

Government Response to the Petitions Committee Report: The Work of the First Petitions Committee: 2008 – 2010

Opening Statement

The Government thanks the Committee for its work and the care it has taken to examine the work of the first Petitions Committee.

This response represents the position of the Government on the matters brought to it by the Committee.

The Government's response to each recommendation is as follows:

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that the House make Sessional Orders 207 and 209 permanent.

Response:

The Government supports this recommendation.

Amendments to Standing Orders moved by the Government and agreed to by the House on the 20th October 2010 represent the implementation of the recommendation.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that the Standing Orders be amended to enable the Petitions Committee to refer a petition to a House Committee for inquiry and report, should the committee so choose.

Response:

After careful consideration, the Government does not support Recommendation 2 of the Committee's report.

Committees in the 43rd Parliament have seen an increase in their workloads, primarily based on amendments to Standing Orders and to the House Selection Committee and its processes.

For example, in the 41st Parliament – the last term of the Howard Government - two Bills were referred to committees for inquiry. In contrast, the first two years of the 43rd Parliament have seen 146 Bills referred so far, representing a jump of 7200% in the workloads of Committees.