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HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1954.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.

General Description.

The Bill proposes to extend the legislation governing the housing activities of private persons, public utility societies and local authorities and it includes provisions to facilitate the administration of the Housing Acts and to encourage the preservation of existing dwellings and the erection of new dwellings.

Grants.

It is proposed to continue for a further period of two years the payment of grants at the present rates to persons and public utility societies erecting, purchasing or reconstructing houses or installing sanitary services in houses and to housing authorities for the erection of non-subsidy type houses under Sections 31 and 35 of the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1952 (Section 6).

Under the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1950, works eligible for payment of a second grant are confined to the construction of a new roof or the provision of additional accommodation to relieve overcrowding. It is proposed to remove the restriction on the type of work which will qualify for a further grant. At present, the period after which a further grant may be made is 10 years where a thatched roof is replaced by a roof of slates or tiles. It is proposed that this provision should extend to the replacement of roofing of any kind by slates or tiles. It is proposed also that no limitation of years should apply where reconstruction is necessary because of damage by storm, flood, fire, etc. (Section 14).

The repeal of Section 10 of the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1950, will remove the prohibition on payment of a grant in respect of a house where compensation was paid under the Neutrality (War Damage to Property) Act, 1941 (First Schedule).

Repair grants up to £80 or one-third of the cost will be made available without limitation as to rateable valuation in all cases where a house is, or is likely to become, dangerous or injurious to health or the proposed works are necessary to render the house more suitable for habitation. Where there is more than one separate dwelling in the repaired house, the grant will be payable for each separate dwelling. The grants are to be confined to houses occupied by or suitable for occupation by persons of the working classes or agricultural labourers and housing authorities are to be authorised to supplement the grants. The valuation of the house will not be increased for 7 years because of the works (Section 12).

Grants payable by annual instalments are at present available under Section 19 of the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1948, for the erection of houses for letting. It is proposed to continue these grants but, as an alternative, to make available to persons providing houses for letting, lump-sum grants on a scale similar to that applicable to owner-occupied houses. Where a lump-sum grant is paid, rates remission will also be allowable (Section 13).

Other provisions in relation to grants are: letting grants under Section 19 of the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1948, to be made available to local authorities erecting houses otherwise than under the Housing of the Working Classes Acts or Labourers Acts (Section 8); clarifying that grants for owner-occupied houses are payable only where the house is occupied as normal place of residence (Section 7).

Supplementary grants.

It is proposed to raise the family income limits which govern eligibility for a supplementary grant under Section 10 of the

Housing (Amendment) Act, 1952, in respect of the four county boroughs, the borough of Dún Laoghaire, Dublin County and those portions of County Cork which are included with Cork City for the purpose of the higher loans to borrowers under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts. The maximum revised limit will be £520 a year (Section 10). Housing authorities are being empowered to pay supplementary grants in respect of houses built outside their functional area (Section 11), and to vary the amounts of supplementary grants subject to the limits set out in the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1952 (Sections 9, 10 and 11).

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM *Labourers Acts and*

Housing of the Working Classes Acts.

It is proposed to continue the Labourers Acts in force (Section 17) and to provide that determination of all questions relating to repairs (Section 18 of the Labourers Act, 1936) should become a function of the housing authority (First Schedule).

The Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906, as applied by Section 50 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1931, facilitates the payment of compensation for land acquired for housing purposes by rural and urban housing authorities provided the compensation payable does not exceed £60. It is proposed to increase this limit to £250. The Acts also enable housing authorities to pay compensation in certain cases into the Circuit Court provided the sum does not exceed £100. It is proposed to increase this limit to £600, which is the present jurisdiction limit in similar matters of the Circuit Court (Section 18).

Section 19 provides that the purchaser of a labourer's cottage may devise his cottage.

Sections 16 and 20 provide that dwellings vested in housing authorities and used by them for the purposes of the Labourers Acts or the Housing of the Working Classes Acts shall be deemed to be dwellings provided under those Acts, the object being to clarify that all such dwellings are outside the scope of the Rent Restrictions Acts and the Landlord and Tenant Acts.

Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts.

It is proposed to afford protection to housing authorities who take a charge on holdings without sub-division in connection with advances under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts (Section 21).

General.

It is proposed to continue the prohibition on the demolition or use otherwise than as a dwelling house of any habitable house, save with the permission of the housing authority or, on appeal, of the Minister (Section 15).

Provisions of the Housing Acts which it is proposed to repeal are listed in the First Schedule to the Bill.

Department of Local Government.

Máirta, 1954.

Grants payable by annual instalments are at present available under Section 19 of the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1948, for the erection of houses for letting. It is proposed to continue these grants but as an alternative to make available to persons providing houses for letting, jump-sum grants on a scale similar to that applicable to owner-occupied houses. Where a jump-sum grant is paid rates remission will also be allowable (Section 13).

Other provisions in relation to grants are: letting grants under Section 19 of the Housing (Amendment) Act, 1948, to be made available to local authorities erecting houses otherwise than under the Housing of the Working Classes Acts or Labourers Acts—(Section 8) restricting the grants for owner-occupied houses to a normal place of residence (Section 7).