

MAYOR'S OFFICE.

New York, Saturday, February 9th, 1895.

At 11.40 A.M., the Secretary and Chief Clerk of the Mayor, Mr. Job E. Hedges, announced that the Mayor was now ready, pursuant to his formal advertisement, to hear the public upon the Power of Removal Bill now before him from the Legislature, and that the order of hearing would be that those opposed to the bill should first be heard and then those in favor of the bill could address the Mayor.

MR. M. D. ROTHSCHILD. Mr. Mayor, I am here in my private capacity as a citizen, not representing any organization or anybody, simply such men as agree with me. I presume I represent those citizens in the City. I have hastily put down my ideas this morning, because I do not want to say things I do not mean. I will read them:

The Mayor's Power of Removal Bill, as it now stands, is a direct blow at the principle of non-partisanship for which the reform organizations fought last November and which we practically abandon now if we do not protest against its passage.

This Bill gives any Mayor the power to remove heads of departments, without charges or ceremony. It withholds that power from the President of the Board of Aldermen, who is elected by the people with a view to the possibility



that he may become Mayor, and so, for purely partisan reasons, this first piece of reform legislation meant to carry out the non-partisan programme is a strictly partisan bill.

This Power of Removal Bill is, on its face, a permanent law; and if it is passed in its present form it bids fair to bring upon our City a system of partisan removals and appointments such as we have not suffered from even under the most corrupt municipal government.

I have the utmost confidence in Mayor Strong and feel assured that he will make proper use of this great power. But what can we expect of his successors, who will probably be elected as Democrats or Republicans and who, following the precedent of an avowed non-partisan Mayor, will be forced to make a clean sweep of the heads of departments ?

The logical or illogical situation will then be that men who are legally appointed for a term of years, subject to efficiency and good behavior, will practically only hold office for the two years that the Mayor holds his office; and knowing this the various City Departments will be used to advance the political fortunes of their chiefs, to even a greater extent than before this new era of reform. To make tenure of office depend on party fealty is certainly not a step in the direction of non-partisan City government.

If this plan were simply that each Mayor should



appoint new heads of departments whose terms of office would expire when his term expired, the experiment might be worth trying; but in that case it would be a farce to give a man a six-years appointment when he knows it is only for two years.

If it is the intention of reformers that this bill shall be repealed after the present Mayor has turned the Tammany office holders out, it must appeal to your foresight that this will simply serve as an example for the next Democratic Legislature to follow, and hence will prove to be a boomerang, disastrous to our idea of non-partisanship in City affairs.

Although special laws of this nature are always to be deplored, the present situation seems to call for extraordinary measures. Therefore, it may not be advisable that charges should be preferred against the present heads of Departments, because such charges, even if well founded, are often hard to prove and the Courts in reviewing a trial of an official by the Mayor may not consent to his removal, because of some technical error in the trial. I believe that the Mayor should have the power to remove any head of a department at any time without a trial, but this should always be for cause. It will be in keeping, however, with the spirit of non-partisanship and will not prevent the Mayor from making any removal that ought to be made, if he were required by law to file the reason for each removal in some public office, like, for instance, the County Clerk's office.



This would recognize the principle that the incumbent of an office whose duties are defined by law and who is answerable to the people should be allowed to finish his legal term, unless there is a fair reason for his removal.

Even a partisan Mayor would hesitate to make wholesale removals if he were forced by law to give reasons. If his reasons were inadequate or frivolous, the public would be able to judge between the Mayor and the official who was removed. This plan is but a small concession to the idea of non-partisanship which voiced itself last November by casting 150,000 votes for a Citizens' Ticket. But if it were adopted, the public conscience would still be alive on this subject and a partisan Mayor could resist even the enormous party pressure which comes with victory, by refusing to dismiss faithful, competent public servants, even if they belonged to the defeated party.

In closing, I respectfully suggest that Mayor Strong cannot afford to approve of legislation which bids fair to simply officially state that "to the victor belongs the spoils".

This Bill in its present form is such legislation, not as it will be interpreted by our present Mayor, but surely as it will be carried out by his successors and, save the mark, as a piece of reform legislation.



MAYOR STRONG. Has any other gentleman anything to say against this Bill ?

(No response.)

MAYOR STRONG. If there is anybody here in favor of the Bill we will hear him, and anybody who comes in in the meantime, before the hearing closes, we will hear him also. We will hear now anybody who desires to say anything in favor of the Bill.

MR. WILLIAM JOHNSON. (Colored.) I did not intend to say anything in regard to this Bill, Mr. Mayor. I am not here to discuss the matter in question, but as I have listened to the manuscript which has just been read I want to say I am in favor of putting all the rascals out. We worked hard enough to get them out, and I am in favor of the Mayor turning them out as fast as possible. Of course, I am no office seeker, not looking for any office; but I am looking for good government. This City has been corrupt for years. I have been in this City for over thirty years. As my friend has read his argument here in favor of not removing them except for cause, I want to say there is a good deal of cause. They have been there long enough. That is the cause. They should come out. And I think if the matter has been settled by our Legislature that we should not come here to discuss it with the Mayor, but let the Mayor use his own judgment in regard to removing those heads of the different departments. I am in favor of sustaining the Mayor in whatever he does.



MAYOR STRONG. Is there any other gentleman present who wishes to be heard ?

(No response. Several minutes elapsed.)

MR. C. C. BEAMAN: Mr. Mayor, I was late in getting here. I understand that something has been said in favor of this Power of Removal Bill and something against it. As a member of the so-called legislative committee of the Committee of Seventy, I had to do with the draughting of this Bill in its original form with several associates.

The Bill as presented at Albany differs from the Bill as passed by the Legislature, in two respects. One, in that the time in which the Mayor can make removals is extended to six months from the date of his taking office, instead of four. That is made in accordance with your own suggestion, as I understand, and was in no way objected to by any of the Committee of Seventy that I know of. The other amendment, or the other change, is in this. The original Bill provided, in effect, that any Mayor during a period of, we will say, six months might make these changes in office, or if he should be incapacitated or should die during the period, that the President of the Board of Aldermen might do so.

The Bill, in its present form, does not give that power to the President of the Board of Aldermen, but only leaves it to the Mayor for the full term. That change is not approved by us. It seemed to us, outside of what we



will call the present situation, that, as a principle, if a Mayor when he was elected should die during the first six months of his term, the President of the Board of Aldermen, who in fact would then become Mayor, should have the same right to make removals that the Mayor himself should have.

The Mayor and the President of the Board of Aldermen would be both elected on the same ticket and, presumptively, both represent the same object. Not only as a question of the present time but as a question of the future time, the Bill in its original form is approved by us and we regret the change has been made.

Now, in regard to the Bill as a whole, we are not here at all opposing your acceptance of it as it is. The Bill, of course, has been drawn, or in one sense, you may say primary, because it has been felt that in view of the recent election it was the desire of the people of New York that the present Mayor should have an opportunity to make removals in the various heads of departments who are ordinarily appointees of the Mayor. But the Bill, as your Honor knows, is not a Bill drawn for the present time; it is a Bill drawn and will apply not only to you but to all future Mayors of the City of New York until the Bill has been repealed.

The question undoubtedly is a very important one as to whether or not the Mayors of the City of New York, as they shall be from time to time elected, shall have power,



practically, to select the gentlemen who are the heads of the various Departments and the various Boards. It has seemed to us that it was wise to change what we will call the present system, and it was well for the people of the City of New York to understand that when they were electing a Mayor they were electing a man who would have power to change the heads of departments. If, by reason of that power given to the Mayor, they find at any time that the Mayor, or the party in power, has put bad men at the head of offices, then there will come occasion for the people of the City of New York at the next election to determine to make a change, and when they make a change it means it will not only change the Mayor but the heads of departments and practically work a revolution, if they want to, in the City government.

Now we think that was a change not only desirable at present but in the future, in view especially of the fact that by the new Constitutional amendment the City elections hereafter will take place in years in which there is no gubernatorial election and no Presidential election. The result of that will be that the people of New York will have a chance to come together and put up their candidates irrespective of who is Governor, irrespective of what party is in power, irrespective of who is President. We want that man or this man for Mayor, and we will then, as



we go around the City asking votes for candidates, say to the people "If this man is elected he will fill the offices with men of his appointment, and it is for you citizens of New York to determine which man you want". That, we believe, is the wise way to govern the City of New York; and therefore not only we are in favor of the Bill for what we will call the present Mayor and present term, but we have advocated it as a permanent Bill, to stand upon before the Legislature in relation to all future Mayors.

I hope, Mr. Mayor, that you will accept this Bill.

MAYOR STRONG. Is there any other gentleman who wishes to say anything, either pro or con ?

(No response. The Mayor waited until 12.35 P.M.)

MAYOR STRONG: Gentlemen, the time is up for hearings on the Power of Removal Bill and the hearing will be closed now.

-----OXO-----



Public Hearing  
No. 1

Power of Removal

Feb. 7

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PUBLIC HEARING NO. 7.

MAYOR'S OFFICE,

New York, March 7th, 1895.

At twelve o'clock M. the Private Secretary to the Mayor announced that in pursuance of the notice given to the public the hearing upon Senate Bill No. 162, Introductory No. 163, entitled "An act to lay out and establish a grand boulevard and concourse, together with not more than fifteen roads running transversely underneath said boulevard in the city of New York," was now opened, and that those opposed to the Bill would state their objections first and that side of the question be concluded, and then those who desired to speak in favor of the Bill would be heard.

MAYOR---Is there any objections to this Bill, gentlemen? If there is anybody here who is opposed to it we will hear their arguments first.

(No response).

Well, there seems to be no one opposed to it. If there are any persons here in favor of this Bill we will hear them.

MR. FORDHAM MORRIS---In behalf of the North Side Board of Trade, I, as one of its Vice-Presidents, have been requested to present to you some considerations which we think will be convincing as to the propriety of your giving your consent to this all important matter.

The act which is before Your Honor is one which the



year before received the assent of the Assembly, and would have passed the Senate had there been sufficient time for it to do so. The particular provision of this Bill and the necessity for the legislation is due to the fact that it was considered that an assessment for land advantages upon the adjoining property would be too exorbitant for the opening and widening of such a broad street, and the theory of twenty-five (25) per cent. being put upon the land owners and seventy-five (75) per cent. being put upon the City was evolved from the experience of past years in the opening of broad avenues like the Boulevard which we have on the West side of the City, where, as you will remember, the assessment was so exorbitant upon the adjoining property owners that it practically amounted to confiscation, and afterwards a special commission was appointed which revised those assessments and much of the property was relieved of the heavy assessment which was upon it, and only a reasonable assessment was placed upon the adjoining land.

Now, we come here as a body of men, part and parcel of your City, but at the same time to a certain extent a new city. The problem that is before us as citizens, and before your special representative, the Commissioner of Street Improvements, is the proper development of nearly one half of the municipality of New York in these new Wards, which since they have been annexed to the city of New York have increased in population greater than any other section of the City. We have there to-day as great a population



as the Capital of this State. Mr. Wells, who is on my left here, and who is the Collector of Statistics in that District, (suppressed laughter) will inform you that in a very few years we will be as great in population as the city of Rochester.

Your City acquired at the close of 1889, as a fitting frontier a great many parks which you may say extend from the Hudson to the Sound, and are connected by a collection of broad avenues which are intended to be ornamental in their character, but these parks are intended to be used not as ornamental grounds, as Central Park is, but rather as the people's play grounds; a place where the man of limited means can go with his family and his children and enjoy the green grass and the shade of the trees, and look up, Sir, as I may express it, to Nature's God, and have something which is of the esthetic; something to regard different from the mere thoughts and action which are presented daily, monthly, yearly and forever to the denizens of a large city. But the Commissioners who laid out these parks were evidently guilty of a sin of omission, or did not appreciate the future of the upper portion of the City of New York and its enormous growth of population, for they failed to lay out any parkway which would make a connection between these northern parks and the Harlem River, and incident to that, a connection with the lower city of New York. I mean by that a connection which would be in keeping with the parks and in keeping with the



character of your great city. The city of Washington is, I suppose, considered to be now the best planned and laid out city in the world. It has in it not only grand pleasure grounds but it also has broad avenues and appropriate drives leading to them in every direction. The city of Paris, as we know, is connected with many broad avenues and with grand parks on the other side of the Seine. We are all familiar with the drives in London and Liverpool, with Berlin and other cities, and these that I have mentioned, Sir, are capital cities, and none of them rank ahead of the city which you are the Chief Magistrate of, excepting the city of London, for you, Sir, preside not only over the commercial interests of a great city, but you also preside over the esthetic interest. You preside over the moral interest of a great city, and no matter what this Boulevard may cost, back of it all, Sir, is something which is better than any rate of interest which can be placed upon any interest gold bearing bond---the improvement of the morals, the improvement of the manners, and the improvement of the tastes of a great people.

The district is traversed by a series of roads which run parallel one and another in a northerly and southerly direction from the Hudson to the Sound. The valleys intermediate to these hills are prolongations of the great lines of avenues on Manhattan Island, and up these valleys this population which I have spoken of is now beginning to settle. These valleys are already traversed with



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broad avenues to the extreme west the old Albany Post Road, next to that Sherman Avenue, leading to the parks, and further on to the upper drives in Westchester. Next to this comes the Third Avenue Road up to Fordham, St. John's College, etc., and next to that Boston Avenue, leading to the old village of West Farms and the easterly portion of Bronx's Park. But each of these avenues, by the action of the Aldermen up stairs, are encumbered with surface cars and surface railroads, or with elevated railroads, or railroads with steam cars, so that although the city of New York to-day possesses this magnificent chain of parks there is no possible way of approaching them over any avenue which might be termed esthetic, and which might be termed in keeping with the great idea of those parks, and, therefore, Sir, in laying out the map of that upper city the Commissioner very wisely felt that he was not doing his full duty to the District; that he was not doing his full duty to the future unless some approach was made, some what on the line of the High Bridge Drive, or the great Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, or the Euclid Ave. in Cleveland, or the Lincoln and Drexel Boulevards in Chicago; he felt that he was not doing his duty unless an approach was also laid out in the great Metropolis of America. He found in the centre of this region traversed by this line of hills a great central ridge which is the end, if I may so express it, of the backbone of old Westchester. Upon that ridge commencing at the northerly end is the Cedar Park at 161st Street. Here he has laid out



this Boulevard which is to be one hundred and eighty-two (182) feet in width, and it is right on the crown of the ridge. At this point commanding views of Long Island Sound; of the East River; of the Palisades of the Hudson, and the beautiful valley of the Harlem are to be obtained. Further on up the valley are beautiful rural scenes at present, which will soon be filled with the teeming population, and so on along the whole route of this ridge will be presented to the eye of the traveller visiting this City, and visiting our great parks, an unparalleled connection of picturesque scenery and beautiful views.

At One hundred and sixty-first Street, Your Honor, is not really the beginning of all this. Streets that are already laid out converge here into One hundred and thirty-eighth Street, where, just to the west is the connection of the Madison Avenue bridge, and to the east will be the connection with the Third Avenue bridge, and there the line of traffic which will utilize this Boulevard will first begin to pour over in their carriages, visiting first this beautiful Cedar Park and then moving on northward.

Going a little bit farther north, Sir, we have another easy access to the central part of Bronx Park, and finally we strike the driveway which makes the connection between the great link of parks which form the esthetic boundary of your great city.

Now, Sir, all we ask you to consent to do is this:



That three-fourths ( $3/4$ ) of the assessment for condemning this land may be assessed upon the City at large, and one quarter ( $1/4$ ) upon the adjoining property owners.

MAYOR---Is that in this Bill?

MR. MORRIS---Yes. We are not asking to have this built to-day, Your Honor. We are merely asking to have this law passed which will authorize the assessment. The matter of building this boulevard is a matter which can be deferred, just as the matter of improving our great parks at the northern limit of the City has been passed upon from time to time until the growing wants of the community require it. But, Sir, there never was a better investment made by the city of New York than when it spent its nine millions of dollars for the continuation of these parks, which I suppose have increased in value from that day to this nearly twenty-five (25) per cent.

Now, Sir, the matter of constructing this Boulevard is something which I presume will not be undertaken for several years to come. I hope, Sir, that we may still find you in this chair when it will be done, (great applause) but there is no present intention of moving the city of New York to carry on the construction at once, and it is merely to get the right of way; to purchase the right of way now when lands are much lower than they will be eight or ten years from now, and also to prevent one of those corrections of mistakes which has been the history of the city of New York from its institution down to the

tical centre, and is the practical centre here. And



present time. There perhaps was no more important thing done for the city of New York--next to the introduction of Croton water and the building of the Erie Canal--than when the Commissioners in 1807 laid out the city of New York north of Bleecker Street to One hundred and Fifty-fifth Street. People then knew where their property was; people then knew how their property was going to be developed, and the growth of your City in its systematic way has been largely due to the wise survey which was then made, years and years ago. But unfortunately that survey was continually changed by Acts of the Legislature. Within that survey was then an area of parks much greater than the present area of parks which now exist south of the Harlem River. But the greed of property owners, and the reluctance to spend money--always an argument in itself to any great public enterprise--prevented the building of this great pleasure ground, and here as late as 1857 we had to wait for the Metropolis of America to have any pleasure ground which was entitled to the name of Parks. This Commissioner in this new area has laid out this approach to the line of parks now to be prepared for the future, to have the streets which intersect it laid out in such a way that they will be adapted to it. It will be the pleasure Broadway of that particular region. It is like our old Broadway. It was nothing but the Albany Road. It is the centre there, as Broadway was the practical centre, and is the practical centre here. And



that is what we ask for, and it will be in keeping with the other developments which your City has already made. You are about finishing the great Viaduct at Seventh Avenue, where there is to be a most beautiful concourse from the end of the avenue Saint Nicholas through to Seventh Avenue around to the great Washington Bridge and back again. That loop will by this bridge connect very closely, you can see, with this, and extraordinary as it may appear, there is not in this City any drives of any great extent which might be termed pleasure drives. Everything has been sacrificed to utility, and it had to be sacrificed to utility. We had as much as we could do, Sir, to maintain our commercial supremacy and to keep ourselves in the position that we have reached. But now there is something more that is due to the people. There is something more that is due from the wealthy to the poor. There is something more that is due from the intelligent to the ignorant, and that is the development of the esthetic as well as the utilitarian, and I feel, Sir, that it would be a satisfaction to your constituents, not only north of the Bridge but south of the Bridge, if during the administration of yourself this Boulevard in the centre of your new extension, -not on the confines of the City, for the Harlem River is the centre of the City;- this Boulevard will be none too expensive; will be none too extravagant; will be none too ornate for the great, the magnificent City of New York. (Great applause).



MR. JAMES L. WELLS---It would seem almost unnecessary, Mr. Mayor, after the eloquent address made by my friend, Mr. Morris, to discuss this matter further, and yet there are some other facts that we desire to bring to your attention.

This concourse not only had the approval of the people of the North Side, but it has the approval of the people south of the Harlem River, whenever they have had an opportunity to give expressions of their sentiments upon it. The matter, Sir, has been thoroughly discussed in the public press; it has been thoroughly discussed before the Board of Street Openings; it was thoroughly discussed before the Committee on Cities in the Assembly. It has been considered by various associations in the lower part of the City, and it has been discussed and approved of by every association north of the Harlem River. I have not known of a measure that has had the universal approval of the people, both north and south of the City as this concourse seems to have. It only remains now to enact this Act by which the land may be taken and the people made secure in having this great public improvement.

We do not come here asking any appropriation for doing the work. This Act simply provided a method for acquiring it now. That is, acquiring the land now. It is a matter of economy for the City and for the people of the North Side who bear a portion of this expense, that the land should be acquired now while it is much cheaper than



it will be one, two, three, four or ten years from now.

We feel that this concourse will prove the same kind of an investment for the city of New York at large as the new parks north of the Harlem River have proven.

The new parks, comprising some four thousand (4000) acres of land, were acquired under an act of 1884, and the City issued its bonds for the payment of the money required to purchase these lands from the property owners and vest them in the City. The nine millions (\$9,000,000.) of dollars spent by the city of New York for the new parks north of the Harlem River has been one of the best investments that the city of New York has ever made. These parks are worth thirty millions of dollars (\$30,000,000) to-day, and this legislation is in accord with that.

These parks are practically useless to the mass of people. Not the people who live on the North Side, but the mass who live on Manhattan Island, unless there is some proper boulevard or roadway leading from the lower portion of the City and connecting the beautiful parks on Manhattan Island with what we think are the more beautiful parks north of the Harlem River.

As I said, we ask that this Act shall receive your approval and shall become a law as early as possible. It is a benefit to the City that it should. As an example of the benefit that the acquisition of the new parks were to the city of New York, let me give you this single instance, without going into the details of sta-

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tistics as my friend, Mr. Morris, suggests.

In 1884 when the New Park Act was passed the assessed valuation of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards was about Twenty-five millions, Five hundred thousands of dollars (\$25,500,000.) This year the assessed valuation of the City north of the Harlem River, comprising these two wards, will be over Sixty-eight millions of dollars (\$68,000,000.), and a very large proportion, Sir, of this increase in our valuation is due to the fact that the City in its wisdom determined to acquire these great pleasure grounds north of the Harlem River. It has, with the other public improvements that the people have been active in securing, brought large numbers of people to that section of the City, and no other city in the State, not even your own lower portion of the city of New York, has increased more rapidly in population than the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards. (Great applause). The best that can be shown for the city of New York is that it has doubled its population every seventeen years. The population of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards since 1860 has doubled every fifteen years, and with the present facilities that you, as a member of the Rapid Transit Commission I feel sure are certain to give us, will be the means of increasing our population more rapidly than any other city in the State.

If you, Sir, were the Mayor of Albany I think you would not hesitate to have an act passed for a grand boule-

ward in that city if the necessity existed. Here is a city with a larger population than the city of Albany, asking for a public improvement of this kind for the benefit of the entire city--not altogether for the benefit of the City on the North Side. Of course I realize the fact that the principal benefit to real estate will come along the line of this concourse, but the City at large will receive a large benefit, because every increase in valuation, every new house that is erected north of the Harlem River, every business enterprise that is established is just as valuable to you, Sir, for taxation purposes as a building constructed in other portions of the City. We are anxious for the development of that section, and, Sir, we are anxious to have this Bill enacted, because it makes secure not only this great public improvement but it relieves another difficulty under which these two Wards have suffered for the last twenty-one years.

You took us into the City in 1874 and since that time we have been unable through any department of the City Government to secure an official map of that district. Here we have an official map; a map if it is filed now that will settle many of the controversies that exist with regard to the sub-division of property and the proper development of property. We have a map here by which people will be enabled to do what men in a growing portion of the City wish to do--that is, sub-divide their property and laying it out upon established lines. This City to-day, Sir, is



suffering from the inefficiency of previous Commissions in delaying the completion of our map, and the City is----

MAYOR---Have you gentlemen ever agreed on any map?

MR. WELLS---Yes, we have agreed on this one.

MAYOR---I have heard that you have never agreed on the subject. (Great applause). We feel that

MR. WELLS---That is not so. You must understand, Mr. Mayor, that there is a pretty live public spirit north of the Harlem River. We know what is going on in our District. We know what our officials are doing; we look after them; we see what they propose, whether it is in the Commissioner of Street Improvements or any other Department, and we take these matters, Sir, not altogether, Sir, in our Political Associations, but we discuss them without any of the political controversies that usually come into these discussions. We discuss them among the people who have to pay the burden of taxation, and, Sir, there are gentlemen in this room who have been elected to office as the representatives of the people of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards on this "home idea;" that they were the representatives of this home district.

To do this will confer benefits upon the South Side as great as on the North. Every public improvement, Sir, that you make in the city of New York will benefit the entire City, and this distinction between the North and South Sides should be stopped. The Harlem River should not be allowed to divide our interest as it divides the

lands. for changes in location of streets; for increased

MAYOR---Do you think the citizens of the North Side would waive that?

MR. WELLS---Yes. We desire to be called the "North Side," because we want to get rid of an obnoxious term called "The Annexed District." (Great applause). We feel that we are twenty one years of age.

MAYOR---In this office we call you citizens of New-York. (Immense applause).

MR. WELLS---Thank you, Sir. Then, Mr. Mayor, treat us as citizens of New York in your consideration of this Bill.

As citizens of New York we claim that it is good policy for the City to complete this; lay out this map, this subdivision of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards.

Can you imagine, Sir, any city in this State of 125,000 people, that will be 250,000 in the next fifteen years, existing without knowing where the streets and the avenues are going to be? Can you expect a city to exist that can not determine where the location of the sewers will be?

How are we going to have any of our public improvements that the City requires, that the people, not the City at large, Sir, but the people upon the line of the streets that desire these improvements have to pay for? How can we have them unless there is some fixed and determined map? You will be called upon year after year to pay damages, as you have been during the last few years for changes of



grade; for changes in location of streets; for increased expense in street openings; for the payments of houses erected on lines of streets that people suppose are all right and then in a year or two afterwards are changed by some Commission of the City Government, the same as it has been in the last twenty years.

The most important point, Sir, for the city of New York is to stop this constant map making north of the Harlem River, and when we come to you, Sir, with a map that we all agree upon, which has been discussed in the public press; discussed before your Board of Street Opening, and found to be as far as human ingenuity devised the best map for the development of that District, we feel that we have a right to ask you to give your approval to it.

Now, Mr. Mayor, I may go on, (a North Sider, you know, can talk all day on these subjects) but I don't want to wear your patience out with any longer discussion. We have the Engineer here who laid out this concourse; we have other gentlemen here who represent interests in the North Side, who are just as familiar with this matter as myself. And right here, Mr. Mayor, I want to say that Mr. Claflin was unable to be here to-day. However, we have here a number of letters from Bank Presidents and business men down town, and among them I would like to read a letter from Mr. Claflin who has thoroughly examined this subject, and you know, Sir, that he does not make up his mind and express his opinion without giving it due

consideration. It probably enable the city to collect revenues from it sufficient to "New York, January 13, 1893.

Hon. Louis J. Heintz,

Commissioner, Morrisania, N.Y. City.

Dear Sir:- Many for the improvement, at one time, I hope

Your plan for a great parkway seems to me altogether the best that has yet been devised. It would be a reproach to the city in the future if there were not adequate facilities for travel between Central Park and the park system in the upper wards. I do not see how such facilities could be obtained on a scale commensurate with the growth of the City otherwise than in the way you have suggested.

I am well acquainted with the topography of the wards above the Harlem river, and I am impressed with the desirability of utilizing the ridge along which you propose the boulevard in such a way that it shall at the same time afford an uninterrupted route for travel, and enhance the taxable value of the adjacent property. If such a boulevard were not built, and the endeavor were made to reduce the ridge to anything like the level of the valleys on either side, it seems to me evident that the expense of such a reduction would either entail an immense expense to the city or result in a practical confiscation of the property by assessments. On the other hand with a grand boulevard on the plateau, the adjoining property owners will be given a taxable value which is not very dis-



tant future will probably enable the city to collect revenues from it sufficient to pay the interest on the cost of the boulevard.

If it should be deemed impracticable to raise the money necessary for the improvement, at one time, I hope it may at least be the policy of the city to buy the necessary land as speedily as possible, and to devote perhaps a million dollars a year to its improvement until the whole work contemplated shall have been finished.

With parks at the upper end of the city unequalled by those of any other city in the world, it would indeed be unfortunate if unwillingness to make a present outlay should result eventually in shutting out the great mass of the people of this city from convenient enjoyment of the splendid pleasure grounds which they have already acquired.

I have examined your estimates as to the cost of the parkway, and I am satisfied that they are liberal. I am confident that the land and buildings which need to be taken can be had for less than \$3,500,000., and I believe that \$6,000,000., will easily cover the necessary expenses of engineering and of construction.

\$9,500,000., or less, invested in this boulevard, will eventually enable the city to collect additional taxes for exceeding interest on the investment; but if property for some distance on either side of the parkway should be assessed one-quarter of the expense the city would pay only about \$7,000,000. for the most important improvement

projected since Central Park.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) JOHN CLAFLIN."

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MR. WELLS--- This is all I have to say, Mr. Mayor.

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MR. ARTHUR C. BUTTS---Mr. Mayor, I appear here to-day to advocate that you give your sanction to this Bill, on behalf of the Sonora Club of Morrisania, in the city of New York. That Club, Mr. Mayor, is an organization consisting of some three hundred members who are divided among all political parties, and a Club which for the last fifteen years has made its mark and placed its indelible stamp upon the interest of the North Side, as far as its political and social interests are concerned. I am the more pleased, Mr. Mayor, to represent this Organization to-day because the projector of this great scheme, that gallant young spirit who is not present here to-day, the dead Commissioner of our District, had that large grasp of mind to see the great benefits accruing not only to the North Side, but the entire city of New York if this scheme should be adopted by the municipal authorities of this great City.

Mr. Mayor, there has ever been a dividing line between the city of New York and that portion north of the Harlem River which until recently has been called "The Annexed District," but I am glad that here and now you, Sir, have obliterated that line, and have given notice to all the



people north of the Harlem River that by the edict of the Mayor we are no longer a community of that character, but we are part and parcel of the great city of New York.

Mr. Mayor, let me say further that when you come to consider all arguments which may have been advanced for and against this measure, that you take into consideration one solitary fact, which investigation will establish in your mind and place beyond all reasonable doubt. First: that we are an intellectual community. We know our needs; we know our wants, and we dare in any tribunal to advocate them. Next: that we are a patriotic community. We are citizens of a great city. We have for years, Mr. Wells, a Republican and I as a Democrat, been laboring to batter down this seeming mark and demarcation between the two sections of the City, and to-day a Republican and a Democrat have the the official sanction of the Mayor, and let it be said that Mayor Strong with one word; with one sentiment, obliterated this line and made the two parts of the City one. (Great applause).

Mr. Mayor, we also are a just community. We know what justice is. We never advocate anything that is not for the interest, not only of the North Side but of the entire City of New York. We were annexed some twenty-one years ago to this City, but we never began to feel the effects of annexation until after lying dormant for years the people of that section rose in their might five years ago, and then it was that we demanded, not only of the City

but of the State authorities, as our locality demanded, that some one of intelligence and knowing the wants and necessities of our District should demonstrate its affairs, and that without distinction of party, as we stand before you to-day, and we elected Louis J. Heintz as Commissioner of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards. The benefits of that administration are apparent to every observing citizen. I trust you are familiar with our territory, and if not, on behalf of all the citizens I invite you most cordially to go to this territory north of the Harlem River (now in the city of New York since your edict has gone forth) and see for yourself the efforts of the people in building up this great and growing community. We demanded that and we obtained it because our demand was just. There was opposition, as there is opposition to all great measures, but the will of the people prevailed.

Mr. Mayor, for years our interests, the interests of our community, demanded that there should be a bridge across the Harlem River at Willis Avenue. We failed to impress our views upon the municipal authorities for some time, but at last it was so apparent that our views were just that in the Legislature of 1894 the Willis Avenue Bridge Bill was passed; it became a law by the signature of the Governor, and we will soon find that great structure spanning the Harlem River.

We have for years also been compelled to pay two fares upon the Elevated Railroad, until we demanded the five



cent fare. That measure was vetoed in several Legislatures, but at last justice again prevailed. The North Side demanded this, not in the interest of itself, but in the interest of all our citizens, and after a great struggle that measure became a law, and to-day you can ride from the Battery or from the City Hall to the most northern terminus of the Elevated Railroad for a one five cent fare.

Now, Mr. Mayor, these are matters affecting not only the North Side, but the entire city of New York, which have originated, been carried forward, and whose sponsors stand as the North Siders of the city of New York. Why, Mr. Mayor, these certain measures that I have mentioned are local improvements, and these cheap fares and the construction of this bridge have done much for the entire community of the city of New York, and now united without any distinction of party affiliations we again come before the Mayor of the city of New York and request this; I will almost say demand this, in the interest, not of the locality, but of the entire municipality, that this great measure of public improvement shall be enacted into a law. Mr. Mayor, I said before, and repeat, that there is no great measure but what has its opponents. There are persons who secretly oppose it; there are persons who undoubtedly openly oppose it. They will talk about the large expenditure of money, but we claim, Mr. Mayor, that the future will take care of the expense, that the future of this City is such that this measure is of great importance, and that

the time to enact the law is now. They talk about the large expenditure of money, but I will not refer to this.

We say this, Mr. Mayor, that you should take a large and broad minded view of this matter. You will sit here as the Mayor of this great municipality of the city of New York for three years, but whatever public measure will come before you for decision there is none which can equal in importance the one which is before you now. And therefore I ask you on behalf of the gentlemen whom I represent; on behalf of all the North Siders; on behalf of all the citizens of New York, to take a large broad minded view of this situation. Do not let those who may whisper as to the great cost of this grand conception swerve you from the path of duty. A statesman is one who listens not to the clamor of the hour, but with a larger vision can see what will benefit those who may come to him. Can you rise to the importance of the occasion, Sir? I trust and believe you will, like one, as the saying is, "That places his bark upon the highest promontory and then waits for the rising of the tide." Let all who may oppose this question of cost, let them have their say, listen to them, but stand not as the Mayor of New York to-day, but as one who confers a benefit because the constitution and the laws of this City have largely given it into your hands either to approve or disapprove this measure. You have the fate of millions in your hands. You have the welfare of a great city in your keeping to-day, and nothing should swerve you from anything here to-day, but as C(23) an of the Public Improve-



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taking such a statesman like view of this whole situation as shall give to the honest men of the North Side what they ask for, not only for their own interest but for the interest of the great municipality of which they are a part.

Our parks cost, I believe, about \$9,000,000. There have been various estimates made of the ultimate cost of the great boulevard which is laid out upon this map. Some may say that there is no precedent for such a large expenditure of money. A small man, a man who travels in a small circle will listen to such an argument as that, but a broad minded statesman, no. I can illustrate it best by referring to once when there was a case before a celebrated Jurist of the United States, and when no less a man than R. Choate was arguing for the establishment of a great principle, the Judge, and it was Judge Starr, said to him, "Mr. Choate, your argument seems to be all right but there is no precedent for this principle that you seek to have enacted by the Court and established by the Court." "No," he said "Your Honor, I admit that, but I trust that you will not let this great opportunity escape to make a precedent."

I trust, Your Honor, that laying all these other considerations aside, you will rise to the occasion and do justice to the sentiment in which you are held by the people of the city of New York.

MR. JOHN DE HART---Mr. Mayor, I did not intend to say anything here to-day, but as Chairman of the Public Improve-

ment Committee of the North Side Board of Trade I feel it my duty to answer two of the questions asked by Your Honor.

In the first place I will refer you to a meeting of the Board of Street Opening held on December 20th, I believe it was; any way it was a few days before Christmas, when Mayor Gilroy made a statement that he did not want to ask an appropriation at that time, at the eve of his going out of office. He felt it his duty to leave that to the incoming administration, and his remarks were, that there was half of the Board of Street Opening remaining in the new Board, which he thought would feel as they had all along, just as they felt when they placed their approval upon the map which Commissioner Haffen presented with this Grand Boulevard upon it. That, Mr. Mayor, was with great deliberation. It was after a series of hearings, and to my knowledge there was only one individual who appeared in opposition to this great scheme.

Now, Mr. Mayor, your second question, as to the people.

Ten days ago eleven Property Owners Associations met at the Fordham Club. I was not present, but they did me the honor of electing me Secretary of the Joint Property Owners Association of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards. These eleven Associations, Mr. Mayor, representing two thousand property owners from the North Side, placed their approval upon this map.

I do not care to enter into any argument, and it is



not within my ability to do so after the eloquent remarks of the gentlemen who have addressed you. I do not care to tire you, but I want to ask you, Mr. Mayor, to place your approval upon this bill so that the people of the North Side know where their land is; so that the land adjoining this boulevard can be improved, and so that the people of the South Side will have the benefits of it.

I wish to call your attention to the fact that for the coming year you must look to the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards for your increased assessments. The increased values of property are levied heavier upon the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards to-day in larger proportions than what they are in the City. I mean the advance, Mr. Mayor. You cannot call upon the people within a circle of half a mile of the City Hall to increase their assessed values. We know that our values are low enough now. We do not complain of that, but we know very well that we have got to grow; we have got to be equal with Manhattan Island, and to become equal to Manhattan Island, Mr. Mayor, we must have something of this character to do it.

MR. WILLIAM J. MC CREA---I am a resident of the city of New York, and I have lived here all my life. I am strongly in favor of this Bill, and intend to speak in favor of it.

I do not suppose that this Board or you are going to approve of this Bill unless it commends itself to you as

being to the interest and benefit of the entire City of New York. Looking at this measure as I do, I consider it not from the standpoint of a North Sider, but from the standpoint of a citizen of the greatest city on the Western Continent. We are becoming the center and attraction of all the wealth of the Western Continent. It is here, Sir, people want to settle who have made money and want to spend it. We are rich in parks, but we have not any means of reaching them. I believe myself to-day that if in the early stages of Manhattan Island there had been laid out--and it could readily have been done--a road whereby men could drive back and forth from their places of business, it would have been one of the greatest attractions possible. I know there are men living down town who would like to own horses and wagons, but it is impossible for them to do so. I used to drive a horse and wagon myself down from where I lived to 59th Street, but it has ceased to become attractive because we have to drive from the Harlem River.

As I understand it, this boulevard is intended to connect the parks of the city of New York. It does strike me that the expenditure of this money must undoubtedly benefit the City at large. The laying out of Central Park has settled that fact. It has been an attraction not only for the wealthy but it has been an attraction for the poor. There is many a poor man who on Sunday would like to hire a carriage, but where can he go to. Nearly



all the streets, or rather avenues, are traversed by railroads and a man cannot drive there.

I think this is all I have to say on the subject, Mr. Mayor.

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MR. DEWITT C. OVERBAUGH---I represent a little different section of our city than these gentlemen who have spoken before me. Kings Bridge is my home. It has been said that if you place a stick near the Grand Central Depot; the Depot of the New York Central Railroad at Kings Bridge and strike a circle of half a mile from that centre it would take in about ten thousand people.

The growth of Kings Bridge has been phenomenal in the past three years. The Government Canal which has just been completed at a great cost, and the beautiful bridge spanning this canal at a cost of some four hundred thousand dollars(\$400,000.) has cut off a portion of Manhattan Island called Marble Hill. There have been many new houses built here, but families are filling them up, and there is not a house to be rented there to-day. Now then the increase of people must naturally centre somewhere in that neighborhood. I have taken trouble to ask many of the tax payers living in that section whether they favor this concourse or not, knowing that two thirds at least of the assessments will come on the tax payers of that section, but I have failed to find one tax payer in my neighborhood that objects to this boulevard being adopted, and

very soon, in the month of May, which is very near by, this canal and bridge will be thrown open to the public and the grand pageant will be inaugurated showing to the world what the country has been doing for us in that section, and we hope, Sir, to see Your Honor there on that occasion. We expect that every city on the Hudson north of us, and every city on the Erie Canal will be represented here. Every city on the Sound should be represented here at this opening of the Harlem River which connects the Hudson River with the Spuyten Duyvil and that with the Bronx and that with the waters of the Sound, throwing open to the world the greatest avenue of the present day. Gentlemen, I feel that the years are not many when the commerce of this City will be done on the North Side, and, Sir, there is no thing in my opinion that can be done to beautify that section more than to give us this beautiful Boulevard. It has been said by one of the Journalists of this City--I have reference to Horace Greeley, Sir, that Northward the population and growth of New York must go. It can go no where else, and now is the time to make this investment, and we ask you in the name of the tax payers of Kings Bridge and the North Side people that you concur with the Legislature and the Governor in this movement.

MR. R. MC CAFFERTY---I wish to say, Mr. Mayor, that this is the first time in twenty-four years that I have had anything to say in relation to this matter. I had the



honor I believe twenty-four years ago of introducing the resolution providing to submit the question of annexation of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards, to the people, while a Member of the Board of Aldermen. I had a great deal of opposition at that time to contend with. The people down town seemed to be of the opinion that it would add very largely to the expense of the City. However, a resolution was passed by the Board of Aldermen submitting the question to the people, and it was almost unanimously adopted. Since that time I have watched with a great deal of interest the improvements going on in that section, and I think within the past five years I have been fully justified in the views that I took twenty-one years ago, that nothing could be done within a half century that would add so much material wealth to New York as the annexation of these two wards.

This improvement here I conceive one of the greatest improvements that has been conceived within the past fifty years, inasmuch as it took almost a century for the people of this Nation to fully appreciate the map of the city of Washington. It lay there almost dormant for a quarter of a century. Nobody knew what advantage there was to the map, and finally it has been discovered that no city in the world equals to-day the plan of the map of the city of Washington.

This is a main artery of travel. It will add materially to the wealth of New York. There is not a mile of

driveway within the boundary of New York City to-day, except that of Riverside Drive. I think to-day that it is just the turning point in the improvement of the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Wards.

That is all I have to say, Your Honor.

WILLIAM N. COHEN---Who owns the largest tract of land along the line of this Concourse, but who lives on the South Side of the Harlem, but whose interests are larger on the South than the North, and, therefore, in a position to have an impartial view of this subject, and one which will affect the citizens on both sides of the River, is here to-day to recommend to Your Honor to approve this Bill. He probably will have to suffer greater than anybody who has spoken to Your Honor on the subject. His land is improved, occupied by tenants, and the Concourse will pass through that land and take away some of his improvements. He feels, however, that as a citizen of the city of New York the result will be so much better that he is here to ask Your Honor to approve this measure.

There is but one word that I have to say, and it is a suggestion that has not been made, and will appeal to Your Honor because you have had some difficulty in the matter of the excise question, in the matter of the closing of saloons and keeping them open during certain hours.

I think one of the difficulties in the city of New York is a lack of an outlet for people to go to Parks that are



not quite as beautiful as Central Park. Central Park must naturally be restricted. People cannot have the freedom that they desire to have when they seek pleasure on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday, and it is a place that should be restricted, but here are these parks which are much in natural beauty, in that when money has been expended on them in landscape architecture they will quite equal if not surpass Central Park, here are these parks that will be a pleasure ground for the people on the South Side to which they can go, and the more of these breathing spots which are afforded to the people of the city of New York the less crime, the less drunkenness Your Honor will have, and they will be a benefit to this whole City.

MAJOR GEORGE CHAPPELL---As an old resident of the South Side and a resident of the past ten years of the North Side, having a great familiarity with real estate in that section, being a tax payer and also a representative of a great many millions of dollars of property in that section, the owners of which all feel the same as I do about this matter, that nothing that you can do during your administration will be half as much benefit to our district as the present map that is now before you.

I am now situated in this way. Since the five cent fare bill was passed I am turning away from our district from fifty to one hundred people a day that want to come up there and live, but the bill was sprung so suddenly upon

us and unexpectedly approved, that it left us without buildings, but I can put ten or fifteen thousand people there in the next six months if we can get the buildings done. We cannot have this done until we know where we stand.

Now, if this matter passes, and I think I am a pretty good judge of the real estate in the North Side, as a citizen of the whole City now, I have no doubt that this improvement will so increase the value of all property north of the Harlem River that it will more than readily pay for itself in the next ten or fifteen years, and that is all I wish to say.

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Mayor---Gentlemen, we usually give an hour for each hearing, but if there is any one else who would like to be heard I will hear them, although it is now past our time--- 1:20 P.M. (No response.) If not we will close this discussion now. I think I understand this matter pretty well. Is there any one else to speak in favor of this Bill? (No response.)

The hearing is closed.

Closed at 1:25 P. M.

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E. H. COLE, STENOGRAPHER.



PUBLIC HEARING NO. 10.

At a public hearing held this 13th day of March, 1895, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, in the Mayor's Office in the City of New York, on Assembly Bill No.192, Introductory No.749, providing for the acquisition of a new site and buildings for the use of the College of the City of New York, there being no appearances in opposition to the Bill, the following gentlemen spoke in favor of it:-

(General Webb.) If Your Honor pleases there are several gentlemen present who would be glad to speak in favor of the Bill, but I think Your honor has a pretty good idea of the necessities of the Bill,- if not we would very gladly explain them.

(Mayor.) Gentlemen, I have an hour to give all those who wish to say anything in favor of the Bill.

(General Webb.) The Chairman of the Alumni, who has been working at this matter for a long time, will say something.

(Mr. Charles E. Lydecker.) I shall consume only a few moments, Mr. Mayor, to call attention to what has been done in this matter in bringing it before the Legislature last year and this year, in which we have secured the concurrence of all the Legislators, satisfying them that this is a great public measure, and a public necessity at the present time. There is here a memorial that was presented to the Senate; an argument showing that the form of this Act is precisely

similar as to form as legislation previously enacted for the College; also several pamphlets showing what the College is and the work that it has done, and also a re-print of an address by the then President of the Board of Education, Erastus C. Benedict, showing what the aim and scope of those who founded the College were, and showing inconnection with these documents that the College has lived up to the original purpose of those who created it. The College has educated about fifteen thousand young men. A small proportion of those, perhaps, succeeded in passing all the way through, but those who have been within its walls have received the benefits. The College was created as the capstone of the free public school system of the City of New York. It was created for the purpose of giving an incentive to every lad in the Public Schools. As soon as the College was founded the numbers of those who attended the Public Schools at once increased, for the teachers had a higher point to attain and the lads had something higher to look for ward to, and the College, in addition to that, acted to an extent as an incentive upon the teachers, prompting them to better work, for the work that they did was reviewed in the progress of those boys who went to the College. That is the great claim of the College,- that it is a part of the Public School system,- that it is not antagonistic to any part of the Public School system. We are as anxious that the Primary Schools and the Grammar Schools



should be maintained as any of those who are directly interested in those schools, or connected in their management, and we say that the College is of the greatest benefit to those Schools. And a remarkable document that was presented to the Governor last year was a memorial signed by the Principals of all the Male Grammar Schools of this City, advocating the passage of the bill.

We have to-day, who have come to advocate the Bill, Mr. Everett P. Wheeler, Colonel Alexander P. Ketcham, Mr. Charles L. Holt, President of the Board of Education, Charles H. Knox, Mr. Theodore M. Bennet of the New York Life Insurance Co., Mr. Robert T. Easton, Mr. W.M.K. Olcott of the Board of Aldermen, Mr. Wood, and General Webb, President of the College, and Mr. Harris, who has been one of the Committee charged with presenting to the Legislature the open facts of this measure, and a number of other gentlemen. I would ask Mr. Wheeler to explain, as he has already, several of the Committees, some of the points which I cannot now take time to do.

(Mr. Wheeler.) The experience of the College in its connection with the public school system of the City has been that it is an essential part of the system of public education. In relation to this new College Bill, - they have in other States public colleges maintained at the expense of the State. In Michigan, Minnesota and many of the Western States, there is a State University supported by the State. The only

argument that has been advanced against any support of this kind by the people of the City of New York is that it is not part of the public business to provide education in anything except the rudimentary branches. It is patent that that argument is entirely wrong, and that it has no application to the conditions of modern society. It seems of the first importance that the public should provide opportunity for young men of talent and ability for cultivating themselves., that talent which, unwisely directed, leads to sources of public mischief and disorder, shall be educated and trained , so that those men who naturally would seek a college education can learn that they are a part of the great public system , that the interest of all classes of society are really identical, and in that way, instead of becoming ringleaders of mischief, that they may become leaders of the public in everything that is wise and good, and I believe there is no graduate of such a college who would not concur with me. Clergymen, lawyers, physicians, businessmen may feel on equal terms with the children of the poorest, and the influence upon which experience has shown is of the first importance. It has sometimes been said that many go to the college and receive an education who are able to pay for it, and that is undoubtedly true, and certainly there can be no good reason why the son of a taxpayer who contributes his fair share of the expense of the college should not have his son educated there at the public expense. The assessment is pro-



portionate to the property, and those who have the greatest property contribute the largest proportion of it but if it were viewed solely from their standpoint, there are few persons but to whose interest it is to have men of talent trained and educated. It is education that is really the safeguard of all the public interests of the State, and I hardly feel that I ought to take a moment more time in urging upon you the intrinsic justice of this bill. But let me say this:- The College was originally organized in accordance with the vote of the people of New York. The Act under which it was organized in the first place was submitted to popular vote and was approved. Afterward, as the College accrued, the original quarters became inadequate, the Legislature made provision for a new site on Bryant Square. That site has become inapplicable, as you know. It has been turned into a park, and it would not be advantageous that that Park should be closed and the land turned into a site for the College. We are simply asking for a substitute for that site. The present quarters are absolutely inadequate, as the President can tell you, and it seems to me that it is simply a matter of justice that these faithful and earnest men who are in charge of the instruction of young men should have adequate facilities for doing what the public authorities are charged with doing, and what the people of New York have been almost unanimous in deciding ought to be done.

(President of the Board of Education, C.H.Knox)

It seems to me, Mr. Mayor, that it was settled at the time that it was only a question as to whether or not the College was a part of the educational system. For my own part, I think that there is no portion of the educational system that is more important than the keeping up of the College. It is well understood that if there be not some higher education above the Grammar Department, that the education found in the Grammar Department will not be as good. There must be something greater to aspire to. It having been settled that there should be such a College as this, and the College having been founded, it being now found quite inadequate, - the buildings being old, overcrowded, &c., the instruction that is given cannot be the equal to what it might be with better quarters. It seems to me that there is not a public improvement that is more imperative at the present moment than this. The College should have a new building. The amount of the expense to this City in building will be materially reduced by the fact that after the new building is built, the provision is made for selling the old site and the returning the amount received to the Sinking Fund. It would undoubtedly be a very material amount. The Board of Trustees of the College has for several years been unanimously of the opinion that the College should have a new building, and we urge upon you, sir, the propriety



of giving your endorsement to that bill.

(Col. Alexander P. Ketchum.) At very great expense there has been acquired in the College building a library and scientific apparatus which, if a fire should occur at the building, would probably be nearly or wholly destroyed. The ~~xxx~~ loss would be not only a pecuniary one, but a scientific loss of a very serious character. A loss like that at this time is a matter of profit and loss to the City, and it is a matter of business to forestall it. It is proposed by this bill that not more than six hundred thousand dollars shall be paid for ground to be used, and not more than seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the building that may be erected thereon. If we are going to procure a new site, the quicker we do it the better, for lots in the unoccupied districts of this City particularly are increasing ~~xxxxxxx~~ in value. We may be able to wait a year or two years longer and be unable to obtain what we can now secure for six hundred thousand dollars or less for anything like that amount. In the meantime, since the present building was erected, the value of property where that building stands at the corner of Lexington Avenue and Twenty-third Street, has very greatly increased in value. It is now much better fitted for business than for educational purposes, as we all realize, and by the time the new building is in ~~mitts of the College.~~ ~~Mr. Mayor: I can only say, as~~ such condition as that the College Instructors and ~~Chairman of the Executive Committee, that we have all~~

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their pupils may occupy it, the probability is that the present site will have reached a value of at least five hundred thousand dollars. Now, therefore, this outlay is in a sense temporary. As to the whole amount it certainly is, because the sale of the old site will perhaps as much as half pay for the proposed outlay.

(Mayor.) How many lots have you there?

(Answer.) We have about thirteen lots and we propose to secure about sixty lots.

We have no particular site in view. We want to particularly emphasize that fact. Under the bill, the Board of Education is to determine where the site shall be and also determine what lands shall be purchased. And again, before they can purchase those lands they have got to have the approval of the Finance City Committee of the ~~xxxx~~ as to the price to be paid. The Board of Estimate & Apportionment has to pass upon the price which the Board of Education may propose to bid for the lots to be bought, so that in every respect the bill has guarded the City against any impropriety that can possibly take place in the course of action necessary to be taken to the final securing of the desired building. It is to that particular phase of the case, sir, I desire to call your attention.

(Mr. Harris, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the College.) Mr. Mayor: I can only say, as Chairman of the Executive Committee, that we have all



been very much exercised as to the condition of the present building. The site is a valuable one. The buildings are very old and they require an immense deal of repairing. They are in such a condition that to be put in proper repair it would take from seventy-five to eighty thousand dollars to put them in scarcely tenable condition. The walls have got to be fixed up, the ceilings were last year in a precarious condition and the Fire Department has instructed the Board of Trustees that they must put up fire escapes. There is an expense alone of from five to seven thousand dollars. We have felt that the responsibility has been upon us. We have been unable to get any money from the Board of Estimate & Apportionment to put up the Fire Escapes, and that is now hanging over. We have been obliged to reduce the number of pupils who have been allowed to go into the Chapel. All these things show that it is absolutely impossible, without an enormous expenditure, to keep these buildings in repair and proper shape. We feel the responsibility, because it is on us that the blame for such abuse would fall. Now the Faculty will tell you the condition of things better than we can, but we all feel that the responsibility is great, and feel that it would be a useless waste of money to put any great amount in the buildings as they now stand, when we should have a building that is fire proof to preserve the apparatus and library. There should be a home for that library, as well as a building in which

we can put our young men without that fear which we now have of some dreadful accident occurring there. With the Board of Trustees it is unanimous upon the question as to the necessity for a new site. There will be no very great expenditure of money which will not come back to the City as soon as the old site is sold, but to take the old buildings and repair them as they should be repaired, would cost so large an amount that the City would not be justified in doing it.

(Mr. Lydecker.) The centre of population at the time this College was erected was below where the College now stands. In this pamphlet is a map showing the City of New York, showing the population and the location of students at the College, and showing very clearly that the centre of population is now far above that point. It is easy to see by a glance that this is one of the claims why a building should not be erected on the present site, even if it were large enough, which it is not.

General Alexander S. Webb, President of the College of the City of New York, then closed the hearing with a few remarks of a general nature advocating the approval of the Bill by the Mayor, whereupon the Mayor declared the hearing closed and the Bill approved.

N.B. Corporation Counsel Scott upon entering the room was asked by the Mayor if he had anything to say against the Bill, and he replied "No sir, nobody could say anything against it."



Public  
Hearing  
No. 10.

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College  
of the  
City of New York.

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54  
March 13/95

PUBLIC HEARING NO. 25.

Mayor's Office,

New York, April 5th, 1895.

At two o'clock P.M., the Private Secretary to the Mayor announced that in pursuance of the notice given to the public, the hearing upon Assembly Bill No. 250, Introductory

PUBLIC HEARING NO. 25.

No. 250, entitled "An act to provide for the location of additional public parks in the City of New York, and for the construction therein of school-houses, school play grounds and municipal baths," was now open, and that those opposed to the Bill would state their objections first, and that

Assembly Bill No. 230, Introductory No. 250, entitled "AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PARKS IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, AND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION THEREIN OF SCHOOL-HOUSES, SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS AND MUNICIPAL BATHS".

first of the question be concluded, and then those who desired to speak in favor of the Bill would be heard.

New York, April 5th, 1895.

Mayor:--Is there anybody here to say anything against this Bill, gentlemen?

No response.

Mayor:-- If there is no one here to say anything against this Bill we will hear anybody that has anything to say in favor of it.

MR. J. AUGUSTUS JOHNSON:--There are other gentlemen who are expected to be here in the advocacy of this Bill, and until they arrive I may perhaps express to you the warm approval of this Bill on the part of the Committee of Seventy, also on the part of the Council of Federated Good Government Clubs, and of the individual clubs who have passed resolutions in approval of this Bill. These organ-



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New York, April 5th, 1895.

At two o'clock P.M., the Private Secretary to the Mayor announced that in pursuance of the notice given to the public, the hearing upon Assembly Bill No. 230, Introductory No. 250, entitled "An act to provide for the location of additional public parks in the City of New York, and for the construction therein of school-houses, school play grounds and municipal baths," was now open, and that those opposed to the Bill would state their objections first, and that side of the question be concluded, and then those who desired to speak in favor of the Bill would be heard.

Mayor---Is there anybody here to say anything against this Bill, gentlemen?

No response.

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MR. J. AUGUSTUS JOHNSON---There are other gentlemen who are expected to be here in the advocacy of this Bill, and until they arrive I may perhaps express to you the warm approval of this Bill on the part of the Committee of Seventy, also on the part of the Council of Federated Good Government Clubs, and of the individual clubs who have passed resolutions in approval of this Bill. Those organ-

izations have both recommended their officers to advocate the passage of this bill at Albany, and representations have been made by them there to the respective representatives, who have co-operated in the passage of this bill, believing it was to the best interest of the City of New York.

We understand, Mr. Mayor, that New York City is far beyond any other city in the world in proportion of its population in the area devoted to park space. The statistics I have not at my finger's end at the moment, but if you, Mr. Mayor, have ever been (I see by the newspapers you have quite recently been there)-(Suppressed laughter) on the East Side, in Mott Street and other streets where the population is congested, you will be able to realize how very very difficult it is for the occupants of that District to get any fresh air, or have any opportunity to get outside of the dark, and heretofore dirty, streets of that part of the City. Thanks to your Administration, and to Col. Waring, the streets are much cleaner now than they have been before.

These maps which Mr. Gilder has placed before you will aid Your Honor in seeing the location of the different parks of the City as they are represented. This is Central Park: (Pointing to map). These small spaces here indicate breathing places in different parts of the City, but you will notice that where the people are 325,000 to the acre--the most thickly settled in the world--the breathing places



are very few and far between, and exceedingly small. ~~Benefit~~  
~~that could~~ Now it is well known to the citizens of New York  
that the people there in their frantic efforts to get fresh  
air go out upon their roofs and sleep upon their roofs, ~~some~~  
and sometimes fall off them. They sometimes go out to the  
gutter and sit there with their little children in the hot  
weather, so you will see that if there was a small park in  
the vicinity what a great relief it would be to the popu-  
lation. I can only say, in my judgment, it would be a ~~the~~  
wise expenditure of money. As a tax payer, personally, I  
shall be most glad to see this bill approved, and I believe  
if the bill has your approval and goes back and becomes a  
law, that it will be a blessing to the City, and will in-  
crease the growing pride that the citizens all feel in  
their City, and stimulate public and civic pride in the  
development of what will sooner or later be "The Greater  
New York". ~~it says that there should be at least two parks.~~

~~I will say that ----- at first decided to~~  
MR. R. W. GILDER---The Tenement House Committee  
discovered in New York a condition of overcrowding as to  
areas unequalled in the civilized world; even Asia seems to  
have no city with so many inhabitants to the acre as part  
of New York. A district exists in the lower part of our  
city 500 feet from any existing or proposed park and 750  
feet from either the North or East River. In this dis-  
trict there is a population of 324,000 persons, and there  
is in it not one small park or a single public playground.  
~~economical in their character (3) or a part of each park must~~

The Committee believed that the greatest relief and benefit that could be promptly supplied to this overcrowded population would be the construction of several small parks in the most crowded portion of the district. It was not considered wise for them to name the exact spots which should be chosen as parks; but they did think it wise and necessary to point out in the bill the exact sub-district where the first additional small parks should be constructed, namely: in the parkless territory of 400 acres, east of the Bowery and Catharine Street, and south of Fourth Street. There are in this sub-district a quarter of a million of inhabitants and the average of density of the entire area is 619 persons to the acre. In a portion of this district the density rises to the extraordinary figure of over 900 to the acre. The Act now before you provides for the expenditure of an average of \$1,000,000 per year for three years, and it says that there should be at least two parks.

I will say that the Committee at first decided to make the amount \$4,000,000 and to require not less than three parks. But finding that there were large delayed payments to be made under Mayor Hewitt's small parks act of 1887 (which payments were provided for in the Committee's bill, signed March 4th, and referring to Mulberry Bend, St. John's and the East River Extension Parks), the Committee reduced the amount from \$4,000,000 to \$3,000,000. There are certain provisions in this bill which meet the peculiar needs of the neighborhood, and which also are economical in their character, for a part of each park must



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be finished as a public playground, and each park must be used for municipal baths, school-houses and school playgrounds. It was the opinion of the Committee that a secondary but highly important benefit might and should be derived from the opening of small parks by the destruction of some of the worst tenement districts. In this connection I beg leave to state that I have just received a letter from Mr. Edward Marshall, secretary of the late commission, in which he says that the destruction of slums and rookeries is going on in London to an extent of which we have only a faint notion in this country. He says that "the result is proof positive of the accuracy of the theory that environment makes or unmakes the man". Mr. Marshall was told in London that "with the disappearance of the old buildings has been brought about the disappearance of the old nature of their inhabitants." He says that twelve years ago the average of highway robberies in London was six in every twenty-four hours, whereas it is now only one for each ten days.

Now, Mr. Mayor, there is a bill that should be before you with this bill. It was passed at the same time by both Houses, and is the Tenement House Committee's bill in relation to school playgrounds. We were asked why we did not make that bill for existing schools. We did not do it on account of the enormous expense that would be forced upon the city.

MAYOR---We have an act now here, (reads act).



MR. GILDER---I would say, Mr. Mayor, that that is the bill of which I have been speaking. There is another bill that passed the sametime this did, concerning which I have a telegram from the Clerk of the Senate saying it should have been sent to you. I have a copy of it here. (Shows bill). The bill reads as follows: "Hereafter no school-house shall be constructed in the City of New York without an open air playground attached to or used in connection with the same".

You will see, Mr. Mayor, this is for the future, and does not force upon the city the enormous expense of providing such playgrounds for school-houses already erected.

MAYOR---This bill we are discussing was sent here March 23rd.

MR. GILDER---Mr. Dawson telegraphs me to-day that he will send you a copy to-morrow.

MAYOR---I should say, this bill was received on March 28th.

MR. GILDER---This bill is a mandatory one in regard to the two parks on the East Side.

I would be very glad, Mr. Mayor, if you would allow Mr. Reynolds to speak on these two bills.

MR. J. B. REYNOLDS---Mr. Mayor, I desire to speak on these two bills because I feel that as Secretary of the Sub-Committee of the Committee of Seventy on parks,

that the question was one that was regarded by us as of immense importance. We ourselves followed the example that Mr. Gilder had set us of specifying the East Side, and finally the absolute specification of the East Side as the place where the introduction of new parks was to be made, was abandoned, not because we did not realize the need, but because we took that part of the city as being in the greatest need of parks. It was the point, I may say, upon which we all agreed, that the greatest necessity was on the East Side.

It seems to me that from the impressions that I received, and the impressions one would receive from going through that section of Washington Square, Corlears Hook, Tompkins Square and Canal Street, that one would get a little idea of the condition of that section, and if one has lived there and seen what the exact condition is one sees that there must be the place of tremendous need, and I feel that it is a very conservative estimate on the part of the Committee to make these two recommendations at this time.

I wish to say also, Mr. Mayor, that a number of gentlemen have come down with us this afternoon, some of them members of Good Government Clubs X and Y, to express their interest and their endorsement of these bills.

I also wish to speak a word in regard to the school playgrounds.

I have had occasion to visit a number of schools



in our part of the city, and saw there the underground halls dimly lighted by gas, which are still used as the only playground in the majority of the schools on the East Side, and I asked some of the children how they got along when they attempted to play, and they said it was very hard, because they said they had to avoid the posts, and that when any of them attempted to run up or down they were apt to strike the posts. They said that a day rarely passed that there was not more or less injury inflicted upon one or more of them. I notice it particularly myself, because, having been at the head of an institution with about two thousand children, I have noticed that when they came to us their greatest desire was to have the pleasure of racing freely up and down the hall, and I felt that while it was a very disorderly proceeding, it was the only fair chance they had, and it would be a great pity not to grant it to them.

I believe that the provision would be of immense value, and would afford a sanitary compensation, and would have an effect upon the health of the children which could not fail to be noticed. I therefore endorse both of these bills, most heartily, and express the hope that you will do likewise.

DR. CYRUS EDSON---I have very little to say, Mr. Mayor, in addition to what has been said. The gentleman who has just talked has covered the ground very freely,

especially in regard to the playgrounds. It is an absolute essentiality that children should have play associated with their work. A child is but a little animal and needs to be developed from the animal standpoint even more than from an intellectual standpoint. At this day the death rate in this city is just as low as it possibly can be made, in my opinion, and the only way that we can possibly obtain a lower death rate is by making such permanent improvements and increasing the park area and park breathing space, such as is contemplated in this bill.

MR. ROGER FOSTER---Mr. Mayor, I have not had the pleasure of hearing what my predecessors have had to say, so I shall be very brief in the hopes that I may not treat much on what they have said.

I have given some examination to this subject, and I am satisfied that this is the only bill that has ever passed the Legislature for the location of new parks in this city which has not been prompted for the immediate interest of some private individual. Every other bill that has ever passed, although they have been a public good, have been prompted and pushed by people who have had real estate which they wished bought by the city. Now, these are parks which have been passed by the Legislature solely for the purpose of the public good, and it is my belief that when the people have forgotten the present quarrel of the officers they will look back upon this and thank this



Republican Legislature for what it has done in this respect. They do not interfere with the principle of Home Rule. You are given the full power of this election; of the election of these parks. This section of the city is the most densely populated section of the whole world. It holds about one-sixth of the entire population of this city. The people are jammed in together there, and we found by examination that they have absolutely no breathing place. The houses are so close together that we found in the whole block only one seventh of the ground open. We found in some sections two thousand inhabitants and not a single bath room in the whole block. The buildings are old, and we found that here the death rate was very high, and the result there is not only to injure the neighborhood of those houses themselves, but contagion starts there which spreads throughout the whole city, so by doing away with them the entire city will be benefitted.

These parks will not increase the tax rate, because we have provided for payment for them by the issue of \$3,000,000 of bonds. Furthermore, that is not an excessive amount, as you know, Sir, by the law of 1887 the City authorities were authorized to spend a million dollars a year for the creation of new parks. Now, during the last eight years they have only spent \$2,500,000., so there are some five or six million dollars left. The reason for this surplus is, the previous authorities of this city found that they could make better use of this

money. You know, Sir, where it has went. So that in this respect you have ample funds, and I believe that when you look back in life on your administration you will find that there will be no act that will give you more satisfaction than the approval of this bill. The people will say that you were the man who laid out the tenement house parks. That is all I have to say, Mr. Mayor.

MR. LEVENSON, CLUB "X."---I represent a Club whose membership is drawn exclusively from the tenement house portion of this city. The Districts covered are the Second, Fourth, and until recently the Third and Fifth were also included, and those are the Districts to which reference has been made by the previous speakers.

Now, I believe we are all a unit in agreeing that these parks and better playgrounds are a necessity. I have spent all my life in that portion of the city, and I think I know pretty well the condition down there.

Now let us treat the Public Schools. The Norfolk Street School is a building that was erected quite recently; say six or seven years ago. The playgrounds there to which Mr. Reynolds referred is very dark. I attended the evening high school there for years, and on one side of the building right next to the playgrounds are the closets with their stench and odors, and the children are supposed to play there. Right outside the gates is Norfolk Street and Hester Street, and certainly the children on a Sunday afternoon (11) the streets of New York,



dren are not in good air if they are outside, and inside they are in air that is worse. space, if not even a park,

in that Now, take the Christopher Street School No. 7, which I attended myself. They erected a new building, and before it was opened the architect had made new plans for a roof garden, and strange to say the roof garden never appeared. The children are compelled to play down stairs, the playground being on the ground floor. Now they could just as well put the playground on the roof. The walls are high and arrangements were made for that purpose, but for some reason, the teachers themselves in the building never being able to say why, the roof garden idea was dropped. really need there is fresh air and small parks. No

matter to The Rivington Street and the Christopher Street and other school houses are sadly deficient in playgrounds.

to-day vi Now for parks. It has been mentioned that from Tempkins Square down to the City Hall, and from Washington Square to the Battery there are very few open places. Now there is a square at the intersection of Baxter, Walker and Canal Streets, and there is a square at the intersection of East Broadway where Canal Street runs into that Street. There are the places for parks. I think that it would be greatly appreciated by the people. Have any of you ladies or gentlemen who spend your lives in the upper portion of your city ever spent a Sunday afternoon in the tenement house portion of this city? Have you, Mr. Mayor? Ask any person who has spent his life there and who has seen the children on a Sunday afternoon on the streets of New York,

and you will just understand how much they will appreciate a small playground, or an open space, if not even a park, in that portion of the city. Why, Mr. Mayor, it is absolutely necessary. The money will be very well expended if we are given the right to go ahead with this. Consider it very carefully, Your Honor, and as has been said, let the people say that you are the man who gave them the tenement house parks.

What we need ----- is a man can take his family in

MR. MURRAY---I would say, Your Honor, that I have been living nearly twenty-three years in this part of the city, and my duties have required me to be there, and what we really need there is fresh air and small parks. No matter how well you construct tenement houses the air in them will be bad, and I am sure the people who have spoken to-day will say that these parks are very necessary to give the people a chance to breathe; where men can take their children on pleasant evenings and be with their families. You can appreciate what a good you would be doing, Your Honor, and I think from an essential standpoint the saloon question would be greatly relieved.

Recreation Now there is one thing that I can call your attention to. In recalling my visits to some large foreign cities, I consulted detailed maps this morning, and I find that in this district which you are considering for small parks, that it is nearly a mile square, and with not a single park in it. Now, if you will take London, I think



you will find that there is hardly a spot in London where much less than half a mile a man cannot reach within an easy walking distance of his house some public square or Park. Now the same way in Paris, there are plenty of wide boulevards where people can get fresh air, and the same thing I think is true in Berlin and Vienna--you don't have to go very far in either city before you strike small parks or squares.

What we need are parks where a man can take his family in the evening, where the children can play within a reasonable distance of the tenement house district. The only way now, if a laboring man wishes to be with his children he has to be shut up in the house, or else sit on the sidewalk.

I have nothing more to say, Your Honor.

MR. R. FULTON CUTTING---I have simply come up here Your Honor, because I feel this matter very much at heart indeed about small parks. We are taking a very different view of human nature from that which we obtained a very few years ago, and have come to recognize the importance of recreation to the development of the moral as well as the physical in man. Of course at no time of life is recreation more necessary than during childhood, and as the children of our public schools are practically restricted to the streets for their playground, we cannot expect recreation to play much of a part in their development into

good and useful men and women.

A few days ago I visited the new buildings of St. Luke's Hospital in the upper part of the city. The workmen were then tearing down a <sup>r</sup>partition in a large room in that part of the building to be occupied exclusively by the nurses. The architect told me this partition was being removed in order to give the nurses more room to dance in. The Trustees of this great institution, with the wise philanthropy, in their effort to obtain the best services from the nurses for the patients in the hospital, have determined to give them an opportunity for recreation, believing that this diversion of the mind from their somewhat painful daily round, would make them more generally efficient and careful. If recreation is useful for these nurses how much more for boys and girls.

In this view of the case I regard the opening of small parks or playgrounds adjacent to new public schools as of the greatest importance, and trust that Your Honor will give your approval to the measure.

I believe we should pull down every tenement house on the East Side to-day, and build it up with modern tenement houses. The trouble also is overcrowding. I am told that it has been computed that in some of the streets on the East Side if the entire population should come down into the street there would not be enough room for them. I am inclined to think this is a little exaggerated, but it points out how crowded they are.



question REV. DR. KIMBER---Mr. Mayor, I had not expected to be called upon to say anything in regard to this bill. I can only say that the Charity Organization Society is deeply interested in this matter. There are also some four or five thousand wealthy citizens interested in this benevolent work, and I know they all feel like myself, that you should give your approval to this bill. vigorous plea

for this bill in relation ----- all parks. Particularly when you MR. MILBURRY---All I can say, Mr. Mayor, is that I am glad to very heartily endorse all that has been said. I know something about that great East Side. We all know the condition that exists there, and we know that we cannot have good health without sunshine and plenty of it. That I think is especially true of children. I very heartily endorse anything that will obligate us to provide the poor with small parks and the schools with playgrounds. I think that is all I have to say, Your Honor.

----- MR. GRAY---I can only speak sir, of my very personal close knowledge of this section in which these parks are supposed to be placed. During the past year I made a personal investigation into the large section of territory referred to. I examined every house, and knowing something of London and something of Glasgow I am prepared to say that in no city of which I have any knowledge is there anything like I saw on the East Side. avenues, but what

we want I believe that the best way to deal with that

question of overcrowding is these parks. I think it should be thoroughly investigated by the city, and I also think if this bill passes and becomes a law the people of New York will be grateful to you.

MR. N. J. FELDMAN---On behalf of the children more especially I should like to put in a vigorous plea for this bill in relation to the small parks. Particularly when you take into view that the children of the present are going to be the citizens of the coming years, and the qualifications for good citizenship on the part of these children will be very greatly enhanced if they can have the proper surroundings and also the means of recreation, and I would particularly desire to enforce the remarks which were made by Mr. Cutting in connection with them. I trust, Your Honor, that these measures may meet with your hearty approval.

MR. DEVINES---I did not expect to speak, Mr. Mayor. If I had I should have brought a little child here. I would like to show you a little map I have here. (Here shows map). This is Tompkins Square, this Washington Square, and this City Hall Park. You will see there is nothing in all this district that one can call a breathing place. Here is the upper part of the city, and here are our beautiful parks and broad streets and avenues, but what we want and need, Sir, are small parks in this thickly



populated section of the city. Parks, as has been said, where the working man can take his family and enjoy the pure air, such as it is impossible to get in these tenement houses. Mr. Cutting is quite right when he says there should be a cleaning out of these tenement houses. Why, Mr. Mayor, in the street where I live there is one house with 44 families in it. I also can show you a house with 400 people in it, and not a single bath tub in the house. There are 80 families living there, and in many of the tenement houses the condition is so fearful that I am told by physicians that many of the people have no water on their backs from September, when the baths close, until when they open again, and I praise the part of this act that refers to municipal baths in the parks.

I hope, Your Honor, you will give your approval to this bill.

MR. J. P. ARCHIBALD---On behalf of the great mass of working people of this city I am authorized to come here and appeal to you for your approval of these bills.

While the working people are grateful for all that these gentlemen have done for them, they fully appreciate the necessity for what has been asked in their interests, and undoubtedly will be grateful if you, Mr. Mayor, will use your influence in securing these breathing places for the children of the poor. It has been said that the children of to-day are the future citizens. That is all

a representative from one of (18) most densely populated

very true, and unless something is done to relieve the strain upon the morals, and I may say, upon the general evils that the children are subject to on the East Side, I am afraid that in the future the poor of our city will reflect but little credit upon us.

The density of the population in certain districts, which has been mentioned here, is a frightful source of anxiety. I assure you it is no by word when I say that the thoughtful men of our class have been sorely treated and grieved over it, and are more delighted to see the efforts that are being made in our behalf. I have endeavored to convince them from time to time that the Mayor of this city would see the necessity of this, and that he would gladly do all that was in his power to aid them. I have every hope that you will do your part and join hands with the people in every effort to bring about the condition that they desire. Life in some districts of this city is simply horrible. It is impossible for children to be raised under the existing conditions with any kind of morality. These playgrounds if they were made for them, would give the parents a better opportunity for supervising their children, which would go a great ways toward making creditable and reputable citizens of them.

I can say nothing more, Mr. Mayor, except that I hope this bill will have your approval.

MR. FANNELL---Mr. Mayor, I appear before you as a representative from one of the most densely populated



sections of the East Side--the Third, Fourth and Fifth Assembly Districts, and I beg that you be kind enough to approve these bills, as the playgrounds and breathing spaces are actually a necessity to the people of that neighborhood.

MR. A. E. OMMEN---I represent Good Government Club "Y? I have lived in that district nearly all my life, and understand the conditions and the surroundings of the people, consequently probably understand the necessity for these playgrounds. Tompkins Square which is probably the largest and closest square to that district, is on days like this and on Sundays and Saturday and in the afternoons densely crowded so that seats are at a premium, and people have to walk up and down the streets instead of in the parks. It shows that another park at least is necessary for these people. Probably the only means of getting a little fresh air in that section of the city are the roofs and the docks. The docks to a great extent have been grabbed, I might say, by corporations, and there are now but a few where the poor can get fresh air. The roofs are certainly not the best places. They cannot go on the streets as they are crowded with trucks, so I feel that it is not a question of convenience to these people, Mr. Mayor, but that it is a question of necessity and nothing more. You and I, Mr. Mayor, and a great many of us here in the room can go to the mountains, rivers, lakes, and ought to bear your approval. (20)

sea shore and enjoy the fresh air, but these people are devoid of health and devoid of wealth, and must stay where they are, and to put a public park in that densely populated district I might say is like a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day. I am sure that they will enjoy better sunshine and better lives in the future, and will appreciate that we had a Mayor who looked out for their interest.

This is all I have to say, Your Honor.

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MR. JULIUS BLUMBERG---I have the honor of representing Good Government Club "X," which Club comes directly from this district. The ground has been covered so well as regards this bill that I will confine myself to a few words.

If you have been in this locality where it is intended by this bill to place the parks, you have noticed that the streets are so fully occupied by the people that they actually have their families on the sidewalks, sleeping on the sidewalks at night; women nursing their babies, and the young children in the gutters. Why, Mr. Mayor, you can hardly walk without stepping on them when passing through the streets. Such is the condition of the section where I have been brought up. The only benefit that they derive now is by going to the docks, but here frequently accidents happen. People sleep here on the roofs, and on the fire escapes, and here accidents have also happened.

I think, Your Honor, this is a just measure, and ought to bear your approval.



MRS. LOWELL---Your Honor, I did not think it would be necessary to say anything after what has been said, so I will only say that I agree with everybody that has spoken that these parks are very much needed.

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MAYOR---We give an hour for each hearing, ladies and gentlemen, and we have fifteen minutes yet. If there is anybody who has anything to say on this bill we will gladly hear them. (No response).

Is there anybody to say anything further on this bill? (No response).

The hearing is closed.

Closed at 2:55 P.M.

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PUBLIC HEARING NO. 47.

Mayor's Office,

New York, April 25th, 1895.

At two o'clock P.M. the Private Secretary to the Mayor announced that in pursuance of the notice given to the public, the hearing on Assembly Bill No. 2090, Introductory No. 253, entitled "An act to amend chapter four hundred and ten of the laws of eighteen hundred and eighty-two, entitled 'An act to consolidate into one act and to declare the special and local laws affecting public interests in the city of New York,' as subsequently amended by chapter eighty-four of the laws of eighteen hundred and eighty-seven, and chapter two hundred and eighty-eight of the laws of eighteen hundred and eighty-seven, and chapter two hundred and seventy-five of the laws of eighteen hundred and ninety-two, and otherwise so as to provide for the improvement of tenement and lodging-houses in the city of New York," was now opened, and that those opposed to the bill would state their objections first, and that side of the question be concluded, and then those who desired to speak in favor of the bill would be heard.

MAYOR---Is there anybody here who wishes to say anything against this bill?

MR. JOHN P. LEO---Mr. Mayor, I represent here to-day a League which is composed of men who practice in New York the art of building, both as architects, and as masons and carpenters; a league of men who have joined together



simply for the furtherance of the best interests of the trade and the profession. The bill as it stands to-day is considered unjust and unfair. The organizations we represent and the people that are in them represent to-day the builders of seventy per cent., at least, of the houses that are building in New York City. They are the merchant builders and the contract builders of this great city.

When the Tenement-house Commission was first formed and the very many gentlemen who composed it elected Mr. Gilder their president, it went to work, and having had provided for them the sum of \$10,000. by the State they prepared maps, which we have seen, showing the worst sections of New York City; showing the tenement-house of forty years ago, and we agree with these gentlemen that these houses should be blotted out and removed. Our effort has been in the direction of elevating and bettering the class of structures for apartments that are being built, but when this Commission seeks to include under the head of tenement-houses the highest class of flats in the city, houses such as are built to rent from \$100. and upwards a month, and put them in the same class with common ordinary buildings, we object.

Now the bill as it stands to-day is very different from the original bill. Mr. Gilder has consented to a number of changes, and to-day it does not contain so many objectionable features. Mr. Gilder had seen, after consultation, that certain requests of ours were reasonable and agreed upon them. One clause which I speak of in par-



ticular is the clause relating to covering. It is section 8 amending section 661, on page 15 of the bill, then following on page 16, starting with line 4, and then going on. I will read it, if the Mayor pleases. ".....being enlarged or altered, or its lot be diminished so that it shall occupy more than sixty-five per centum of the area of said lot." Now, Mr. Mayor, the bill as it stands to-day allows for sixty-five per centum, and also gives the Board of Health the privilege of extending that area when in their good judgment proper conditions for light and air prevail. They, following their judgment, decide that it would be proper to cover seventy-eight percent of the lot. Now, the difference between the seventy-five which is allowed here under the old law and seventy-eight is very apparent. The Board of Health have had the privilege to change the rule allowing seventy-eight per cent. at any time, but they never have changed it one bit. Now, you may say that the difference of three per cent. does not make much of a showing, but when you build a three family apartment house as we are doing to-day you will find that it does. Now if you say we must cut this down three per cent. how can we do it. We must diminish the sizes of the rooms in order to get the three apartments - - - - -; we cut down the number of rooms, because these houses will be built and can be built even under the seventy-five per cent. rule.

Now, so far as the area of twenty-two per cent. is concerned, we have not here, as the notice was rather



short, but we hope to have for you a map which we would like to place side by side with the maps of the Commission.

Now the clause relating to the carrying of the height of the basement floors above the curb line is an excellent one, we think, and we heartily agree with the Commission thereon. And so on, the section relative to wall-paper, stating that it should be taken from the walls before new paper is applied. But the one clause which we do object to, and object to very strongly, is in regard to the proceedings as to the requirements in cases of condemnation. We have here to-day Mr. Ash, who is a member of the League, and he is also a lawyer who is prepared to demonstrate to you, and who prepared the act which is a recognized authority, and he can describe to you better than I can the effect of that law.

But the particular section that I want to refer to is that section in regard to the amount of space to cover. Perhaps it is best to let Mr. Ash speak on this point.

MR. ASH---If the Mayor pleases I want to say at the outset that I am entirely in harmony with the efforts of this Tenement-house Commission, or any other organization who approve the conditions of the construction of tenement-houses, but I am not in favor of radical schemes such as are proposed in this bill. I want to say that I will confine my remarks solely to the discussion of section 659 as amended by section 7 of this act, and I want to say at the outset, Mr. Mayor, that I myself do not know or do not represent



anybody who owns any "rookery" or "pest hole" in the city of New York. On the contrary I have the good fortune to be the constructor of some of the tenement-houses which recently obtained the commendation of the architect member of the Tenement-house Commission. He himself said that if that was the kind of house that was going to be built in the city of New York, that there would be no need of changes in the law.

Now, Mr. Mayor, it is doubtful whether any law that has been passed, referring to this city, has been such a radical measure as this. The measure is this. If the Mayor pleases he can authorize the Board of Health whenever they find a tenement-house in such a bad condition from a sanitary standpoint, to order it vacated, offering a premium if the Mayor pleases, and I address you, Mr. Mayor, as representing the tax payers of the city of New York who will have to go in their pockets and pay this premium to owners who will allow their buildings to assume such a condition that the Board of Health will say, "we will take these buildings and will pay the owner the cost of the material and the other things which go in to make up the valuation of this building as determined by a committee for condemnation." If a building is in a poor condition so that it is a nuisance to adjoining buildings it must be by reason of its inherent condition. That condition can be remedied by the Board of Health, who can compel the owner to put it in proper condition, and if the owner does not put it in a



proper condition what then? The Board of Health has the power to order that building vacated. Now, Your Honor knows as a practical business man that if the owner of a building is going to get no income from his property he will change the nature of the building. Your Honor knows the discussion that was going on in the public prints during the time this Commission sat in reference to the bad condition of some tenements that were known to be owned by a large corporation in this city. Owing to the fact that the condition of these buildings was shown by the public prints and through this Tenement-house Commission that corporation has taken steps to order these buildings vacated, and is going to entirely re-construct the buildings for business purposes. Now, if that was a practical fact of the situation, why should the tax payers of the city of New York give a premium to people who allow their houses to be put in such a condition that the city will have to pay for them.

I will now refer to page 12: "Whenever in the opinion of the board of health of the health department of the city of New York, an order to vacate which has been ~~made~~ made by said board, is, by reason of age, defects in drainage plumbing, infection with contagious disease, or ventilation, or because of the existence of a nuisance on the premises, which is likely to cause sickness among its occupants or among the occupants of other property in the city of New York,....." Do you see how wide that is. We might allow this Tenement-house Commission to say that when a square of



of buildings is not in proper condition in their estimation, they can cause them to be pulled down.

Let me say another thing, if Your Honor pleases. There is an idea prevalent with a large number of people that you can remedy evils by putting laws upon statute books. I remember when I went to college that the principle of government was that that ~~xxx~~ government governs best that governs least. Does Your Honor expect for a moment that if a measure like this is put upon the statute books that the people will submit to it. But Your Honor is the one who represents us. You should look into it and see if it is for the interest of the tenement-house people or the best interest of all. I have to pay my taxes, you have to pay your taxes, and I say that a provision as radical as this ought never to be upon the statute books of the city of New York. I ask your Honor officially if you have any doubt about the constitutionality of this question you should consult your Corporation Counsel about it, and ask him if there is or ever has been put upon the statute books of the city of New York.

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MR. SAMUEL MCMILLAN---On behalf of the Real Estate Exchange of the city of New York I appear before you in behalf of the disposition of this bill, and for what reasons do I do it? I appeal to a business man who is Chief of the city of New York who has made himself what he is through business channels. The channels with which we



construct the edifice in which the poor man dwells is equal in line with the business which you have been in all the days of your life. If this business paid better than any other business paid the city of New York would have no reason to give \$10,000. to a Commission to create such a measure or bill. Why, as a business man; as a man of finances, if I go into an office where a loaner of money wishes to loan on a tenement-house, he asks me 6 per cent. his attorney asks me a double fee for the passage of its title. If I go into the same office and ask the same gentleman for a loan on business property it is 4 per cent. and I will make the cost of the search as light as possible. I claim to-day that a poor man cannot pay for the building of a tenement-house under these existing amendments. It is impossible. It would raise his rent 15 or 20 per cent. Now, why can't the poor builder build a building such as they want? Because they require a fireproof stair, a fireproof hall and a solid partition, which means from 30 to 40 per cent more than the present building laws require.

MR. GILDER---I ask the gentleman where he gets his information.

MR. MCMILLAN---I have not had the time to go over the whole matter, but I know that the Mayor will agree with me. I am building a building with a fireproof partition, and everything else that is required by law, and I say to-day that if these gentlemen want to create a blessing in New York let the building laws exist as they are now.



MR. WILLIAM H. STEINKAMP---If your Honor please, I appear here as spokesman for a Committee representing the House and Real Estate Owners' Association of the 12th and 19th Wards of New York City. This Association has been in existence seven years, and is composed of five hundred members, every one of whom is an owner of one or more tenement houses, of the better class.

We are opposed to this bill, first: Because it very largely increases the cost of building tenement-houses and will, therefore, result in fewer building operations. The growth and welfare of the business interests of our city being largely dependent upon the building trades, as is well known to all careful observers, to hamper and obstruct these trades by oppressive laws and enactments would cripple the business interests of our city. Fewer buildings would be constructed; the laborer and mechanic would be injured because the demand for their services would not be so great; in fact, every line of trade would be materially affected because every calling is more or less dependent upon this branch of business.

Second: Fewer tenement-houses would be constructed because of the increased cost of construction. In consequence of this rents of apartments in tenement-houses already in existence would be increased, and a greater crowding of families might result by reason thereof.

Third: Because of the oppressive enactments of the bill relating as it does exclusively to the city of New York, many builders would change their base of operations,



thus Brooklyn and other neighboring cities and towns which are not hampered by such a law would profit thereby to the detriment of our home city. Let us seek the advancement of our city and its commercial and business welfare rather than the prosperity and improvement of other cities and towns.

Fourth: We regard that portion of section 5 of the bill which relates to walls and ceilings of all portions of tenements being made fireproof wherein a bakery is maintained as unusually oppressive. The enactment of this section will have the effect of compelling many poor bakers to give up business because the landlords rather than make the necessary and expensive alterations will compel such business men to move, or, in the event of their being permitted to remain, their rent will be materially increased. Thus a monopoly of this business in favor of the large and wealthy bakers who have their own bake-shops will practically be created. These provisions appear all the more necessary because these bakers' ovens, as a general rule, are built either under the sidewalk in front of or under the rear in the rear of their premises. That portion of this section also which relates to all windows opening into the halls being closed up solidly as the rest of the wall and all doors leading into the hall being made fireproof of these portions wherein spirituous liquors and drugs are stored or kept for the purpose of sale or otherwise, is likewise unnecessarily oppressive.



Fifth: The annual notice required to be filed with the Board of Health as provided for in section 6 and the penalty for non-compliance are likewise unnecessary and oppressive. One notice should be sufficient and inasmuch as the bill calls for a notice of change of ownership as soon as the said tenement-house passes into other hands, there is no necessity for an annual notice.

Sixth: Section 7, relating to the condemnation of unfit tenement-houses would materially increase the tax rate of our city, giving rise, as it no doubt would, to expensive litigation. The object sought to be attained by this section can be secured by the power already vested in the Board of Health by existing laws. The Board of Health already possesses the power to order premises to be vacated that are unfit for habitation or dangerous to the public health. No owner would long permit his house to remain vacant, and rather than have an unprofitable vacant house would tear it down and build a new one.

Seventh: That portion of Section 9 which says: "In every tenement -house in the said city in which there is a hallway or hallways with no window opening from such hallway outside of said house, a light shall be maintained by said owner or lessee in each such hallway between the hours of eight A. M., and ten P. M., of each day," would materially increase the cost of maintaining houses which such a light is really necessary in, as for instance the house owned by myself (known as a single flat of five stories).



and in which I live, this hall is well lighted ~~yet~~ there are no windows opening to the outer air, there being a large sky-light, on the three lower floors there are glass doors both front and rear thus throwing in an abundance of light. Not only would this enactment entail a cost of from \$80.00 to \$200.00 per year but it would also materially affect damage suits that might be brought for accidents arising in hallways when perchance the gaslight through no fault of the owner or lessee had been extinguished.

In conclusion we request you to withhold your approval from said measure because we firmly believe it will be detrimental to the interests of our city in every particular, and because we believe the objects sought to be attained can be brought about by the enforcement of the laws already on our statute books.

I have nothing more to say, Your Honor.

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MR. WILLIAM W. JENKS---I am not here, Your Honor, to oppose this bill. My feelings are together with this Tenement-house Commission, but I do not agree with them in all the measures that they have adopted. I think that they have the best objects in view, but I would like to ask Mr. Gilder what section 8 is intended to do. That is the section which provides for the area of a lot which may be covered by a tenement-house or lodging-house. What the Commission had in view in that section. What I mean is this. Is it not intentioned by that section to place in



the Superintendent of the Building Department the right to allow a tenement-house to be built which will cover 75 per cent of the lot?

MR. GILDER---Does the gentleman not know that the present law requires 65 per cent, and that the option carries it to 78 per cent? In this case the limit is put at 75 per cent.

MR. JENKS---If the law makes a provision that no building shall cover more than 75 per cent. of the lot and then goes on, as in the same sentence, and says where the lot and ventilation are materially improved, I claim that that is an absolute failure, except you show an improvement in the lot and ventilation. If I am right you are taking 13 per cent. out of 78 per cent. of the available space from said lot.

Now, Your Honor, I don't ask you to disapprove this bill because of this provision, but I do ask Your Honor to advise with the Corporation Counsel and ask him if he will advise you that there is no doubt as to the meaning of this section. It is too important to pass it, if it leaves a matter to be decided hereafter by the Courts. The building interests of the city of New York are very important to the city as well as to those who are engaged in them.

Now, there is another provision which I would like to make a suggestion about, and that is the definition of what a tenement-house is. If it is any building that is occupied by three or more families, I have a particularly

good right to speak on this subject, because I have lived in one, and there are a great many gentlemen in the city of New York who are living to-day in tenement-houses.

I remember the most commodious quarters that I ever occupied in this city were tenement-house quarters. It was in my judgment quite an apartment house, but in the eyes of this Commission it would be called a tenement-house. Now this house was No. 20 North Washington Square. The apartments were each 50 feet front and about 140 feet in depth. The rents were in the neighborhood of \$500. or \$1,000. a month. Under the provision of this law I should be required to whitewash all my rooms. (Here Mr. Jenks was told he could not have read the bill correctly). Well, now, it may be that I did not read it correctly, but it was a bill that was sent down to me within a week with the compliments of Assemblyman Ainsworth. Well, in any event, while these gentlemen are about it let them make a definition, let them define the matter in their law what a tenement house is. That is not a very difficult thing to do.

MR. GILDER introduces MR. ROBBINS:

MR. S. HOWLAND ROBBINS, FIRE COMMISSIONER.

consulting with Your Honor I have been sent here to represent the Fire Department to-day, and to say that as far as the sections in the new law over which we have jurisdiction, are concerned we heartily approve of them.

After September 1st no fat boiling in non fire-proof tenements, except with permission of Fire Department.



Rooms where fat is boiled closed off from hallways.

No part to be used as storage for hay, feed, straw, except with permission of Fire Department.

All transoms or windows opening on hall in tenements where paints or liquors are stored for sale or otherwise, closed up. All doors leading into such rooms fire-proof.

Double-deckers fire-proof walls, and other tenements exceeding three stories in height, slow burning staircase in halls.

No wainscoting except cement or other fire-proof material.

Second floor in non fire-proof tenements, all entrances to halls closed and fire-proof doors swinging both ways, closed at night at ten o'clock.

No fan-light or window in partition of main wall, between main and private hall, in non fire-proof buildings.

Fire Department vested with authority to prescribe regulations with regard to danger from fire from lights used in halls.

Mr. Mayor, in reading over the bill to-day and consulting with the other Commissioners, we are quite satisfied that this bill as it is is as near correct as possible, and we all give it our hearty approval.

MR. BURCH---Mr. Mayor, I appear here perhaps without preparation, but simply as a member and the President

of the Real Estate Owners Building Association. We are largely interested in building fine houses up town. We have long looked for some method of distinguishing apartment-houses from tenement-houses. We think that a line could very readily be drawn between them. If a tenement-house bill is to be passed, and many of these provisions apply to tenement-houses only, and there they are very correct, we ask them to incorporate therein something which will distinctly distinguish a tenement-house from an apartment-house. We think that where an apartment has its own separate bath-room it should be called an apartment-house. The houses that need the protecting care of the Board of Health are the double deckers, but the apartment-houses up town are able to take care of themselves. They all of course come under the distinction of a tenement-house, but it is not right, they should be called apartment-houses.

it is charge.

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Mr. R. W. GILDER---The suggestion is a most interesting one. I think every one will acknowledge this. I know that from the very beginning of the labors of our Commission we ~~stood~~ <sup>sought</sup> for such a distinction. The definition just offered by the gentleman who spoke was sent to me in writing a week or two ago. *It was not accepted because if applied to existing laws would do great damage*

MR. GILDER SPOKE AS FOLLOWS---The bill now before Your Honor is the fourth and last of the laws formulated by the Tenement-house Committee of 1894. You have approved and the Governor has signed the bill providing for the nec-



essary payments on account of Mulberry Bend, East River Extension and St. John's Cemetery Parks (chapter 69 of the laws of 1895); also the bill providing \$3,000,000 for small parks with playgrounds on the East Side (chapter 293 of the laws of 1895), and the bill requiring future public schools to be provided with open-air playgrounds (chapter 338 of the laws of 1895).

The present bill has many details and has therefore very rightly been more slow in its passage through the Legislature, where it has received the close attention its importance demanded, and whence it has emerged somewhat altered in details, but without any injury to the principles involved. I am happy to state that so appreciative and hospitable was the legislature in both houses to the measure of the Committee that not a single amendment was forced upon this bill against the protest of those who had it in charge.

I feel it my duty to acknowledge on this public occasion the able championship of the Tenement-House legislation by Senator O'Connor and Assemblyman Ainsworth, who introduced the bills, and the friendly interest in these measures on the part of Messrs. Lawson, Miller and Ahearn, not only from this city, but also from other parts of the State.

This Act, Mr. Mayor, is simply a natural and very much-needed extension of the laws as to health and public safety for many years on our statute books; laws which have

proved their usefulness, and some of which are declared by experts to be the best in the world. It may especially be said of the health laws of New York that they have reduced greatly our death rate, and if properly executed and enlarged are able to accomplish even more in the future than in the past. It is a satisfaction to record that the Legislature peremptorily refused to be a party in any way to an attempt made to damage certain sections of the present health laws as re-enacted in the bill of the Committee. But the most important features of the bill are,

First, ~~saf~~ Now as to the special features of this bill. In the first place it makes an absolutely necessary increase of fifteen in the list of sanitary inspectors, and of five in the list of sanitary police. The inspectors are already under Civil Service examination as to their peculiar fitness, conducted by the Municipal Civil Service Board. This, if properly enforced, will lift the standard of the sanitary police and make their work more efficient. Constant and intelligent sanitary inspection means permanent improvement of conditions. ~~the sociological reason of the~~

~~frequency~~ In a general way it may be said that the bill simplifies the operations of the Health and Building Departments, and clears up some points of possible misunderstanding between these Departments; and it adds somewhat to the responsibilities of the Fire Department. ~~a threatened loss~~

~~of property~~ As to minor details: hereafter no tenement-house may be used for a lodging-house, stable or for the storage



and handling of rags. That constant nuisance and danger, the dark tenement-house hallway, is prohibited, for if not otherwise sufficiently lighted, there must be artificial light by day, and there must be light in all hallways up to 10 p.m. A new and valuable health provision is the requirement that one sheet of wall paper shall not be spread upon another in tenement-houses. The provision as to the filing of owners' names at the Health Department is strengthened.

But the most important features of the bill are, first, safeguards against fire in existing tenements; second, the condemnation of unsanitary buildings; and third, improved construction of tenement-houses.

It is a startling fact brought out by the Committee through the investigations in our behalf by Mr. Brentano that, whereas the tenements of New York are only 31 per cent of all the buildings, 53 per cent of the fires occur in tenement-houses. The greatest activity of the Fire Department, as every one knows, is in the tenement-house districts. Whatever the sociological reason of the frequency of these fires, it is a fact that the danger from fire is an ever-present menace to the tenement-house population. I do not think that the loss and misery arising from this peril can well be exaggerated. It is not merely a death danger, but a mental terror, and a threatened loss of property falling upon those who can so easily lose all they possess. The cost of fire protection by means of the

Fire Department, according to Dr. Shaw, is twice that of the twice as large city of London; and in proportion to population four times that of London. The whole city is taxed to save the expense of fire precautions in our tenement-houses. Our Committee thought that its duty would be not performed without providing additional safeguards as to fire in connection with dangerous occupations, or uses, in existing tenements. A single foot is gained for air and

ventilation. No new provision of this act is more valuable than that providing for the condemnation of unsanitary buildings, especially those which injure the sanitary condition of a neighborhood. The initiative must be taken by the Board of Health, and the proceedings carried on through the courts, with compensation so moderate that the law will not be a premium upon neglect on the part of landlords. It is, I may say, mathematically proved in the report to the Legislature of the Tenement-house Committee that there are houses in New York which breed and disseminate the germs of disease, and are a menace not only to their inhabitants, but to the whole community. The introduction of small parks should do away with some of these, and well-considered condemnation proceedings can destroy others. Let me repeat here the words of the report that "the legislation which will most favorably affect the death rate of New York is such as will do away with the rear tenements, and root out every old, ramshackle, disease-breeding tenement-house in the city."



increase. With regard to improvement in construction of future tenements, the law provides a slight restriction of only 3 per cent upon impossible area that may be covered by a tenement-house on its lot. A rule of the Building Department permits an extension of the tenement to 78 per cent. of the area; the limit here is 75 per cent,--at least one-quarter of the lot being dedicated to purposes of light and ventilation. A single foot is gained for air and ventilation between buildings on corner lots; they must be five feet apart. Occupied basements must be two feet instead of one foot above the ground. Certain additional fireproof requirements, especially in connection with staircases, are provided. In this respect the bill is less severe than when introduced, but, as compared with the requirements of the old law, it gives a little more light and air and a good deal more safety from fire. It is a step in the right direction, and it is believed will not prove onerous in view of the reduction in price of fireproof materials and of the introduction of new and simpler methods in building. that were inserted in the Legislature after it left my

I beg leave to bring to your attention at this time certain other recommendations of the committee which it did not seem necessary for them to embody in laws, but which are of the highest importance to the tenement-house population of this city, and this, as you know, constitutes the majority of our people. I refer especially to the

gentleman who appeared before (20) sometime ago as the Counsel

increase of rapid transit facilities, the establishment of municipal baths, a decided increase in the number of drinking fountains and lavatories, the extension of electric lights and smooth pavements throughout the tenement-house districts, and very especially the increase of our school accommodations and a substantial addition to the number of public kindergartens. I know that all these matters are receiving the attention of the city authorities, and I desire now merely to emphasize their relation in the comfort, health and morals of the people of New York.

MR. FOSTER--It is so hot and you have heard so much that I shall trouble you with but a very little in reply to the objections that have been made to this bill. In addition to that I will say that if you refer any of these matters to the Corporation Counsel I shall be very glad to give him any assistance that he may wish in explaining any of the measures of this bill that was drawn by me. I do not know that I can be of much assistance in regard to these sections that were inserted in the Legislature after it left my hands, though.

Now these gentlemen who have addressed us criticized the bill on two grounds. In the first place as representing the builders, and second as representing the taxpayers. But it is a curious fact that there has no one appeared here in behalf of the tax payers, except the gentleman who appeared before us sometime ago as the Counsel



of the associated builders, Mr. Ash. No tax-payers have appeared here except a gentleman who has been retained to oppose the building provision of the bill. That was copied from the English statute and has worked well there. The provision was so drawn that an owner whose building is condemned does not receive compensation. Now my friend here says we should have all these buildings destroyed and not pay the owner anything, and he illustrates as an example an unsafe building. An unsafe building may fall at any moment, and moreover, the fact that the building is unsafe is enough to warrant its being torn down. Now, it is not so with some of these unsanitary buildings in the city which the Board of Health has informed us have existed for forty or fifty years. Buildings that are known to be nests of typhus fever where you can trace the death rate. There are a good many buildings of that sort in this city. Now the man that has bought that building may not know the defective condition it is in. It seems only fair when a building of that sort is taken down, it seems he ought to have the value of the material. We know well enough that public officers will not take the responsibility of destroying any buildings but what they think are dangerous, without compensating the owner. Health has for several years been

The Board of Health has now power to take your buildings and pay for them without the approval of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. sanitary condition, and

to make My friend, Mr. Ash, made a plea against paternal

legislation. He said that we should not interfere with the dwellings of the poor. . . This bill was drawn to benefit the whole city of New York; so as to decrease the fires and give more light and ventilation, and so check the progress of disease.

The bills introduced by the tenement-house committee in 1884 were not passed for three years, and some did not go through at all. You have approved all other bills which we have presented, and if you will approve this, the fourth, Sir, we shall be satisfied with the result of our arduous duties.

MR. CHARLES G. WILSON---Mr. Mayor, I will be very short, Sir, take very little time. In behalf of the Board of Health I desire to express its approval of the Tenement-House Act now under your consideration. It is a bill that was carefully prepared by a Committee which has the entire confidence of the community and which gave a large amount of time and great consideration to the subject. I especially call your attention to the provisions which are important to the proper and efficient administration of the health laws governing this city.

The Board of Health has for several years been embarrassed for the want of a sufficient number of sanitary inspectors to promptly inspect premises complained of by citizens and alleged to be in an unsanitary condition, and to make a thorough semi-annual inspection of the tenement



houses as required by law, and this bill provides for a sufficient number. It also provides five additional policemen for sanitary inspections. This increase is justified by the large increase of population, especially in the tenement house districts. When the number of sanitary inspectors and policemen was fixed by the present law the number of tenement and apartment houses in this city was about 30,000, and that number has since increased to about 40,000, and the tenement-house population, which was about one million, now numbers about 1,350,000.

The provision of this bill in respect to cellars as places of human habitation is an improvement over the old law, and the provision in respect to wall paper in tenement houses is approved by all who are familiar with the dangers from contagious diseases, and in the interests of cleanliness.

The provision requiring owners of tenement and lodging houses to file their names and addresses and to notify the Health Department of any change in ownership will greatly facilitate the work of the Board of Health, as it often requires considerable time and labor to ascertain who is responsible for the unsanitary condition of the tenement-houses when repairs are needed, and often when serious defects need prompt attention.

The provision for condemnation proceedings and compensation to owners of tenement and lodging houses is important and valuable, as there are cases where such houses

cannot be repaired or altered to make them fit for human habitation.

The provision requiring that the halls of tenement and lodging houses shall be lighted at night is one which has for a long time been regarded by the Board of Health as very important, not only to the safety of the tenants and lodgers and to people visiting them, but is believed to be important for social and moral reasons.

Finally, your approval of this bill, which will be equivalent to its passage by the Legislature, and will insure the signature of the Governor being given to it, will greatly strengthen the Board of Health.

It will enable that Department to improve the tenement houses and thereby to better the sanitary conditions under which their occupants live, to put an end to places which are to-day a menace to the health of all the citizens of New York in being those where disease might easily find a breeding nest and to improve the moral well being of the people who live therein, with their physical comfort and health.

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DR. CYRUS EDSON---Mr. Mayor, the carefully prepared argument of Mr. Gilder leaves but little to be said on the subject of this important bill. We can do but little more than uphold his hands and endorse his able plea.

There are one or two points to which I consider it important to call your attention. Mr. Gilder has quoted from the



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learned work of Prof. Albert Shaw on Municipal Government in Great Britain, and it would almost seem as though this work had been written for the purpose of furnishing unanswerable arguments in favor of such reform measures as the one we are now considering. Dr. Shaw calls attention to the fact that the 19th century is closing on a race of which the majority are destined to live in cities or under conditions more or less strictly urban. This fact, he says, has only recently forced its way into consideration. Circumstances of an obvious kind compelled its recognition in England and Western Europe somewhat sooner than in America and stern necessity led to the speedier discovery, of means to lessen the disadvantages and dangers, and to secure the possibility of massing people in large towns, without injury to them resulting from the changed conditions.

During the last twenty-five years the citizens of New York City have taken undisguised pride in its buoyant growth, but we have now awakened to the fact that we are dwelling in a great city whose population per acre, in large areas, is denser than that of any other city in a civilized nation. As a result of this, we find ourselves face to face with problems, the solution of which is beyond the laws existing to-day. The whole fabric of these laws, to use a metaphor of Dr. Shaw's, has been built upon the foundation of agricultural and rural life. The future safety of our institutions requires that we learn how to shape city



life to the promotion of the general welfare, for the present evils of this life are temporary and remedial. They are only so remedial, however, under such laws as we ask you to approve of to-day. The destruction of the numerous unwholesome conditions arising from the crowding together of people in limited areas is as feasible as the drainage and circumstances of a swamp and total dispersion of its miasma. The conditions, Dr. Shae says, (and every thinking man who has studied the subject must agree with him) that surround the lives of the people in modern cities can be so adjusted as to result in the highest development of the race, in body, mind and in moral character. I respectfully ask you to

approve. New York is better situated for good sanitation than any other city in the world. It is washed on either side by great rivers that can easily carry away its drainage, and it has a good water supply, yet its death rate, notwithstanding all the efforts to keep this down by the application of existing laws, ranges from 21 to 30 in 1,000. It is true that during the last two years the death rate has been lower than ever before, but it cannot be kept where it is except by unceasing vigilance on the part of the sanitary authorities, and by the upholding of the hands of those authorities, through the enactment of the needed legislation. The death rate of Liverpool is 23. per thousand; that of Glasgow, 20. per thousand, and yet these two cities are not situated as advantageously as New York. In both, however, laws are enforced and applied rigidly, simi-

lar to the provision of this act, which permits the Board of Health to remove plague spots. The sanitary force of Liverpool and of Glasgow, and the facilities of the sanitary authorities in those two cities are greater by one-half than those of New York, yet neither city is as large.

In conclusion, let me say that for a year the tenement-house Committee, of which Mr. Gilder was Chairman, considered the conditions existing in this city, for the remedy of which this act has been devised, in the most careful and thorough manner, and as an ex-member of this committee, as Commissioner of the Board of Health, and chiefly as a citizen of New York, I respectfully ask you to approve of this bill.

MR. W. BAYARD ----- Mayor, I do not wish to -- COMMISSIONER FAURE -- Mr. Mayor, our Board has not acted on this matter, and my attention was only drawn yesterday to the date of this hearing, hence I come unofficially and in a large measure unprepared.

Regarding the argument brought by the gentleman representing the Building Trade, I simply want to answer that twenty-five years' experience in the dry goods trade has taught me that the best goods will sell the quickest and hold the market the longest. I speak from an experience of twenty-two years of visiting the sick and the poor, and chiefly for the women and the children, that the benefits from this bill will be very great to the general health of all those who reside in tenement-houses, and as



an individual I heartily concur in the bill as presented by Mr. Gilder and his associates, and trust that it will receive your approval.

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MR. CONSTANT A. ANDREWS---The Charity Organization Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor would like to say that this bill has been under our consideration. This Society, you know, covers the entire city of New York, and works mainly among the poor. I have no argument of course now to present. I think you probably have heard enough in favor of the bill, but we say most emphatically that we hope you will approve of this bill.

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MR. W. BAYARD CUTTING---Mr. Mayor, I do not wish to add anything to what has already been said, I simply thought that it might perhaps be interesting to you if I should simply an incident of to which I was a party just before leaving my office. I had the pleasure of presiding at a meeting of gentlemen who are tenement house owners in the city of New York, who are the owners of tenements that have been completed for more than four years, that have been constructed under conditions much more onerous than these laid down in this bill. We had the honor of declaring to-day the twenty-eighth semi-annual dividend of 2 1/2 per cent. of the stock upon that corporation, a dividend that has been declared every six months during the existence of the corporation.

I don't know that I am any more competent to

speaking on the condemnation of old houses than any gentleman here, but there is a fact that is well known to every gentleman here, and that is that there are conditions prevailing in this young city more serious in regard to the crowding of population than that prevailing in any part of the civilized world. Now the radical measures taken in England and France are not any more so than those proposed by this Commission. I think that that answers any objection that might be raised on the ground that the measures proposed by this bill are too radical.

PROF. GIDDINGS, Columbia College---I would say very little, Mr. Mayor. Your time has been taken up to-day, but it was my privilege to have charge of a statistical examination of the children living in tenement houses with regard to their school accommodations. As a part of that examination our investigators discovered many things that could not be ascertained if you were directly seeking them. They came in accidentally, and there can be no question, Mr. Mayor, that it is true that when the people living in these tenement-houses speak freely their minds upon these matters they will say they do live in very considerable danger of fire and their lives are constantly in peril and their property as well, and there can be no question if their own feelings and interest in the matter were consulted they would not in the slightest degree hesitate to recommend the bill.



of a fire. MR. J. B. ARCHIBALD---Mr. Mayor, I appear in behalf of the organized working men of this city to declare their firm belief that if the builders were as fully informed on their own best interests in the matter of the construction of buildings they would not for a single moment oppose this bill. The men who have achieved distinction in the building line of this city must remember the part of their trade that brought disgrace on them. I appeal to the gentlemen who have known the building trade for fifteen years, particularly Mr. Merritt, that there is no tangible reason for opposition to the findings contained in this bill for which we seek your approval. I know thoroughly well that under existing circumstances life in the tenement district of this city is almost inhuman. I know it is immoral. I would ask you, Mr. Mayor, therefore, on the part of the working men of this city not to hesitate for a single moment in announcing your approval of this bill. this bill.

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MR. SIMON BRENTANO---Well, I did not know that Mr. Gilder would expect me to address you, but, Mr. Mayor, on this one point alone--fire--if this bill contained no other good features, it should be approved. The real danger from fire in tenement houses will never be controlled so far as the improvement is opposed by the builders. Your Honor sees the buildings when they are going up, and the firemen see them when they are going down, and when they see them going down they see they going down in consequence

of a fire. Now, it is quite true that we know that no building material is absolutely fire-proof, but we can make the conditions of these houses much more safe than they exist at the present time. You have got to burn down half of this city before you can build it up in the proper way, and Com. Robbins has declared the truth that every improvement relating to better construction has been opposed. They do it from no enmity, except that it will increase the cost. I don't think any one ever secured a better thing without paying a little more for it. In conclusion I have only to say that I hope Your Honor will approve this bill.

JACOB A RIIS---I have not much to say, Mr. Mayor, except that I have watched this bill from the very beginning and I have labored with the Committee as far as I was able. I can simply say that I trust you will approve this bill.

MR. REYNOLDS---I want to say that I agree perfectly with the other gentlemen in favor of this bill. I have had occasion from living on the East Side to see how the present conditions affect the life and affect the health and comfort of those living there. Living there last summer and going sometimes from the tenement house neighborhood up town I could see how different the atmosphere became. I also have had some special occasion to observe this work, as having in our own house a sanitary club.



MR. MEYER JOFFE---The Sanitary Aid Society organized by the Inspectors of the late Tenement-House Commission, ask your honor for the approval of the fourth and last bill of that commission recently passed by the legislature of the State of New York.

The extreme unsanitary condition in which we found a large number of tenements, the constant dangers to life and limb arising from the imperetrable darkness in the alleys and passageways, the insufficient safeguard against fire; and the fatal catastrophes from tumbling dwellings due to faulty construction, urgently call for some appropriate legislation which we believe to be embodied in the above bill.

The provisions in the bill are so conservative in their character, while effective in their bearings, and their enactment will bring so great an amelioration of the many evils of the Tenement House System, that we hope your Honor will not fail to concur with the legislature of this State in approving the same.

As Sanitarians, as Inspectors of the late Tenement House Commission, and as Citizens of New York, we shall in common with all your constituents be greatly appreciative for your action in favor of the bill.

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MAYOR STRONG---I want to say to you Mr. Gilder, that the people are greatly indebted to you, and if I find there is anything that is not quite right in this bill I

may make some suggestions to you in a day or two. But what I want to particularly say to you is to give you my thanks and the thanks of the entire city of New York for the painstaking manner in which you have managed your work, so thoroughly well done as it has been, without any compensation. It is very rarely that you can find a committee of gentlemen that will devote as much time as your Committee has spent in the completion of the bills that you have been interested in in getting through the Legislature.

HEARING CLOSED/



April 25/95

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New York, April 20th, 1897.

A public hearing was this day given by His Honor WILLIAM L. STRONG, on Assembly Bill entitled "An act to provide for a bridge and approaches over the Bronx river between the Williamsbridge and Woodlawn stations of the New York and Harlem Railroad in the city of New York."

It was announced that the opposition to this bill would be heard first.

Hon. CHARLES P. McCLELLAN spoke as follows:

Your Honor, I have here several petitions signed by residents and taxpayers of Williamsbridge in opposition to the bill which is now before you. The bill provides for the construction of a bridge over the Bronx river and the Harlem Railroad at a point about midway between the Woodlawn station and the present Williamsbridge station on the Harlem Road. There is no definite point fixed in the bill for this bridge. The opponents of the bill are opposed to it on that ground first, and further, recite in their petition that it makes it mandatory for the Comptroller to issue stocks or bonds of the City to the amount of \$150,000. for the construction of this bridge, and it authorizes the Commissioner of Street Improvements in the upper district to take the necessary proceedings to condemn whatever land he may deem necessary for the approaches to this bridge. The cost of acquiring the land and the damages awarded to the owners for the same will all be in addition to the \$150,000. named in the bill, and there is no limit



fixed for the expenditure to be made in this direction.

The opponents of the bill believe that there is a purpose behind this bill which does not appear on the surface. I think I can say, without fear of substantial contradiction, that the history of this bill has not been entirely open. In the first place it was introduced in the Assembly and passed substantially in the form as introduced by a gentleman who does not represent the constituency, a gentleman on the south, Mr. Mathewson, who represents the adjoining district. The bill was not sufficiently brought to the attention of the people to attract any attention. Merely within about two weeks when it became generally known that there was such a bill there, the attention of Senator Burns, who does not represent that constituency, was attracted to the bill, and he said that he knew little or nothing about it, that the bill was the bill of Mr. Mathewson, and that he would look it up when he went back. I subsequently personally saw the Senator in Albany and suggested some changes in the bill, and he told me that the bill being that of Mr. Mathewson, and having been asked to take charge of it, that he did not like to consent to any change in the bill at that stage, because he believed that any change would endanger its passage.

(At this juncture the speaker was interrupted by Mr. James B. Kilsheimer, a gentleman in favor of the bill, who claimed that the statements made concerning Senator Burns were absolutely false).

The speaker replied as follows:

I make the above statements as coming from Senator Burns, and I don't think I am betraying any confidence in

so doing.

Now, if Your Honor pleases, the bill is bad in its indefiniteness because it authorizes the construction of a bridge, without giving any definite location, and the point, as near as can be ascertained, half way between Williamsbridge station and Woodlawn station, would be at Eighth street, in the Village of Williamsbridge, and that would be the most expensive point at which the bridge could be located. I submit that an investigation or an examination by any one representing Your Honor will confirm me in the statement that that would be the most expensive place that the bridge could be constructed.

Bronx river, if Your Honor pleases, is a very irregular stream. I have a map here which I will show Your Honor which will make it pretty plain. (Here shows map). This (pointing to map) is Bronx river; this is Eighth street; here is Bronx Terrace and here is Webster avenue, and I desire to call Your Honor's attention to the fact that all on the west of this is Woodlawn Cemetery. There is no outlet to the west anywhere from where the present bridge is located and the railroad depot to away up here at the upper end of Woodlawn Cemetery. The land, I believe I state correctly, for the opening of Webster avenue has had to be taken from the Cemetery, and there is no business here at all, and any change from here would necessitate the people coming from this section away down here just as they have to do now in order to reach westward, in order to reach Kingsbridge, in order to go down on the west side of the City, in order to go north to Yonkers or to Van Courtlandt Park. There is no call for any change of that character,



but I don't want Your Honor to understand me as being here on behalf of any body to oppose the construction of bridges. If the City desires to construct bridges, well and good, but why, I ask, should the bridge be located here? Your Honor will notice that at Second street it will be unnecessary to condemn any land from the line parallel with this (points to line) down. You can see how close it is here. At Eighth street the land would have to be condemned from Second street or Second avenue clean across to Webster avenue, the most expensive point at which the bridge could possibly be located. Now if it were at Tenth street there would be but a short distance to go and the expense would be very much lighter.

Now can I ask Your Honor why it is necessary to construct an eighty foot bridge across the railroad here and lead to a cemetery? There is no present entrance to the cemetery, and the natural inquiry is, is there any in contemplation? What is there behind this bill that requires the construction of an eighty foot bridge at an outlay of \$150,000. for the bridge itself with all the attending expense? It is not in line with regular legislation. The fair thing to have done, if there was anything behind this bill that was hidden, would have been to have provided in the bill that a bridge was to be located at Fifth street or Tenth street or somewhere else, then the people would know just what they were going to get, but they don't know by this bill and they don't know what is behind it. I think everybody will agree with me that the centre of population is in this direction (points) and has been here for some time; what it may be in time to come I do not know,



but the centre of population is here now. Proceedings have already been taken for the widening of Olin avenue. If it is to be widened a new bridge will have to be constructed there, and why have they not made provision for the construction of a new bridge there? I am told that at the railroad bridge the grade will be raised two feet. Now a new bridge is necessary there, and that bridge accounts for something because it leads somewhere. Somebody will say that there will be a trolley line along Riverside avenue, but assuming, if you please, that there is going to be a trolley line along there, is it necessary to construct an eighty foot bridge at a cost of \$150,000. and all the additional expense that I have referred to already to get over here and get the trolley? A foot bridge is all that is necessary for that purpose, and if a foot bridge is all that is necessary to get you to Webster avenue at this point, why that would be a comparatively small expense, and you could have foot-bridges all the way down. Certainly no one will argue seriously that if the only purpose is to get to Webster avenue to get a trolley car that it is necessary to construct an expensive bridge eighty foot wide, but it is not necessary at all to go to Webster avenue to get a trolley. Here the White Plains Road comes down on the other side and leads to this point. A franchise has already been granted for a railroad from Webster avenue there and the railroad will be in operation right there in a little while. Now I cannot see for the life of me where the necessity is for this bridge unless, as I say, there is some hidden purpose.

I would like to know on what theory Mr. Mathewson, and I make no reflection upon the gentleman personally, but



I would like to know what theory he is governed by as a member of the legislature when he undertook to press upon the people of this locality a bill of this character unless making it plain to all what the purpose is behind it and the people of the city of New York have got to bear the burden and they don't know the first thing about it. They simply know that from the eighth day of February down to within about two weeks ago this bill was kept under cover at Albany. Some people knew it was there, I have not the slightest doubt. I have not the slightest doubt that the Woodlawn Cemetery people knew it was there, but the people of this community knew it was there I deny, with the exception of a few. There is no question about it.

Now, Your Honor, I submit I would like to hear (I have not heard anything up to the present time) anything in favor of this bill, and I would like to reserve just about two minutes for a reply.

The Mayor said he would give Mr. McClellan an opportunity to reply to the remarks made in favor of the bill.

MR. JAMES B. KILSHEIMER, representing the Williamsbridge Tax Payers' and Commuters' Association, spoke in favor of the bill, as follows:

Now, Mr. Mayor, I represent the Williamsbridge Centre Tax Payers' and Commuters' Association, and on their behalf I present to Your Honor a petition signed by the residents and tax payers of Williamsbridge, urging Your Honor to approve this bill. The statement that Senator McClellan makes concerning Senator Burns' action in this matter is so absolutely false that I don't believe that Senator McClellan knows the actual facts.

This bill was decided upon after consultation by the members of the Tax Payers' Alliance and Commissioner Haffen. The bill was prepared and I personally mailed it with copies to Senator Burns, on the 6th day of February, if that were a Saturday, and asked him to have it introduced in the Senate and asked him also to give the copies to be introduced in the House to Mr. Emmet, then our representative. On the Monday morning following I noticed in the papers that our representative, Mr. Emmet, had died on the day previous (Sunday) and I saw Senator Burns personally on Monday, and I then told him that I had mailed him the bill and said I had noticed that our representative had died and I asked him if he would ask Mr. Mathewson to present it. I saw Mr. Mathewson the same afternoon at the Grand Central Depot and spoke with him regarding it. Mr. Burns introduced the bill on the 8th day of February because he was away attending the funeral of his late colleague Mr. Richard Emmet, Jr. On the 23rd day of February this bill was set down for a hearing before the Cities Committee; the City was represented by Mr. Clark, and then and there he agreed with us that the bill was a proper bill to be passed and come down before Your Honor the Mayor for approval or disapproval.

I can prove to Your Honor that there has been no sneak about this bill. I have sent for my letter book which contains a copy of a letter sent to Senator Burns asking him to present the bill.

Now the opposition as laid down by Senator McClellan is as dishonest as possibly can be. He says he has no objection to bridges; the only objection he has is to Your Honor and the Board of Estimate and Apportionment locating



the bridge at any other point than where his client whom he represents has property. This property is located around Fifth street and it is their desire to have it improved. It is low, wet, swampy land and was condemned by the Board of Health less than ten days ago.

MR. McCLELLAN:

I desire to say that that statement is not so.

MR. KILSHEIMER:

The bill gives power, with the consent and approval of the Mayor, for the expenditure of a sum of money not exceeding \$150,000. If the Board of Estimate and Apportionment should determine that the bridge should only cost \$10,000. we will have to be contented with that. We don't come out and demand that \$150,000. shall be spent, we simply say that we desire a bridge.

At this juncture Mr. Kilsheimer showed on the map where it would be desirable to locate the bridge. He said (pointing to the map) that it was about a mile from the point he referred to to the White Plains road, and about a mile to a point called Gun Hill road. He said there was a single trolley line only to Bedford Park, but that a double trolley would soon come up Webster avenue and go to Mt. Vernon. He said (again pointing to the map) that they were compelled to go away up here and then come away over this way to get to the Harlem river, and by this road here we can get down to the Harlem river in twenty minutes less time than now. This section here, Olin avenue, is the business centre, but right here we have the Webster Avenue Boulevard, one of the finest boulevards that there is being built, all the way

from Fourth street to Fifteenth street you can see this Boulevard being built now and it will soon be finished. We cannot get down to this grand Boulevard or down to New York City now unless we walk a mile .

Now Your Honor, the Cemetery authorities perhaps know nothing about this bill. Senator McClellan simply represents his clients interests in Williamsbridge. We have no connection with the Railroad Company either, and, as I said, we have no connection with the Cemetery people; we simply desire an outlet from any point in Williamsbridge here to Webster avenue. As a matter of fact, Mr. Haffen I think will say to you, and any man who understands the nature of this bridge will say to you, Sir, that this bridge is merely a component part of the Webster avenue improvement, that to improve Webster avenue you must have outlets for the Village here. No statement as to the cost of the land, Your Honor, should enter into this matter at all. The Senator would have no objection to this bill, Your Honor, if it said the bridge should be located at Fifth street or Second street. If such were the case he would be here in favor of it, simply because right there is the section he represents which his client desires improved.

Now as to the cost, Mr. Lee will state to Your Honor just exactly how much land will be taken from each point and what the cost of the land will be.

That is all I have to say, I think.

MR. AMBROSE LEE spoke as follows:

Your Honor, there are two statements that Mr. McClellan has made here to-day and I am surprised that he has made them to you. Now there is not a man in this



room here to-day that is opposed to this measure or not that would undertake to make such assertions as the Senator has. The bulk of the population unquestionably is here (pointing to map). This Webster avenue when it is completed without any outlet to Williamsbridge will not only not be a benefit to the people of Williamsbridge but will be a positive detriment to that locality for the reason that thousands of the people that come from New York pass our doors and have no means whatever to reach us.

Senator McClellan has dwelt considerably upon the cost of the land around here. I think I know as much about the values of land as the gentleman who spoke on that matter. I say to him and to you here that the cost of the land here, instead of being a large amount as Senator McClellan has stated, is going to be a very small amount in comparison to the benefits to be derived in cutting through these properties. If the bridge is located here (pointing) the condemnation of the land would cost the city from \$2500. to \$3,000. at any of these points according to present prices, and it is going to be a big amount for the tax payers to stand. Now here, (pointing) I will sell any man in the room to-day twenty or twenty-five lots here for \$200. so that that amount would not amount to anything in condemnation proceedings. I will agree to deliver them to-day; that is the market price. They are on the books of real estate men to-day for that price.

MR. CRAWFORD:

What did you sell some lots from your property for, Mr. Lee, a little while ago?

MR. LEE:



Front lots here which are worth three times as much I sold for \$455.

Now, I say again, Your Honor, that if this Webster avenue is to be continued as it is here to-day, without any egress, it will be a positive detriment to all the property lying there, and the people of Williamsbridge are entirely in favor, as you will see from the two or three hundred names that we have here, of this bridge. Men with small holdings and men with large holdings, a million dollars worth of property in all, are in favor of locating this bridge here. The first move in opposition to this bill, Your Honor, was that it should not be located away down here fifteen hundred feet away from one bridge and five thousand away from the other. There are nearly six thousand people living between these two points on that side of the river.

Now, Your Honor, all we want is that an outlet be given us to this great Webster avenue when completed, to enable the people to reach trolly lines so that they may not have to walk a mile this way or a mile that way. The people up there are all in favor of this bill, and trust that Your Honor will approve it.

MR. JOHN DAVIDSON, spoke as follows:

Your Honor, I am not a member of the Association that has been the prime mover in this bill because my time has been so much taken up that I could not afford the time. I have been identified with the village of Williamsbridge since its first inception, and have labored hard amongst others for the purpose of having a village. I have served in that village in almost every official capacity except that which was created by politicians.



I have served as President of the village, and have the honor to have been its last President. I belong to the same party as Senator McClellan, but this is the first time that I ever saw him to my knowledge. I believe, if I may say so, that it was possibly the third or fourth time that he was ever in the village when he came to examine in behalf of certain clients the conditions of the territory which is now marked before you. He begins by approving of a bridge. Whom the Gods destroy they first make mad. He comes among us; he approves of a bridge, but he asserts at a point where no bridge should be located. The lots here (pointing) would indicate considerable population because you will notice they are divided very small, but in fact all this territory here has not a single soul living on it. This territory here has none also. When Mr. Crawford asked the price of Mr. Lee for certain lots upon the heights he referred to valuable property, but here these lots could be sold just like so many cakes, by the dozen.

Now here is the main outlet which Senator McClellan with all his knowledge of affairs insinuates that at some time there is a possibility of this road being moved. Just imagine Olin avenue, which is the only outlet in this section of the country from the great parks of the west to the parks of the east being moved. Why should there ever be a possibility of moving it. Here is this territory lying there, and of course as he is not skilled in the affairs of this territory he makes a ridiculous statement when he says that his experience in Williamsbridge, that is second to none, has always found that Fifth and Sixth streets is the centre of population. Ten years ago, five years



are, seven years ago the people at this point banded themselves together time and time again and appealed to the Central road to make a station at Eighth street, but with no avail. The Senator suggests that possibly there is a "nigger in the fence." There may be in behalf of the Cemetery an entrance from this bridge, but the distance that they would have to raise is about fifty feet in twenty-five, and is there any possibility of a Cemetery being able to make an entrance up that way whilst they have an entrance at Nineteenth avenue upon which there is a new bridge already provided for the end of Webster avenue. Why should Second street be mentioned? This is the thoroughfare through which these people go to the Depot and this is all waste land. There would be no advantage to have these people come away up here. The centre of population is ever growing in this direction.

Mr. Mayor I know you have been in Williamsbridge, and I believe that if there was any question in your mind in relation to some of the statements made that you would not decide this matter without looking over the ground. We have had similar opposition to every movement that has been started in this territory for years past. It all comes from the same source which the Honorable Senator now represents. There never was an improvement in the village of Williamsbridge that the owners of that particular property have not objected to. They desire no improvements of any kind unless they themselves are to be the chief participants. When anybody says that this territory is unaware of the fact that a movement in favor of this is on foot, it is false, and long before the great Senator ever was known



as a public man the people in that village had their hopes based, not only on a railroad through there, but upon a bridge over which they could get a fair outlet.

MR. F. CRAWFORD, spoke as follows:

Your Honor, I am here not to oppose a bridge, Sir, I am not here representing anybody, I am here personally. I am not here to oppose my friend Mr. Davidson except on what things I think he overstated, and I know he wants to be fair.

Now, I think I am a member of that Society, I don't know but I have a faint idea that I am. Now, Sir, I think we need a bridge somewhere between Williamsbridge and Woodlawn. Now, Sir, I don't know whether my friend was sneering a little at me. I am interested right up at Eighth street, Ninth street, Tenth street and Fifth street, but I think a bridge should be built where it will cost the least to build it and where it will be nearest the centre. It has been said that the station would be taken away, but I am sure, sir, that a Mayor of your knowledge and judgment would never think of such a thing as moving a station away from Olin avenue. If I were to build a bridge I would build it here (pointing to map). It may be a few hundred feet away from the centre but that is the outlet to Eastchester at the present time and the only outlet at the present time. I would advocate going across all these lots here up to where the street is already opened. It is opened down to the river, if you will notice. The land around here can be easily purchased, and I don't think there is any axe to grind.

Now, these people here (pointing to map) do need



some outlet, but I have not read the bill and only can rely on what the gentleman have said .

Now, sir, I am going in for the expense of the thing. I think we are going in tremendously in expenditure at the present time, and I am sure you, sir, are one that will look out for the interest of the tax payers . I can't see the necessity for an expenditure of \$150,000 for a bridge, but I do see the necessity of having a bridge somewhere in this neighborhood.

MAYOR;

Mr. Crawford, we go over all these things pretty carefully here before we are willing to accept them, and they are all left with the Board of Estimate & Apportionment to approve of the plans of such bridge and approaches. Mr. Haffen we always try to treat pretty nearly right, but he will tell you that we have rejected a good many things that he has brought down before us, and adopted a good many more. I think he is generally right, about 85 per cent. or 90 per cent. of the time when he comes before us. We of course turn him down occasionally, but we have to keep his intellect right.

Now, Senator, it would look to me as if the Board of Estimate and Apportionment or the Board of Street Openings would not care to state just where the bridge should be located. My experience with Mr. Haffen has been that when he wanted a thing done he would bring with him down here just about such a delegation as this.

SENATOR McCLELLAN:

I was going to suggest that if the bridge had been located definitely at Tenth street I am quite certain that



I would not appear here to-day to oppose it. Now Tenth street is the proper place for this bridge. At Eighth street the people have for years been trying to get the Railroad to build a depot but without result.

MR. CRAWFORD:

I am here to oppose any bridge down at Second street or at Fifth street, and I am here to advocate a bridge at Tenth street. Now of course whatever bridge is put up there should be a first class one.

MR. HAFEN:

It was through the request of the Department that that was delayed one year, Mr. Mayor. The first one was brought up before the Corporation Counsel. I was here to ask for twenty-five or thirty, but you gentlemen opposed me. This is one that we intended to bring up next year.

MR. LEE:

You are not opposed to the bridge being placed midway, are you, Mr. Crawford?

MR. CRAWFORD:

I am in favor of the bridge being placed at Tenth street.

MR. W. H. KEATING, spoke as follows:

Now, Your Honor, I have the honor of being the President of the Tax Payers & Commuters Association of Centre Williamsbridge. I believe that Association is the nigger in the fence. About nine years ago I moved up to this section; it was then a barren waste here. I myself am an artisan, and when I moved there I saw the possibility of a very good thriving village for the honest mechanic and artisan like myself and hundreds of us located there.



Our income was not sufficient to allow us to live in the place we would like to bring up our children, and we wanted a little home where our children might cultivate the plants and the flowers, learn something of the better side of nature as they see it on the banks of the picturesque Bronx which we hope to have this bridge across in a short time. As I said before this was a barren waste, but it met the eye of every intelligent purchaser and they bought their little twenty-five feet and put up their houses. It makes a pretty long day, Mr. Mayor, for the day laborer or the laborer at the desk who has to get up and travel a mile and a half to a car in the morning and the same thing at night, it certainly makes life very arduous and is certainly discouraging. But Mr. Mayor, if you will put your signature to this bill you will receive the blessings and the prayers of hundreds of honest men and women who compose the population of this Centre Williamsbridge. This is not a real estate speculation, it is not in the interest of any real estate but in the interest of the public.

I met a friend of mine last Sunday who used to live in Williamsbridge and he said "I just passed your house with my little girl, and she said 'Oh, father, how I wish I was back in Williamsbridge,' but I cannot do it, I cannot travel to the station night and morning. Better bring them back to the flats in Harlem where I can be with them than not to have any father at all. But I bring them up occasionally to let them have a look at Williamsbridge".

An improvement of that kind, Your Honor, is going to increase the population of that district. It is now growing every day, and if you sign the bill it would in-



crease even faster than it is.

MR. P. SCHWEICKERT, spoke as follows:

Your Honor this scene brings me back to the old Town Hall of Williamsbridge with the exception that instead of the President and Village Board we now address the Mayor. Looking back over the time when we were an incorporated village I also think of the many things which the President and four members said and the many nights they sat and legislated for the good of the citizens. The opposition here to-day is the same opposition we had then in this way: the Senator comes here and says he is not opposing a bridge. It was the same way, Your Honor during a session of the village Board, if they considered the flagging of a certain street the inhabitants would come around in arms condemning the Village Board about flagging that street, but would want the neighboring streets flagged as it would not cost them anything. Now the Senator says that the bulk of the people is at the lower end of the village. I have not any doubt but what <sup>if</sup> the Senator during the term that he represented the constituency in Williamsbridge had not followed in the footsteps of Westchester County politicians and came up through Williamsbridge as he should, he would have known more about it, but the trouble was, Your Honor, that when politicians from the County House at Westchester came down the Harlem Railroad and got off here, they never got off at Woodlawn.

There is not a resident of the village of Williamsbridge but will bear me out when I say that the tide of travel of the politicians was always southward in a certain direction.

MAYOR:

Is there better hotels down there?

MR. KEATING:

Well, probably the owners of them wished to show that they could entertain them with a greater degree of hospitality.

SENATOR McCLELLAN:

Do you want to mention names?

MR. KEATING:

The Senator is trying to force me into making a statement and that is this: The village of Williamsbridge is ruled by a petticoat, and that is just where this opposition is here to-day.

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

I desire to express my regret that so much attention has been given to the location of this bridge. It appears to me we are all here agreed that there ought to be a bridge here between these two points, and I am sorry that some time was not given to explain to you what a connecting link this eighty foot bridge, or whatever width it will be, would be between the parkways and boulevards on the West and the parkways and boulevards on the East.

Just here, as you know, will be an eighty foot road in a few days. The White Plains avenue is to be widened to one hundred feet, and there is no connecting link except this that you see here. All this goes to show that the population that you have described as being opposed to this bill are really in favor of it.

With the population located here, as it is and always has been the centre of population, seven years ago



the trustees of the village agreed to build the approaches to a crossing somewhere at this point (pointing) if New York City could be gotten to extend itself as it is now. Now we demand a crossing, or request you, sir, to give that matter your approval. We feel that you have always been quite liberal in the North Side, and we hope you will approve this bill which practically leaves the location to be determined afterwards.

As I understand it, Senator McMillan who opposed this bill, would without doubt be in favor of it, Your Honor, if it were located near the property he represents.

SENATOR McMILLAN:

I think, if Your Honor pleases, we have attracted your attention sufficiently to the location as to convince you as to where it should be located.

MAYOR:

Now, Gentlemen, I approved of this bill before it went to the Legislature, and it will go up to-day approved, simply because I think you ought to have a bridge.

Hearing closed.