

# SLUM CLEARING BILL IS STUDIED BY HOUSE GROUP

by Thomas Furlong Mar 19, 1941

## SLUM CLEARING BILL IS STUDIED BY HOUSE GROUP

Hearing Is Given to Backers of Plan.

BY THOMAS FURLONG

Springfield, Ill., March 18.—Legislators proposed to help Chicago and cities of the state to rebuild their widening slum was placed into the hands of a house subcommittee of seven members today with instructions to report on the measure by April 1.

The decision to refer the legislation to a subcommittee was made after a three hour hearing before the house judiciary committee of which David I. Swanson, Chicago, is chairman. Swanson said he would name the subcommittee later.

Several witnesses were heard today. They included Aid. Arthur G. Lindell, chairman of the committee on housing of the Chicago city council, and J. Soule Watterfield, vice president, and Paul Angell, secretary of the Chicago Building Congress, which is sponsoring the legislation.

Warns of Slums' Spread.

Lindell told the committee that it is imperative that steps be taken to check the rapid growth of the slum areas in Chicago. The spread of blight, carrying with it an alarming increase in tax delinquency, is threatening the continuance of local government, he said.

Forty square miles of property in Chicago today pays into the city treasury less taxes than it takes to finance the municipal services in the area. Lindell declared. As a result, he said, the taxpayers in other sections of the city shoulder the cost.

Lindell opposed a bill offered at the last session of the legislature which would have granted condemnation rights to corporations, organized to rebuild slum areas. The bill was re-written to meet the objections of Lindell and others and was introduced at this session under the title of the Neighborhood Development bill. Lindell told the committee that the changes made in the legislation meet all the objections he had raised against the earlier measure and urged its passage.

Answers Committee's Questions,

John Butler, counsel for the Chicago Building Congress and one of the authors of the bill, answered the committee members who questioned the constitutionality of the proposed bill.

The slum evil, he said, has become a problem of the first magnitude and the public purpose to be served in its eradication justifies the granting of limited powers of condemnation to the quasipublic corporations which would be chartered under the proposed law. He stressed the public supervision to which such corporations would be subject through municipal redevelopment commissions provided for under the terms of the bill.

Watterfield and Angell told the committee the bill in its present form represents the product of study by civic organizations, real estate men and housing experts on the subject of slum clearance. These, they said, have been carried further in Illinois than in any other state.

One Opposition Witness.

Only one witness appeared to testify in opposition to the measure. He was S. T. Lane of the Chicago Urban League, a Negro welfare organization. Lane's was (illegible) at the time of the bill of any , to insure that persons now in slum areas would get suitable new living quarters.

Proponents of the measure replied that the same criticism has been made

of the federal government housing projects. They emphasized that the bill is not a public housing measure and should not be considered as such.

Horace Russell, Chicago attorney, appeared to testify in support of another slum clearance measure that follows the redevelopment bill in most particulars. Russell's bill, however, would give the redevelopment corporations special tax treatment, provide for the freezing of assessments for a 10 year period as an additional incentive for capital to invest in the projects. The measure sponsored by Russell was also referred to the sub-

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