



## CHAPTER xviii

An Act to make better provision for the structural improvement repair and maintenance of the Royal Albert Hall to provide additional capital funds and borrowing powers for the Corporation of the Hall of Arts and Sciences to amend and extend the existing provisions as to seat rates and seatholders and the use and letting of the hall and for other purposes. [22nd June 1951.]

**W**HEREAS—

(1) The Corporation of the Hall of Arts and Sciences (hereinafter called “the Corporation”) was incorporated by royal charter dated the eighth day of April eighteen hundred and sixty-six (hereinafter called “the original charter”) for the purpose of building and maintaining a hall and buildings connected therewith on the estate of the commissioners for the exhibition of 1851 (hereinafter called “the exhibition commissioners”) at South Kensington and appropriating the hall to purposes connected with science and art as therein mentioned and the Corporation accordingly built the Royal Albert Hall (hereinafter called “the hall”) which was opened on the twenty-ninth day of March eighteen hundred and seventy-one and is the largest hall in the country and capable of accommodating 7438 people:

(2) The membership of the Corporation consists of the registered holders of permanent seats in the amphitheatre of the hall or of private boxes containing a certain number of seats or of seats in such boxes such seats having been allotted to them in proportion to the amount of subscriptions paid by them towards the building of the hall or having been subsequently purchased by them. The seatholders now number 370 holding 1297 seats:

(3) The exhibition commissioners subscribed large sums towards the building of the hall in respect of which they held rights to seats which they have since surrendered. They also made a free grant to the Corporation of a lease of the site of the hall for a term of 999 years from the twenty-fifth day of March eighteen hundred and sixty-seven at a nominal rent:

(4) The said lease included covenants by the Corporation to keep the hall in good repair and not to use it or permit its use for any ends intents or purposes except such as were authorised by the original charter without the consent in writing of the commissioners and a right of entry for the exhibition commissioners in the event of breach of any of the covenants on the part of the Corporation contained in the lease:

(5) The original charter provided for the drawing up and sanctioning of a constitution for the Corporation and under such constitution the management of the hall was vested in an elective council consisting of a president and eighteen ordinary members. A supplemental charter dated the seventh day of December nineteen hundred and twenty-eight provided for the addition to the council of five appointed members appointed respectively by the parties therein mentioned. The members of the council all serve in an honorary capacity:

(6) The original charter provided that no dividend should be payable to any member of the Corporation and all profits which the Corporation might make by the use of the hall or by the sale or letting of any seats belonging to the Corporation for the time being after completion of the hall should be applied in carrying into effect the purposes of the Corporation. The constitution provided that the boxes or seats in the hall remaining at the disposal of the Corporation might be sold or let by the council either for the remainder of the term of the said lease or for any less period on such terms as the council might think fit:

(7) The purposes for which the hall was authorised by the original charter to be used were the following:—

- (a) congresses both national and international for purposes of science and art;
- (b) performances of music including performances on the organ;
- (c) the distribution of prizes by public bodies and societies;
- (d) conversaciones of societies established for the promotion of science and art;
- (e) agricultural horticultural and the like exhibitions;
- (f) national and international exhibitions of works of art and industry including industrial exhibitions by the artisan classes;



(g) exhibitions of pictures sculpture and other objects of artistic or scientific interest ;

(h) generally any other purposes connected with science and art :

The original charter empowered the Corporation subject to the rights reserved to the members of the Corporation to let the use of the hall "for a limited period" for any purposes for which the Corporation might themselves use the hall :

(8) By a supplemental charter dated the twenty-fifth day of October eighteen hundred and eighty-seven (hereinafter called "the 1887 charter") the said purposes were supplemented under article 9 by the following purposes :—

(a) public or private meetings of any body of persons ;

(b) operettas concerts balls or any "other than theatrical" entertainments for the amusement and recreation of the people ;

and the council of the Corporation was authorised under article 10 to let the hall for any of those purposes and also to arrange with individual members of the Corporation for the exchange purchase renting or temporary user of their boxes or seats :

(9) The 1887 charter provided under article 11 that the Corporation in general meeting might by resolution after notice and with the support of a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of those voting empower the council to exclude the members of the Corporation from the hall on a certain number of days not exceeding ten in any one year on any occasion on which the hall should be used for private meetings or entertainments to which the general public should be unable to obtain admission by payment of money only :

(10) The Royal Albert Hall Act 1876 (hereinafter called "the 1876 Act") after reciting that the funds at the disposal of the council for maintaining repairing and furnishing the hall and supporting an adequate staff of officers and servants were wholly insufficient for those purposes and that a majority of the members were willing that the seats should be charged at a rate not exceeding two pounds per annum for providing a fund for those purposes empowered the Corporation to rate the members in every year at such sum (in the said Act called "the seat rate") not exceeding two pounds for every seat as the members present at a general meeting called for that purpose some time in the month of February in each year should determine. 39 & 40 Vict.  
c. lvi.

The 1876 Act further provided that any member might at any time compound for all sums thereafter to become due in respect of seat rate for any seat or seats belonging to him upon payment

of all sums then in arrear for seat rate thereon and a sum of fifty pounds for each of such seats. The holder for the time being of a seat in respect of which such composition was made was thereafter to be exempt from seat rate thereon:

All sums received for seat rate under the 1876 Act were to be carried to a "special maintenance" account and paid into a bank to credit of trustees appointed under the Act and moneys on the special maintenance account were to be applicable under the direction of the council in or towards maintaining repairing and furnishing the hall defraying all rates and taxes and providing and keeping up the necessary staff for such purposes but if disapproved by the trustees then only by order of a meeting of the Corporation.

Sums received for composition of seat rates were to be carried to an "endowment fund" account and invested by the trustees. The income of the endowment fund was to be applied towards payment to the special maintenance account of sums equal to and in place of the seat rates from time to time payable on seats in respect of which seat rate had been compounded for and any surplus over such payments was to be invested by the trustees in augmentation of the fund. The number of seats in respect of which the seat rate has been the subject of composition is 35 leaving 1262 uncompounded for:

17 & 18 Geo. 5,  
c. lxxiv.

(11) The Royal Albert Hall Act 1927 (hereinafter called "the 1927 Act") after reciting that the funds at the disposal of the council for the purposes recited in the 1876 Act were again insufficient by reason of increased cost of those purposes and that the expenditure of large sums of money on the hall had become necessary in order to comply with the requirements of the London County Council relating to means of escape in case of fire and safety of persons resorting to the hall and that the Corporation had no funds to enable them to comply with such requirements included provisions to the following effect:—

- (a) imposing on every member for the time being of the Corporation a compulsory seat rate in place of the seat rate under the 1876 Act for a period of six years from the first day of January nineteen hundred and twenty-seven and as from the expiration of that period increasing to three pounds the maximum sum of two pounds chargeable in any year for seat rate under the 1876 Act;
- (b) substituting seventy-five pounds in place of the fifty pounds payable under the 1876 Act for composition of the seat rate in respect of a seat;
- (c) providing that for any seat in respect of which composition is made for the seat rate no seat rate shall be chargeable for any year after the year in which the composition is made;



- (d) repealing the provision in the 1876 Act as to application of the income of the endowment fund but re-enacting it in substance subject to a maximum limit of two pounds in any year upon the payment out of such income to the special maintenance account in place of the seat rate charged for that year on any seat in respect of which the seat rate has been compounded for ;
- (e) empowering the Corporation to borrow on mortgage of the seat rate and other the income revenues and property of the Corporation provided that no greater sum than one hundred thousand pounds shall be owing by the Corporation on mortgage at any one time and requiring the Corporation in every year to appropriate and pay out of the seat rate or other income or revenues of the Corporation a sum not less than one-thirtieth part of the principal outstanding to a sinking fund in the hands of the trustees in order to discharge the borrowed moneys ;
- (f) providing that notwithstanding anything in the original charter or in article 9 of the 1887 charter the hall may be used for theatrical entertainments and operatic performances but without affecting the operation of the Theatres Act 1843 ;
- (g) providing under sections 17 and 18 as follows:—

6 & 7 Vict.  
c. 68.

(i) that the occasions on which the Corporation in general meeting may under article 11 of the 1887 charter by resolution empower the council to exclude the members of the Corporation from the hall shall be extended so as to include firstly occasions on which the hall is used for balls for the purposes of which a floor is erected over the amphitheatre stalls and secondly occasions when it is used for other entertainments (not being (a) balls for the purposes of which a floor is not so erected or (b) boxing entertainments) whether or not the general public can obtain admission thereto by payment of money ;

(ii) that on occasions (other than those to which the said extension applies) on which the hall is used for any purpose for which it is necessary or convenient to erect a floor over the amphitheatre stalls a floor may be erected thereover and the holders of such amphitheatre stalls shall be disentitled to use such stalls but entitled to free admission to the hall and to all rights and privileges as such holders other than the use of their stalls The floor

may not remain over the amphitheatre stalls longer than six weeks unless with the consent in writing of the holders of a majority of such stalls ;

(h) prohibiting the Corporation from letting the main hall for any continuous period exceeding one year :

(12) After eighty years of existence and constant use the hall is urgently in need of large structural and other repairs and improvements to render it safe and commodious for those who resort to it and properly equipped for the many uses to which it is and may be put Heavy expenditure mainly of a capital nature is involved for which the present funds and resources of the Corporation and present possibilities of revenue from use or letting of the hall are insufficient to provide :

(13) In order to enable the financial resources of the Corporation to be augmented to the necessary extent and to give the Corporation increased means of earning revenue it is expedient that further powers should be conferred upon the Corporation and the council and further provision should be made with respect to the use and letting of the hall and the rights of seatholders therein as in this Act set forth :

(14) The purposes of this Act cannot be effected without the authority of Parliament :

May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted and be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows:—

Short and  
collective  
titles.

1.—(1) This Act may be cited as the Royal Albert Hall Act 1951.

(2) The Royal Albert Hall Acts 1876 and 1927 and this Act may be cited together as the Royal Albert Hall Acts 1876 to 1951.

Interpreta-  
tion.

2. In this Act unless the context otherwise requires—

“ The capital contribution ” has the meaning assigned to that expression by section 4 (Capital contribution) of this Act ;

“ The capital expenditure account ” and “ capital expenditure ” have the respective meanings assigned to those expressions in section 3 (Capital expenditure) of this Act ;

“ The Corporation ” means the Corporation of the Hall of Arts and Sciences ;

“ The council ” means the council of the Corporation ;

“ The 1876 Act ” means the Royal Albert Hall Act 1876 ;



“ The 1887 charter ” means the supplemental charter of the Corporation dated the twenty-fifth day of October eighteen hundred and eighty-seven ;

“ The exhibition commissioners ” means the commissioners for the exhibition of 1851 ;

“ The great floor ” means the floor which by section 17 (As to amphitheatre stalls on certain occasions) of the 1927 Act is authorised to be erected in the hall over the amphitheatre stalls on the occasions there mentioned ;

“ The hall ” means the Royal Albert Hall of Arts and Sciences at South Kensington (constructed in pursuance of the provisions of the original charter and commonly known as “ the Royal Albert Hall ”) as for the time being existing ;

“ The lease ” means the lease dated the twenty-fifth day of March eighteen hundred and seventy-two of the site of the hall from the exhibition commissioners to the Corporation ;

“ Member ” means a person who is for the time being a member of the Corporation whether a body corporate or an individual and in the case of several persons jointly entitled to the same seat means all such persons collectively ;

“ The 1927 Act ” means the Royal Albert Hall Act 1927 ;

“ The original charter ” means the royal charter dated the eighth day of April eighteen hundred and sixty-six by which the Corporation was incorporated ;

“ Seat ” means a permanent seat in the hall with a registered holder whether such seat be in the amphitheatre or form one of several seats in a private box ;

“ Seat rate ” means and includes any rate in respect of a seat to which a member is for the time being liable.

3.—(1) All expenditure of a capital nature which the Corporation shall incur on and after the passing of this Act in relation to improvements of or additions to the hall shall be charged to the capital expenditure account in the books of the Corporation. Capital expenditure.

(2) All expenditure for the time being chargeable to such capital expenditure account is in this Act referred to as “ capital expenditure ”.

4.—(1) In order to meet capital expenditure and to enable the Corporation to provide sufficient security for the borrowing of money to meet such expenditure the Corporation shall levy collect and receive the capital contribution charged by this section. Capital contribution.

(2) There shall be charged upon and in respect of every seat a capital contribution of two hundred and eighty pounds. Such capital contribution shall be payable by yearly instalments of seven pounds on the first day of January in every year for the period of forty years commencing on the first day of January nineteen hundred and fifty-two. Every member is hereby made liable for the payment of such yearly instalment in respect of each seat of which he is the registered holder on the first day of January in any year within the said period.

(3) The sums so charged shall be received and held by the Corporation as capital funds for all purposes and shall be applicable solely to capital purposes of the Corporation. They are in this Act together referred to as "the capital contribution" and the payments made by the members in respect thereof shall be treated for all purposes as outgoings of a capital nature.

(4) If at any time any member refuses or for three months after demand made by the Corporation for payment thereof neglects to pay the amount of capital contribution for which he is liable in respect of the seat or seats of which he is the registered holder the amount thereof or so much thereof as shall then be due shall be recoverable in any court of competent jurisdiction.

(5) Any member may at any time compound for all further instalments of capital contribution thereafter to become due in respect of each seat belonging to him (whether or not he compounds or has compounded for seat rate in respect thereof) upon payment of all instalments (if any) then in arrear in respect of the capital contribution for each such seat and of a further lump sum of two hundred pounds for each such seat and no further instalments of capital contribution shall be payable after such payment or payments as aforesaid in respect of such seat or seats. All sums received by the Corporation in respect of the compounding of capital contribution in pursuance of the provisions of this subsection shall be applied either to repayment of moneys borrowed by the Corporation or to meeting capital expenditure.

(6) The provisions of the following sections of the 1876 Act shall extend and apply for the purposes of this Act with the substitution of the expression "the capital contribution" for the expression "seat rate" and "a" "the" or "any seat rate" (that is to say):—

Section 8 (Recovery of seat rate when ownership of seat is doubtful);

Section 9 (When seat belongs to joint members);

Section 10 (Corporation may refuse to register transfer of seat when seat rate in arrear);

Section 12 (Receipts).



5. In section 9 (Corporation may borrow) of the 1927 Act for "one hundred thousand pounds" there shall be substituted "five hundred thousand pounds".

Increase of  
borrowing  
powers.

6.—(1) The Corporation may mortgage the capital contribution as the security or part of the security for any loan (in this section referred to as a "Royal Albert Hall loan") which the Corporation may borrow and apply to the following purposes or any of them (that is to say):—

Power to  
mortgage  
capital  
contribution.

(a) Repayment of the principal of any loan owing by the Corporation at the passing of this Act ;

(b) Meeting capital expenditure ;

(c) Repayment of the principal of any Royal Albert Hall loan.

(2) In relation to any Royal Albert Hall loan the following provisions of the 1927 Act shall apply subject to any necessary modifications or adaptations (that is to say):—

Section 10 (Form of mortgage) ;

Section 11 (Protection of lenders from inquiry) ;

Section 12 (Corporation not to regard trusts) ;

Section 13 (Appointment of receiver) ;

Section 14 (Transfer of mortgages) ;

The schedule.

7. In section 16 (Composition to be carried to separate account and invested by trustees) of the 1876 Act for the words from "their names in" to the end of the section there shall be substituted the words "securities in which trustees are for the time being authorised by law to invest trust moneys".

Amending  
section 16  
of 1876 Act.

8. In section 11 (Power to compound for seat rate) of the 1876 Act as amended by subsection (3) of section 3 (Rate on seats) of the 1927 Act for "seventy-five pounds" there shall be substituted "one hundred pounds".

Amendment  
of provision  
for composi-  
tion of seat  
rate.

9. Notwithstanding anything in the original charter or the 1887 charter or the 1927 Act the following provisions shall have effect:—

Amendment  
of provisions  
as to use of  
hall and  
exclusion of  
members.

(1) The occasions on which the council may be empowered in pursuance of the provisions of article 11 of the 1887 charter to exclude the members from the hall (on days not exceeding ten in any one year) shall not be restricted to the occasions mentioned in that article as varied by section 18 (As to occasions on which members may be excluded from the hall) of the 1927 Act but shall comprise any occasions on which the hall is let for any purposes for which the Corporation is empowered to let the hall ; and

(2) In addition to the occasions on which the council are empowered as mentioned in paragraph (1) of this section to exclude the members from the hall the council may exclude the members therefrom on any further occasions not exceeding eight in any year being occasions on which the hall is let for a ball on the great floor or for a dance in the arena or for a conference reunion prize-giving or other affair (not being a public meeting) organised by an association society university union or other body and designed for a specialised audience.

As to lease  
of hall.

**10.** Nothing contained in the lease shall operate or have effect or be deemed to operate or have effect so as to prohibit prevent or interfere with or require the consent of the exhibition commissioners (or other the persons entitled for the time being to the reversion to the premises demised by the lease) to the letting of the hall or any part thereof or the mortgaging of the hall or the using or permitting the use of the hall or any part thereof for any purpose if such letting mortgaging use or permission is authorised by the original charter or the 1887 charter (as amended by the 1927 Act and this Act) or by any provision contained in the Royal Albert Hall Acts 1876 to 1951.

Repeal of  
section 15  
of 1927 Act.

**11.** Section 15 (Fund for repayment of borrowed moneys) of the 1927 Act is hereby repealed.

Costs of Act.

**12.** The costs charges and expenses preliminary to and of and incidental to the preparing applying for obtaining and passing of this Act shall be paid by the Corporation.

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# Royal Albert Hall Act, 1951

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