

SESS. II.—1891.
NEW ZEALAND.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE).

Brought up on Friday, the 19th day of June, 1891, and ordered to be printed.

REPORT.

THE Standing Orders Committee have the honour to report that they have considered a number of proposals submitted with a view to the amendment of the existing Standing Orders, and recommend the alterations and amendments indicated in the draft hereto attached for adoption by the House.

19th June, 1891.

W. J. STEWARD, Chairman.

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND AMENDMENTS OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

To omit Standing Order No. 29 and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

29. Mr. Speaker reports that the House had this day attended the Governor (or had been in the Council Chamber at the desire of the Commissioners for opening Parliament), and that His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament (or that the Commissioners had made a Speech to both Houses of Parliament), of which Mr. Speaker says he had, for greater accuracy, obtained a copy, which he *lays upon the Table* of the House.

To omit Standing Orders 30, 31, and 32, and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

30. The said Speech having been laid upon the Table, Notice of Motion for an Address to the Governor is given.

31. The Address to His Excellency conveys the thanks of the House for His Excellency's most gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament at the opening of the session, and is moved in the form in which it is proposed to be presented to His Excellency, but is not necessarily a reply to His Excellency's Speech, paragraph by paragraph, and the House agrees to the same with or without amendment.

NOTE.—Alterations in procedure in relation to the Governor's Speech and the Address in Reply:—

(29.) The only change is the proposed substitution of the words in italics—viz., *lays upon the Table* of for the words READS TO, which occur in the present Standing Order, the object being to avoid the waste of time consequent upon a formality the necessity for which has long ceased to exist.

(30.) The change herein is merely such as to bring it into conformity with the amended form of No. 29.

(31.) *New Standing Order in lieu of present Orders Nos. 31 and 32:* This proposes to do away with the present formality of a Committee to prepare an Address (which has been already prepared), and admits of the Address itself being greatly shortened.

A similar proposal will be found among the amendments of which notice was given by Sir H. A. Atkinson in May, 1888, but which never came on for discussion.

To omit Standing Order No. 51 and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

51. *Upon days on which Government business has precedence*, no Order of the Day or Notice of Motion shall be called on after half after Twelve o'clock at night.

NOTE.—The present 12.30 rule has latterly led to great loss of time on private members' nights, on which only is it made use of for "talking-out" purposes.

To omit Standing Order 71 and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

71. The House proceeds each day with: 1. Private business; 2. Public Petitions; 3. Giving Notices of Motion; 4. Motions for Leave of Absence; 5. Presentation of Papers; 6. Reports of Select Committees; 7. Questions; 8. Unopposed Motions for Returns; 9. Leave to introduce Bills; 10. Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion, or *vice versa*, as set down in the Order Paper.

To adopt the following new Standing Orders, to follow No. 94:—

94A. No Motion for the adjournment of the House shall be made before the Questions have been disposed of.

94B. If Mr. Speaker shall be of opinion that a Motion for the adjournment of a Debate, or of the House during any Debate, or (when the House is in Committee) if the Chairman do report progress or do leave the Chair, is an abuse of the Rules of the House, the Speaker or Chairman (as the case may be) may require ten members to rise in their places to support the Motion.

NOTE.—94A, 94B. These proposed new orders correspond, *mutatis mutandis*, with as many of the new Rules of Procedure of the House of Commons, and were included in the proposals of Sir H. A. Atkinson of May, 1888.

Their object is to prevent, so far as possible, the abuse of the privilege of moving the adjournment.

To adopt the following new Standing Order, to follow No. 99:—

99A. When after the doors have been locked for a Division upon a Motion for the adjournment of a Debate, or of the House during any Debate, or that the Chairman of a Committee do report progress or do leave the Chair, the decision of Mr. Speaker or the Chairman that the "Ayes" or "Noes" have it is challenged, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman may call upon the members challenging it to rise in their places, and, if they be less than seven in a House of twenty members or upwards, he may forthwith declare the determination of the House or of the Committee. The names of such challenging members shall be recorded if required.

NOTE.—This is a modification of No. 4 of the New Rules of the House of Commons (1882), and is intended to avoid the loss of time consequent upon the taking of unnecessary Divisions.

To omit Standing Order No. 288 and substitute the following in lieu thereof:—

288. Every Bill (except as before) is ordered to be prepared and brought in by *a member, or members*, named by the House.

NOTE.—The words in italics are new, and are necessary to bring the Standing Order into conformity with the practice of the House.

To omit Standing Orders Nos. 293 and 294.

NOTE.—Corresponds with the proposal of Sir H. A. Atkinson in 1888, and aims at the abolition of an antiquated and cumbrous procedure.

To omit Standing Order No. 297 and substitute the following in lieu thereof:—

297. A Bill is presented by *the member*, or one of the members, ordered to prepare and bring in the same, and such member is desired by Mr. Speaker to bring it up.

NOTE.—The words in italics are necessary to bring the Standing Order into conformity with the practice of the House; and for the same reason the words "who appears at the bar for that purpose," occurring in the existing Standing Order, are proposed to be omitted.

To omit Standing Order No. 311 and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

311. In Committee on a Bill, the Preamble stands postponed without question put until after the clauses have been considered *seriatim*.

NOTE.—This proposal corresponds with the procedure of the House of Commons, and is obviously the most convenient course.

To omit Standing Order No. 329 and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

329. After the third reading, and further proceedings thereon, the Title of the Bill is agreed to, or amended and agreed to, and this having been done the Bill has passed.

NOTE.—This, as in the Legislative Council, omits the formal question "That this Bill do pass."

To omit Standing Order No. 331 and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

331. On days on which Private Members' business has precedence, Private Members' Bills coming back with amendments from the Legislative Council shall take precedence of Bills standing for the third reading, Bills for third reading of Bills for report, Bills for report of Bills for Committal, Bills for Committal of Bills for further consideration in Committee, and Bills for further consideration in Committee of Bills for second reading. When committed together Bills for further consideration in Committee shall take precedence in Committee of Bills for the first time committed.

NOTE.—This somewhat extends the classification under the existing order of corresponding number, which was introduced a few years ago with great advantage to the despatch of business. A somewhat similar proposal was included in Sir H. A. Atkinson's resolutions of 1888.

To omit Standing Order No. 339 and substitute the following in lieu thereof:—

339. Amendments made by the Council in Public Bills are ordered to be considered on a future day, unless the House shall order them to be considered forthwith. They are then agreed to, or agreed to with amendments, or disagreed to, or the further consideration thereof is put off for three or six months.

NOTE.—The proposed new Standing Order differs from the old Order by omitting the words "twice read and," the alteration being in conformity with the practice of the House.

To omit Standing Orders 356 and 357, and insert the following in lieu thereof:—

356. There shall be appointed at the commencement of every session a Committee on Local Bills, consisting of ten members, to which all Local Bills shall stand referred after they have been read a first time. If the Standing Orders on Local Bills have been complied with, the Committee shall report to the House on the merits of the Bill, and if, in their opinion, the Bill should be allowed to proceed, may make such amendments (if necessary) as they may think desirable. Every member in charge of a Local Bill shall, *ipso facto*, be a member of the Committee while his Bill is under consideration, whether he be nominated of the Committee or not. The procedure in such Committee shall be the same as in a Select Committee, unless the House shall otherwise order: Provided that strangers shall be admitted, except when the Committee shall order them to withdraw, and the said Committee shall not sit while the House is sitting without the order of the House: Provided also that any notice of amendment relating to any Bill which may be committed to the said Committee, given by any member in the House, shall stand referred to such Committee, and such member shall be entitled to be heard by such Committee in support thereof.

356A. The Committee on Local Bills shall have power to confer or sit as a Joint Committee with any similar Committee appointed by the Legislative Council.

357. All Bills which have been committed to the Committee on Local Bills, when reported to the House, shall, if the Committee report that the Bill should be allowed to proceed, be set down for second reading on a future day, but may not be read a second time until after they shall have been reprinted showing any amendments therein; and Local Bills that have been read a second time shall be set down for third reading on a future day, unless the House shall order that they be read a third time forthwith, or that they be committed to a Committee of the Whole.

357A. Unopposed Local Bills shall be placed at the head of the list of Local Bills on the Order Paper, and Bills shall be treated as unopposed against which no notice of opposition has been lodged with the Clerk of the House by Five of the clock on the day preceding that fixed for the consideration of the Bill.

NOTE.—356, 356A, 357, 357A. These proposals, relating to Local Bills, are almost identical with those of Sir H. A. Atkinson in 1888, and, it is believed, contain some very desirable improvements upon the present procedure.

To adopt the following new Standing Order, to follow No. 366:—

366A. On a Motion for printing any Paper being offered by any private member, the same shall be first submitted to the Printing Committee for report, before the Question is put thereon.

NOTE.—This is identical with a Standing Order of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, and is intended to secure that the House shall be in possession of full information as to cost, &c., before it can be asked to give orders for printing.

To omit Standing Order No. 387.