

HOUSE No. 1753

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, BOSTON, May 21, 1919.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

The long cessation of building activities due to war conditions has produced a scarcity of tenements which is working a great hardship. The cost of building has not only increased, but taxes and repairs have increased. This is an economic condition that will adjust itself in the end according to the law of supply and demand. The great body of real estate owners are dealing honorably with their tenants. There are some, however, who seem disposed to take advantage of present conditions to demand a rate of rent which is thought to be unreasonable. As a result they have instituted a policy of raising rent and immediately dispossessing tenants who have performed in every way their contracts for the use of tenements.

It is apparent that some remedy should be provided against action of this kind. Under the present provisions of law it is possible to evict a tenant in forty-eight hours, setting him into the street. While recognizing in full the right of an owner of property to lease it or not and for such price as he may choose, the law has always recognized that a tenant in possession had certain rights even against the owner. One of these is a reasonable time within which to vacate. What was reasonable when other tenements could be secured is unreasonable when there are no such tenements. This is a temporary condition without doubt, but it should be recognized and immediate legislation provided. No refuge

should be afforded for any tenants who are not reasonably using tenements or paying rent as agreed.

It is therefore recommended that the time between the giving of notice and the time at which tenants are required to vacate be temporarily extended and legislation be enacted protecting tenants from summary evictions without their having a longer time than is now provided by law for the surrender and termination of their possession, and giving tenants the right of possession until after the expiration of a longer time than is now allowed by law and until after the giving of notice to vacate and quit, and extending the time between the termination of a tenancy at will and the time when the tenant is required to vacate.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.