

HOUSE No. 176.

[Bill accompanying the petition of Washington Hoitt. Joint Judiciary.]

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred.

AN ACT

To provide for the Protection of Human Life in the Case
of Fire or Panic.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives
in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the
same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section twenty-four of chapter four hun-
2 dred and eighty-one of the acts of the year eighteen
3 hundred and ninety-four is hereby amended in the
4 twenty-third line thereof by inserting after the word
5 "egress" the words: — by suitable hollow towers of fire-
6 proof material, on the inside or outside of the building,
7 each tower having a centrally located support and a con-
8 tinuous spiral chute or slide therein attached to said sup-
9 port, running from the top to the bottom of such tower,
10 for the safe descent of all who enter the tower, together
11 with proper means of ingress into such tower from each
12 story of the building, or, — and in the twenty-first line
13 thereof after the word "room," the words: — or both, —
14 so that said section shall read as follows: —

15 *Section 24.* Every building now or hereafter used,
16 in whole or in part, as a public building, public or pri-

17 vate institution, school-house, church, theatre, public hall,
18 place of assemblage or place of public resort, and every
19 building in which ten or more persons are employed
20 above the second story in a factory, workshop, or mer-
21 cantile or other establishment, and every hotel, family
22 hotel, apartment house, boarding house, lodging house or
23 tenement house in which ten or more persons lodge or
24 reside above the second story, and every factory, work-
25 shop, mercantile or other establishment, the owner, lessee
26 or occupant of which is notified in writing by the inspec-
27 tor hereinafter mentioned that the provisions of this act
28 are deemed by him applicable thereto, shall be provided
29 with proper ways of egress, or other means of escape
30 from fire, sufficient for the use of all persons accommo-
31 dated, assembling, employed, lodging or residing in such
32 building; and such ways of egress and means of escape
33 shall be kept free from obstruction, in good repair and
34 ready for use. Every room above the second story in
35 any such building, in which ten or more persons are em-
36 ployed, shall be provided, if the said inspector shall so
37 direct in writing, with more than one way of egress, by
38 suitable hollow towers of fire-proof material, on the in-
39 side or outside of the building, each tower having a cen-
40 trally located support and a continuous spiral chute or
41 slide therein attached to said support, running from the
42 top to the bottom of such tower, for the safe descent of
43 all who enter the tower, together with proper means of
44 ingress into such tower from each story of the building,
45 or by stairways on the inside or outside of the building,
46 placed as near as practicable at opposite ends of the
47 room, or both; stairways on the outside of the building
48 shall have suitable railed landings at each story above
49 the first, and shall connect with each story by doors or
50 windows, and such landings, doors, and windows shall
51 be kept clear of ice and snow and other obstructions.

52 Women or children shall not be employed in a factory,
53 workshop, or mercantile or other establishment, in a
54 room above the second story from which there is only one
55 way of egress, if the said inspector shall so direct in
56 writing. All doors and windows in any building subject
57 to the provisions of this section shall open outwardly, if
58 the said inspector shall so direct in writing. No portable
59 seats shall be allowed in the aisles or passageways of such
60 buildings during any service or entertainment held
61 therein. The proscenium or curtain opening of all
62 theatres shall have a fire-resisting curtain of some incom-
63 bustible material, and such curtain shall be properly con-
64 structed and shall be operated by proper mechanism; the
65 certificate of the said inspector shall be conclusive evi-
66 dence of a compliance with such requirements.

1 SECTION 2. Section eighty-two of chapter four hun-
2 dred and nineteen of the acts of the year eighteen hun-
3 dred and ninety-two as set out in section one of chapter
4 three hundred and ten of the acts of eighteen hundred
5 and ninety-seven is hereby amended in line thirty thereof
6 by inserting after the word "stairs" the words:— or by
7 a suitable tower of fire-proof material, on the inside or
8 outside of the building, such tower having a centrally
9 located support and a continuous spiral chute or slide
10 therein attached to said support, running from the top
11 to the bottom of such tower, for the safe descent of all
12 who enter the tower, together with proper means of in-
13 gress into such tower from each story of the building,—
14 so that the same shall read as follows:—

15 *Section 82.* No building two stories or more in
16 height hereafter erected in the city of Boston, and no
17 such building in said city not used at the passage of this
18 act as a school-house, church, theatre, public building,
19 hall, place of assembly or public resort, tenement house,

20 boarding house or lodging house, or as a factory or
21 workshop where ten or more persons are employed, or
22 used above the second story as a dwelling by two or
23 more families, shall be used for any of said purposes
24 unless such building is provided with at least two inde-
25 pendent and sufficient ways of egress. One of said ways
26 of egress shall consist of a flight of stairs extending from
27 the lowest to the highest floor, made of fire-proof mate-
28 rial and enclosed in brick walls, with the enclosed space
29 or stairway provided with a ventilating skylight which
30 can be opened and closed from every floor, and having
31 openings through an external wall to the outer air, at
32 least one to each story except the upper and the lower,
33 each opening to have an area of at least five square feet
34 and to be maintained unobstructed; *provided, however,*
35 that when there shall be within the space enclosed by the
36 stairway and its landings from the second story upwards
37 an open area for light and ventilation whose least hori-
38 zontal dimensions shall be equal to the width of the
39 stairs, but in no case less than three feet, then the afore-
40 said openings through an exterior wall may be omitted.
41 There shall be no opening upon the stairway except as
42 aforesaid and for said skylight, and for doors from apart-
43 ments and corridors. The other way of egress shall be
44 a flight of stairs or a suitable tower of fire-proof material,
45 on the inside or outside of the building, such tower hav-
46 ing a centrally located support and a continuous spiral
47 chute or slide therein attached to said support, running
48 from the top to the bottom of such tower, for the safe
49 descent of all who enter the tower, together with proper
50 means of ingress into such tower from each story of the
51 building, approved by the inspector of buildings, and
52 may project over a public way. Every way of egress
53 from every such building shall be kept in good repair
54 and unobstructed.