



HOUSE OF LORDS

Procedure Committee

9th Report of Session 2010–12

Debates on motions in Grand
Committee

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The Procedure Committee

The Select Committee on Procedure of the House is appointed each session to consider any proposals for alterations in the procedure of the House that may arise from time to time, and whether the standing orders require to be amended.

Current Membership

The members of the Procedure Committee are:

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Lord Bassam of Brighton
Lord Brabazon of Tara (*Chairman*)
Baroness D'Souza (*Lord Speaker*)
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General Information

General information about the House of Lords and its Committees is on the Internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/lords/index.cfm>.

Contacts for the Procedure Committee

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk to the Procedure Committee, House of Lords, London, SW1A 0PW.

The telephone number for enquiries regarding the Committee's work is 020 7219 8796.

NINTH REPORT FROM THE PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Debates on motions in Grand Committee

1. We have considered a proposal from the Clerk of the Parliaments, brought forward with the support of the usual channels, to allow general debates to be held in Grand Committee. To give effect to this change, a new subheading, “general motions for debate”, would be added to the list of categories of business that can be taken in Grand Committee given in paragraph 3.15 of the *Companion to the Standing Orders*. If this proposal is agreed by the House, it is expected that the first such debate will be held on 1 December 2011.
2. We also take this opportunity to clarify current practice on referring items of business to the Grand Committee. We see no good reason for business motions except when there are to be further proceedings in the House. Thus business motions are appropriate to refer bills or affirmative instruments to the Grand Committee, which in turn reports that it has considered the bill or instrument. But the use of a business motion in relation to a Committee report¹ or a take note motion, where there are no further proceedings in the House, seems to be anomalous. Business motions are already not required in the case of Questions for Short Debate, motions to consider negative instruments or national policy statements.
3. **We therefore recommend:**
 - **That “general motions for debate” be added to the list of categories of business that can be taken in Grand Committee given in paragraph 3.15 of the *Companion to the Standing Orders*;**
 - **That such motions for debate may be taken in Grand Committee without a business motion, and that the use of business motions to refer Committee reports to Grand Committee should be discontinued.**

¹ See *Companion to Standing Orders*, paragraph 11.36.