the Secretary of State as to whether, having regard to the size of the area, to the number of houses to be dealt with, to the position, structure, and sanitary condition of such houses, and of the neighbourhood thereof, and to the provisions of section three of the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875, the case is either wholly or partially of any and what importance to the metropolis at large, with power to such arbitrator to report that in the event of the case being dealt with under the Artizans Dwellings Acts, 1868 to 1882, the Metropolitan Board of Works ought to make a contribution in respect of the expense of dealing with the case. The Secretary of State, after considering the report of the arbitrator, may, according as to him seems just, decide that the case shall be dealt with either under the Artizans Dwellings Acts, 1868 to 1882, or under the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1882, and the officer of health or other proper officer shall forthwith make the report or official representation necessary for proceedings in accordance with such decision.

- (3) Where an arbitrator has under the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1882, determined the amount of compensation, an appeal shall not lie to a jury from the decision of such arbitrator without leave of the High Court of Justice, but such court or any judge thereof at chambers may grant such leave upon application in a summary manner, and upon being satisfied that a failure of justice will take place if the leave is not granted.

#### *Amendment as to Interest on Public Works Loans*

### **6 Rates of loan by Public Works Loan Commissioners**

Any loan advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners in pursuance of the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, or of the Artizans Dwellings Acts, 1868 to 1882, or of the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1882, the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act, 1875, and any Acts amending the same, or of any of such Acts, or for labourers dwellings in pursuance of the Public Works Loans Act, 1875, shall bear such rate of interest, not less than three pounds two shillings and sixpence per cent., as the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury may from time to time authorize as being in their opinion sufficient to enable such loans to be made without loss to the Exchequer.

Provided that this section shall cease to be of effect after the thirty-first day of December one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight.

#### *Amendment of General Sanitary Law, &c*

### **7 General duty of local authority to enforce the law**

It shall be the duty of every local authority entrusted with the execution of laws relating to public health and local government to put in force from time to time as occasion

may arise, the powers with which they are invested, so as to secure the proper sanitary condition of all premises within the area under the control of such authority.

## **8 Amendment of 38 & 39 Vict. c.55 s.90**

Whereas under section ninety of the Public Health Act, 1875, the Local Government Board can declare that section to be in force within the district of a sanitary authority, and after the publication of notice of such declaration such authority is empowered to make byelaws with respect to lodging-houses, and it is expedient to authorize every such authority to make such byelaws without any declaration by the Local Government Board : Be it therefore enacted as follows:—

Every sanitary authority shall have power to make byelaws for the matters specified in section ninety of the Public Health Act, 1875.

## **9 Tents and vans used for human habitation**

- (1) A tent, van, shed, or similar structure used for human habitation, which is in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health, or which is so overcrowded as to be injurious to the health of the inmates whether or not members of the same family, shall be deemed to be a nuisance within the meaning of section ninety-one of the Public Health Act, 1875; and the provisions of that Act shall apply accordingly.
- (2) A sanitary authority may make byelaws for promoting cleanliness in, and the habitable condition of tents, vans, sheds, and similar structures used for human habitation, and for preventing the spread of infectious disease by the persons inhabiting the same, and generally for the prevention of nuisances in connexion with the same.
- (3) Where any person duly authorized by a sanitary authority or by a justice of the peace has reasonable cause to suppose either that there is any contravention of the provisions of this Act or any byelaw made under this Act in any tent, van, shed, or similar structure used for human habitation, or that there is in any such tent, van, shed, or structure any person suffering from a dangerous infectious disorder, he may, on producing (if demanded) either a copy of his authorisation purporting to be certified by the clerk or a member of the sanitary authority or some other sufficient evidence of his being authorized as aforesaid, enter by day such tent, van, shed, or structure, and examine the same and every part thereof in order to ascertain whether in such tent, van, shed, or structure there is any contravention of any such byelaw or a person suffering from a dangerous infectious disorder.
- (4) For the purposes of this section " day" means the period between six o'clock in the morning and the succeeding nine o'clock in the evening.
- (5) If such person is obstructed in the performance of his duty under this section, the person so obstructing shall be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding forty shillings.
- (6) This section shall apply to the metropolis, with the substitution of section nineteen of the Sanitary Act, 1866, for section ninety-one of the Public Health Act, 1875, and of nuisance authority, under the Nuisance Removal Acts, for sanitary authority.
- (7) Nothing in this section shall apply to any tent, van, shed, or structure erected or used by any portion of Her Majesty's military or naval forces.

## **10 Application of certain provisions as to byelaws and local inquiries**

- (1) With respect to byelaws authorized by this Act or by the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Act, 1851, to be made—
  - (a) sections two hundred and two and two hundred and three of the Metropolis Management Act, 1855, where such byelaws are made by the Metropolitan Board of Works, or any nuisance authority in the metropolis; and
  - (b) the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1875, relating to byelaws, where such byelaws are made by a sanitary authority,shall apply to such byelaws, and a fine or penalty under any such byelaw may be recovered on summary conviction.
- (2) For the purposes of the execution of their duties under this Act the Local Government Board may hold such local inquiries as the Board see fit, and sections two hundred and ninety-three to two hundred and ninety-six, both inclusive, of the Public Health Act, 1875, relating to inquiries by such Board shall apply.

## **11 Amendment of 45 & 46 Vict. c.38 as regards erection of buildings for working classes**

- (1) The Settled Land Act, 1882, shall be amended as follows:—
  - (a) Any sale, exchange, or lease of land in pursuance of the said Act, when made for the purpose of the erection on such land of dwellings for the working classes, may be made at such price, or for such consideration, or for such rent, as having regard to the said purpose, and to all the circumstances of the case, is the best that can be reasonably obtained, notwithstanding that a higher price, consideration, or rent might have been obtained if the land were sold, exchanged, or leased for another purpose.
  - (b) The improvements on which capital money may be expended, enumerated in section twenty-five of the said Act, and referred to in section thirty of the said Act, shall, in addition to cottages for labourers, farm servants, and artizans whether employed on the settled land or not, include any dwellings available for the working classes, the building of which in the opinion of the Court is not injurious to the estate.
- (2) Any body corporate holding land may sell, exchange, or lease such land for the purpose of the erection of dwellings for the working classes at such price, or for such consideration, or for such rent as having regard to the said purpose and to all the circumstances of the case is the best that can reasonably be obtained, notwithstanding that a higher price, consideration, or rent might have been obtained if the land were sold, exchanged, or leased for another purpose.

## **12 Condition to be implied on letting houses for the working classes**

In any contract made after the passing of this Act for letting for habitation by persons of the working classes a house or part of a house, there shall be implied a condition that the house is at the commencement of the holding in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation. In this section the expression "letting for habitation by persons of the working classes " means the letting for habitation of a house or part of a house at a rent not exceeding in England the sum named as the limit for the composition of rates by section three of the Poor Rate Assessment or Collection Act, 1869, and in Scotland or Ireland four pounds.

*Supplemental***13 Definitions**

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

The expression "sanitary district" means the district of a sanitary authority:

The expression "sanitary authority" means an urban sanitary authority or a rural sanitary authority:

The expressions "urban sanitary authority" and "rural sanitary authority" and "contributory place" have respectively the same meanings as in the Public Health Act, 1875:

The expression "metropolis" means the parishes and places within which the Metropolitan Board of Works have for the time being power to levy the consolidated rate :

The expression "cottage" may include a garden of not more than half an acre; provided that the estimated annual value of such garden shall not exceed three pounds.

**14 Construction of Act**

This Act, so far as it amends the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Act, 1851, the Labouring Classes Dwelling Houses Act, 1866, and the Labouring Classes Dwelling Houses Act, 1867, (which Acts are in this Act referred to as the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867,) shall be construed as one with those Acts, and together with those Acts may be cited as the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1885.

This Act, so far as it amends the Artizans Dwellings Acts, 1868 to 1882, shall be construed as one with those Acts, and together with those Acts may be cited as the Artizans Dwellings Acts, 1868 to 1885.

This Act, so far as it amends the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1882, shall be construed as one with those Acts, and together with those Acts may be cited as the Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875 to 1885.

**15 Application of Act to Ireland**

In the application of this Act to Ireland, the following provisions shall take effect:—

- (1) The Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, shall be substituted for the Public Health Act, 1875, and in particular the references in this Act to sections ten, ninety, ninety-one, and one hundred and seventy-five to one hundred, and seventy-eight, both inclusive, of the Public Health Act, 1875, shall be respectively taken to be references to sections eight, one hundred, one hundred and seven, and two hundred and two to two hundred and four, both inclusive, of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, and the reference to sections two hundred and ninety-three to two hundred and ninety-six, both inclusive, of the Public Health Act, 1875, shall be taken to be a reference to sections two hundred and nine, two hundred and ten, two hundred and twelve, and two hundred and thirteen of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878 ;



- (2) The provisions of this Act which relate exclusively to the adoption by rural sanitary authorities of the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, shall not apply to Ireland;
- (3) The Local Government Board for Ireland shall be substituted for the Local Government Board ;
- (4) The Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland shall be substituted for the Public Works Loan Commissioners ;
- (5) This Act, so far as it amends the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses and Dwellings (Ireland) Act, 1866, shall be construed with that Act, and that Act shall be included amongst the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, as they are referred to under that description in this Act. So much of subsection four of section twenty-one of the said Act of 1866 as provides that no byelaws made under that Act shall be of any legal force until the same shall have received the approval of the Chief Secretary or Under Secretary for Ireland shall be . amended by substituting therein the Local Government Board for Ireland in lieu of the Chief or Under Secretary;
- (6) Nothing contained in this Act shall prevent the adoption by any town commissioners, not being an urban sanitary authority, or by any such company, society, association, or private persons as are therein referred to, of the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses and Dwellings ("Ireland) Act, 1866, by whom that Act might have been adopted if this Act had not been passed.

## **16 Application of Act to Scotland**

In the application of this Act to Scotland the following provisions shall have effect:

- (1) The Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, may be adopted by any local authority under the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1867, and the Acts amending the same, and the expenses shall be paid and money borrowed as under the last-mentioned Acts;
- (2) The provisions of this Act with respect to the adoption of the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts, 1851 to 1867, by a rural sanitary authority shall apply to the adoption thereof by a local authority, being a parochial board, as if the Board of Supervision for the Relief of the Poor in Scotland were substituted in the said provisions for the Local Government Board;
- (3) In the provisions of this Act with respect to the purchase of land, section ninety of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1867, and the enactments amending that section, shall be substituted for sections one hundred and seventy-five to one hundred and seventy-eight of the Public Health Act, 1875 ;
- (4) The Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act, 1875, and the Acts amending the same shall apply to the whole of Scotland, and the local authority under the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1867, and the Acts amending the same shall be the local authority under the Act so applied.

## **17 Short title**

This Act, may be cited as the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1885.

**18 Repeal**

The Acts mentioned in the schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent in the third column of that schedule specified, without prejudice to anything done or suffered thereunder, or to any proceeding pending at the date of the passing of this Act.

*Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).*

## SCHEDULE

### ENACTMENTS REPEALED

A description or citation of a portion of an Act in this Schedule is inclusive of the word, section, or other part first and last mentioned or otherwise referred to as forming the beginning or as forming the end of the portion comprised in the description or citation.

Session and Chapter.	Short Title.	Extent of Repeal.
<i>Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Acts.</i>		
14 & 15 Vict. c. 34 [1851].	The Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Act, 1851.	Section two. Section three, except from " words " importing the masculine " to the end of the section. Sections five to thirty-four. So much of sections thirty-five to forty-three as relates to parishes or to the Commissioners for a parish, or to the vestry, guardians, churchwardens, or overseers of a parish. Section thirty-seven. Section forty. Section forty-one. Section forty - three from " and the surplus " to end of section. Section forty-four. In section forty-five from " and as " to any parish " to the end of the section, In section forty-six the words " and Commissioners" wherever they occur, and from " provided always " to the end of the section. So much of sections forty-eight, fifty-one, and fifty-two, and of the schedule, as relates to parishes or to the Commissioners for a parish.
29 & 30 Vict. c. 28 [1866].	The Labouring Classes Dwelling Houses Act, 1866.	So much of sections four, six, and seven, as authorizes any council, board, or

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*Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).*

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Session and Chapter.	Short Title.	Extent of Repeal.
		other sanitary authority to borrow, or as relates to Commissioners authorized to carry into execution the Labouring Classes Lodging Houses Act, 1851.
29 & 30 Vict. c. 44.	The Labouring Classes Lodging Houses and Dwellings Act (Ireland), 1866.	So much of sections three to seven, of sections eleven to thirteen, and of section twenty-three, as relates to urban sanitary authorities and urban sanitary districts.
		Section twenty-five.
46 & 47 Vict. c. 60.	The Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1883.	Section twenty.
	<i>Artizans Dwellings Acts.</i>	
42 & 43 Vict. c. 64 [1879].	The Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Act (1868) Amendment Act, 1879.	Sections five and six.
	<i>Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Acts.</i>	
38 & 39 Vict. c. 36 [1875].	The Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875.	So much of section two as relates to ' the population of urban sanitary districts.
38 & 39 Vict. c. 49 [1875].	The Artizans and Labourers Dwellings Improvement (Scotland) Act.	Section two.
45 & 46 Vict. c. 54 [1882].	The Artizans Dwellings Act, 1882.	Section eleven.