



Deferred divisions

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On 24 October 2004, the House agreed a new Standing Order on deferred divisions. This made permanent a Sessional Order that had been first introduced in 2000 on an experimental basis following a recommendation from the Modernisation Committee. Until October 2004, the Sessional Order was renewed annually.

This note discusses the procedure and history of deferred divisions.

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1 Modernisation Committee proposals

In 1998, the Modernisation Committee issued a *Consultation paper on voting methods*.¹ It reported that a number of Members had made representations about the House's voting system. It said that the purpose of its consultation paper was "to give all Members of the House the opportunity to give us their views on several issues related to voting methods, and in particular to express their preferences in relation to the present system and the various electronic options".² After reviewing the current system, the Committee said that some of the "perceived disadvantages of the current system could be rectified without the need for radical change".³

It then identified "two possible changes in particular on which we would welcome the views of Members", one of which was the possibility of deferring divisions:

9. One is the recording of abstentions. If Members so wished we would investigate the possibility of creating some kind of "third lobby" adjacent to the Chamber, in the form of one or more division desks at which Members who were present, but did not wish to vote for or against the question before the House, could record an abstention.

10. The other would be to change the times at which divisions took place. The House might decide that as a general rule any question on which Members wished to divide should, instead of being put at the conclusion of the debate, be held over to a specified time, so that votes could be taken one after another at a convenient time, so far as possible. This is not as simple as it may look; but we would investigate the feasibility of moving in this direction if Members so wished.⁴

In June 1998, the Committee reported the outcome of its consultation. It analysed the responses it had received. It reported that:

Members seemed interested in the possibility of holding divisions over, so that all votes could be taken one after another at a convenient time, instead of holding divisions immediately at the end of each debate. We may wish to come back to this question later in the context of other relevant issues.⁵

In July 2000, in its report, *Programming of legislation and timing of votes*, the Modernisation Committee recommended the introduction of deferred divisions, on a trial basis.⁶

In its report, the Committee considered whether "without curtailing debate, there could be a cut-off time after which votes would cease to be taken. They would instead be deferred for decision at another point in the main Parliamentary day". The Committee saw "clear advantages in having a mechanism which would allow Members to debate business after 10 pm without requiring other Members who did not wish to take part in the debate to remain in the building late at night waiting for a division which might in the event not take place".

Although it recognised that much of the practice of the House was to debate a matter and then take a decision on it, without a separation between decision and debate, it noted that House's procedures provided for the deferral until 10 pm of questions on Estimates motions,

¹ Modernisation Committee, *Consultation paper on voting methods*, 29 April 1998, HC 699 1997-98

² *Ibid*, para 2

³ *Ibid*, para 7

⁴ *Ibid*, paras 9-10

⁵ Modernisation Committee, *Voting methods*, 5 June 1998, HC 779 1997-98, para 5

⁶ Modernisation Committee, *Programming of legislation and timing of votes*, 6 July 2000, HC 589 1999-2000, para 45

and that the grouping of amendments in committee or on report also has the effect of separating the debate from the decision. The Modernisation Committee saw “no advantage in deferring parts of a sequence of votes beginning at 10 pm [at the time, the moment of interruption was at 10pm Monday to Thursday], even if the second and subsequent votes fell after 10 pm”.

The Committee concluded that this left:

a distinct class of free-standing motions, without associated amendments, which it would be both possible and sensible to defer if a division would otherwise occur after 10 pm. These include:

- motions to approve statutory instruments, whether debatable or decided without debate;
- ‘prayers’ against statutory instruments;
- freestanding Money and Ways and Means resolutions;
- debatable motions on the membership of select committees.

It concluded that if decisions could be taken without a division, then they should continue to be taken when the question was put, “but if the Chair’s opinion as to the decision of the question was challenged, the question would be deferred”.

The Committee recommended that any deferred divisions should be taken at a predictable time each week and to that end recommended that “such questions should be deferred to the next Wednesday on which the House sits and should be decided between 3.30 pm and 5 pm that day”.

The Committee proposed that Members should vote in the ‘No’ Lobby, and that the results would be announced by the occupant of the Chair.

On the advice of the Clerk of the House, the Committee also concluded that it would not be practical to defer divisions that arose during the committee and report stages of bills.⁷

Sir George Young, the Shadow Leader of the House and a member of the Modernisation Committee, tabled a minority report, which was discussed when the Modernisation Committee considered its report. In his minority report, Sir George argued against deferring divisions. He argued that “The concept of Members voting once a week on a whole range of different and important issues that have been discussed on the previous four sitting days, when they may not even have been in the House, is insupportable”.⁸

The Modernisation Committee’s report was debated in the House on 7 November 2000 and the House agreed to a Sessional Order on deferred divisions by 271 votes to 152 votes.⁹

In introducing the proposal on deferred divisions, Margaret Beckett, then Leader of the House, argued that “the process of voting itself has been used to detain hon. Members late at night” and that “I know that many colleagues, on both sides of the House, feel that the sheer unpredictability of being so detained, without even being sure that there will be a vote at all, is one of the worst aspects of our procedures”.¹⁰

⁷ *Ibid*, paras 29-41

⁸ *Ibid*, Proceedings of the Committee relating to the Report, paras 34-50

⁹ HC Deb 7 November 2000 cc209-288

¹⁰ *Ibid* c222

For the Conservatives, Angela Browning expressed the concern that the new procedure would break “the principle that votes should be cast immediately after a debate. Those votes could now be decided outside the House, or be subject to third-party influence”.¹¹ For the Liberal Democrats, Paul Tyler suggested that “it is extremely important that all parties should tell the Government, fair and square, that we hope that they will avoid tackling major issues after 10 o’clock”.¹²

The Sessional Order was subsequently renewed on 28 June 2001, by 268 votes to 130; on 29 October 2002, by 313 votes to 153; and on 6 November 2003, by 242 votes to 80.¹³

2 The Standing Order and deferred division procedure

On 26 October 2004, Peter Hain, the Leader of the House of Commons, proposed that the Sessional Order should be made permanent – that is be made a Standing Order of the House. He said:

The third motion seeks to make permanent the Sessional Order on deferred Divisions. I believe that most hon. Members find the provision for Divisions to be deferred in specific, well-defined circumstances of great convenience, and I see little point in the House revisiting what is now established practice, Session by Session.¹⁴

The Standing Order, which was agreed on 24 October 2004, was amended on 26 January 2005 to reflect changes in sitting hours of the House.¹⁵ The text of the Standing Order as it now stands is given in the Appendix.

For certain types of business, after the moment of interruption on Monday to Thursday,¹⁶ any division is deferred until the following Wednesday. In such cases, the questions to be decided by deferred divisions are listed on a pink ballot paper in Wednesday’s Vote Bundle, and Members may vote in the No Lobby at any time from 12.30 to 2 p.m. (with extra time if such voting is interrupted by ordinary divisions). The result is then announced in the House. Members may not normally hand in a ballot paper for another Member.

Many types of business are not covered by these arrangements, including proceedings on bills, and a Minister may move that the arrangements shall not apply to specified motions. Deferred divisions are most common on motions relating to statutory instruments and EU documents, whether debated on the floor of the House or dealt with without debate.

2.1 Items of business to which the provisions will not apply

The Standing Order excludes certain categories of business from the deferred division procedure (para 2). The most substantial category is set out in para 2 (a):

[questions] on motions or amendments in the course of proceedings on bills or allocating time to or programming such proceedings

¹¹ *Ibid* c231

¹² *Ibid* c242

¹³ HC Deb 28 June 2001 cc812-878; HC Deb 29 October 2002 cc689-844; HC Deb 6 November 2003 cc949-999

¹⁴ HC Deb 26 October 2004 c1316

¹⁵ HC Deb 26 January 2005 cc327-393

¹⁶ The “moment of interruption” is the time at which the main business of the Commons day normally ends (that is 10 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday; 7 p.m. on Wednesday; and 6 p.m. on Thursday)

The memorandum from the Clerk of the House to the Modernisation Committee had highlighted problems with the deferral of votes on committee or report stage of a bill.¹⁷ The Committee accepted the Clerk's advice on this, and therefore proposed to deal with bill proceedings through the mechanism of programming,¹⁸ as made clear in its report:

41. We accept the Clerk's advice that the deferral of votes would not be practicable during the committee or report stage of a bill or the consideration of Lords amendments. If a bill were programmed, the programme itself could solve the problem of late votes by ensuring both greater certainty in the timing of votes and a limitation on when they would be taken. **We therefore further recommend that all programme motions introduced under our proposals should contain provisions that proceedings on any particular day should be concluded at about 10 pm (or 7 pm on a Thursday), followed if necessary by consequential votes.**¹⁹

The Modernisation Committee further indicated:

Whilst it might be possible procedurally, we see no advantage in deferring parts of a sequence of votes beginning at 10 pm, even if the second and subsequent votes fell after 10 pm. For example, on an allotted Opposition day, it would make sense for the House, as we do now, having voted on the Opposition's motion at 10 pm, to go on to vote on the Government's amendment at 10.15 pm in order to dispose of the business. The same considerations apply to Opposition amendments to Government motions; amendments to the Loyal Address; proceedings following a closure; Budget resolutions and Estimates resolutions (each of which leads to the introduction of a bill); and to the sequence of divisions which may be associated with the second reading of a bill (reasoned amendment, main question, committal motion, programming motion, etc).²⁰

Accordingly, the Sessional Order and subsequently the Standing Order excluded such items of business from the deferred division procedures, along with motions which may be made without notice and 10 o'clock motions to exempt business from the moment of interruption (under SO No 15(2)). This leaves a relatively small proportion of business subject to the new procedures.

The Standing Order includes a general provision which allows a Minister to make a motion to the effect that the deferred division procedure should not apply to particular questions on specified motions, and such a motion would not be debatable:

(3) After the moment of interruption and the conclusion of proceedings under any other Standing Order which fall to be taken immediately after it, a minister of the Crown may make a motion to the effect that this order shall not apply to questions on any specified motions; such motion may be proceeded with, though opposed, and the question thereon shall be put forthwith.

Possible circumstances in which ministers might wish to use this provision could include: an impending adjournment, which meant that the next Wednesday was some time off; or, the need to obtain approval for a Statutory Instrument by a particular date.

¹⁷ Modernisation Committee, *Programming of legislation and timing of votes*, 6 July 2000, HC 589 1999-2000, Appendix 3, pp4-5

¹⁸ see House of Commons Library Standard Note SN/PC/569 – *Programming of legislation*, <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/notes/snpc-00569.pdf>

¹⁹ Modernisation Committee, *Programming of legislation and timing of votes*, 6 July 2000, HC 589 1999-2000, para 41

²⁰ *Ibid*, para 32

The first deferred division (under the temporary) procedures took place on Wednesday 13 December 2000, voting on questions which had been put the previous day. Copies of the ballot paper were included in the Vote Bundle.²¹ The results of the divisions appeared in Hansard at the end of the day's proceedings under the heading "Deferred Divisions".²²

2.2 Issues

On 14 December 2000, Eric Forth raised the following point of order in the House:

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will know that yesterday we had the first use of the ludicrous new voting system that the House has to suffer. Can you clarify for us what procedure you have laid down in case there are spoiled ballot papers? Who will be the scrutineer? Who will determine whether a ballot paper is valid? If there is a dimpled or otherwise dubiously marked ballot paper, who will decide what it means--and will there be any method of appeal, because in close votes those ballots could become extremely important? The House would appreciate your early guidance on this matter, so that as our pencils hover above the appropriate boxes we will all be very careful.²³

The Speaker undertook to look into the matter, and he made a statement on 19 December:

I undertook last Thursday to respond to the point of order raised by the right hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst (Mr. Forth) about "spoiled ballot papers", as he put it, in deferred Divisions. The paper for deferred Divisions is quite simple to fill in. Members are highly experienced in matters of voting and there is no reason why any voting papers should be inadequately filled in or spoiled.

I have given instructions that any voting paper that is not clearly marked with a voting intention should be disregarded. The Chair has, in the past, deprecated the practice of voting in both Division Lobbies as a method of demonstrating a third position. On the other hand, deliberately voting in both Lobbies has long been an accepted way of cancelling out the effect of voting by mistake in the wrong Lobby. I am sure that the almost 80 right hon. and hon. Members who voted both "Aye" and "No" in the first deferred Division last Wednesday were not seeking to correct a mistake.

The circumstances last week may have been novel and exceptional, but the Speaker has a duty, where possible, to ensure that the House's reputation is not damaged. The House has empowered me by its order of 7 November to make the arrangements for recording deferred Divisions. I have therefore instructed the Clerks that, in future, the name of any Member who marks both boxes in a particular question in a deferred Division should not be recorded as voting on that particular question.²⁴

This has the effect of disallowing an abstention or a demonstration of a "third position" by voting both "Aye" and "No". This is broadly in keeping with the practice outlined in *Erskine May* on voting in both lobbies:

Intentionally voting in both lobbies is an accepted way of cancelling out the effect of inadvertently voting in the wrong lobby. However, Members who have voted in both lobbies in the same division have been allowed on the following day to state as a matter of personal explanation (see pp 364-366) in which lobby they intended to vote, and the numbers of the division have been directed to be corrected accordingly. A

²¹ available on the parliamentary web site,
<http://pubs1.tso.parliament.uk/pa/cm200001/cmdefdiv/dd001213.htm>

²² HC Deb 13 Dec 2000 vol 359 cc770-784

²³ HC Deb 14 Dec 2000 vol 359 cc821-822

²⁴ HC Deb 19 Dec 2000 vol 360 c207

correction has been directed to be made at the end of government business on the same day after an explanation by a member of the government on his own and a colleague's behalf. The Speaker has deprecated as 'unparliamentary' the practice of voting in both lobbies as a demonstration of a 'third' position.²⁵

3 Similar schemes in other Parliaments

3.1 Scottish Parliament

A system of deferred divisions operates in the Scottish Parliament,²⁶ known in Standing Orders as 'Decision Time':

Rule 11.2 Decision Time

1. Except as provided in Rule 11.3, the Presiding Officer shall put any question in relation to a motion or amendment during Decision Time on the day on which the motion or amendment is moved.

2. Decision Time is the period which normally begins at 17:00 where a meeting of the Parliament is held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and at 12:00 where a meeting of the Parliament is held on Friday and which ends when every decision which is to be taken during Decision Time has been taken.

3. Normally, Decision Time shall end not later than 30 minutes after it begins but, in accordance with Rule 2.2.6(a), it may continue in order to complete any voting which is not adjourned to a later meeting under paragraph 5.

4. The Parliament may, on a motion of the Parliamentary Bureau, decide that Decision Time on a particular day or days shall begin at a time other than that mentioned in paragraph 2.

5. The Parliament may, on a motion of any member moved without notice not more than 30 minutes after the beginning of Decision Time, decide that decisions which have not been taken by the time the motion is moved are to be taken at a later meeting of the Parliament. Members shall be notified of the day and time when such decisions are to be taken.

6. Where-

(a) a motion is listed on the daily business list for consideration before Decision Time; but

(b) that motion has not been moved before Decision Time begins,

the Presiding Officer may allow the motion, and any amendment to it, to be moved at the beginning of Decision Time.

Rule 11.3 Decisions at times other than Decision Time

1. In the following cases the Presiding Officer shall, subject to paragraph 3, put the question immediately after he or she has closed the debate on the motion in relation to that question or, if there is no debate on the motion, immediately after the motion is moved-

²⁵ Erskine May, *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd edition, 2004, p412

²⁶ The Parliament operates a system of electronic voting.

- (a) a motion seeking the agreement of the Parliament to the First Minister's recommendation for the appointment of a person as Lord Advocate or Solicitor General for Scotland under Rule 4.3 or for the removal of a person as Lord Advocate or Solicitor General for Scotland under Rule 4.4;
- (b) a motion seeking the agreement of the Parliament that a person be appointed a Minister under Rule 4.6 or a junior Scottish Minister under Rule 4.7;
- (c) a business motion;
- (d) a motion for the closure or extension of a debate;
- (e) a motion for the adjournment of a debate;
- (ea) a motion under Rule 9.6.3A that is moved on the day the general principles of the Bill referred to in the motion are to be considered;
- (f) a motion under Rule 9.6.5;
- (fa) a motion under Rule 9A.8.9;
- (g) a motion under Rule 9.8.5, 5C or 6;
- (ga) a motion under Rule 9A.10.5 to determine the order in which amendments are to be disposed of or to adjourn the remaining Final Stage proceedings on a Private Bill, or a motion under Rule 9A.10.6;
- (h) a motion under Rule 9.21.1 or any motion in relation to an Emergency Bill;
- (i) a motion for the exclusion of a member;
- (j) a motion for the adjournment or closure of a meeting of the Parliament;
- (k) a Members' Business motion moved after Decision Time; and
- (l) a motion taken after 17:30 at a meeting of the Parliament in respect of which the Parliament has taken a decision under Rule 2.2.4.

2. If an amendment to a Bill is moved, the Presiding Officer shall put the question on that amendment immediately after any debate on that amendment or, if the amendment has already been debated, immediately after the amendment is moved.

3. Decisions may, at the discretion of the Presiding Officer, be taken at a time other than Decision Time or the times mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2. Members shall be notified of any such time.²⁷

3.2 The European Parliament

The European Parliament has a voting period system, as an extract from a 1998 *House Magazine* article notes:

The hours kept at Strasbourg are closer to those of a normal working day. The daily session generally starts at nine in the morning. Late night sessions (from nine in the evening till midnight) are attended in practice only by those who want to speak or have to answer; and there are no votes then. Indeed, votes seldom follow a debate immediately. For here is another Strasbourg practice which, though providing less

²⁷ Scottish Parliament, *Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament*, 3rd edition (1st Revision), September 2007, <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/so/sto-c.htm>

drama than Westminster, makes life much easier for those who take part. There are prearranged voting times in the plenary sessions, when the votes are taken on whichever groups of different resolutions or measures have already been duly debated. Normally these votes happen at midday or at six in the evening, and may last an hour or so. In other words, although technical procedural traps may be laid, and votes on some matters may be postponed, Members are generally not called to the Chamber unexpectedly, and their time is not wasted - at least on that account.²⁸

This is considered in more detail in an extract from Corbett *et al's The European Parliament*:

Members of the public, lobbyists or journalists who attend Parliament's plenary sessions to follow a particular subject are often surprised to find that the vote on a particular matter does not usually follow the debate, but comes only at voting time, which may be a day later. There are several reasons for this. One is the unpredictability of the duration of votes: if voting followed each debate, it would be even more difficult to plan the organisation of debates within the small number of days available each month. The variety of other meetings that take place during plenary sessions would have to be interrupted every time there was a vote. Most votes are therefore grouped at fixed moments of the week, notably noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. At such times, votes under the simplified procedures (without amendments) are generally taken first (starting with the legislative items and then the non-legislative). Items not following a simplified procedure are taken after, again starting with the legislative and then, if any, the non-legislative.

Although members thus have a good indication of when voting time will take place, they are also reminded by division bells, which can be heard throughout the buildings, shortly before a vote will take place²⁹

4 Previous attempts to defer divisions

4.1 1960s – morning sittings

An earlier Commons example of a form of deferred voting came in the not entirely successful morning sittings experiment of the late 1960s, initiated by Crossman. Several Members criticised the proposal to hold over votes from morning proceedings, for example, George Strauss said:

I want to come back to the principle that is proposed of having a discussion in the morning on a subject-perhaps an important one-and having a vote on it later in the day. This is an extraordinary principle. One could carry it logically forward and say that, on the Report stage of a Bill, on a large number of Amendments dealing with different matters all the votes could be taken at the end of the day, at 10 o'clock at night. We can logically go still further and suggest that, because it might be more convenient for hon. Members - and this is all being done for hon. Members' convenience - voting on all matters debated on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday should take place on Wednesday night.

To take the logic a step further, why not have proxy votes? One need not be in the House, one could be abroad on certain days when matters were discussed and need not hear the arguments, and then give a proxy vote two or three days later. I cannot believe that this principle is good for the House. It is not accepted in any national chamber throughout the world, as far as I know. We ought to stand by the practice that

²⁸ Brendan Donnelly MEP, "By Order of Strasbourg", *House Magazine*, 20 April 1998, p9

²⁹ Richard Corbett, Francis Jacobs and Michael Shackleton, *The European Parliament*, 7th edition, 2007, pp174-175

debate and argument should lead to the climax of vote decision and action. Any departure from that principle is damaging to the House.³⁰

and Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe commented that:

It is not often that I find myself in agreement with the hon. Member for Fife, West (Mr. William Hamilton), but I absolutely agreed with him that to arrange the sometimes non-controversial business for Monday mornings but then to delay votes on that business, be it Prayers or anything else, until the evening makes an absolute mockery of Parliament. The whole principle of the House is that the vote follows the argument. It is true that all hon. Members do not always follow the argument. They are not always here. But at least they can if they want to. The idea that we can have a Prayer to annul a Regulation on Monday morning and that the vote on that Prayer will not be taken until 9.30 on Monday night makes the thing an absolute farce. If the House wants that, the only practical way of doing it is not to have the vote on Monday or Wednesday night at half past nine, but to delay it for another 24 hours until the Tuesday or Thursday night, by which time hon. Members who were not present on the Monday or Wednesday morning can have the opportunity, if they so wish, to read what had been said in HANSARD published the following morning. If the House does not want to have the vote in the morning when the business is taken, then, for heaven's sake, give hon. Members an opportunity of reading what said before they vote.³¹

4.2 1950s – suggestions

In the early 1950s, some Members made suggestions for deferral of votes. In a general debate on procedure, for example, in January 1953, Henry Hynd made a number of proposals to 'modernise' procedure, some of which have come to pass, such as time-limits on speeches, and in relation to prayers on delegated legislation. He said: "Could we not have Prayers at an earlier time, or if there are going to be late Prayers could we not next day have the vote, if there is to be a vote ...?"³² In the same debate, however, Sir Herbert Williams denounced Mr Hynd's suggestion:

The hon. Member for Accrington suggested that we should postpone certain Divisions until the next day, or take all the Divisions together. I have never heard quite such a stupid proposal. For example, I might move an Amendment to Clause I of some Bill which may or may not be accepted and, having debated it, we get on to the next Amendment and then, having considered four or five other Amendments, on none of which we vote, we discuss the Question, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill." Then later on we have five Divisions.

Mr. H. Hynd: Obviously, that could not apply if the House were in Committee, which is what the hon. Member is visualising.

Sir H. Williams: But the proposal has been put forward that we should accumulate these Divisions. That would be senseless because if No.1 were carried it might well be that No.2 would cease to make sense and would be wiped out of the way. The idea that we should have a debate on one day with certain people being present, or having the opportunity of being present, and that the next morning before Mr. Speaker said, "The Clerk will now proceed to read the Orders of the Day," we should have a Division is not, I think, a sensible proposition.³³

³⁰ HC Deb 14 December 1966 vol 739 c515

³¹ *Ibid* c573

³² HC Deb 23 January 1953 vol 510 c541

³³ *Ibid* c552

Appendix: Deferred Divisions – Standing Order No 41A³⁴

41A.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), Standing Order No. 38 (Procedure on divisions) shall not apply if, after the time for the interruption of business, the opinion of the Speaker as to the decision on a question is challenged in respect of any question.

(2) Standing Order No. 38 (Procedure on divisions) shall apply (and this order shall not apply) to questions—

(a) on motions or amendments in the course of proceedings on bills or allocating time to or programming such proceedings;

(b) on motions which may be made without notice;

(c) on motions to be disposed of immediately following the disposal of amendments proposed thereto, and on such amendments;

(d) on motions made under—

(i) paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 15 (Exempted business);

(ii) paragraph (3) of Standing Order No. 51 (Ways and means motions);

(iii) sub-paragraph (1)(a) of Standing Order No. 52 (Money resolutions and ways and means resolutions in connection with bills);

(iv) paragraph (5) of Standing Order No. 54 (Consideration of estimates); and

(v) paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 55 (Questions on voting of estimates, &c); and

(e) on motions made under paragraph (3) below or to which an order made under that paragraph applies.

(3) After the moment of interruption and the conclusion of proceedings under any other Standing Order which fall to be taken immediately after it, a Minister of the Crown may make a motion to the effect that this order shall not apply to questions on any specified motions; such motion may be proceeded with, though opposed, and the question thereon shall be put forthwith.

(4) If the opinion of the Speaker is challenged under paragraph (1) of this order, he shall defer the division until halfpast twelve o'clock on the next Wednesday on which the House shall sit.

(5) On any Wednesday to which a division has been deferred under paragraph (4) above—

(a) Members may record their votes on the question under arrangements made by the Speaker;

(b) votes may be recorded for one and a half hours after half-past twelve o'clock, no account being taken of any period during which the House or committee proceeds to a division; and

(c) the Speaker, or the chairman, shall announce the result of the deferred division as soon as may be after the expiry of the period mentioned in sub-paragraph (b) above.

³⁴ House of Commons, *Standing Orders of the House of Commons – Public Business*, November 2007, HC 105 2007-08, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmstords/105/105.pdf>