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Rt Hon. The Lord Gardiner of Kimble
Senior Deputy Speaker
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Dear Lord Gardiner,

Royal Albert Hall Bill

Standing Order 142 of the House of Lords requires me to report on this Bill because it affects the property of a charity.

Clause 5 of the Bill concerns the sale of new Grand Tier box seats and the rights of some existing Grand Tier box seat holders. I understand that Clause 5 has been criticised and that an amendment is to be proposed at Committee Stage that would remove it. If that amendment is made then I do not object to the Bill, which seeks to ensure the continued viability of one of our most important cultural institutions.

I must, however, express my disappointment that the Bill is not more ambitious. It is widely acknowledged that the constitution of the Corporation of the Hall of Arts and Sciences gives rise to a potential conflict between the private interests of seat-holding trustees and the Corporation's charitable objects. This potential conflict is of significant concern to the Charity Commission and many well-informed observers. Indeed, I wrote last year to the President of the Corporation to express my disappointment that more had not been done to resolve the conflicts issue in the many years of its existence. I therefore regard the Bill as a missed opportunity to effect meaningful change to the arrangements by which the Royal Albert Hall is governed.

I will write in similar terms to the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order 158 of the House of Commons.

Yours,

RT HON VICTORIA PRENTIS KC MP
ATTORNEY GENERAL