

1956

REPORT
FROM THE SPECIAL
ORDERS COMMITTEE
OF THE HOUSE
OF LORDS ON
PRIVATE BILL
PROCEDURE

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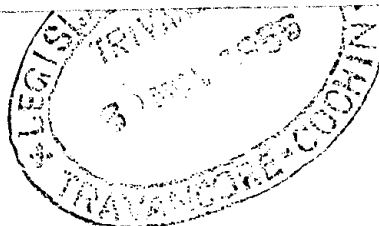
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FIRST REPORT
FROM THE
SPECIAL ORDERS
COMMITTEE

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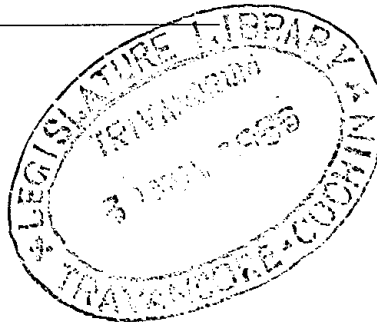
MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD
SUBJECT: [Illegible]
[Illegible text follows, including what appears to be a list or series of points.]

FIRST REPORT
FROM THE
SPECIAL ORDERS
COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF LORDS

(SESSION 1955-56)

2396
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Ordered to be printed 28th June 1955



LONDON
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First Report from the Special Orders Committee of the House of Lords

Tuesday, the 28th of June, 1955

Draft Fertilisers (England, Wales and Scotland) Scheme, 1955.

Draft Fertilisers (Northern Ireland) Scheme, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Schemes as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Schemes do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Schemes are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Schemes can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Schemes.

Draft Cereals (Deficiency Payments) Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Order as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Order do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Order is founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Order can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Order.

Draft International Organizations (Immunities and Privileges of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization) Order, 1955.

Draft International Organizations (Immunities and Privileges of the World Health Organization) (Amendment No. 2) Order, 1955.

Draft International Organizations (Immunities and Privileges of the Commission for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara) Order, 1955.

Draft International Organizations (Immunities and Privileges of Western European Union) Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Orders as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Orders do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Orders are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Orders can be passed without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to present an Address to Her Majesty praying that the Orders be made.

Draft Local Government Superannuation (Benefits) Amendment Regulations, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Regulations as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Regulations do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Regulations are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Regulations can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Regulations.

SECOND REPORT
FROM THE
SPECIAL ORDERS
COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF LORDS

(SESSION 1955-56)

Ordered to be printed 13th July 1955

LONDON
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Second Report from the Special Orders Committee of the House of Lords

Wednesday the 13th of July

White Fish Industry (Grants for Fishing Vessels and Engines) Scheme, 1955.

Herring Industry (Grants for Fishing Vessels and Engines) Scheme, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Schemes as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Schemes do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Schemes are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Schemes can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Schemes.

Draft Local Government Superannuation (Benefits) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Regulations as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Regulations do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Regulations are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Regulations can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Regulations.

National Health Service (Superannuation) Regulations, 1955.

National Health Service (Superannuation) (Scotland) Regulations, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Regulations as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Regulations do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Regulations are founded on precedent:

That owing to the length and complexity of the Regulations the Committee consider that they cannot be passed by the House without special attention, but that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Regulations.

Agriculture Act (Part I) Extension of Period Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Order as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Order do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Order is founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Order can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Order.

THIRD REPORT
FROM THE
SPECIAL ORDERS
COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF LORDS

(SESSION 1955)

Ordered to be printed 20th July 1955

LONDON
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Third Report from the Special Orders Committee of the House of Lords

National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) (Colliery Workers Supplementary Scheme) Amendment (No. 2) Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Order as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Order do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Order is founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Order can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Order.

Potatoes (Guaranteed Prices) Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Order as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Order do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Order is founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Order can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Order.

White Fish Subsidy (United Kingdom) Scheme, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Scheme as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Scheme do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Scheme is founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Scheme can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Scheme.

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FOURTH REPORT
FROM THE
SPECIAL ORDERS
COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF LORDS

(SESSION 1955)

Ordered to be printed 2nd November 1955

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Fourth Report from the Special Orders Committee of the House of Lords

Motor Vehicles (Variation of Speed Limit) Regulations, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Regulations as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Regulations do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Regulations are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Regulations can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Regulations.

Patents (Extension of Period of Emergency) Order, 1955.

Registered Designs (Extension of Period of Emergency) Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Orders as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Orders raise important questions of policy and principle:

That the Orders are founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Orders cannot be passed by the House without special attention, but that no further special inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to present an Address to Her Majesty praying that the Orders be made.

- Whilst in no way suggesting that these Orders are not proper to be approved,
- the Committee wish to point out that their effect is to continue for a year powers granted originally by the Patents and Designs Act, 1942, for the war period.
- These powers were continued by two Acts of Parliament until December, 1950, and have since been continued five times by Order in Council for twelve months each time.

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FIFTH REPORT
FROM THE
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COMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE OF LORDS

(SESSION 1955)

Ordered to be printed 23rd November 1955

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HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
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Fifth Report from the Special Orders Committee of the House of Lords

International Finance Corporation Order, 1955.

1. The Committee have examined the Order as required by the Standing Orders of the House.

2. They call attention to Article 3 of the Draft Order which enacts that the provisions of the Agreement for the establishment and operation of the International Finance Corporation, set out in the Schedule to the Order, shall have the force of law.

3. They consider that the following provisions of the Agreement set out in the Schedule are obscure:—

Article VI, sections 3,

6,

9 (b), 9 (c) (ii), 9 (d) (ii).

4. The Schedule sets out Article VI, section 4, of the Agreement, which purports to limit the legislative powers of Parliament.

5. The Order follows the precedent of the Bretton Woods Agreement Order in Council, 1946 (S.R. & O. 1946 No. 36, Vol. I, page 43) which, since it did not require an affirmative resolution, was not referred to the Special Orders Committee.

6. The Committee report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Order raise important questions of policy and principle:

That the Order is founded on precedent:

- That in the opinion of the Committee the Order cannot be passed by the House without special attention, but that no further inquiry is
- necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Order.

Lace Industry (Scientific Research Levy) Order, 1955.

The Committee have examined the Order as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Order do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Order is founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Order can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Order.

Buxton Memorial Drinking Fountain Proposal.

The Committee have examined the Paper as required by the Standing Orders of the House and report:—

That in their opinion the provisions of the Paper do not raise important questions of policy or principle:

That the Paper is not founded on precedent:

That in the opinion of the Committee the Paper can be passed by the House without special attention, and that no further inquiry is necessary before the House proceeds to a decision on the Resolution to approve the said Paper.

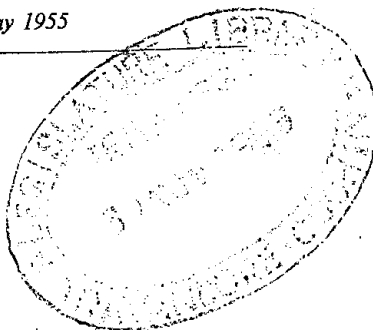
JOINT COMMITTEE
ON
PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE

REPORT

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REPORT

BY THE

Joint Committee of the House of Lords and the House of Commons appointed to consider what alterations, if any, are desirable in the practice and the Standing Orders of the two Houses relating to private legislation, having special regard to the desirability of lessening the expense at present incurred

Ordered to report:—

INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee have sat on 18 days. They have received memoranda and taken evidence from the Lord Chairman of Committees, the Chairman of Ways and Means, Lord Champion, Counsel to Mr. Speaker and other officers of the two Houses, representatives of the Parliamentary Bar, the Parliamentary Agents, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, the Official Shorthand-writer, the several Associations covering a majority of the local authorities in England and Wales, the Federation of Master Printers and other bodies. Memoranda were also received from other organisations, including the London County Council and the Rural District Councils Association. The Committee have also examined witnesses on the working of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1936, and the Statutory Orders (Special Procedure) Act, 1945.

2. A Select Committee with somewhat similar Orders of Reference to those of the present Committee was set up by the House of Commons in February 1930 under the Chairmanship of the late Sir Herbert Dunnico. The House of Commons also appointed a Select Committee in December 1936 to enquire and report whether any alteration was desirable in the procedure on Private Bills containing "Local Legislation" clauses, and in the respective functions of the Chairman of Ways and Means and the Committee of Selection.

THE DUNNICO COMMITTEE

3. A number of changes resulted from the recommendations of the Dunnico Committee. Amendments were made to Standing Orders reducing the notices which have to be published when a private Bill is promoted and altering the dates for the deposit of documents during the preliminary stages. The Local Legislation Committee was also abolished, and the Borough Funds Act, 1872, repealed and replaced by Part XIII of the Local Government Act, 1933. The Dunnico Committee further recommended that all private Bills should be set up by promoters in the same style and type as public Bills, and that this type should be bought by the Stationery Office and used by the Controller for printing the official copies. This recommendation was not implemented.

4. The changes made as a result of the inquiry of 1930 undoubtedly simplified procedure and have helped materially to keep costs lower than they would otherwise now be. Some witnesses appearing before the present Committee, however, expressed doubts as to the wisdom of abolishing the Local Legislation Committee, on the ground that the existence of a body dealing constantly with local legislation clauses, as that Committee did, helped to secure general uniformity in the powers granted to local authorities. Lord Campion made the suggestion that a "Local Authorities Committee", with more restricted Orders of Reference than those of the old Local Legislation Committee, should be established. The Committee return to this proposal later.

PRESENT PROCEDURE

5. Normally all private Bills have to be deposited in the Private Bill Office of the House of Commons by 27th November, each Bill being accompanied by a petition addressed to that House for leave to bring it in. Local authorities promoting Bills have, besides obeying Standing Orders, to comply with Part XIII of the Local Government Act, 1933, or the corresponding provisions of the London Government Act, 1939. Copies of Bills are also deposited in the Lords Private Bill Office on 27th November. It should be added that it is possible under Standing Orders for a Bill to be introduced later in the Session provided that its subject matter is of sufficient importance and urgency to warrant this course. The Committee understand that an average of two Bills in each Session have been accepted in this way since the war.

6. The Standing Orders of both Houses prescribe a number of conditions which must be fulfilled by the promoters before certain dates in November and December. They relate mostly to the service of notice upon persons who will be affected by the provisions of the Bill; to advertisements of the Bill in the newspapers; and to the deposit of the Bill together with plans and other documents in Government Departments and elsewhere. On 18th December an inquiry is held by the two Examiners (who are Officers of the two Houses) to ascertain whether these requirements have been satisfied and, if they find that they have not, the Bill is referred to the Standing Orders Committees of the two Houses. Unless those Committees decide that compliance can be dispensed with, the Bill cannot proceed.

Present Time-Table

7. Whilst the present practice of insisting that all Bills shall thus be deposited by a fixed date in November apparently meets with little or no criticism from either promoters or petitioners, the Committee were impressed by the fact that the deposit of some forty Bills each November inevitably involves considerable strain during the first six months of the year on Committees, printers, Parliamentary Agents, the Officers of the two Houses and on the Official Shorthand Writers who have to produce a verbatim record of each day's proceeding in Committee on opposed Bills the same night. An additional difficulty resulting from the present congestion is that, although private Bills receive the Royal Assent by the end of July at the latest, the Queen's Printer's copies of about a quarter of the last batch of Bills are

frequently not available for sale until the following November or December. In addition it appears to the Committee that, if the recommendation they make later in this Report, that in order to avoid two printings of every Bill only a limited number of printers designated by the Stationery Office should be employed by promoters, is accepted, the strain upon the printers may be increased.

8. The Committee have therefore considered whether any amendments to Standing Orders are desirable in order to make it possible for a private Bill to be promoted at any time in a Session, and whether additional provision should also be made to allow for the carrying-over of such Bills where necessary from Session to Session. The witnesses from the local authorities associations were of the opinion that local government officials preferred to work to a definite time-table rather than to be free to deposit a Bill at any time. The Committee understand this view, but believe that if this is the sole objection it is not in itself enough when weighed against the obvious desirability of providing for a more even spread of private legislation over the Session. It is open to both Houses now to pass resolutions permitting private Bills to be carried over, but this is normally only done when a Dissolution ends the Session early. The Committee recommend that power should be given by Standing Order to the Chairman of Committees or the Chairman of Ways and Means, as the case may be, to authorise, at his discretion, the carrying over of private Bills from one Session to the next of the same Parliament, when all stages up to the one which the Bills had reached would be taken formally. The Committee's recommendation does not extend to the carrying over of Bills into a new Parliament; they think the present practice of moving a resolution for this purpose should be continued.

Second Reading

9. Private Bills are formally read the first time in the House of Lords during the first ten days after the Christmas recess, and in the House of Commons not later than the second sitting day in February.

10. Private Bills are read a second time in the House of Lords in batches of four or five within a few sitting days of their First Reading. The Second Reading is very rarely opposed, but occasionally instructions to the committee which is to sit on the Bill are debated on Second Reading. These instructions either direct the committee to have regard to particular points of public policy (e.g. food production), or to satisfy themselves that certain conditions have been met before sanctioning a clause or part of the Bill.

11. In the House of Commons, after an interval of four clear days from the First Reading, a Bill may be set down for Second Reading at the time of private business, which may occupy part or all of the first quarter of an hour of a sitting of the House, but at which no opposed business may be taken. These Bills are thus not then debatable and, should any Member object when the title of a Bill is read out, its Second Reading is postponed. If on later days such objection continues, the Chairman of Ways and Means is empowered under Standing Order No. 7 (4) (Public) to order a debate to be held on the Bill at 7 o'clock in the evening.

an expectation not always realised in the event. Though certain types of Bill are more likely to fail on Second Reading than others, this is a risk which under present procedure all Bills have to run. The Committee therefore recommend that in the first House Committees on Bills seeking county borough status or the extension of boundaries should not sit until twenty-one days after Second Reading. They further recommend that this provision should, unless waived by agreement of the parties, apply to all Bills (see also paragraph 31 (Ministers' reports)).

22. The Urban District Councils Association, on the other hand, whilst having no objections to some arrangements being made to lengthen the period between Second Reading and the committee stage in the first House, was more anxious to see the time-limit for the lodging of petitions in the second House extended. They informed the Committee that experience had shown that the period at present allowed was insufficient. The Association suggested that the period should be extended to one month.

23. The difficulty is however that if the petitioning time were thus lengthened in all cases there would probably be serious congestion in the second House and, as some Bills even now do not reach that House until the end of June, their passing might be jeopardised. If however the Committee's recommendation that private Bills should be allowed to be introduced at any time in a Session and to be carried over from Session to Session is accepted, this objection loses much of its force. The Committee recommend that petitioning time in the second House be extended from ten to twenty-one days.

Ministers' reports

24. Promoters are bound by Standing Orders to lodge copies of private Bills with Government Departments, who may then consider the Bills in relation to the general law and the policy of the Government. Any comments or recommendations which Departments may wish to make are then embodied in reports which are considered by the select committees on the Bills. Departmental representatives are present at the sittings of committees and are heard in explanation of their reports. Standing Orders of the House of Commons ensure that committees make reports on Bills, stating with reasons what action they have taken on Ministerial reports. The representative of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government told the Committee that his Ministry have close contact with the Agents for the promoters and send them copies of their reports at the same time as they send them to Parliament. In their consultations with the Agents they review previous decisions of committees in order to persuade promoters to make such alterations as the Department would like to see made.

25. Petitioners and their Agents do not appear to be so well served. Several witnesses representing petitioners were strongly in favour of the earlier issue of Ministerial reports and of their being made generally available. At present they find it extremely difficult to find out before the sitting of the committee in what way Departments are likely to report, or even whether Departments are reporting on certain clauses of Bills. They informed the Committee that if they could get advance information about the attitude of Departments, agreements might be reached with promoters at a sufficiently early stage to enable petitioners

to withdraw before appearing before the committee or even to refrain from depositing petitions at all.

26. It was also suggested that the publication of Ministerial reports would make it possible for collections of precedents to be made, to which petitioners could refer when negotiating with promoters and when deciding whether to petition or not. It was pointed out that one reason why the present system of two-committee procedure was helpful to petitioners was that they could reserve their opposition to the second House pending the clarification, before the first House's committee, of Departmental views on a Bill. If these views were known in advance the value to them of the right to appear in the second House might be to some extent diminished.

27. The Committee also heard evidence which pointed to the conclusion that certain organisations were at present incurring unnecessary expense in depositing petitions against a Bill or several Bills which affected their interests, because they did not know, at the end of the petitioning time, whether the Minister was going to report adversely on the points which affected them or not. It was alleged that to prepare and deposit such a petition cost about £50; and that many such petitions were proved unnecessary in those cases where they were followed by a report to the same effect from the appropriate Minister. The Committee wish to make it clear for the benefit of potential petitioners that, although it is the custom to endorse petitions "by Counsel, etc.", there is nothing in the practice or Standing Orders of the two Houses which compels a petitioner to disclose, before the first sitting of the Select Committee on the Bill against which he is petitioning, whether he intends to appear by himself, by his Counsel or by his Agent. It ought therefore to be possible for those who may wish to present petitions against a Bill or Bills which affect their interests, to draw up, perhaps largely in common form, simple petitions which could be lodged on payment of the House fees merely to "hold the position" for the organisation concerned until the Minister's report was available. Such "holding petitions" would put the petitioner in a stronger position against the promoter, and would enable him to negotiate with a greater chance of settlement before the committee sat on the Bill.

28. The Committee are of the opinion that it would also assist petitioners to settle with promoters if Ministerial reports on a Bill were available at least a fortnight before the opening of the committee on the Bill in the first House. This interval would enable negotiations to take place, and the petitioners to decide whether to brief Counsel, to appear by themselves or their Agents, or to withdraw their petition. The adoption of this proposal could, in the opinion of the Committee, result in some cases in a saving of time to committees and of costs to the parties concerned.

29. It would also be an advantage, both to promoters and to potential petitioners, if the views of various Ministers upon certain types of clause which appear in private Bills were to be more generally available. It would, of course, be possible for such Departmental reports to be published by the Stationery Office; but the Committee do not feel that the issues involved would justify this expense. There is no reason, however, why such reports should not, in duplicated or similar form, be kept in the Ministries concerned for ten years after the passage

of the Bills to which they relate, and be made available to interested parties, possibly on payment of a small fee.

30. The Committee appreciate that at present the issue of Ministerial reports a fortnight before the first sitting of the committee on the Bill might in a few cases anticipate the Minister's statement of his attitude towards a Bill on Second Reading. The Committee have however recommended that the interval between Second Reading and the first sitting of the committee on a Bill in the first House should not as a rule be less than three weeks (see para. 21).

31. The Committee recommend that Ministers' reports on a private Bill should be made available to all interested parties not less than fourteen days before the committee of the first House sits on the Bill. When, by agreement of the parties, the committee sits less than fourteen days after Second Reading of a Bill, the Ministerial reports should be issued as soon as possible. The reports should be kept in the Ministry concerned, and made available on payment of a reasonable fee to interested parties, for ten years after the passage of a Bill.

Committee

32. In the House of Commons, Bills on committal are automatically referred to the Committee of Selection. Every unopposed Bill is sent by the Committee of Selection to a committee of five Members, consisting of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means and three Members selected by the Chairman of Ways and Means from a panel, usually of eleven Members, appointed by the Committee of Selection at the beginning of each Session. Promoters have the right to be represented before the committee on an unopposed Bill by their agents, and they normally exercise this right.

33. For the consideration of every opposed Bill the Committee of Selection nominate four Members, none of whom may have any local or other interest in the Bill. All petitions on the Bill are referred to the committee. Both the promoters and the petitioners may be, and normally are, represented by Counsel. The views of Ministers upon the subject-matter of a Bill are expressed in reports which are laid before the committee on the Bill, who may, if they wish, ask for the reports to be explained orally.

34. The procedure in the Lords is the same, save that—

- (a) the Committee of Selection in practice plays no part in the procedure ;
- (b) Select Committees on opposed Bills consist of five Lords ;
- (c) the Unopposed Committee consists of the Chairman of Committees alone assisted by his Counsel ;
- (d) Select Committees do not deal with the unopposed parts of opposed Bills, which are subsequently dealt with by the Chairman of Committees.

35. The Chairman of Ways and Means told the Committee that it was becoming increasingly difficult for the Committee of Selection to find Members who were willing to serve on the committees and that this was especially true of opposed Bill committees, since attendance is compulsory. It is, in fact, the one duty a Member still has to perform even if he has been suspended from the service of the House.

36. The Committee have come to the conclusion that there must be a number of Members who may be willing to serve on committees on opposed Bills but are never asked to do so. They consider that the arrangements for finding out who would be willing to be nominated for these committees could be improved. They are also of the view that the Committee of Selection should enlarge the panel for the consideration of unopposed Bills.

37. No shorthand writer is present at the sittings of committees on unopposed Bills. There is thus no record of the discussions between the Committee, Agents and Departmental officials, or of undertakings and assurances given by the Agents for the Bill. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government make their own private record of anything that concerns them, and, in the House of Commons, the committee make a report on the action they have taken on certain clauses of the Bill. The Committee have no desire to add to the expenses of parties, particularly on Bills that are unopposed. This notwithstanding, they recommend that an adequate record of the points made before the committee on the Bill and the decisions taken, with reasons, should be kept for the use both of the committee and of interested parties.

Unopposed Parts of Opposed Bills

38. In the House of Lords, as indicated above, the practice is for select committees on opposed Bills to remit for the consideration of the Chairman of Committees the unopposed clauses and parts of such Bills. The Agents for the promoters and the representatives of the interested Government Departments then appear before the Chairman of Committees, and those clauses and parts of the Bill are gone through as though in the Unopposed Committee. Amendments made by the Lord Chairman are deemed to have been made by the select committee.

39. In the House of Commons the select committee, having dealt with the opposed parts of the Bill, then turns to the unopposed parts. It was suggested in evidence to the Committee that there was a possibility that insufficient attention might be paid by the select committees to such parts of a Bill. The Chairman of Ways and Means, as well as the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, also suggested to the Committee that there was a risk of inconsistency in private legislation resulting from possible variations in the decisions of different select committees on the same point. One or two witnesses were also inclined to regret the disappearance of the Local Legislation Committee which in their view had contributed an element of stability and consistency to local legislation in the House of Commons. After reviewing this evidence, the Committee approve the suggestion made by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and recommend that the Chairman of Ways and Means and his advisers should be requested to work out a procedure similar to that in use in the House of Lords, so that the unopposed parts of opposed private Bills should be treated in committee as if they were unopposed Bills. They are of the opinion that this will lead to greater consistency and sometimes also to economy.

PRINTING

Printing of Evidence

40. It is clear to the Committee from the evidence and from the specimens handed in for their inspection that technical difficulties which earlier prevented duplicating from being a really satisfactory substitute

for printing have been almost entirely overcome. They learned from the Official Shorthand Writer that he would be able and willing to duplicate all the evidence taken before Select Committees on opposed Bills. The cost of producing overnight the printed evidence taken on one day is now somewhere in the neighbourhood of £120; and the Official Shorthand Writer has estimated that he would be able to produce duplicated evidence for about a third of that sum. This might save more than a thousand pounds on a Bill which was strongly opposed in each House. The Committee therefore recommend that the Official Shorthand Writer should be instructed by each House to draw up a scheme under which he would undertake to produce the required number of duplicated copies of evidence. He should also be asked to draw up a scale of charges to be agreed upon by the two Houses. In the opinion of the Committee, it would be best that the present practice should continue whereby the agent for the promoter of a Bill buys the evidence on its production, distributes it to the Committee, and sells it to other interested parties.

Printing of Bills

41. The Dunnico Committee recommended that private Bills should be printed in the same style and type as public Bills and Acts, and that the Stationery Office should buy from the private printers the type used in the printing of private Bills. This type should then have been used by the Stationery Office to print the King's Printer's copies of the private Acts. The recommendation was not carried out. The present Committee did not go too deeply into the reasons for this, but decided that it would be best to see whether some other solution could be found to the problem presented by the fact that the type used for printing a private Bill (and also for the first issue of the private Acts, known as the "Royal Assent copies") has under the present system to be scrapped and new type set by the Stationery Office for the production of the Queen's Printer's copies of the private Acts. It seems obvious that if it were possible to avoid this double setting of type, there would be a saving both of time and money, and that some at least of the financial saving could be passed on to the promoters.

42. After reviewing the evidence given by the British Federation of Master Printers and the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and taking into consideration the views of certain other witnesses, the Committee have come to the conclusion that the two Houses should issue instructions that private Bills should be printed in the same style and type as public Bills; that they should only be printed by printers approved by the Stationery Office; that the printing of "Royal Assent copies" of private Acts should be discontinued; and that, on the granting of the Royal Assent to a private Bill, the Stationery Office should pay to the printer thereof a proper proportion of his initial composing charges and should then authorise him to print the Queen's Printer's copies of the Act.

43. The Committee feel that this recommendation would result in a saving both of public money and of expense to promoters. It would also enable the Queen's Printer's copies of private Acts, which at present take several months to produce, to be issued sooner. A detailed scheme for the implementation of this recommendation should be worked out by the Stationery Office and the authorities of the two Houses.

44. The Committee have also considered the question whether all private Bills should necessarily be printed, as at present required by Standing Orders. In view of the facts that some private Bills go through unopposed in each Session, that only a small number of copies of such Bills are required, and that relatively few amendments are made to such Bills during their passage, the committee do not think that there is any justification for imposing upon the promoters of such Bills the expense of having them printed. The Committee therefore recommend that amendments should be made to Standing Orders so as to provide that the promoter of any private Bill shall have the option of having his Bill duplicated instead of printed.

45. During their progress through the two Houses, private Bills may at present have to be reprinted three or four times. In the view of the Committee this is unnecessarily expensive. They therefore recommend that promoters should be given the option, instead of reprinting their Bills, of inserting duplicated amendments or pages.

46. After considering the evidence of the Controller of the Stationery Office on the labour and cost of producing the vellum copies of private Acts, the Committee have come to the conclusion that the production of such copies is no longer necessary. The Committee accordingly consulted the Master of the Rolls and the Clerk of the Parliaments, and after taking account of their views, recommend that the practice of printing vellum copies of private Acts should be discontinued, and that there should be substituted for them copies printed on paper of suitable strength and durability.

COSTS

47. Promoters' and, to a less extent, petitioners' costs include House fees, printing of Bills and minutes of evidence, agents' fees, Counsel's fees, expert witnesses' fees and advertising. The Committee do not consider that they are in a position to comment on the fees paid to Counsel and expert witnesses. They heard evidence on these matters particularly from the Leader of the Parliamentary Bar, and examined tables of costs of promoting and opposing private Bills submitted by the Agents. They noted the substantial proportion of such costs which is represented by Counsel's and expert witnesses' fees, but heard no complaint from any witness that the charges were excessive. Nor do the Committee think they can properly comment on Agents' charges beyond those which come within the control of the Taxing Officers of the two Houses. The printing of Bills and evidence has already been dealt with earlier in this Report (see paras. 40-46).

House Fees

48. House fees are charged in each House on similar principles but on different scales. Thus in the House of Commons a fee is paid for the taking of each formal stage, e.g. Second Reading, Report and Third Reading. This fee is charged on a scale graduated not with reference to the time and effort entailed in dealing with the Bill but according to the sums to be raised or expended under the Bill. Additional fees are charged on opposed Bills according to the number of days spent in Committee. Normally, the minimum total fee for a Bill passing unopposed through the House of Commons is £82 and in the House of Lords £100 2s. These totals may be somewhat increased by postponement of the proceedings and, if the Bill is opposed, may be very

much increased. The amount of the fees received annually by each House in the last five years has been about £6,000.

49. While House fees are not a large part of the total cost of a big opposed Bill, they are a very large part of the cost of promoting a small unopposed Bill. The Committee understand that the scales of fees have not been revised for some years. They consider that the fees often bear unduly heavily upon the promoters of small unopposed Bills; and also upon petitioners who, after all, may only be defending their rights under the existing law. Moreover, they do not think that the system of increasing the fees according to the money to be raised by the Bill is justifiable, since those Bills on which fees are highest often go through Parliament more quickly and with less opposition than those upon which fees are low. The Committee recommend that the fees charged by the two Houses should be the same, and that fees should be very considerably reduced especially for petitioners and for the promoters of small, unopposed Bills.

Taxation of Costs

50. Under Acts now over a hundred years old, each House has a list prescribing the maximum charges allowable to Parliamentary Agents for services rendered to promoters and petitioners. The Taxing Officer of either House is empowered on application by the parties to tax Agents' bills of costs according to these lists. A charge is made for taxation which is graduated according to the amount of the bill of costs. The Committee have considered these lists and taken evidence upon them. It is clear that for many of the items in the lists present charges are too high, whilst in some other cases they are much too low. The Committee therefore recommend that the two Houses should arrange for a joint review of these lists and Agents' charges generally, so far as the latter properly come within the jurisdiction of Parliament, in order to bring the scale more into line with modern usage.

Advertisements

51. Notices of varying length, some in great detail, have to be published by promoters in local and national newspapers and in the London Gazette, giving information about the purposes of Bills, meetings of local authorities and meetings of electors. Some of these notices are prescribed by Parliamentary Standing Orders and some by the Local Government Act, 1933, or the corresponding provisions of the London Government Act, 1939. It was submitted by the Parliamentary Agents that the advertisements required in the case of a Bill promoted by a local authority are too numerous, in that some of them are similar and often appear separately in the same issue of a newspaper. The Agents at first suggested that it should be possible to eliminate some of these notices, which have to be published twice in successive weeks, and to curtail others, for example, those containing full details of the Bill. Later, when giving evidence, the Parliamentary Agents modified their views, since, although there might be overlapping in the case of local authorities, it would not be safe to relieve promoters of the notices published under Standing Orders, as these notices are the only ones published by promoters other

than local authorities. The views expressed by the Agents were supported generally by the representatives of the County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Corporations.

52. The Committee recommend that Part XIII of the Local Government Act, 1933, should be amended so as to reduce considerably in length and scope the advertisements to be inserted in newspapers by local authorities promoting private Bills. The Committee further recommend that the Officers of the two Houses, in drawing up the new code of Standing Orders recommended in paragraph 68 of this Report, should have special regard to the desirability of reducing the number and complexity of the advertisements prescribed by Standing Orders, especially for local authorities and statutory undertakers.

JOINT COMMITTEES OF BOTH HOUSES

53. The Committee spent much time receiving evidence on the desirability of joint committees for private Bills. The main argument for joint committees is that a hearing before one committee ought to be cheaper and shorter than separate hearings before two. This consideration was repeatedly put to witnesses, who agreed that logically this should be so, though many of them went on to express the belief that in practice it would not be so. There is nothing now to prevent the appointment of a joint committee provided both Houses agree. Such committees, however, are only appointed either when the Government has suggested that it would be in the public interest or when several bills on the same subject, or competing bills, are simultaneously before Parliament, or when there has been general agreement among promoters and opponents that there should be a joint committee. The Committee regret that it has not of recent years more frequently been found possible to secure the agreement of the parties for a joint committee, and suggest that in their own interests parties should in future consider more seriously the possibility of reaching such agreement, especially where a multiplicity of interests is involved. Little of the evidence given before the Committee was in favour of joint committees; but in the nature of the case, since there have not been more than twelve such committees in the last fifty years, it has been impossible for the Committee to test the validity of the opinion of those who contend that joint committees would result in economy of time and money. Too much importance should, therefore, not be attached to the lack of evidence based on actual experience of joint committees. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the most natural form for the detailed examination of private legislation in a bi-cameral legislature is by means of committees of each House.

54. One witness told the Committee that in his view a part of the value of two committees was that it was not until the promoters' case had been fully opened in the first House that the petitioners could fully apprehend it, and that they could then if necessary recast their opposition accordingly in the second House. The Committee, therefore, tried to think of another method by which the promoters' case could be fully opened on the introduction of the Bill, so that potential petitioners would know from the first the nature of the proposals. It would for example be possible for the promoters to deposit and publish with their Bill an explanatory memorandum giving the reasons for their proposals; but this memorandum would have to be on at

least as full and elaborate a scale as petitions against a Bill now are, and would therefore be very expensive to produce. Again, the preamble of the Bill might be extended to fulfil the same purpose; but this would be even more expensive, since the preamble has to be several times reprinted. Further, both these suggestions are open to the objection that they would have to be prescribed for every private Bill, whereas in modern times only a minority of private Bills are in the event opposed, so that the greater part of the time and labour spent on the production of these lengthy and complex accompanying documents would in effect be wasted.

55. The principal reason advanced in support of the present system is that it gives more scope for settlement by negotiation between one hearing and the next, on the ground that it is not until the promoters' case has been opened at the first hearing that the issues become clear. The leader of the Parliamentary Bar quoted a case where the whole emphasis of the opposition was changed as a result of the light thrown on the case at the first hearing. It is thus possible for petitioners who are in doubt about the necessity of opposing the Bill to hold their hand and thus save money, knowing that they will have ample opportunity after the Committee of the first House for negotiation and, if this proves abortive, for pressing their opposition in the second House. It is also possible that under the present system certain clauses which may be objectionable may be altered or dropped during the hearing of a Bill, even when unopposed in the first House, as a result of the intervention of a Government Department.

56. It was also pointed out that of late years there has been some change of tactics by parties resulting in fewer Bills now being opposed in both Houses. The Lord Chairman of Committees, the Chairman of Ways and Means and the Parliamentary Agents agreed that there would almost certainly be some saving in having a joint committee on a Bill which was certain to be strenuously opposed in both Houses.

57. The Chairman of Ways and Means also said he thought that most promoters would prefer to get their case settled at one hearing, whereas petitioners wanted not unnaturally as many chances as possible to renew their attack. This view was confirmed orally by the representatives of the Association of Municipal Corporations, whose official memorandum expressed general opposition to a system of joint committees. They informed the Committee frankly that, as their members were more often opposing than promoting Bills, their majority view was against single hearings. However, as many of them individually were promoters of big and heavily opposed bills they would on such occasions be in favour of getting their case decided in a single committee. This they said was especially true of extension bills promoted by county boroughs.

58. Other witnesses, representing petitioners' points of view, including the County Councils Association, the Urban District Councils Association and private organisations, were strongly in favour of the continuation of the present system, which they felt sure gave them the best opportunity for effective negotiation.

59. Neither the Chairman of Committees nor the Chairman of Ways and Means was in favour of having a joint committee on unopposed Bills. They pointed out that it would be unjustifiable to assume that

a Bill was to be unopposed in the second House simply because it was unopposed in the first. It was also pointed out that there would be little saving in money as no Counsel were briefed for the hearings, and the Bills were usually disposed of in one short sitting.

60. Two suggestions for new procedure were put before the Committee. The first was that all petitions for Bills should be referred to joint committees, unless the Chairmen, or either of them, reported that there was a question of principle involved. On being reported from the joint committee the Bill would be deemed to have passed through all stages up to, but not including, Third Reading. Where the Chairman did report a question of principle, the present procedure should be followed, except that the Bill should be referred to a joint committee.

61. The second was a method of giving special treatment to Bills "involving important considerations of public policy", which should be referred to a sessional joint or select committee having, unlike the present private Bill committees, power to send for persons, papers and records. The Committee were interested in both these proposals but considered that the weight of the evidence was against them and that, apart from their far-reaching character, an additional element of time and expense would be introduced, especially by the second suggestion.

62. The Committee noted the weight of opinion against joint committees. They do, however, feel that the case presented in favour of the present system was not as strong as might at first sight appear. For it emerged quite clearly from the evidence that, although the great majority of witnesses favour a second hearing, they do so mainly as petitioners. In spite of the reluctance of witnesses to commit themselves on the point, the Committee think that it may be legitimate to infer from the evidence that a system of joint committees would in fact save time and money for the promoters.

63. It also appears to the Committee that some of the arguments used in favour of two hearings cancel each other out. For example, experienced witnesses agreed that the most appropriate use of joint committees would be for complicated and hotly contested measures—the very type of Bill, in the view of other witnesses, where a second hearing would be most helpful.

64. The Committee feel that, in spite of the presumption in favour of two committees which arises from the fact that Parliament is bicameral, the case against joint committees would be greatly weakened, and the legitimate fears of petitioners largely if not entirely allayed, if petitioners could be made aware at an early stage of the full case they have to meet. It seems, therefore, to the Committee that, apart from the understandable desire of all petitioners for a second opportunity, the argument in favour of a second hearing depends largely on the fact that, until the case for the promoters is deployed and the attitude of the Government Departments concerned is known, petitioners are placed at an unfair disadvantage.

65. On balance, the Committee have come to the conclusion that they cannot recommend any alteration in the present system.

STANDING ORDERS

66. Each House has more than two hundred private Bill Standing Orders and, though their purport is in general the same, their wording is not always identical. The Committee were informed by the Chairman of Ways and Means that the Standing Orders come under frequent scrutiny by the officers of the two Houses and that since 1945 no less than forty-seven had been removed and a further fifty-six added.

67. The Lord Chairman of Committees was of the opinion that a number of Standing Orders were either redundant or archaic, whilst others, for example, the "Wharnccliffe" Orders, and Standing Order 27 (4) (which provides for the sealing up and retention of certain duplicate plans until called for by either House), were obscure. He also took the view that some Standing Orders, for example, Nos. 39 and 60, and No. 180 of the House of Commons (No. 147 of the House of Lords)—which provide for the deposit of a printed copy of every Bill with a large number of Government and other offices—seemed not only unnecessarily exacting but expensive, as fifteen shillings is charged by Parliamentary Agents for every such deposit.

68. The Lord Chairman suggested that the Officers of the two Houses might be instructed to draw up a new and, so far as possible, identically worded code of private Bill Standing Orders for each House. The Committee concur with this suggestion and so recommend.

CLAUSES

69. With the object of ensuring that local authorities seeking similar powers should, where possible, receive these powers in the same form, the two Chairmen, with the aid of an unofficial committee, have in the past few years published successive editions of the book known as "Model Clauses".

70. Some witnesses complained that the use of the word "model" as applied to these clauses was misleading in that it encouraged the belief that they were both acceptable without question and should be invariably adopted as they stood. They thought that these clauses should not be regarded as suitable in every case and without further examination. Although all Parliamentary Agents and most local authorities are aware of the fact that the clauses are no more than guides for drafting, the Committee have not been able to find that this is made clear anywhere in the volume. The Committee recommend that explicit reference to this point should be made in future editions.

71. Some of the representatives of local authorities, and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, were in favour of periodic public Acts containing clauses conferring powers applicable either to local authorities generally or to particular classes of local authority. Such Acts would undoubtedly go far towards reducing the trouble and expense of promoting private Bills. In view, however, of the persistent pressure on parliamentary time, it seems unlikely that any Government would feel able to commit itself to the introduction of such Bills regularly at very short intervals. But there seems no reason why the Government should not sponsor such a Bill at least once every ten years, and the Committee recommend accordingly.

72. A practice has grown up in recent years by which county councils promote private Bills containing adoptive clauses or parts making powers available generally to district councils in their areas. The practice has definite advantages although it seems likely that if certain powers are desirable in some counties they might well be made available to district councils over the whole country. The London County Council has a somewhat similar, though wider, power to promote, in effect, clauses on behalf of the Metropolitan Borough Councils. The Committee approve the adoptive method of private legislation as tending to reduce costs and simplify procedure.

73. The Urban District Councils Association suggested the institution of a permanent Commission to authorise the extension to certain local authorities, or to local authorities generally, of powers granted to other "pioneer" authorities. The Committee have considered this suggestion but do not see their way to recommend it. In the view of the Committee it would further complicate the procedure of local legislation and would also to some extent encroach upon the authority of Parliament.

SCOTTISH PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE

74. The Committee considered the possibility of extending the Scottish private legislation procedure to England and Wales. This procedure appears to have one outstanding advantage as applied to Scotland, namely that the parliamentary inquiry is conducted locally, normally in Edinburgh or Glasgow. Moreover, the administration of Scotland is in general more centralised under one Secretary of State than is the case in England and Wales. The advantages of local inquiries in England and Wales appear doubtful; and in practice it seems to the Committee that it would in most cases be cheaper and more convenient for the parties concerned if important inquiries upon local legislation were conducted in London. It emerged clearly from the evidence that the extension of the practice south of the border would hardly be likely to reduce costs. On the whole, therefore, the Committee do not feel that the Scottish procedure is suitable, certainly as it stands, for application to England and Wales.

THE STATUTORY ORDERS (SPECIAL PROCEDURE) ACT, 1945

75. One witness suggested that enabling legislation should be introduced to extend the procedure under the Act of 1945, somewhat on the lines of the Consolidation of Enactments (Procedure) Act, 1949, so as to enable uncontroversial model clauses (after reference to a Joint Committee and redrafting if necessary in consultation with the interests concerned) to be made applicable by "Special Procedure Order" to any local authority. It would thus be possible for powers, which have been explored and developed by pioneer local authorities to the point of becoming almost invariably unopposed, to be easily and cheaply extended to local authorities generally. The adoption of this method would also probably help to lessen the pressure on parliamentary time, and the Committee accordingly recommend that the Government should accept the proposal.

TOWN MEETINGS AND POLLS

76. The Committee heard a number of witnesses, and received memoranda, on the question of town meetings and polls. In view of the Committee's terms of reference ("to consider what alterations, if any, are desirable in the *practice and the Standing Orders of the two Houses* relating to private legislation") it is doubtful whether these are matters which fall strictly within the Committee's field of inquiry, as they are provided for by Part XIII of the Local Government Act, 1933, so that any alteration would require legislation. The provisions of Part XIII of the 1933 Act are, however, undoubtedly closely linked to the matters which the Committee were appointed to consider.

77. In general, as might be expected, those witnesses concerned with the promotion of private Bills were in favour of the abolition of town meetings and polls; while those who represented potential petitioners other than local authorities favoured their retention. The arguments adduced by local authority organisations and others for abolition were—

Town meetings

- (a) That normally no hall could be found large enough for even a reasonable proportion of the electors to attend the town meeting;
- (b) That in any case only a very small proportion of the electorate did so attend;
- (c) That it was difficult to confine the attendance to electors;
- (d) That businesslike conduct of the meetings was difficult, and in many cases it was impossible to ascertain correctly the views of those present on the clauses and parts of Bills, which had to be put somewhat arbitrarily to the meetings;
- (e) That it was possible for a powerful or wealthy organisation to create opposition to the proposals in the Bill, even though the feeling of the electors was in their favour.

Town polls

- (a) That the subject-matter of the poll was often incomprehensible to the ordinary elector;
- (b) That the promoter's opportunities for counter-propaganda were limited;
- (c) That the ballot papers, in the nature of the case, were both complicated and uninformative;
- (d) That in some cases electors had been subject to pressure to vote against all the proposals on the ballot paper in order to ensure the rejection of one.

78. Arguments adduced by those in favour of the retention of town meetings and polls were—

- (a) That the ordinary ratepayer and local elector, who could not petition "against his common seal", had no other opportunity of signifying his disapproval of a proposed clause or Bill promoted by his Council which he considered extravagant or unnecessary;
- (b) That the procedure was democratic;

- (c) That in practice it was not difficult to ensure that only electors entered the hall at a town's meeting ;
- (d) That proposals contained in local legislation were not a part of the normal exercise of its powers by a local authority ; they more nearly resembled an alteration of its constitution, since a local authority can only exercise those powers which have been conferred upon it by statute ;
- (e) That, when the issue is simple and one that interests the majority of electors, a substantial proportion have voted ;
- (f) That the town meeting and poll sometimes offer the only opportunity for opposition to those townspeople who are specially affected by the Bill, though they may not have any such interest in it as would give them a *locus* to petition either House.

79. The Committee have given very careful consideration to this matter, in which great interest was shown by practically all witnesses. The Committee have taken into account the frequency with which local government elections occur, the physical difficulties involved in holding a town meeting in these days of large electorates, and the further difficulties of putting the issues, often complicated, to the electors, coupled with the heavy cost ; and they conclude that town meetings and polls cannot any longer be justified. The Committee recognise that there have been occasions on which a simple clear-cut issue has been put to the electors and turned down by a substantial proportion of them. But the records show that such occasions are rare, and it does not seem reasonable that urban district, borough and county borough councils, alone of local authorities, should remain under the irksome disability of having to hold a referendum if any body of citizens or association can organise sufficient opposition to their proposals. The Committee would point out that in coming to this conclusion they are doing no more than to concur with the findings of previous inquiries. The abolition of this procedure was recommended by the Royal Commission on Local Government appointed in 1923, and that Commission's view was subsequently supported by the Local Government and Public Health Consolidation Committee presided over by Lord Chelmsford in 1932. The Committee, therefore, recommend that legislation should be introduced to abolish town meetings and polls.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

80. The recommendations of the Committee are shortly as follows :—

(1) Power should be given by Standing Order to the Chairman of Committees or the Chairman of Ways and Means, as the case may be, to authorise, at his discretion, the carrying over of private Bills from one Session to the next of the same Parliament, when all stages up to the one which the Bills had reached would be taken formally. The present practice of moving a resolution for the purpose of carrying over Bills into a new Parliament should be continued. (Paragraph 8) ;

(2) In the House of Commons, subject to certain exceptions, Mr. Speaker should in all cases declare the Second Reading carried unless a reasoned amendment to the motion for the Second Reading stands

on the Order Paper signed by at least six Members ; this rule should not apply if the Chairman of Ways and Means indicates at the time the Second Reading is first moved that the Bill raises a new and important principle (paragraph 18) ;

(3) In the first House, committees on Bills seeking county borough status or the extension of boundaries should not sit until twenty-one days after Second Reading. This provision should, unless waived by agreement of the parties, apply to all Bills. (Paragraph 21) ;

(4) Petitioning time in the second House should be extended from ten to twenty-one days (paragraph 23) ;

(5) Ministers' reports on a private Bill should as a rule be made available to all interested parties not less than fourteen days before the committee of the first House sits on the Bill. When, by agreement of the parties, the committee sits less than fourteen days after the Second Reading of a Bill, the reports should be issued as soon as possible. The reports should be kept in the Ministry concerned and made available on payment of a reasonable fee to interested parties for ten years after the passage of a Bill (paragraph 31) ;

(6) The Committee of Selection in the House of Commons should enlarge the panel for the consideration of unopposed Bills (paragraph 36) ;

(7) An adequate record of the points made before the unopposed committee and the decisions taken, with reasons, should be kept for the use both of the committee and of interested parties (paragraph 37) ;

(8) The Chairman of Ways and Means and his advisers should be requested to work out a procedure similar to that in use in the House of Lords, so that in the House of Commons the unopposed parts of opposed private Bills should be treated in committee as if they were unopposed Bills (paragraph 39) ;

(9) The Official Shorthand Writer should be instructed by each House to draw up a scheme under which he would undertake to produce the required number of duplicated copies of evidence taken before the committees on opposed Bills (paragraph 40) ;

(10) The two Houses should issue instructions that private Bills should be printed in the same style and type as public Bills ; they should only be printed by printers approved by the Stationery Office ; the printing of "Royal Assent copies" of private Acts should be discontinued ; and on the granting of the Royal Assent to a private Bill, the Stationery Office should pay to the printer thereof a proper proportion of his initial composing charges and should then authorise him to print the Queen's Printer's copies of the Act (paragraph 42) ;

(11) Amendments should be made to the Standing Orders so as to provide that the promoter of any private Bill shall have the option of having his Bill duplicated instead of printed (paragraph 44) ;

(12) Promoters should be given the option instead of reprinting their Bills of inserting duplicated amendments or pages (paragraph 45) ;

(13) The practice of printing vellum copies of private Acts should be discontinued and there should be substituted for them copies printed on paper of suitable strength and durability (paragraph 46);

(14) "House fees" should be the same in each House and should be very considerably reduced, especially for petitioners and for the promoters of small, unopposed Bills (paragraph 49);

(15) The two Houses should arrange for a joint review of the scales of Agents' charges (paragraph 50);

(16) Part XIII of the Local Government Act, 1933, should be amended so as to reduce considerably in length and scope the advertisements to be inserted in newspapers by local authorities promoting private Bills (paragraph 52);

(17) The Officers of the two Houses in drawing up the new code of Standing Orders recommended in paragraph 68 should have special regard to the desirability of reducing the number and complexity of the advertisements prescribed by Standing Orders, especially for local authorities and statutory undertakers (paragraph 52).

(18) The Officers of the two houses should be instructed to draw up a new and, so far as possible, identically worded code of private Bill Standing Orders for each House (paragraph 68);

(19) In future editions of "Model Clauses" explicit reference to the fact that the clauses are no more than guides for drafting should be made (paragraph 70);

(20) The Government should at least once every ten years introduce a Bill containing clauses conferring powers applicable either to local authorities generally or to particular classes of local authority (paragraph 71);

(21) The procedure under the Statutory Orders (Special Procedure) Act, 1945, should be extended so as to enable uncontroversial model clauses (after reference to a Joint Committee and redrafting if necessary in consultation with the interests concerned) to be made applicable by "Special Procedure Order" to any local authority (paragraph 75);

(22) Legislation should be introduced to abolish town meetings and polls (paragraph 79);

81. The Committee have not made any recommendation in respect of the following matters:—

(1) The adoption of a system of joint committees on private Bills in substitution for the present procedure (paragraph 65);

(2) The institution of a permanent Commission to authorise the extension to certain local authorities, or to local authorities generally, of powers granted to other "pioneer" authorities (paragraph 73);

(3) The application to England and Wales of Scottish private legislation procedure (paragraph 74).

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