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shall be made (ii) providing that the grant may be made only if the Minister is satisfied that the works are essential for the purpose of providing suitable housing accommodation (section 11).

The effect of these proposals would be that eligibility for repair and improvement grants would be extended to the works of a limited class of houses.

## BILLE NA dTITHE (LEASU), 1958 HOUSING (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1958

Housing authorities carrying out repair works in default of houses where following service of compulsory repair notices would be required to carry out the works.

### EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

It is proposed that housing authorities be enabled to pay repair grants equal to the cost of the works.

#### GENERAL.

The Bill proposes to encourage private enterprise in the conservation and improvement of the existing stock of dwellings by amending and extending the legislation governing the purchase, reconstruction, repair and improvement of previously occupied houses and the conversion of the larger houses into separate dwellings of adequate standards. Provision is also made with a view to raising the standards of housing in rural areas.

The Bill aims to stimulate the slum-clearance operations of housing authorities by equating the rate of financial assistance available to rural housing authorities to that available in urban and county borough areas and facilitating the acquisition of land for housing purposes and the demolition or repair of unfit houses.

#### GRANTS.

##### *New and Reconstructed Houses:*

It is proposed

- (a) to extend from 1st April, 1958, to 1st April, 1960, the time in which a house must be completed to qualify for grants to private persons and public utility societies (section 6);
- (b) to increase by £25 the grant for a new serviced house commenced on or after 30th June, 1958, in an area where a public piped water supply and sewerage scheme are not available or are not being provided, thus making the grant for a serviced house greater by £75 than the grant for an unserviced house in such an area (section 8);
- (c) to increase by £20 the rate of grant for reconstruction works, commenced on or after 30th June, 1958, i.e., from £80, £100 and £120 for a 3, 4 or 5 or more roomed house to £100, £120 and £140 for such houses (section 8).

##### *Provision of Water and Sewerage Facilities in Private Houses:*

It is proposed to increase by £15, i.e., from £60 to £75, the grant for the provision and installation of private water supply and sewerage system commenced on or after 30th June, 1958 (section 12).

##### *Repair and Improvement Works:*

It is proposed

- (a) to increase by £20 the rate of grant for each separate dwelling provided by works commencing on or after 30th June, 1958, i.e., from £80, £100 and £120, to £100, £120 and £140 for dwelling up to 3 rooms, of 4 rooms and of 5 or more rooms;
- (b) to simplify administration of these grants and to extend their scope by

- (i) deleting the requirement that the house to be repaired or improved must be occupied by or suitable for occupation by persons of the working classes or agricultural labourers, and
- (ii) providing that payment of the grant may be made only if the Minister is satisfied that the works to be carried out are essential for the purpose of providing suitable housing accommodation (section 11).

The effect of these proposals would be that eligibility for repair and improvement grants would be tested by the type of works to be carried out and not by the suitability of the house for a limited class of occupants.

Housing authorities carrying out repair works in default of house owners following service of compulsory repairs notices would qualify for grants of similar amounts (section 10).

#### *Supplementary Grants by Housing Authorities:*

It is proposed that housing authorities be enabled to pay supplementary grants equal to the State grants for reconstruction works (section 8) and for the provision and installation of private water supply and sewerage services (section 12) where the works or installation, as the case may be, commenced on or after 30th June, 1958. Similar provision is proposed in respect of improving grants made under the Housing (Gaeltacht) Acts (section 7).

This provision would replace the present scale of supplementary grants which is graded according to the applicant's income or the rateable valuation of his holding.

#### LOANS.

It is proposed that housing authorities be enabled to make loans for the carrying out of works of repair or improvement provided the works are essential for the purpose of providing suitable housing accommodation (section 13).

Under this provision, persons proposing to execute repair or improvement works to a house to be used either for their own occupation or for letting as a separate dwelling or in self-contained flats, could apply to the housing authority for a loan on the security of the property to be repaired.

Statutory authority exists under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts but is not operated at present, empowering housing authorities to make loans for the purchase of previously occupied houses. It is proposed to enable housing authorities to exercise these powers in relation to the lower income groups and provision is included in the Bill for re-defining the market value of such houses so as to include for the purposes of calculating a loan, costs such as stamp duties and legal fees incidental to the acquisition of the ownership of a previously occupied house (section 30). It is also proposed that the loans for repair and improvement works may be associated with loans for purchase under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts (section 13). The effect of the latter procedure would be that

- (a) a person who is in occupation of a house which is the subject of a Small Dwellings loan may obtain a further advance for repair and improvement works and the advance would be repayable with the Small Dwellings loan;
- (b) a person who purchases the interest in a house which is already the subject of a Small Dwellings loan may similarly obtain an advance and the advance would be repayable with the Small Dwellings loan;
- (c) a person who proposes to purchase and repair a previously occupied house may apply for a Small Dwellings loan for the purchase transaction and may obtain a further advance for repair and improvement works, which would be repayable with the Small Dwellings loan.

## RATES REMISSION.

At present, the valuation for rating purposes of new houses which qualify for grants is reduced by two-thirds for a period of seven years. It is proposed to replace this system for future houses by a graduated scale of rates remission (section 31).

Under this provision, the valuation of a new grant house would in the first year be reduced by nine-tenths, in the second year by eight-tenths, and so on until full valuation is reached.

## SUBSIDIES FOR HOUSING AUTHORITIES.

### *Compounding of older subsidies.*

Annual subsidies are paid to housing authorities under the Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906, the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Act, 1908, and the Irish Land Act, 1909. It is proposed to compound these subsidies, without loss to the housing authorities concerned (sections 16 and 17).

The effect of the proposals would be to reduce the indebtedness of the housing authorities concerned by amounts related to the compounded value of the subsidies and, where appropriate, to transfer the investment funds from which the subsidies are paid to the Savings Certificates Reserve Fund. These measures would be of administrative convenience to both central and local authorities and are designed as a measure of rationalisation of the existing subsidies structure.

### *Application of current urban subsidy system to rural areas.*

The annual subsidy at present payable in respect of new rural housing is 60% of loan charges subject to fixed cost maxima. Payment of the subsidy is not conditional on operations such as clearance of unfit dwellings, the relief of overcrowding, or other factors which determine the rate of subsidy payable in urban areas. It is proposed to apply the urban scale of subsidies to future cottages in rural areas so that the annual subsidy will be 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of loan charges subject to the fixed cost maxima where, for example, overcrowding has been relieved or unfit dwellings have been replaced or repaired or any other statutory operation is carried out by the housing authority (section 14). The differential rate of urban subsidy, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of loan charges, will be available for other rural housing, i.e., housing not related to slum-clearance or overcrowding relief or other statutory operations. In association with this proposal, it will become mandatory on rural housing authorities, as it is on urban authorities, to adopt Bye-laws for the prevention of overcrowding (section 19).

These provisions would act as incentives to county councils to secure the repair or demolition of unfit dwellings and to prevent recurrence of overcrowding, by making available the higher rate of subsidy payable at present to urban authorities for similar purposes. It would also bring the code of housing subsidies into line in urban and rural areas.

## LABOURERS ACTS.

The housing code comprehensively referred to as the Labourers Acts is due to expire in 1960. This code will ultimately be incorporated with the Housing of the Working Classes Acts into a single housing code. It is proposed, therefore, to make a general provision continuing the Labourers Acts in force until they are replaced or repealed (section 26).

Provision is made in the Bill confirming the power of housing authorities to provide flats under the Labourers Acts but making it clear that such flats are not to be regarded as coming within the scope of the purchase scheme provisions of the Labourers Act, 1936 (section 27).

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

It is proposed that owners of premises which are the subject of Demolition Orders should be required when the Order becomes operative, to secure the premises against further occupation (section 22). The purpose of the provision is to prevent a recurrence of the past experience of housing authorities who, having rehoused a family from an unfit house, found that the house had been re-occupied, thus hindering enforcement of the Demolition Order. It is proposed also that a person who occupies or permits another person to occupy an unfit house which has become vacant and which is the subject of a statutory notice requiring repairs to be carried out should be liable to prosecution and prescribed penalties (section 21).

It is proposed that where land to be acquired by a housing authority by means of a compulsory purchase order includes dwelling-houses which are unfit for human habitation and are incapable at a reasonable cost of being made fit, the compensation payable in respect of the unfit dwelling-houses, if the Minister confirms the Order, shall be site value less the cost of clearance. The Minister would have power, if he were not satisfied that a particular dwelling-house were unfit for human habitation and incapable at reasonable cost of being made fit, to exclude the premises from the "unfit" category, but to confirm the acquisition so that the compensation would be related to the market value. It is proposed that "dwelling-house" should be defined as a building used wholly or principally for human habitation (section 24).

Provision is made in section 23 widening the power which a housing authority has to close any part of a house *let* for human habitation so as to bring within this power any part of a house *used* for human habitation, whether or not the occupation is a letting. Section 22 also contains provision to remove any doubt that service of a *copy* of a Demolition Order (not the original Order) will be valid compliance with the statutory provisions.

Housing authorities have power to extinguish public rights-of-way and easements in certain circumstances. The power does not extend to the acquisition of lands which, for technical reasons, do not come within the definition of clearance areas or improvement areas. It is essential that the extended powers be available to housing authorities and provision for this purpose is contained in section 20.

*An Roinn Rialtais Aitiúil.*

*Iúil, 1958.*