

THE

Tenant's Sanitary Catechism

(FOR PLACES OUTSIDE LONDON).

[MAY, 1896.]

The attention of householders and lodgers is directed to the powers given to the local authorities by the Public Health Act, 1875 (see pages 3 and 4). Occupiers are requested to read the questions below; and if their houses are not in a sanitary condition as prescribed by the Act, they should fill in the spaces under the heading "Answers," and forward this paper, either signed by themselves or not, to the Sanitary Inspector for the district, or to the Chairman or members of the Local Sanitary Authority. Persons employed in an insanitary workshop should use the form to describe the workshop and send it to the Factory Inspector, or direct to the Home Office, Whitehall, London.

This leaflet may also be used by "Clarion Scouts" and other persons desirous of enquiring into the sanitary condition of any village or district in England or Wales (except London, which has a separate Act). The questions should then be asked by the enquirer, and the blanks filled up by him. The results, when collected, can be tabulated and published in the local press, sent to the local sanitary authority, the County Council and the Local Government Board, or otherwise made use of.

QUESTIONS.

1. Name of Town or Village.
2. Name of Street and No. of House.
3. Name of the occupier or occupiers.
4. Name and address of the reputed owner.
5. Has the house a water-closet or an earth-closet for the sole use of its inmates?
(See Clause 36.)
6. If a water-closet, is it properly flushed with water?
(See Clause 40.)
7. If not, how many (a) houses, and (b) persons use the same closet?

ANSWERS.



QUESTIONS.

ANSWERS.

8. (a) Is the kitchen or scullery fitted with a proper sink? (b) Is it in sound condition?

(See Clause 41.)

9. Is there a properly constructed dust-bin or ashpit for the sole use of the inmates?

(See Clauses 36 and 40.)

10. Is it regularly emptied?

(See Clause 43.)

11. Are the floors throughout in a proper condition of repair?

12. Are the ceilings and walls clean and in repair?

13. Is the roof sound and water-tight?

14. Is any part of the house in such a condition as to be dangerous or injurious to the health of the inmates?

(See Clause 46.)

15. Is the water-supply abundant? Are taps, etc., conveniently situated?

(See Clause 62.)

16. Is the back-yard properly paved and drained?

17. How many rooms have you in your house?

18. What is the size of the garden, if any?

19. What weekly rent do you pay?

20. Is the supply of good cottages in your parish or town equal to the demand?

Signature.....

Address.....

Date.....

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1875.

SANITARY CLOSETS AND DRAINS.

Clause 36.—“If a house within the district of a local authority appears to such authority, by the report of their surveyor or inspector of nuisances, to be without sufficient water closet, earth closet, or privy, and an ashpit furnished with proper doors and coverings, the local authority shall, by written notice, require the owner or occupier of the house, within a reasonable time therein specified, to provide a sufficient water closet, earth closet, or privy, and an ashpit furnished as aforesaid, or either of them, as the case may require.

“If such notice is not complied with, the local authority may . . . do the work thereby required to be done, and may recover in a summary manner from the owner the expenses, etc. . . . Provided that where a water closet, earth closet, or privy has been and is used in common by the inmates of two or more houses, or if, in the opinion of the local authority, a water closet, earth closet, or privy may be so used, they need not require the same to be provided for each house.”

[N.B.—But the local authority should insist on each house having its own closet.]

Clause 40.—Every local authority shall provide that all drains, water closets, earth closets, privies, ashpits and cesspools within their district be constructed and kept so as not to be a nuisance or injurious to health.

Clause 43.—If a local authority who have themselves undertaken or contracted for the removal of house refuse from premises, or the cleansing of earth closets, privies, ashpits and cesspools, fail, without reasonable excuse, after notice in writing from the occupier of any house within their district, requiring them to remove any house refuse or to cleanse any earth closet, etc. . . . the local authority shall be liable to pay to the occupier of such house a penalty not exceeding five shillings for every day during which such default continues.

Clause 41 gives the local authority power, if the drains of a house are in such a condition as to be “a nuisance or injurious to health,” to compel the owner to put the same in good condition under penalty not exceeding ten shillings for every day’s fault after receipt of proper notice.

Clause 157 gives the urban authority power to make bye-laws with respect to closets, ashpits, etc., and “to the closing of buildings or parts of buildings unfit for human habitation, and to prohibition of their use for such habitation.”

CLEAN AND HEALTHY HOUSES.

Clause 46.—“Where, on the certificate of the Medical Officer of Health, or of any two medical practitioners, it appears to any local authority that any house or part thereof is in such a filthy or unwholesome condition that the health of any person is affected or endangered thereby, or that the whitewashing, cleansing or purifying of any house or part thereof would tend to prevent or check infectious disease, the local authority shall give notice in writing to the owner or occupier of such house or part thereof to whitewash, cleanse or purify the same, as the case may require.”

Clause 47 authorizes the local authority to do same and charge owners with expense.

Clause 91 defines a nuisance as “Any premises in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health.”

Clauses 94, 95, 96 give local authority power to abate a nuisance at court of summary jurisdiction if its order is not complied with.

Clause 97 says: “Where the nuisance proved to exist is such as to render a house or building, in the judgment of the court, unfit for human habitation, the court may prohibit the using thereof for that purpose until, in its judgment, the house or building is rendered fit for that purpose,” after which the house may be declared habitable and be inhabited.

Clause 62 gives local authority power to require houses to be supplied with water.

Clause 93.—*Who may Complain.*—“Information of any nuisance under this Act in the District of any local authority may be given to such local authority by any person aggrieved thereby or by any two inhabitant householders of such district, or by any officer of such authority, or by the relieving officer, or by any constable or officer of the police force of such district.”

Clause 31, Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, says:—“Four or more householders by written complaint can compel the medical officer of health in a locality to inspect houses that are considered unfit for human habitation, and he is then bound to report the results of his inspection to the local authority.”

OFFENSIVE FACTORIES.

Clause 114, *Public Health Act, 1875*, says that if any house is rendered unfit for human habitation through offensive effluvia arising from any factory adjoining, any ten inhabitants in an *Urban District* may complain to the local authority, who shall inquire into and abate it. A heavy fine may be imposed.

NOTES.

PARISH COUNCIL COTTAGES.

(1) In many localities where the supply of cottages is not equal to the demand, and where the wages earned by the cottagers will allow of it, any strict enforcement of the provisions of the *Public Health Act* given in this leaflet may cause the landlords to raise the rents. This should always be met by the tenants with an agitation for the construction of lower-rented sanitary dwellings by the proper local authority. For information on this point see *Fabian Tract No. 63*. The *Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, Part III.*, enables the local sanitary authority (if the cottagers fight the question unitedly) to erect workmen's dwellings at rents that will checkmate the action of the private landlord in raising cottage rents. In addition, at the expiration of about 30 years the local authority, having paid off the capital loaned for the building of workmen's dwellings, will be able to let such dwellings for lower rents than before. Parish Councillors should use this leaflet and systematically visit every cottage in their parish and get these questions answered. The collected facts should then be placed before the Parish Council, and a resolution passed calling on the District Council to remedy the insanitary condition of cottages in the parish. A case might often be made out for municipal cottages on the score of bad accommodation and excessive rents.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

(2) If the facts collected by means of these leaflets are made use of in the early autumn, it will give the local authority sufficient time to give notice and to compel the landlords to abate nuisances directly after Christmas, thereby providing work for unemployed members of the building trade when it is most required.

(3) In many of the poorer districts, the roads and streets which serve cottages are in a disgraceful condition owing to the fact that such thoroughfares have not been taken over by the local authority. To alter this, get up a petition to the local council, call their attention to the state of the road or street, the time it has been in a bad condition, and ask them to put Clause 150 of the *Public Health Act, 1875*, into operation. If they respond favorably, the road will be sewered, paved, channelled and metalled at the expense of the landlord frontagers in the road, after which it will become a public highway. Now, if notice to put such roads in order be given in the spring-time, the necessary "red-tapeism" can be got through by Christmas, and the making of the new road at the landlords' expense will provide useful work for the unemployed in the slack months of January, February and March.

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