



Explosive Substances Act 1883

1883 CHAPTER 3

An Act to amend the Law relating to Explosive Substances. [10th April 1883]

BE it enacted by the Queen'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 :

1 Short title

This Act may be cited as the Explosive Substances Act, 1883.

2 Punishment for causing explosion likely to endanger life or property

Any person who unlawfully and maliciously causes by any explosive substance an explosion of a nature likely to endanger life or to cause serious injury to property shall, whether any injury to person or property has been actually caused or not, be guilty of felony, and on conviction shall be liable to penal servitude for life, or for any less term (not less than the minimum term allowed by law), or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding two years.

3 Punishment for attempt to cause explosion, or for making or keeping explosive with intent to endanger life or property

Any person who within or (being a subject of Her Majesty) without Her Majesty's dominions unlawfully and maliciously—

- (a) does any act with intent to cause by an explosive substance, or conspires to cause by an explosive substance an explosion in the United Kingdom of a nature likely to endanger life or to cause serious injury to property; or
- (b) makes or has in his possession or under his control any explosive substance with intent by means thereof to endanger life, or cause serious injury to property in the United Kingdom, or to enable any other person by means thereof to endanger life or cause serious injury to property in the United Kingdom,

shall, whether any explosion does or not take place, and whether any injury to person or property has been actually caused or not, be guilty of felony, and on' conviction shall be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding twenty years, or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding two years, and the explosive substance shall be forfeited.

4 Punishment for making or possession of explosive under suspicious circumstances

- (1) Any person who makes or knowingly has in his possession or under his control any explosive substance, under such circumstances as to give rise to a reasonable suspicion that he is not making it or does not have it in his possession or under his control for a lawful object, shall, unless he can show that he made it or had it in his possession or under his control for a lawful object, be guilty of felony, and, on conviction, shall be liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding fourteen years, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years with or without hard labour, and the explosive substance shall be forfeited.
- (2) In any proceeding against any person for a crime under this section, such person and his wife, or husband, as the case may be, may, if such person thinks fit, be called, sworn, examined, and cross-examined as an ordinary witness in the case.

5 Punishment of accessories

Any person who within or- (being a subject of Her Majesty) without Her Majesty's dominions by the supply of or solicitation for money, the providing of premises, the supply of materials, or in any manner whatsoever, procures, counsels, aids, abets, or is accessory to, the commission of any crime under this Act, shall be guilty of felony, and shall be liable to be tried and punished for that crime, as if he had been guilty as a principal.

6 Inquiry under order of Attorney General, and apprehension of absconding witnesses

- (1) Where the Attorney General has reasonable ground to believe that any crime under this Act has been committed, he may order an inquiry under this section, and thereupon any justice for the county, borough, or place in which the crime was committed or is suspected to have been committed, who is authorised in that behalf by the Attorney General, may, although no person may be charged before him with the commission of such crime, sit at a police court, or petty sessional or occasional court-house, or police station in the said county, borough, or place, and examine on oath concerning such crime any witness appearing before him, and may take the deposition of such witness, and, if he see cause, may bind such witness by recognizance to appear and give evidence at the next petty sessions, or when called upon within three months from the date of such recognizance ; and the law relating to the compelling of the attendance of a witness before a justice, and to a witness attending before a justice and required to give evidence concerning the matter of an information or complaint, shall apply to compelling the attendance of a witness for examination and to a witness attending under this section.
- (2) A witness examined under this section shall not be excused from answering any question" on the ground that the answer thereto may criminate, or tend to criminate, himself; but any statement made by any person in answer to any question put to him

on any examination under this section shall not, except in the case of an indictment or other criminal proceeding for perjury, be admissible in evidence against him in any proceeding, civil or criminal.

- (3) A justice who conducts the examination under this section of a person concerning any crime shall not take part in the committing for trial of such person for such crime.
- (4) Whenever any person is bound by recognizance to give evidence before justices, or any criminal court, in respect of any crime under this Act, any justice, if he sees fit, upon information being made in writing, and on oath, that such person is about to abscond, or has absconded, may issue his warrant for the arrest of such person, and if such person is arrested any justice, upon being satisfied that the ends of justice would otherwise be defeated, may commit such person to prison until the time at which he is bound by such recognizance to give evidence, unless in the meantime he produces sufficient sureties: Provided that any person so arrested shall be entitled on demand to receive a copy of the information upon which the warrant for his arrest was issued.

7 No prosecution except by leave of Attorney General. Procedure and saving

- (1) If any person is charged before a justice with any crime under this Act, no further proceeding shall be taken against such person without the consent of the Attorney General, except such as the justice may think necessary by remand, or otherwise, to secure the safe custody of such person.
- (2) In framing an' indictment the same criminal act may be charged in different, counts as constituting different crimes under this Act, and upon the trial of any such indictment the prosecutor shall not be put to his election as to the count on which Tie must proceed.
- (3) For all purposes of and incidental to arrest, trial, and punishment, a crime for which a person is liable to be punished under this Act, when committed out of the United Kingdom, shall be deemed to have "been committed in the place in which such person is apprehended or is in custody.
- (4) This Act shall not exempt any person from any indictment or proceeding for a crime or offence which is punishable at common law, or by any Act of Parliament other than this Act, but no person shall be punished twice for the same criminal act.

8 Search for and seizure of explosive substances

- (1) Sections seventy-three, seventy-four, seventy-five, eighty-nine, and ninety-six of the Explosives Act, 1875, (which sections relate to the search for, seizure, and detention of explosive substances, and the forfeiture thereof, and the disposal of explosive substances seized or forfeited), shall apply in like manner as if a crime or forfeiture under this Act were- an offence or forfeiture under the Explosives Act, 1875.
- (2) Where the master or owner of any vessel has reasonable cause to suspect that any dangerous goods or goods of a dangerous nature which, if found, he would be entitled to throw overboard in pursuance of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1873, are concealed on board his vessel, he may search any part of such vessel for such goods, and for the purpose of such search may, if necessary, break open any box, package, parcel, or receptacle on board the vessel, and such master or owner, if he finds any such dangerous goods or goods of a dangerous nature shall be entitled to deal with the same in manner provided by the said Act, and if he do not find the same, he shall not be subject to any liability, civil or criminal, if it appears to the tribunal before which the

question of his liability is raised that' he had reasonable cause to suspect that such goods were so concealed as aforesaid.

9 Definitions, and application to Scotland

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

The expression " explosive substance " shall be deemed to include any materials for making any explosive substance; also any apparatus, machine, implement, or materials used, or intended to be used, or adapted for causing, or aiding in causing, any explosion in or with any explosive substance; also any part of any such apparatus, machine, or implement.

The expression " Attorney General " means Her Majesty's Attorney General for England or Ireland, as the case may be, and in case of his inability or of a vacancy-in the office, Her Majesty's Solicitor General for England or Ireland, as the" case requires.

(2) In the application of this Act to Scotland the following modifications shall be made :

The expression " Attorney General " shall be deemed to mean the Lord Advocate, and in case of his inability or of a vacancy in the office, Her Majesty's Solicitor General for Scotland.

The expression " petty sessional court-house " shall be deemed to mean the sheriff court.

The expression " felony " shall be deemed to mean a high crime and offence.

The expression " recognizance " shall be deemed to mean juratory caution.

The expression " justice " shall include sheriff and sheriff-substitute.