Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 33
Introduced on: 29 May 2013
Promoted by: Glasgow City Council
Passed: 21 January 2014
Royal Assent: 25 February 2014

Passage of the Bill

The Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 29 May 2013. The Bill was introduced as a private bill, promoted by Glasgow City Council, and parliamentary consideration therefore followed private bill procedure. The Burrell Committee (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill Committee (the Burrell Committee) was established to scrutinise the Bill. It issued its Preliminary Stage Report on 11 November 2013. The Preliminary Stage Debate took place on 21 November 2013.

The Consideration Stage took place on 5 December 2013. No objections or amendments were received in relation to the Bill. The Scottish Parliament passed the Bill without amendment after the Final Stage debate on 21 January 2014. The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 February 2014 to become the Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Act 2014 (asp 4).

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The purpose of the Bill was to remove the restrictions on lending items from the Burrell Collection to other museums and to enable externally-borrowed items to be displayed alongside objects from the Collection. The restrictions which existed on lending from, and borrowing into, the Collection prior to the passing of the Bill came from the agreement between the then City of Glasgow Corporation and Sir William Burrell, covering the original donation of the Collection (the Agreement) and from Sir William’s will (the Will).

The Bill was introduced while Glasgow City Council was considering plans to extensively renovate the purpose-built building which houses the Burrell
Collection (which leaked to the extent that objects in the Collection were in danger). Items from the Collection could not be displayed during the renovation period, and it was argued that this would present an ideal opportunity to mount an international tour. It was noted that this may also help to raise funds towards the renovation costs.

**Provisions of the Bill**

The Bill made provision to override restrictions in the Agreement and Will to enable Glasgow City Council to lend items from the Collection and to display items borrowed from other institutions alongside objects from the Burrell Collection. The Bill required that Glasgow City Council publish a “lending code” outlining the basis on which its lending and borrowing powers would be exercised.

The lending code must be agreed with the “Burrell Trustees” (people appointed under Sir William’s will to purchase further items for the Collection using money left in trust for that purpose). The draft code provided by Glasgow City Council during consideration of the Bill also gave the Burrell Trustees a role in approving specific lending requests.

**Parliamentary consideration**

The Burrell Committee considered the Bill during the Preliminary Stage at meetings in June, September and October, including an evidence session held at Pollok House, beside the building which houses the Burrell Collection, in Glasgow. Evidence focussed on the views of the promoter and Burrell Trustees, practices of other collections limited by the terms of agreements or bequests and whether developments in art shipping made it safe to move delicate artworks and artefacts.

The Preliminary Stage Report recommended the principles of the Bill. However, it also recommended that the Explanatory Notes which accompanied the Bill were revised to include copies of the Agreement and Will. The report stated (paragraph 106):

“It is the Committee’s view that the accompanying documents, as they stand, do not allow proper scrutiny of the Private Bill and scrutiny would be greatly improved by the addition of the Will and the Agreement within the Explanatory Notes. This would also assist those referring to the Act in the future.”

The promoters agreed to do this, and Supplementary Explanatory Notes were made available on 30 November 2013.

No objections were received in relation to the Bill, and the Consideration Stage and Final Stage passed without the Bill being amended.

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