

of Commons has been relieved of a troublesome class of legislation, and we have an illustration of the benefit that Parliament may derive from increasing the facilities of the same House for the consideration of other classes of private bills. The Senate has no more constitutional right to consider Divorce Bills than the House of Commons; it is a matter which the Senate has taken up in conformity with the practice of the House of Lords, and the Commons has acquiesced in the convenience of the arrangement.

The Senate has no permanent Chairman of Committees like the House of Lords, but it is desirable that one should be appointed by that body in case of a change in the direction now suggested.

The Senate has not adopted the rule respecting a Model Bill simply because the necessity has never arisen—the introduction of Railway Bills in that House being exceptional. Indeed, the Commons and Senate Rules should be uniform in all particulars as in England.

With this short reference to the rules and regulations respecting Private Bills in the two Houses, we may now inquire whether it would not be practicable and expedient to make the following changes in their procedure in order to facilitate the progress of Private Bill legislation in Parliament, and give that additional employment and responsibility to the Senate which its members have more than once demanded in the interests of that branch of the legislature. These suggestions are mainly based on the English practice as briefly set forth in this memorandum, and on the simple rules and machinery that already exist in the Houses so far as they can be made applicable with a few amendments:—

1. All petitions and bills should be deposited in the hands of the Clerk of Parliament or of the Clerk of the House, on or before the 24th day of December [or one month before the meeting of Parliament], and printed in the two languages at once.
2. The notice published in the *Gazette* and newspapers, under existing rules, should state the date when the petition and bill will be presented.
3. At the beginning of each session, the Chairman of Committees of the House of Commons shall seek a conference with the Chairman of Committees of the Senate for the purpose of determining in which House the respective private bills shall be first considered and shall report such determination to the House.
4. It shall be the duty of the Chairman of Committees, with the assistance of the Officers of the House, to examine all private bills, whether opposed or unopposed, and to call the attention of the House, and also, if he think fit, of the Chairman of the Committee on every private bill, to all points which may appear to him to require it; and at any period after a bill has been referred to a Committee, he is at liberty to report any special circumstances relating thereto to the House.
5. The promoters in depositing a petition in the House by the 24th of December as aforesaid [or one month before the meeting of Parliament], shall place on the back thereof the name of the member who is to present it at the proper time in the House, and shall do the same in the case of the Bill when it is to be presented in the House.

This foregoing is a summary of the new rules that would probably enable the two Houses to ensure a better division of labour in an important class of legislation. But in other respects the business may be facilitated by forming a joint Committee of Standing Orders, instead of having separate Committees in the two Houses reporting on petitions and compliance or non-compliance with the Standing Orders relating to notices. It would be inadvisable certainly to have one joint tribunal as more than once suggested in England on the Bills themselves, since a review by another