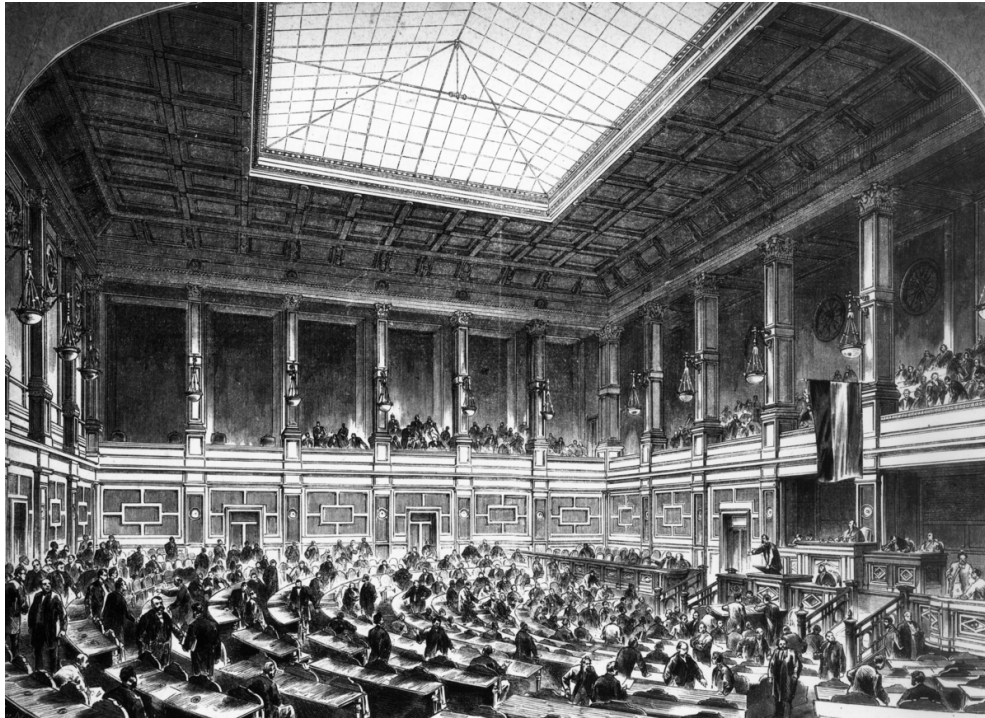


Interior of the Reichstag (1872)

Abstract

In March 1871, the first session of the new German Reichstag convened in the building occupied by the Prussian House of Deputies at Leipziger Straße 75. The bad acoustics, lack of air, and cramped quarters raised immediate complaints from the 382 deputies, who decided within days that a new building was required. As a provisional solution, the former Royal Porcelain Manufactory next door (Leipziger Straße 4) was renovated at great speed (despite a construction workers' strike), so that the second session of the Reichstag, which began on October 13, 1871, could be held in the new quarters. While it was originally thought that a still newer, purpose-built Reichstag could be constructed from the ground up within five years, the "provisional" home at Leipziger Straße 4 was used until Paul Wallot's (1841–1912) Reichstag building was opened in 1894. (Wallot's building, which occupies the land immediately northwest of the Brandenburg Gate, was famously reconstructed by architect Norman Forster from 1992 to 1999.) In contrast to Wallot's grand, overscaled structure, which bears the famous inscription "To the German People" ["Dem Deutschen Volke"], the provisional Reichstag building was squeezed in between the more imposing Prussian House of Lords immediately to the west of it and the War Ministry to the east. It surely must have pleased Bismarck that the national parliament was overshadowed, both literally and figuratively, by two buildings symbolizing Prussian prestige and power. This woodcut showing the Reichstag's main chamber and public galleries dates from 1872.

Source



Source: Session of the Reichstag in the former building of the Royal Porcelain Manufactory at Leipziger Strasse 4. Wood engraving (1872). The building served as a provisional building until 1894.

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