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1901-06-05

Senate.

The President took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

THE SENATE ELECTIONS

Motion (by Senator Walker - New South Wales) proposed -

That a return be laid upon the table of the Senate showing - (a) The aggregate number of votes obtained by the first three senators in each State at the election for senators ; (6) The aggregate number of votes obtained by the second three senators in each State at the election for senators.

Senator HIGGS

- Would Senator Walker have an objection to adding to his motion the words - " also a detailed list of the votes obtained by each senator"? I think that, as a return is being prepared, it might be interesting to the Senate to know the total number of votes polled by each senator.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable member can move that as an amendment if he likes.

Senator WALKER

- I have no objection to those words being added, but I do not exactly see the force of them.

Senator Drake

- It will increase the cost.

The PRESIDENT

- Senator Walkercannot discuss the matter ; he cannot move the motion in an amended form except by leave of the Senate.

Senator MCGREGOR

- I would suggest to Senator Walker, if he asks leave to move his motion in an amended form, that he should include in it a return showing the aggregate number of the votes obtained by the unsuccessful candidates.

Senator Drake

- There is no point in that.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I understand that there is no objection to this motion. If we are going to have any returns - and, of course, the motion is moved with an object - showing the position which the different senators took on the poll, I think we might as well have a statement of the expenses incurred by each senator in and about his election. Therefore, I move -

That the question be amended by the addition of the words (c) "Also the expense incurred by each senator in and about his election."

That will make the return complete, for some senators may have been more industrious than others in securing their return.

Senator Playford

- The Government will never get the information.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We must do the best we can.

Senator Walker

- I am willing to accept the amendment.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I would like to ask Senator Sir John Downer how the Government are going to obtain this information.

Senator Sir John Downer

- They can get it in South Australia and Tasmania anyhow.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I object to support an amendment which I know is a farce on the face of it, for the information cannot be obtained.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I think my honorable friend, Senator Sir John Downer, who is a privileged joker, is really making fun of this motion.

Senator Sir John Downer

- Not a bit of it ; just the contrary.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It is perfectly ludicrous to add the words suggested, for the reasons mentioned by Senator Sir Frederick Sargood and for other reasons. Of course in South Australia there are means of supplying this information. I do not know whether it would be possible to supply it under an order of this Senate; it may or may not be.

Senator Playford

- It will be published in the Gazette.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The materials are there, and if it were intended seriously, and we were limited to a return of the expenses in South Australia that would be practicable, and possibly some of us might not have any objection to it. I should have no objection to it at all. But leaving that, what my friend Senator Higgs referred to is I think an important modification of this motion. The motion as it stands - I do not know whether Senator Walker so intended it - merely enables the House to ascertain the aggregate votes of the three senators at the head of the poll, and the aggregate votes of the other three senators, but, undoubtedly, the return is not complete at all, whatever object he may have in getting the information laid before the Senate, unless it shows the voting for each senator. That information ought to be given, and it will cost nothing in itself.

Senator Walker

- I have no objection.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I have no objection to move that amendment if Senator Higgs is considered to have spoken. I propose to add to paragraph (a) the words "and the number for each senator."

Senator Drake

- Strike out the word aggregate and put in the word each.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- That would make it simpler still, because we can add it up ourselves. The same amendment will have to be made in paragraph (J).

The PRESIDENT

- Although we have no standing orders, I must observe the ordinary practice of Parliament. There is an amendment before the Chair now, and if it is carried, the amendment of Sir Josiah Symon cannot be put.

Senator Sir John Downer

- I ask -leave to withdraw my amendment to allow the other to be moved.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn

Amendment (by Senator Sir Josiah Symon) proposed -

That the word " aggregate " in paragraph (a) be omitted, with a view to the insertion of the words "each of" after the word "by."

Senator- DRAKE(Queensland) Postmaster-General - I have no objection to this amendment, and would support the motion in the amended form. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary, seeing that the other amendments have been for the time withdrawn, to speak in regard to them, but I hope that the amendments which have been spoken of by some senators will not be seriously persevered with. This is not the amendment which was mentioned by Senator Higgs ; he asked for a detailed list of the voting, which is a very different thing. The election of senators was in the hands of the States, and in some States I believe detailed lists of the voting have been, published. In those cases there would be no difficulty in collecting information. But in the case of those States in which that information has not been given, I think it would be extremely difficult to get it ; in fact, I do not see how the Commonwealth Government could undertake the responsibility of getting it. You could do no more, I think, than make a request that that information should be forthcoming. Senator Sir William Zeal. - Has not all the information been published in the newspapers 1

Senator KEATING

- The motion as it stands will be of very little value for determining the position of the successful

candidates in the State of Tasmania, because we have there a totally different system of voting. Therefore, it will be necessary to have, this motion so framed as to enable honorable senators, when the return is produced, to determine exactly what number of primary votes each successful candidate got. When the subsequent counts are completed and the six men are duly elected, we find in the ordinary course that the six have the quota. Some persons are under the impression that each of the successful six are on terms of equality. I should like the motion to be so framed that the Senate would be able to ascertain the exact number of primary votes which the successful candidates obtained.

Senator Drake

- They would get that information under this return.

Senator KEATING

- If they get in the return the aggregate number of votes.

A Senator.- - That is to be struck out.

Senator KEATING

- A candidate must get the quota before he is returned at all. Several Senators. - No.

Senator KEATING

- Five candidates out of the six got the quota, but the six senators might be put down as having obtained the quota, whatever it may have been. So far as Tasmania is concerned, the motion should be so framed that the Senate may know the number of primary votes or the first-choice votes accorded to the three men at the top of the poll, and the number of similar votes accorded to the other three.

The PRESIDENT

- Perhaps the best way would be for the honorable senator to move another sub-section.

Senator KEATING

- I intend to move that the question be amended by the addition of the following: - "That in the case of Tasmania the return show the number of primary votes secured by each senator returned for the State and the final order."

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Senator EWING

- I would like to know, and I am sure most honorable senators would like to know, from some one intimately connected with the law of Tasmania, whether that State is not in the same position as most of the other States with regard to the ballot-papers after they have been once counted 1 The law of Western Australia is, I understand, that after the ballot: is counted the papers are to be sealed, and under no conditions are the boxes to be opened and the papers counted, unless under an order of the court for a recount, or in the event of a protest being lodged against the return of a candidate.

Senator Playford

- Ours are counted. "

Senator EWING

- If that is the case in Tasmania, I would ask the mover of this amendment how it is possible to have a recount of the votes in that State 1

Senator Keating

- There would be no need for a recount at all. The returning officer has a record showing exactly how the candidates stood at each count.

Senator EWING

- In that case I fail to see on what principle the honorable senator proposes to use this return. It may possibly be that the order of primary votes of one of those who have been returned highest on the poll would have been different if the whole of the votes had been counted before his name was struck out of some of the ballot-papers on which his name was of no use, because he had obtained the quota. I take it that numbers are counted 'up to the quota first in Tasmania, and that after a candidate has arrived at the quota, his name is discarded from all future ballot-papers.

Senator Keating

- No. All his primary votes are counted.

Senator EWING

- I think the honorable senator ought to so frame his motion that the Senate may get the number of secondary votes, and full particulars of the Tasmanian ballot. Then, I suppose, the interesting duty would

devolve upon the Senate of deciding which of the senators of Tasmania is the senior and which the junior.

Senator KEATING

- No. That was decided.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- It seems to me that this is a very simple matter. The honorable senator from Western Australia informs us that the returning officer has these documents sealed up. There is nothing unusual in that, for the same procedure is followed in this State. The papers are retained for a time in case of a disputed election, so that the ballot can be recounted. I have in my hands a statement of the ballot in Western Australia as declared by the returning officer at the poll.

Senator Ewing

- Excuse me. The returns were never declared at the poll.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- It says here : -

The POLL for the Senate was declared this morning as follows : - Mr. Smith, first ; Mr. Matheson, second ; Mr. Pearce, third ; Mr. DeLargie, fourth ; Mr. Harney, fifth ; Mr. Ewing, sixth.

I do not suppose the honorable senator is in a position to dispute that.

Senator Ewing

- I was present.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- At all events I have the number recorded for each candidate. All I understand that Senator Walker wants to get is the number of votes obtained by each candidate. Surely there is nothing in the background which will injure any senator by producing that information. It seems to me that it is a perfectly reasonable and feasible procedure.

Amendment agreed to.

The PRESIDENT

- With the concurrence of the Senate I will alter paragraph (b) in a similar way.

Senator Sir JOHNDOWNER (South Australia.) - I desire to say that I did not move my amendment in the slightest degree as a joke.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- The honorable senator has spoken.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I have withdrawn my amendment.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable senator cannot speak again.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- There are no standing orders at present.

Amendment (by Senator Keating) agreed to-

That the question be amended by the addition of the following words : - " (c) And in the case of the election of senators for Tasmania, the number of primary votes received by each of the six senators for that State. " '

Senator STEWART

- Seeing that Sir John Downer has not proceeded with his amendment, I would take the opportunity of moving for a return showing the expenses to which each senator has been put.

Senator Drake

- How could it be got ?

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Senator STEWART

- I am astonished at any honorable senator asking such a question. Does not each senator know how much his election cost him ? Are honorable senators in ignorance as to how much money they spent on their respective elections ? I can easily state how much I spent, and I have not the slightest objection to letting the people of Australia know it.

I move -

That the question be amended by the addition of the following new paragraph - "(d) The amount of money spent by each senator in securing his return."

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I cannot remember the exact page of May, but in the tenth edition it is plainly laid down that it is not within the competency of a Legislative Chamber to order the production of papers that it is not within the power of the Government to supply. The information sought is not within the power of the Government, and they could not supply it. All the Government could do is to apply to the different members of the Senate for information.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I fail to see what purpose the return will serve, unless we know the expense to which each senator has been put to. One man may have had only a limited amount of money to spend. If he could have travelled more, perhaps he might have obtained more votes.

Senator Best

- He may have had a lot of newspaper influence behind him.

Senator CHARLESTON

- Exactly. If the return is to be of any value, we ought to know the amount that each senator spent on his election.

The PRESIDENT

- I would point out that it is quite within the power of the Senate to order any return. Of course, as a matter of procedure, the Senate will not order returns the production of which it cannot enforce, but it is quite within the competency of the Senate to pass the motion.

Senator PLAYFORD

- I think it would be a very good thing if we could get the information. As far as the South Australian members are concerned, the whole of the expenses which have been paid in 'contesting the different electorates will appear in the Government Gazette in South Australia in the course of a few days, and the world will be able to know what each of us has spent. Of course the object of this motion is as plain as a pikestaff. The object is to show the large number of votes that the three senators at the top of the poll got over those at the bottom of the poll, for the purpose of arguing, and very properly arguing, that the electors undoubtedly have decided by their votes who are to retire first. Having placed certain gentlemen at the head of the poll, they have shown unmistakably where their confidence rested. As the Commonwealth Act contains no provision for retirement by lot, that having been struck out of the Act, and the matter having been left entirely to the Senate, I think we as good democrats cannot overlook the fact that the electors have practically decided the question. This return will show to what extent they have decided it.

The PRESIDENT

- Is the honorable senator not discussing another question ? The motion is one for information.

Senator PLAYFORD

- Yes, but it is information in the direction I have indicated. There will of course be a further opportunity of arguing the matter, but if we could get the information that some senators desire, I am sure it would be very valuable, because it might be pointed out that some of the senators who were highest on the poll were highest because they expended the largest amount of money.

Senator GOULD(New South Wales).I wish to say with reference to the amendment that it appears to me to be utterly useless to attempt to add such a paragraph, because it is very clear the Government have no power whatever to get the information. They will be absolutely dependent on the willingness, or unwillingness, of senators to afford the information. Again, it will be within the power of any honorable senator, if he sees fit, to magnify or diminish the amount of his expenditure. It may happen that some honorable senators have not kept an exact record of what they have spent. I do not think it is a wise thing to attempt to direct returns to be laid upon the table unless the Government have power to produce those returns, and unless there is an opportunity for honorable senators, if they see fit, to check the correctness or otherwise of them.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- To make it complete we ought to have a return of the influence of organizations and so forth.

Senator GOULD

- Yes. I do not know whether the honorable senator in charge of the amendment would contemplate doing anything of that sort.

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Senator Stewart

- I contemplate obtaining nothing but the bare cost.

Senator Sir John Downer

- We might know the money expended, and we must trust each other.

Senator GOULD

- What good is it?

Senator Stewart

- To satisfy our curiosity.

Senator GOULD

- Supposing one senator spent £100, and another £10. The circumstances in each case may be entirely different. One man may have had to travel over the whole State, and another man might not have had to travel half the distance.

Senator Charleston

- What is the value of the return?

Senator GOULD

- It is to enable us to determine a question that will come up by and by, but this amendment will not help us one jot. I think it is a foolish course for this Chamber to attempt to order returns on matters not within the cognizance of the Government.

Senator EWING(Western Australia).With regard to the criticism that has been offered to Senator Stewart's amendment, the object of which it is said is to get a return which Parliament cannot legally compel, I would point out that we have just passed a motion in favour of getting a return that we cannot compel. . The Postmaster-General, no doubt, will agree that he has no power whatever to compel the States to give the information asked for in Senator Walker's motion ; and if that is no objection to Senator Walker's motion, why should it be an objection to the amendment of Senator Stewart1 Admitting that we cannot compel senators to make a return, Senator Stewart's motion is just as much in order as Senator Walker's. All that can be done is to request the States to give the information, and, in the case of Senator Stewart's amendment, to request members to give the information.

Senator FERGUSON

- To show how useless the request for this information would be, as far as some senators are concerned, I may say that I was in England during my election, and that my expenses were paid for me. If I were to attempt to give my expenses, I would have to apply to the different banks upon which the cheques were drawn. My several agents and attorneys paid my expenses, and therefore, it is impossible for me to ascertain the exact amount expended.

Senator Glassey

- Did they pay the expenses out of their own pockets, or draw upon the honorable member 1

Senator FERGUSON

- They at all events had the power to pay, and to find out the amount they paid I would have to go to the different banks.

Senator McGregor

- Will not the honorable member find out by how much they fleeced him?

Senator Gould

- Some hon. members travelled free by trains and others have to pay their own expenses.

Senator FERGUSON

- At all events if any one asked me my expenses, I would tell him that was my business and not his.

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - I cannot accept the amendment, and if it were carried I should feel bound to vote against the motion. The information asked for by Senator Walker is information that has been made public. The returns are announced by the Returning Officer according to law, and we are in the position to obtain them, but with the exception of the State of South Australia there is no provision in the law of any of the States which

requires a senator to disclose the amount of his expenditure.

Senator Keating

- Yes, in Tasmania.

Senator DRAKE

- Well, then, in two of the States it might be possible to obtain this information. With regard to the others there is no law by which we can compel senators to disclose the amount of their expenditure, and I can say on behalf of the Government that they will certainly not ask for any information which they cannot insist on having supplied to them. If the motion were carried in this amended form the Senate would be making an order which it would be out of the power of the Government to comply with.

Senator Ewing

- Can we insist upon the States giving the other information.

Senator DRAKE

- All the information referred to in the motion as it stands can be obtained from the announcements that have been made by returning officers.

Senator Ewing

- Not officially in Western Australia.

Senator DRAKE

- Then the law in Western Australia must be very different to what it is in the other States. In all the other States the law requires that the returning officer shall publicly announce the number of votes recorded.

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Senator Charleston

- I would ask if the Prime Minister is not already in possession of the list of the gentlemen elected, and the number of votes recorded for each senator. Did he not make a return for the Prime Minister of those facts?

Senator DRAKE

- I think so.

Senator Sir FREDERICKSARGOOD (Victoria). - I entirely agree with the Postmaster General as to the futility of passing the amendment. Is it to be absolutely unlimited, or is it intended to limit it to the expenditure incurred prior to the nomination or subsequent to the nomination? If prior to the nomination, for what period? It seems to me you lose yourself in the clouds, and cannot arrive at anything.

Senator HIGGS

- Although it may be impossible to get the information from honorable senators, I hope, when the time comes, the Government will not fail to introduce into their Electoral Bill the necessary clause to provide that such information shall be forthcoming.

Senator Drake

- That is another thing.

Question - That the words proposed to be added be added - put. The Senate divided.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

There is a constitutional point, Mr. President, to which I would ask your attention in connexion with the vote. Under the Constitution with regard to the State, you as President have a vote, and not a casting vote. I would like to ask whether you are obliged on that account, and for that reason to vote on every question?

The PRESIDENT

- I do not think so.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The constitution of this Senate is unlike that of the United States, where the President is not a member of the Senate. You are a member of the Senate, and are entitled to exercise a vote, and the question is whether you being in the chamber must on every occasion exercise a vote. It is an important constitutional question?

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable senator will find that the Act says that the President " may " vote. I have looked upon it as a matter to be settled by the standing orders.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It requires very grave consideration, because of the essential principles of the equality of representation. In respect of each State it is essential that the full voting power should be exercised, unless there is some constitutional reason to the contrary, upon every question that comes before us. Every member of the Senate, according to the old parliamentary rule, who is in the chamber at the time the vote is taken is obliged to exercise his vote. I mention this matter now as this is the first occasion upon which the point has really arisen, in order that you may be able to give it consideration, and that the Senate may give it consideration and arrive at some conclusion.

The PRESIDENT

- As a matter of fact, I have thought about it a great deal, but I have not arrived at any conclusion. I thought the probability was that the standing orders would state the circumstances under which the President could exercise his option.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- And whether he can abstain from voting.

The PRESIDENT

- This being the first occasion upon which the question is raised, I shall vote with the Noes.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

Before the division is announced, may I be permitted to refer to the passage of May, to which I have already made reference.

The PRESIDENT

- No, that is not a point of order. I will now announce the result of the division.

13

AYES

17

NOES

Majority 4

AYES

NOES

Question so resolved in the negative.

Senator CLEMONS

- Mr. President-

The PRESIDENT

- The debate is closed.

Senator CLEMONS

- Only on the amendment.

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The PRESIDENT

- It all depends upon the practice we adopt. I do not know whether we ought to adopt the practice followed in the House of Commons or in South Australia, but, according to the South Australian practice, the debate has been concluded.

Senator Playford

- The debate is finished but not the motion.

The PRESIDENT

- Exactly ; the debate is concluded. I now put the motion as amended to the Senate.

Senator Clemons

- I wish to move an amendment on Senator Keating's amendment.

The PRESIDENT

- Senator Keating's amendment has been agreed to.

Resolved- That a return be laid upon the Table of the Senate showing - (a) The number of votes obtained by each of the first three senators in each State at the election for senators, (b) The number of votes obtained by each of the second three senators in each State at the election for senators, (c) And in the case of the election of senators for Tasmania the number of primary votes received by each of the six senators for that State.

POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL

First Reading

Bill presented by Senator Drake (Queens land - Postmaster-General), and read a first time.

Second Reading

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - I shall be perfectly prepared to move the second reading of this Bill, which relates to the postal and telegraph services of the Commonwealth, to-morrow, and then to allow the debate to stand over till such time as may be convenient to the Senate. If there is a general feeling on the part of senators that it is desirable that the second reading should not be moved until next week, I will take the second reading on Wednesday. Of course, it will be understood that should we make good progress with business to-day, there will be very little work for the Senate to do next week, if this Bill is not read a second time until Wednesday next.

Senator Dobson

- When will the Bill be circulated ?

Senator DRAKE

- To-morrow morning. I intended to make the second reading speech, and then adjourn the debate until next week, so that senators might have an opportunity of reading the Bill after they had heard my observations.

Senator Dobson

- There is no standing order to prevent us going on with the Bill until it has been issued seven days.

Senator DRAKE

- Oh, no ; and there is no practice in the House of Commons to that effect, as far as I know. I think it can be read a second time on the day following its first reading-. I beg formally to move : -

That the Bill be printed, and that the second reading stand an order of the day for tomorrow.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I would suggest that it would not be fair to the Postmaster-General himself, or to honorable members generally, to move to-morrow the second reading of a Bill which we have not yet seen. I think it is utterly impossible to follow a second reading speech clearly and intelligently until we have had an opportunity of looking through the Bill, and studying the clauses to which special attention may be called. The practice so far as this State is concerned has been to circulate Bills and to allow honorable members an ample opportunity of making themselves acquainted with their contents before the second reading is moved. In that way honorable members are able to follow the mover in a much more satisfactory and intelligent manner than when they are asked to deal with a Bill which they have not seen for five minutes. I suggest that time would be saved by moving the second reading next Wednesday. Apart from that it does appear to me to be hardly worth while calling the Senate together for the simple second reading speech of a Bill which is to a large extent a machinery measure.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I agree with the proposal of the Postmaster-General. It appears to me that in spite of the impossibility perhaps of carefully studying this Bill, which according to Senator Sir Frederick Sargood is simply a machinery measure, between to-day and to-morrow, it will be an immense advantage to all of us if before we begin to look into it at all we hear exactly what the Minister in charge of it has to say. In my opinion it would be much more convenient to adopt that course. That has been the practice in the South Australian Parliament. Of course, that is not an argument in favour of that practice, but as I was a member of that Parliament for some years, I can say that it is a convenient course to adopt. It has always been our usage to allow the second reading to take place as early as possible, for then we have the Bill explained by the Minister in charge, and we approach its consideration with the gloss of his speech upon it, instead of puzzling our heads over matters of machinery which we really could not understand otherwise. I think this is a good precedent. The sooner the second reading of a Bill comes after its introduction the better. Let the interval come after the second reading has been moved. For my own part, I entirely agree with the views expressed by the Minister in charge of this Bill.

Senator Major Gould

- Would it be possible to have the Bill circulated this afternoon, while members are in the chamber.

Senator DRAKE

- I will see if that can be done.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

DAYS AND HOURS OF SITTING

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - On behalf of the Vice President of the Executive Council, and at his request, I beg to move -

That the days of meeting of this' Senate during the present Session be Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week at the hour of half-past two o'clock in the afternoon, unless otherwise ordered.

I may say, Mr. President, that my honorable colleague the Vice-President of the Executive Council has taken great pains to ascertain as far as he can the views of the Senate with regard to the days that will be most convenient to honorable members. It is almost unnecessary to say that there is some difference of opinion. Some senators consider that certain days in the week will be more convenient, and others hold a different view. This proposition represents, I believe, the result arrived at by my honorable colleague after making inquiries from very many of the senators. I think it very desirable that there should be some expression of opinion on the subject. If the Senate would prefer to meet at 10.30 on Friday morning, instead of at 2.30 p.m., the Government would offer no objection to that alteration. The sole object is to ascertain the days and hours that will be most convenient to the majority of senators.

Senator Major GOULD

- I think that honorable members will find it more convenient generally to meet on Friday morning than on Friday afternoon. If we meet on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, and on Friday morning, it will be possible for a large number of them to get away to their homes every Friday afternoon. I understand that, as far as the representatives of Tasmania are concerned, it would be a convenience, as they would be able to return to their homes and come back by a boat leaving Tasmania on Tuesday and arriving here on Wednesday. The train to South Australia leaves between 4 and 5 o'clock p.m., so that representatives of the State would also have an opportunity of spending a few days at home before resuming their duties. Senators from New South Wales would be inconvenienced in exactly the same way. Our friends from Queensland are rather too far away, but, possibly, this arrangement would convenience them in certain instances. Of course, senators from Western Australia will have to wait for their transcontinental railway before they can take advantage of this proposal. So far as the Victorian members are concerned, I have no doubt they will under the circumstances make arrangements to attend on Friday mornings. It will, of course, inconvenience those residing in Melbourne, but we must ask them to put up with that for the sake of the majority of members. I therefore beg to move as an amendment -

That after " afternoon " the following words be inserted - " of Wednesday and Thursday, and at the hour of 10.30 in the forenoon of Friday."

The honorable member in charge of the motion has kindly expressed his willingness to consent to this alteration. I may say that I had a personal interview with Senator O'Connor, and he promised very much the same thing to me personally.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I have no objection to the insertion of the words. They are entirely in accord with the wishes of the majority of the Senate, but there was a kind of understanding also arrived at that the Friday sittings should terminate in time to enable honorable members to catch their various vehicles.

Senator Dobson

- That ought to depend on the business.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- It was proposed that the sittings should terminate at 4 o'clock.

Senator Drake

- Not by a sessional order, but by a general understanding.

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Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- It seems to me that the motion provides exactly what Senator Gould asks for, as it says, " unless otherwise ordered." It will thus be in the power of the House at each sitting to say what the time of meeting for the following day shall be. I think, therefore, that the motion will do as it stands.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- Col. Neild. - It would be better to have a fixed order, so that we might know what we were about.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- What is the use of making a hard and fast rule which cannot possibly be observed? I do not think that any senator from Victoria would offer the slightest objection to meeting at 10.30.

Senator Harney

- Why not fix it, then ?

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- Because I think it is fixed already by the terms of the motion.

Senator Harney

- It would require a special order.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- No; it would not require a special order, but simply an expression of opinion from the Senate.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- With all due deference to Senator Sir William Zeal, I think he will find that it is not absolutely fixed. Any senator could demand that notice be given before fixing the hour of meeting at 10.30. The honorable member knows that a sessional order could not be departed from without notice except by the unanimous consent of the Senate, because any one member could prevent it. While I must confess that 10.30 a.m. would be an extremely inconvenient hour to me, still I feel that, for the sake of the eighteen or more honorable members that it would convenience, I must put aside personal considerations.

Senator DAWSON

- The mover of the amendment and those supporting him base their arguments on the ground of studying the convenience of senators. Senator Gould has told us that it will suit the representatives of New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria; but the representatives of Queensland and Western Australia cannot possibly take advantage of the amendment. Instead of fixing" the hours in this way, I think it would be better for us to increase the days of sitting, in order that we might get over the business as quickly as possible. It would be much better for us to sit from Monday to Saturday, until the business of the Commonwealth has been completed.

Senator Harney

- And finish off in two months instead of six.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- We have to wait for the other Chamber.

Senator DAWSON

- If we could show the general public that we are prepared to do business in a much more expeditious manner than another place, we would be able to recommend men, and the talkative members of that Chamber would not be returned again. I should like to know from Senator Drake what bearing his motion and the amendment will have on the motion which stands next on the notice-paper?

Senator Drake

- I do not propose to alter the next motion. Private members, will have an additional advantage.

Senator DAWSON

- That means that private members will have the whole sitting:.

Senator Drake

- Yes.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I would point out to my honorable friend, senator Dawson, that every member of this Chamber exceedingly regrets that no. arrangement can be made to afford equal facilities to senators from Queensland and Western Australia to return home each week.

Senator McGregor

- Cannot the honorable member give a bonus for a flying machine?

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend has an inventive genius, and if he would apply that genius to the invention of a flying machine, we should be prepared to encourage him, so as to enable honorable members to return to

their homes at the end of the week. The effect of sitting from Monday till Saturday would be to place us very much in the position of the celebrated French king, who led his army up the hill and marched it down again, because, according to the notice-paper, there will probably be no necessity for us to meet next week, and the representatives of Queensland and Western Australia will be able to take a trip home. After comparing the notice-paper of this Senate with that of another place, I feel that the three days provided for the business of the Senate will scarcely be occupied for some time to come. It will certainly be a very great convenience to meet at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, and we may be well content with the statement of the Minister that there is an understanding that there will be no late sittings unless the business requires it. If they are required, then we shall all be ready to devote ourselves as strenuously as we can to the completion of our work.

Amendment agreed to.

Resolved :That the days of meeting of this Senate during the present session be Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of each week, at the hour of half-past two o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday and Thursday, and at the hour of half past ten o'clock in the forenoon of Friday, unless otherwise ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Senator DRAKE

- On behalf of the "Vice President of the Executive Council I move -

That on Wednesday and Thursday, during the present session, Government business take precedence of all other business on the notice-paper except questions, and that private business take precedence of Government business on Friday up to the dinner hour.

The Senate will see that, in consequence of the alteration which has been made in the preceding motion, the time allotted to private business is considerably extended. Instead of from half -past two o'clock, to the dinner hour, as was intended, private business will take precedence from half-past ten o'clock in the morning up to the dinner hour. I think the Senate will agree, that that is a very liberal allowance of time to make to private members. I have always been in favour of allowing a considerable amount of the time at the disposal of any chamber I have been in to private business. I am very glad, therefore, to have this opportunity of moving the motion as it stands on the business paper.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I wish to call attention to the fact that, the words "dinner hour," are used. I would suggest to Senator Drake, that the hour should be named.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I rise to ask the representative of the Government if he has any objection to insert after the word " questions " the words " and formal motions." It is customary in certain places for formal motions to be taken, even if they relate to the business of private members. The motion may be for papers that are urgently required in order that some question coming before the Chamber may be dealt with. I shall not move an amendment if the Postmaster-General will accept my suggestion and insert the words.

Senator Best

- It is always done by consent.

Senator Dobson

- I think the term - unopposed motion - is better.

Senator DRAKE

- With the consent of the Senate, I would like to say that that is the . practice which I have been accustomed to and it has always worked exceedingly well. Questions, and what are called in Queensland "formal motions," always have precedence of all other motions.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable member is not replying ; he is only answering a question ?

Senator DRAKE

- Yes, sir. I have no objection to insert the words " and formal motions."

Sir Frederick Sargood

- And unopposed motions ?

Senator DRAKE

- Formal motion is the term I have been accustomed to.

Senator Major Gould

- A " formal motion " involves no debate.

Senator DRAKE

- Formal motion and unopposed motion, I understand, really mean the same thing.

Senator Major Gould

- But a formal motion may be voted against.

Senator DRAKE

- It is a motion which by agreement is to be moved without debate. An honorable senator may vote against it, but may not debate it.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- Therefore " unopposed " is not a good term to use. Formal is the correct term.

Senator DRAKE

- It is the term I prefer, but perhaps that is because it is the term I have been accustomed to. I presume that the standing orders will settle that. If we use the term "formal motion" I have no doubt that it will be adopted by the Standing Orders Committee.

Senator Lt.-Col.NEILD (New South Wales). - I beg to move -

That the words "and formal motions" be inserted after the word "questions."

Senator Drake

- I accept that.

Senator PLAYFORD

- I do not know what the words "formal motion " may mean. One senator may look upon a motion as a formal motion which another senator may consider a very important matter.

The PRESIDENT

- Perhaps I may be permitted to explain the practice, although it has never been adopted in South Australia. The President reads to the Senate the motions and asks if they shall be formal or not, and then if nobody objects they are put ; but if anybody objects they must be treated as opposed motions.

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Senator PLAYFORD

- But we must recollect, in the first place, that private members are to have Friday only up to the dinner hour, which, I understand, is one o'clock.

Senator Dobson

- No; half-past six o'clock.

Senator PLAYFORD

- If we are to have the whole of the day, the argument which I was going to use does not apply.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- I would suggest to the representative of the Government that the words "up to the dinner hour " be struck out.

Senator Drake

- No.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- What was the tenor of the honorable gentleman's argument just now - that honorable senators from New South Wales and South Australia should be able to leave by the express train. Is it not a farce to put in the words to which I have referred when they will have to leave two hours before the dinner hour ?

Senator Drake

- But we must have the right to go on.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- In this State the Legislative Council used to meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The whole of Wednesday was given up to private members, subject, of course, to there being sufficient private business on the notice paper; and if there was not sufficient private business on the notice paper, Government business went on. It is a perfect farce to allow the motion to stand as it is, because the Government might practically monopolize the whole of the time of the Senate, and private members would have no regard shown to them.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- It is the other way.

Senator DRAKE

- Private members would have all the time up to the dinner hour.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- If honorable senators give up their rights it will be of no use afterwards for them to complain about it. I hold that the words "up to the dinner hour" ought to be struck out, with a view to allow honorable senators who bring forward private business an opportunity of placing it properly before the House and the country. Therefore I propose to move the omission of the words.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable member cannot do that while there is an amendment before the Senate.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do not want to say much about the amendment, except that in the draft standing orders there are no such things as formal motions provided for. It is a pity to complicate matters by adopting that term, unless we intend to use it in a different sense.

The PRESIDENT

- There is something about formal or unopposed motions in the draft standing orders.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes, the standing orders speak of it as an unopposed motion. It really is an unopposed motion, and that is a much more definite expression than formal motion. A formal motion may be formal in some respects, and may be very informal in the sense of being debatable in another ; and it will always be necessary to inquire, so I understand, whether the motion is to be put formally in the sense of being unopposed or not. If we use the words unopposed motion there can be no confusion. The standing orders use the word "unopposed," and we shall either have to alter it there or adopt it now. We should adopt a term which has precision instead of one which requires definition at the moment. I think Senator Sir William Zeal will find that there is no necessity for his amendment, because the motion gives up the whole of Friday to private business. That is the object of it, it seems to me, and if the words up to the dinner hour are left in, it merely means that if the dinner hour is half-past six o'clock private business may go on till that time, although a number of honorable senators may be away at four o'clock or half-past that hour. There is no object in striking out the words up to the dinner hour, but we might insert the words up to the dinner hour or the hour of adjournment.

Senator Drake

- Oh, no.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The substance of the motion is that private members are to have the whole of Friday up to dinner hour for their business, but that after that hour, if there is any Government business, it may go on.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- With regard to the use of the terms formal and unopposed, I see that May in his Parliamentary Practice makes a distinction between the two. On page 210 of the 10th edition there is this marginal note: "Formal motion during time for unopposed business," clearly indicating that they are two distinct things. In Victoria we have been accustomed to the term unopposed motion. It does appear to me that the term unopposed defines more clearly what we mean than the term formal, and as it appears to be given a definition in May, I think we might very well adopt the word unopposed rather than the word formal.

Senator Major GOULD

- A formal motion is one which would be taken without debate, but on which the Senate might divide. An unopposed motion would be a motion on which the Senate could not divide, because it was unopposed. I have seen the case where a motion has been taken as a formal one, but a division has been called for and it has been negatived.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- It frequently happens.

Senator Major GOULD

- There has been a desire to get a motion off the notice paper, and sooner than wait week after week, or month after month, honorable members have consented to take it as a formal motion and go to a division and to deal with it. For this reason I think it is better to use the word formal because it gives much more

freedom in dealing with motions of the character we want to meet in these cases. With regard to private business taking precedence of Government business on Friday up to the dinner hour, I thought that possibly Senator Sir William Zeal was going to suggest that we should fix the hour at which it is contemplated the Senate will rise - that is about four o'clock - and if we amend the motion at all, I should say it would be in the direction of making four o'clock the time up to which private business can take place. There would be this advantage so far as the Government are concerned. They have given us an assurance that they will not press on business unduly or unreasonably on a Friday afternoon, when honorable senators want to get away. With regard to business which is in the hands of private members, they may be very anxious to go on with that business up to five o'clock, possibly with a very thin Senate, and may then get a determination which does not convey "the sense of the majority. True it may be said that certain senators thought it expedient to go home instead of waiting, but still you would have this disadvantage, that a debate might be pressed on when there were only a few members in the Chamber, and a decision be arrived at which possibly senators as a whole would regret, and take some means to reverse. I really think it would be better to fix the time at four o'clock. Honorable senators may ask - why take away a fair amount of time from those who desire to introduce private business 1 My reply is that the Government, strictly speaking, are the proper persons to introduce public business into the Senate. They have a responsibility before the people of the country which a private member has not. It very frequently happens that matters are brought forward which could be very much better dealt with by the Government, and it would give much more satisfaction to people generally if they were so dealt with.

Senator DAWSON

- A private member will have to be supported.

Senator Major GOULD

- Of course he will be. When the Government have the business in hand, they have a full sense of responsibility. Honorable members seem more inclined to stop in the House on such occasions. If from half-past ten o'clock to four o'clock, at any rate in the early days of the session, is set aside to private business honorable senators will find that there will be ample opportunity for them to bring forward and discuss any matters which they consider ought to be discussed, but which cannot be so well taken up by the Government. I shall not move an amendment unless I find that it is in accord with the wishes of honorable senators generally. I think it would be a convenience to fix the hour at four o'clock, because honorable senators would say - we can go to the Senate at half-past ten o'clock, knowing that we can get away at four o'clock, whatever the state of business may be, unless there is some important Government business to be brought forward, when, of course, we should make a point of remaining to discuss it. I doubt whether for some time to come we shall have business to carry us on to four o'clock on Friday.

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Senator MCGREGOR

- I wish to point out to Senator Sir William Zeal that the Government, in agreeing to extend the time from half-past two o'clock to half-past ten o'clock in the morning, have been very liberal to private members. Under the original proposal, private members would only have from half-past two o'clock in the afternoon to half-past six o'clock, and the few senators who desired to get away at four o'clock would be in a bit of a fix. I hope that the hour of four o'clock will be substituted for the dinner hour in the motion, because it will give private members a definite time in which to deal with their business, and induce them to hurry up more than they would do if they had a longer time. Later on in the session, when Bills come up from another place, and we have an accumulation of business here, and honorable senators are anxious to close their labours, it may be necessary for the Government to introduce business on Friday evenings, and very probably to sit all night. I have seen such things happen before. Therefore, I think it would be wiser for the Government, and for even private members, to fix the hour at four o'clock for private business to conclude, and then allow the Government - of course that means with the consent of the Senate - a free hand when real press of business comes on. I hope the suggestion will be adopted.

Senator BEST

- With regard to the suggestion about fixing a definite hour at which we should adjourn, I wish to state what our experience in that connexion was in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria. There was a certain popular motion before the House. It was a proposition that a minimum rate of wage be paid to all Government labour. There was clearly a majority in the House in favour of the motion, but there was a

very substantial minority against it. There was a standing order to the effect that private members' business should be adjourned at four o'clock. Private members' day after private members' day passed, and on each occasion this private members' motion was consistently stonewalled.

Senator Major Gould

- Could we not put the closure on ?

Senator BEST

- No.

Senator Major Gould

- I hope that in our standing orders we shall have that provision.

Senator Ewing

- It would be undesirable to adopt it.

Senator BEST

- Certainly it is most desirable, and we in Victoria are most desirous of falling in with the suggestion of honorable senators from other States in order to facilitate their return to their homes. Subsequently, when we altered this standing order, there was a general understanding amongst honorable members that we should adjourn at four o'clock, and we did consistently adjourn at that hour. So I would suggest that it certainly would be desirable to have an understanding that we should adjourn at that hour, but that it would be a very great mistake to adopt a cast-iron standing order. Our experience is certainly against that.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Would not the same objection apply to making it half past six o'clock.

Senator BEST

- No doubt it would.

Senator HARNEY

- I think that the observations made by Senator Best do not supply an answer to the remarks that were made by Senators Gould and McGregor. The observations of Senator Best were pointed to showing the difficulties that would arise by having an hour fixed for adjournment, but I see no less fixture in dinner hour than in four o'clock.

Senator Best

- Hear, hear . ' That is quite right.

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Senator HARNEY

- Then the honorable member's object is to have it fixed. I understood the remarks of the honorable senator to be directed to what Senator McGregor pointed out, that the adjournment should be at four o'clock and not the dinner hour. Knowing very little of procedure and not fully realizing the difficulties that have been referred to, there does seem to be a great deal of force in the remarks of Senator McGregor. As the motion originally stood private business was given from half-past two until the dinner hour, but now the time is, in the language of Senator McGregor, to be extended backwards to half-past ten. If we extend backwards one thing, we ought to extend backwards the other, and if we make the meeting three or four hours sooner than contemplated we ought to make the termination three or four hours sooner. I am sure that when the Government were framing the motion they gave full consideration to the time that would be required for private business, and I think it would be wrong to take advantage of an amendment which was accepted in order to convenience the Senate, and thereby give a longer time to private members than was originally intended by the Government. I believe that for some months there will not be sufficient private business to occupy us from half-past ten until four, and to place a very long time at our disposal would create a tendency to prolonged debate. Honorable senators would have no object in leaving the chamber when business might be called on up to the dinner hour, and would fill in their time by unduly attenuating their speeches.

Senator HIGGS

- I am very much in favour of the remarks that have fallen from Senator Sir William Zeal in favour of striking out the words "up to the dinner hour," which would give us the right to proceed with private business till Saturday night at six o'clock, if we so desired. I have not been impressed with the great fluency of some of the members for New South Wales who seem to be very anxious to adjourn

altogether. I think if our Senate is to maintain anything like prestige throughout the Commonwealth, it will have to do some business, and, so far, it does not appear very much inclined to do anything, and the Government unfortunately do not appear anxious to help it to do anything. I am sorry that we have no more work to go on with. If the Government will not introduce any legislation, of course private members will have to introduce it, to show that they have some desire to bring legislation before the country. I hope we shall not curtail the time to be given to private members, because, as Senator Best pointed out, it will be within the power of individual senators to talk out measures. We in Queensland especially have suffered from that kind of thing. We could not get a fair and free discussion of any business, because we only had a limited number of hours at our disposal, and opponents would talk measures out.

Senator Drake

- We never had such a large proportion of the time 'as is proposed to be given now.

Senator Keating

- If we limit the time we give opportunity for stone-walling.

Senator HIGGS

- The time given in Queensland was a couple of hours, and now the Government propose to give us from 10.30 a.m. until 6.30 p.m.

Senator Drake

- That will be seven hours out of a total of three days.

Senator HIGGS

- If the time is limited to four o'clock that means that we have four and a half hours. I do not think that gives sufficient time to deal with any business. Surely when senators are only sitting three days a week, they will not object to sitting three full days? I think the proposal for Friday morning sittings is simply made to allow a number of senators to go away altogether on Friday. Have we any guarantee that the senators, who will be advantaged in this respect, will put in an appearance at all on Friday. I doubt very much whether they will. They will probably forsake the chamber, with the result that there will be no quorum.

Senator STYLES

- It is provided in the case of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Victoria, that Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays shall be the days of sitting, and private business is dealt with on Wednesdays until 5.30 p.m. It appears to me, as it is presented by Senator Higgs, that Friday will find us without a quorum occasionally. Government business will be taken on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and then there will be a stampede.

Senator Major Gould

- Twelve men form a quorum.

Senator STYLES

- There will be a stampede on Thursday evening, because of their being no important business to transact - only private business. Private business is no doubt important to the private members bringing it forward, but other private members do not think so much about it. The way to keep honorable members here would be to have Thursday for private business; they would then have to remain over Friday for the Government business. It appears to me that those who are likely to bring private business forward - I do not indulge in the luxury much myself - had better think this matter over and see whether it would not be better to substitute Thursday for Friday.

Senator WALKER (New South Wales). I am not quite sure whether we are perfectly regular. It seems to me that we have not disposed of the first amendment.

The PRESIDENT

- The practice I intend to ask the Senate to agree to, until we get standing orders, is the practice we had in the Convention, which was this: Every senator is entitled to make one speech, except the mover of the motion. Although theoretically there can be only one amendment before the Senate, other members may speak, and indicate amendments which will be moved at a later stage. When the amendments are put, they will be put in order, and if the original motion is amended then a new question arises, and every member can speak again. When they are speaking, they can speak to the motion and to all the amendments that have been proposed or suggested.

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Senator Major Gould

- Would that leave me in a position to submit an amendment such as I indicate, about the hour of meeting, or having spoken, would I be precluded 1

The PRESIDENT

- If we amend the motion, I put it again, and the debate starts afresh.

Senator WALKER

- Under the ruling you have now given, I take it I may propose omission of the words " the dinner hour," with a view of inserting the words, " four o'clock in the afternoon." There is no doubt considerable force in what one honorable senator has stated, that some members may run away to escape private members' business on Friday, but the effect would be that the Government would go on with their business, and I scarcely think they would allow senators to disperse if they had business to bring on. From what Senator Harney said, I am clear that it would be wise to make this additional alteration. I beg to move -

That the words "the dinner hour " be omitted.

Senator MACFARLANE

- I second that amendment. I do so because we are proposing to sit on Friday morning to enable members to get away. Therefore to take away the advantage given to senators seems to me unreasonable.

Senator DAWSON

- It appeal's to me, as far as the debate has gone, that senators are getting into something of a tangle. My honorable friend, Senator Higgs, agrees to the omission of the words " the dinner hour," because he thinks it will give a lengthened time for private members' business. The amendment that has just been moved is to omit the words " the dinner hour," with the view of inserting " four o'clock," in order to curtail the time devoted to private members. I think that what the Government have offered us is very reasonable. They have offered us from 10.30 in the morning up to 6.30 for private members' business. That is the most liberal allowance made in any Parliament in the British Empire.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- No.

Senator DAWSON

- I ask the honorable senator to point then to one Legislature, from the House of Commons to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, where a more liberal allowance is made.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- That of Victoria.

Senator DAWSON

- No State Parliament that I am aware of gives such a large amount of time to private business. We ought to be reasonable about the matter.

I think that ample opportunity should be given to private members to bring forward private Bills which cannot be taken up by the Government - I mean measures dealing with private individuals and institutions

- and also public Bills which the Government do not wish to take up.

Senator McGregor

- Syndicate railway Bills, for instance.

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Senator DAWSON

- As a rule, I have always found the Government only too eager to take up those ; other measures of a public nature are left to private members to ventilate, and the public have then to judge between the Government and those private members. In Queensland, as the Postmaster-General has pointed out, we have about two hours a week for private business, and one man who has command, of the English language and an eloquence equal to that of our honorable friend Senator Harney could get up and occupy the whole time. It means, really, that there is only one speech on private members' day. In Queensland for the first three months of the session, we adjourn over the day allotted to private members. It is only during the last two months of the session that we sit on private members' day. Therefore, any member with the great talkative power of the honorable senator I have just mentioned, and his distinguished friend sitting immediately in front of him, could, by a conspiracy of oratory, stop all private members' business, under the rules we have in Queensland. But, if we accept the proposal of the Government that from half-past ten until the dinner hour we shall devote ourselves to private business,

then I would defy any combination of oratorical members of the Chamber to prevent private members' business from receiving full and fair consideration. Some mention has been made of the difficulty of getting a quorum, but I understand that the quorum is to be fixed at twelve. I venture to say that there are six senators from Queensland who will be always in their places - that will be half the quorum. I believe there are six from Western Australia who will be perfectly willing also to be in their places. That will make the quorum ; and if senators hailing from other places than Queensland or Western Australia stay away, the senators from those two States will pass legislation on Friday to suit their States, and it will be the fault, not of the Western Australians or the Queenslanders, but of those who do not attend to their duty but run off to their homes.

Senator Walker

- Is the honorable member going to support my amendment?

Senator DAWSON

- I certainly am not. I do not think the Government would be justified in giving up the whole of one day to the discussion of private members' business ; but I do think they are doing a very decent and liberal thing towards private members when they give us from half-past ten to half-past six, and private members have no right to ask for any more. I therefore intend to vote against the amendment, and in support of the Government proposal. I would just like to put this view, and I think it is well worth considering. I refer to the question raised by Senator Styles about giving a lot of time to private members' business. There ought to be a check on private members' business.

Senator Harney

- That is what we want. Senator DAWSON. - But the check should not be too severe. I am quite willing there should be a check. Honorable senators talk about there not being a quorum for the transaction of private business, but I think that when business is introduced which affects all parts of the Commonwealth, they will see it to be their duty to be here. If the business is of a trivial and frivolous nature, then the only way in which you can stop it is by staying away and letting the House be counted out. I intend to support the proposal of the Government, and to vote against the amendment.

Senator DOBSON

- It appears to me that we are having rather a funny debate. There are two honorable Ministers in this Chamber and some thirty members, and when Ministers say they will give us from half-past ten to half-past six in the evening, some of us are replying - " You have offered us a loaf and we prefer to take half a loaf." The reason why some senators suggest that we should adjourn at four o'clock is that while they go to their own homes, others, who are not able to do so, may rush some important private business through the Senate. I do not intend to listen to that argument. It appears to me that it is too much taken for granted that at four o'clock every Friday we are to adjourn. I am sure that every senator cannot go to his home at the end of each week, and as far as I am personally concerned, I am afraid that I will not be able to see Hobart until Cup time. We are to adjourn at four o'clock when that can be reasonably done ; but it should not be taken for granted that throughout the session we shall adjourn at that hour. I have not had the pleasure of serving in an Upper House before; but it appears to me that" for the first six weeks, or two months, we shall have "little to do, and it will make very little difference whether our friends from South Australia or New South Wales go away at four o'clock on Fridays or not. For the last three months of the session, however, we shall have more than we can do. Therefore, I think that the proposal of the Government is an exceedingly fair one. We should take what private members' time we can get. I am perfectly sure that during the last two months the Government will have to encroach on private members' time. There is an enormous amount of work on the notice-paper of another place, and we shall have to deal with that at a period when we are fagged out, and when we wish to go home. Then these sessional orders will have to go, and we shall have to sit three or four days a week.

Senator KEATING

-I have listened with great interest to the remarks of honorable members who have had experience of the difficulties arising in connexion with private business in State Legislatures. Many of the arguments which have been addressed to us by those who are in favour of fixing a certain hour for the closing of private business on Friday are based on a premise which has no foundation whatever, that is, that the whole of the time allotted for private business will be availed of by private members. The real point appears to me to be that private business on certain days and for a certain time should have precedence of Government

business. If certain hours are fixed for private members' business, it does not necessarily follow that honorable members will avail themselves of the whole of that period.

Senator DAWSON

- Then the Government business would come on.

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Senator KEATING

- The interjection made by my honourable friend seems to indicate that he has changed his views since he addressed the Senate on this subject, because I gathered from his remarks that he was in favour of having the time limited, as private business would be introduced to the sacrifice of public business. I certainly think that private members will not have much business to bring before the Senate during the first two or three months. The remarks made by Senator Sir William Zeal, who seems to have noticed the difficulties which honorable members experience in bringing forward matters of private concern, appear to me to have a great deal of weight, and they have been borne out by the experiences of Senator Best. We, as representatives of the States, stand in an entirely different position to members of another place. We are more likely to have private business to bring forward than the honorable members of that Chamber. We should have the fullest and freest opportunity of exchanging views in regard to reforms in our different States, reforms which the Government cannot always fully and fairly grasp. Under these circumstances, I must certainly vote against the amendment moved by Senator Walker, and if Senator Sir William Zeal is prepared to move an amendment to give effect to the suggestion he has made, I shall gladly support it.

Senator STEWART

- I intend to support the Government in this matter. It appears to me that there is a much stronger desire in the minds of many honorable members to get home than to do the business of the country. All I have to say to those honorable senators is that, if they are so very fond of their homes, they ought to have stayed there ; they should not have submitted themselves for election to this Parliament. We are here to do the business of the country, and those of us who come from Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, and cannot get home-

Senator Harney

- Make a virtue of necessity.

Senator STEWART

- Yes, we must make a virtue of necessity. But when we had the opportunity we were not so very anxious as some honorable members think. Now, it appears to me that the status of this Chamber is very considerably affected by the method which the Government have adopted in dealing with business. I find that no less than thirteen measures are set down in the notice-paper of another place. That simply means, as Senator Dobson has pointed out, that, during the first six weeks or two months of this session, we shall have nothing to do, while towards the close of the session we shall have to work day and night, or scamp the business. I wish to intimate to the Government that, so far as I am personally concerned, if they keep us here for the first two months of the session without anything to do, they will probably have to wait four months at the other end before we do their business.

Senator Major Gould

- You will not let them rush it.

Senator STEWART

- As far as I am concerned, I will not let them rush it. Perhaps it may be somewhat out of order to refer to another place. It is not considered to be good form, but we are at the beginning of a new Parliament, and the Government and honorable members of both Chambers ought to remember that this is not an ordinary Upper House. There are two wheels to this legislative machine, and the upper wheel is just as powerful as the under wheel. If the Government allows this wheel to remain inactive for two months - for practically that is what I understand the Government mean to do-

Senator Drake

- No.

Senator STEWART

- Then the business of the Government is not going to be carried on as it ought to be. Why should not

some of those Bills have been submitted to us instead of the solitary one that has been brought before the Senate? This is a direct attempt to lower the Senate in the eyes of the Commonwealth, and should be resented by every senator. Action of this kind does not tend to good legislation. Every one of the Bills I have referred to will have to come up to the Senate, and why should not some of them be introduced here. Why not utilize the energies of honorable members who are here in dealing with these Bills, instead of telling them that next week there will be nothing at all for them to do.

Senator Dobson

- Most of those Bills involve the appropriation of money.

Senator Drake

- There will be plenty of work to do next week.

Senator STEWART

- One senator has told us there will be nothing at all to do next week as far as he can see. We are eager for the fray, and the Government should utilize our enthusiasm to the utmost. I do not know where the term "private members" originated; I have not been able to discover any such personage as a private member. No senator is a private member.

Senator Drake

- Unofficial.

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Senator STEWART

- Well, the Ministry is only a committee of Parliament.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- The expression in the motion is "private business."

Senator STEWART

- I object to the term "private business," because we do not come here to deal with that.

Senator Sir William Zeal

- We come here to deal with all business.

Senator STEWART

- With the business of the country.

Senator Harney

- It is only a term.

Senator STEWART

- Then we may as well have a term which will correctly express the meaning intended to be conveyed.

Senator Major Gould

- What term would the honorable member suggest?

Senator STEWART.- "Measures brought in by non-official members of Parliament," or, "by members of Parliament who are not members of the Government." Perhaps that would suit.

Senator Keating

- Or "non-Ministerial business."

Senator Styles

- Or "members of Parliament who only get £400 a year."

Senator STEWART

- The honorable member speaks in a very doleful tone of voice. No doubt he is very anxious to eliminate the figure "4" and substitute something larger. My reason for supporting the Government is that I think the limitation of hours proposed in the amendment would not be a step in the right direction. Senators from Queensland have had a sharp experience of how a rule of that kind works. It simply means that instead of a private member ventilating a particular matter, and other members having an opportunity of discussing it, members of the Government who are opposed to the proposal get up and occupy the whole time at the disposal of the House. I think the proposal of the Government is a fairly liberal one, although, for my own part, I would rather see no limitation of private members' business. It would be much better - it would stop stone-walling, at all events - if it were permissible to carry on the business to a conclusion.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- When we commenced this discussion it was upon a question of whether formal business or unopposed business should take precedence of private business. As far as these two matters are concerned, I think

it would be much better to say simply that on Fridays private members' business shall all take precedence.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- That was Senator Sir William Zeal's proposition.

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I entirely agree with that. There is no possible difficulty about it. When there is any Government business of great urgency there is no trouble in postponing private members' business ; nor is there any trouble in postponing Government business when urgent private business has to be dealt with. Senator Sir William Zeal's proposal is right. , It would be much shorter to say that on Wednesdays and Thursdays Government business shall take precedence, and that on Fridays private members' business shall take precedence, and leaving it to the standing orders to determine anything else. The good sense of the House can be trusted to prevent abuse of debate, and to prevent inordinately long speeches only intended to prevent decision.

Amendment that the words " and formal motions" be inserted, agreed to.

Question - -That the words "the dinner hour" proposed to be left out stand part of the question - put. The Senate divided -

16

AYES

15

NOES

Majority 1

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Resolved:That on Wednesday and Thursday during the present session Government business take precedence of all other business on the notice-paper except questions and formal motions, and that private business take precedence of Government business on Friday up to the dinner hour.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - On behalf of the Vice President of the Executive Council, and at his request, I beg to move -

That the right be reserved to His Majesty's Ministers of placing Government business in the rotation in which it is to be taken.

I presume that it is hardly necessary for me to make any observations in moving the motion.

Senator Major Gould

- Does that contemplate that the Government can arrange their business as they see fit when the House meets, or must they place their business on the paper beforehand 1

Senator DRAKE

- They will inform the Clerk beforehand of the order in which they desire that the business shall be' taken, and it will appear in that order on the business paper.

Senator Major Gould

- It is not contemplated that the Government may be able to postpone Orders of the Day Nos. 1 to 5, and take up Older of the Day No. 6 1

Senator DRAKE

- They must get the consent of the Senate to postpone an order of the day.

Senator DAWSON

- I suppose one senator could object.

Senator Major Gould

- I do not think so.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

STANDING ORDERS

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - On behalf of the Vice President of the Executive Council, and at his request, I beg to move -

That until the Senate shall have adopted standing orders, on the report of the Committee to be appointed to prepare them, the draft standing orders laid on the table of the Senate on the 23rd of May be temporarily adopted.

Honorable senators will see that the next motion on the business paper is one for the appointment of a Standing Orders Committee, to whom the draft standing orders will be remitted. I understand that the Committee will get to work soon after it is appointed, and that there will be no great delay on their part. I therefore, with considerable confidence, would ask the Senate to allow these standing orders which have been lying on the table since the 23rd May, and which I presume have been carefully read and studied by honorable senators to be adopted temporarily. "We have got on very well without any standing orders, but I think all honorable senators will admit that it is desirable that at the earliest possible stage we should have standing orders, so that we may know exactly where we are, and how it is necessary for us to conduct the debates.

Senator Sir WILLIAM ZEAL

- I desire to ask Senator Drake if these revised standing orders contain the alterations which were mentioned by Senator O'Connor. Probably the honorable senator was not in the chamber at the time when his colleague stated that the original standing orders were such as he did not approve of, and that he had made certain alterations in them. I wish to get from Senator Drake an assurance that the alterations in the draft have met with the approval of Senator O'Connor.

Senator DRAKE

- The standing orders which were first laid on the table were afterwards re-read carefully by the Vice President of the Executive Council, and several standing orders to which objection might have been taken, and which would have given rise to discussion, were eliminated. The standing orders as they now appear in this draft, my honorable colleague considers, do not contain any material which should give rise to discussion.

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Senator MCGREGOR

- I rise at this early stage to give honorable senators an opportunity to discuss, along with the proposition of the Government, an amendment. I move :-

That the question be amended by the addition of the words - "With the exception of chapter 15."

This chapter relates to the previous question. A number of honorable senators have discussed the rules in this chapter, and, besides considering them unnecessary, I for one think that they place too much power in the hands of a single senator. Any one may rise and move a motion similar to the previous question, that is, that the question be not now put. Let me show the difference between "being now put" and "being not now put." If it is carried that the question be not now put it is shelved altogether. If on the contrary it is carried in the other direction then the question has to be put without further discussion or further amendment, and any senator may at any time get up and bring discussion or shelve any business that may come before the Senate. I think it is the duty, at this stage of any senator who has any objection to the draft standing orders to make this objection so that it may go before the Standing Orders Committee. There is another standing order which may be of very great importance to the senators from one State. Standing order 53 provides for the moving of the adjournment of the House for the purpose of allowing senators to carry on what some persons may call an informal discussion, and what others may call a discussion of a matter of very urgent importance.

Senator Major GOULD

- It must be a definite matter of urgent public importance.

Senator MCGREGOR

- I am only putting it in that way. I want to show that it is necessary according to the draft standing orders to obtain the approval of seven senators to the moving of that motion. There are only six representatives of each State, and there are only 36 senators altogether. Possibly on some occasion a question might arise which was of vital importance to one State ; and unless a senator from that State could get the support of some senators from another State the question could not be discussed at all.

Senator Dobson

- He would get the support of a dozen senators if it were an important question.

Senator MCGREGOR

- It might be considered of very vital importance by one State, and not a single senator from another State might take any interest in it. What is the Senate for ? Does it not exist to represent the interests of the different States 1 If it were not for the interests of the different States, a Senate would not be necessary in the Constitution. I hope that -the attention of the Standing Orders Committee will be drawn to this question, and if they possibly can, in the interest of every State they should fix the number at five and the mover.

Senator Major GOULD

- Five are sufficient

Senator MCGREGOR

- Then if it were of vital importance to the senators of any State, they could have the question discussed independently of the opinion of senators from other States.

Senator DAWSON

- The approval of only five is required in the Queensland Assembly, -where they have 72 members.

Senator MCGREGOR

- I am only indicating to the Standing Orders Committee the objections which have been raised, and which I raise, to the draft standing orders. The original standing orders were of such a character that even the Government themselves were prepared to alter them. I have not the least doubt that if honorable senators are in a position to explain defects, there may be other standing orders which would be altered by the Standing Orders Committee. If that body do not effect all the alterations which are really necessary in the opinion of a good many senators a discussion will arise. If we assist the committee by expressing our opinions now we may have less difficulty in adopting the standing orders which may be framed. I would like to hear other honorable senators express their differences of opinion in the same frank way as I have done. I move this amendment as an indication to the Standing Orders Committee that it is not fair to put the Senate in such an awkward position that its deliberations can be thwarted or interfered with by a single representative. If it is not carried, I hope the committee will consider my suggestion, and that the Senate will be prepared to give it more serious consideration when the matter again comes before us.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I have listened with considerable interest to the remarks of Senator McGregor. I think there is a great deal of force in what he states. I do not suppose that he intends to ask the Senate now to agree to his amendment. I presume that his object is to have that suggestion remitted to the Standing Orders Committee with a view to their considering it carefully, and when their report is brought up we shall all of us be able to deal with every standing order, and discuss and approve or disapprove of it. I rose more particularly to call attention to a matter connected with the standing orders that occurred on the 21st May, practically our first day of meeting. The Vice-President of the Executive Council moved a motion that notices of motion be read and discharged and be made orders of the day for the next day in order to proceed with the consideration of the Address in Reply. -Senator Lt.-Col. Neild said - I submit that the motion before the Chamber is entirely in accordance with parliamentary practice, particularly the practice of the Imperial Parliament. It is not usual for the Government to attempt to transact any business until the Address in Reply has been disposed of.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- But we must establish our own Government.

Senator DAWSON

- They have already done business.

Senator Neild

- The business that has been done has been business absolutely necessary, such as the fixing of the next time of meeting. It is customary for such motions to be carried, but it is not customary for what are practically sessional orders to be dealt with until the Address in Reply has been disposed of.

Then Senator Sir John Downer went on to say-

So far as constitutional usage is concerned, I have always understood that practically we ought to do no business at all until the Address in Reply has been agreed to.

Senator O'Connorthen said

In taking the course which I have done I have followed what I think is admitted to be the unvarying

constitutional usage.

At that time I felt that that was not absolutely correct, but I was quite unable to recall to my mind any case or any rule laid down in May. Since then I have had an opportunity of looking up May. If honorable members will turn to the 10th edition of May they will find this passage at page 171 : -

The transaction of public business is carried on whilst the proceedings on the address are in progress.

Bills are introduced, committees are appointed, and in session 1884 debate on the address was adjourned from day to day, unresumed, whilst a motion of censure on the Government regarding "events in the Soudan," was under consideration.

In order to make myself thoroughly acquainted with what occurred I looked up the imperial Hansard. On 5th February, 1884, the Address in Reply was moved, and it was not finally carried until the 22nd February. What happened between those dates ? On 6th February a motion that this House do now adjourn was moved, and a discussion occupying 20 pages of Hansard took place, and 50 bills were read a first time. On 7th February the debate on the Address in Reply was resumed, and 34 Bills were read a first time. On 8th February the debate on the Address in Reply was resumed, and four Bills were read a first time and several select committees appointed. On 11th February a motion that this House do now adjourn to call attention to affairs in the Soudan was moved, and the debate occupied 12 pages of Hansard, and then the debate on the Address in Reply was resumed, and one Bill was debated and read a second time, and one Bill was read a first time. There was also a debate on a motion for a return, and select committees were appointed. On the 12th, the vote of censure debate was continued, a return moved for, three Bills read the first time, and select committees appointed. On the 13th, a Bill was read a second time, and four Bills read a first time. On the 14th, the debate on the vote of censure was continued, a Bill read a second time, six Bills read a first time, and a select committee appointed. On the 15th, the vote of censure debate was continued, and returns moved for. On the 18th, the vote of censure debate continued, and four Bills were read a first time. On the 19th, two private Bills were read a second time, and three Bills read a first time. On the 20th, there was the Address in Reply, and a Bill read a second time. On the 21st, two Bills were read a first time and committed, and two Bills debated ; and on the 22nd the debate on the Address in Reply was continued.

Senator Drake

-What does this prove?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- It proves that Senator O'Connor was not quite correct in saying that " in taking the course I have done, I have followed the unvarying constitutional usage."

Senator Drake

- Are we bound by the practice of the House of Commons ?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I think it must be clearly admitted that general business is carried on by the House of Commons during the progress of the debate on the Address in Reply, and I have shown that in 1884 a very large amount of general and private business was transacted between the commencement of the debate on the Address in Reply and its conclusion.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do not know that we would be very profitably engaged in re-opening the debate just concluded, when we are here considering whether the Senate shall adopt temporarily these standing orders. I thoroughly agree with what Senator McGregor has said as to it being desirable at this stage, I would say imperatively necessary, if we are to have regard to our own dignity and the regularity of our proceedings, that we should not merely indicate for the guidance of the Standing Orders Committee the modifications that may occur to us but that we should give effect to our suggestions by amendments now. Not that I think it would be advisable to go through the standing orders in complete detail, and make more or less minor amendments. No one would expect anything of the kind. But, if there are obvious amendments upon which we are all more or less agreed, or matters of vital importance which require amendment, we should take this opportunity of moving amendments. To that extent I differ with Senator Sir Frederick Sargood, as to the amendment moved by Senator McGregor being treated as a suggestion to the Standing Orders Committee, and not a matter for debate now. It may be unwise of the Senate to hurriedly adopt these

standing orders, even temporarily. It is an entirely new code. It contains a large number of rules, which are more or less drastic, and properly drastic, for the maintenance of order, and which ought to be considered. There are other standing orders which embody matters of very considerable importance and which are worthy of debate. We must remember also that we do not know when we shall adopt finally any set of standing orders for the Government of this Senate. I merely want to preface what I want to say with these one or two remarks. We shall place ourselves in an exceedingly anomalous position by coming to a conclusion upon a number of new and difficult standing orders and adopting them temporarily. We shall be governed in our debates by a set of inchoate standing orders with many of which we must disagree.

Senator Drake

- That must be so in any case.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Not to the extent to which it is sought to be done here. This is a new matter. We are now dealing with the proceedings of this Senate, and we have no standing orders to guide us. We have got along exceedingly well with the care of the President, and our own good sense, without any standing orders at all, and when we come to conduct our proceedings by reference to some set of standing orders, we ought to make sure that even temporarily, we do not adopt a code which is, to a large extent new, and which contains provisions not included in any other set of standing orders in Australia with which I am acquainted. Now the course which has been suggested from another side of the chamber is that which occurred to me as the wisest. Why should we not do as the Convention did, adopt some set of standing orders with which we are acquainted, and of - which we have experience.

Senator DAWSON

- And which we could look up.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes ; and with which many members are familiar and which we could use as a basis of our proceedings without considering a scientific new code such as this. In the Convention we adopted with satisfactory results the standing orders of the House of Assembly of South Australia. I do not know whether they are as efficient or as suitable as the standing orders of some of the other Australian Chambers, but I think it would be very much better to do that. I want now to call attention to some exceedingly drastic orders which make me shiver. Not that I am likely to be bellicose and infringe them.

Senator Drake

- The honorable senator will not find anything in them that is not in the standing orders of some State Legislature.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do feel that we should be exceedingly cautious before we adopt temporarily, for how long we really do not know, a new code which contains a large number of provisions with which we are entirely unfamiliar. I suggest that we ought to do what the Convention did, and I will ask Senator McGregor to temporarily withdraw his amendment to enable an amendment of mine to be put if it meets the views of the senators.

Senator McGregor

- I shall be pleased to do so.

Amendment withdrawn.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

-I beg, to move -

That after the word "that," the words " it be referred to a committee consisting of the President and Senators Drake, Gould, McGregor, and Sir William Zeal, to inquire and report to the Senate to-morrow whether they recommend any and which standing orders now in force in either branch of any State Parliament with or without verbal modifications for temporary adoption by the Senate until it shall have adopted standing orders upon the report of a committee to be appointed to prepare them," be inserted. That will enable us to do exactly what was done in the Convention, and it will enable us to say whether we shall adopt the South Australian, or Victorian, or Queensland House of Assembly Standing Orders.

Senator Glassey

- I hope the honorable senator will not adopt the Queensland orders.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do not know them.

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Senator Glassey

- We, unfortunately, know them too well.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- At all events, we can adopt some set of standing

Orders, with such modifications as to make them applicable to the proceedings of this Senate. I wish to call attention, as Senator McGregor has done, to three points which particularly concern the privileges and status of this Senate, and to which I am not disposed to assent, even temporarily. The first is that to which Senator McGregor has called attention in clause 53, with regard to motions for adjournment.

Although that is a matter that may be overcome, it infringes that principle, upon which the Senate rests, of equal representation, and it is an infringement of the rights of the States. I will only add this to what Senator McGregor has said : There is not, so far as I am aware, any precedent for anything so drastic. It is required that seven members shall rise in their places as indicating approval of the proposed discussion on the motion for adjournment ; that is, one-fifth of the whole of the effective strength of this Chamber must rise before a motion for adjournment to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance can be accepted.

Senator Drake

- I think it is 30 in the House of Commons.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I think it is 40 with 658 members. You may have : a House consisting of a little more than a quorum. The point that Senator McGregor raises is absolutely fatal as the effect will be to neutralize equal representation. Why should not the six members from one State have a right to move a motion for adjournment affecting their own State ? In fact, the number ought to be less than six, because one of them might not be here. We may be called upon in a moment of extreme State exigency to deal with an important matter, and those of us who are strong and resolute in maintaining the constitutional position of the Senate ought to prevent, if possible, our power being weakened in the slightest degree. I shall move to substitute five for seven in the standing order. I think that ought to be done now, because we shall be acting on these standing orders if they are adopted temporarily.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- For months.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes, it may be for months.

Senator Dobson

- Why should it be for months ?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I think it will be for months. We know how it will be when we come to deal with these standing orders in detail. At any rate we ought to be in the position that the representatives from any one State shall be entitled, without let or hindrance, to ventilate any definite matter of urgent public importance upon a motion for adjournment. The next matter is even more important and is contained in chapter 18, relating to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees ; Order No. ' 237. Now, if we adopt these standing orders temporarily we commit ourselves to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees in this Senate. I, for one, submit to the consideration of my honorable friends whether we ought to have a Chairman of Committees at this stage. It seems to me we are in great danger of overloading the machinery. We should be specially cautious as to the offices and salaries that we create in connexion with the Parliament. It is a very easy thing, with the wave of the hand, to appoint officers and apportion salaries, but it will be a very different thing when we come to see the expenditure in cold print in the Estimates, and we have to face the people of Australia, who have been insisting throughout the whole of this federal movement, and especially throughout the whole of the federal elections, upon economy being exercised.

Senator Harney

- What is there exceptional in this House that we should not appoint a chairman 1

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- There is nothing exceptional, but we have a House in South Australia which has no Chairman of Committees.

Senator Playford

- The House of Lords has no Chairman of Committees, why should we 1

Senator Glassey

- Would the honorable Senator tie the President to the Chair and ask him to preside over committees as well.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- That is exactly what the President of this Chamber has been doing for years in South Australia.

Senator Glassey

- I hope it will not be done here.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Why should we have a Chairman of Committees until the necessity arises 1 Do not let us do anything in indecent haste. If we are to have a Chairman wait until the necessity arises. There is a motion on the paper dealing with this matter, and I am glad that the question arises under these standing orders quite apart from any personal consideration as to who shall fill the office.

Senator Dobson

- You have only to strike out the word "shall" and put in " may."

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend with that foresight which distinguishes him so much has anticipated my amendment. I propose to strike out the word "shall" and substitute "may," and I will indicate that amendment now. Of course if the other amendment is carried, it will have the effect of placing the proceedings of the Senate on the basis of some existing set of standing orders that have been in operation in one of the Australian Parliaments.

The PRESIDENT

- I do not -think any Senator can move two amendments at the same time.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I do not move it. But I indicate that I intend to move an amendment on sections 53 and 237. I shall certainly vote against the appointment of a Chairman of Committees at this stage, reserving to myself at a later period, if the business of the Chamber becomes so considerable, and the calls upon you, sir, are so great that it will be unreasonable or improper that you should discharge those duties, the right of supporting the appointment of a Chairman of Committees. Until that necessity is established it seems to me we can hardly be considered as giving effect to our protestations in favour of economy in the parliamentary machine of the Commonwealth, unless we excise those appointments which are at present unnecessary. "We shall have to wait to see how this expenditure all tots up - how it will appear in cold print. With all these different offices we shall have an expenditure in connexion with the Parliament that I think we shall ourselves shrink from attempting to support before our constituents when the figures are put down in black and white.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- Does the honorable senator notice that Standing Order No. 237 proposes that the chairman shall be appointed for ever - that is for as long as he is a member of the Chamber?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON. Exactly. Then there is another point which arises. We are discussing in another connexion the position of this Chamber in regard to motions for adjournment and the equality in representation. The Constitution has most sacredly preserved the full efficiency of the voting power from each State. It .has provided that the President of the Senate, unlike the President or the Speaker of ordinary Chambers of Legislature, shall be entitled to a vote, and shall have no casting vote, the object being to preserve in full the equal representation of the States. If we adopt these standing orders temporarily, they will prevail for months, may be. Under them the Chairman of Committees loses his vote ; but he has, in the event of an equality, a casting vote.

Senator Best

- Is that iri the standing orders 1

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes. That provision is contained in Standing Order No. 244, so that the State by which he is returned will

be immediately disfranchised to the extent of one-sixth on questions arising in committee. Such questions will be numerous enough when the Tariff comes up for consideration. We should seriously consider whether this is not an infringement of the principle upon which the Senate is founded. There, is no analogy with this in the Upper Houses of the other States. The Senate of the United States, which is the parallel of this Chamber,, has for its President the Vice President of the United States. He is not a member of the Senate, and he has no vote. He is a sort of excrescence, merely being there for the purpose of preserving order. 'There is no Chairman of Committees in the United States Senate. A Chairman of Committees for this Senate is entirely an excrescence. Before we proceed to appoint a Chairman of Committees we should consider the question of salary. I see by the newspapers that the salary is to be £500, in addition to the £400 enjoyed by the holder of the office as a private member ; but, of course, there is no authority for that statement. We should carefully avoid anything that has the appearance of overloading the expenses so far as the officers of the Federal Parliament are concerned. , We know the outcry that is likely to be raised about it, and in all probability the safest course to pursue will be to scrupulously and carefully scrutinize every salaried office in connexion with our own establishment. Section .244 would certainly require amendment before it could fit in with the constitution of the Senate. Look at the equality of power possessed by the two

Houses. I suggest this for the consideration of honorable members and for the consideration of the Standing Orders Committee if these orders are to be referred to them. Why should we not be placed in the same position as that occupied by honorable members of another place in regard to addressing the House upon any grievance on going into Committee of the Whole to deal with the Tariff, Appropriation Bills, or any of the financial measures ? We should be able to do that in order that we may have that strength that efficiency that we are all claiming and all seek to enforce. It is impossible to bear greater testimony to this than was done in the powerful speech made by Senator Sir John Downer the other day. He went a little further than even I should be disposed to go. He made clear the position of the Senate, and we ought not now to deprive ourselves of a privilege which should belong to us as well as to members of another place. I leave it to the members of the Standing Orders Committee to see how this can be fitted in. What I suggest is that, in order to place this House on a footing with another place with regard to the power of its members to ventilate grievances and bring up matters of public importance, there should be some standing order assimilating the practice of this House with that of the other Chamber.

Senator Dobson

- In the House of Commons the privilege has been grossly abused, and they are thinking of cutting it away.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I am satisfied that the House of Commons will not cut away that privilege, but they may subject it to restrictions just as we have done in some of our State Parliaments. In the South Australian Legislature we have placed restrictions on the freedom of debate, for we have a most efficient closure in the shape of a motion " That the House do now adjourn." I feel as one who is anxious to maintain the privileges and powers of this House that this is a most salutary power in the hands of the Commons House, and it will be a salutary power in the Senate, particularly as we are the States House. At any moment a matter of great consequence may arise, which we from the States may wish to deal with. We may not have an opportunity of doing so on a motion for adjournment. Such a procedure is unsatisfactory, because any member may get up in the middle of the discussion and object to it. On the motion for going into" Committee of Supply he could not do that. Grievances must be ventilated, and this is the best privilege of a free Parliament.

Senator Glassey

- A very old privilege.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Yes, I should like to adopt the principle in this Senate, with any limitation you like, but so as to give every power to members to ventilate the grievances of the States they represent, and secure justice immediately on a matter of urgency.

Senator Dobson

- Is it not solely a question of what is the right time to ventilate grievances?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- No ; the freedom of England is largely due to the power of the House of Commons to debate grievances. It arises from the power of the House to refuse Supply till a particular grievance has been remedied.

Senator Sir John Downer

- I think we can do that here.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I hope we can, but I do not think so.

Senator Harney

- We cannot stop Supply.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- We cannot, nor can the other House; but there the right exists of bringing grievances before Parliament on a motion for going into Committee of Supply.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Could not it be done on a motion for the adjournment of the Senate?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- It depends on what our standing orders are. Under our standing orders in South Australia any honorable member can object to a debate proceeding on a motion for adjournment. I have had such an experience myself. In the South Australian Parliament I have moved the adjournment of the House in order to bring up a matter of importance, and in the middle of my speech a member has got up and objected.

Senator Playford

- Quite right.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My honorable friend is an autocrat. We should have an opportunity equivalent to that possessed by the other Chamber of ventilating a grievance with the utmost freedom on the motion for going into Committee of Ways and Means or of Supply. We could assimilate the practice of the two Houses, although, of course, we have no

Committee of Supply. I make this suggestion, and honorable members can adopt it when the Standing Orders Committee reports. In the meantime, I feel that it is impossible to impress the Senate too strongly with the importance of securing the fullest opportunity of ventilating grievances and bringing up questions, which may be of very great importance, without being required to give formal notice of motion.

Senator Best

- Has the honorable senator formulated the means of doing that?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- My suggestion is that when financial business comes before this Chamber, with respect to which we have larger powers than any ordinary House, that we should have some standing orders that would assimilate our procedure with that of the other House, and which would enable us to discuss grievances on going into committee of the whole. I have handed in an amendment which I move with the view of saving time, and to enable us to proceed with the business of this Chamber on what will be really temporary" standing orders. I think that the temporary standing orders should be those at present in force in either Chamber of some of the State Parliaments constituting the commonwealth, and that the committee whose names I have taken the liberty of indicating in my amendment should determine which are the most appropriate for our use until the other standing orders are adopted.

The PRESIDENT

- I do not see how I can put all the amendments suggested by Senator Symon. A senator can only move one amendment at a time. Senator Sir Josiah Symon is moving amendments inconsistent with each other. His first amendment is to do away with these proposed standing orders altogether ; his other amendment is to alter them.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- No, I have only moved one amendment. I only indicated the other proposals so that they might be considered in the event of my first amendment not being adopted.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I do not think it is a matter of very great moment whether we carry the motion or not. I have sufficient appreciation of your judgment, Mr. President, and of our own good sense, to be satisfied that with or without standing orders we shall get along on very fair lines, and that there will not be any great trouble. At the same time, I cannot see any difficulty in adopting the motion which has been moved by the Postmaster-General. I cannot understand in the smallest degree the difficulties which have been raised by my honorable friend Senator Sir Josiah Symon. I have heard much of our constitutional rights, and I know something of them myself. If our constitutional rights do not exist by virtue of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, they cannot be created by any standing orders. Either we have or we have not got those rights. If we have them we do not want a standing order to confer them upon us. If we have not got them no standing order can give them to us. So far as our position is concerned there is no one clearer and stronger in the assertion of it than myself, but there is no one clearer in the view that these standing orders would interfere in no way with our rights, and that if they did, we would rise superior to our standing orders and assert what the Constitution has pleased to give us.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Then we had better have no standing' orders.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I care very little about them. I think it would be better for us to take the standing orders as submitted greatly on trust.

Senator Charleston

- But if we adopt them shall we not be pledging ourselves ?

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We shall pledge ourselves to nothing. What danger is there of any great time being occupied over the preparation of our standing orders. , We are all experienced men, and no doubt honourable members will take care that the committee to whom the orders are referred are men of experience in their different States. What necessity is there for all this long debate except that we have nothing else to do, and we might as well talk about this as disperse and say nothing at all. These standing orders have been brought before us by the President, whom we all esteem, and we are asked to accept them so as to have some rules during the few days which must elapse before we can make permanent standing orders. Why not adopt them ? It is the invariable rule, and is fraught with no danger.

Senator Playford

- Why not adopt familiar standing orders ?

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Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- What standing orders are familiar to honorable members? Those of South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, or of the Queensland Parliament ?

Senator DAWSON

- No, not Queensland.

Senator Higgs

- They are familiar enough to us.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I should have thought these standing orders were familiar to most of us. Either let us adopt the course suggested by the Postmaster-General or say we will adopt none at all until we have had the matter properly considered, and have come to conclusion as to what we are ultimately going to do. What is the good of mending the orders intermittently, then sending them to the Standing Orders Committee, and having them brought back again to be discussed over again. ' It seems to me simply a question of carrying the motion or adopting no standing orders at all. It appears to me that that is not consistent with our dignity or with what is expedient in the conduct of our business. We may fairly trust to the good sense of yourself, sir, with the House standing by you, to dispense with standing orders for the present, else we ought to take the course which the Government propose to take by adopting ad interim standing orders, and not subject Ministers to a distinct snub.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- What snub 1

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- A distinct snub at the very initiation of their proceedings such as would necessarily be involved by refusing to accept this motion.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- It is a matter for the Senate. Why should we have a bad standing order even temporarily!

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- Which is the particular standing order ?

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- A whole group of them.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER. There we come to the whole question. Are we going to take the view of the Government for two or three weeks and adopt these standing orders, which come, I suppose, from you, sir--

The PRESIDENT

- Oh no.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- The President is not responsible for them.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- They have come from the Government, at all events.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- Merely tentatively. Surely the adoption of standing orders is not going to be made a party question.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- There is no party question in it.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- The honorable senator's speech indicates as much.'

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- There is no party question in matters of this kind, and either we have to adopt some mode of procedure to govern us until we can settle our standing orders, or we have to say we are good enough standing orders in ourselves.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Does the honorable senator object to standing orders being adopted under my amendment as they were in the Convention 1

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I have not the slightest objection to the standing orders of South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, or Queensland.

Several Senators. - Oh

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- I look upon the thing as absolutely of no consequence ; it is so much a matter of ad interim arrangement. I care not what standing orders are adopted temporarily, but I think it would be wise to follow the leader of the Government, and adopt these standing orders until we have an opportunity of carefully considering the code.

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Senator PLAYFORD

- The last speaker has evidently misunderstood the object of the amendment. Senator Sir Josiah Symon does not want us to amend the standing orders if he carries his amendment, but in case he does not carry the amendment, in which it is recommended that certain senators should recommend the adoption of standing orders with which at all events we may presume that six honorable senators are very familiar, as against a number of standing orders with which not a single senator is familiar. The draft standing orders contain a number of new provisions. They have been taken from the Houses of the various State Parliaments, and mixed up in such a way that not one of us recognises the standing orders of his own State Parliament. I took the trouble to go through the original draft with very great care, and I made a few notes, which I am sorry to say I have not with me now. So objectionable were those standing orders in certain respects that Senator O'Connor withdrew them, and substituted a revised draft. I contend that it will be a great deal better for us, in the interval, to be governed by standing orders with which a certain

number of us are familiar, than by. these special standing orders.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- And of which there is experience, and on which there are precedents.

Senator PLAYFORD

- No doubt we have experience and precedents, in connexion with some of our standing orders to guide us. I have not the slightest objection to take the standing orders of Victoria, or of New South Wales, or of South Australia, until the Standing Orders Committee can consider and discuss them, and bring up their proposed amendments. It will be better for the Senate to be governed by standing orders which we know, than by standing orders with which none of us are familiar. Take the point that, by adopting these standing orders temporarily, we are actually committing ourselves to the election of a Chairman of Committees. However strongly we may feel on the matter, the dignity of the Senate, as it has been put to me, requires that it should have a Chairman of Committees. I think that the Senate, out of courtesy, should leave it to the Standing Orders Committee to consider whether we require a Chairman of Committees. I hold the view very strongly that, if one man can do the work, it is not a question of dignity for us to appoint two men simply because the other House may possibly have two presiding officers. No question of dignity is involved at all. I think it is the other way. I think we shall lower our dignity by making officers where they are not required, and expending the money of the Commonwealth where it is not necessary. We might just as well say that to keep up our dignity we ought to have a mace stuck on the corner of our table, and our President should be preceded by some gentleman carrying the mace in the most reverent manner, as if it were a wooden god like the Fijians carry. Or we might as well say that in order to keep up the dignity of the Senate it is necessary for you, sir, to have in front of you three clerks, because the Speaker in another place happens to have three clerks sitting in front of him. We might as well say that it is lowering our dignity if we have not the same number of officials as the other House has. The suggestion is perfectly absurd. I think out of common courtesy to the Standing Orders Committee it is a fair and proper thing to ask them' to inquire into the necessity for the appointment of a Chairman of Committees. I suppose that one of the most dignified Houses in the world is the House of Lords, yet it has no Chairman, of Committees. I have seen the Lord Chancellor get out of his woolsack and go down into the body of the House when it went into committee. I have never seen a Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords. Surely we cannot follow better precedent than that, and still preserve our dignity. I imagine that if the motion is carried in the way it is proposed by Senator Sir Josiah Symon there will be no necessity for our proceeding with the next motion on the business-paper. I altogether object to the attempt of Senator Sir John Downer to treat this question as a party question, to make out that we are obstructing the Government. I who am a supporter of the Government, I who believe that their policy on the whole is the best policy, am not going to be led away to vote contrary to my convictions on a matter of this sort. It is not a question of snubbing the Government at all. It is simply a question of what is most convenient to the Senate. Is it not advisable, in present circumstances, not to commit ourselves to standing orders without consideration and without debate, and thus force ourselves into the position of appointing a Chairman of Committees 1

Senator Sir John Downer

- That is another point altogether.

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Senator PLAYFORD

- It is a very serious point, and one which I hope the Senate will consider. If it is found that the work of the Senate is so great, both in the House and in committee, if it is found that the President is not able to do all the work without exceeding great inconvenience, then I am not one who will be opposed to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees, but let the necessity be thoroughly shown. Let the honorable senators who are being appointed to consider these standing orders consider that particular part of them, and either leave out the word "shall" and put in the word "may," or leave it open for future consideration if they cannot get evidence on the point sufficient to justify them in coming to an unmistakable decision. But do not let us commit ourselves at once without further evidence on that point. There is one point to which I would urge the very serious consideration of this committee, and that is the joint standing orders in regard to suggested amendments in Bills. The original code contained a number of standing orders which have been struck out, and which were very valuable because they provided a means of arriving at a

compromise between the two Houses, although they did not go quite far enough. They provided that the other House might accept suggestions made by the Senate with amendments. That was a very valuable rule. We have not got such a rule in South Australia, and we have felt the want of it very considerably. That standing order ought to be reinstated. Another point of greater importance is if possible to try and arrive at some understanding with the other House that if it rejects our suggestions we shall be able to call for a conference in the same way as we can do when we amend an ordinary Bill. Those honorable senators who have been charged with the practical working of Government know that frequently we have been able to save Bills of a most valuable character, to save them from being thrown out by one House or the other, as the result of a conference. Half-a-dozen men have been appointed by each House and have met together quietly and talked the matter over, and the rule was that they came to some compromise which was accepted by the Government, and a very valuable measure was saved. I do not want to discuss any of the standing orders except the one that requires that a motion for the adjournment of the Senate must meet with the approval of seven senators. I am quite willing to allow this standing order to stand exactly as it stands in the standing orders of South Australia. I am quite willing that any man should be allowed to move the adjournment of the House at any particular time, but that he shall be liable to be stopped if any one objects to his motion. If we do not have some safeguard of that sort, we shall have motions moved on the score of urgency, and the business retarded in a most unnecessary manner. We can understand also another direction in which an immense amount of time may be wasted. If there is one power which has been abused more than another in the House of Commons and in the State Parliaments, it is the power of discussing every question under the sun on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the consideration of the Estimates. It was abused to such an extent in South Australia when I was Premier that the only way in which I could stop it was to make the usual motion, and then let honorable members speak to that question. We let them gas and gas on until we were sick and tired of it, and then I put up a man to move that the debate be adjourned, and its resumption made an order of the day for another day, and when that day came round I moved the usual motion, but all these gassers who had gassed the day before could not open their mouths because they had already spoken. Those of us who have tried to carry on the business of the country, have seen the valuable time of honorable members being wasted by an Opposition which had no chance of turning out the Government, but which was just able to say at the end of the session "What have these fellows done? Here is another wasted session. They have done really nothing," although they were the very men who had wasted the time of the House. Although I do not believe that in this Senate, where Ministers will not be made and unmade to the same extent as in another Chamber, it will be abused - so much as it has been - abused in other directions - at the same time, if we are to ventilate our grievances on the motion to go into committee on any Bill, let us have some means by which we can stop frivolous and useless discussion. I hope that the Standing Orders Committee will consider the necessary means for achieving that particular purpose. It would be a great deal better for us to agree to the amendment that has been proposed by Senator Sir Josiah Symon. I shall support the amendment most heartily, and I hope the Senate will accept it.

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Senator HIGGS

- I wish briefly to say that I think Senator Sir Josiah Symon has made out a very good case why we should adopt standing orders which are at present in existence. The standing orders which have been proposed are the work of some one who is very desirous of meeting our wishes in every way, yet I can see that they are such as are likely to give rise to a great deal of discussion. I think the best way out of the difficulty is to adopt either the Victorian or South Australian standing orders with which you, yourself, sir, are, no doubt, well acquainted. Now, if we- adopt these draft standing orders temporarily we compel you as President, as well as ourselves, to make a study of them, so as to be able to carry on our business in the meantime between now and the time the Standing Orders Committee bring up their report. I do not think the Standing Orders Committee will be able to do the work very quickly. I dare say that you yourself, sir, may have a number of standing orders which you wish to introduce, and after the Standing Orders Committee have done their work the code must come to this Chamber to be discussed clause by clause, some of the clauses perhaps taking a whole afternoon. In the meantime we are to work under the draft standing orders. If we are not to adopt the amendment proposed by Senator Sir Josiah Symon, then it will

be necessary for those of us who hold strong opinions about certain of the draft standing orders to move that they be struck out. The Senate may, therefore, prepare itself for a rather lengthy discussion. I am very hopeful that the Minister will see his way clear to accept the amendment that a committee, consisting of the senators mentioned, should choose some standing orders to be adopted by this Chamber. We know that the South Australian standing orders have been in vogue for some time.

Senator Walker

- They were used at the Convention, too.

Senator Dobson

- That was out of compliment to the State.

Senator HIGGS

- Those were the standing orders of that very important Federal Convention, and they appear to have given . satisfaction. We could at once agree to adopt them, but we cannot accept the draft standing orders even temporarily, because that may mean two or three months' work.

Senator Drake

- Why 1

Senator HIGGS

- The South Australian standing orders bear the hall-mark of the agreement of the South Australian Legislature. With regard to the "previous question," which I may not have an opportunity of referring to if I do not do so now, that- appears to have been inserted in the draft standing orders with a view of stopping frivolous debate. If it were merely that the question be now put, and, if negatived, we could go on with the debate, it would be all right, but no one member should be able to stop debate. If it is desirable to put a stop to frivolous discussion we have already in the draft standing orders the provision mentioned by Senator Sir Josiah Symon, under which it. may be moved - "That the Senate do now divide." That can be moved by any senator if he thinks the question before the Chamber is not one that should take up further time.. I believe it is in the power of the President to stop frivolity or irrelevance on the part of any senator. ' There are other clauses in the draft standing orders which, I believe, the Prime Minister has agreed to amend - that one especially regarding motions for adjournment. A question raised on a. motion for adjournment must not be debated at greater length than two hours. According to the standing orders, that would only permit of about seven members of the Senate speaking ; the mover for half an hour, and the others for a quarter of an hour each. The Postmaster-General might tell us 'if he knows whether the Prime Minister has agreed to alter that in the standing orders of another place. I do not agree with the latter part of the speech of Senator Playford in reference to the abuse of power in speaking about the redress of grievances. Senator Playford was in the position of a Premier, and we all know that Premiers expect to be badgered to some extent by the Opposition. It is' the duty of the Opposition -to be critical. They are there for that purpose. Perhaps the-, word "badgering" is not dignified enough for this Chamber, but I think a very great deal of good is done by the discussions which take place.. If the question on which a motion for the adjournment of the House is submitted is not of an important character, then the men who indulge in the discussion, will suffer at the hands of the electors.

Senator Playford

- They talk about post offices and little roads.

Senator HIGGS

- Then the Government should build the post-offices if they are required, and I suppose if they are not required the Opposition would never think of bringing those matters before the House.. I hope the Postmaster-General will agree to the amendment. If not, then we must simply set to work and endeavour to do our best by striking out of the draft standing orders those which strike us as being irritating and frivolous.

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Senator DOBSON

- It must be clear that as business men we are bound, as soon as we possibly can, to frame standing orders for the conduct of our business ; but I think at the present juncture we should do wisely to direct our whole attention to the amendment moved by Senator Sir Josiah Symon, because, if that amendment be carried, nothing more need be said about the matter. If it be not carried we can very usefully listen to the suggestions of senators as to the amendments which they think are required in the draft standing

orders submitted by the Minister. Now, it appears to me that two courses are open to this Chamber. One is "to adopt the temporary standing orders and also the very useful suggestion of our friend, Senator McGregor, that each senator should point out any standing order to which he has an objection and which should be amended. That appears to me to be a common-sense, practical, and prompt way of dealing with the matter. The amendment of Senator Sir Josiah Symon asks us to sweep away all that has been done.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Not at all.

Senator DOBSON

- Yes, to make an absolutely new departure.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- The honorable senator entirely misunderstands me.

Senator DOBSON

- I understand my honorable friend suggests that a committee of experienced men who understand the matter shall be appointed to consider whether they cannot pick out from- the standing orders of the other States, notably from South Australia, certain standing orders, and adopt them temporarily, with modifications.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- May -I explain to my honorable friend that he has entirely misunderstood my amendment 1 My amendment is that a committee should choose en Moe the standing orders of either branch of an existing Parliament in Australia. As a matter of courtesy to those gentlemen, I do not think we should ask them to adopt those standing orders without modification.

Senator Drake

- A modification might mean a. great deal.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- My "object is that they should be adopted en bloc, just as the Convention adopted them.

Senator DOBSON

- I thank the honorable senator for his explanation, but it appears to me that he is only repeating the words I was uttering. He invites the committee to look through the standing orders of the different Parliaments, and make such' amendments in them as they think desirable.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- I am quite willing to eliminate the words " with or without modification."

Senator DOBSON

- Then the experienced committee are to begin de novo; they are to look over all the standing orders of the different Parliaments, and they are to see how far they are suitable.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- What did we do in the Convention ?

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Senator DOBSON

- They are to make such modifications as they think fit, and they are then to get the standing orders printed. Every honorable member will then have to read them through, and make his notes about them, and a month hence we shall find ourselves in the same position we occupy now. I do not profess to have any greater know- ledge of the proposed standing orders than any one else, but I understand that they have been carefully and thoughtfully prepared by the clerks, and notably by the senior clerk, whose experience we all have great respect for. They have been criticized by honorable members, and Senator O'Connor has gone through them himself, taking into consideration the different suggestions made and the objections which were raised. Then I understand that Ministers have had the benefit of your advice, and suggestions and amendments, although I do not for a . moment say that you father these standing orders. No one is more fit to speak of the suitability of the South Australian orders than yourself, sir, and the Clerk, as you have both had so much experience of them. When we know that 3'ou, and the Clerk, and Senator O'Connor have gone through these standing orde'i'3, and that the South Australian standing orders were used in the Convention, we may take it for granted that many of the standing orders of South Australia which are considered suitable have been introduced here. What is to be gained by another

committee going over the work again and a month hence putting us in the same position as we are now in

1 It appears to me that Senator McGregor's suggestion is a most admirable one. Having had time to consider the orders, and every honorable member having in his mind certain modifications, he can then get up and clearly point out what his objections are. I notice my name is down as one of the Standing Orders Committee. I lay no claim to be appointed a member of that committee, but if I am appointed I will give my best time and thought to the matter, and I suggest that the committee should meet to-morrow morning, and sit as continuously as it can, bringing up a report within three or four weeks. I think that Senator Sir Josiah Symon gave us a most admirable suggestion that we should point out where the standing orders want amending, and he has given us the very greatest help, but he then sweeps that all away by proposing we should go over the work again by appointing another committee to choose standing orders which cannot be as suitable as those now proposed. I would not say that there was any snub intended to the Government. That was a little slip made by Sir John Downer; but I think the motion of Senator Drake ought to be carried. It will be a saving of time, and a prompt and practical way of dealing with the matter.

Senator HARNEY

- I intend to vote for the amendment proposed by Senator Sir Josiah Symon, provided that the alteration is made leaving out the words " with or without modification." Either that, or the amendment should be made to read " with or without verbal modification." I may say that I have never read through these standing orders. I thought that the time had not arrived for doing so, and for that very reason I am not prepared to express an opinion on the argument put forward by Senator Sir Josiah Symon. His view is that these standing orders may contain objectionable and novel features.

Senator Dobson

- There are no novel features in them.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- As a matter of fact they do contain novel features.

Senator HARNEY

- The honorable member suggested that they might contain objectionable and novel features, and he now goes further, and asserts that, as a matter of fact, they do contain them. Now, I do not profess to go as far as that, because I candidly say I have not read them; but it is sufficient to give full effect to Senator Sir Josiah Symon's argument to say that they may contain objectionable and novel features. Surely we would be safe in adopting the standing orders of South Australia, because, whatever may be their faults, they will be applicable to the conditions of debate that will arise in this Chamber, and they show no very marked departure from ordinary rules. I understand also that the standing orders of South Australia were those which guided the Convention, and there is a further argument which has great weight with me. According to Senator Sir Josiah Symon, it is possible that by adopting these standing orders temporarily, we may commit ourselves to important things which will be of a permanent character. It is stated that we shall be bound to appoint a Chairman of Committees, whereas the standing orders ultimately adopted may contain no such provision, and we would then find ourselves in a curious position. I throw out this point for the consideration of lawyers in the House. I guard myself from saying definitely that by temporarily adopting these standing orders we bind ourselves to appoint a Chairman of Committees. I say possibly we do. It is a question of legal construction. Undoubtedly, the words are - " a member shall be appointed by the Senate to be Chairman of Committees." It would be a very serious thing if we adopted these standing orders for a day and were bound to appoint a Chairman of Committees. I do not think we ought to commit ourselves, especially when by adopting the amendment we can avoid all possible difficulties. I may say that I do not agree with the view that we ought not to have a Chairman of Committees. I think we ought, and when the time comes for discussing it I shall be able to give reasons for my conclusion, but I certainly would be very slow, however desirous I am of having a Chairman of Committees, to adopt any practice that would compel the House to appoint one contrary to the wishes of the Senate.

Senator Drake

- We could not do that.

Senator HARNEY

- What Senator Playford has been pointing out, and what I think the Postmaster-General admits, is that by

adopting the standing orders we may commit ourselves.

Senator Drake

- Not at all.

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Senator HARNEY

- These are the only remarks I have to make, except that I think the alternative suggested by Senator McGregor, and to which Senator Dobson has spoken, namely, that each member of the Senate, from his place in the House, should state how he would like to have the standing orders modified, would be a most lengthy way of doing business. Senator Sir Josiah Symon has pointed out, and I thoroughly agree with him, that it would be advisable for us to adopt in our standing orders a method of bringing important public questions to the front similar to that possessed by the other Chamber in connexion with motions for going into Committee of Supply. Senator Sir John Downer has said that we could not do anything of the kind by standing orders. He put it that the powers of this Chamber depend upon the Constitution ; that they emanate from the Constitution, and if no such power exists no standing orders could supply the omission. But the honorable senator fell into error. What the honorable member to whom he was replying wanted to put was not that the standing order would give any power which did not exist in the Constitution, but that it should- provide a means of giving effect to a power which already existed.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- To regulate the procedure.

Senator HARNEY

- For instance, the Constitution says that this Senate shall, equally with the other Chamber, have power of its own initiative to bring forward any important public questions. What Senator Sir Josiah Symon suggests is that, since we have equal power with the House of Representatives, a means of giving effect to that power similar to that possessed by another place, should be provided in our standing orders. The discussion which has arisen is sufficient to impress upon us the great difficulty that would arise if we were to pursue the course suggested by Senator McGregor. It would involve lengthy argument and a good deal of consideration. I am in thorough accord with the view put forward by Senator Sir Josiah Symon, not because I am opposed to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees - not at all, my feelings are quite the other way - but because I think that, while we are considering what rules we shall permanently make for ourselves, we should proceed under rules which have at all events stood the test of time, and which are familiar to many members of this House.

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Senator BEST

- I find myself unable to agree with some of the remarks which have fallen from the honorable senator who has just resumed his seat. The position seems to be that originally we had one set of standing orders circulated. Those standing orders contained certain objectionable matter, which I am sure is familiar to most honorable members. I know that I communicated my own objections to the leader of the Senate. A number of these provisions have now been eliminated, and we have before us a set of standing orders which are submitted for temporary adoption. It is quite true that some of the standing orders now proposed may or may not be objectionable. The desire of the Senate will be, I am sure, to formulate a set that will work satisfactorily to ourselves. I quite understand that if we were pressed with a great deal of business at the present moment some temporary expedient such as that suggested by my honorable friend, Senator Sir Josiah Symon, should be adopted. The fact remains, however, that, fortunately or unfortunately, we have some time on hand, and it is desirable that we should devote it to the improvement of our standing orders. The scheme whereby this may be best carried out is that which has been suggested by Senator McGregor. We have these standing orders before us. Most of us have read them, and most of us, no doubt, are in a position to speak as to the desirability or otherwise of many of them. The discussion which takes place in the Senate will be an instruction to whatever committee is appointed to formulate and bring up standing orders. It will enable them to bring up a set that will be in accord with the wishes of the House. A discussion of this kind must be most profitable to the Standing Orders Committee, and profitable to you, sir, who will be the president of that committee. If we have an opportunity of going through the standing orders and marking our objections to some and our approval of others, and what is more important, of making suggestions, then I am sure we shall expedite business

and secure draft standing orders which will be more likely to meet with acceptance hereafter. A valuable suggestion was thrown out by the mover of the amendment, namely, that some standing order should be formulated to permit of the ventilation of grievances in the Senate. This is a most difficult subject, and must be treated with great care. In the Legislative Assembly of which I had the honour of being a member for some twelve years, we were enabled regularly every third Thursday in the month, on a formal motion for going into Committee of Supply, to bring forward grievances. We have no such corresponding Committee of Supply in the Senate, but, no doubt, we can formulate a scheme to achieve this object. I have another suggestion which

I desire the Standing Orders Committee to consider. I agree with what was said during the recent debate by many senators, who took exception to the representation of the Government in the Senate by one Minister holding office and a Minister without office. We are gratified by the presence here of the two honorable gentlemen who represent the Government, but there is no doubt we have a right to expect a greater proportion of Ministers. There should be at least two in addition to the honorary members of the Government. I also desire to make a suggestion which no doubt would be a matter for negotiation with the other Chamber. I had the honour of being chairman of a Constitutional Reform Committee in 1894, which consisted of twelve leading members of the Victorian Legislature. Many of the suggestions made by that committee have since been adopted, but one very important proposal has by some means escaped attention. The committee suggested a joint standing order enabling Ministers in one Chamber to speak in the other, but not to vote there. I would like to point out how necessary such a provision is.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- It is contrary to all English usage.

Senator BEST

- It is adopted on the continent. It is in operation in Switzerland, for example.

Senator Harney

- No standing order can give the right under our Constitution.

Senator BEST

- I think the standing orders may give the right to speak, but not to vote. A Minister in charge of a department has possibly taken great care in the preparation of a measure, and having mastered the details of it has proved his qualifications by carrying it through the other Chamber. Then the Bill goes on to the Upper House and is placed in charge of the representative of the Government there. While in the Victorian Legislative Assembly I had the advantage of able colleagues in the Upper House, yet it was my experience from time to time to sit in the Legislative Council's gallery and to hear requests made for information which it was impossible for the Minister in charge to supply without full inquiry. It was my experience to hear questions asked as to the objects of certain clauses, and to hear the Minister in charge give his own explanation probably after a hurried glance at the measure, which I had to correct subsequently. I consider this Chamber has at least the right to hear all the Ministers, to receive from them the fullest information, and to have the advantage of the study of those honorable gentlemen in connexion with measures that are being submitted.

Senator Charleston

- But in the State House the honorable senator was always available. He says he was in the gallery.

Senator BEST

- That is not a very dignified position to occupy. It is very awkward for the Minister in charge of a Bill to have to leave the table and to be seen discussing matters with a colleague in the gallery. I am sure Senator Sir Frederick Sargood will recognise exactly what I mean in this connexion. I could quote many instances of the kind. The point I wish to make is that the Standing Orders Committee in formulating standing orders should, amongst other things, have the advantage of suggestions which might be made as a result of the united experience of senators. I feel that great good can be achieved by carefully going through the standing orders. It has been submitted to us that honorable members are more likely to be acquainted with the existing standing orders of some of the State Legislatures, but I think they are likely to have a better knowledge of the standing orders which have been circulated, and which I believe have been read by them.

Senator Drake

- We would have to start again.

Senator BEST

- Exactly. Senator Harney was a little apprehensive that the Senate might, in some way, be bound by the adoption of temporary standing orders. Where vital principles are involved the Senate should definitely decide these various points, and then the Standing Orders Committee, having had the advantage of the decision of the Senate, will know what is required. I venture to say that we would materially assist the Standing Orders Committee in that way ; in addition to that we would be more likely to do work calculated to produce acceptable standing orders. As Senator Sir John Downer has said, it must be borne in mind that these are only temporary standing orders, and very few weeks will elapse before the final set will be submitted to this Chamber.

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Senator WALKER

- From what I have heard of the experience of other legislative chambers I intend to support the amendment. I am afraid that if we do not accept the amendment we shall go on debating these rules for some considerable time, and that it will not tend to shorten the debate on the permanent rules when they are submitted. I shall support the appointment of a Chairman of Committees when the time comes to consider that question. I have a distinct recollection of the admirable manner in which the debates in the Convention were conducted under the rule of the Right Honorable Mr. Kingston as President, and of yourself, sir, as Chairman of Committees. As the senators for South Australia know the rules of the Inter-State Parliament very well, and as live members of the Senate sat in that Convention, eleven senators may be said to have a knowledge of these rules, which I trust the committee will see their way to adopt.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- When the standing orders were first circulated I went into them very carefully and compared them -with standing orders in use, and I came to the conclusion that before they could be adopted by the Senate very considerable alterations would have to be made. This opinion is supported by the fact that Senator O'Connor brought down an amended set, and I then felt that the wiser course would be rather to at once adopt as a temporary measure some standing orders which had been used for a number of years.- To that extent I shall certainly support the amendment, and if I had any doubt at all as to the advisability of that course and the inadvisability of adopting these proposed standing orders, even as a temporary measure, I think that this discussion, and more particularly the remarks of Senator Best, would settle my mind. For a number of years I was a member of the Standing Orders Committee of the Legislative Council of Victoria. I had to do with the revision of its standing orders on two occasions, and the time taken in that work was very considerable, extending over months. If that were the case with standing orders which were comparatively well known, I am sure that considerable time would be necessary to properly revise these new standing orders which are arranged in a very different manner - which is an improvement - and which also contain some very important and novel rules - before they could be submitted to the Senate.

Senator Best

- Will the senator point out any novel one ?

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I do not want to go into that now, but as a matter of fact there are novel ones.

Senator Drake

- I have not been able to find one myself ; I asked for an instance.

Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- I have not my noted copy of the standing orders here, but I can assure the honorable senator that there are very important alterations. For instance, the provision for the appointment of a Chairman of Committees is novel and very important. I am decidedly of opinion that it will be advisable to appoint a Chairman of Committees, but I do not think there is any necessity to make an appointment probably for two or three months. Hence, I shall support the amendment, believing that to be the wiser plan and one that will save* the greatest amount of time,' and enable us to arrive at the most satisfactory conclusion. This discussion will undoubtedly be an important and valuable instruction and suggestion to the Standing Orders Committee. With regard to the discussion of grievances, I do not think the proposal which was made by Senator Sir Josiah Symon would exactly meet the case. It is not very frequently that we will have financial Bills, and it appears to me that all the' requirements will be fairly met with the standing orders

dealing with the adjournment of the House.

Senator Best

- - That only provides for the discussion of one subject.

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Senator Sir FREDERICK SARGOOD

- It is quite enough for a senator to deal with one subject at a time, but the number of honorable senators who will have to rise in their places should be reduced from seven to five. That alteration appears to me to be absolutely necessary, and if it is made I think there will not be the slightest difficulty for any honorable senator to rise and cause a discussion on any subject he may wish to have discussed. If his case is a fair one, he is sure to be able to get five honorable senators to rise in support of his motion. In the Legislative Council of Victoria we never had the slightest difficulty in discussing any question that any few honorable members might wish to bring forward, and I, cannot conceive that there will be any greater difficulty in the Senate. I think we might now fairly remit the whole matter to a committee, and in the meantime pass this amendment, remitting the matter to certain honorable senators simply to decide with verbal amendments which of the existing standing orders we should agree to and act under,, at all events for a few months.

Senator Major GOULD

- I think that it will save the time of the Senate to adopt the amendment. There has been a tendency to discuss a number of the standing orders in this code, and the question to be considered is whether it is wise at this moment to negative the amendment, and discuss the whole of the standing orders wherever we find that they require amendment or alteration. If we are going to deal with 421 standing orders in that way we shall have to spend a good many hours over the work, and certainly we shall have to go into detail to deal with them intelligently. If, on the other hand, it is to be understood that when the committee bring up a code, whether South Australian or Victorian, it is to be debated at length here, we cannot be doing very much good. I think we should clearly understand that whatever code is brought up, the Senate practically gave its assent beforehand to adopt the standing orders in globo, because they had stood the test of time in 'some State or other. Although I know there will be many objectionable features to many honorable senators in whatever code they may get, they will have to make up their minds to accept the code, even with the objectionable features, in order to facilitate business and put an end to what, to a great extent, would otherwise be a fruitless discussion.

Senator Dobson

- All these standing orders are old ones.

Senator Major GOULD

- Honorable senators who have gone through the code have failed to recognise many of the standing orders as old friends ; at all events, if they are old friends, they have got such new faces that they cannot be recognised: I submit that the great bulk of these standing orders are such as can be adopted without any hesitation, doubt, or difficulty'. We should bear in mind that the committee cannot make any alterations, and therefore, with certain honorable senators, it will have to be a case of compromising a certain amount of principle for the time being. The Senate must put itself in exactly the same position as the Standing Orders Committee is placed in, and by that means it will facilitate our having a code to regulate our business, and do not bind ourselves to accept any one of the standing orders which are brought up. With regard to chapter 1 5 of the standing orders, there does appear to be some misapprehension of the object in putting the previous question.

Senator McGregor

- We know what the object is.

Senator Major GOULD

- Some honorable senators seem to assume the fact that it is only done to put an end to the debate at once, and that you can take a division by adopting some other method ; but really the object is to avoid taking a division. It may be that in the debate some question is raised on which it is undesirable in the public interest to give an expression of opinion by definite resolution. The time may be inopportune, or it may be a matter which may properly come on at a later period, but at that particular juncture it is undesirable to give a vote. Therefore the idea is that the previous question may be moved to enable the House to evade saying yes or no at that time ; but it does not preclude the House from considering the question at a later day if it feels so inclined. Even if we do omit chapter 15 of this code, the very first

standing order provides that in all cases not provided for the practice of the House of Commons shall prevail. The practice of the House of Commons is to enable honorable members to have the previous question moved and considered, so that by striking out chapter 15 nothing would be gained unless the first standing order was also struck out. If we take that course we shall land ourselves in a sea of trouble, because there will be many questions arising on which we shall have to follow the practice of the House of Commons. I have no doubt that any standing orders we adopt will still provide for the Senate being able to have the previous question submitted to it for its consideration.

Senator McGregor

- Not necessarily.

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Senator Major GOULD

- Referring to motions for the adjournment of the Senate I do not know what the rule is in all the State Parliaments, but evidently there is very great strength in the contention of Senator McGregor as to the number of approving members being excessive. I think if we required four senators, together with the mover, to signify their intention to have a matter submitted, it ought to be ample in our Chamber to enable a senator to discuss any question. Whether the debate should be limited to two hours is a debatable question. The rule restricting the time on a motion for adjournment, and requiring only one definite matter to be discussed, was made in consequence of the gross abuse of public time which the old system gave rise to, but I do not think that the temper of the Senate is such as to require such an extremely drastic rule. I shall be prepared to give three or four hours for the discussion on a motion for adjournment. I would remind Senator Sir Frederick Sargood that we can only discuss one matter of urgent public importance each day on a motion for adjournment, so that if there are half-a-dozen grievances to be ventilated, a week will be required to discuss them. If those grievances can be brought forward at a particular time we shall get the trouble over in an hour or two, and it will mean an absolute saving of time. While we have no equivalent to the motion which they have in the other Chamber for going into Committee of Supply, we must remember that our constitution is entirely different from that of any other second Chamber in Australia. The fact of our having been given the power of suggesting amendments and the fact of our being direct representatives of the people to whom we are responsible, shows that there is a necessity to make some provision for emergencies of this character. It is a matter which will no doubt give the committee a little bit of trouble in order to see how the thing can be worked out under the new set of circumstances, because the circumstances are altogether unique from those of any other Legislature, I believe, in the British Dominions. Another matter which has been alluded to is the appointment of a Chairman of Committees. Senator Playford will find that the practice of the House of Lords is a little different from what it was when he was there. He told us that there was no Chairman of Committees appointed.

Senator Playford

- Not as far as I know.

Senator Major GOULD

- On reference to May, I find that when the Lord Chancellor leaves the chair the Chairman of Committees takes the chair to go on with the business, and that he is appointed by a resolution of the House.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- Is he a salaried officer ?

Senator Major GOULD

- May does not say.

The chair is taken in the Lords by the Chairman of Committees, who is appointed by resolution of the House. Pursuant to Standing Orders Nos 41 and 42, he takes the chair in all committees of the whole House, and in all committees upon private Bills, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House ; and if he, or any Lord appointed by the House in his place, shall be absent (unless by leave of the committee) the House is resumed.

It is abundantly clear that there is such an officer in the House of Lords. In our case it is all very well to F. that there will be a saving of time. We have a large number of honorable senators who are great believers in the principle of eight hours' labour, although they do not always apply it to legislative work. We do not want to put a senator in the position of having to discharge the onerous duties of President and Chairman

of Committees possibly for sixteen hours. ' We do not want to become sweaters, and see the President at the end of the committee business reporting to himself. He has sufficient duties to occupy his time while the Senate is sitting, and when it goes into committee is it not fair that he should have an opportunity for a little rest and relaxation, instead of keeping his brain on the rack the whole time? Again, supposing he wants to go away, the Chairman of Committees will take the chair under the standing orders while he is absent. It will be seen that it carries on the business of the Chamber correctly, and I think honorable senators will find that it will be very desirable to keep to that standing order. I believe we shall also have to allow the Chairman of Committees to have a deliberative vote. That will be strictly in accordance with the Constitution, which provides that our President shall have a deliberative and not simply a casting vote. No allusion has been made to Standing Order No. 274, which reads as follows : -

A member having spoken to the main question cannot speak to any amendment thereto, nor to the previous question.

I believe that standing order is taken from South Australia, but whether that be the case or not, it is certainly one which should be altered.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- We had to alter it in Victoria.

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Senator Major GOULD

- I know that it is contrary to the practice of the House of Commons, and also contrary to the practice in the Parliament of New South Wales. Suppose that an honorable senator has spoken to a question, and some very important amendment is proposed. Is it not a reasonable thing that he should have an opportunity of making his opinion heard before the thing is put to a vote? His arguments might influence the House very greatly. That is a matter of considerable importance and the standing order should be altered so as to allow an honorable senator to speak, not only to the question, but also to each individual amendment that may be submitted from time to time. I do not want to go through the whole of these orders. I have alluded to two or three of them, and I am now taking up the ground that it is better for us to have, for temporary purposes, standing orders that have been worked under, even if they be defective, and to let our Standing Orders Committee get to work as speedily as possible and bring up such a code as we can approve of and make suitable to the requirements of this Chamber.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I hope honorable members will agree to the suggestion of Senator Sir Josiah Symon. It seems to me that we shall get over the difficulty much more readily in that way than in any other that has been suggested. I understood from the honorable senator when he was speaking that his desire was that a report should be brought up tomorrow. There was no thought of the committee going right through the whole standing orders of the various States, but that they should decide amongst themselves as to whether they should recommend the Victorian, the South Australian, or any of the other standing orders.

Senator Drake

- How can they form a judgment without any knowledge of the facts.

Senator CHARLESTON

- It is only a temporary expedient. We should be dealing then with standing orders that have already been tried. I think out of courtesy to our excellent President we should adopt the South Australian orders, with which he is thoroughly familiar.

Senator Dobson

- - Nine-tenths of these are South Australian standing orders.

Senator CHARLESTON

- That is all the better. It seems that it would be an anomaly to adopt standing orders that we practically know nothing about. They are laid upon the table and we are asked to accept them temporarily and to discuss them afterwards. It would be very much better to adopt standing orders that have already been tried until we have been able to go through these thoroughly, and make such amendments as are necessary. With regard to the "previous question," I think honorable members have not grasped what that means. I understood that the previous question was always moved to enable the chairman of the meeting, or the president of any body, to get out of a difficult position. That is to say, I may get up and move a motion. The chairman cannot very well rule it out of order, because there may be some relevancy

in it, and he would be placed in a very awkward position if he ruled it out of order. After the motion has been discussed for some time, it does not appear that any practical result will arise. Therefore, some one gets up and moves the previous question, which must be put at once, and I understand the previous question is this - it is supposed before any motion can be discussed at all, that a vote of the House or meeting is first taken as to whether it shall be discussed or not. That being the previous question, it is put - " Shall this motion be discussed 1"

Senator Playford

- Shall the question be put?

Senator CHARLESTON

- The question to be put is what was understood to be a previous question not actually put. We first decide as to whether we shall discuss a matter at all.

Senator Drake

- It is the closure the honorable senator is thinking of.

Senator CHARLESTON

- I have consulted authorities and the matter was put as I am now stating it ; and if honorable members will only hear me through they will be able to decide whether I am right or not. The question is put - Shall this matter be discussed? And if it is decided that it shall not be discussed it falls to the ground. If it be decided that it shall be discussed, the debate proceeds.

Senator Playford

- The matter is discussed on the previous question. - Senator CHARLESTON. - What is the previous question ?

Senator Playford

- " That the question be not now put."

Senator CHARLESTON

- How is it the previous question ?

Senator Playford

- It is a form.

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Senator Drake

- It is a fiction.

Senator CHARLESTON

- Exactly ; because it is supposed to have been put previously. If honorable members will look at the authorities they will see I am practically correct. Standing Order 162 says that if the Senate resolves the previous question in the negative, then the question is put. Hence it is not really blocking the whole subject, but it is again put as it would have been previously - that the matter be discussed. The result would not be as Senator McGregor thought, that it would block the whole of the discussion. I have stated the matter now as I understand it, and can bring forward authorities to prove that I am right. All that the honorable member contends for, if I understand him aright, can be settled by the question, " that we now divide," and there is no need to move the previous question at all if the honorable member's interpretation of the previous question is correct.

Senator McGregor

- The honorable senator has made the-question rather muddy and hazy.

Senator CHARLESTON

- That depends entirely on the honorable senator's vision. I now come to the question of the Chairman of Committees. I am quite sure that this Senate would not see its President sweated. At the same time, a good many of us see that at present, and perhaps for some months to come, there will be no excessive work in the Senate. Therefore, I think we might economize in that direction for the present. I had the pleasure of sitting under you, sir, for seven or eight years in" the South Australian Parliament, and you fulfilled the duties of both President and_ Chairman to the satisfaction of every member of the Council, and also of the State. Many times, especially during the end of the session, you were very hard worked, but any member who had any experience at all was ready to assist you if you required assistance. I think at the present time it would be unwise to appoint a Chairman of Committees. I would like to see .the suggestion of Senator Sir Josiah Symon carried out, that we should adopt temporarily the rules of some

State, and afterwards go in for revising our own standing orders. It will require a great deal of time to go through these standing orders carefully, and I think that by adopting the suggestion which has been made, we should save time.

Senator GLASSEY

- I have been endeavouring to follow honorable senators as to what is to be gained by the adoption of this amendment. If we were likely to get a set of standing orders » with which honorable members were familiar I could understand the value of the amendment. But can we get them? I could understand it, too, if we adopted the South Australian orders, with which you, sir, after your long experience in that State, are so thoroughly familiar. But suppose we adopt the "Victorian or New South Wales standing orders, or, as suggested, the Queensland standing orders, might I be permitted to suggest that you would not be quite so familiar with them as with the standing orders of South Australia. If it were contended by the mover of the amendment and those who support him, that the South Australian standing orders should be immediately adopted, I could see some point in the argument. But very few honorable members are familiar with all the standing orders of the States, or, indeed, with any standing orders outside their own States.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- There is not much difference between them.

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Senator GLASSEY

- I could see some force and point in the argument for adopting the South Australian orders, but outside of that I confess I cannot see the value of the amendment. Then, again, there is another element to which some slight allusion has been made during the discussion. The Clerk of this Chamber, the Vice President of the Executive Council, a gentleman of considerable ability and a fair-minded man, together with others, in their joint capacity, have given a great deal of consideration to the standing orders which we are now asked to adopt temporarily. Surely honorable senators have some little regard for the feelings of those gentlemen, who have been engaged in that particular work and who have performed it in a very admirable manner. I admit that their work is not perfect, but we are surely not going to cast their work aside and adopt some standing orders that may be in operation in one State. I certainly should regret very much if that course were taken, although I do not believe there is any desire or intention to cast any reflection or censure, even in a mild way, on the gentlemen who have brought forward this new code. That being so, I hope honorable senators will consider - this matter and adopt the standing orders which have been put together with so much care for their guidance, and for the control of the business of this Chamber. In the meantime, if the orders are temporarily adopted the committee can get to work and bring forward a permanent set of standing orders for our guidance in years to come. I certainly cannot see my way clear to support the amendment brought forward by Senator Sir Josiah Symon. Now, coming to the question of the Chairman of Committees, I think of all the weak arguments that could be advanced in favour of no appointment being made it is that we would save £400 or £500 a year. I am just as economical as other senators. During all the years I have been in a State Parliament I have always endeavoured to urge economy. But I cannot see the justice or fairness of asking you, sir, or any other senator who may occupy the elevated position of President, to perform double duty. You may have to sit in that chair for six, seven, or ten hours during the discussion of a measure which it may be a matter of urgency to put through committee at once, and after that would it be fair to ask you to come down from your seat and take the position of Chairman of Committees, to deal with the various details contained in the Bill. I certainly think it would be asking too much. After a little reflection, senators must come to the conclusion that that would be an unfair and unreasonable demand to make to the President of this Chamber. Now, coming to the question that there is no necessity for you to continue as chairman all through a long dreary sitting, and that some person could act temporarily. Where is the person you could get to act temporarily! If you told off two or three members at the beginning of the session who could perform the duties for the time being I could understand the position but to leave it to you to invite Senator So-and-so to occupy your place seems to me to be an unworkable scheme.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- That has been the practice for 27 years in Victoria.

Senator GLASSEY

- Well, if I may be pardoned for saying so, I do not by any means set this Senate alongside the Legislative Council of Victoria, however much I may admire that Chamber. I say this Senate is so constituted that it has far greater and more important functions.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- I misunderstood the honorable member. I thought he was speaking of relieving the Chairman of Committees.

Senator GLASSEY

- That sometimes happens ; there must be a, temporary chairman occasionally.' I am now putting forward, I hope in a reasonable way, the fact that I by no means place this Senate on a plane with any Legislative Council in Australia, the strong position taken up by honorable members during the discussion on the Address in Reply showed their determination to safeguard the rights and privileges of the Senate, and to place it on terms of equality with the other branch of the Legislature. I am sure my honorable friend, Senator Playford, will pardon me if I say that I do not attach much importance to the question of economy. I really think that the argument put forward with the view of practising economy to the extent of £400 or £500, not to say of preventing the appointment of a Chairman of Committees, is of extremely little importance. I wish to see you, Mr. President, reasonably worked. Although we are not busily engaged just now, I venture to say that before long, there will be an abundance of business. I think we shall have a long and certainly very heavy session indeed. That is only another reason why in my opinion, a Chairman of Committees should be appointed as early as possible. Senator McGregor and Senator Sir Josiah Symon have pointed out two or three objections to the standing orders, but they are difficulties which can very easily be overcome. There may be rules in South Australia, to which I would take strong exception, and why should I adopt the South Australian set because some senators say they have stood the test of time. Every rule in this temporary set has stood the test of time in some particular State or- other. If there are orders among them which have not been in operation before, it is for honorable senators to point them out.

Senator Dobson

- They cannot point them -out. '

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Senator GLASSEY

- Surely we are not going, merely for the love, of carrying some amendment, to cast some implied censure upon you, Mr. President, and upon the Clerk of this Chamber - a man of wide experience, a man of considerable ability, who has had the working of the rules, of South Australia under his care and under his consideration for many years. Surely it is not sufficient to say that merely because some honorable senator brings forward an amendment of that kind we should adopt it, and put aside your work. Such a course would undoubtedly imply, although not intended, that you had done the work in a perfunctory manner. I cannot see my way to support the amendment. I think it would be false economy not to appoint a Chairman of Committees. He should be appointed as early as possible so that we may be able to get to work and discuss matters in detail.

Senator STEWART

- I regret very much that I cannot share the views of Senator Glassey. The honorable senator apparently is unwilling to support the amendment, because he is afraid that he will hurt the feelings of certain gentlemen. I understand that you, Mr. President, were among those engaged in the forming of the provisional standing orders.

The PRESIDENT

- The standing orders were prepared long before I saw them. I had, however, something to do with the first chapter of these standing orders, relating to the opening proceedings of Parliament. That is all.

Senator STEWART

- The chief reason given by Senator Glassey for opposing the amendment is that we are hurting the feelings of those who were engaged in framing these standing orders. I must say that the first instalment we received was so objectionable that the Government saw fit to issue a fresh edition. The revised edition we have now before us, and it contains so many objectionable features that I am inclined to favour Senator Sir Josiah Symon's proposal. I think it is much better that before they are adopted our standing orders should be thoroughly sifted and made agreeable to all sections of the House. I do not favour their

temporary adoption. Some honorable members seem to see great danger in Senator Sir Josiah Symon's proposal. I cannot see where any danger comes in. I believe the standing orders of South Australia are framed in a most liberal fashion.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- They were ratified by the Convention.

Senator STEWART

- They have the honorable stamp of age upon them. They have a stamp upon them that is even more honorable. They were extremely liberal towards members in the conduct of the Convention.

Senator Dobson

- They were only adopted by the Convention as a matter of courtesy to the colony in which the first sitting was held.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Not at all.

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Senator STEWART

- South Australia has sent more eminent legislators to the Federal Parliament than any other State has done. That is a proof that the South Australian representatives have been brought up in a very favorable atmosphere, that their powers as debaters have not been curbed and restricted by undesirable standing orders. We see here the effect of that favorable environment. Members from South Australia stand head and shoulders above the representatives from other States. I do not say this with any disrespect to other honorable senators, but seeing that the standing orders of South Australia have so favoured the production of able debaters and administrators I do not think we can go far wrong in adopting them temporarily. One good reason why these standing orders should be made clear and explicit was manifested in the Senate this evening. We had an honorable member getting up and tackling a question on the previous question, and the way in which he involved himself, the way in which he tied himself up into knots and turned the whole thing into a Chinese puzzle was absolutely amusing. I thought I saw his point clearly at the beginning, but before the honorable member sat down he had put me into the same' state of mental confusion as he seemed to be in himself. It is extremely desirable that that' sort of thing should be avoided. I was disappointed to hear several honorable members turn from the question to the question of limiting discussion. Some of them also referred to the standing orders of the House of Commons, and said we ought to be guided by that august assembly. I make bold to say that we could not have a worse example than the British House of Commons. This may appear to some honorable members to be rank heresy. The conditions existing in the House of Commons are quite different to those which exist here. The House of Commons is an unpaid assembly. The larger proportion of its members look upon legislation as a sort of gentle afternoon diversion. They do not consider it in the light of real business. We here are in a different situation. We are paid to do the work of the country. We are paid to discuss business. I am certain there is very little probability of free discussion in this - Chamber, seeing that we propose to sit only three days in the week, and I do not suppose that we shall remain here for more than six months in the year at the very outside. That being the case, I do not think there is any reason whatever for the fear expressed by some senators that our discussions are likely to be of an extended character. We ought to invite discussion. Discussion is the very breath and life of legislation. I am aware that every honorable member thinks that, after he has spoken, everything that could be said upon the subject has been said. We are all more or less of that opinion.

Senator DAWSON

- Or ought to be.

Senator STEWART

- Yes, or ought to be. I do not think there is any reason why we should hurry matters through, and I am therefore opposed to any standing order which has for its purpose the limitation of debate. I think we cannot do better than adopt Senator Sir Josiah Symon's suggestion. We could then set our committee to work at once. The committee, I am glad to see, will probably be composed of members from every side of the House. It will have a member of the labour party on it, a couple of members of the Opposition, and two or three members from the Government side - all members from different States - and I think it will be able to submit to us at a very early date a report which will permit us to take up the discussion of these

standing orders and dispose of them very speedily. I do not know whether it is altogether in order to speak to the question of the appointment of a Chairman of Committees. Several honorable members, however, have had something to say upon the subject. Some seem to be very much afraid that you, Mr. President, will be sweated. I have not perspired much since I came to Victoria, and I do not know whether. I shall do so before I leave.

Senator Major Gould

- They will make the honorable senator travel by-and-by, from a legislative point of view.

Senator STEWART

- I am in favour of economy.

Senator DAWSON

- Being a Scotchman.

Senator STEWART

- Yes, being a Scotchman, I am in favour of every expenditure, except that which affects myself, being on the most economical scale possible.

I quite recognise that you, Mr. President, are placed in a different position from that enjoyed by other honorable members. For instance, it would not be quite proper if you, sir, were to fall asleep in your chair, but any other senator, when bored by the utterances of his fellow members, may fall gently asleep in his place.

Senator Major Gould

- But he must be quiet.

Senator STEWART

- Yes ; he must not snore. To do so would be out of order. He can go and sit by the fire or go to the billiard-room or refreshment-room, or wander about at his own sweet will. In many ways your position, Mr. President, is different from that of other honorable members, and I think it is extremely desirable that you should have a substitute available. Whether that substitute ought to be paid in the present condition of affairs is a matter upon which I cannot give a decided opinion at present ; but I am in favour of economy not only in this, but also in many other directions. In certain quarters there is a desire expressed for economy with regard to the parliamentary machine. That desire, I take it, comes from people who do not believe in the parliamentary machine - who would rather see the business of the country conducted without a Parliament. I think that cheeseparing in furnishing and equipping the parliamentary machinery is a case of being penny wise and pound foolish.

The PRESIDENT

- Does the honorable member think his argument has anything to do with the question of standing orders ?

Senator STEWART

- I do not think so, sir, but I thought I would throw that in before I sat down.

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- I have not much to add to the discussion, but I shall feel it my duty to vote for the amendment moved by Senator Sir Josiah Symon. I desire to say a word or two with reference to an altogether incorrect proposition submitted from the other side of the chamber, in regard to hurting the feelings of some unknown persons who are supposed to be responsible for the production of these orders. I have not had an opportunity of investigating the contents of these orders, but I understand from the discussion that if the amendment is carried the standing orders in force in South Australia will be temporarily adopted here. I take it that these standing orders come very much from the same source, and consequently if there is any hurting of any one's feelings, there should surely be solace in the fact that the South Australian orders, emanating from the same distinguished source, will thus be temporarily in vogue here. I absolutely disclaim any sympathy with the proposition that documents laid before us are not to be discussed for fear of hurting some one's feelings. If I may say so, it is the rankest nonsense. What are we here for, if it is not to discuss documents which are put before us? If the author of every Bill, resolution, or order had to be considered in each instance, we should have to accept them in globo, with bated breath, and with a full knowledge that we were not hurting the feelings of some one. I protest against any such nonsense. I think it is very unhappy that any attempt should be made to make this a party question, involving the credit or

discredit of any one. It is unusual that a Ministry or a Minister is in any shape or form responsible for bringing standing orders before any Chamber. That is merely a question that comes from the creation of not only a new House, but of an absolutely new Parliament. Surely His Majesty's Ministers of State are above any such petty littleness as to feel the question of the detailed management of the Senate's affairs to be one involving their credit because, as a mere matter of convenience, they bring the rules down here. These standing orders ought to have gone through the mill of a committee before they were received here, that body being really responsible to all parts of the House, and the Ministry ought to have had no more to do with that matter than the ink bottle out of which the ink was taken to write them. I think we are asked by the amendment to accept for the present the known rather than the unknown. We are asked to accept for temporary purposes some standing orders which have passed the crucial test of experience rather than some standing orders which, however excellent they may prove to be on examination, are not in that position. I, therefore, intend to vote for the known rather than the unknown. It has been said that all these rules are to be found in the standing orders of some House of Parliament. I venture to assert that there are some of them which have certainly not been seen anywhere before. I see standing orders here with reference to the transactions of the two Chambers, based, of course, on the conditions laid down in the Constitution Act. Surely nobody will say that those standing orders are to be found anywhere else 1 Take No. 217 and the others in the same section. These are absolutely new, and as they deal with the relations between the two Houses, we ought to be very careful whether we should accept them for five minutes without they have had the overhaul which is always given by any deliberative assembly to standing orders which are to govern its proceedings. Then Senator Sir J. H. Symon referred to Standing Order No. 237, relating to the election of Chairman of Committees. Whatever view honorable senators may have as to the necessity or otherwise for a Chairman of Committees, I think there will be almost a universal feeling against the clause as drawn - a clause that proposes to elect a gentleman as Chairman of Committees for as long as he may happen to be a member of the Senate. For twenty years off and on I have been taking part in the election of the Chairman of Committees in another State, and there the practice has been to elect a chairman session by session, and I believe that is the rule in at least the majority of the State Parliaments ; but we are asked now to do what I look upon as most objectionable, and will never be a party to doing - to elect a gentleman to a responsible position from which he could only be removed by practically a personal attack. I do not think we desire to put ourselves in the position of having to bring practically personal charges or personal reasons, which amount to very much the same thing, against the occupant of a position before we could make a change. Surely it will be sufficient to follow the practice which is practically universal throughout the British Empire, and where they are deliberative Assemblies, and elect not for life or something akin to it, but for the session. As I read the proposed standing order which this motion desires us to adopt, I understand that it is mandatory. It says that we shall elect. It is of no use turning round and saying, " We did not mean that. We need not do it." We give ourselves a positive direction, and we must act on that direction, else we shall be guilty of laches.

Senator Drake

- It does not say when.

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Senator Lt Col NEILD

- We all know perfectly well what the plain English word " shall " means. If we pass , a standing order, which directs us positively to do a certain thing, we are guilty of neglect if we do not do that thing which we are ordered by our own act to do.

Senator Harney

- The House of Lords has decided that " may " means " shall."

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- But does "shall" mean "may"?

Senator Best

- What is the penalty if we do not elect a chairman 1

Senator Lt Col NEILD

.- The penalty of not doing it perhaps' might be explained by the senator who, being learned in the law, no doubt can offer some good reason. I do not think it is necessary that I should take up time by making any suggestions on the point, because I do not think they would be very relevant to the matter at issue. There

are other proposed rules for governing the numbers on certain committees, and I find on the business paper some proposals to appoint sessional committees under the standing orders. I do not wish to raise the question of State against State, or anything of that kind, but we are sent here deliberately to represent each State. AVE are the States House, and I think that on important committees each State should have a representative. Standing orders Nos. 331 to 333 provide that nearly every one of these committees shall consist of five senators. I see no reason why it should not consist of six. For instance, on the printing committee, why should there not be a representative of each State? Seeing the wide extent over which our operations are scattered, there may be the best of reasons to suppose that a senator representing say, Queensland, should be the best judge of what documents relating to that State are of sufficient value to be printed.

Senator DAWSON

- Very often documents find their way into the waste paper basket.

Senator Lt Col NEILD

- Some do and some do not. I think there is very commonly a great deal of waste in connexion with parliamentary printing ; but that is no answer to my argument. Unless each State has a representative on these committees they are of no avail as representative bodies. Our special function is to look after and represent the interests of the State. AVE are told that it is our duty rather to represent the States and the people of the States, if one can differentiate between the two. I know that I cannot do it very well, but I suppose that we are to represent the States, irrespective of the population of each one. If that is our duty, and that is the function we are assumed to discharge, then I think on every committee of the Senate each State should have a representative. I object to passing these standing orders, which will prevent us, if we adopt them even temporarily, from making any alteration in the numbers on the committees. The committees will be fairly small at that number. For these reasons, and the reasons I have heard given with a great deal of emphasis and good sound argument on different sides of the Chamber, I shall feel it my duty, with a perfect feeling of friendliness and respect for all those authorities who are responsible for the introduction of these standing orders, to vote for the amendment. '

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - This has been a very interesting and instructive debate. I think that the Senate could congratulate itself rather more on its usefulness if the line that was indicated by Senator McGregor had been adopted. That is to say, if it had agreed to my motion, and allowed this debate practically to be an instruction to the Standing Orders Committee to take a note of all the standing orders to which any objection had been made, and endeavour to give effect to the wishes of the Senate. I have learned something in the course of the debate. One thing that struck me is that if we are now, as I believe we are, under South Australian rules, they are in some respects faulty. Senator Lt.-Col. Neild has already drawn attention to one of them, and we have seen how it operates. I bring forward a motion with a very short speech ; a senator proposes an amendment which is practically to substitute another motion for the one I moved, and then I, the representative of the Government, who moved the original question, have no opportunity of saying one word on that amendment. I have sat here all night hearing various senators give their opinions and expressing their intention as to how they will vote, without having had the slightest opportunity of saying a word on the amendment.

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Senator Dobson

- And that is a South Australian rule.

A Senator. - The honorable senator will not have an opportunity under these standing orders.

Senator DRAKE

- For this reason that nine-tenths of these standing orders, I am informed, are taken from South Australia.

- Senator Lt.-Col. Neild. - The honorable senator could have spoken on the amendment.

Senator DRAKE

- I am informed not.

The PRESIDENT

- In the South Australian Assembly the representative of the Government has an opportunity to speak twice.

Senator DRAKE

- I made some enquiries, and understood that by the rules of the South Australian Parliament, with which I am not familiar, I was debarred from speaking on the amendment, but that I had the right of reply.

The PRESIDENT

- That is by a sessional order.

Senator DRAKE

- Under the Queensland Standing Orders to which I have been more accustomed, although they may be faulty in some respects, it is always a rule that so soon as an amendment has been moved, the mover of the motion or in the case of Government business, the representative of the Government, shall have an opportunity at once to explain the attitude he takes in regard to the amendment. This appears to me to be very much -the better course to adopt. Judging by the speeches of honorable senators there appears to be a majority in favour of accepting the amendment. But I think the Senate in agreeing to the amendment will be making a mistake. In the first place, it appears to me to be entirely impracticable. If the intention of the mover of the amendment is that this small committee shall do the work it is asked to do, we are to decide which code of standing orders will be the most suitable for our purpose. We cannot conscientiously do this unless we are acquainted with all the codes of standing orders. It is all very well to say that there is a sort of understanding that we are to meet and agree to adopt the South Australian or Victorian, with a good deal more emphasis on South Australia than Victoria. But supposing we do this shall we not be told afterwards, when the terms of the resolution are quoted, that we solemnly decided that the standing orders of one of the Houses of the South Australian Parliament were preferable to those of the corresponding House of any other Parliament ? Is ' it fitting ' that by an amendment to a motion a committee of senators should be appointed; and told that they are to do certain work, and present a report next day ? I do not know exactly at what time this debate will finish and the House adjourn, but very probably we shall have no time to do anything this evening. I do not know whether the senators who are named in the amendment are present. I am not aware of what their engagements may be. I am quite sure that my time will be all occupied to-morrow.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- -The Convention adopted the South Australian standing orders without any adjournment at all.

Senator DRAKE

- I quite understand the position taken up by the honorable ' senator, -and that is that the terms of the amendment calling upon us to decide as to which standing orders shall be adopted is really a formality. What he really means is that, instead of doing that, we shall come to-morrow with a motion saying that the South Australian are the standing 1 orders which shall be adopted.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Not unless it is thought that the Victorian ones or the Queensland ones are better.

Senator DRAKE

- If it is only to be a formal meeting to take a few minutes, how are we to decide? Let the honorable senator put himself in my place. I only - know a little about the South Australian standing orders, and of the Victorian standing orders I know very much less. So how can I conscientiously say that one is preferable to the other ?

Senator Harney

- Any tried standing orders against novel ones.

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Senator DRAKE

- What is the use of going through the farce of appointing a committee to do certain work and telling us at the same time it is perfectly understood that we are not going to do the work at all, simply because there is no time to do it. I trust that my name will not be included in the committee, because I feel that the whole tiling is a perfect farce, and that it will be utterly impossible for me, between now and to-morrow, to express an opinion as to whether the South Australian or Victorian standing orders are preferable. I think that some of the senators have underrated the work which has been undertaken by my honorable colleague and the officers of the Senate. We knew that it would be necessary that there should be standing orders. We considered, and I think senators will agree that it is exceedingly desirable that there should be standing orders as quickly as possible. What was done by my honorable colleague and the

officers of the Senate was to compare the standing orders in use in the various States and to compile from them a code which we considered would be useful for the purposes of the Senate. I am informed that nine-tenths of these standing orders are South Australian. I think I may say there is hardly one that is not to be found in some code of standing orders, and that has not been probably tested by actual experience, in cases to which reference, if necessary, could be made. My colleague not only took infinite pains with regard to the standing orders in the first place, but when it was represented that some of them might be objected to, he withdrew the first lot, and excised all those which he thought might give rise to debate. In this matter he has done his very best to meet the wishes and consult the feelings of the members of the Senate. If the amendment that has been suggested is now carried, it will simply mean that, whereas we are appointing one Standing Orders Committee to draw up standing orders for us, we are now going to appoint another committee to recommend certain standing orders to fill up the interval, and they will be in just the same position as my honorable colleague and the officers of the House were in with regard to framing the present standing orders.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Oh, no.

Senator DRAKE

- Well, the honorable senator wants the South Australian orders.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- No, really I do not.

Senator DRAKE

- He has made up his mind that the South Australian orders can be made to suit the purposes of the Senate with certain verbal amendments.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Temporarily.

Senator DRAKE

- If my colleague had come down and proposed that the South Australian standing orders should be the standing orders temporarily of this Senate, he would have been told that he was giving a preference to one State and to the senators of one State. There would have been a marked advantage in it. The senators who are from South Australia, and those who were at the Convention, know those standing orders pretty well, and everything that is not according to those standing orders seems to be foreign and strange to them. The standing orders which have been referred as being strange have been taken from the codes of all the States. ' I do not know that any particular advantage is to be gained by adopting the standing orders of the South Australian Legislative Council. Seeing that up to the present time our debates have been conducted according to the standing orders of one Chamber of the South Australian Parliament, what will be the use of this committee recommending that they should be adopted It has been considered by the Government to be desirable that we should have standing orders specially fitted to the conditions of this Chamber, and hence these have been brought down. If honorable senators do not approve of that course, all that is necessary is to go no further.

Senator DAWSON

- We cannot dispute the President's ruling unless we have, standing orders.

Senator DRAKE

- Up to the present time we have not agreed to adopt any standing orders, but the debates have been conducted according to the practice which prevails in one of the South Australian chambers. If we had no standing orders we should go on in the same way.

Senator Harney

- If we have the South Australian orders by- implication, why not have them expressly 1

Senator DRAKE

- The honorable senator is assuming what is going to be the result of this committee that is going to be called together in a solemn way to inquire and report.

Senator Ewing

- What is wrong with the standing orders that have been introduced t

Senator DRAKE

- Objections ' have been taken to one or two of them, and I am quite willing to refer to those to which

objection has been taken. I will refer to them directly. It is utterly impossible for this committee to do the work it is asked to do, and if all that is intended is that we all shall; come down to-morrow and say that we have had a meeting, and that we find that the South Australian rules are the best, then I think we might as well leave the work alone.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Not the best.

Senator DRAKE

- If that is what we are to do, what is the use of going through the farce of appointing this committee. Why" cannot an amendment be moved 1

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Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Will the honorable senator move an amendment 1

Senator DRAKE

- No I will not do that, because I am in favour of the motion as it stands, but if it is the wish of the Senate to have instead of the rules which the Government have laid on the table, the standing orders of the South Australian Legislature, would it not be a more straightforward course to move an amendment to that effect, and put it to the vote 1 Let the Senate . decide. But what is the necessity or good of appointing a committee to go through the farce of meeting together with the understanding that without any knowledge of the facts they will make a report 1 I do not know exactly what our position is. I do not know what will happen if the committee refuse to do the work they are charged to do.

A Senator. - "Will it save time if I move that amendment 1

Senator DRAKE

- I will not suggest to any honorable senator what course should be taken, but I may point out what appears to me to be the difficult position into which we shall get if this amendment is adopted, because it will stand as an instruction to a committee to do something which I feel certain they cannot conscientiously do. Of course, they can recommend this and re- ' commend the other, but they will certainly not make any inquiry which would justify them in making such a report.

Senator Dobson

- This motion is a great step towards permanent standing orders.

Senator DRAKE

- Now I will say a word or two with regard to the objections.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Where did Standing Order 75 come from, which relates to the suspension of members ?

Senator DRAKE

- I do not know that I can answer that. I believe it came from Queensland

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- That is a very objectionable standing order.

Senator Dobson

- Still it is not novel.

Senator Best

- It is in the Victorian rules.

Senator DRAKE

- It is in the Victorian rules, and, I have no doubt, in those of other States as well. I suppose it is one of those standing orders that is not in the South Australian code. I will deal first with the objections taken by Senator McGregor to the number of members required to stand up in support of a motion for adjournment. There is a great deal in what th honorable member urged, and the contention was strengthened by the argument put by Senator Sir Josiah Symon with regard to the constitution of this Chamber as representing the States. I do not believe it would often occur that a senator from one particular State would desire to move the adjournment of the House upon a subject of such a nature that he could not get any support from any senators, except those from his own State. However, surely that is only a matter of detail. No harm can come from adopting, temporarily, such a standing order. I am not, personally, wedded to the number seven, and I would be quite satisfied that it should be six or five. The fact that an honorable member has objection to one standing order in the code is surely not a reason for

refusing to adopt them at all. I will undertake to say that if you take the South Australian standing orders there will be something in them to which honorable senators will object. If the Victorian standing orders were adopted it is very likely that Senator Sir Josiah Symon would be able to find something in them to object to also, so that the same argument applies in nearly every case. With regard to the previous question, I will not plunge into that and try to explain the way in which it works, but I always understood it to be a device which enables the House, if it does not want to come to a resolution on a subject, to pass on to the next business. It is a very simple matter, and it is a very useful provision. It is a way of enabling a House to dispose of a question if it does not desire to pass a formal resolution.

Senator Higgs

- Does not the order enable one man to stop a debate 1

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Senator DRAKE

- I think not, because the debate takes place on the question that the question be not now put. . If it is carried the House goes on to the next business ; if it is not carried then a division takes place. Now the other matter was with regard to the Chairmanship of Committees, There was nothing in the argument that it was desirable that this House should have some means of ventilating grievances, similar to the practice of bringing up grievances on a motion to go into a Committee of Supply. That has nothing to do with the question as to whether we adopt these orders or not. As an instruction to the Standing Orders Committee, it might be useful, but it does not affect the question at all. With regard to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees, I cannot see how the Senate, by adopting ' these standing orders, would be compelled to proceed at once with the appointment of a chairman.

Senator Ewing

- Can they not appoint the President?

Senator DRAKE

- I do not know whether they can. I quite agree with those senators who have expressed the opinion that we ought to have a Chairman of Committees as they have in another place. I believe in practising economy ; I hope it will always be practised. But it should not be practised at the cost of efficiency, or in such a way as will lower the status of this House.

Senator Ewing

- But to those senators who argue that the appointment of a Chairman of Committees as a separate individual is not necessary, cannot the answer be given that you could appoint the President?

Senator DRAKE

- I presume the President could be appointed as Chairman. It was said also - and this was an argument which had some weight with some senators - that if this amendment is not accepted then we are going to have a long discussion on these standing orders. Well, do we gain anything to escape a long discussion by accepting the amendment? If the amendment is accepted it will mean that there will be a motion for the adoption of some other standing orders, and will there not be just as long a discussion on them ? Suppose this committee recommends the Victorian or Queensland standing orders - why should we not suppose they will recommend the Queensland standing orders - do we gain anything then ? In each case the proposal is for the temporary adoption of standing orders, pending the report of the Standing Orders Committee. If the amendment is accepted and it is proposed to temporarily adopt another code, there will be room for exactly the same discussion as there is here.

Senator Dobson

- Will not senators require the standing orders of another State to be printed, with such, modifications as may be suggested ?

Senator Harney

- The only modifications are verbal.

Senator DRAKE

- I have heard that said, but I have very considerable doubt whether we can accept even the code of South Australia without modification. The senator who moved the amendment put in the words " with or without modification." Clearly it was in his mind that some modification might be necessary in order to make these -standing orders fit our circumstances.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- That was done out of courtesy to the committee, so as not to thrust upon them the adoption of standing orders without verbal amendment.

Senator DRAKE

- I am considerably in the dark in regard to the modifications that will be necessary, but I think it is probable that whatever code is adopted some modifications will have to be made. That is part of the duty that is cast on this committee, which is expected to bring up a report tomorrow. I do not see how they can be expected to do so, and I hope even at the eleventh hour the honorable senator will not press his amendment. I would like to say with regard to the Chairmanship of Committees, in order to put Senator Playford right, that in the House of Lords Lord Morley is Chairman of Committees, and receives a salary of £2,500 a year.

Amendment agreed to.

Senator HIGGS(Queensland). - I wish to move that the South Australian orders be adopted.

The PRESIDENT

- The honorable member cannot do that. The question now is what we are to do with the remaining words of the motion. I presume it is intended to strike them out.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- That is so.

Consequential amendment agreed to.

Senator DOBSON(Tasmania). - Do I understand that it is the wish of the Senate that the committee shall bring up a report to-morrow ?

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Rising to a point of order, I would point out that the honorable senator cannot ask that question; it is a reflection on the duties to be discharged by the committee.

Senator DOBSON

- I have a right to speak.

The PRESIDENT

- Every honorable member has a right to speak.

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Senator DOBSON

- We are practically resolving that this committee shall do something which we know they will not do. As Senator Drake has pointed out, it is a perfect farce to suppose that this small committee can read through all the standing orders of the different States and adopt a set of standing orders to-morrow. I would point out that more than nine-tenths of the standing orders are taken from those of South Australia. In two most vital points the South Australian orders are absolutely opposed to the will of the Senate. There is first of all the order which practically stops debate, and prevents a Minister, or any one in charge of an original motion, from speaking to a most important amendment which, so to - speak, absolutely takes the motion away. Now I find that a committee in the South Australian rules means a committee of five. We have had good reasons shown to us why a committee should consist of more than five members. Therefore, on these two most important points the South Australian orders are practically contrary to the expressed will of this Chamber. No good purpose whatever can be served by going on with the motion of my honorable friend.

Senator Charleston

-^ But we have carried it.

The PRESIDENT

- We have only carried the amendment. .

Senator DOBSON

- In the South Australian rules, which it is evidently suggested the committee should adopt, there are the two flaws I have mentioned, and they will have to be modified. There may be other flaws of which we are all ignorant. I should like to ask honorable members before they vote whether we are going to have a printed copy of all the standing orders with the different modifications ; and also when the report will be made, and how long senators are to consider the report. We have been through the standing orders in front of us ; the whole of them have been recast in pursuance of certain suggestions made by us ; and although it is not exactly a snub to the Government, I think it is unwise to throw aside all this work and

begin de novo with the standing orders, which, as I have already pointed out, are contrary to the will of the Senate.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- I am sure that my honorable friend has been carried away by momentary excitement, which rendered it impossible for him to pronounce my name with his usual accuracy.

Senator Dobson

- It is such a jawbreaker.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The one advantage that I feel it possesses is that it always assists any one who commences in a condition of excitement to pull himself together. He has to do so in order to properly pronounce the name, and then he is calm once more and able to deal with the subject in hand. I was surprised to hear Senator Dobson referring to the South Australian orders as those of which we are all ignorant. I must remind him that for four Sessions he sat in the Federal Convention and took a most prominent and distinguished part in its business.

Senator Dobson

- Call it three sessions.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- For three sessions, occupying four months in different States, Senator Dobson took part in the Convention, and no one was more familiar with the operation of these orders than my honorable friend. Yet for the sake of a little polemical advantage in this debate he professes ignorance of the subject. That is not like him

Senator Dobson

- I must rise to a point of order. I do not think that I professed ignorance on this subject. What I said was that the South Australian orders might contain rules of which we were ignorant, and which might be equally as objectionable as those that I pointed out.

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Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- The South Australian orders were the Convention's orders. That is the particular virtue they possess, and that seems to me to disarm all the criticism of my honorable friend the Postmaster-General on some aspects of this amendment. If I thought that his suggestion, which he was good enough to address to myself, had any force, I should unhesitatingly accept it, because I am only desirous of seeing the proceedings of this Senate put on a proper foundation. I do not think we should accept a mere experimental draft set of standing orders without having an opportunity of testing them, because we are merely told that portions of them come from standing orders in all the different English-speaking Parliaments of the world. When my honorable friend, Senator Dobson, says the express will of the Senate is against some of the standing orders I think he is drawing upon his political imagination, because there has been no expressed will of this House upon the standing orders to which reference has been made. I think it is unworthy of my honorable friend to talk of our casting aside these draft standing orders. I have the very highest respect for those who have had a hand in the framing of them. It is almost a monumental work, and it is intended for the criticism of the Senate. It is the work of the Senate - it is our work - and not the emanation of a Minister or anyone in particular. You, sir, would readily admit that the proper way of submitting standing orders to any Legislative Assembly is, first of all, to have them passed through the ordeal of a committee, and then brought down with such recommendations as may be thought fit. It is because of the courtesy we owe to those who had a hand in these orders that they should be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee before they are acted upon by this Chamber, and come up to us with a recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee, which will probably disarm criticism, that it occurred to me that we should have some temporary standing orders which have stood not only the test of time but to which experience has been applied, to which precedents have been applied, and which were familiar to us in the framing of our Constitution. It seemed to me that the best way was to get some such set of orders temporarily adopted. If they are incomplete it will be an additional incentive to the Standing Orders Committee to press on with their work, so that we may have a complete set of our own for the regulation of our procedure and the maintenance of order in our debate. Order 75 is a most drastic one. I should not attempt, if the amendment had not been carried, to go through them with a view to their adjustment ; but I

say that Order 75 will put members in a kind of peril that is not justifiable in a set of experimental orders. If, on the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee, we agree to it, then we shall know where we are, but to go on for months under such an order would be almost intolerable, unless we did it with our eyes open.

Senator Best

- Is there any order of that kind in the South Australian set?

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Not that I am aware of. My honorable friend the Postmaster-General told me it was taken from the Queensland orders.

Senator Drake

- No ; I was corrected in that statement. It comes from the Victorian standing orders, but we have something of the kind in Queensland.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- What I propose is that the committee should recommend what are desirable. If they recommend the Convention standing orders, which are admirable-

Senator Dobson

- But which were never looked at by the Convention, except as to the debates.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- Then my honorable friend should have looked at them. So far as that is concerned, the point now is whether we are to be carried away by the misguided enthusiasm of Senator Dobson, or whether we are to give effect to the position, and go on under the complete standing orders, of which, we are told, nineteenth parts are already in this draft. All we seek is that the additional tenth part should be used for our guidance.

Senator DRAKE(Queensland - Postmaster-General). - I think that Senator Symon, who moved the amendment, should tell us how this resolution can be carried out. I have had some little experience with regard to the appointment of committees for special purposes ; but, as a rule, time has been given for summoning the members of the committee, and there has been time for deliberation and for discussing the report. As the matter now stands, the committee are called upon to inquire and to report to-morrow.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- They can ask for more time.

Senator DRAKE

- That is so. They can bring up a preliminary report and ask for more time, but how are they to arrange for the preliminary meeting. Senator Sir William Zeal, whose name is on this committee, has left the chamber.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- He was here when the amendment was moved.

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Senator DRAKE

- Yes, but he was not here when it was carried. I cannot see how we are to arrange for a meeting in order to bring up any report to-morrow, that is supposing we accept the view that the duty we are charged with is to be regarded as a mere farce. It is quite impossible to make any comparison between the codes in force in the various States. The intention clearly is that we shall compare one code with another, and that we shall agree to accept the code of one particular State without making any inquiry. I do not think it is a fair position in which to place you, Mr. President, or any member of the Senate on the committee. I feel it is my duty to point that out. If the Senate chooses to act upon this amendment, it will really ask the committee to do something which is impracticable.

Senator HIGGS(Queensland). - I beg to move -

That there be added to the motion, after the word "to-morrow," the words "or as soon as may be."

The PRESIDENT

- The Senate has agreed that all these words are to stand, and therefore they cannot be altered.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- On a point of order, Mr. President, when the proposition is put subsequently, may not Senator Higgs move the addition of the words to the substantive motion 1

Senator HIGGS

- I intended that the words should be added, even if I did not so express myself. I understood that the word " to-morrow" was the last word in the line.

The PRESIDENT

- Oh, no.

Senator HIGGS

- Well, Mr. President, I beg to move : -

That there be added to the motion the words " or as soon as may be."

The sentence may not be perfect but the committee will understand what is meant. I hope the committee will meet in a graceful way the wishes of the Senate as expressed. I do not think there should be any irritation or heat about the matter. I think the committee know very well now that the Senate has a preference temporarily for the South Australian orders. If they bring up a report to-morrow or any time next week that in their opinion the South Australian orders should be adopted, we might then add to the motion accepting their report, the words, " until otherwise ordered." Then if the Senate finds that any particular order is unsatisfactory, the committee can remedy the matter right away.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- We have had an entertaining afternoon and I do not think we have done much harm. If we wish to complete the excellent service we have done to the country I think we should negative the resolution in its amended form. We have said that the standing orders proposed by the Government shall not be adopted in the meantime. We have not said any others shall be adopted.

Senator Lt Col Neild

- Yes, we have ordered the insertion of certain words.

Senator Sir JOHN DOWNER

- No, we have said the committee shall be appointed and shall bring up a report tomorrow, not recommending final standing orders, but interim standing orders, by which we are to be guided until the final set shall have been adopted. I cannot conceive of a more complete waste of time - I say it with all respect - than we have had in this matter. I think we ought to negative this proposal altogether, and trust to the good sense of the House to do its business orderly and respectably and to your knowledge, Mr. President, to enable us to do so. When the standing orders are prepared and brought up, we shall be able to debate them fully. We have had the whole day taken up in considering standing orders which are intended to be set aside directly afterwards, or which at all events we do not bind ourselves to adopt. We have appointed another committee, and when it has brought up its report, I suppose the Government will appoint still another committee to bring up the final standing orders. I venture to express the opinion that we shall very well conserve our conduct and the time of this House if we say that until standing orders are finally adopted, we are satisfied to be standing orders unto ourselves, and that we require no more debates of this description. The question as to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees is a matter of no moment at all at present. For my own part, although I had given notice of motion, when I saw the discussion entered upon in regard to the standing orders, I thought it would be inexpedient to move it until the standing orders had been finally agreed upon. I do hope that senators will not carry this useless motion but that we shall do what might very well have been done at first, and state that, until the standing orders are finally agreed upon, we shall trust to our own good sense and judgment, and your ruling, sir, to manage our business properly and orderly.

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The PRESIDENT

- I am afraid that I cannot put the amendment of Senator Higgs, because, if I did, it would be altering the words of an amendment which has been agreed to. If I may be permitted to make a suggestion, perhaps it may shorten the debate. If this committee is appointed, it can bring up a report to-morrow that it has not had time to consider the standing orders, but that it recommends the standing orders of some particular State, because I do not think it is a matter of very great importance which standing orders are adopted. Senator HARNEY(Western Australia). - I do not think that the complications have arisen that have been suggested by

Senator Sir John Downer. As I understand the trend of the debate, it has been against the representative of the Government asking us to accept certain standing orders temporarily, which were alleged by this

side to be of a novel character. Senator Sir Josiah Symon went no further than to say - " Since we are only to have them temporarily, better let us have some established and recognised standing orders that have in them nothing of a novel character." Now, the representative of the Government says, how is he tomorrow with the committee to determine what are suitable standing orders ? Senator Sir Josiah Symon might very well have put it in the first instance that we ought to adopt temporarily the standing orders of South Australia. I presume that he did not adopt that direct form more out of courtesy than for any other reason.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Hear, hear.

Senator HARNEY

- The reason why the amendment is verbally so long is that that senator wished the Senate to have the opportunity, through its committee, of saying whether it would accept the Victorian or South Australian or any other recognised standing orders, but really he did not make it an imperative part of the amendment that those of any particular State should be chosen. The whole gist of his remarks, was let us have something which has been tried rather than something which is novel. I cannot see that any of the difficulties suggested by Senator Drake can arise, because all the committee will have to do will be not to go through the clauses of various codes, but to say in a general way whether they prefer the Victorian, or the Queensland, or the South Australian. There was a suggestion by Senator Sir Josiah Symon that for temporary purposes those of South Australia would probably be the best standing orders for us to adopt, since they had been applied in the Federal Convention. I do not see that there is the slightest justification - if Senator Drake will allow me to say so - for the tone of irritation and personal umbrage which has been imported into the debate.

Senator DRAKE

- Oh, no.

Senator Dobson

- We are only a little in earnest, there is no umbrage.

Senator HARNEY

- I misunderstood the earnestness, but when we find a very keen earnestness, in the absence of any occasion for it, we are apt to suspect that it comes from some other source. I see no reason why honorable senators on the other side need be so earnest in their desire to compel us to work under standing orders which they admit to be novel, when all we ask is that until we have had an opportunity of criticising these novel standing orders, they shall allow us to carry on our proceedings under standing orders that have been tried, and are known to possess the ordinary features of standing orders that have existed in these States.

Senator BEST(Victoria). - It appears to me that we are simply inviting a repetition of the debate which has taken place this evening.

Senator Major Gould

- Are we not having it now after the question has been virtually decided ? "

Senator BEST

- Of course, if it is understood that the recommendations of the committee are to be accepted en bloc, I can understand the position at once. But is that to be understood ?

Several Senators. - Hear, hear.

Senator BEST

- I do not think that any senators are prepared to come to an understanding of that kind.

Senator Dobson

- Certainly not.

Senator BEST

- Suppose this committee sees fit to recommend that the Queensland standing orders be accepted, because they are suitable, is the Senate going to accept them 1

Several Senators.-" No "; " Yes

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- Why does the honorable senator want a guarantee now 1.

Senator BEST

- Because I do not want time wasted.

Senator Sir Frederick Sargood

- The honorable member is wasting it now.

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Senator BEST

- My honorable friend is not justified in making that remark. I think I have troubled the Senate as little as any senator, and I trust that I am at liberty to point out a thing exactly in the same way as I would permit that honorable senator to do. So long as we have an understanding it is very good. Suppose the Victorian standing orders are recommended, are they going to be accepted en bloc, with the very objectionable standing order referred to by Senator Sir Josiah Symon.?

Senator Major Gould

- I hope so.

Senator BEST

- If that is not so, then it will be a reasonable request to make that whatever standing orders are recommended they shall be printed and circulated, and that honorable members shall have an opportunity of considering them. In that way we shall have a repetition of the thing to which the senator referred. He was very impressive when he urged on the Senate that even temporarily we were not justified in adopting the standing orders which had been circulated, and yet he is now prepared to ask us to accept en bloc standing orders which may be recommended by this committee, and which may contain equally objectionable matter.

Senator Sir Josiah Symon

- I do not believe that the committee would recommend such standing orders, and if they did I should not accept them en bloc.

Senator BEST

- Then we should have a repetition of what has taken place here this evening.

A Senator. - Not necessarily.

Senator BEST

- Originally we had a code of standing orders containing objectionable matter. Those standing orders were carefully gone through, and the objectionable matter, for the most part, eliminated. There are three or four standing orders that may still be objectionable. We would have been on infinitely safer ground if we had accepted the standing orders with the modifications which have been suggested by several senators. But, unless there is going to be an understanding such as the one I have mentioned, I think that Sir John Downer did not overstate the position when he mentioned that he feared that we had to some extent wasted time in this connexion.

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Resolved :That it be referred to a committee consisting of the President and Senators Drake, Gould, McGregor, and Sir William Zeal to inquire and report to the Senate to-morrow whether they recommend any and which standing orders now in force in either branch of any State Parliament with or without verbal modification for temporary adoption by the Senate until it shall have adopted standing orders upon the report of a committee to be appointed to prepare them.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Postmaster-General

Senator DRAKE

. - On behalf of the Vice President of the Executive Council, and at his request, I beg to move - That the Standing Orders Committee be appointed, consisting of the Honorable the President, the Chairman of Committees, Senators O'Connor, Gould, Sir John Downer, Sir W. A. Zeal, Dobson, Higgs, and Harvey ; six to be the quorum.

With the consent of honorable senators, I propose to make a slight alteration in the wording of the motion. I propose to ask the Senate to consent to the substitution of five senators for six, as a quorum. When a Chairman of Committees is appointed there will be eight; but I think five will be sufficient for a quorum. The constitution of this committee has been the subject of a good deal of care, and I believe the names which have been chosen meet with the approbation of all parts of the Senate.

The PRESIDENT

- The question is that Senator Drake have leave to amend his motion.

Amendment agreed to.

Question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by Senator Drake, Queensland - Postmaster-General) proposed -

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until 2.30 p.m. to-morrow.

Senator Sir JOSIAH SYMON

- May I ask Senator Drake to say either now or to-morrow if there is likely to be any business for the Senate on Friday. I understand that he intends to move the second reading of the Post and Telegraph Bill to-morrow, which will be a great convenience to honorable senators, because they will be in possession of all the facts relating to it, and the debate will be adjourned till next week

Senator DRAKE

- I see that there is no motion on the paper in the name of any senator for Friday. So far as I am able to judge at the present time, I think that the notice-paper will be cleared of Government business on Thursday.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resolved(on motion by Senator Drake) -

That the Post and Telegraph Bill take precedence of all other business to-morrow.

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21:47:00

Senate adjourned at 9.47 p.m.