



Companies (Consolidation) Act 1908

1908 CHAPTER 69

PART III

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Inspection and Audit

109 Investigation of affairs of company by Board of Trade inspectors

- (1) The Board of Trade may appoint one or more competent inspectors to investigate the affairs of any company and to report thereon in such manner as the Board direct—
 - (i) In the case of a banking company having a share capital, on the application of members holding not less than one third of the shares issued :
 - (ii) In the case of any other company having a share capital, on the application of members holding not less than one tenth of the shares issued :
 - (iii) In the case of a company not having a share capital, on nthe application of not less than one fifth in number of the persons on the company's register of members.
- (2) The application shall be supported by such evidence as the Board of Trade may require for the purpose of showing that the applicants have good reason for, and are not actuated by malicious motives in requiring, the investigation; and the Board of Trade may, before appointing an inspector, require the applicants to give security for payment of the costs of the inquiry.
- (3) It shall be the duty of all officers and agents of the company to produce to the inspectors all books and documents in their custody or power.
- (4) An inspector may examine on oath the officers and agents of the company in relation to its business, and may administer an oath accordingly.
- (5) If any officer or agent refuses to produce any book or document which under this section it is his duty to produce, or to answer any question relating to the affairs of

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the company, he shall be liable to a fine not exceeding five pounds in respect of each offence.

- (6) On the conclusion of the investigation the inspectors shall report their opinion to the Board of Trade, and a copy of the report shall be forwarded by the Board to the registered office of the company, and a further copy shall, at the request of the applicants for the investigation, be delivered to them. The report shall be written or printed, as the Board direct.
- (7) All expenses of and incidental to the investigation shall be defrayed by the applicants, unless the Board of Trade direct the same to be paid by the company, which the Board is hereby authorised to do.

110 Power of company to appoint inspectors

- (1) A company may by special resolution appoint inspectors to investigate its affairs.
- (2) Inspectors so appointed shall have the same powers and duties as inspectors appointed by the Board of Trade, except that, instead of reporting to the Board, they shall report in such manner and to such persons as the company in general meeting may direct.
- (3) Officers and agents of the company shall incur the like penalties in case of refusal to produce any book or document required to be produced to inspectors so appointed, or to answer any question, as they would have incurred if the inspectors had been appointed by the Board of Trade.

111 Report of inspectors to be evidence

A copy of the report of any inspectors appointed under this Act, authenticated by the seal of the company whose affairs they have investigated, shall be admissible in any legal proceeding as evidence of the opinion of the inspectors in relation to any matter contained in the report.

112 Appointment and remuneration of auditors

- (1) Every company shall at each annual general meeting appoint an auditor or auditors to hold office until the next annual general meeting.
- (2) If an appointment of auditors is not made at an annual general meeting, the Board of Trade may, on the application of any member of the company, appoint an auditor of the company for the current year, and fix the remuneration to be paid to him by the company for his services.
- (3) A director or officer of the company shall not be capable of being appointed auditor of the company.
- (4) A person, other than a retiring auditor, shall not be capable of being appointed auditor at an annual general meeting unless notice of an intention to nominate that person to the office of auditor has been given by a shareholder to the company not less than fourteen days before the annual general meeting, and the company shall send a copy of any such notice to the retiring auditor, and shall give notice thereof to the shareholders, either by advertisement or in any other mode allowed by the articles, not less than seven days before the annual general meeting :

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Provided that if, after notice of the intention to nominate an auditor has been so given, an annual general meeting is called for a date fourteen days or less after the notice has been given, the notice, though not given within the time required by this provision, shall be deemed to have been properly given for the purposes thereof, and the notice to be sent or given by the company may, instead of being sent or given within the time required by this provision, be sent or given at the same time as the notice of the annual general meeting.

- (5) The first auditors of the company may be appointed by the directors before the statutory meeting, and if so appointed shall hold office until the first annual general meeting, unless previously removed by a resolution of the shareholders in general meeting, in which case the shareholders at that meeting may appoint auditors.
- (6) The directors may fill any casual vacancy in the office of auditor, but while any such vacancy continues the surviving or continuing auditor or auditors, if any, may act.
- (7) The remuneration of the auditors of a company shall be fixed by the company in general meeting, except that the remuneration of any auditors appointed before the statutory meeting, or to fill any casual vacancy, may be fixed by the directors.

113 Powers and duties of auditors

- (1) Every auditor of a company shall have a right of access at all times to the books and accounts and vouchers of the company, and shall be entitled to require from the directors and officers of the company such information and explanation as may be necessary for the performance of the duties of the auditors.
- (2) The auditors shall make a report to the shareholders on the accounts examined by them, and on every balance sheet laid before the company in general meeting during their tenure of office, and the report shall state—
 - (a) whether or not they have obtained all the information and explanations they have required ; and
 - (b) whether, in their opinion, the balance sheet referred to in the report is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the state of the company's affairs according to the best of their information and the explanations given to them, and as shown by the books of the company.
- (3) The balance sheet shall be signed on behalf of the board by two of the directors of the company or, if there is only one director, by that director, and the auditors' report shall be attached to the balance sheet, or there shall be inserted at the foot of the balance sheet a reference to the report, and the report shall be read before the company in general meeting, and shall be open to inspection by any shareholder. Any shareholder shall be entitled to be furnished with a copy of the balance sheet and auditors' report at a charge not exceeding sixpence for every hundred words.
- (4) If any copy of a balance sheet which has not been signed as required by this section is issued, circulated, or published, or if any copy of a balance sheet is issued, circulated, or published without either having a copy of the auditors' report attached thereto or containing such reference to that report as is required by this section, the company, and every director, manager, secretary, or other officer of the company who is knowingly a party to the default, shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds.
- (5) In the case of a banking company registered after the fifteenth day of August eighteen hundred and seventy-nine—

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- (a) if the company has branch banks beyond the limits of Europe, it shall be sufficient if the auditor is allowed access to such copies of and extracts from the books and accounts of any such branch as have been transmitted to the head office of the company in the United Kingdom; and
- (b) the balance sheet must be signed by the secretary or manager (if any), and where there are more than three directors of the company by at least three of those directors, and where there are not more than three directors by all the directors.

114 Rights of preference shareholders, &c. as to receipt and inspection of reports, &c

- (1) Holders of preference shares and debentures of a company shall have the same right to receive and inspect the balance" sheets of the company and the reports of the auditors and other reports as is possessed by the holders of ordinary shares in the company.
- (2) This section shall not apply to a private company, nor to a company registered before the first day of July nineteen hundred and eight.