

- A. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (composition and business)
- (1) There shall be a standing committee called the Northern Ireland Grand Committee, which shall consist of all Members representing constituencies in Northern Ireland, together with not more than twenty-five other Members nominated by the Committee of Selection, which shall have power from time to time to discharge the Members so nominated by it and to appoint others in substitution for those discharged.
  - (2) The quorum of the committee shall be seven, subject to paragraph (5) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)).
  - (3) The business of the committee shall include -
    - (a) questions tabled in accordance with Standing Order B (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (questions for oral answer));
    - (b) short debates held in accordance with Standing Order C (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (short debates));
    - (c) ministerial statements proceeded with under Standing Order D (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (ministerial statements));
    - (d) bills referred to it for consideration or further consideration in relation to their principle, in accordance with Standing Order E (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (bills in relation to their principle));
    - (e) such legislative proposals and other specified matters relating exclusively to Northern Ireland as may be referred to it in accordance with Standing Order F (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (legislative proposals and other matters relating exclusively to Northern Ireland));

- (f) instruments (whether or not in draft) referred to it in accordance with Standing Order G (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (delegated legislation)); and
- (g) motions for the adjournment of the committee, made under paragraph (5) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)).
- (4) Any Minister of the Crown, being a Member of the House, though not a member of the committee, may take part in the deliberations of the committee and may make a motion, but shall not vote or be counted in the quorum.

#### Notes

1. The quorum of the Northern Ireland Grand Committee is at present 14 ( $\frac{17 + 25}{3}$ ). The Welsh Grand Committee, which is almost the same size as the Northern Ireland Grand Committee (although the proportion of added members is much lower), now has a quorum of 7. The second part of the paragraph refers to the quorum of 3 for a half-hour adjournment debate.
2. Para (4) gives all Ministers in the Commons, including those who are not added members of the NIGC, the right to attend and speak.

B. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (questions for oral answer)

- (1) Notices of questions for oral answer in the Northern Ireland Grand Committee by Northern Ireland Office ministers on a day specified in an order made under paragraph (1) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)) may be given by members of the committee in the Table Office.
- (2) Notices of questions given under this order shall bear an indication that they are for oral answer in the Northern Ireland Grand Committee.
- (3) No more than one notice of a question may be given under this order by any member of the committee for each day specified under paragraph (1) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)) for the taking of questions.
- (4) On any day so specified under paragraph (1) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)), questions shall be taken at the commencement of the sitting; no such question shall be taken later than half an hour after the commencement of the proceedings thereon; and replies to questions not reached shall be printed with the Official Report of the committee's debates for that day.
- (5) Notices of questions under this order may be given ten sitting days before that on which an answer is desired, save where otherwise provided by a memorandum under paragraph (8) of Standing Order No. 18 (Notices of questions, motions and amendments):

Provided that when it is proposed that the House shall adjourn for a period of fewer than four days, any day during that period (other than a Saturday or a Sunday) shall be counted as a sitting day for the purposes of the calculation made under this paragraph.

Notes

1. This SO is common to the Scottish and Welsh Grand Committees, except that paragraph (4) allows half an hour for questions (as in the Welsh Grand) rather than 45 minutes (as in the Scottish Grand).
  
2. Only NIO Ministers in the Commons may take part in Grand Committee Question Time.

C. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (short debates)

- (1) Notices of subjects to be raised in short debates in the Northern Ireland Grand Committee, on a day specified in an order made under paragraph (1) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)), may be given by members of the committee in the Table Office.
- (2) Subjects of which notice is given under paragraph (1) of this order must relate to Northern Ireland.
- (3) Not more than one notice of a subject may be given under this order by any member of the committee for each day specified under paragraph (1) of Standing Order H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)) for the holding of short debates.
- (4) On any day so specified such debates shall be held at the commencement of the sitting or, if the order under paragraph (1) specifies also the taking of questions on that day, immediately after questions.
- (5)
  - (a) No Member except the Minister of the Crown replying to the debate shall be called to speak later than half an hour after the commencement of the first such debate.
  - (b) The Member who gave notice of the subject and the Minister of the Crown replying to the debate may each speak for five minutes. Other Members may speak for three minutes.
  - (c) The chairman may direct any Member who exceeds the limits in sub-paragraph (b) to resume his seat forthwith.
- (6) Notice of subjects under this order may be given ten sitting days before that on which they are sought to be raised:

Provided that when it is proposed that the House shall adjourn for a period of fewer than four days, any day during that period (other than a Saturday or a Sunday) shall be counted as a sitting day for the purposes of the calculation made under this paragraph.

Note

This SO is common to the Scottish and Welsh Grand Committees. It has never been used.

D. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (ministerial statements)

- (1) The chairman of the Northern Ireland Grand Committee may permit a Minister of the Crown, whether or not a Member of the House, to make a statement, of which prior notice has been given to him, on a matter relating to Northern Ireland, and to answer questions thereon put by members of the committee.
- (2) Ministerial statements may be made -
  - (a) at the commencement of a sitting; or
  - (b) if questions are taken, immediately after the conclusion of proceedings thereon; or
  - (c) if short debates are held, immediately after the conclusion of those proceedings.
- (3) Proceedings under this order shall be brought to a conclusion at the discretion of the chairman.
- (4) A Minister of the Crown making a statement under paragraph (1) of this order, who is not a Member of the House, may not do so from the body of the committee; and shall not vote, make any motion or be counted in the quorum.

Notes

1. This would allow any Minister (including Lords Ministers, and Ministers from departments other than the NIO) to make a statement, provided it related to Northern Ireland.
2. It follows the simpler Welsh model rather than the more complicated Scottish one, which makes provision for ministerial "evidence sessions" of up to 45 minutes, which were designed principally for the then Minister of State and the Lord Advocate who, as peers, could not take part in Grand Committee Question Time.

E. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (bills in relation to their principle)

- (1) On the order being read for the second reading of a public bill relating exclusively to Northern Ireland, a motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown (or in the case of a private Member's bill, by the Member in charge of the bill), 'That the bill be referred to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee'; and the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed:

Provided that such a motion may be made by a private Member only with the leave of the House.

- (2) A bill so referred to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee shall be considered on a motion, 'That the Committee has considered the bill in relation to its principle'; and, when the committee has considered that question for a total of two and a half hours (whether on one or more than one day), the chairman shall put the question necessary to dispose of the motion, and shall then report accordingly to the House (or shall report that the committee has come to no resolution), without any further question being put thereon:

Provided that a Minister of the Crown may, immediately before the motion 'That the Committee has considered the bill in relation to its principle', is made, make without notice a motion to extend the time-limit specified in this paragraph; and the question on such motion shall be put forthwith.

- (3) A bill in respect of which a report has been made under paragraph (2) above shall be ordered to read a second time on a future day.
- (4) When a motion shall have been made for the second reading of a bill to which paragraph (3) above applies, the



question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed.

- (5) At the conclusion of proceedings on consideration on report of a bill in respect of which a report has been made under paragraph (2) above, or on the order being read for the third reading of such a bill, a motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown (or in the case of a private Member's bill by the Member in charge of the bill), "That the Bill be referred again to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee"; and the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed:

Provided that such a motion may be made by a private Member only with the leave of the House.

- (6) A bill so referred again to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee shall be considered on a motion, "That the Committee has further considered the bill in relation to its principle"; and, when the committee has considered that question for a total of one and a half hours (whether on one or more than one day), the chairman shall put the question necessary to dispose of the motion, and shall then report accordingly to the House (or shall report that the committee has come to no resolution), without any further question being put thereon:

Provided that a Minister of the Crown may, immediately before the motion "That the Committee has further considered the bill in relation to its principle" is made, make without notice a motion to extend the time-limit specified in this paragraph; and the question on such motion shall be put forthwith.

- (7) A bill in respect of which a report has been made under paragraph (6) above shall be ordered to be read the third time on a future day.

F. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (legislative proposals and other matters relating exclusively to Northern Ireland)

- (1) A motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown at the commencement of public business to the effect that a legislative proposal or other specified matter relating exclusively to Northern Ireland be referred to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee for its consideration, and the question thereon shall be put forthwith.
- (2) If such a motion be agreed to, the committee shall consider the legislative proposal or matter referred to it and shall report only that it has considered the said legislative proposal or matter.
- (3) In this order and in Standing Orders A (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (composition and business)) and H (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)) 'a legislative proposal' means a proposal for a draft Order in Council relating exclusively to Northern Ireland.

Note

This re-enacts the existing power of the NIGC to consider "matters" on a formal motion, but shifts the emphasis to the consideration of legislative proposals.

G. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (delegated legislation)

## (1) Where -

- (a) a Member has given notice of a motion for a humble address to Her Majesty praying that a statutory instrument be annulled, or of a motion of a similar character relating to a statutory instrument, or to any other instrument (whether or not in draft) which may be subject to proceedings in the House in pursuance of a statute, or of a motion that the House takes note of a statutory instrument, or
- (b) a Minister of the Crown has given notice of a motion to the effect that an instrument (whether or not in draft) upon which proceedings may be taken in pursuance of an Act of Parliament (other than a draft deregulation order) be approved,

a motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown, "That the instrument be referred to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee"; and the question on such motion shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed.

- (2) The committee shall consider each instrument referred to it on a motion, "That the Committee has considered the instrument"; and the chairman shall put any question necessary to dispose of the proceedings on the motion, if not previously disposed of, not later than two and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings thereon; and shall thereupon report the instrument to the House without any further question being put:

Provided that a Minister of the Crown may, immediately before the motion "That the Committee has considered the instrument" is made, make without notice a motion to extend to three hours the time-limit specified in this paragraph; and the question on such motion shall be put forthwith.

- (3) If any motion is made in the House of the kind specified in paragraph 1(a) or 1(b) of this order, in relation to any instrument in respect of which a report has been made to the House in accordance with paragraph (2) of this order, the Speaker shall put forthwith the question thereon; which may be decided at any hour, though opposed.

### Notes

1. This SO would allow draft Orders in Council to be taken in the NIGC instead of on the Floor (or in a Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation). Except for the time limit in paragraph (2) and the proviso, it follows the Scottish SO, which has not yet been used.
2. SO No. 101 provides for 2½ hours' debate in a Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation on an SI relating exclusively to Northern Ireland. The same limit is imposed in para (2) of this SO. The Appropriation Order is normally given 3 hours on the Floor, but that would not fit into a 10.30-1.00 meeting. The proviso to para (2) would allow a 3 hour debate if the Government moved the necessary motion. Notice of that motion would not be required, but if there were to be a 3 hour debate completed at a morning sitting at Westminster, arrangements would have to be made beforehand for the Committee to meet at 10.00.

H. Northern Ireland Grand Committee (sittings)

- (1) A motion may be made by a Minister of the Crown providing (or varying previous provision) for the Northern Ireland Grand Committee -
- (a) to sit on not more than two specified days in Northern Ireland (at places to be named by the Member appointed chairman), the sitting commencing, and proceedings being interrupted, at such hours as shall be specified;
  - (b) to sit on other specified days at Westminster at such hours as shall be specified;
  - (c) to take questions under Standing Order B (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (questions for oral answer)) on certain of the days specified under paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) above;
  - (d) to hold short debates under Standing Order C (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (short debates)) on certain of the days so specified;
  - (e) to consider specified bills which shall have been referred to it under Standing Order E (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (bills in relation to their principle)) on certain of the days so specified;
  - (f) to consider legislative proposals and other specified matters which shall have been referred to it under Standing Order F (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (legislative proposals and other matters relating exclusively to Northern Ireland)) on certain of the days so specified;
  - (g) to consider specified instruments (whether or not in draft) which shall have been referred to it

under Standing Order G (Northern Ireland Grand Committee (delegated legislation)) on certain of the days so specified; and

- (h) to consider motions for the adjournment of the committee made under paragraph (5) below on certain of the days so specified;

and the Speaker shall put forthwith the question on such a motion, which may be decided at any hour, though opposed:

Provided that nothing in this order shall prevent the committee from considering further at a sitting at Westminster business adjourned at a previous sitting in Northern Ireland, nor from considering at a sitting in Northern Ireland business adjourned at a sitting at Westminster.

- (2) The provisions of Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees), so far as they relate to the naming of a day in respect of business by the Member appointed chairman and the committee's appointment of future days in respect of business not completed at a sitting, shall not apply to the Northern Ireland Grand Committee.
- (3) The chairman shall interrupt proceedings (other than on a motion made under paragraph (5) below) at the time specified in relation to the sitting by an order made under paragraph (1) above or, in the absence of such provision, at one o'clock, subject to paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees).
- (4) At the moment of interruption, proceedings under consideration and not disposed of shall stand adjourned.
- (5) On a day specified in an order made under paragraph (1) above, after the interruption of proceedings, or on the completion of the business appointed for consideration at

that sitting, whichever is the earlier, a motion for the adjournment of the committee may be made by a Minister of the Crown, and, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees) the chairman shall, not later than half an hour after the motion has been made, adjourn the committee without putting any question; and in respect of business taken under this paragraph, the quorum of the committee shall be three.

### Notes

1. Para (1) of this SO provides for a sittings motion specifying the date, time and venue (Northern Ireland or Westminster) for each meeting, and the business to be taken at that meeting. Separate decisions are required on the referral of a matter or an instrument to the NIGC.
2. Para (1)(a) and the proviso deal with the possibility of meetings in Northern Ireland, of which there may be up to 2 per session. The place of meeting is left to be named by the chairman and is not specified in the order of the House; it does not therefore appear on the Order Paper or in Hansard.
3. Para (1)(b) allows flexibility over the timing of meetings at Westminster.
4. Paras (2) to (4) deal with unfinished business at the end of the sitting.
5. Para (1)(h) provides for a half-hour adjournment debate at the end of specified meetings only. It may be convenient to arrange adjournment debates at sittings when oral questions are to be taken, since all Northern Ireland Office Ministers in the Commons would normally be present at those sittings. Para (5) deals with the arrangements for the adjournment debate.

- (8) When a motion shall have been made for the third reading of a bill to which paragraph (7) above applies, the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed.

Note

This Standing Order follows the relevant Scottish order, except that -

(i) there is no certification procedure for bills relating exclusively to Northern Ireland (just as there is no procedure for Welsh bills); and

(ii) a bill reported from the Northern Ireland Grand Committee is read a second time explicitly instead of being deemed to have been read a second time.