



Speaker's Conferences

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The Prime Minister announced on 3 September 2007 that he had proposed that the Speaker should call a conference to 'consider against the backdrop of a decline in turnout, a number of other important issues such as registration, weekend voting, the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons, and that he should also examine in parallel with the Youth Citizenship Commission whether we should lower the voting age to 16.' On 22 July 2008 the Speaker announced the terms of reference for the new Speaker's Conference and the proposal for it to be set up as a Committee of the House. On 12 November 2008 the House of Commons agreed to appoint a committee, to be known as the Speaker's Conference. The Conference has published two interim reports during 2009.

This note looks briefly at the background to previous conferences and lists them, with their terms of reference and details of their membership.

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1 Background

Prior to the existence of the Electoral Commission, Prime Ministers had, on a number of occasions during the twentieth century, asked the Speaker to establish and chair conferences to reach all-party agreement on reforms to electoral law. The Speaker's Conference on Electoral Reform of 1916-17, for example, laid the ground work for the *Representation of the People Act 1918*, although not all its recommendations were finally enacted.¹ In *The Office of Speaker* Philip Laundy commented:

The comparative smoothness with which [the recommendations] were carried into effect spoke favourably for the method whereby the ground was prepared, namely, the convening of a representative conference presided over by the very personification of aloof impartiality, Mr Speaker.²

It is notable that Speaker's Conferences have been brought into being as a result of executive, rather than Parliamentary action. The Speaker was chosen to chair the Conference as a model of impartiality.

Later Conferences were to prove less successful and at least one Speaker, Selwyn Lloyd, was critical of the process (see below) and made a number of suggestions to improve the procedure.

Until the mid 1970s Speaker's Conferences dealt with a variety of issues of electoral administration, such as the registration of service personnel³ and the redistribution of seats.⁴ The last Conference was in 1978, which recommended an increase in the number of parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland.⁵ This was the fifth Conference of the twentieth century. Papers of the Conferences are available after thirty years in the Parliamentary Archives.

The mechanism of the Speaker's Conference was a manifestation of the constitutional convention that changes to the electoral system should be agreed as far as possible on an all-party basis. (This convention is not universally observed, since there were serious inter-party disagreements in 1931 over attempts to bring in proportional representation; in 1948 over the abolition of the business vote and university representation; in 1970 when the Labour Government engineered a vote against parliamentary boundary reorganisations in England, and in the 1980s over Conservative extensions to voting rights by overseas citizens.⁶) The advent of the Electoral Commission in 2001 created a permanent mechanism for providing independent advice to the Government on electoral reform.

1.1 1916-17

The initiative for the first Speaker's Conference came from the Prime Minister, Mr Asquith, following a difficult debate in Parliament on the *Special Register Bill* in 1916. The idea of an all-party conference as the mechanism for deciding controversial issues on elections was widely welcomed and was first suggested by the President of the Local Government Board,

¹ Cd 8432 1917

² *The Office of Speaker*, by Philip Laundy. Cassell, 1964 p131

³ Cmnd 5363 July 1973

⁴ Cmnd 6543 1944

⁵ Cmnd 7110 February 1978

⁶ For a useful discussion of the convention and breaches, see David Butler's *The Electoral System in Britain since 1918* 1963, p121

Walter Long, during the Second Reading debate on the *Special Register Bill*. Long proposed a conference to debate and reach agreement on electoral matters:

I myself believe that if we agreed amongst ourselves, and the Government offered any assistance which they could, and which, I believe, they would gladly do, to set up – I will not say a committee, because that is not exactly what I mean – but a representative conference, not only of parties, but of groups, a conference which would really represent opinion on these three subjects: electoral reform, revision of your electoral power when you have got it and registration, I believe...that such a conference of earnest men, holding strong views, bitterly opposed to each other, if they were face to face with these difficulties...would produce an agreed system for all three questions upon which the great mass of opinion of the people of this country would come together.⁷

There was some precedent in the informal all-party talks before the passing of the Third Reform Act in 1884-85.⁸

The recommendations of the first Speaker's Conference were subsequently embodied in the *Representation of the People Act 1918* 'which implemented the most sweeping electoral reforms since 1832.'⁹ The Act provided for the enfranchisement of women aged 30 and over and the introduction of a franchise based on residence or the occupation of business premises amongst other measures. On 1 February 1944 the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, introduced a debate on a motion welcoming the proposal to set up a Speaker's Conference, and he gave a summary of the work of the 1916 Speaker's Conference:

Perhaps it would be useful to the House if I indicated in a short summary what happened in connection with the Speaker's Conference which was set up in 1916. I think this was the first time that the device of a Speaker's Conference had been used for matters of this sort. I think everyone will agree that it was eminently useful, and a precedent which it would be well for the House to follow on this occasion...

The Conference was composed of 5 Members of the House of Peers and 27 Members of the House of Commons, selected by Mr Speaker Lowther. The problems before that Conference were considerable in number, in importance and in complexity. There had been no Franchise Act since 1884 and woman suffrage at that time was, I would not myself say a difficult, but it certainly was a controversial, and for many politicians a rather dangerous subject which had to be faced and settled. There had been great pre-war struggles about it, but I think it can fairly be said that the part that women played in the last war was really the deciding factor that settled the argument and the principle of woman suffrage. That issue is now settled. There were many and varied qualifications at that time for the Parliamentary franchise and the law as to the compilation of the lists of electors was rather complex. There had been no distribution since 1885. Consequently the Conference had big and important issues before it. It did its work and reported in January 1917, when it submitted to the House agreed resolutions for Parliamentary consideration, and it is satisfactory to observe that on this occasion its recommendations were embodied almost without alteration in the *Representation of the People Act 1918*.¹⁰

⁷ HC Deb 16 August 1916 c1949

⁸ For background see David Rolf in *History* 1979 'Origins of Mr Speaker's Conference during the First World War'

⁹ *An Encyclopaedia of Parliament*, by N Wilding and P Laundry, 4th ed, 1972. p714

¹⁰ HC Deb 1 Feb 1944 c 1154

1.2 1944

On 1 February 1944 the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, introduced a debate on the motion ‘that this House welcomes the proposal of His Majesty’s Government to set up a Conference on Electoral reform and Redistribution of Seats and to invite Mr Speaker to preside.’¹¹ Herbert Morrison said that many Members of Parliament had called for redistribution of seats and a debate on electoral reform before the outbreak of war but before the Government honoured its commitment, first made in 1940, to provide an opportunity for such a debate it had been necessary to wait for the report of the Departmental Committee on electoral machinery. The recommendations of that Committee concerning electoral registration had already been implemented by the *Parliament (Elections and Meetings) Act 1943* but its recommendations concerning the redistribution of seats would be considered by the Speaker’s Conference. Morrison continued:

...I hope myself that the Speaker’s Conference, which will represent all political parties as far as practicable, will itself agree on the principles or redistribution, and the directions to the boundary commissioners, and if they do I shall be very grateful. It will save me a nasty job, an invidious job, and I think it is the way it should be done. The political parties should get round the table under Mr Speaker and try amicably and fairly to settle the principles on which they should act. That is the way in which we propose that this matter should be handled.¹²

Herbert Morrison said that the Government would reconsider the draft terms of reference it had drawn up for the Conference after the debate. (These were announced on 10 February 1944.)¹³ He also explained the procedure for setting up the Conference:

...we propose that it shall be substantially as it was before. We propose that a letter should be sent by the Prime Minister to you, Mr Speaker, asking you to preside over the Conference. I am sure the House will be glad to know, Sir, that, unofficially, I have already approached you, and that you are willing to preside. I am sure we are all extremely grateful. I have only done the unofficial part. The Prime Minister will do the official part, and the letter will draw attention to the desirability of early reports on the subjects I have just indicated.¹⁴

Mr Morrison was asked about the membership of the Conference. He replied that this would be a matter for Mr Speaker but that ‘it would be appropriate that their Lordships’ house should have representation upon the Conference.’¹⁵ The Speaker subsequently announced the membership of the Conference two weeks later on 15 February 1944.¹⁶ There were 3 Peers and 29 Members of Parliament. Philip Allen of the Cabinet Office and Mr A C Marples of the House of Commons Committee Office were appointed Secretaries to the Conference.

The Parliamentary Archives currently has a page about the 1944 conference on the Parliament website.

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/parliamentary_archives/archives___speakerconf.cfm

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid, c1160

¹³ HC Deb 10 Feb 1944 c1912

¹⁴ Ibid, c1166

¹⁵ Ibid, c1166

¹⁶ HC Deb 15 Feb 1944 c32

The Archives hold the background papers for the conference which include an account of the origin, constitution and course of proceedings of the conference, correspondence, notices of meetings, minutes of proceedings, papers circulated to the conference and minutes of evidence.

1.3 1965 – 68

On 12 May 1965 Speaker Hylton-Foster announced the establishment of a Speaker's Conference:

The Prime Minister, in reply to Parliamentary Questions on 10 November and 2 February last, indicated that discussions were in progress with a view to possible changes in electoral law and procedure. I understand that it has now been agreed that it would be useful if this review – at any rate so far as concerns the more important questions of policy – were to be undertaken, following the precedents of 1916 and 1944, by a conference over which I should preside. The Prime Minister has invited me to preside over such a conference, and I have readily agreed to do so.¹⁷

This Conference was set up to consider the minimum voting age; methods and conduct of election; election expenses generally; the use of broadcasting at elections and the cost of election petitions.

On 23 June 1965 the Speaker announced the names of the 29 Members who had accepted his invitation to serve on the Conference.¹⁸ The two Secretaries attending the Conference were to be Mr K Eddy of the Home Office and Mr S C Hawtrey of the House of Commons Journal Office. When asked how the list of Members invited to take part in the Conference compared to those of the earlier Conferences the Speaker responded:

My recollection is that while this Conference will have 29 Members, made up, as best one can, to be representative of every class of constituency and interest, the last one contained 31 Members; but in that case Members of the other House were included, a practice which I have not followed.¹⁹

The Home Secretary, James Callaghan, made a statement on 24 July 1968 about the Government's conclusions on the final report of the Conference.²⁰ The Government accepted 60 of the Conference's 71 recommendations.

1.4 1973 – 74

On 2 August 1972 Speaker Selwyn Lloyd announced that the Prime Minister had asked him to preside over a Speaker's Conference and that he had agreed to do so.²¹ He describes the Conference, which he chaired in 1973-4, in his book *Mr Speaker, Sir* :

The Conference over which I presided had twenty-nine other members. We met or tried to meet once a week. The average attendance was about half. A move to allow the Deputy Speaker to stand in for me from time to time was narrowly defeated.

I found it a very time-consuming and cumbersome operation. We were too large a body to consider some of the more detailed matters put to us. It was difficult to assemble the necessary evidence. We reported, in the form of letters from me to the

¹⁷ HC Deb 12 May 1965 c520

¹⁸ HC Deb 23 June 1965 c1761

¹⁹ HC Deb 23 June 1965 c1762

²⁰ HC Deb 24 July 1968 c576

²¹ HC Deb 2 August 1972 c560

Prime Minister, on certain minor matters in June, October and November 1973. We did, however, have one quite substantial achievement to our credit. In February 1974, a general election suddenly became imminent. The Conference had not yet dealt with election expenses. Owing to inflation, the rates then allowed meant that many candidates could not have conducted an election campaign even on a modest basis without breaking the law. I told the Conference on 6 February that if we could agree unanimously on increased rates within one hour, there was a sporting chance that the Government would legislate to implement our findings before Parliament was dissolved.

We reached agreement, with one or two grumbles, and reported that day. The Government accepted our recommendation. The Representation of the People Act 1974 was passed the following day, and most candidates were saved from almost inevitable breaches of the law.

I was glad that no attempt was made to set up another conference while I was Speaker. I think there is advantage occasionally in a body presided over by the speaker with his 'aloof impartiality'. But its methods of working need re-examination, and I have put forward my own suggestions in a later chapter.²²

Lord Selwyn-Lloyd's proposals for future Speaker's Conferences were as follows:

If the Government with the agreement of the Opposition indicates their wish that the Speaker should preside over a conference to consider certain electoral matters, the Speaker should then act as follows. He should choose three or four experienced Members to examine with him the particular topics designated, and to decide what papers upon them would be required by way of evidence, and what witnesses should be asked to prepare oral evidence. When that has been done, and the papers received, a conference with a larger membership, but not exceeding twenty, should be convened, and the material already assembled put before it. Of course other papers could be called for and other witnesses summoned as proved necessary. I believe that this method would save a lot of time, both for the Speaker and for the members of the conference.²³

1.5 1977 - 78

On 19 July 1977 Mr Speaker Thomas announced that the issue of Northern Ireland's representation at Westminster had been referred to a Speaker's Conference.²⁴ The Prime Minister had asked him to preside over such a conference and he had agreed to do so. The terms of reference were 'to consider and make recommendations on the number of Parliamentary constituencies that there should be in Northern Ireland.' Twenty-eight Members of Parliament served on the Conference and the joint Secretaries were Mr J H Willcox, a principal clerk in the House of Commons and Mr D Chesterton of the Northern Ireland Office.²⁵

²² *Mr Speaker, Sir*, by Selwyn Lloyd. Jonathan Cape, 1976. p117

²³ *Ibid*, p166

²⁴ HC Deb 19 July 1977 c1379-80

²⁵ *Ibid*

2 List of Speaker's Conferences and their terms of reference

Date	Chairman	Report	Terms of reference
Oct 1916-17	Speaker Lowther	Cd 8463	<p>To examine and, if possible, submit, agreed resolutions on the following matters:-</p> <p>(a) Reform of the franchise.</p> <p>(b) Basis for redistribution of seats.</p> <p>(c) Reform of the system of the registration of electors.</p> <p>(d) Method of elections and the manner in which the costs of elections should be borne.</p>
Feb–July 1944	Speaker Clifton Brown	Cmds 6534 and 6543	<p>To examine and, if possible, submit agreed resolutions on the following matters:-</p> <p>(a) Redistribution of seats.</p> <p>(b) Reform of franchise (both Parliamentary and local government).</p> <p>(c) Conduct and costs of Parliamentary elections, and expenses falling on candidates and Members of Parliament.</p> <p>(d) Methods of election.</p>
June 1965 – Feb 1968	Speaker Hylton-Foster, followed by Speaker King	Cmnds 2880, 2917, 2932, 3202, 3275 and 3550	<p>To examine and, if possible, to submit agreed resolutions on the following matters relating to parliamentary elections:-</p> <p>(a) Reform of the franchise, with particular reference to the minimum age for voting and registration procedure generally;</p> <p>(b) Methods of election, with particular reference to preferential voting;</p> <p>(c) Conduct of elections;</p>

			(d) Election expenses generally; (e) Use of broadcasting; and (f) Cost of election petitions and applications for relief.
March 1973-74	Speaker Selwyn Lloyd	Cmnds 5363, 5469, 5500, 5547	The Conference considered electoral registration, particularly (a) the registration timetable, and the frequency of publishing the register; (b) multiple registration and the definition of 'residence'; (c) registration of service men; and the minimum age for election and the timing of by-elections
July 1977 – Feb 1978	Speaker Thomas	Cmnd 7110	To consider, and make recommendations on, the number of parliamentary constituencies that there should be in Northern Ireland.
December 2008 -	Speaker Martin followed by Speaker Bercow	Interim reports HC 167-I, HC 63-I	To consider and make recommendations for rectifying the disparity between the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons and their representation in the UK population at large; and to consider such other matters as might, by agreement, be referred to for consideration.

3 Other conferences chaired by Speakers or former Speakers

Oct 1919 - 20	Speaker Lowther	Cmd 692	Conference on devolution
Dec 1929 – July 1930	Retired Speaker Lowther, Viscount Ullswater	Cmd 3636	No specific terms of reference were given but the Conference 'thoroughly examined and debated the merits of proportional representation and of the alternative vote as

			compared with each other and with the existing system.'
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Introducing the debate in the House of Commons on the 1944 Speaker's Conference, the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, commented on the work of the Conference which took place in 1929:

In 1929 there was another Speaker's Conference, which arose out of the Parliamentary situation of that day, with a minority Labour Government. In that case 3 Members of the House of Lords and 18 Members of the House of Commons were selected by Mr Speaker, in relation to the party representation in the House of Commons. The main issue was whether there should be Proportional Representation or the alternative vote, but that Conference was abortive and no agreed conclusions arose out of it. There were other matters under consideration...and as far as I can tell there was disagreement about nearly everything. This was a conference which agreed about nothing, and consequently no action arose out of it.²⁶

4 Procedure and membership

There are no fixed or statutory rules governing the creation of a Speaker's Conference. However previous Conferences have been established by the Prime Minister issuing an invitation to the Speaker to preside over an all-party conference. The terms of reference are usually specified in the invitation, but not the membership or procedure. The Speaker informs the House of his acceptance and explains the terms of reference. There is no need for a formal approval or otherwise by the House, although in 1944 there was a two day debate on a motion for the House to welcome the proposal to set up the Conference. It was agreed without a division.²⁷ The first Conference in 1916 was comprised of 5 Peers and 27 MPs and the 1944 Conference was comprised of 3 Peers and 29 MPs. Thereafter Peers were not included and the 1965-68 Conference was comprised of 29 MPs; the 1973-74 Conference of 29 MPs and the 1977-78 Conference of 29 MPs. For further details of the membership of the Conferences see Appendix I of this Note.

The reports of the Conferences have usually been in the form of letters from the Speaker to the Prime Minister, published as Command Papers. See the tables above for further details.

5 The new Speaker's Conference

The Prime Minister announced on 3 September 2007 that he had proposed to the Speaker that a Speaker's Conference should be convened to debate and make recommendations about a number of electoral matters. In a speech on politics to the National Council of Voluntary Organisations Mr Brown said:

And then in order to address the problems of the political system itself, I want to revive the idea of a Speaker's Conference. A Speaker's Conference brings together all the parties at Westminster to look at issues that can only be dealt with on a cross-party basis. In the last century there were five Speaker's Conferences and each looked at different aspects of the political and electoral system - reform of the franchise, distribution of parliamentary seats, registration of electors and other matters. Today I am proposing to the Speaker that he calls a conference to consider against the

²⁶ HC Deb 1 Feb 1944 c1156-7

²⁷ HC Deb vol 396 c1154

backdrop of a decline in turnout, a number of other important issues such as registration, weekend voting, the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons, and that he should also examine in parallel with the Youth Citizenship Commission whether we should lower the voting age to 16 so that we build upon citizenship education in schools and combine the right to vote with the legal recognition of when young adults become citizens of our country.²⁸

Nick Herbert MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, said that the Conservative Party was willing to take part in the Conference but added that it 'would need to discuss not just Mr Brown's chosen topics, but also issues such as votes for English MPs and freeing local councils from Whitehall.'²⁹

On 19 May 2008 the Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman, made a written statement announcing the establishment of a task force to take action to increase the number of black and Asian and minority ethnic women on local councils.³⁰ Ms Harman referred to the new Speaker's Conference in the statement:

The Prime Minister has proposed to the Speaker that he call a Speaker's conference to consider, against the backdrop of a decline in turnout, a number of important issues including the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons. The Speaker's conference and the taskforce we are announcing today will play a vital role in ensuring that we take steps to make progress.³¹

On 22 July 2008 the Speaker announced the terms of reference of the new Speaker's Conference:

It may be for the convenience of the House to know that the Prime Minister has suggested to me that I convene a Speaker's Conference. The following terms of reference have been agreed through the usual channels:

"To consider and make recommendations for rectifying the disparity between the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the House of Commons and their representation in the UK population at large; and to consider such other matters as might, by agreement, be referred to for consideration."

It is proposed that the Conference will be set up as a Committee of the House. A motion to establish the Conference as a Committee of the House will be tabled by the Government in October for decision by the House.³²

On 12 November 2008 the House agreed to appoint a committee, to be known as the Speaker's Conference, which will consist of the Speaker as chairman and 17 other members, one of whom will be the vice-chairman.³³ In proposing the motion to establish the Conference, the Leader of the House, Harriet Harman, said:

The proposal for a Speaker's Conference arises out of a raft of suggestions put forward by the Prime Minister under his governance of Britain agenda. In agreeing to a Speaker's Conference, Mr. Speaker has taken what I believe will be an historic step forward in the drive to bring Parliament into the 21st century, and I hope that all Members on both sides of the House will support him in doing so.

²⁸ Speech to the NCVO, 3 September 2007. Available at <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page13008.asp>

²⁹ Brown chooses two Tories and a Lib Dem to lead reviews of government policy, *Guardian*, 4 September 2007

³⁰ HC Deb 19 May 2008 c8WS

³¹ Ibid

³² HC Deb 22 July 2008 c659

³³ HC Deb 12 November 2008 c896

Speakers' Conferences are convened only very rarely, and this one will follow in big footsteps. It was a Speaker's Conference established in 1916 which secured cross-party agreement that women should have the right to vote. That was an historic and major change. I hope that we can vote today to set up this Speaker's Conference, and that it will set its sights high. The motion before the House today will establish a Speaker's Conference that will be able to meet in public, to be cross-party and to take evidence from a wide range of organisations and individuals. It will consider the disparity of representation between the Members of this House and the country at large. It will report before the end of this Parliament, and it will make recommendations.

The Prime Minister is committed to equality of representation, and so am I, but I move this motion to engender progress on a cross-party basis. Through this Speaker's Conference, and with Opposition Members, I hope that we can all work together to address a shared belief in the importance of tackling the lack of legitimacy that is inevitable until the House becomes more representative. There is a democratic deficit: the missing faces on the green Benches, and the missing voices in the Chamber. This is not a criticism of any individual Member. It is a recognition that this House has a problem that we need to change. I ask for the support of the House, not just in passing this motion but in actively supporting what I believe will be an historic Speaker's Conference.³⁴

The membership of the Speaker's Conference was announced in the Votes and Proceedings for 10 December 2008.³⁵ See the appendix to this note for further details.

1.1 Interim reports

The Speaker's Conference published two interim reports in 2009.³⁶ The first noted the public anger after the publication of Members' allowances and the loss of trust in politicians and political parties. The Conference suggested that increasing the diversity of MPs would make the House of Commons 'a more just, legitimate and effective legislature' and recommended that in constituencies where the sitting MP is not contesting the next general election the political parties should:

- Promote equality by selecting at least 50% women as candidates;
- Ensure that a significantly greater proportion of candidates than at the 2005 election are selected with BME backgrounds;
- Seek to encourage a wider placement of BME candidates across the country than was present at the 2005 election; and
- Ensure that a significantly greater proportion of candidates who identify as disabled are selected than at the 2005 election.³⁷

The second interim report was published in November 2009. The Conference announced in this report that it would draft a new clause to the *Equality Bill* currently before Parliament. This new clause would

...require registered political parties to report every six months, according to specified criteria, on the diversity of their candidate selections; and to publish those reports online.³⁸

³⁴ HC Deb 12 November 2008 c898

³⁵ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmvote/81210v01.htm>

³⁶ HC 167-I and HC63-I, 2008-09. Available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/spconf/spconf.htm>

³⁷ Speaker's Conference (on Parliamentary Representation) interim report. HC 167-I, 2008-09

Four political parties, the Labour party, the Conservative party, the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru, had responded to the Conference's additional recommendation in its first interim report that the parties should report the result of selections by constituency 'giving the date of selection, the method of selection, the candidate's gender and the candidate's ethnicity and reporting in accordance with candidates' identifications of disability and sexual orientation' by 12 October 2009. The leaders of the three main political parties gave evidence to the Conference on 20 October 2009 and they agreed in principle to publish future reports on the results of candidate selections:

Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown MP said "You are absolutely right, unless people know what is happening, then the public opinion that is being shaped about this cannot put the pressure that is necessary on the parties"; Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP said that the Conservative party monitored "in terms of gender, BME candidates and those who register themselves as disabled" already and would be "very happy to publish" the data; Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg MP told us that the Liberal Democrats already provided "very full reports" to its party Conference twice a year and "would be very happy to make that public". Accordingly, we have written to request two further monitoring reports from each of the main parties, to be delivered on 11 January and 15 March 2010, if Parliament is then still in session.

10. These reports will, we hope, provide a baseline for future accountability. The information we have published so far is not statistically significant, but each future report that is made will help to clarify where a particular approach is proving successful in tackling under-representation, and where difficulties remain. As there are problems across the parties on this issue of diversity, so there should be common benefits in sharing this information.

11. In the long term, however, a more formal mechanism for making these reports will be needed. Our Conference will cease to exist at the dissolution of the current Parliament and will not therefore be able to continue to act as monitor and publisher of the data.³⁹

The Conference said that its proposal to amend the *Equality Bill* was a modest one which required little effort from the parties but that it might help, over time, to 'secure a House of Commons which is more effective, more representative of our society and in which the public feels better able to place its confidence.'⁴⁰

³⁸ Speaker's Conference (on Parliamentary Representation) second interim report. HC 63-I, 2009-10

³⁹ Ibid, paras 9-11

⁴⁰ Ibid, para 15

Appendix I Membership of the Conferences

Membership of the 1916-17 Conference

Member	Party
*[4 th] Marquess of Salisbury	Conservative
*[4 th] Earl Grey	Liberal Unionist
Viscount Gladstone	Liberal
Lord Burnham	Liberal Unionist [formerly Liberal]
Sir [William] Ryland Adkins	Liberal
*Rt Hon Sir Frederick Banbury	Conservative
Sir John Bethell	Liberal
Sir William Bull	Conservative
*Colonel James Craig	Unionist [MP for East Down]
Colonel Henry Page Croft	Conservative
Ellis Davies	Liberal
Rt Hon W.H. Dickinson	Liberal
*Rt Hon Sir Robert Finlay	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr Frank Goldstone	Labour
Mr Maurice Healy	Irish Nationalist
Rt Hon George Lambert	Liberal
Sir Joseph Larmor	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr Donald Macmaster	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr T.P. O'Connor	Irish Nationalist
Mr Basil Peto	Conservative
Mr William Pringle	Liberal
Rt Hon Sir Harry Samuel	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr Thomas Scanlan	Irish Nationalist
Mr MacCallum Scott	Liberal
Rt Hon Sir John Simon	Liberal
Mr Edmund Turton	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr Stephen Walsh	Labour
Mr George Wardle	Labour
Mr Aneurin Williams	Liberal
*Lord Southwark [Richard Causton]	Liberal
*Sir Robert Williams	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
*Mr Patrick Brady	Irish Nationalist
**Mr Charles Stuart-Wortley	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr George Touche [Knighted 1917]	Unionist [i.e. Conservative]
Mr Edward Archdale	Unionist [i.e. Conservative; MP for North Fermanagh - re-elected October 1916]

*Viscount Bryce and Rt Hon Laurence Hardy were obliged through illness to withdraw their acceptances, and Mr J. Mooney also found himself unable to take part in the proceedings. Their places were taken by Lord Southwark, Sir Robert Williams and Mr Brady. Sir Robert Finlay was appointed Lord Chancellor on 11 December 1916 and was unable to continue his membership of the Conference. Earl Grey was prevented by illness from attending, but was not replaced. On 14 December 1916, Lord Salisbury, Sir Frederick Banbury and Colonel Craig resigned. They were replaced by C.B. Stuart-Wortley, Mr Touche and Mr Archdale.

** Charles Stuart-Wortley was MP for Sheffield Hallam until December 1916, when he was nominated for a peerage. He became 1st Baron Stuart of Wortley in 1917.

Membership of the 1944 Conference

Member	Party
Viscount Margesson	Conservative
Lord Rea	Liberal
Lord Ammon	Labour
Mrs Janet ['Jennie'] Adamson	Labour
Mr Patrick Buchan-Hepburn	Conservative
Mr Alexander Erskine-Hill	Conservative
Colonel Arthur Evans	Conservative
Mr William Foster	Labour
Miss Megan Lloyd George	Liberal
Mr Walter Green	Labour
Mr James Griffiths	Labour
Sir Douglas Hacking	Conservative
Mr Glenvil Hall	Labour
Mr Edmund Harvey	Independent Progressive [formerly Liberal]
Sir Austin Hudson	Conservative
Mr Geoffrey Hutchinson	Conservative
Mr Hamilton Kerr	Conservative
Sir Joseph Lamb	Conservative
Major Duncan McCallum	Conservative
Mr Thomas Magnay	Liberal National
Mr James Maxton	Independent Labour
Sir Joseph Nall	Conservative
Sir Hugh O'Neill	Ulster Unionist
Mr John Parker	Labour
Mr Maurice Petherick	Conservative
Mr Frederick Pethick-Lawrence	Labour
Mr Kenneth Pickthorn	Conservative
*Mr Denis Pritt	Labour [Elected 1935; expelled 1940]
Mr Donald Scott	Conservative
Mr Robert ['Robin'] Turton	Conservative
Sir Herbert Williams	Conservative
Mr Arthur Woodburn	Labour

*D.N. Pritt was expelled from the Labour Party in March 1940, after defending the Russian invasion of Finland. He stood as an Independent Labour candidate at Hammersmith North in 1945 and won.

Membership of the 1965-68 Conference

Member	Party
Sir William Anstruther-Gray [1965]	Conservative [Defeated at 1966 election]
*Mr. Jack Ashley [1966]	Labour
Mr Terence Boston [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr Robert Brown [1966]	Labour [First elected in 1966 election]
Mr Paul Channon [1965]	Conservative
Mr Donald Chapman [1965 + 1966]	Labour
*Mr Robert ['Robin'] Chichester-Clark [1965 + 1966]	Ulster Unionist
*Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody [1966]	Labour [First elected in 1966]
*Mr David Gibson-Watt [1965 + 1966]	Conservative
Sir Douglas Glover [1965 + 1966]	Conservative

Sir Richard Glyn [1965 + 1966]	Conservative
*Mr Raymond Gower [December 1966]	Conservative
Mr Harold Gurden [1966]	Conservative
Mr William Hamling [1965]	Labour
*Sir Harwood Harrison [1966]	Conservative
Mr John Harvey [1965]	Conservative [Defeated in 1966]
Miss Betty Harvie Anderson [1966]	Conservative
*Mr John [E.B.] Hill [1967]	Conservative
*Mr Douglas Houghton [February 1967]	Labour
Mrs Lena Jeger [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr Carol Johnson [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr James Idwal Jones [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Sir Donald Kaberry [1965 + 1966]	Conservative
*Mr Kenneth Lomas [1967]	Labour
*Mr Walter Loveys [1967]	Conservative
Mr Eric Lubbock [1965 + 1966]	Liberal
Mr Gregor Mackenzie [1965 + 1966]	Labour
*Mr Robert Maclennan [1967]	Labour [First elected in 1966]
Mr John Mendelson [1966]	Labour
Mr Ian Mikardo [1965]	Labour
**Mr Stratton Mills [April 1967]	Ulster Unionist [but Alliance from Apr 1973]
Mr Edward Milne [1965]	Labour [Independent Labour from Feb 1974]
Mr Cranley Onslow [1966]	Conservative
*Mr. Charles Pannell [January 1967]	Labour
Mr George Pargiter [1965]	Labour [Retired in 1966]
Mr John Parker [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Miss Mervyn Pike [1965]	Conservative
Miss Joan Quennell [1966]	Conservative
Sir David Renton [1965 + 1966]	Conservative
*Mr Edward Rowlands [1966]	Labour [First elected in 1966]
*Mr Samuel Silkin [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr George Strauss [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr Frank Tomney [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr Robert ['Robin'] Turton [1965 + 1966]	Conservative
Mr George Wallace [1965 + 1966]	Labour
Mr David Webster [1965]	Conservative
Mr Roy Wise [1965]	Conservative [Defeated in 1966]

The original membership of 29 was announced by Mr Speaker Hylton-Foster on 23 June 1965. He died on 2 September 1965, but his successor, Mr Speaker King, informed the House on 17 November 1965 that he had agreed to the Prime Minister's request to take over the Conference. Following the General Election of 31 March 1966, Mr Speaker King informed the House of Commons on 25 April 1966 of his agreement to reconstitute the Conference and announced on 8 July 1966 the membership of 29.

On 16 December 1966, Mr Raymond Gower was appointed to replace Mr Gibson-Watt, and on 20 January 1967 Mr Charles Pannell replaced Mr S.C. Silkin. On 24 February 1967, Mr Douglas Houghton replaced Mr Ashley and on 4 April 1967 Mr Stratton Mills replaced Mr Chichester-Clark. At some point after 24 April 1967, Mr J.E.B. Hill, Mr K. Lomas, Mr W.H. Loveys and Mr R. Maclennan replaced Sir Harwood Harrison, Mrs Dunwoody, Mr Stratton Mills and Mr E. Rowlands, respectively.

** Mr Stratton Mills resigned from the Ulster Unionist Party in December 1972 but continued to take the Conservative Whip until he joined the Alliance Party in April 1973.

Membership of the 1973-74 Conference

Member	Party
Mr David Crouch	Conservative
Major-General Jack d'Avigdor-Goldsmid	Conservative
Mr William Deedes	Conservative
Mr Raymond Gower	Conservative
Mr John Selwyn Gummer	Conservative
Mr Harold Gurden	Conservative
Mr John Hall	Conservative
Mr Stephen Hastings	Conservative
Mr Brynmor John	Labour
Sir Donald Kaberry	Conservative
Mrs Elaine Kellett-Bowman	Conservative
Mr David Knox	Conservative
Mr Richard Leonard	Labour
Mr Ian MacArthur	Conservative [Defeated in October 1974]
Mr Robert MacLennan	Labour
Mr John Mendelson	Labour
Mr Richard ['Bob'] Mitchell	Labour
Mr Elystan Morgan	Labour [Defeated in February 1974]
Mr John Parker	Labour
Mr Thomas Pendry	Labour
Mr Peter Rees	Conservative
Mr William Ross	Labour [Kilmarnock]
Mr Neville Sandelson	Labour
Mr Edward Short	Labour
Mr Iain Sproat	Conservative
Mr David Steel	Liberal
Mr George Strauss	Labour
Sir Robert ['Robin'] Turton	Conservative
Mr George Wallace	Labour [Retired in February 1974]

Membership of the 1977-78 Conference

Member	Party
*Mr William Benyon	Conservative
Mr John Cartwright	Labour
Mr William Clark	Conservative
Mr Stanley Cohen	Labour
Mr Gerard Fitt	Social Democratic and Labour Party
Mr Hugh Fraser	Conservative
Mr Clement Freud	Liberal
Mr Philip Goodhart	Conservative
Mr Ian Gow	Conservative
Mr Peter Hardy	Labour
Mr Cledwyn Hughes	Labour
Mr Sydney Irving	Labour/Co-op
Mrs Jill Knight	Conservative

Mr Michael McNair-Wilson	Conservative
Dr Edmund Marshall	Labour
*Mr Carol Mather	Conservative
Mr Peter Mills	Conservative
Mr Norman Miscampbell	Conservative
Mr James Molyneaux	Ulster Unionist Party
Mr Arthur Palmer	Labour/Co-op
Mr Laurie Pavitt	Labour/Co-op
Mr J Enoch Powell	Ulster Unionist Party
Mr Giles Radice	Labour
Sir David Renton	Conservative
**Mr William Small	Labour
Mr Michael Stewart	Labour
Mr William van Straubenzee	Conservative
Mr Edwin Wainwright	Labour
Mr John Watkinson	Labour
Mr Alec Woodall	Labour

*Mr W Benyon replaced Mr Carol Mather on 22 November 1977.

**Mr Small died in January 1978

Membership of the 2008-09 Conference

Member	Party
Diane Abbott	Labour
Anne Begg (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
John Bercow	Conservative
David Blunkett	Labour
Angela Browning	Conservative
Ronnie Campbell	Labour
Ann Cryer	Labour
Parmjit Dhanda	Labour
Andrew George	Liberal Democrat
Julie Kirkbride	Conservative
Dr William McCrea	Democratic Unionist Party
David Maclean	Conservative
Fiona Mactaggart	Labour
Anne Main	Conservative
Jo Swinson	Liberal Democrat
Betty Williams	Labour
