

Backbench Business Committee

Representations: Backbench Business

Tuesday 26 June 2018

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 26 June 2018.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Ian Mearns (Chair); Bob Blackman; Patricia Gibson; Nigel Mills; Mr William Wragg.

Questions 1 - 6

Representations made

[I](#): Stephen Kerr.

[II](#): Rosie Duffield.

Stephen Kerr made representations.

Q1 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to the Backbench Business Committee. We are slightly delayed because of a Division in the House.

We have two applications before us this afternoon. First up is Mr Stephen Kerr, who is applying for a debate on failures in the banking sector.

Stephen Kerr: My application is for a three-hour debate on failures in the banking sector, with a motion relating to consideration of lessons learned in banking sector from the recent past.

The key point in my application is not only that we are concerned about lessons that have not been learned and the lack of adequate reform of the banking system, but that we live with a present threat of all those mistakes of the past, if we can call them that—deeds of the past?—being repeated. The all-party parliamentary group on fair business banking and finance has evidence that the methodologies used in the past at HBOS Reading and RBS/GRG are still in use. We have current cases of abuses in banking practices and also the insolvency process, so this is not just about learning from the past, but about what the past should have instructed us to change in the present that has not changed.

The impact of this lack of reform in banking is being felt today in our economy, in productivity and business confidence, let alone in the availability of good quality capital. Unless we in Parliament demonstrate that we have these issues at the forefront of our mind, that we are prepared to tackle them and that we wish to apply the learning from the past to reform in the present, the cycle will repeat itself. The other thing to mention is that progress in individual cases comes about only by drips and drabs when Parliament and the press focus on these issues.

Those are some of the considerations that I would ask the Committee to bear in mind, along with the fact that Members have joined me in this application from all the parties—the Scottish National party, the Labour party, the Liberal Democrats, the DUP and, of course, the Conservatives. We cannot afford to let this drag on and on, as it has for the best part of a decade, and become, in effect—if you will forgive me using the parallel—another Hillsborough.

Q2 **Bob Blackman:** Thank you for the presentation and the additional names that you have supplied.

Stephen Kerr: There are two more to add.

Bob Blackman: You've got more than enough to fill the three hours. I have one query about your application. You have asked for, potentially, a debate in Westminster Hall on a Thursday or Tuesday, and you have asked for three hours. The Tuesday debates that we can allocate in Westminster Hall are 90 minutes, whereas the Thursday debates are three hours. Given the number of speakers, I assume that you want the three hours on a Thursday.

Stephen Kerr: Yes, please.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q3 **Bob Blackman:** You win first prize in the lottery, then, because you get a choice of dates, potentially, between 12 and 19 July in Westminster Hall.

Stephen Kerr: I think either of those dates would be fine.

Bob Blackman: Lovely.

Chair: Certainly this issue has come across my desk, as a Member of Parliament for a constituency in the north-east of England, and it involves a whole range of different banking groups, so it will be of interest to MPs across the House. Thank you for the application; we will let you know what we are doing in due course.

Stephen Kerr: Thank you.

Rosie Duffield made representations.

Q4 **Chair:** Next up this afternoon we have Rosie Duffield, who is applying for a debate on the 90th anniversary of the Equal Franchise Act 1928.

Rosie Duffield: Thank you for considering my debate. I recently did a debate on International Women's Day on the 100-year anniversary of women first getting the vote. It was clear from that debate that we were talking about privileged women—women with property, women who were married. What came out were stories of other women—MPs' families and families who had fought for the vote for working-class women.

It is obvious from my role as an ambassador for 50:50 Parliament that there is a need to tell that story. This debate would be on the 90th anniversary of working women, who did not own properties and were not necessarily married, getting the vote. That is important today, because it resonates with women who want to be here and want to see themselves represented in Parliament—not just as a certain type of woman, from a certain type of background.

I have only put nine names on my form, but there are loads more people who have rushed in. I was taken aback by how popular the idea was when I suggested it, and the Women and Equalities team on the Labour Front Bench are really keen for me to take this forward as well. I do have cross-party support, and I can think of about 15 to 20 people off the top of my head who would be really keen to speak in the debate, but I think 90 minutes is probably sufficient.

Q5 **Bob Blackman:** You have applied for a 90-minute general debate, but when you allow for the Front Benchers and you or whoever introduces it, those 15 speakers will not have much time to contribute. If you really want 90 minutes, we can allocate that, but if you want to extend the time because you have more speakers, there is a potential to do so—I think this is the first time you have appeared before the Committee.

Rosie Duffield: Yes, and I will take your advice on that, because this is the first time I've done it.

Q6 **Bob Blackman:** There is a range of choices, potentially, because we have a gap on 5 July for 90 minutes or alternatively, if you wait a bit longer,



HOUSE OF COMMONS

you could potentially get three hours, so it depends what your preference is.

Rosie Duffield: Because 5 July is nearer to the anniversary and would probably get a bit more traffic and publicity, and because the various charities, such as the Fawcett Society, would probably be more keen for me to honour the anniversary, that is what I will go for.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed, Rosie.

That concludes our two applications this afternoon. We did have a third, but it was withdrawn at short notice.