



Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921

1921 CHAPTER 7

1 Powers with respect to the taking of evidence, &c, before certain tribunals of inquiry.

(1) Where it has been resolved (whether before or after the commencement of this Act) by both Houses of Parliament that it is expedient that a tribunal be established for inquiring into a definite matter described in the Resolution as of urgent public importance, and in pursuance of the Resolution a tribunal is appointed for the purpose either by His Majesty or a Secretary of State, the instrument by which the tribunal is appointed or any instrument supplemental thereto may provide that this Act shall apply, and in such case the tribunal shall have all such powers, rights, and privileges as are vested in the High Court, or in Scotland the Court of Session, or a judge of either such court, on the occasion of an action in respect of the following matters :—

- (a) The enforcing the attendance of witnesses and examining them on oath, affirmation, or otherwise;
- (b) The compelling the production of documents;
- (c) Subject to rules of court, the issuing of a commission or request to examine witnesses abroad;

and a summons signed by one or more of the members of the tribunal may be substituted for and shall be equivalent to any formal "process capable of being issued in any action for enforcing the attendance of witnesses and compelling the production of documents.

(2) If any person—

- (a) on being duly summoned as a witness before a tribunal makes default in attending; or
- (b) being in attendance as a witness refuses to take an oath legally required by the tribunal to be taken, or to produce any document in his power or control legally required by the tribunal to be produced by him, or to answer any question to which the tribunal may legally require an answer ; or
- (c) does any other thing which would, if the tribunal had been a court of law having power to commit for contempt, have been contempt of that court;

the chairman of the tribunal may certify the offence of that person under his hand to the High Court, or in Scotland the Court of Session, and the court may thereupon inquire

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

into the alleged offence and after hearing any witnesses who may be produced against or on behalf of the person charged with the offence, and after hearing any statement that may be offered in defence, punish or take steps for the punishment of that person in like manner as if he had been guilty of contempt of the court.

- (3) A witness before any such tribunal shall be entitled to the same immunities and privileges as if he were a witness before the High Court or the Court of Session.