

HOUSE No. 1429

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 17, 1909.

The committee on Mercantile Affairs, to whom was referred the petition (with accompanying bill, House, No. 336) of The Association of Theatre Managers of Boston for an amendment of the law relative to fire protection in existing theatres, report the accompanying bill.

For the committee,

FRANK G. HODSKINS.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Nine.

AN ACT

Relative to Theatres in the City of Boston.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section one hundred and eleven of chap-
2 ter five hundred and fifty of the acts of nineteen
3 hundred and seven, as amended by chapter three hun-
4 dred and thirty-six of the acts of nineteen hundred and
5 eight, is hereby amended by striking out the words
6 “and landings”, in the first line of said section and
7 by striking out the second sentence in the third para-
8 graph of said section and inserting in place thereof
9 the following: — In every theatre there shall be over
10 every exit, on the inside, and over every opening to
11 a fire-escape, on the inside, an illuminated sign,
12 bearing the word “exit” or “fire-escape”, respectively,
13 in letters not less than four inches high. An emer-
14 gency are light or its equivalent to be installed in the
15 auditorium, which light or lights, exit lights, and all
16 lights in halls, corridors, or any other part of the build-
17 ing used by the audience except the general auditorium

18 lighting, must be fed independently of the stage light-
19 ing and must be controlled only from the lobby or other
20 convenient place in the front of the house. Every exit
21 sign shall be kept illuminated and every outside bal-
22 cony and fire-escape shall be kept well lighted during
23 the performance, except outside exits during a per-
24 formance in the daytime and before sunset. And said
25 section is hereby further amended by inserting after
26 the word "desk", in the seventh paragraph and the
27 eighth line thereof the words "or any other place
28 easily reached from the stage level", and said section
29 is further amended by striking out the second sentence
30 in the eighth paragraph thereof and inserting in place
31 thereof the following:—The said pipes shall in no
32 case be sealed and shall have a gate and check valve
33 and shall have a test valve placed between the gauge
34 valve and check valve. Said section as amended to
35 read as follows:—*Section 111.* All stairs of theatres
36 shall have throughout proper hand-rails on both sides
37 firmly secured to walls or to strong posts and balusters.
38 Stairways twelve feet or more wide shall have one or
39 more intermediate rails not more than eight feet apart
40 and properly supported.

41 No boiler, furnace, engine or heating apparatus, ex-
42 cept steam, hot water or hot air pipes or radiators, shall
43 be located under the auditorium nor under any passage
44 or stairway or exit of any theatre.

45 In every theatre there shall be over every exit, on
46 the inside, and over every opening to a fire-escape, on
47 the inside, an illuminated sign, bearing the word
48 "exit" or "fire-escape", respectively, in letters not
49 less than four inches high. An emergency arc light
50 or its equivalent to be installed in the auditorium,
51 which light or lights, exit lights, and all lights in halls,

52 corridors, or any other part of the building used by
53 the audience except the general auditorium lighting,
54 must be fed independently of the stage lighting and
55 must be controlled only from the lobby or other con-
56 venient place in the front of the house. Every exit
57 sign shall be kept illuminated and every outside bal-
58 cony and fire-escape shall be kept well lighted during
59 the performance, except outside exits during a per-
60 formance in the daytime and before sunset. *

61 The exits and openings to fire-escapes of all theatres
62 shall open outward and have fastenings on the inside
63 only. They shall be unfastened during every perform-
64 ance and shall be so arranged that they can easily be
65 opened from within. Plans showing the exits and
66 stairways shall be legibly printed so as to occupy a full
67 page of every programme or play-bill.

68 No temporary seats or other obstructions shall be
69 allowed in any aisle, or stairway of a theatre, and no
70 person shall remain in any aisle or stairway of any
71 such building during any performance.

72 The proscenium or curtain opening of every theatre
73 shall have a fire-resisting curtain of incombustible ma-
74 terial, reinforced by wire netting, or otherwise strength-
75 ened. If of iron, or similar heavy material, and made
76 to lower from the top, it shall be so arranged as to
77 be stopped securely at a height of seven feet above the
78 stage floor, the remaining opening being closed by a
79 curtain or valance of fire-resisting fabric. The cur-
80 tain shall be raised at the beginning and lowered at the
81 end of every performance, and shall be of proper ma-
82 terial, construction and mechanism.

83 There shall be one or more ventilators near the
84 centre and above the highest part of the stage of every
85 theatre, of a combined area of opening satisfactory to

86 the building commissioner, and not less than one tenth
87 of the area of the proscenium opening. Every such
88 ventilator shall have a valve or louvre so counter-
89 balanced as to open automatically, and shall be kept
90 closed, when not in use, by a fusible link and cord
91 reaching to the prompter's desk or any other place
92 reached from the stage level and readily operated there-
93 from. Such cord shall be of combustible material, and
94 so arranged that if it is severed the ventilator will open
95 automatically.

96 There shall be at least two two-inch high-service
97 standpipes on the stage of every theatre, with ample
98 provision of hose nozzles at each level of the stage on
99 each side, and the water shall be kept turned on during
100 the occupation of the building by an audience. The
101 said pipes shall in no case be sealed and shall have a
102 gate and check valve and shall have a test valve placed
103 between the gauge valve and check valve. The pro-
104 scenium opening of every theatre shall be provided
105 with a two and one half inch perforated iron pipe or
106 equivalent of automatic or open sprinklers, as the com-
107 missioner may direct, so constructed as to form when
108 in operation a complete water curtain for the whole
109 proscenium opening, and there shall be for the rest of
110 the stage a complete system of fire apparatus and
111 perforated iron pipes, automatic or open sprinklers.
112 Such pipes or sprinklers shall be supplied with water
113 by high pressure service, and shall be ready for use
114 at all times.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its pas-
2 sage.

