

Procedure Committee

Oral evidence: [English Votes for English Laws](#)
[Standing Orders: Technical Review](#), HC 189

Wednesday 7 September 2016

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Members present: Mr Charles Walker (Chair); Edward Argar; Jenny Chapman; Patricia Gibson; Patrick Grady; Simon Hoare; Sir Edward Leigh; Ian C. Lucas; Holly Lynch; Mr Alan Mak; Mr David Nuttall.

Questions 1 - 24

Witnesses

Professor Michael Kenny and Daniel Gover

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Professor Michael Kenny and Daniel Gover](#)



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Professor Michael Kenny and Daniel Gover.

Q1 **Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr Gover and Mr Kenny, for coming to see us about EVEL. Do you want to make any opening statements or shall we just crack on?

Daniel Gover: No, happy to crack on.

Q2 **Chair:** Crack on. Well, thank you for your paper. I am going to say it: in your evidence you suggest that you know someone—you do not give any more detail other than the fact that you know someone—who believes we could accomplish in two pages what we are currently accomplishing in 80 pages of Standing Orders. Do you stand by that statement?

Daniel Gover: I stand by the statement that that is what one of our interviewees suggested to us.

Q3 **Chair:** Have you got this interviewee to produce the two pages yet?

Daniel Gover: No, not yet.

Q4 **Chair:** We would like to see that. I am serious; we would like to see the two pages.

Professor Kenny: The broader point we are trying to make through that particular illustration is: the question of how you reduce the length, and indeed the complexity of the current Standing Orders, is a very live issue and it is something that we have given a lot of consideration to. Whether it is two or whether it is three remains to be seen. We are currently working on a report on this particular issue. We will say more about that in the report.

Q5 **Chair:** We are not stupid here but it is fiendishly complex; EVEL is fiendishly complex. As you rightly identify, I think in the Legislative Grand Committee Consent stage there has only been an hour and three minutes of debate and 42 minutes of that was attached to the first time it met. There has to be an easier way of doing it.

One of the recommendations of the Committee was just to do it all at the Report stage. You see the merits of that but suggest that there is a different way of doing it and that is having an English Select Committee. That is right, isn't it?

Professor Kenny: Yes, that is one of the ideas we have started to give some thought to.

Q6 **Chair:** I was talking to a former member of this Committee, Jacob Rees-Mogg, and why could we not do the certification and votes at Report



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stage? Why on earth do we need to go on to this Legislative Grand Committee if, quite frankly, it could be done at Report stage and in fact a Minister could move a motion and, unless somebody stood to speak to that motion, the House would just move on, given that so much of this is so totally non-contentious?

Daniel Gover: Yes. There are different proposals about what you would do at Report stage in relation to the Legislative Grand Committee. One of the proposals in your Committee's interim report was that any Divisions that took place on amendments that had been certified, if there was a split decision then that would trigger the need for a Legislative Grand Committee. I am not opposed to that proposal, but it seems to me one of the problems with it is that the Speaker ends up having to certify even more amendments than at present. Currently he gives a provisional certification to Government amendments. If we move to a situation where any amendment that could be put to a Division was certified, presumably that increases the number of amendments that have to be certified prior to Report stage.

In principle, however, I think it would be a sensible thing to think about: how to avoid the need to go to the Legislative Grand Committee. In the memorandum that your Committee received from the Public Bill Office, there was a suggestion that the Legislative Grand Committee would not need to meet if a motion was uncontested or passed without any objection. That would seem to be perhaps a better way of avoiding the need to go to the Legislative Grand Committee.

There are numerous ways in which the complexity can be reduced. For instance, your interim report suggested applying it to specific Bills. Again, it is another way of trying to remove the need to go through this process so often with—as you point out—very little obvious benefit.

Chair: Yes. The House of Commons Public Bill Office evidence you refer to: it is paragraph 6, isn't it, where they suggest that possible course of action? I will let other colleagues come in, but I do think that the Government should give serious consideration to making this a great deal less complicated than it is, and less onerous, and by doing that perhaps more accessible so on occasions we could have some serious debate. I suspect that the reason we have had so little debate about it in our Committees is that nobody actually understands it. You can talk privately to clerks who will say it is fiendishly difficult to get your head around and, if they do not understand it, it is unlikely that Members of Parliament will really understand it.

Q7 Ian C. Lucas: On the accessibility point, the system is completely opaque from a Member's perspective. It is impossible to see when it is applying and the procedure whereby we have this green screen flashing up with "Sitting suspended"—no one has a clue what is going on. Unless we spend hours considering the Order Paper in advance of every sitting session, then it is impossible to prepare. That is the reason why, from a Member's perspective, it is just not possible to act effectively in this



procedure.

Professor Kenny: There is something we have picked up from a number of the interviews we have done. A general observation arising from the research is that the more comprehensive you attempt to make the veto—so the more places, the more points in the legislative process to which it can apply or the more legalistic the formulation of it, as in the Standing Orders—probably there is a trade-off with accessibility and with the sense that Members, and indeed the wider public, are likely to understand what is happening. So there is a sort of trade-off here, between the establishment of a fully comprehensive veto versus establishing a process, which looks as if it gives the English a say or a voice, which is also sometimes one of the arguments for this. One of the arguments we are going to run in our report is that what the Government needs to do is think about that trade-off, because it does seem to us very important that, if you have introduced a system that many Members do not find accessible and easy to operate, it may not matter in a mechanical way now but we could come to a point where it really does matter that Members do have a good understanding of it.

Mr Alan Mak: Can I bring you back to the issue of the Speaker, which the Chair raised at the start? You have suggested that there might be scope for the Speaker to exercise more discretion or play a role in helping to simplify the procedures. Could you explain what you mean and also give us a sense of whether having more discretion might make his office more political or less political?

Professor Kenny: Yes, undoubtedly, the question is: if you increase the Speaker's discretion is there some sort of danger, a risk that you politicise the office? One thing I think that is important to say is that one of the most common criticisms of the new procedures came from those who were concerned that this would happen anyway; that certification would result in complaints, in arguments, in dragging the Speaker into political issues. In the course of the project we have done we have not found any clear evidence of that happening. As you will be aware, there have been complaints about the rules themselves, and about the procedures, but not deep complaints about the way in which the Speaker has interpreted them. I think that is an important point, and worth observing, about the current system as it is run so far.

In terms of discretion more generally—this goes back to the trade-off—if you formulate a very comprehensive and legalistic set of rules, what you do is reduce the flexibility and the discretion with which they can be applied, so you give the Speaker essentially fewer options. Again, we are thinking here of one issue, which is whether we need to run these procedures every single time, as universally as they have been run now.

A second question is whether circumstances may occur in which the application of discretion by the Speaker is quite valuable. If a particular issue arises that a proportion of Members feel potentially has a Barnett consequential, for instance, where the rules suggest that certification



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should apply, thinking about the opportunity for the Speaker to exercise discretion in that kind of case could be immensely valuable. There is a risk undoubtedly but, based on what we have seen so far, we do not think that is a particularly strong risk.

Patricia Gibson: I want to ask a very basic question that struck me as I was reading your general observations. You were talking about a growing sense of grievance in England because of this perceived mismatch in terms of authority over legislation. Do you have the same perception in Scotland about an apparent failure by the Westminster establishment, over many years, to comprehend the financial implications of so-called English-only legislation, and how that has fed into this entire debate and in some way perhaps poisoned it, this failure to recognise the impact of what we call English-only legislation but which isn't really?

Professor Kenny: It is an interesting question. In terms of Scottish opinion on the principle of English Votes for English Laws, the polling that has been conducted for a number of years, by and large, has suggested support for that principle in Scotland as well as growing support for it in England. I know that is not specifically on the spending issue but, purely at the level of principle, it is quite striking that there is a principle at the root of all this that appears to be accepted in all parts of the UK. How you institutionalise that in response to the principle, of course, is bound to lead to disagreement and argument. Undoubtedly you are right, to the extent that there is a perception in some quarters of Scotland that decisions are made in the Westminster Parliament that have adverse consequences for Scotland. I do think it is important to note that this is not just an issue that the English are in favour of. There is a point of principle here, which, it seems to me, if this is handled carefully, means that you could well get legitimacy for something like this, perhaps in a moderated form, across the UK.

Q8 **Patricia Gibson:** You would not advocate, for example, that perhaps the most effective way to solve this, as the Chair said, "fiendishly complex" issue, is to have an English Assembly?

Professor Kenny: We probably would not advocate that, no. There is a debate that has been around for a while, which has grown a bit more intense, about what are the different ways in which you might answer the English question and, of course, that is one answer to it. There is a range of different possible answers but, within the confines of this particular exercise, what we are looking at in our report is whether it is possible to develop this particular convention within the UK Parliament sufficiently well that it does the role of renewing confidence; it is like a confidence-building exercise among sections of English opinion. It seems to me that is the first port of call here. Now, if it does not work and if things change, who knows where we will be but I think that is the very much the focus in territorial terms here.

Sir Edward Leigh: I want to ask about the double veto. If you are going to have EVEL it seems to me that the double veto is probably the better



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way of proceeding, in that you avoid the accusation that you are creating a second class of Member because, basically, all legislation has to be voted on by all the Members and by all the English Members. You say that is hard to refute. You might explain why you think the double veto is hard to refute.

There is one aspect of it that I suppose could be considered a bit unfair to English Members. Say English Members wanted to do something; for example, they want to relax the ban on hunting with hounds. Say there was a majority in England for that but there was not a majority in the United Kingdom for that, the effect of the double veto means that the English Members in that sense are stymied, so there isn't an English Parliament. I suppose you think that is a price worth paying, do you? I am trying to sum up all the arguments and you can give your views.

Professor Kenny: Essentially, I think it does come under the heading of "a price worth paying". If you want to take that kind of issue and say, "We have to do something about this" and give English MPs a kind of initiatory right, the right to pass legislation that is not supported across the House as well as just block it—so that is some way additional to what we have—then you move towards the kind of thinking about some sort of English Assembly and—

Sir Edward Leigh: Effectively creating an English Parliament.

Professor Kenny: I think it would then be legitimate for critics to say, "Do we have a system here that really infringes the equality of all Members of the House?"

Q9 **Sir Edward Leigh:** So, from a democratic point of view—and I am just using this hunting with hounds' thing as an interesting example—if the Scottish Parliament can get on with it, can ban it or allow it, or something, I suppose you could argue that is a bit unfair on the English MPs. On the other hand, you just have to accept that this is a United Kingdom Parliament. You cannot have it both ways, can you?

Professor Kenny: I think there is no solution to this that gives everyone absolutely what they hypothetically might want. We are probably into the territory of least-worst solutions. I think your point about the double veto principle is very important—and we have stressed this in the submission here—but it seems to us that this has to be the bedrock of this system.

Q10 **Sir Edward Leigh:** What has to be the bedrock?

Professor Kenny: The double veto model has to be there.

Q11 **Sir Edward Leigh:** You like that, do you? If we are going to have it, you would like that?

Professor Kenny: Yes, I think it has to be there, because without it you not only open up the kind of issue you are talking about but I think you also genuinely have a problem answering worries about Barnett consequential, about spillovers and about indirect effects. I think you



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have some sort of answer if you can say to all Members, "Look, you get to vote in the final reading here", and it seems to me that principle does enshrine the principle of equality of all Members. It seems to us that ought to be promoted as the bulwark of this system; that ought to be the buttress upon which this is built.

- Q12 **Chair:** You say in your evidence, "The double veto does not prevent non-English MPs exercising a decisive influence on legislation applying to England. It is a key attribute of the current system, offering an important bulwark against the charge that it has created two different classes of MP". So you are absolutely firmly committed to the double veto, clearly, by that statement.

Professor Kenny: Yes, we are.

- Q13 **Patrick Grady:** I want to come back to the issue of public opinion, because you suggest that constitutional anomalies have been a source of grievance and concern. I wonder if the people of England are now sleeping more easily in their beds at night, knowing that the Legislative Grand Committee has met for a sum total of one hour and three minutes since it was introduced or whether, in fact, there is a bigger question of public perception when these procedures are kicking in about what kind of scrutiny is being provided, if any, through the process.

I would also like to ask a slightly less related question about the most fiendish of the fiendish complexities that the Chair referred to, which is the negative instrument procedure and the slightly related question of the Lords' amendments. It almost seems to me that no one had thought about that. To be fair, I don't think it came up as part of our deliberations when we were looking at the Standing Orders in the first round of evidence and inquiry. I don't know whether that is something that needs a specific kind of solution, or whether it would be better to try to wrap the whole thing up in a completely different form of EVEL.

Just to put it on the record: as you say, I think people in Scotland do support the principle of English Votes for English Laws and we have never objected to the principle of English Votes for English Laws. We just have very serious concerns about these particular procedures.

Professor Kenny: There are two questions there. I will take the first one and then pass the negative to Daniel. That is his specialist subject. That is Daniel's latitude that he enjoys very much.

On the very broad question about public opinion, yes, this is not an issue that has what political scientists call salience. It is not something that plays in a kind of loud way among the English opinion. There are caveats to that, though, because of course it is an issue that has been raised by the Conservative party; it has been in its General Election manifestos ever since 2001, I think, and it is an issue that did to an extent come to the fore in the aftermath of the Scottish independence referendum. There are, of course, many different polls out there that show rather different things.



One important point here is that the particularities and complexities of this system, which, as we have already established, might be beguiling Members, are certainly not even noticed by the public at large, as we can conclude. But that also relates to an important aspect of the current system. If the process that is being put in place is concerned—or perhaps more concerned than this model is—with the achievement of voice, with the idea of establishing some kind of deliberative space, some sort of forum, where English interests are aired and heard, and seen to be aired, if that were to be the case I think there is a good chance that, over time, English opinion might begin to notice. For instance, were there an English Affairs Committee with a high-profile chairperson, it is quite possible that that person might become associated with the issue. So, there are interesting questions here about the design of the system.

Going back to my earlier point, the more emphasis you put on designing a comprehensive and legalistic veto—there is a trade-off—the less likely it is to generate something that is comprehensible and accessible.

Q14 Chair: I want to interrupt before you come in, Mr Gover. You say in your evidence, “The complexity and opaqueness of the rules present a problem for several reasons. Both MPs and members of the public may find the new procedures hard to comprehend. This might not itself matter to the running of the system but, should a significant dispute or major political disagreement happen, the absence of widespread understanding of the system could well become destabilising”. In their evidence to us the clerks say—this is clerks of the House of Commons saying—“It is unsatisfactory that a Standing Order of the House is so difficult to interpret”. I wanted to get that on the record.

Daniel Gover: Yes. Coming back to the point that was raised about the length of time in Legislative Grand Committees, in terms of the veto—so separating out the voice from the veto—I think it is not necessarily the point as to whether or not there was a debate about whether to exercise the veto or whether the veto was indeed applied. There is a point of principle about the right to a veto. In many ways it is similar to the legislative consent motions in the Scottish Parliament. Do people in Scotland notice when the Scottish Parliament considers whether or not to give consent? Probably not; but there is still probably an understanding that develops over time that this right is there; that there are people working on their behalf looking out for their interests, and you have to factor that into the effects of the veto as well.

Regarding the other point that you raised about negative instruments, it seems to me that it is perfectly possible to modify the Standing Orders in order to require a slightly different process so that, if it is subject to the negative procedure, then it requires one of the two groups to vote in favour of the motion to annul it, in order for it to be annulled. To me that seems like a perfectly reasonable change that really should be made.

Chair: I have been mulling over your evidence on negative SIs and you have now explained it and I get it. Thank you.



- Q15 Mr David Nuttall:** I appreciate that this is classified and categorised as “English Votes for English Laws Inquiry: technical review”, but I think it is difficult to look at the technical aspect of this without considering the underlying process and why we are here even considering it at all.

As a starter, would you agree that part of the problem lies in the very title itself of “English Votes for English Laws” because that is not what this does, does it? It does not do that at all. English MPs cannot produce English laws under this process. It is misleading the public; it is misleading Members of Parliament. At best, I would venture to suggest—and I will be interested to see whether I have gone wrong on this; you are the experts on it—is it more the case of an English veto over MPs from other parts of the United Kingdom imposing their laws on the English?

Professor Kenny: To be frank, I would think the Government would be delighted to rename it because, of course, the acronym that comes from English Votes for English Laws is probably not one that they would be delighted with.

I guess that is right. Obviously it has acquired this name over time, and you are right that, in a way, it does lead to this potential misunderstanding. I am not quite sure what I would prefer as an alternative.

Mr David Nuttall: Well, mine was not a very snappily framed question.

Professor Kenny: But you are right. There is an important point there, I agree, that this is essentially a veto right, which is the point you are making. It clouds things if people come away with the impression that English MPs can initiate things and themselves pass legislation against the wishes of the House. That is not what this is about at all.

There is a wider point here about language. It is a very difficult thing to do public communications about. It is procedural and technical in kind. Certainly, we have said elsewhere—I think in the report—that we do think it is very important that the Government works hard at explaining this and maybe also at clarifying the goals: what are the problems it is trying to solve with this? I think that would help to some degree.

There are slightly different problems here. One is if the real problem they think is the West Lothian conundrum, that kind of anomaly, then that does point you towards the veto as an answer. But if—as the then Prime Minister David Cameron said straight after the Scottish Referendum—it is about the English needing their voice heard, needing to feel greater confidence in Parliament, then I think that points you probably towards a more voice-like solution. I think language and reasoning and communications are very important here.

- Q16 Mr David Nuttall:** Could I turn to a couple of the more technical detail aspects of the evidence you very kindly submitted back on 21 April?



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You rightly point out that quite a few of the potential things that could happen under this procedure have not ever happened. Therefore, I wonder whether you think that in some ways we have been a bit premature in this technical review, and whether or not we ought to see how things develop on all these other things that have never happened and could throw up problems in the future. I see Daniel is nodding.

Daniel Gover: I agree with that. The Government is doing a review after a year. It makes sense for others to feed into that after a year. You are quite right: a number of the elements of this system, including some that take up quite a number of pages themselves, have not yet happened. To be honest, they are unlikely to happen during the rest of this Parliament. We can never predict but it may well be that this is something that needs to be revisited in a couple of sessions' time, but maybe even beyond that as well. It is difficult to understand the whole effect of some of these. When presented with quite complex circumstances, it is difficult to predict accurately exactly how they will be felt.

Q17 **Mr David Nuttall:** Can I carry on very briefly? Two further things: one is you mentioned the report you are working on a couple of times. When do you think that report will be ready to inform the Committee?

Professor Kenny: We hope to publish it in the first week of November. That is the current ambition.

Q18 **Mr David Nuttall:** Thank you. That is helpful. In the final paragraph of your written evidence you refer to the fact that, "Given the constitutional importance and political sensitivity of issues that EVEL raises, we would suggest that an independent body be tasked with conducting a comprehensive review after three years of its operation". You are not suggesting that this august body, the Procedure Committee, is not suitable are you?

Professor Kenny: Quite the opposite. You would be a prime candidate for the independent body. The point there—it follows on from Daniel's observation—is it is important to think about the timescales here. The real worry is that this suddenly matters incredibly when a very difficult issue arises. Because of the particular political configuration of the House at the moment, you cannot see that happening in the short term but you really do want this reviewed properly over a longer period.

Daniel Gover: What we meant by an independent body was independent of Government. We think it should be a body—

Mr David Nuttall: Again, that is important for the record. I don't want others, of perhaps a less charitable nature, to think that somehow we should bring in someone from outside of Parliament to start investigating our procedures. Thank you.

Q19 **Ian C. Lucas:** Can I go back to this observation that you made that this is a bulwark against having two different classes of MP, because I want to challenge that? You saw Lady Hermon's evidence, and Lady Hermon is a



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strong Unionist and I am, too. What I find difficult about this is that, in non-devolved areas, there are no Scottish laws for Scottish MPs, Welsh laws for Welsh MPs and Northern Ireland laws for Northern Ireland MPs. Would it not be better, if this is a foundational principle, to apply this foundational principle to all Members of the House equally?

Professor Kenny: Obviously, that is a concern that has been aired about this. Two things there: in practical terms, on the second half of this—and something we have been thinking about, because it has been raised with us before—whether there would be cases where you might want to think about Welsh votes for Welsh laws and so on, outside England. We cannot think of many issues, and I suspect they would be rare, where you would have issues arising that were not devolved elsewhere and did not meet the second test, which is specified in these processes. I do think there may be issues around that. One or two have been mentioned but—

Q20 **Ian C. Lucas:** Do you want me to give you an example?

Professor Kenny: Yes, give me an example.

Ian C. Lucas: Court practices within Wales—

Daniel Gover: Yes, that is the only example that we had.

Ian C. Lucas: Broadcasting within Wales; two. Do you disagree? These are very sensitive areas within Wales

Professor Kenny: They are undoubtedly sensitive and we have discussed that with people in part of the research. Going back to a point I made earlier, essentially here you are trying to balance two principles. One is maintaining the equal rights of all MPs across the House. The other one is trying to build something in that looks as if it gives an English dimension to the way in which legislation that only obviously affects England happens, and that the dimension is there in terms of scrutiny and is also there in terms of the veto right we have discussed. Does that necessarily infringe the equality of rights of all MPs in the House? As you say, it has been raised. Based upon what we have seen this year, it does not seem to me that that has been a very obvious and loud complaint that has been made continually about the process. It may be. It may be something that—

Ian C. Lucas: It has by me.

Professor Kenny: It has by some Members, and we are aware of Lady Sylvia Hermon's representations on this issue, but there is no optimal way to balance this off.

Q21 **Ian C. Lucas:** Can you tell me the problem with introducing this for MPs from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland?

Professor Kenny: I do not necessarily, in principle, have any problem with it. I think it would be an extremely rarely undertaken exercise. I would not have any in-principle objection to doing so. I don't think we would be doing it very often.



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This is a slightly different point but it relates to it. I think it is really important that we do defend the specific importance of reserved matters. One way in which this argument sometimes goes is that people say, "If people are making legislation on a reserved matter and it only affects one part of the UK, why do we not, because of EVEL, on the same principle only have Members from that particular county or region or from London voting on it?" It seems to us that is a dangerous way to go, because it is very important, partly as a principle of the Parliament of the Union, to defend the integrity of reserved matters in legislation. It relates to this point because that is one of the counterarguments that are put. I am not convinced yet that the processes that the Government have introduced have fundamentally infringed the right to the equality but it is obviously something that the Government have to be minded to watch. I do think that, if you start to play around with the double veto, then you are into that kind of territory.

Q22 Patricia Gibson: Chair, can I just come in here? Listening to that exchange it was very interesting. I want to make an observation and perhaps you could comment on it. I think the reason why it is so complicated, and the reason why that question is difficult to answer, is because we are trying to use the UK Parliament for something for which it was never intended. I don't think the circle can be squared satisfactorily. I go back to my original point that the only way around this, given that we have devolved government, is to take that to the end of its journey and have a devolved Government in England, because I think anything else leads you into these complex areas, with which no one is really satisfied, and it does not work unless you use brute force and try to put round pegs in square holes.

Professor Kenny: I think you have named the key question really, which is that we have a system here that undoubtedly does not solve all the anomalies that arise from trying to build this dimension into the UK Parliament. I don't think there is a single institutional answer that does that. That is right. The judgment that the House has to make, and the Government too, is: what is the least bad option here? Moving down the kind of road you are talking about obviously creates a new set of challenges and problems for the Union as a whole. Our focus here is obviously on this particular one.

Q23 Chair: An incoming Government of a different shade could obviously change Standing Orders and use its majority to do so, so I think we have to focus. It is very important to try to look at the wider issues but if we look at the technical aspects of this, we have talked to a number of constitutional experts who say they appreciate the problem but they simply don't understand the solution. We are talking about people who have been in the service of the House for over 30 years, some pushing 40 years, senior former principal clerks. We have a real problem here. What we need to do, without the Government losing its ambition or its objective, is try to create a set of Standing Orders that are penetrable for mere mortals, that are streamlined, and work in a way that does not



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exclude people from taking part in parliamentary processes, and we are not there yet, are we?

Professor Kenny: No. I think that is right.

Q24 **Chair:** I end up where I started: can you please ask your expert contact—I am being really serious about this—who believes what is currently taking 82 pages to achieve could be achieved in two pages, to provide us with evidence and some suggestions as to how that can be achieved, or if he or she does not want to come forward, could you submit further evidence expanding on that?

Professor Kenny: The report that we mentioned earlier will not undertake that exercise—sadly, we do not have the funding for that yet—but certainly we will make detailed recommendations about ways in which we think the Standing Orders can be simplified and reduced, and we will be looking hard at the question about discretion and where we think reasonably the Speaker's discretion could be amplified. I do think, however, as an exercise running parallel with or feeding into the Government's review, attempting that kind of redrafting would be extremely valuable.

Mr David Nuttall: I don't think we should get too hung up on the two pages. If it happened that it is two and a half—the idea is there; it is the general principle.

Professor Kenny: Yes, absolutely.

Chair: I thought we did make some very sensible suggestions to Government as to how this whole process could be streamlined and simplified, and in this place we still suffer from "not invented here". What is extraordinary is we have clerks advising this Committee who will produce recommendations that seem to make eminent sense and then clerks seconded to the Leader of the House's office saying, "Well, they don't. We could do it differently". Sometimes that is difficult to navigate. We will continue to in our efforts to get this sorted.

Can I thank you very much for your time and let's keep in touch?

Professor Kenny: Yes. We will send you a copy of the report.

Chair: Thank you.