



HOUSE OF LORDS

Guide for Deputy Speakers and Deputy Chairmen

October 2022



Interruptions in the Chamber

In case of interruptions in the Chamber, the following procedures should be used. This information is also available on the red and yellow cards by the Woolsack.

Emergency requiring evacuation

The minister or whip at the Despatch Box will interrupt the business of the House and say –

*“My Lords,
This is an emergency announcement. It is necessary to evacuate the Chamber. Please leave the Chamber as directed by the doorkeepers.”*

The Lord Speaker or Deputy then says –

“The House [or Committee] stands adjourned. Please leave the Chamber as directed by the doorkeepers.”

Emergency not requiring evacuation (illness in the Chamber etc.)

The minister or whip at the Despatch Box will say –

*“My Lords,
It may be appropriate to break for XX minutes.”*

The Lord Speaker or Deputy then says –

“The House [or Committee] stands adjourned for XX minutes.”

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The Lord Speaker, Deputy Speakers and Deputy Chairmen

The Lord Speaker is elected by the House. It is the Lord Speaker's duty ordinarily to occupy the Woolsack, or the Chair when the House is in committee. The Senior Deputy Speaker is the Lord Speaker's designated deputy.

Deputy Speakers, appointed by the Crown under the Great Seal, and Deputy Chairmen, appointed by the House,¹ may take the place of the Lord Speaker. If none of these Lords is present the House may on motion appoint its own Speaker. Rotas are prepared on a weekly basis allocating duties to Deputies in the House or Grand Committee.

The function of the Speaker or the Chairman is to call on items of business, to call on remote participants and to put the Question on all motions which have been proposed, but they have no power to maintain order. Responsibility for maintaining order rests with the House or the Committee.

¹ They have the same duties, however appointed. Throughout this Guide the term 'Deputy' is used to refer to the member on the Woolsack or in the Chair presiding over debate.

Proceedings in the House

A brief is provided for the Lord Speaker on each day when the House sits and this sets out the expected course of business, the items of business which will need to be called on and the main Questions which have to be put from the Woolsack. A copy is also provided for any member acting as Speaker (the Deputy).

A separate brief from the Legislation Office is provided for the Deputy to draw attention to points of difficulty which may arise during an amending stage of a bill, for example the pre-emption of one amendment by another. These briefs assume a general knowledge of the procedure of the House and of the forms of words explained in this guide. The brief only draws attention to matters which may need particular explanation or guidance.

The Clerks at the Table should be consulted on any unexpected business or unusual procedure. Further written guidance is available in the *Companion to the Standing Orders* and in the *Short Guide to Procedure*.

Order in the House

The Deputy has no power to act in the House without the consent of the House. The Deputy's function is to assist, and not to rule. The House does not recognise points of order. Any advice or assistance given by the Deputy is subject to the view of the House as a whole.

The role of assisting the House at question time rests with the Leader of the House, not the Lord Speaker. At other times

of the day the Deputy may on occasion assist the House by reminding members of the relevant parts of the *Companion*. Such assistance is limited to procedural advice and is usually in the brief. In most cases advice about keeping order in the House or Committee is given by the government front bench, on advice from the Clerk at the Table.

The Government Chief Whip advises the House on speaking times in debates. Reinforcing such time limits is handled by the front benches rather than the Deputy, and any member can draw such advice to the attention of the House. Timed debates are brought to an end (if necessary) by the Deputy on an indication from the Clerk of the Table.

Interventions calling attention to the failure of an individual member to comply with the rules may come from the front benches or other members. This would be the case, for example, when a member was seeking to make a speech on report after the minister had spoken, or when arguments deployed in committee were repeated at length on report. Such interventions would not normally come from the Deputy.

The Deputy observes the same formalities as any other member of the House. The Deputy addresses the House as a whole, and not an individual member (unless calling a member to speak), and does not intervene when a member is on their feet, except to end a time-limited debate.

Communication with the clerks

When on Woolsack duty, the Deputy needs a laptop, tablet or smart phone, charged up and logged on to their parliamentary account so they can communicate with the Clerk from the Woolsack or Chair via Microsoft Teams.

The Deputy should ensure the device does not go to sleep. If they can bring in two devices that is helpful. Some support is available from the doorkeepers for charging at the Woolsack but not all devices can be supported.

The Teams Chamber Chat is initiated in the morning before sitting. This is how the Clerk at the Table communicates with the Deputy. Some other key players are in the Chat, including whips and officials. The Deputy should know how to communicate with individuals as well as the group.

Each time there is a change of Deputy, the Clerk at the Table should send a welcome message through the Teams Chamber Chat. This will set out any relevant information the new Deputy should know such as gap speakers, scratchers and adjournment plans.

Beginning of a sitting

If the Lord Speaker is absent at the beginning of a sitting of the House, the Senior Deputy Speaker or a Deputy Speaker takes the Lord Speaker's place on the Woolsack. In this event, the Lord Speaker's procession with the Mace is curtailed. The Yeoman Usher, alone, takes the Mace by way of the Library corridor to the Peers' Lobby where the Deputy Speaker waits at the Brass Gates and follows the Mace into the Chamber from below the Bar on the Temporal side. On reaching the Woolsack, the Deputy Speaker bows first to the Yeoman Usher who has just placed the Mace on the Woolsack, turns, faces the House and bows, turns to the Bishop and bows, then turns to face the Throne and finally, after the psalm has been read, kneels for prayers. When prayers are over the Deputy Speaker rises, bows to the Bishop, then to the House and sits

on the Woolsack. If no Bishop or other ordained minister of the Church of England is present the Lord Speaker or Deputy Speaker may read prayers.

When the House sits after an 'Adjournment during pleasure', the Mace is already on the Woolsack. The Deputy enters the House from the Prince's Chamber on the Spiritual side, goes to the Woolsack, bows to the House and sits down.

Change of Deputy during sitting

One Deputy may succeed another on the Woolsack without interruption of business. The member who is to replace the Deputy waits on the archbishops' bench. At the agreed time the two Lords stand on either side of the Woolsack and bow to each other (the member who is taking over stands on the Spiritual side of the House, the one being replaced on the Temporal side); the member who has been on the Woolsack then withdraws and the member replacing them sits down. They should check the Teams Chamber Chat as soon as possible to read any messages sent by the Clerk at the Table.

There is no formality when one Deputy succeeds another at the Table. The one taking over comes to the Table on the Spiritual side or sits on the Judges' Woolsack behind. The one leaving goes out by the Temporal side.

Quorum

The quorum of the House (or of a Grand Committee) is three, including the Lord Speaker or Deputy. There is, however, a quorum of 30 for divisions on a bill or on any Question for the approval or disapproval of subordinate

legislation. The procedure to be followed if fewer than 30 Lords have voted in such divisions is set out in Appendix 2 (pages 71–78).

Voting on the Woolsack and in the Chair

The Lord Speaker and Senior Deputy Speaker are expected to refrain from political activity, including from voting in the House. If, however, one of the Deputies is on the Woolsack or in the Chair and wishes to vote during a division then their vote is taken by the clerk in the Chamber. They must present a valid security pass for their vote to be taken.

Adjournment of the House

At the end of business a member of the Government moves “*That the House do now adjourn*”. It is customary for the Deputy not to put the full Question on this motion unless informed that any member wishes to speak on the adjournment. Instead the Deputy repeats the words –

“That the House do now adjourn.”

and does not collect the voices. The Deputy then turns to the Temporal side, bows to the Mace and follows it out of the House by the Temporal side into Peers’ Lobby where they leave the procession after bowing to the Mace in the centre of the Lobby.

Adjournment during pleasure

When the House is to be adjourned during pleasure the motion is moved from the government front bench. The motion may include the time at which the House will resume,

but on other occasions the time is not specified. The Deputy then puts the Question in full, including the time if it has been specified in the motion –

“The Question is that the House do now adjourn during pleasure until X o’clock.”

The Deputy collects the voices and, when the Question is agreed to, leaves the House alone, going by the Spiritual side to the Prince’s Chamber.

For further variations on adjournments and interruptions, including the interrupting of a committee stage, see pages 56– 58.

Virtual participation of eligible disabled members

In business with a speakers’ list

In business with a speakers’ list, eligible members wishing to take part remotely will be marked as remote with a [v] next to their name in the list in the brief. The Deputy should call them in their turn –

***“My Lords, Lord/Baroness X is taking part remotely.
I invite Lord/Baroness X to speak.”***

In oral questions, oral statements and repeated urgent questions

In oral questions, oral statements or repeated urgent questions (where there is sufficient notice to allow virtual participation), eligible members are called on by the Lord Speaker or Deputy at an appropriate point. The brief will provide further details. Where a whips’ office has indicated that a virtual member should be called at a particular point, the Clerk will send a message on Teams.

In other business without a speakers' list

In business without a speakers' list there is a fixed point at which eligible members participating remotely will be called to speak by the Deputy. The brief will provide further details and the Deputy should call them on when it is time for them to speak. For bills see pages 40–41.

Technical difficulties

The Deputy should call a remote member twice. If there is no response, they should call the next member on the speakers' list or invite the House to continue with the business. The Deputy has discretion to return to members later if time allows and they were present and unable to participate e.g. through loss of connection. The Clerk at the Table will advise on the Chamber Chat whether this is possible.

Calling on business

The Deputy calls on the business on the order paper, private notice questions, urgent question repeats, first readings of Lords bills and oral statements. The Deputy should rise to do this.

The table below sets out what happens in other cases.

Item of business	What happens
First reading of Commons bills	Not called – clerk reads Message
Commons amendments considered forthwith	Not called – clerk reads Message
Business statements not on order paper	Not called
Personal statements	Not called
Messages from the Crown	Not called
Tributes	Not called
Deaths and retirements, Royal Assent	Not called – the Lord Speaker announces these
Hereditary peers by-election results	Not called – announced by the Clerk of the Parliaments

Calling on oral questions

When the House has settled, the Deputy rises and calls the member with the first question –

“First oral question: Lord/Baroness X.”

The member named on the order paper is always called, even if it is expected that another member will ask the question on their behalf.

When the clocks show 0:10:00, the time allowed for the first question is up and no further supplementary may be asked. If the ten minutes have yet to elapse, but there are no more supplementaries, the Deputy should call the next oral question.

The other three questions are treated the same way, with the clock being restarted for each question.

Once the supplementary underway at 0:10:00 on the fourth question has been answered, the Deputy rises and calls on the next business.

If the Lord Speaker knows that an oral question is not going to be asked, they inform the House before they call the first question; the remaining questions are each limited to ten minutes.

Calling on private notice questions

At the time indicated in the brief (usually after the end of oral questions), the Deputy rises and says –

“Private notice question on ... : Lord/Baroness X.”

Proceedings on private notice questions follow the rules for oral questions. They are expected to take not more than 15 minutes. When the clock shows 15 minutes, time is up and no further supplementary questions are allowed. Once the supplementary underway at 0:15:00 has been answered, the Deputy rises and calls on the next business.

Calling on business of the House motions on the order paper

The Deputy rises and says –

“Business of the House: The Lord Privy Seal”

When the Question has been decided, the Deputy calls on the next business.

Calling on urgent question repeats

At a convenient point, if the timing of an urgent question repeat is not clear from the annunciators, the Clerk at the Table will nod, or notify the Deputy on the Teams Chamber Chat, that the urgent question is ready. If the House is in committee, it will first be necessary to resume the House (see page 58).

The Deputy rises and says –

“Repeat of the answer to an urgent question asked in the House of Commons [yesterday], on ... : Lord/Baroness X”

Questions follow, normally led by the opposition front bench, for a maximum of 10 minutes. When the clock shows 0:10:00 and flashes, time is up and no new question should be asked. Once the question underway at 0:10:00 has been answered, the Deputy rises and calls on the next business.

Calling on statements

At a convenient point, if the timing of a statement repeat is not clear from the annunciators, the Clerk at the Table will nod, or notify the Deputy on the Chamber Chat, that the

statement is ready. If the House is in committee, it will first be necessary to resume the House (see pages 57–58).

(1) When statement is repeated

The Deputy rises and says –

***“Repeat of a Statement made in the House of Commons
[yesterday] on ... : Lord/Baroness X”***

Lord/Baroness X will then repeat the statement and respond to the opposition front benches (20 minutes). If this overruns, there is nothing the Deputy can do about it. The clock will restart for the back benches. When the clock shows 0:20:00 and flashes, time is up and no new question should be asked. Once the question underway at 0:20:00 has been answered, the Deputy rises and calls on the next business.

(2) When statement is not repeated

The Deputy rises and says-

***“Questions on a statement made in the House of
Commons [yesterday] on ... ”***

The statement is not repeated. The speakers from the two opposition front benches will ask their questions one after the other and then the minister will respond to them both (20 minutes). If this overruns, there is nothing the Deputy can do about it. The clock will restart for the back benches. When the clock shows 0:20:00 and flashes, time is up and no new question should be asked. Once the question underway at 0:20:00 has been answered, the Deputy rises and calls on the next business.

Calling on bill stages (except first reading of Commons bills)

(1) First reading of a Lords bill

The Deputy rises and says –

“First reading – Lord/Baroness X”

(The bill is not on the order paper so its title is not read out.)

(2) Second reading

The Deputy rises and says –

“Second reading of the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness X”

(3) Committee of the whole House

The Deputy rises and says –

“House to be [again] in committee on the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness X”

(4) Grand Committee

The Deputy rises and says –

“Grand Committee on the ... Bill [day 2 &c] – Lord/Baroness X”

(5) Report stage

The Deputy rises and says –

“[Further consideration on] report of the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness X”

(6) Third reading

The Deputy rises and says –

“Third reading of the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness X”

(7) Consideration of Commons amendments/reasons

The Deputy rises and says –

“Consideration of Commons [reasons and] amendments to the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness X”

Calling on debates

The Deputy rises and says –

“Motion for debate: [Title of debate] – Lord/Baroness X”

Calling on questions for short debate

The Deputy rises and says –

“Question for short debate: [Title of QSD] – Lord/Baroness X”

Calling on secondary legislation

(1) Affirmative

The Deputy rises and says –

“[Name of Order] – Lord/Baroness X”

(2) Affirmatives debated together

The Deputy rises and says –

***“[Name of Order] and [one] other motion(s) – Lord/
Baroness X”***

(3) Regret motion

The Deputy rises and says –

“[Name of Order] – Motion of regret – Lord/Baroness X”

Putting the Question and divisions

Motions

Every motion, after it has been moved, must be put in the form of a Question from the Woolsack (or the Chair) before debate takes place upon it. When a motion is moved, the Deputy rises at the end of the mover's speech and puts the Question on the motion for the first time. If no one rises to speak the Deputy goes on immediately to 'collect the voices' (see pages 22–23) and the Question is decided. If there is a debate, the Deputy does not collect the voices at this point but waits until the end of the debate when they put the Question for the second time and collect the voices, and the Question is decided.

The Question takes various forms, for example –

“The Question is that this motion be agreed to.”

“The Question is that this bill be now read a first [second] [third] time.”

“The Question is that this report be now received.”

“The Question is that the House do now resolve itself into a committee upon the bill.”

The form of Question follows the wording of the motion, though in the case of long motions it may be appropriate for the Question to refer to the words “set out on the order paper/as printed on the marshalled list”. Such a case would be explained in the Lord Speaker's Brief.

The essential requirement is that the Question should be put in a form which leaves the House in no doubt about what it is being asked to decide.

Absence of mover

If a member in whose name a motion or question stands on the order paper cannot be present, they may authorise another member to move or ask it on their behalf. This member should state that they are doing so with the authority of the absent member.

If authority has not been given, any member who wishes to move the motion or ask the question must ask the House for leave, which must be unanimous. This does not apply to amendments, or to ping-pong propositions.

Amendments to motions

The principle which underlies the structure of a debate during which amendments (and possibly amendments to amendments) are proposed to a motion is that the discussion of each amendment is a separate debate, which must be concluded before the House disposes of the original motion. Similarly, an amendment to an amendment must be disposed of before the original amendment is disposed of.

When an amendment to a motion is moved, the Question on the amendment is, for the sake of clarity, put as follows –

“The Question is that the amendment in the name of Lord/Baroness X be agreed to.”

When the debate on the amendment has finished and the Question is put for the second time and decided, and no

further amendment to the motion has been tabled, the House reverts to the original motion (either amended or unamended). If there are several amendments tabled to the same motion, they are called in turn in the order in which they relate to the text, subject to the rules on pre-emption.

In practice the motion and any amendments are usually debated together on the first amendment, subsequent amendments are called and disposed of formally and the Question on the original motion is put for the second time as soon as the last amendment to it has been disposed of. If no amendment is agreed to, the original Question should be put in its original form. If any amendment has been agreed to, the Question on the original motion should be put as follows –

“The Question is that the original motion, as amended, be agreed to.”

Amendments to bills

The Question on amendments to bills is put in a different form, see Appendix 3. See also Appendix 1 for an overview of the general procedure relating to amendments.

Collecting the voices

At the end of the debate on a motion or an amendment, the Deputy, having put the Question to the House or Committee for the second time, says –

“As many as are of that opinion will say “Content”; the contrary “Not-content”.”

If an eligible disabled member taking part remotely moves and presses an amendment, their voice is taken to be “Content”.

If there is a response from only one side, the Deputy says –

“The Contents [Not-contents] have it.”

and the Question is resolved in the affirmative or negative accordingly.

If there is a response from both sides, but the Deputy thinks one side is more numerous than the other, they say –

“I think the Contents [Not-contents] have it.”

If this expression of opinion is not challenged the Deputy says –

“The Contents [Not-contents] have it.”

and the Question is decided accordingly.

The Deputy may repeat this expression of opinion until satisfied that they cannot avoid calling a division or until one side ceases to challenge. Only one voice needs to reply from each side to force a division.

Divisions

When the Deputy has decided that a division must be called, they say –

“The question will be decided by a division. I will advise the House when voting is open.”

The Clerk then enters the details of the division into the divisions system and opens the vote. The Clerk rises and bows, and the Deputy says –

“Voting is now open. Clear the Bar.”

Division bells are rung throughout the House. At the end of the three minutes the clerk rises and bows and the Deputy rises and puts the Question as before –

“The Question is that ... As many as are of that opinion will say “Content”; the contrary “Not-content”.”

If both sides again reply the Deputy says –

“The Contents will go to the right by the Throne; the Not-contents to the left by the Bar.”

But if only one side replies, the Deputy says –

“The Contents [Not-contents] have it.”

No division takes place, and the Question is resolved accordingly. The Deputy may wish to say a few words, as follows:

“My Lords, the Question has been decided because there were not voices for both sides present in the Chamber at three minutes, so no division is needed. I suggest we allow noble Lords and staff a moment to clear the lobbies before proceeding.”

In addition, if the proper number of Tellers is not appointed, a division cannot take place and Deputy will be advised by the Clerk at the Table on the procedure which they should follow (see Appendix 2).

If the Deputy wishes to vote, their vote is taken by the Clerk in the Chamber.

After a further five minutes, the clerk again rises and bows and the Deputy says –

“The Question is that ... [as appropriate]”.

The Deputy does not add the final words “*As many as are of that opinion ...*” because they are merely informing the House or Committee of the Question before it. The doors of the Chamber are then locked, and only those in the Chamber or the lobbies at that time may continue to vote. When all have voted, one of the Tellers will hand the Deputy the result and they rise and say –

“There have voted –

Contents ... Not-contents ...

so the Contents [Not-contents] have it.”

If there is no quorum, or an equality of votes, the Deputy will be advised by the Clerk at the Table on the procedure which they should follow (see Appendix 2).

The Deputy has discretion to authorise an extension of the time required for a division under special circumstances, for example if the division bells fail to ring.

Contingency arrangements

If there is a problem with the pass-reader voting system, the Deputy should pay particular attention to the Teams Chamber Chat where the clerk will post advice.

If the pass-reader voting system is unavailable, divisions may be conducted as normal, with the exception that the names of members voting are recorded manually by staff in the lobbies.

Divisions may also in certain circumstances be deferred until an appropriate time on a succeeding day. Decisions on deferral are taken by the usual channels, consulting staff of the House

as necessary, once it has become clear that the pass-reader voting system is not functioning.

Deferred divisions

Deferred divisions can only take place during a sitting of the House. The timing of such divisions will be indicated on the order paper. At the agreed time for a deferred division, the Deputy should announce and restart the division, as follows: “*The Question is that ... [as appropriate]. The Question will be decided by a division*” and so on. There is no need to take the voices, as the House has already decided to divide on the Question.

Withdrawal of motions or amendments

At the end of a debate the mover of a motion or amendment may ask the leave of the House or Committee to withdraw their motion or amendment. If they do, the Deputy rises and says –

“Is it your Lordships’ pleasure that this motion [amendment] be withdrawn?”

If there is no dissenting voice the Deputy adds –

“Motion [amendment] by leave withdrawn.”

The leave of the House to withdraw must be unanimous; if there is any dissenting voice, the Deputy must put the Question, and say –

“The Question is that this motion [amendment] be agreed to. As many as are of that opinion ...”

The procedure for conducting a division set out on pages 23–25 then applies.

“Not moved”

If a member whose amendment is called wishes to speak, other than to say “*Not moved*”, he or she must move the amendment, and the Deputy must put the Question (“*Amendment proposed ...*”). This allows others to speak too. The amendment may then be withdrawn in the usual way but it is not in order to make a detailed speech and then to say “*Not moved*”.

Committee of the whole House on public bills – Normal procedure

See Appendix I for the general procedure relating to amendments and amendments to amendments.

In committee, members may speak more than once including after the Minister has replied.

When the motion that the House go into committee has been agreed to, the Deputy takes the Chair at the Table.

They then call each clause in turn by its number; if no amendment is moved, the Question is put on each clause, thus –

“The Question is that clause ... stand part of the bill.”

If there are amendments to any clause, the Deputy calls them in sequence by number, thus –

“In clause X, amendment 1 – Lord A.”

If the amendment is to insert a new clause, the form of words used is –

“After clause X, amendment 1 – Lord A.”

In the absence of Lord A, any other member may move the amendment, even if they have not added their name to it.

When Lord A has spoken to the amendment the Deputy says –

“Amendment proposed, page X, line Y, leave out “...” and insert the words as printed on the marshalled list”

(OR the Deputy reads out the actual words if they are not too many).

“Amendment proposed, after clause X, insert the new clause as printed on the marshalled list.”

The debate on the amendment follows, and at the end of the debate if the member who has moved the amendment presses it, the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that this amendment be agreed to.”

The Deputy then collects the voices and, if necessary, calls a division (see pages 22–23).

If after the debate the member asks leave to withdraw the amendment, the Deputy says –

“Is it your Lordships’ pleasure that this amendment be withdrawn? – amendment, by leave, withdrawn.”

Leave to withdraw must be unanimous. If there is a single dissenting voice, the Deputy must put the Question –

“The Question is that this amendment be agreed to.”

Clauses and schedules

Clause/schedule stand part

By long-established practice, each clause and schedule has to be moved affirmatively into the bill in committee.

As soon as any amendments to each clause have been disposed of, the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that clause X [as amended] stand part of the bill.”

On this Question a general debate on the clause may take place and it is open to any member who wishes to propose the omission of the clause to speak (see page 31).

The Deputy's brief indicates when it is necessary to stand part clauses to which no amendments have been tabled, but does not highlight the need to stand part clauses to which amendments have been tabled. This is one of the points for which the Deputy should prepare in advance.

The clauses of the bill are proceeded with in sequence unless there is an Instruction from the House. This is printed at the top of the marshalled list, and is usually an instruction that the schedules be considered immediately after the clauses to which they relate.

The schedules to the bill are treated in the same way as the clauses but the Question is put on each thus –

“That this be the Schedule to the bill”

or

“That Schedule 1 [as amended] be the first schedule to the bill. As many as are of that opinion ...”

When a clause or schedule has been disposed of the committee cannot consider it again, unless a motion is subsequently passed to recommit it.

When there are consecutive clauses or schedules to which no amendment has been set down, the Deputy does not call the clauses or schedules singly but puts the Question on all of them, or on groups of them, together (*‘en bloc’*): *“That Clauses 12 to 14 en bloc Stand Part of the Bill”* or *“That Schedules 1 and 2 en bloc be the first and second schedules to the Bill”*.

The Deputy should pause before completing the Question in case a member, who has not given notice of their intention to do so, wishes to speak on a particular clause. If so, the clause is taken separately.

Members taking part in a debate on clause stand part sometimes erroneously say “*I beg to move*” at the end of their speech. This is best ignored.

Leaving out clauses/schedules

Notice to leave out a clause or schedule at committee stage is not treated as an amendment but as an indication that a member wishes to oppose the Question that the clause or schedule stand part of the bill. Such notice appears in the marshalled list without a number and in italics in the form –

Lord A gives notice of his intention to oppose the Question that clause X stand part of the bill.

or

The above-named Lords give notice of their intention to oppose the Question that clause X stand part of the bill.

When this notice is reached, and unless already debated as part of a group, the Deputy should say –

“The Question is that clause X stand part of the bill – Lord A.”

The debate takes place on the Question “*That the clause stand part*”. Lord A does not “*beg to move*” and the Deputy does not repeat the question after Lord A has spoken. When the Question is put again at the end of the debate, those who wish

to leave out the clause say “*Not-content*” and those who wish the clause to remain say “*Content*”.

Schedules are dealt with similarly.

Insertion or substitution of new clause or schedule

Where a new clause or schedule is tabled for inclusion in the bill (either in substitution for an existing clause or schedule or separately) it is treated as an ordinary amendment, and the question on it is accordingly –

“That this amendment be agreed to.”

If the amendment is agreed to it is not then necessary to stand the new clause or schedule part of the bill.

Transposition of clause or schedule

An amendment to transpose a clause or schedule (or part of a clause or schedule) is unusual. Should it arise, the Question is put after the Question that the clause or schedule stand part of the bill. Therefore it is not necessary for the transposed clause or schedule to be stood part of the bill again in the place to which it is transposed.

Postponement of clauses or schedules

The committee may, on motion of which notice is not essential, postpone clauses or schedules or groups of clauses or schedules which are then taken up later on. This is unusual and may not be done if an amendment has already been made to the clause or group concerned.

Other amendments

Grouped amendments

For the purposes of debate it is often convenient for related amendments on the same subject to be discussed together, even if the amendments are not consecutive nor consequential nor all in the name of the same member. The process of identifying which amendments should be grouped is conducted by agreement between the members concerned and the Government Whips' Office, which produces a list of the groupings on the day of debate. Debate usually takes place only when the first of the grouped amendments ('the lead amendment') is called. Before calling the lead amendment, the Deputy may say –

“We now come to the group beginning with amendment X.”

Only the lead amendment is moved at this point. Debate may cover all amendments in the group but the non-lead amendments should not be moved until their place in the marshalled list. Members who tabled later amendments in a group sometimes erroneously say “*I beg to move*” at the end of their speech. This is best ignored.

When the first amendment in the group has been disposed of, it is usual for the remaining amendments in the group not to be further debated when they are called in their place on the marshalled list. The amendments may be moved formally for agreement, either singly or *en bloc*, or moved for division, or not moved. It is open to any member to speak to a non-lead amendment, if moved, at the point when the Question is put on it but the practice of degrouping amendments (i.e. debating an amendment or clause stand part separately from its

published group) is discouraged. It is not a matter over which a Deputy has control.

When calling such an amendment, the Deputy may say –

“Amendment X – Lord A – already debated. [Moved formally?] [Does the noble Lord wish to press the amendment?] [Not moved?]”

En bloc amendments

The Question should be put on amendments *en bloc* only where a decision in principle to agree them has already been made by the House or Committee earlier in the bill. The Deputy may say –

“It may be for the convenience of the House if amendments X and Y are moved en bloc...”

The Deputy should not allow a member to move a new group of amendments *en bloc* (except when Commons amendments are being considered: see pages 49–50). The first amendment in the group must first be debated and decided. If it is agreed, some or all of the later amendments may, by unanimous leave of the House, be moved *en bloc*, provided that they are consecutive in the marshalled list and, when the House is in committee, confined to a single clause or schedule (for procedure at report stage and third reading, see page 47). If leave is given, a single Question is put –

“The Question is that Amendments 25 to 30 be agreed to en bloc. As many...”

and agreed without further debate; if leave is refused, the amendments must be called and disposed of separately to the extent desired.

In committee, amendments to insert new clauses may be moved *en bloc*, provided they are not in substitution for an existing clause.

Amendments may not be withdrawn *en bloc*.

Manuscript amendments

Amendments may be moved in committee even if they have not been previously published. These are known as ‘manuscript amendments’. When a manuscript amendment is moved, its text should (unless the Committee otherwise directs) be read out to the Committee, not only by the mover but also by the Deputy when putting the Question. If such an amendment has not been sent or handed to the Deputy, they should ask for it in order to put the Question correctly.

Amendments withdrawn from the marshalled list

Amendments marked [*Withdrawn*] on the marshalled list cannot be called and may be disregarded, but it may be helpful to say, “*My Lords, Amendment X has been withdrawn*”.

Where one amendment affects another

Amendments to amendments

Amendments to proposed amendments are called after the original amendment has been moved and the Question put on it for the first time.

An amendment to an amendment is called thus –

***“As an amendment to Amendment X, Amendment Y –
Lord/Baroness A.”***

The Question on an amendment to an amendment is put thus –

“Amendment proposed, as an amendment to Amendment X, at end insert ...”

When such amendments to the amendment have been disposed of, and the original amendment (or the original amendment as amended) is finally decided, the Deputy may need to prompt the mover to say whether they wish to press or withdraw.

Where more than one amendment to an amendment is tabled they are taken in the order in which they relate to the text of the original amendment. They must each be called in turn, subject to the rules on pre-emption, even if they have been debated with the first amendment in the group.

If an amendment to which amendments have been tabled is grouped with an earlier amendment, and is subsequently moved at its place in the marshalled list, any amendments to that amendment must be called and disposed of (normally without debate) before the Question on the amendment is finally decided. If the original amendment is not moved, amendments to it are not called. The Deputy says –

“Amendment 1 not moved. Therefore I cannot call Amendment 2.”

Alternative amendments

Where there are alternative amendments to the same place in a bill, each may be called. If any such amendment is agreed to, the subsequent amendments may be put in an altered form by reference to it. The amendments are tabled as follows –

Amendment No.

- 1 Page 1, line 1, leave out “four” and insert “five”
- 2 Page 1, line 1, leave out “four” and insert “six”
- 3 Page 1, line 1, leave out “four” and insert “seven”

If Amendment 1 is carried, Amendment 2 is put thus –

“Amendment proposed, Page 1, line 1, leave out “five” and insert “six”.”

Similarly, if Amendment 2 is carried, Amendment 3 is put thus –

“Amendment proposed, Page 1, line 1, leave out “six” and insert “seven”.”

If more words are involved, it may be preferable to say “leave out the words last inserted ...”. This will be covered in the brief.

This does not apply to alternative amendments to different places in the bill. The Deputy may be briefed to remind the House that “An amendment to a bill must not be inconsistent with a previous decision given on the same stage of the bill” (Standing Order 46).

Altered form

Agreement to one amendment may require another to be put in an altered form even if they are not alternatives. For example if an amendment to leave out “guidance” and insert “regulations” were agreed to, an amendment to insert words after “guidance” would be put as “after “regulations”” or “after the word(s) last inserted”. This will be covered in the brief.

Pre-emption

If an amendment has been pre-empted by one previously agreed to by the House, e.g. because the text proposed to be amended has been left out of the bill or because the amendment would no longer make sense, the amendment will not be called. This will be covered in the brief. The Deputy alerts the House to this possibility either when calling the pre-empting amendment (“*Amendment X – Lord/Baroness A*”) if it is expected to be moved (e.g. the lead amendment in a group), or, if it is moved unexpectedly, when putting the Question for the first time (“*Amendment proposed...*”).

The Deputy says—

“My Lords, I must inform the House that if Amendment X is agreed to I will not be able to call Amendment Y by reason of pre-emption.”

When a pre-empted amendment is reached the Deputy says—

“My Lords, I am unable to call Amendment Y by reason of pre-emption.”

Consequential and paving amendments

Whether an amendment is consequential on an amendment previously agreed is for the House to judge in each case: it is not the responsibility of the Deputy to make decisions on consequential. Decisions still need to be made on amendments even if there is agreement that they are consequential. Grouped amendments are not necessarily consequential.

The Deputy may tell the House it may not consider a pre-empted amendment (see page 38) but they may not tell the House it must agree an amendment because it is consequential.

The Deputy should however be alert for possible consequentials, since they may be moved formally and agreed to in quick succession.

Where a substantive amendment is accompanied by a minor consequential amendment, but the decision will be taken on the minor amendment because it comes first in the marshalled list, the minor amendment may be referred to as a ‘paving amendment’.

End of committee stage

When the committee has gone through the clauses and schedules, amendments may be moved to the preamble and title of the bill (preambles are uncommon). The Deputy concludes the committee stage by putting the Question –

“That this [as amended] be the title of the Bill.”

When consideration of the bill in committee has been concluded, the Deputy says –

“My Lords, that concludes the Committee’s proceedings. The House will now resume.”

The Deputy then leaves the Chair and goes to the Woolsack and says –

“My Lords, the Committee of the whole House to which the ... Bill was committed has gone through the same and has directed me to report it to your Lordships with amendments [with an amendment] [without amendment].”

If no amendment has been made, the member in charge of the bill may then (though they need not) move –

“That this report be now received.”

and the Question is put accordingly. This is unusual (as there is usually a separate report stage) and normally done only by prior arrangement so should be covered in the brief.

Eligible disabled members taking part remotely

Today’s Lists and/or the brief may indicate that an eligible member will speak remotely. The Deputy should alert the House or Grand Committee at the start of the debate that a member is taking part remotely:

“My Lords, Lord/Baroness A will take part remotely in this debate.”

The Deputy then calls them at the point stated in the brief:

“My Lords, Lord/Baroness A is taking part remotely. I invite Lord/Baroness A to speak [move their amendment] [say whether they wish to move their amendment] [reply to the debate].”

If the mover of an amendment speaks remotely and presses it, when the Deputy collects the voices the Deputy takes their voice to be “*Content*”.

If a remote speaker is lost, it may not be possible to recover them before debate ends; the Clerk will advise. If this is achieved, the Deputy may call them again at a point agreed with the whip. If a remote mover is lost, and no other member moves the amendment, the Deputy says “***Not moved***”. If a remote mover is unable to withdraw, the Deputy acts on their intention, if already known or communicated promptly, or failing that the sense of the House expressed by the whips. If they have nominated another member to represent them in the Chamber, this will be in the brief.

Committee of the whole House on public bills – Procedure if no amendments

The following shortened procedures may be used in cases where no amendment has been set down and no member has given notice that they wish to move an amendment or speak to a clause or schedule. They will be covered in the brief.

Committee discharged

The member in charge of the bill, having given notice on the order paper, may move *“that the order of commitment [re-commitment] be discharged”*. If no member objects, the question is put from the Woolsack *“that the order of commitment be discharged”* and if agreed to the House proceeds to the next business on the order paper. If any member objects, the member in charge of the bill moves that the House do now resolve itself into a committee in the normal way; the Clerk at the Table will supply a brief for the Deputy.

Report forthwith without amendment

If the member in charge of the bill has not given notice for the discharge of the order of commitment, the House must go into committee. The Deputy may then ask the permission of the committee to report the bill without amendment forthwith instead of going through the bill in the usual way. The Deputy says –

“[Short title of bill]. My Lords, I understand that no amendments have been set down to the bill and that no noble Lord has indicated a wish to speak. With the agreement of the Committee, I will report the bill to the House without amendment.”

The Deputy should look around the Chamber to see whether any member wishes to speak. If not, they say –

“The House will now resume”

and they return to the Woolsack and report the bill without amendment. If a member indicates that they do want to speak, the Deputy puts the clauses and schedules in the usual way (in groups, if convenient). As soon as the House is resumed, the opportunity has passed for any member to move an amendment or to speak to a clause or schedule. This procedure is rarely needed.

Committee stage in Grand Committee

The Deputy's function in a Grand Committee is exactly the same as in the House.

The procedure described on pages 28–41 for Committee of the whole House is followed in a Grand Committee, with the following exceptions.

Divisions

It is not possible for a division to take place in Grand Committee. Therefore decisions of the Committee to amend the bill can only be made by unanimity. If there is objection to the Question that an amendment be agreed to and the amendment is not withdrawn, the Deputy must declare the amendment negatived. Provided that there is at least a single voice in favour the Deputy must declare clauses or schedules stood part, even if the clause or schedule is objected to.

Adjournment for a division in the House

If there is a division in the House while the Grand Committee is sitting, the Deputy should immediately interrupt proceedings and say –

“My Lords, there is a division in the House. The Committee will adjourn for 10 minutes.”

Adjournment during pleasure

It may be for the convenience of members that the Grand Committee adjourn for a short time during its proceedings

(e.g. for a statement in the House). Normally no question is put and the Deputy simply says –

“My Lords, the Committee will adjourn for X minutes.”

If, exceptionally, a proposal to adjourn were to give rise to debate, the Deputy would put the Question as follows –

“The Question is that the Grand Committee do now adjourn during pleasure until X o’clock. As many as are of that opinion ...”

Resumption of business

Following an adjournment during pleasure, or for a division in the House, the proceedings simply continue without further formality from the point at which they were broken off.

Completion of proceedings for the day

When the last amendment for the day has been disposed of, a whip will move that the Grand Committee adjourns.

The Deputy says –

“The Committee stands adjourned.”

No Question is put.

Completion of proceedings on the bill

When the last amendment has been disposed of the Deputy puts the Questions on the preamble (if there is one) and title in the usual way, and then says –

“My Lords, that concludes the Committee’s proceedings on the bill.”

Amendments on report

A further opportunity to move amendments to a bill arises on report stage. The Deputy should call on the report stage –

“[Further consideration on] report of the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness X”

The member in charge of the bill moves and the Question is put –

“That this report be now received.”

or

“That this bill be now further considered on report.”

When this has been agreed to, the Deputy calls each amendment in the order in which it appears on the marshalled list.

“Amendment 1 – Lord A.”

When Lord A has spoken to the amendment the Deputy says –

“Amendment proposed, page 1, line 1, leave out [insert the words as printed on the marshalled list]” (or the words to be inserted are read out if not too many).

The amendment is then considered and disposed of in the same manner as in committee (page 29).

Though generally speaking amendments are dealt with in the same way on report as in committee (see page 29), there are four important differences –

- (1) No member may speak more than once to the same Question unless they are the mover of an amendment replying to the debate on it or the minister (by leave).
- (2) Only the mover of an amendment should speak after the minister, except for short questions for elucidation. This rule does not apply if a minister wishes to speak early to assist the House.
- (3) The House is only considering the amendments before it, not the whole bill, so the existing clauses and schedules are not again stood part of the bill.
- (4) The moving of consecutive amendments *en bloc* is (because of (3) above) not confined to groups within a clause or schedule. Any consecutive amendments may, with the unanimous leave of the House, be moved *en bloc*, subject to the need for a decision in principle to have already been taken (see page 34).

The enforcement of (1) and (2) are matters for the whips, not the Deputy. When the last amendment has been disposed of, the report stage ends without any further Question and the House proceeds to the next business.

Proceedings on third reading

The last opportunity to move amendments to a bill is on third reading. The Deputy should call on the third reading –

“Third reading of the ... Bill – Lord/Baroness A”

The member in charge of the bill moves and the Question is put –

“That this bill be now read a third time.”

When this has been agreed to, the Deputy calls each amendment in the order in which it appears on the marshalled list and it is disposed of in the same way as at other stages. The rules which apply are broadly similar to those on report except that manuscript amendments may not be tabled. This is the last opportunity for moving amendments.

After third reading, when the amendments have been disposed of, the member in charge of the bill moves and the Question is put –

“That this bill do now pass.”

This Question may be opposed, and amendments tabled to it, but this is unusual. There is normally no substantive debate so any remarks should be brief. Sometimes there is a short debate thanking those who have taken part in proceedings on the bill. Lengthy debate is discouraged but this is not a matter for the Deputy.

Initial consideration of Commons amendments to a Lords bill

Notice is normally given on the order paper of consideration of Commons amendments to a bill, though in certain circumstances consideration may be moved forthwith without notice. A comprehensive brief is provided for this stage and other ‘ping-pong’ stages.

The Deputy calls on the business or, if it is taken forthwith, the Clerk reads the Commons message. Then the member in charge of the bill moves and the Question is put –

“That the Commons amendments be now considered [be considered forthwith].”

As soon as the motion for consideration has been agreed to the Deputy calls –

“Amendment 1 – Lord A.”

Typically, at the first stage of ping-pong on a Lords-starting bill, motions to agree with Commons amendments are not printed on a marshalled list but taken as implied: the brief indicates the relevant motion. Any variation from straight agreement is printed, however.

The member in charge of the bill may move that the House do agree with the Commons amendments singly or *en bloc*. Blocs must consist of consecutive amendments in the order in which they appear on the paper, to which no amendments or notice of opposition have been tabled. If leave to move amendments *en bloc* is refused the Question must be put separately on each amendment to the extent desired.

At the end of the mover's speech on Amendment 1 the Deputy puts the question –

“The Question is that this House do agree with the Commons in their Amendment 1 [Amendments 1–36 en bloc].”

If it is desired to move any subsequent amendments *en bloc* the mover must ask leave to do this when the first amendment of the group is called and the Question is put accordingly.

Where there is an amendment tabled to the Commons amendment, after the Question on the Commons amendment has been put for the first time the Deputy immediately calls the member in whose name the amendment stands –

“Amendment 1A – Lord B.”

They move and the Question is put –

“The Question is that Amendment 1A as an amendment to Commons Amendment 1 be agreed to.”

When the amendment to the Commons amendment has been disposed of the Question is then finally put –

“The Question is that this House do agree with the Commons in their Amendment 1 [as amended].”

Disagreement

Where a member seeks to disagree with the Commons amendment, or to propose an amendment in lieu, the counter-proposition is framed as a motion to amend the motion of the member in charge of the bill that the Commons amendment

be agreed to. Accordingly the Deputy calls first the member in charge, who moves, and the Question is then put –

“The Question is that this House do agree with the Commons in their Amendment I.”

The Deputy then immediately calls the member in whose name the amendment stands –

“Motion IA – Lord B.”

They move and the Question is put –

“The Question is that Motion IA be agreed to.”

If the motion is agreed to, no further Question is put with respect to the Commons amendment.

If the motion is withdrawn or disagreed to, the Deputy puts the Question on the original motion –

“The Question is that this House do agree with the Commons in their Amendment I.”

Where the member in charge wishes to disagree to a Commons amendment or propose an amendment in lieu, they so move when first called and the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that this House do disagree with the Commons in their Amendment I [but do propose Amendment IA in lieu].”

Subject to these points the rules of debate are the same as for report stage.

Lords amendments disagreed to by the Commons

If the Commons disagree to amendments proposed by the Lords, the bill is returned from the Commons with reasons for the disagreement, or amendments to or in lieu of the Lords amendments. When the bill is considered the Deputy calls on the business or, if it is taken forthwith, the Clerk reads the Commons message. Then the member in charge of the bill moves and the Question is put –

“The Question is that the Commons reason(s) [and amendment(s)] be now considered [be considered forthwith].”

Each motion to be moved by the member in charge is printed on the marshalled list and identified with a single letter. Any counter-propositions in the form of motions to amend these motions are identified as A1, A2, etc. The individual motions may cover one or more Commons reasons/amendments, and those amendments will be printed together on the marshalled list.

When the motion for consideration has been disposed of, the Deputy calls –

“Motion A – Lord X.”

The member in charge of the bill then moves and the Question is put –

“The Question is that Motion A be agreed to.”

If there is a counter-proposition, notice will have been given as Motion A1; the Deputy then calls the member in whose name Motion A1 stands to move their motion. The Question is then put –

“The Question is that Motion A1, as an amendment to Motion A, be agreed to.”

If Motion A1 is agreed to, and it rejects the Commons amendments, no further Question is put. If Motion A1 is agreed to and merely amends the Commons amendments, the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that Motion A as amended be agreed to.”

If Motion A1 is withdrawn or disagreed to, the Deputy puts the original Question –

“The Question is that Motion A be agreed to.”

Royal Assent by notification

Royal Assent to bills is generally notified to the House by the Lord Speaker or Deputy, either at the beginning of business or at a convenient point between items of business, or at the end of business. The Clerk will use the Teams Chat to indicate when the Deputy should rise and notify the Royal Assent with these words –

“My Lords, I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the King has signified his Royal Assent to the following Acts [and Measures]”.

and then reads out the short titles from the list in the Lord Speaker’s Brief.

Formally time-limited debates

If the time limit expires during a debate on a take note motion, the Clerk at the Table will rise and bow. The Deputy then says

–

“My Lords, the time allotted for this debate has now elapsed and I must put the Question. The Question is that this motion be agreed to. As many as are of that opinion ...”

If the time limit expires when debate on a substantive motion is continuing the Deputy says –

“My Lords, the time allotted for this debate has now elapsed. Does the noble Lord/Baroness wish to withdraw his/her motion?”

If the answer is in the affirmative, the Deputy says –

*“Is it your Lordships’ pleasure that the motion be withdrawn?” – and, in the absence of a dissentient voice –
“Motion by leave withdrawn.”*

If there is objection to withdrawal or the mover refuses to withdraw the motion, the Deputy says –

“The Question is that this motion be agreed to. As many as are of that opinion ...”

Interruption and postponement of business

Interruption for a statement

When the House is not in committee, the business is broken for a statement informally. A cue for proceedings on the statement to begin will be given by the Deputy, with wording supplied in that day's brief. The business interrupted is not called when the proceedings on the statement conclude. This applies whether the interruption occurs during the course of a debate on a motion, or between amendments at report stage or third reading. If the business interrupted is the report or third reading of a bill, the Deputy resumes the business by calling on the next amendment. In any other case it is for the next speaker on the list to rise and make their speech.

Different procedures apply to interruptions of a committee stage (see pages 57–58).

Interruption for dinner or lunch adjournment

If business (usually the stage of a bill) is to be broken for dinner or lunch, a whip will move that the business be adjourned. It is usual at this point for an indication to be given that the main business will not be resumed before a certain time. Accordingly the whip usually proposes that the business be resumed “*not before X o'clock*”.

The Question is then put that the business be adjourned, e.g. –

“The Question is that [further] consideration on report be adjourned [until...]”

If this arises during debate on an amendment, that debate must first be adjourned. See pages 59–60.

If there is no lunch or dinner business, the Question is then put that the House do now adjourn during pleasure until the time proposed. Similarly, if the dinner or lunch business concludes before that time, a whip moves and the Question is put that the House do adjourn during pleasure until X o'clock.

When an item of business has been broken off for an adjournment, the resumed business is called by the Deputy as if it were on the order paper, whether or not business has been taken during the adjournment.

Interruption of committee stage for other business

If it is wished to interrupt a committee stage to take other business (e.g. a statement or dinner break business), a member of the Government moves and the Deputy puts the Question

–

“The Question is that the House be resumed.”

When this motion is agreed to the Deputy moves immediately to the Woolsack and calls on the next business.

If this arises during debate on an amendment, that debate must first be adjourned. See pages 59–60.

When the other business has been completed, the member in charge of the bill moves and the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that the House do now again resolve itself into a committee on the bill.”

When this motion is agreed to the Deputy moves to the Chair and calls on the committee stage of the bill as set out on page 28.

Interruption of committee stage for dinner or lunch (no other business)

If it is wished to interrupt a committee stage for dinner or lunch during which no other business is to be taken, a member of the Government will merely state that it may be convenient for the committee to break at that point and resume again at a stated time. In the absence of objection no Question is put but the Deputy says –

“The Committee stands adjourned till X o’clock.”

If this arises during debate on an amendment, that debate must first be adjourned. See pages 59–60.

The Deputy then leaves the Chair. At the stated time following the adjournment, the Deputy goes straight to the Table and the committee stage is immediately resumed from the point reached before the interruption.

In the unlikely event of this procedure being objected to it is necessary either to continue the committee stage or for a motion to be moved and the Deputy to put the Question –

“The Question is that the House be resumed.”

If the resumption of the House is agreed to, the adjournment may be moved in the usual way after the House is resumed. After the adjournment the Deputy goes to the Woolsack and calls on the bill as if at a new sitting.

Adjournment of business to another day

(1) Committee stage

If the committee stage is not completed at one sitting, the member in charge of the bill or another member of the Government moves and the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that the House be resumed.”

Once the motion is agreed to the Deputy returns to the Woolsack.

(2) Report or third reading

The member in charge moves and the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that further consideration on report [proceedings after third reading] be now adjourned.”

(3) Second reading or other debate

A whip moves and the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that this debate be now adjourned till [tomorrow].”

Adjournment in mid-debate on an amendment

If it is desired to adjourn in mid-debate on an amendment &c, a whip first moves and the Deputy puts the Question –

“The Question is that debate on Amendment X be now adjourned.”

When business is resumed, no corresponding motion is required. The Deputy says –

“Resumed debate on Amendment X.”

Postponement of business

Business may be postponed to later the same day without notice, with the unanimous leave of the House. The business to be postponed has to be called by the Deputy and the member who intends to move the postponement should make clear the right of any member to object to the motion. Such objection would prevent the motion for postponement from being moved. So only if there is no objection does the Deputy put the Question that the business be postponed.

Grand Committees on statutory instruments, motions and questions for short debate

The Deputy's function in a Grand Committee is exactly the same as that of the Deputy in the House: to call on the business and put the Question on all motions which have been proposed. The Deputy may assist the Committee by reminding members of the relevant parts of the *Companion*. Such assistance is limited to procedural advice.

Procedure in Grand Committee on motions to consider statutory instruments (SIs), other motions and questions for short debate is essentially the same as in the House, except that no divisions can take place. The effect of this is that if any motion is opposed on the voices, and opposition persists, the Deputy must declare the motion negatived. In practice such opposition is rare, since the motions "to consider" and "take note" have no procedural force and there is no utility in opposing them.

As in the Chamber, when SIs, motions or questions for short debate are taken in a Grand Committee members may not (with the usual exceptions) speak more than once.

Statutory instruments

Statutory instruments considered in Grand Committee are debated on the motion, "*That the Grand Committee do consider the [name of Order]*". The Grand Committee therefore only considers SIs; the motion to approve (or annul) is moved subsequently in the Chamber in the usual way.

At the start of business the Deputy will call the first SI as follows –

“Consideration of the [name of Order] – Lord/Baroness A.”

The member in charge moves and the Deputy puts the Question–

“The Question is that the Grand Committee do consider this instrument.”

The debate follows and at the end the member in charge has a right of reply. The Deputy finally says –

“The Question is that the Grand Committee has considered this instrument. As many as are of that opinion ...”

If no debate arises on a motion, whether moved formally or not, the Question is put –

“That the Grand Committee do consider this instrument. As many as are of that opinion ...”

Where two or more SIs are debated together in Grand Committee, they may be taken *en bloc* provided the appropriate notice has been given. The Deputy puts the question –

“That the Grand Committee do consider the [two] Order[s] standing in the name of Lord A en bloc.”

Motions

The Deputy calls the motion as follows –

“Motion for debate: [Title of debate] – Lord/Baroness A”

Once the motion has been moved, the Question is put –

“The Question is that this motion be agreed to.”

The debate follows and at the end the mover has a right of reply. The Deputy finally says –

“The Question is that this motion be agreed to. As many as are of that opinion ...”

Questions for short debate

The Deputy calls the question as follows

“Question for short debate: [Title of QSD] – The time limit is one hour – Lord/Baroness A.”

As in the Chamber, there is no question for the Deputy to put.

Conclusion of proceedings

Once all the business has been completed, the Deputy says –

“My Lords, that completes the business before the Grand Committee this afternoon. The Committee stands adjourned.”

There is nothing further to say.

Adjournment for a division in the House

If there is a division in the House while the Grand Committee is sitting, the Deputy should immediately interrupt proceedings and say –

“My Lords, there is a division in the House. The Committee will adjourn for 10 minutes.”

Adjournment during pleasure

It may be for the convenience of members that the Grand Committee adjourn for a short time during its proceedings (e.g. for a statement in the House) or between items of business. Normally no question is put and the Deputy simply says –

“My Lords, the Committee will adjourn for X minutes [or until X o’clock].”

If, exceptionally, it was clear that a proposal to adjourn would give rise to debate, the Deputy would put the Question at the beginning of the debate as follows –

“The Question is that the Grand Committee do now adjourn during pleasure until X o’clock.”

But the Deputy should make it clear, either at the beginning of the debate, or at a later stage, according to the circumstances, that the House has agreed that there are to be no divisions in Grand Committee, and that therefore the motion could be debated, but would have to be agreed to unanimously, withdrawn or, in the event that the issue was pressed, negatived.

Resumption of business

Following an adjournment during pleasure, or for a division in the House, the proceedings simply continue without further formality from the point at which they were broken off.

No longer heard motion

If in a speech a member is thought to be seriously transgressing the accepted practice of the House, it is open to another member to move *“that the noble Lord/Baroness be no longer heard”*. This motion, however, is very rare; it is debatable and seldom needs to be decided on Question since members generally conform to the sense of the House as soon as this becomes clear. If, however, the member concerned persists in speaking, and there remains opposition to them doing so, the Question is put in the following form –

“The Question is that the noble Lord/Baroness, Lord/Lady A, be no longer heard.”

The effect of agreeing to this motion is to prohibit the member from speaking further on the motion or Question before the House, but not on any subsequent motion or Question.

Closure

The Closure (that is, the motion “*that the Question be now put*”) is an attempt to bring a debate to an end – close it down – before all who wish to speak have done so. It is a procedure to be used extremely sparingly. When a member seeks to move the Closure the Deputy shall bring the attention of the House to its exceptional nature and give the member concerned the opportunity of reconsidering their action, by reading the following paragraph to the House (or Committee) before the Question is put –

[To be read slowly]

“I am instructed by order of the House to say that it will accept the motion “That the Question be now put” only in circumstances where it is felt to be the only means of ensuring the proper conduct of the business of the House; further, if a member who seeks to move it persists in their intention, the practice of the House is that the Question on the motion is put without debate.”

If, nevertheless, the member who is seeking to move the Closure persists in their intention, the Deputy must put and complete the Question forthwith without debate, thus –

“The Question is that the Question be now put.”

If the Closure is carried –

- (1) the Deputy, without resuming their seat, immediately puts and completes the original Question without further debate;

- (2) the original Question cannot be withdrawn, because the House or Committee decided that the Question be now put; and
- (3) the Deputy may not put any other Question until the original Question has been disposed of.

If the Closure is not carried, the debate on the original Question is resumed.

Appendix I: General procedure on amendments and amendments to amendments

Amendments

The first amendment in each group is 'called' by the Deputy and 'moved' by the member proposing it. A debate follows, in which other amendments in the group are 'spoken to'. There is no time limit or list of speakers. The minister usually speaks last. At the end the mover has a right of reply. Then:

- in the Chamber but not in Grand Committee, the mover may 'test the opinion of the House', i.e. press it to a vote; or
- the mover may 'beg leave to withdraw', which must be unanimous; or
- the amendment may be agreed without a vote.

Other amendments in the group are called in their place on the marshalled list. If the first amendment was defeated or withdrawn, the rest are usually 'not moved', with no speeches, but they may be pressed to a separate vote (if they are being considered in the Chamber). If the first was agreed to, others may be 'moved formally' and agreed without a vote. Whether one amendment is 'pre-empted' by another already agreed (so the House cannot even consider it) is announced by the Deputy; whether one amendment is 'consequential' on another already agreed (so the House should agree it without further debate) is up to the House. Groupings are informal and not binding but the de-grouping of amendments for separate

debate after each day's groupings have been published is discouraged.

In committee, after any amendments to each clause or schedule the question is put whether the clause or schedule should be included in ('stand part of') the bill. Members can make general points about it or seek to leave it out by opposing the question that it should 'stand part'.

In debates in committee members may speak more than once. At report and third reading they may generally speak only once and not after the minister, unless briefly to ask a short question of the minister 'before they sit down'. Speeches must relate to amendments in the group; general 'second reading' speeches are not allowed. Points made in committee should not be repeated at length at report.

Amendments to amendments

The standard procedure for an amendment to an amendment, whether an amendment to a bill or to a motion, is:

- The Deputy Speaker calls the main amendment. If it is not moved, the amendment to it cannot be called;
- If the main amendment is moved, it may be spoken to by the mover and the Deputy puts the Question for the first time;
- The Deputy then calls the amendment to the amendment;
- If the amendment to the amendment is moved, it may be spoken to by the mover and the Deputy puts the Question on the amendment to the amendment for the first time;

- Debate may follow;
- The mover of the amendment to the amendment has right of reply and either begs to move or begs leave to withdraw;
- If they beg to move, the Deputy then puts the Question on the amendment to the amendment and collects the voices (and calls a division if necessary);
- The mover of the original amendment then either begs to move or begs leave to withdraw (the Deputy may need to prompt them); and
- If they beg to move, the Deputy then puts the Question on the original amendment [as amended] and collects the voices (and calls a division if necessary).

Members sometimes expect the question on the main amendment to be decided before the question on the amendment to the amendment. If this happened, the question on the main amendment would pre-empt the question on the amendment to the amendment, which could not then be put to the House.

Appendix 2: Unusual proceedings on divisions – forms of words

No quorum on a division

(4) On –

- a stage of a bill or on an amendment to a motion relating to such a stage;
- a motion to approve an affirmative instrument; and
- a prayer to annul a negative instrument –

“As it appears that fewer than thirty Lords have voted, in accordance with Standing Order No. 56 I declare the Question not decided and the debate thereon stands adjourned.”

(5) On an amendment to a bill at any stage other than in committee –

“As it appears that fewer than thirty Lords have voted, in accordance with Standing Order No. 56 I declare the Question not decided and the further proceedings on the bill stand adjourned.”

(6) On an amendment to a bill in Committee of the whole House –

“As it appears that fewer than thirty Lords have voted, in accordance with Standing Order No. 56 I declare the Question not decided; and, pursuant to the Standing Order, the House will now resume.”

The House then proceeds to the next business (if any) on the order paper.

Equality of votes

The general principle behind the various options below is contained in SO 55, that legislation is allowed to proceed in the form which is before the House unless there is a majority in favour of rejecting or amending it.

Equality of votes – stages of a bill

- (1) On a stage of a bill –

“There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55, which provides that no proposal to reject a bill shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection, I declare the motion agreed to.”

- (2) On an amendment to a motion relating to a stage of a bill –

“There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject or amend a motion relating to the stages of a bill shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection or amendment) I declare the amendment disagreed to.”

Equality of votes – amendments to bills

- (3) On an amendment to a bill (including an amendment to insert or substitute a clause or schedule) and including amendments to amendments –

“There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to amend a bill in the form in which it is before the House shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such amendment) I declare the amendment disagreed to.”

- (4) On the question that the clause stand part, or that this be a schedule to the bill –

“There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to amend a bill in the form in which it is before the House shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such amendment) I declare the question resolved in the affirmative.”

Equality of votes – Commons amendments

- (5) On consideration of Commons amendments (since the form of the bill before the House is taken to be the bill as amended by the Commons) –

“There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to amend a bill in the form in which it is before the House shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such amendment) I declare the –

amendment/motion disagreed to (in the case of a Lords amendment to a Commons amendment or a Lords motion to insist or to propose an amendment in lieu or to disagree with a Commons amendment); or

amendment/motion agreed to (in the probably hypothetical case of a division on the Question that the Commons amendment be agreed to or a motion not to insist)."

Equality of votes – delegated legislation

- (6) On a motion to approve an affirmative instrument –

"There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject subordinate legislation shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection) I declare the motion agreed to."

- (7) On an amendment declining to approve an affirmative instrument or a prayer to annul a negative instrument –

"There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject subordinate legislation shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection) I declare the amendment/motion disagreed to."

Equality of votes – other matters

- (8) On any matter or amendment other than those relating to stages of bills, amendments to bills, or the approval or annulment of delegated legislation –

"There being an equality of votes, in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that the question before the House shall be resolved in the negative unless there is a majority in its favour) I declare the motion/ amendment disagreed to".

Insufficiency of Tellers on one side only

- (1) Insufficiency of Tellers for the Contents –

“Tellers for the Contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place, and I declare that the Not-contents have it.”

- (2) Insufficiency of Tellers for the Not-contents –

“Tellers for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No 52. A division therefore cannot take place and I declare that the Contents have it.”

Insufficiency of Tellers on both sides

- (1) On a stage of a bill –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject a bill shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection) I declare the motion agreed to.”

- (2) On an amendment to a motion relating to a stage of a bill –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject or amend a motion relating to the stages of a bill shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of

such rejection or amendment) I declare the amendment disagreed to.”

- (3) On an amendment to a bill –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to amend a bill in the form in which it is before the House shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such amendment) I declare the amendment disagreed to.”

- (4) On the question that the clause stand part, or that this be a schedule to the bill –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 52 (which provides that no proposal to amend a bill in the form in which it is before the House shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such amendment) I declare the question resolved in the affirmative.”

- (5) On an amendment to disagree with or amend a Commons amendment, or insist on a Lords amendment –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to amend a bill in the form in which it is before the House shall

be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such amendment) I declare the amendment disagreed to”.

- (6) On a motion to approve an affirmative instrument –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject subordinate legislation shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection) I declare the motion agreed to.”

- (7) On an amendment declining to approve an affirmative instrument or a prayer to annul a negative instrument –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that no proposal to reject subordinate legislation shall be agreed to unless there is a majority in favour of such rejection) I declare the amendment/motion disagreed to.”

- (8) On any matter or amendment other than those relating to stages of bills, amendments to bills or the approval or annulment of delegated legislation –

“Tellers for the Contents and for the Not-contents have not been appointed pursuant to Standing Order No. 52. A division therefore cannot take place and in accordance with Standing Order No. 55 (which provides that the question before the House shall be resolved in the negative unless

Appendix 2: Unusual proceedings on divisions – forms of words

there is a majority in favour of such question) I declare the motion/amendment disagreed to.”

Appendix 3: Putting the Question during bill stages

Introductory motions

“The Question is that this bill be now read a first [second] [third] time.”

“The Question is that the House do now [again] resolve itself into a committee upon the bill.”

“The Question is that this report be now received.”

“The Question is that this bill be now further considered on report.”

“The Question is that this bill do now pass.”

Calling amendments

“In clause X [after clause X], amendment Y – Lord A.”

Putting the Question the first time on amendments

“Amendment proposed, page X, line Y, leave out “...” and insert the words as printed on the marshalled list” (or the Deputy reads out the words if they are not too many, e.g. no more than a single line of text).

Disposing of amendments

If a motion or amendment is pressed:

“The Question is that this motion [amendment] be agreed to.”

“The Question is that amendments 25 to 30 be agreed to en bloc.”

If leave is sought to withdraw a motion or amendment:

“Is it your Lordships’ pleasure that this motion [amendment] be withdrawn?”

If there is no dissenting voice the Deputy adds –

“Motion [amendment] by leave withdrawn.”

Clauses and schedules (committee stage only)

To stand part a clause/schedule:

“The Question is that Clause X stand part of the bill.”

*“The Question is that this be the Schedule to the bill” or
“That Schedule I [as amended] be the first schedule to the bill.”*

To stand part a clause/schedule (notice of debate):

“The Question is that Clause X stand part of the bill – Lord A.”

Title (at end of Committee stage):

“The Question is that this [as amended] be the title of the bill.”

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