

Answers to Rent Queries; New Laws Explained for Evening World Readers

L. E. S.—My two-year lease expires Oct. 1. I have paid \$39 a month and have offered the landlord \$78, or a 50 per cent. increase, but he has refused and demands \$87. He claims he lost last year on the house. Does the 25 Per Cent. Law apply in this case?
Answer—The 25 Per Cent. Law does apply to this case. It permits a landlord to raise his rents as high as his expenses will justify. When the increase is above 25 per cent. he must prove he is fair. Stick to your offer of 50 per cent. increase. It seems very fair and you will doubtless win in court.

F. H. S., C. M. M.—I moved into my apartment in August, 1919, and was paying \$20 a month. On Jan. 1, 1920, I was raised to \$25. What procedure should I take if the landlord demands more money?
Answer—If you think a further increase unjustifiable refuse to pay it, because the law would presume your landlord to be oppressive and unjust in demanding more. It is up to him to prove by his facts that a further increase is justifiable.

A. B. C.—In April, 1919, I was paying \$25 a month. In June, 1919, I was raised to \$28 and in October of that year I was raised to \$35. Now the landlord says he is going to raise our rent to \$55 on June 1. Can he do this?
Answer—Our landlord should figure on what you were paying a year previous to June 1, 1920, which is evidently \$28. A 25 per cent. increase is resumed to be fair by the new law. Hence, it will be up to you to prove the last increase is not fair.

A. W.—We have been notified to get out of June 7 and the landlord says he will occupy our rooms. I have locked all over and can't find any place to go and yet the owner insists that we get out. Can he put us into the street?
Answer—No. If you cannot find another place the court would grant you at least a thirty-day stay in eviction proceedings. If the landlord wants the rooms in good faith and is not trying a subterfuge to get you out he will be given the preference to the apartment.

E. S. B.—My two-year lease expires Oct. 1, 1920. I have been paying \$13.34 a month and the landlord offered to renew for 1921 at \$12 a month. I refused and offered him a 25 per cent. increase, agreeing to do my own renovating. He refused and I have now been served with notice to vacate by Sept. 20. What would you advise me to do?
Answer—Do not sign the lease for 1921 and in the mean time try to find another apartment. If you cannot find one remain where you are and when your landlord brings you into court on "holdover" proceedings explain to the Judge your predicament. You will doubtless have to pay more rent, but not as much as your landlord demands, for it seems unreasonable.

M. E.—I sold my house last October with a verbal agreement that I would get a lease for a year. Since taking title the landlady has changed her mind and is suing for dispossession. What can I do?
Answer—If you have entered into a verbal lease with your landlady and can prove it in court you can enforce it.

F. M. C.—In April, 1919, I was raised from \$16 to \$19 a month, and during May this year the landlord made some repairs, which he claims cost him \$30. He raised my rent to \$31, and I paid it last month. Can I do anything about it?
Answer—Repairs costing \$30 would not justify such an increase.

Since you have paid the \$21 demanded, it is questionable whether you can yet have the matter adjusted; some Judges hold you can, others you cannot. It would be wise for you to discover the opinion of the Municipal Judge for your district and be governed accordingly.

M. B. M.—On Oct. 1, 1919, I was paying \$45 a month. The house has been sold and the landlord has told me that the rent will be \$30 a month beginning next June. I am a professional man and use part of the apartment for my office. Please advise me.
Answer—The increase is presumed to be unjust and oppressive because it exceeds 25 per cent. of what you paid the year before. Offer the landlord 25 per cent. of \$45 and if he does not accept it let the matter go to court and be settled.

H. M. F.—Since May, 1919, the landlord has raised the rent from \$14.50 to \$20, and now he has cut off hot water and says if anybody says anything against it he will put them out in October. What would you do if you were me?
Answer—You are most strongly advised to go before a Magistrate and swear out a warrant against the land-

lord, charging him with shutting off the water. Get all the tenants in the house to testify against him, and if you convict him he can be imprisoned or fined or both. It would be a good thing to teach him such tyranny cannot be practiced. Do it without delay. It will not prejudice you right to your apartment in any way.

J. J. G.—On Oct. 1, 1919, I signed a lease for my apartment at \$35 per month, and I have been told when it expires, on Oct. 1, 1920, my rent will be \$45. Is this increase excessive?
Answer—The law presumes it to be fair and just because the rise is less than 25 per cent. of what you paid on Oct. 1, 1919. This presumption can be upset, however, if you can prove the rise unjust and oppressive.

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