

Resolutions on the bill for improving the health of towns in England, prepared and brought in by Viscount Morpeth, Lord John Russell, and Sir George Grey. March 30, 1847.

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RESOLUTIONS ON THE BILL FOR IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF TOWNS IN ENGLAND,
PREPARED AND BROUGHT IN BY VISCOUNT MORPETH, LORD JOHN RUSSELL, AND SIR GEORGE GLEN. March 30, 1847.

The Committee of the Health of Towns Association held a Meeting at the Statistical Society, 12 St. James's Square, on Wednesday, April 7th; Lord ASHLEY in the Chair; for the purpose of taking into consideration the "Bill for Improving the Health of Towns in England," presented to Parliament by Her Majesty's Government: when it was resolved unanimously:—

1. That the Bill is founded on the Bill framed with great care and labour by the late Government, and presented to the House of Commons at the close of the session 1845, by the Earl of Lincoln and Sir James Graham.

4. That while both the former and the present governments have earnestly laboured to mature a comprehensive and efficient sanitary measure, it must give confidence in the principle on which it is proposed to legislate, that the measure presented to Parliament by both administrations is essentially the same, differing merely in the mode in which it is proposed to carry the Act into operation.

operation. That the Bill prepared by her Majesty's present Government proposes to place the general superintendence of the Act in a competent authority created for the express purpose; to assign the management of the Act to bodies already constituted for the kind of work involved in its execution; to extend the jurisdiction of these bodies, where this may be necessary, by the creation of new roads and affording facilities for the formation of such bodies where income at present exists; to place the main expense of improvement (exceeding every where a vigilant control over the expenditure).

the working party with a vigorous criticism over the expenditure of the Government on the railways. The Government, however, has not been able to do more than to promise that it will endeavour to secure a more profitable management of the railways, and to reduce the expenditure on the railways to the minimum possible. The Government has also promised to reduce the expenditure on the railways to the minimum possible. The Government has also promised to reduce the expenditure on the railways to the minimum possible.

6. That the Bills proposed, both by the late and the present Government, alike provided, that the supply of water, the sewerage, the drainage, the cleansing and the paving of towns, should be under one and the same authority; that the existing separate, independent, and often conflicting trusts and boards, being proved by experience to be uneconomical, often wasteful, and almost invariably inefficient, should be abolished; and that their duties and powers should be transferred to some single body; located, each in its assigned district; uniformly constituted, and always under supervision and control.

7. That, with regard to the metropolis, after the full and repeated investigations which have been made into the sanitary condition of this important part of the empire—first by Dr. Amott, Kay, and Southwood Smith; secondly, in the following year, by Dr. Snow; and thirdly, by the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the state of towns; fourthly, by the Local Board of Health, and the Local Board of Sanitary Commissioners; and, lastly, by the evidence of Water Companies, and of Officers of Sewers, of Engineers of Water Companies, and of large numbers of medical and other witnesses, collected under the Health of Towns Commission, constituting altogether a mass of unswayed and unanswerable facts, showing the enormous and disastrous amount of disease, and the management of the Sewerage, the Drainage, the Supply of Water, and the Fencing and Cleansing of the Metropolis;—that they have been taken by the local authorities, that they have been taken by the local authorities, by any thing they have done in past, or are likely to do in future, that they are better fitted for continuing in office, than similar bodies in other parts of the country; or that there is the shadow of reason why a special exception should be

But among the practical results of the progress of the nation in the last century, there is, without doubt, one of the most remarkable—the improvement that has taken place in the salubrity and usefulness of dwelling houses, and in the salubrity of the localities in which they are placed; that this, however, is true only of the houses and localities in which the higher and middle classes reside, and which have been able to afford the means of the class of social improvement that this improvement has deserved to attain; while in general no improvement whatever has reached the abodes of common or unskilled labourers, who form the bulk of the population, both of our town and rural districts; but that on the corresponding sequelence of the increase of the population, without a corresponding amelioration, and without attention to the equities of the distribution of the dwellings, the dwellings have been driven, the sanitary condition of the poorer classes is positively worse than it was half a century ago; because they have become more crowded, because the sources of the air have progressively become increased, and because the access of fresh air has every year become more difficult; whence it has happened that the classes in question have been compelled to spend their lives, from the moment of birth to that of death, in a poisoned atmosphere, in which not only has the attainment of perfect mental health and strength been impossible, but the deterioration

of the body and the corruption of the mind have become inevitable.

9. That little or nothing of this state of things is known to the higher and wealthier classes, because no indication of it have been visible in our great squares, or our principal streets and common resorts, where every thing marks improvement, and indicates health and comfort, are the abodes of tens of thousands of the people, in a state which no one out of their own class can witness without a feeling of horror, and which people of all ranks, brought thither by curiosity or duty—statesmen, legislators, clergy men, medical men, and others, who are sent to see the cause of the disease, are finding to be disgraceful to us, equally as a civilized and as a Christian nation.

10. That the consequences of this state of things are proclaimed to us daily by an indispensable and undisputed authority, though hitherto practically neglected—the Tables and Reports of the Registrar-General—whose columns show, that in some of these places the mortality has increased, and in others trebled, and that the population has diminished, and that the children of the poor are deprived of one-third, and in many cases of one-half of the natural term of their existence; that during the very last year 200,000 persons in a part only of England, living chiefly in these districts, perished, over and above the ordinary numbers that die yearly; and that, from calculations based on the returns of the Registrar-General, it appears that the mortality in England alone, from removable causes of sickness and mortality, amounts to no less than 126 persons every day.

11. That although the sickened mortality from these causes press with peculiar severity on the poorer classes, yet the wealthy are by no means exempt from similar suffering; that there is no boundary within which it is possible to confine the visitations of malarial, and other fevers, and all the attendant diseases of the miasmata, and no moment when it may not pass beyond its usual haunts ; that it sometimes introduces fever and other painful and mortal diseases into the mansion as well as into the hotel, seizing upon young and old alike ; that it is not confined to the warm countries alone, but often visits our islands, and even reaches the shores of the Arctic circle, where it has been observed to have deprived of many years of their natural term of life.

[illegible]

14. That the General Assembly may proceed to Parliament and the House of Commons, and may calculate to remove from the classes in question the most prevalent and powerful of the causes, and to bring the very lowest of the people within the influence of that physical and moral improvement which is the necessary consequence of advancing civilisation, and in the inextinguishable bonfire of the higher and middle classes have long participated.

15. That this Measure, involving no political distinction, and involving no religious distinction, is one which all parties in every class without exception, is one which all parties in both Houses of Parliament may cordially co-operate in perfecting, and all classes out of Parliament unite in securing; its happy distinction being, that while it is capable of effecting a certain amount of good, without the admixture, or even the danger of any countervailing evil of any kind or degree, immediate or remote, it will at the same time lay the foundation for obtaining other and greater good, by the unsustainable without it will be (and it ought to be) the improvement, and the progress of the people.

On behalf of the Committee,

ASHLEY, CHAIRMAN,

STATION & CO. MANUFACTURERS OF COFFEE GRINDERS

