

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
GENERAL COMMITTEES

## Public Bill Committee

### HOUSE OF COMMONS (ADMINISTRATION) BILL

*Wednesday 24 February 2016*

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#### CONTENTS

CLAUSES 1 to 9 agreed to, some with amendments.  
CLAUSE 10 disagreed to.  
CLAUSES 11 to 13 agreed to, some with amendments.  
SCHEDULE agreed to.  
Title amended.  
Bill, as amended, to be reported.

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**Sunday 28 February 2016**

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT WILL GREATLY  
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THE BOUND VOLUMES OF PROCEEDINGS  
IN GENERAL COMMITTEES

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**The Committee consisted of the following Members:***Chair:* MR NIGEL EVANS

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|---|--|
| † Beresford, Sir Paul ( <i>Mole Valley</i> ) (Con)                          | † Harris, Rebecca ( <i>Castle Point</i> ) (Con)                        |
| † Betts, Mr Clive ( <i>Sheffield South East</i> ) (Lab)                     | † Howell, John ( <i>Henley</i> ) (Con)                                 |
| Blenkinsop, Tom ( <i>Middlesbrough South and East<br/>Cleveland</i> ) (Lab) | † Lilley, Mr Peter ( <i>Hitchin and Harpenden</i> ) (Con)              |
| † Brown, Mr Nicholas ( <i>Newcastle upon Tyne East</i> )<br>(Lab)           | † Meale, Sir Alan ( <i>Mansfield</i> ) (Lab)                           |
| Carmichael, Mr Alistair ( <i>Orkney and Shetland</i> ) (LD)                 | † Mowat, David ( <i>Warrington South</i> ) (Con)                       |
| † Chope, Mr Christopher ( <i>Christchurch</i> ) (Con)                       | † Onn, Melanie ( <i>Great Grimsby</i> ) (Lab)                          |
| † Coffey, Dr Thérèse ( <i>Deputy Leader of the House of<br/>Commons</i> )   | † Watkinson, Dame Angela ( <i>Hornchurch and<br/>Upminster</i> ) (Con) |
| † Day, Martyn ( <i>Linlithgow and East Falkirk</i> ) (SNP)                  | Fergus Reid, <i>Committee Clerk</i>                                    |
| † Freer, Mike ( <i>Finchley and Golders Green</i> ) (Con)                   | † <b>attended the Committee</b>  |

## Public Bill Committee

*Wednesday 24 February 2016*

[MR NIGEL EVANS *in the Chair*]

### House of Commons (Administration) Bill

2 pm

**The Chair:** Please can we make sure that our electronic devices are turned to silent? There is to be no tea or coffee, but the Minister will be delighted that we will allow Coca-Cola.

**The Deputy Leader of the House of Commons (Dr Thérèse Coffey):** I've drunk it.

**The Chair:** There will be no Coca-Cola, either, then.

This is a private Member's Bill and we do not have a programme motion to agree, so we will start straightaway with clause 1. There is no set finish time this afternoon. Our proceedings will be concluded either by our finishing with the Bill or by the Committee agreeing to adjourn.

#### Clause 1

##### THE FUND

*Question proposed,* That the clause stand part of the Bill.

**The Chair:** With this it will be convenient to consider clauses 2 to 6 stand part.

**Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) (Con):** It is delightful to serve under your guidance, Mr Evans, particularly as I am sure you are going to help us to get the Bill through quite speedily.

Normally at the end of such a Committee the Member in charge of the Bill thanks members of the Committee, the Chair and so on. I will do that now, as this is an opportunity to point out that, with the help of all Members, this Committee stage will be brief. We might break my record for a Committee, which is 23 minutes, if we proceed with great haste. I thank you, Mr Evans, the members of the Committee who have come along, and the Minister, who is in effect standing in for the Treasury. I particularly thank my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch, who intervened at an appropriate stage of the Bill's passage. The Committee will see his amendments as we proceed.

This is a little Bill to consolidate and amend provisions for the House of Commons Members' Fund. I suspect that few Members who are not trustees will be aware of the fund—a number of members of this Committee are trustees, and the chairman of trustees is with us—other than noting a small deduction on their monthly Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority payslip. The fund was established before the second world war, when there was no parliamentary pension to help former Members who had fallen into financial difficulties. The fund has been used to top up pensions for the widows of Members who left the House when widows received a lower

entitlement—that is an interesting statement, because of course it should be “spouses” nowadays, but this was before the second world war—and for a few isolated cases of hardship of former Members.

As the Committee will recognise from that description, demands on the fund have dropped as time has passed. In the last financial year, payments worked out at £137,000. As a consequence, the fund has grown over the years to a considerable £7 million. At present, the fund draws from compulsory contributions from Members, earnings from its investments and an annual contribution from the Treasury of approximately £215,000. If the Committee agrees to the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch, that last contribution will cease. The Bill will also remove the requirement under existing primary legislation for Members to make monthly contributions of £2. In effect, the trustees will be empowered to cease deducting contributions. Given the figures that I have just stated, I suspect that they intend to do so immediately following Royal Assent, as the fund has, to put it simply, a considerable surplus. However, the Bill will also enable them to recommend resumption of contributions, if needed, up to a maximum of 0.2% of pay. The trustees can, if they agree, return any surplus funds to the Treasury, and they have requested that discretion.

The Bill will extend the class of beneficiaries to assist all dependants of former Members who experience severe hardship. It will also remove the requirement for trustees to be current Members. I am sure the Committee agrees that it is sensible for the trustees to ask, for example, the Association of Former Members of Parliament to nominate one trustee. In addition, the Bill will enable the trustees to get over the problem that arises when, at a general election, a number of trustees lose or vacate their seat. The Bill will allow such former MPs to remain as trustees temporarily until they are formally replaced.

This is a little Bill, a sensible Bill and a tidying up Bill, and I hope the Committee will accept clauses 1 to 6.

**Melanie Onn (Great Grimsby) (Lab):** I will not detain the Committee long. It is worth saying that, although I was not aware of this fund, I recognise that even in the smallest of such bodies, the good work of the trustees who support the work in distributing any funds should not go unrecognised, so I thank them for all their work so far. It is right that we review this matter, and I agree that this is a tidying-up Bill, but I have some questions.

The Bill does not appear to provide for circumstances in which the scheme needs to be wound up entirely. The hon. Member for Mole Valley mentioned that the fund is being called on less and less as the years go by. Would it be sensible now to consider the time when the fund is no longer required, or the scope of the changes? Now, with the contributory pension scheme, it is unlikely to be relied upon in the same way. Is there a requirement for the long-term continuance of the scheme?

I believe the repayment figure stands at about £1 million to be returned to the Treasury, at the discretion of the trustees. I wondered what the projections for the scheme over the next five years are, primarily because I wonder what the purpose could possibly be of retaining such a balance. Would it be preferable to return a greater sum?

Is the Treasury the appropriate place to return the money to? Is it necessary for £6 million to remain in the fund?

**Sir Paul Beresford:** Most of what we are doing today enables the trustees to be in the position to answer most of the hon. Lady's questions when they decide on the conditions. The refund to the Treasury will be in the hands of the trustees, and the chairman of the trustees is here to hear her. The balance at the moment is £6.5 million. It is estimated that we need about £4 million, which means that there could be a refund of £2 million, but that will be down to the trustees. One of the more modern ways of government is to devolve the decisions on these sorts of matters downwards, and I think it is appropriate to give the trustees the ability to do that, including wind-up if they wish.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 1 accordingly ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 2 to 6 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Clause 7

#### PUBLIC MONEY

**Mr Christopher Chope** (Christchurch) (Con): I beg to move amendment 1, in clause 7, page 3, line 32, leave out subsection (1).

**The Chair:** With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Amendment 2, in clause 7, page 3, line 34, leave out subsection (2).

Amendment 3, in clause 7, page 3, line 35, leave out subsection (3).

Amendment 4, in clause 7, page 4, line 1, leave out "under subsection (1)" and insert "by the Treasury (under an enactment repealed by this Act), and".

Amendment 5, in clause 7, page 4, line 4, leave out subsection (5).

Amendment 6, in clause 7, page 4, line 6, leave out "subsection (4)" and insert "this section".

Amendment 7, in clause 7, page 4, line 7, leave out subsection (7).

Amendment 8, in clause 9, page 4, line 36, leave out subsection (2).

Amendment 9, in clause 11, page 5, line 12, leave out from "force" to end and insert

"at the end of the period of three months beginning with the day this Act receives Royal Assent."

Amendment 10, in clause 11, page 5, line 14, leave out subsection (2).

Amendment 11, page 6, line 8 in schedule, at end insert—

"4A The trustees may enter into arrangements for the transfer (by sale or otherwise) of liabilities or commitments (which may include future liabilities or commitments) on such terms as the trustees may agree."

*The amendment would allow the trustees to make arrangements under which an insurance company or other commercial institution would undertake to adopt liabilities or commitments of the Fund in return for one or more commuted payments.*

Clause stand part.

**Mr Chope:** It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Evans. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Mole Valley for his willingness to discuss the issues arising from the Bill as drafted by him.

Private Members' Bills are an iterative process, and this Bill follows on from similar Bills in the last Parliament introduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Hitchin and Harpenden. During the last Parliament, for reasons that I cannot really recall, I started taking an interest in the subject, and it seemed to me that we needed to try to set up a proper benevolent fund for House of Commons Members, totally independent of the Treasury. That is the purpose of my proposed amendments to clause 7, which would remove from the Treasury any responsibility for making payments into our Members' fund.

Under subsection (1),

"The Treasury may make payments into the House of Commons Members' Fund."

Under subsection (2),

"The amount paid in in any year shall not exceed £215,000."

My amendments would remove that power from the Treasury and ensure that there were no references to any specific sums. Subsection (4) would be retained so that the trustees had discretion to

"surrender to the Treasury amounts which in the trustees' opinion...are attributable to sums paid to the Fund"

under past arrangements. The amendments would also make it clear that in future any money beyond that already in the fund would need to come either from Members' contributions, as my hon. Friend the Member for Mole Valley outlined in relation to clause 1, or from voluntary donations.

There is every reason to believe that there are current or former Members of this House who might be inclined to make a legacy to a House of Commons benevolent fund. That is what happens in a lot of professions. As a member of the Bar, I know that the barristers' benevolent fund is in receipt of legacies from barristers, former barristers and their dependants. There is no reason why the same thing should not happen in relation to our fund, but at the moment there is a bit of an inhibition for somebody to donate or leave a legacy to the House of Commons Members' Fund because they know that, in so doing, they are absolving the Treasury of potential liability. I do not know why, but that does not seem always to be a good incentive for somebody to make a voluntary contribution.

By ensuring that the Treasury is kept out of this, we will be able to move towards a truly benevolent fund, which is what I proposed to my right hon. Friend the Member for Hitchin and Harpenden in the previous Parliament. At that stage, there seemed to be some doubt about whether there would be sufficient money in the fund to allow it to go on its own, but with the help of my hon. Friend the Member for Mole Valley, we got from advice from the Government Actuary that shows current liabilities of about £4 million and assets in excess of £6 million. It is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure that, at any one time, assets are sufficient to cover liabilities, and from the information given in the Government Actuary's report, I see no reason why that would not be possible in future. The fund will be self-standing, self-sufficient and independent of the Treasury. That is the purport of my amendments.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** I thank my hon. Friend. We had a very constructive meeting on this, and as a result of his lateral thinking we went to the Government Actuary and got the situation spelled out, as he has just explained. I wish that the next time he speaks and I have to answer that he uses shorter words, because English is my second language, and sometimes barrister's words are too long for me. I am delighted that he feels we will get gifts and bequests. My profession has a similar back-up system but I do not think that the bequests are quite the same as the legal profession seems to manage. I certainly support his amendments.

*Amendment 1 agreed to.*

*Amendments made:* 2, in clause 7, page 3, line 34, leave out subsection (2)

Amendment 3, in clause 7, page 3, line 35, leave out subsection (3)

Amendment 4, in clause 7, page 4, line 1, leave out “under subsection (1)” and insert

“by the Treasury (under an enactment repealed by this Act), and”

Amendment 5, in clause 7, page 4, line 4, leave out subsection (5)

Amendment 6, in clause 7, page 4, line 6, leave out “subsection (4)” and insert “this section”

Amendment 7, in clause 7, page 4, line 7, leave out subsection (7)—(*Mr Chope.*)

*Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

## Clause 8

### TAX

2.15 pm

**Dr Coffey:** I beg to move amendment 12, in clause 8, page 4, line 16, leave out “(Administration)” and insert “Members’ Fund”

*The amendment is consequential on amendment 15. This provision of the Bill textually amends existing legislation so as to refer to the Bill. This Committee amendment secures that the textual amendment uses the new short title which results from amendment 15.*

**The Chair:** With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Amendment 13, in clause 8, page 4, line 22, leave out “(Administration)” and insert “Members’ Fund”

*The amendment is consequential on amendment 15. This provision of the Bill textually amends existing legislation so as to refer to the Bill. This Committee amendment secures that the textual amendment uses the new short title which results from amendment 15.*

Amendment 15, in clause 13, page 5, line 20, leave out “(Administration)” and insert “Members’ Fund”

*Without clause 10 (see amendment 14), the Bill will deal only with the House of Commons Members’ Fund. The amendment changes the short title of the Bill accordingly.*

Amendment 16, title, line 2, leave out from “Fund” to end of line 3

*The amendment is consequential on amendment 14. The long title no longer needs to refer to the subject matter of clause 10.*

Clauses 8 to 13 stand part.

That the schedule be the schedule to the Bill.

**Dr Coffey:** It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Evans.

Amendment 12 will be necessary should the Committee decide that clause 10 should not stand part of the Bill, as the Government intend to argue. The Clerks have advised that leaving out clause 10 would necessitate a change in title from the House of Commons (Administration) Bill to the House of Commons (Members’ Fund) Bill. Amendments 12, 13, 15 and 16 would amend the short and long titles to reflect that.

The Government oppose the inclusion of clause 10 because we believe that it is appropriate for the estimates to remain separate. It is currently the responsibility of the Government to lay the Members estimate before the House and of the Speaker to lay the Administration estimate before the House. The current division of responsibilities is appropriate and should remain.

**Mr Nicholas Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne East) (Lab): I would like, very briefly, to explore with the Minister why the Government hold the view that the two estimates should remain separate and that the Bill should not even be permissive on the subject of merging the two estimates. One estimate covers a maximum of £22 million of public expenditure in the context of £700 billion of expenditure. The Members estimate, for which the House is responsible, is something of an anomaly now. It is effectively residual following the setting up of IPSA. It is not possible for the sums spent to be increased by a decision, say, of the Commission or of any other House body because the pay and rations for MPs are now dealt with exclusively by IPSA.

Effectively, the Members estimate covers residual things such as Short money, which is wholly conditioned by a resolution of the House and not open to serious adjustment via any other mechanism, as well as the computers and stationery that Members use. I think that is just about it now. It is not an extensive budget head and there is not much scope for it to expand.

In an ideal and virtuous world, we would be looking at ways of merging these necessary expenditures with the main functions of IPSA. Certainly it seems odd that the Government are not even keeping the idea alive. Parliamentary vehicles such as this Bill do not come along very often. I fully accept that the Government are assisting with this one so I will not push my point too far. I wish the Bill well. The hon. Member for Mole Valley, who I will call my hon. Friend, has done well to get the Bill this far, and I appreciate the generally constructive approach that the Government are taking as, indeed, previous Governments did when they tried to get a similar measure through. I just think that the Government may have got it wrong on whether the estimates—not the monies—could be merged at some future point.

Such a merger could not take place before 2017 in any event. The Treasury would have to agree to it, as would the other parties, before anything like that could be done. The idea is that agreeing to it now would somehow commit the Treasury, but it is not as though anybody could do that. The Treasury would still have to consent. It seems to me a bit narrow of the Government—it clearly is the Government—to insist that that not be a route taken at some stage in the future. From a House of Commons point of view, it might be sensible to at least leave the option open and to leave legislative provision, perhaps making it clearer on Report that the Treasury would have to consent before anything such as this could be done.

In an ideal world, that is the approach we would take. There may be some Member resistance because of dissatisfaction with IPSA, but that would be about the functioning of IPSA rather than the merging of the estimates. The Minister was open enough to say that this was opposed, but she did not explain why. I would like to hear that explanation.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** I hope we can resolve this issue because, to be quite blunt, this is an opportunist clause put in for an opportune moment, and it looks to me as though—to use a colonial phrase—we were rumbled. I therefore support the Minister's position, particularly as the clause is not related to the fund itself directly or the management of the fund.

On the assumption that it is appropriate to do so, I will speak briefly to amendment 11, which is to the schedule. This is a belt and braces amendment for the trustees, because it allows them to make arrangements under which a commercial institution could undertake the commitments or liabilities of the fund. That follows the thinking of my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch.

**Dr Coffey:** I thank my hon. Friend for what he just said. Let me say in response to the right hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne East that there has been considerable consideration of this issue by my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Treasury. The Government believe that merging the Administration and the Members estimates, to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, would require relinquishing Government oversight of the Members estimate and therefore reducing the Government's ability to scrutinise costs. Given the current fiscal environment, the Treasury would like to continue to be able to offer that scrutiny and support to the House of Commons to keep expenditure down. As my hon. Friend the Member for Mole Valley mentioned, we are keen for the Bill to go forward, but we are also keen to keep that scrutiny.

**Mr Clive Betts** (Sheffield South East) (Lab): Will the Minister give way?

**Dr Coffey:** I have sat down.

**Mr Betts:** I hoped the Minister was going to give way because, with respect, she did not answer the question. The issue at this stage is not whether we should amalgamate the two estimates, though there is actually quite a strong case for that, given the disparity in size. If the Treasury really is so upset about £22 million that it thinks we need this great panoply of extra audit committees, extra scrutiny and extra laying of separate estimates, it has got its priorities a little bit wrong. In every other respect, the Government and the Treasury are encouraging public bodies to look for easy administrative savings—sometimes quite difficult ones—by sharing. That is what they are encouraging local government to do.

The question that my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne East asked the Minister was: is it not true that the Bill as drafted does not ensure the amalgamation of the two estimates, but simply enables that to happen, with a very important caveat, which is that the Treasury can say no; and if the Treasury's

position remains that it does not want to approve the amalgamation, it can maintain that position? The Bill as drafted has an enabling provision whereby if in the future all the parties agree that it is a good idea to amalgamate the estimates, that amalgamation can take place. The Treasury would still have a veto, but if there were a change of mood, approach or position in the future, we would not need another piece of primary legislation to enable that to happen. We all know—some of us better than others—how long it has taken to get this piece of primary legislation this far.

All the Bill does is enable. The Bill still leaves the Treasury in the driving seat if it wants to remain there. I really do not understand the Minister's position. She did not answer the fundamental question that my right hon. Friend raised, and it would be helpful if she responded to it.

**The Chair:** The Minister is indicating that she does not wish to speak.

**Mr Chope:** I did not want to join this discussion, but if a perfectly reasonable question is put to a Minister on such a Committee, it is conducive to the orderly conduct of the Committee's proceedings if the Minister responds. Otherwise the issue will be raised again, perhaps on Report. I would have thought it is better to resolve the issue now. There may be a simple explanation, and if there is not we are owed an explanation of why there is nothing simple about it. The Minister may be doing what she has been told by the Treasury, which may have instructed her not to say anything. If that is so, perhaps she can tell us that those are her instructions. I am sure that it is possible to enable the Bill to proceed with everyone agreeing on its content and with good will on both sides of the Committee. To facilitate that, I invite her to respond to the question that has been put.

**Dr Coffey:** I feel that I have responded. I can read exactly the same response into the record if that is required but, as I have already said, there has been considerable consideration by the Government. The answer I gave to the right hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne East is still valid, and it is the answer that I offer on behalf of the Government. I am not sure why my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch believes that I have not said anything, because I have replied. He may not have liked my reply, and the hon. Member for Sheffield South East may not like it either, but I have replied.

**Mr Betts:** Will the Minister give way?

**Dr Coffey:** No, I will not give way, because I have replied to the right hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne East.

**Mr Brown:** I accept that the Minister has replied, and I will not push the point because, of course, I wish the Bill well and I take the point about the ambitions of the hon. Member for Mole Valley for the duration of this Committee.

I ask the Minister to ask her Department, and particularly the Treasury, to consider the possibility that on this point they may be mistaken and that the

[Mr Nicholas Brown]

answer she has given to the Committee may not stand up to close scrutiny. When one looks at what the Members estimate actually covers, the amount of control that the Treasury, or indeed anybody else, could properly exercise over the very narrow individual budgetary heads to which I referred earlier, and that are covered by this part of the House's estimates, is very narrowly drawn. The principal matters are the Short money, which is a matter for a resolution of the House, and nobody else can go beyond that—we decide it collectively. Traditionally, it has always been done by consent through the usual channels, and then by the Leader of the House and the Opposition spokesmen. It has been done by complete and harmonious agreement in the past, although I agree that that might not be what is happening now, but that does not alter the point that it will have to be decided on the Floor of the House.

The other items that are covered relate to the necessary computer assistance to Members, the postage system and some other administrative costs. It is now very narrowly drawn, because all those sorts of matters are properly dealt with by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. The amount of actual control that the Treasury says it does not want to relinquish over either an independent public body, over which it should not be exercising any undue control at all, or the narrow items under this budgetary head is absolutely minimal. In that context, and perhaps with that awareness, I invite officials to think again. It is a pity that we are missing this opportunity, because parliamentary opportunities to address such detailed questions do not come along very often, I accept that such opportunities would not come along at all if the Government did not help, which is why I do not want to push the point any further. Will the Minister oblige me by having further discussions with officials on the narrow points of substance that lie underneath the estimate?

**Dr Coffey:** It goes without saying that of course I will share with my right hon. and hon. Friends in the Government any concerns raised by the Committee.

*Amendment 12 agreed to.*

*Amendment made:* 13, in clause 8, page 4, line 22, leave out “(Administration)” and insert “Members’ Fund”.—(Dr Thérèse Coffey.)

*The amendment is consequential on amendment 15. This provision of the Bill textually amends existing legislation so as to refer to the Bill. This Committee amendment secures that the textual amendment uses the new short title which results from amendment 15.*

*Clause 8, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Clause 9

#### REPEALS AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

*Amendment made:* 8, in clause 9, page 4, line 36, leave out subsection (2).—(Mr Chope.)

*Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.  
Clause 10 disagreed to.*

### Clause 11

#### COMMENCEMENT

*Amendments made:* 9, in clause 11, page 5, line 12, leave out from “force” to end and insert

“at the end of the period of three months beginning with the day this Act receives Royal Assent.”.

*Amendment 10, in clause 11, page 5, line 14, leave out subsection (2).—(Mr Chope.)*

*Clause 11, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 12 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Clause 13

#### SHORT TITLE

*Amendment made:* 15, in clause 13, page 5, line 20, leave out “(Administration)” and insert “Members’ Fund”.—(Dr Thérèse Coffey.)

*Without clause 10 (see amendment 14), the Bill will deal only with the House of Commons Members’ Fund. The amendment changes the short title of the Bill accordingly.*

*Clause 13, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Schedule

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS MEMBERS’ FUND: TRUSTEES’ POWERS AND PROCEEDINGS

*Amendment made:* 11, in schedule, page 6, line 8, at end insert—

“4A The trustees may enter into arrangements for the transfer (by sale or otherwise) of liabilities or commitments (which may include future liabilities or commitments) on such terms as the trustees may agree.”.—(Sir Paul Beresford.)

*The amendment would allow the trustees to make arrangements under which an insurance company or other commercial institution would undertake to adopt liabilities or commitments of the Fund in return for one or more commuted payments.*

*Schedule, as amended, agreed to.*

### Title

*Amendment made:* 16, in title, line 2, leave out from “Fund” to end of line 3.—(Dr Thérèse Coffey.)

*The amendment is consequential on amendment 14. The long title no longer needs to refer to the subject matter of clause 10.*

*Bill, as amended, to be reported.*

2.33 pm

*Committee rose.*