

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Twenty Third Sitting

Wednesday 19 December 2018

CONTENTS

Motion to adjourn considered.

Adjourned till Wednesday 9 January 2019 at Ten o'clock.

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the final version of the report should be clearly marked in a copy of the report—not telephoned—and must be received in the Editor’s Room, House of Commons,

not later than

Sunday 23 December 2018

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:*Chairs:* †Ms NADINE DORRIES, ALBERT OWEN

Allan, Lucy (<i>Telford</i>) (Con)	Mills, Nigel (<i>Amber Valley</i>) (Con)
Bone, Mr Peter (<i>Wellingborough</i>) (Con)	† Norris, Alex (<i>Nottingham North</i>) (Lab/Co-op)
† Charalambous, Bambos (<i>Enfield, Southgate</i>) (Lab)	Paisley, Ian (<i>North Antrim</i>) (DUP)
† Fletcher, Colleen (<i>Coventry North East</i>) (Lab)	† Smith, Chloe (<i>Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office</i>)
† Foster, Kevin (<i>Torbay</i>) (Con)	Stewart, Bob (<i>Beckenham</i>) (Con)
Harper, Mr Mark (<i>Forest of Dean</i>) (Con)	Wiggin, Bill (<i>North Herefordshire</i>) (Con)
† Khan, Afzal (<i>Manchester, Gorton</i>) (Lab)	
Lee, Karen (<i>Lincoln</i>) (Lab)	Adam Mellows-Facer, <i>Committee Clerk</i>
† Linden, David (<i>Glasgow East</i>) (SNP)	
† Matheson, Christian (<i>City of Chester</i>) (Lab)	† attended the Committee

Public Bill Committee

Wednesday 19 December 2018

[Ms NADINE DORRIES *in the Chair*]

Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill

10 am

Afzal Khan (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab): I beg to move, That the Committee do now adjourn.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms Dorries. This may be the last sitting before the Christmas recess. Let me apologise to you, Ms Dorries. Last week, we had the shortest meeting—it was 1 minute 20 seconds.

The Chair: You didn't break my record though, Mr Khan.

Afzal Khan: I was thinking there is also time to do the longest meeting—but not today. We may well have broken a record by the time we finish—this may be the Committee that goes the longest without making any progress. At least we are making some records, if not progress.

I am a new MP, but I am not new to politics. Before coming to Parliament, I was a councillor, a lord mayor and a Member of the European Parliament. I have seen how things get done in politics, and I have to say I have been a bit disappointed by how the Government are operating. I will not say much about Brexit; we all know what is happening with that. Some Members will know that I am Labour's shadow Immigration Minister. For the past year, we have been promised the White Paper. Perhaps today we will get it.

I was lucky to be drawn quite high up in the private Members' Bill ballot. I chose this Bill because I thought there was a need for it. I believe the Bill will help strengthen our democracy, but more than a year on from passing Second Reading unanimously, we have made no progress. It seems the Government are expert at kicking the can down the road. We come here every week basically to give a message to the Government and the Minister that we are ready to make progress. I hope everyone has a good Christmas and a well-deserved break. I hope the Minister will use the time to reflect and bring us a money resolution when we come back.

10.2 am

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms Dorries. As the hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton did, I wish every

member of the Committee a very happy Christmas when it comes. This is not the first time I have been in a Committee Room this week. I was here on Monday night taking part in the Tenth Delegated Legislation Committee to pass the relevant statutory instrument to reduce the stake on fixed-odds betting terminals. While I was there, I reflected on the fact that we had been asking the Government to make that change for some time. Eventually, they brought forward that legislation, which I wholeheartedly welcome.

My only plea as we head into the Christmas recess is that on the morning of 25 December, when I go to my stocking, I find a little note from the Minister saying, "The money resolution will be coming. Happy Christmas." I look forward to spending Wednesday mornings in 2019 with this Committee, because nothing fills my heart more than to spend a Wednesday morning with you in the Chair, Ms Dorries, and with members of the Committee. With that, I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

10.3 am

Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab): It is a great pleasure to serve under your chairmanship once again, Ms Dorries. I look forward to doing so into the new year. I do not wish to detain the Committee very much longer, save to express sadness at the fact that the Committee has lost its place at the top of the charts of the most ludicrous events happening in Parliament. We have been knocked off top spot by the chaos that the Government have found themselves in with the meaningful vote and the, "Will they, won't they? No, they probably won't."

The Chair: Mr Matheson, keep it to this Bill, please.

Christian Matheson: Indeed. I am merely expressing regret that we seem to have made no further progress in this Committee, but we will return.

With the festive spirit in mind, I have to say that the hon. Member for Glasgow East is right. Let us hope that Santa brings us a money resolution down the chimney on Christmas night. I send my very best wishes to all of the Committee and particularly the Minister, who I hope has a restful Christmas. We all hope we see her again in the new year fit and ready to go. These proceedings will continue one way or another.

The Chair: I wish all Members, the officials and the Clerk a merry Christmas, and I look forward to seeing you all in your places again in the new year.

Question put and agreed to.

10.5 am

Adjourned till Wednesday 9 January at Ten o'clock.