What the Australian Senate (and other multi-party chambers) can learn from the New Zealand House of Representatives.

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On 20 February 1996, some seven months before the first MMP election, the traditional, House of Commons inspired, standing orders of the New Zealand House of Representatives were replaced. The new standing orders came out of a two-year review process and constituted a major overhaul of the procedures of the House. This paper examines whether the new standing orders provide a useful model for the management of other multi-party chambers, like the Australian Senate, and concludes that while the ability of the House to efficiently process legislation has been enhanced, this has been at the detriment of some of its other functions.

Introduction

One consequence of the recent election in Queensland is that in yet another Australian chamber the two party, or at least bipolar, model no longer holds. This has long been the case in the Australian Senate. Despite this, most chambers are still run along the lines of House of Commons inspired Standing Orders, based on the concept of clearly defined parties of government and opposition. The New Zealand House of Representatives has recently undertaken a comprehensive review of its Standing Orders in an effort to make them more appropriate for a multi-party chamber. This paper examines the impact of these new Standing Orders of the ability of New Zealand House of Representatives to adequately carry out its various functions.

In the lead up to the introduction of MMP, the New Zealand House of Representatives resolved, on 22 December 1993, to appoint a Standing Orders Committee (the Committee) to review the body of rules that govern the operation of the House. Some two years later, following a consultation process and visits to the parliaments of Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Germany, the Committee reported back recommending a major overhaul of the way in which Parliament operates. The recommended changes include: using proportionality as the guiding principle for managing the House, abolishing the quorum, introducing a new voting system within the chamber, adopting new forms of reference for members, reorganising the House's sitting times, allowing more latitude for private members' bills to affect spending, reforming the legislative process and providing procedures to ensure natural justice for people subject to allegations under parliamentary privilege (Joseph and McHerron 1997; Boston, Levine, McLeay and Roberts 1995, 72). While the adoption of new forms of address for MPs was simply a consequence of the change to MMP (list MPs cannot be referred to as the Member for an electorate) other changes have quite important implications. The new natural justice provisions for citizens subjected to attacks by MPs address a longstanding problem, while the adoption of the "financial veto" provision increases the potential scope of private members' bills. It is the first three changes, however, that have had the greatest impact on the running of the House.

The role of Parliament

According to Mulgan (1997) Parliament in New Zealand has four main roles: it provides a government, it enacts legislation, it scrutinises the executive arm of government and it represents citizens and communities. Along with these formal roles it is also clear that the New Zealand Parliament has an important political role in providing a testing ground for the

competing political elites (Held 1996, 198; Palmer 1992, 110). For the new standing orders to provide a useful model for the management of a multi-party chamber, it must be possible to show that, on balance, they enhance the Parliaments ability to carry out its various roles. It is not enough that they significantly enhance its ability to carry out some of these roles at the expense of others.

The proportionality principle

One of the most significant changes to the way Parliament runs is the adoption of the proportionality principle. Previously the Parliament was organised on the basis that there was a party of Government and a party of Opposition, with speaking time alternating across the House and membership of committees reflecting the majority and minority status of the two parties. This model was seen as inappropriate for a multi-party chamber, where some parties would not fall clearly into one camp or the other. For example, before United entered into coalition with the National party in 1996, they were not part of the government. They could hardly be seen as an opposition party, though. Not only did United support the government on confidence matters, it also supported much of National's legislative program (Pauline Gardiner, New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10798). The Standing Orders now recognise proportionality between parties as the fundamental organising principle within the House. The principle applies to, among other things, question time, speaking time in debates and to the membership of select committees. An important precursor to this is the official recognition of political parties, in Standing Order (SO.) 34.

The management of the House has also been reformed. A new select committee called the Business Committee, chaired by speaker, and including the Leader of the House and party whips decides (per SO.78):

(a) the order of business in the House
(b) the time spent on items of business
(c) the allocation of time on items of business among the parties
(d) individual members speaking time on items of business.

The Business Committee attempts to make decisions based on unanimity. Where the Committee cannot reach an unanimous decision, a decision is only made if there is, in the Speaker's view, "near-unanimity" assessed on the "numbers in the House represented by each of the members of the committee" (SO.77). While it is not clear what the threshold is, it has been established that when the representative of a party with four MPs (in the previous, 99 members, Parliament) objected, there was "near-unanimity." (Speakers' Rulings 1996, 11/4).

The introduction of the business committee has not affected the way the House provides for a government, or the way MPs represent citizens and communities. The most important effect of the committee is on the way in which the House goes about its legislative business. Rather than allowing the executive to control Parliament's agenda, the Business Committee ensures all parties to have a say in the way in which the House is run. The establishment of the Business Committee does not prevent the Government from attempting to take control of the agenda. Indeed the Committee recognises that sometimes the committee will not be able to agree. In such cases it presumes the Government may end up "taking urgency and ploughing on in the absence of a Business Committee ruling" (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 21). The assumption is that it is in the best interests of the Government to seek a resolution from the Business Committee that all or most parties are happy with as this will facilitate the efficient progression of legislation.

The Business Committee system also has implications for the ability of the Parliament to exercise scrutiny over the executive, primarily in the role it plays in determining when the major debates occur and in allocating speaking time to non-government members. These

debates also provide the opportunity for the leaders of alternative governing elites to prove their worth. While the adoption of the proportionality principle, and the establishment of the Business Committee represents a significant change to the mind-set which Parliament operates under, the changes that have proved most controversial, both within and outside the House relate to the new voting system and the abolition of the quorum.

The new voting system - a cosmetic change?

When the Committee's report was debated in the House only Labour and National MPs spoke in favour of the change to the voting system. The New Zealand First, Alliance and United New Zealand MPs all opposed it. In a passionate denunciation, Winston Peters argued:

> It is wrong that in 1995 so many members here who went through law school, and who went to political science classes and learnt something about the growth and evolution of democracy, should have so denuded Parliament with this intent.

Under the previous Standing Orders, the procedure followed in the New Zealand House of Representatives[1] was substantially the same as that currently used in Australian Parliaments (*Senate Standing Orders* 1998, Chapter 18; *House of Representatives Standing Orders* 1998, Chapter 15), and many other Commonwealth parliaments. Under this system, when a question was put the Speaker would call on all those in favour to say "Aye" and those against to say "No", then declare the result in favour of the Government side. If the Opposition indicated dissent, the Speaker would ask if a "division" was required. If a member affirmed this, the Clerk would be instructed to "ring the bells" for five minutes to summon members into the chamber. If the vote immediately follows a previous vote, without debate, then the bells ring for only one minute. After the ringing of the bells the Clerk directs the "Ayes" to pass to the right and the "Noes" to pass to the left and appoints two tellers for each side. The Speaker orders the doors to be locked. The tellers then count and note the name of every member voting in the division.

In their report, the Committee suggests that it takes about five minutes to conduct a vote, after the ringing of the bells (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 27). This compares with estimates of seven minutes in Ireland (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 272-273) and three minutes in the Australian Senate (Evans 1997, 11.4).[2] Over the two and three-quarter period of the Forty-Third Parliament, 1991-93 (the last complete session in which the division system was used), the House sat for 2015 hours and 46 minutes. During this time 1765 divisions occurred (Harris and Levine 1994, 296).[3] If we assume the process of voting (ringing the bells and counting votes) takes an average of seven minutes a vote, over 25 eight-hour days (205 hours and 55 minutes) or just over 10% of the entire time the House was sitting, it was in the process of voting. It was this factor, the time it takes to determine a question in the New Zealand House, that prompted the Committee to consider alternate methods of voting. The recommended system that is now in use is a "three-tiered system" adapted from the Second Chamber of the Netherlands Parliament. Under this system if there is dissent on the voices the Speaker calls on the Clerk to conduct a party vote. The Clerk then calls on the leader or whip of each party in order of size to cast the votes of all members of that party who are in the Parliamentary precincts or who have granted a duly authorised proxy. The Clerk then asks for the vote of any independents and then for "other votes," these being the votes of members not voting with their party.

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[1] Previously set out in SO.133.

[2] Evans (1997, 11.4) also argues that any form of proxy voting in the Senate would probably be in breach of section 23 of the *Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia* which provides that each senator present and voting shall have only one vote.

[3] The figures are complicated by the change in voting system towards the end of this period.

The third-tier of the process is the personal vote. Personal votes occur in two ways: first, a member may call for one after a party vote. If the Speaker considers "that the decision on the party vote is so close that a personal vote may make a material difference to the result" a personal vote can be granted. The second situation is conscience issues, where the House goes directly from the voices to a personal vote. Whether the matter is conscience issue is determined by the Speaker. The Committee believed that there would be few personal votes, noting that in the Netherlands "such votes are not called for or granted lightly" with only three being held between August 1994 and May 1995.

Besides adopting the three-tiered voting system the Committee also decided that it should be possible for party and members to record abstentions (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 29). They also felt that, as "pairing" is not apt in a multi-party chamber, a restricted system of proxies should be allowed. It should be noted here that when the whip casts the party vote they can only cast the votes of MPs present in the chamber so the institution of the party vote does not overcome the problem. The rules on proxies require that a party cannot exercise proxy votes for more than 25% of their members but parties with less than five MPs still get one proxy vote. The Committee also resolved to abolish the casting vote of the speaker and replace it with a deliberative vote to maintain proportionality. If a vote is tied, the motion is lost. The party vote process has an advantage regarding the voting of presiding officers. In the Australian Senate, the President, who also has a deliberative vote,[4] votes by stating to the Senate (or Committee) whether they support the "ayes" or the "noes". This draws focus to the partiality of the presiding officer, unlike the party vote process, where their vote is cast by their party whip.

Legislative role

The most obvious effect of this change is that it allows for far more expeditious processing of legislation. An example of this is the passage of the highly controversial *Social Security Amendment Bill (No.5)* which introduced a "work-for-the-dole" scheme.[5] Sitting under urgency, the House resumed at 9.00 am on Friday 15 May 1998 and proceeded to debate the *Copyright (Removal of Prohibition on Parallel Importing) Amendment Bill.* Following the second reading of that bill, the House went on to debate the Second Reading and Committee stages of the *Social Security Amendment Bill* (No. 5). Apart from a one hour break for lunch and then dinner the House sat until midnight and resumed for the Third reading at 9.00 am. on Saturday. The Third Reading took place late-morning. The vigorous opposition of the Labour and Alliance parties to this legislation ensured its passage was delayed for an entire (thirteen hour) day. In all 55 votes were held during the passage of the Bill, 45 of which immediately followed a previous vote. If 55 divisions had been required, the process of voting would have occupied the House for over six hours, delaying the passage of the bill for at least an additional five hours. Indeed, such is the speed with which questions can be resolved under the party vote system that if it had been used for the entire period of the Forty-Third Parliament (discussed above) just under 162 hours or 20 eight-hour days would have been saved.

Effective Scrutiny

While the new system clearly allows for the more efficient processing of legislation, at the same time it has an impact on other functions of Parliament. The first area affected is the ability of Parliament to exercise effective scrutiny over the executive. The Committee argued that there are two main reasons for calling a division in the House, the first being a desire for

[4] If the President had a casting vote this would violate the equal representation of states provision in Section 23 of the *Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia* 1901.
[5] The substance of this legislation is discussed by Reid (1998).

a party not to be seen as supporting a particular policy (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 27). In the past the drawn-out division process may have, at times, acted as a disincentive to calling for a vote. The second main reason for calling for a division, identified by the committee, is that they provide an avenue for non-government parties to exercise some control over the time spent in the House on controversial policies (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 27). The very efficiency with which voting can occur under the new rules, mitigates against this. Previously the Opposition could frustrate the government by filibustering in the debate, forcing the government to move the "gag" ("that the question be now put"), then taking every vote to division. While this still occurs the new voting system has muted the effect. In the case of the "Work-for-the-Dole" legislation referred to above, the opposition parties could have delayed the legislation for up to two days under the previous system as, if it could have prevented the final vote being taken by 11:59pm Saturday, the legislation would have been stalled until 9am Monday. Delaying legislation in this way gives the opposition time to draw media attention to the controversial legislation and allows further lobbying of MPs to take place. However, where there are more effective opportunities to scrutinise the government's legislative program, such as the select committee process, it is probably in the interest of all parties that votes are taken in an efficient manner. Unfortunately despite the introduction of this more efficient voting system, this has not meant that all legislation has been subjected to the normal legislative process. As at 1 August, the New Zealand House of Representatives has gone into urgency on 12 occasions during its 1998 sittings (Waikato Times 1998, 10). Often this has meant legislation has either skipped the select committee stage or has had a truncated select committee procedure. This seriously limits the opportunity for the non-government parties, and indeed the backbenchers from the government side to exercise scrutiny.

Another impact of party voting also puts a lie to the fiction that MPs are influenced by the ebb and flow of debate in the House,[6] a fact that the Deputy Prime Minister found particularly despicable (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10808). This could affect the extent to which the house provides a forum for party competition. It would be interesting to test whether the participation in debates by senior MPs has been effected by the change.

Representing citizens and communities

The main criticism the recommended system faced in the House though, was not in terms of the impact it would have on the ability for the non-government parties to delay the passage of legislation. Rather critics of the system such as the Rt. Hon. Winston Peters, have focussed on the implications it has for the independence of MPs. The criticism seemed to be based on two grounds. The first was that many MPs see party voting as inconsistent with their interpretation of the role of MPs. Secondly, some MPs felt it was repugnant that MPs should be able to vote on a piece of legislation without even being in the House let alone listening to the debate.

Trustee, delegate or partisan?

Using data from the 1996 New Zealand Election Survey, Catt (1998) shows that among both voters and candidates in New Zealand there is not only disagreement about the representative role of an MP but also confusion about the implications of constructing the MP's role in different ways. The debate within the House on the concept of party voting reflects this disagreement and confusion. From his arguments against the system it is not totally clear whether Winston Peters views MPs as delegates of their electorates, he certainly believes they should be strongly influenced by the views of their electorate though, or as a trustee. Clearly he rejects the partisan model:

[6] Indeed the Committee specifically recognised this (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 23).

> The reality is that members of Parliament are not the prisoners or the servants of the party first. They are people who stand for Parliament, sponsored by the party, in the public interest. That is an understanding of democracy which goes all the way back to Edmund Burke, but it seems to have totally escaped the modern New Zealand politician, who thinks that what the party says and what they whips say is gospel. Such members will never, ever turn and say: "I must put the people who voted for me first." (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10807).

He goes on to express concern that under the party vote system even though "a member may have a contrary view, or, more important, his electorate may have a contrary view" the member cannot vote according to their own view, or that of their constituents. The opposing, view of the representative role of an MP is best articulated by Michael Cullen.

> I belong proudly to a party where I am bound by caucus decisions. I have never regretted that fact. I have sometimes voted against my own views within caucus. I have sometimes whipped my caucus against my own views in caucus. I make my point in my caucus. That democracy works. If I do not like it, I still vote with my caucus.
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> My electors expect me do that. They did not elect me because they thought I was the prettiest candidate. (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10819)

So while Cullen sees a role for his own judgement and the views of his electors, these are to be expressed within caucus, however, once caucus makes a decision he is bound to follow it. It is not surprising that the Deputy Leader of the Labour party takes this view as his party requires MPs to abide by caucus decisions or resign.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the merits of the competing views on the representative role of the MP. However, it is important to note that by way of amendment to its Standing Orders, the House has, in effect, institutionalised the partisan model of representation, without the merits of this view ever being fully debated. This has seriously affected the ability of MPs to vote in what they view to be the best interests of their constituents or communities. Under the division method of voting, it was possible for MPs to cross the floor without giving prior notice to their party. They simply joined the other side when the division was called. Now it is necessary for an MP to advise their Whip before the vote takes place so that the whip will not exercise that MPs vote in the party vote. This must inevitably have implications for the freedom of MPs to vote against the whip. In the past the whip was presented with a *fait accompli* now they have the opportunity to influence the prospective dissident (Christine Fletcher MP, interview with author, 4 August 1998). MPs who have crossed the floor note the amount of criticism they have had to withstand for having done so (eg Laws 1998, 1996). It is quite conceivable that some would not have crossed the floor if they had been required to advise their whip first. This may even effect, to some degree, the first criterion - the way in which Parliament provides a government. An MP cannot cross the floor to bring down a government, without warning their party whip in advance.

One solution to this problem would be to change the order in which the Clerk calls for votes. Currently the Clerk calls on the party whips in order of the size of the party's parliamentary delegation. Then the Clerk calls for other votes. If MPs were given a chance to exercise these "other votes" at the beginning of the process then their Whip could just exercise the number of votes not previously exercised. This would be a much closer approximation of the status quo ante than the current system. There is also the practical problem, noted by Margaret Austin, that as the bells are not rung when a party vote is taken, there is no notice given for MPs who intend to vote against their party line (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10810). A similar concern is expressed by Christine Fletcher (interview with author, 4 August 1998), who has crossed the floor on a number of occasions in the current Parliament.

The problem could also be ameliorated to some extent if the Speaker to take a more liberal view of when a personal vote should be allowed. A personal vote can be called in to situations: under SO.147, when the Speaker considers the subject of the vote is a conscience issue and under SO.149, following a close party vote the Speaker can accept a call for a personal vote. Since the introduction of the system the Speakers have set a fairly high threshold for personal votes. One controversial case arose when the house appointed a new Deputy Speaker following the election. Before the vote, the Speaker dismissed a point of order that argued that the matter should be dealt with as a conscience issue. The Speaker held the election of a Deputy Speaker was not traditionally seen as a conscience matter, nor was there "something arising out of the flow of debate," within or outside the House, that suggested it should be (New Zealand Hour of Representatives 1997a, para 76). A later party vote resulted in an amendment being defeated 61-58. The Speaker ruled that closeness in the result on a party vote was not enough, of itself, to warrant a personal vote. He suggested that along with closeness there would need to be “some element of confusion” (New Zealand Hour of Representatives 1997a, para 76). A similar ruling was made when the vote on the deferral of the tax cuts passed 61-59. Here the Speaker specifically dealt with a suggestion that a personal vote should follow as there was some suggestion that two National MPs intended to vote against the Whip. He ruled that they were free to remove their proxies from their Whip if they wished to do so (New Zealand Hour of Representatives 1997a, para 77).

It is not clear what the case would be if a party completely refused to accept the concept of party voting. On 30 July 1997 the Speaker ruled that a vote on Easter trading would be treated as a conscience vote as he had been advised by members that they saw it as such (New Zealand Hour of Representatives 1997b, para 220). This has been upheld in subsequent decisions (New Zealand Hour of Representatives 1997b, para 221). It may be that if a party advised the Speaker on every vote that they intended the matter to be a free vote for their party, that it might have to go immediately to a personal vote.

One solution proposed by those who oppose the change to party voting, is the adoption of some form of electronic voting (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10810). In its report, the Committee notes that many submissions favoured introducing a form of electronic voting. The Committee had the opportunity to witness the operation of electronic voting in the Norwegian Storting and the Danish Folketing. The Committee was attracted to the system used in Folketing, where members have to be seated in their assigned seat in the chamber to vote, with each seat being represented by a light on a board showing the layout of seats in the chamber (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 27). This system makes it simple to ensure that votes were not cast for absent members. Despite the favourable view the committee took of this system, it did not recommend the introduction of electronic voting. While they believed it would reduce the time taken to determine a question, after the ringing of the bells, from their estimated five minutes to some 30 seconds they believed that an equally efficient system could be adopted which did not entail the installation of costly infrastructure. Clearly the system would not be as efficient as the current system, however it would increase efficiency without affecting the other parliamentary functions.

Attendance in the House

The other criticism of the new voting system applies more to the proxy voting element than the party vote concept per se. The strongest argument in favour of allowing proxies is that there will inevitably be times when MPs cannot attend Parliament. They may be ill, they may be overseas on official business at the time, ministers may be involved in governmental responsibilities, MPs may even be at select committee hearings in some cases. It does not seem right that in these situations the people represented by these MPs are effectively disenfranchised. The major objection from MPs opposed to proxy voting seems to be that it allows large numbers of MPs to be absent from the House (eg Sandra Lee, New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995, 10818). In the past MPs had to either organise pairs or

physically attend a vote. Even though many would race into the chamber simply to vote and then return to their offices. It is not clear whether this is any better than the current situation. Also, changing patterns of attendance are due not only to the new voting procedures but also to the abolition of the quorum requirement.

The Abolition of the Quorum: limiting scrutiny

Under its pervious Standing Orders the New Zealand House of Representatives had a quorum of 15 members, inclusive of the Speaker.[7] The new standing orders contain no quorum requirement, however they formalise a longstanding Speakers' Ruling that requires the attendance of a Minister in the House at all times. The combined effect is to replace the 15 member quorum with an effective quorum of one minister (SO.40). The rationale for replacing the quorum with the "Minister in the House" rule was, as with the change in voting procedures, based on the efficient running of the House (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 22), as only Ministers can move certain motions.[8] The Committee noted that the quorum requirement often meant, in practice, that it fell to the government to provide the quorum and they felt this was inappropriate.

Again, the change in standing orders has created a situation in which the expeditious processing of legislation is facilitated but at the expense of the scrutiny role of Parliament. The Committee considered and rejected the option of splitting the responsibility to maintain a quorum between all parties. One of the reasons for rejecting this was that it would allow one party to frustrate the business of the House (Standing Orders Committee 1995, 24). It is interesting then, that this is exactly the situation that now exists - by sending their ministers from the House the governing party or parties can frustrate the business of the House. Indeed this has already happened. When a vote arose on the controversial energy reform legislation there were no National MPs in the House to deliver the party vote to the clerk. If the vote had proceeded the government would have lost, so New Zealand First sent its sole Minister out of the House. This resulted in the suspension of the vote and the ringing of the bells until a Minister returned (Llewellyn 1998).

Given the advantages the government has in the chamber, the effective obligation to supply a quorum is not huge impediment. In any case, characterising the previous rule as requiring the government to provide a quorum is somewhat inaccurate. When a quorum is required, there is an incentive for which ever party wishes to keep the House in session to provide the quorum. If the government has legislation that it wishes to advance, it is responsible for providing the quorum, if the Opposition wants to stage a debate on a particular matter of public urgency, then the responsibility falls on it. The advantage of this situation is that neither side can unilaterally cause the suspension of business, short of formally moving for this to occur. Re-instating some form of quorum requirement would not redress this problem, though as the Government could still suspend the House by withdrawing all ministers. The "Minister in the House" rule might have advantages in terms of efficiency but transfers too much power to the executive.

Conclusion

The changes in the New Zealand standing orders introduced following the report of the Standing Orders Committee, have done much to increase the efficiency with which the House deals with legislation. Handing the control of the parliamentary agenda to the Business Committee, has done this at little cost to the ability of the Parliament to exercise

[7] SO. 56.

[8] It has also been argued that forcing MPs to sit in the House leads to poor behaviour (Boston, Levine, McLeay and Roberts 1995, 76).

scrutiny over the executive, nor has it negatively affected the ability of MPs to act as representatives of their communities. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the new voting system and the replacement of the quorum with the "Minister in the House" rule . In the case of the quorum, while its reintroduction would be unpopular among MPs, it is inappropriate to allow the government the degree of control over the house that it currently has with the "minister in the House rule" and the situation must be changed. The situation with the new voting procedures is not as clear cut. The system saves huge amounts of time. It seems somewhat absurd to endorse a return to divisions. When explaining the previous system to those unfamiliar with it, the most common response is one of bewilderment that modern legislatures continue with such a system. The answer to the first part of the problem, that is the removal of the ability of the non-government parties to delay the passage of controversial legislation, may be found elsewhere. If more effective limits could be placed on the ability of the majority to move the House into urgency, thus ensuring that the normal legislative procedures are followed, then this is not such a problem. The second part of the problem, that MPs do not have the same freedom to vote against the party vote, that they had under the division system, could be addressed in one of three ways. First, and most simply, MPs voting against the whip could be given the opportunity to vote and the beginning of the process, rather than at the end. This would obviate the need to advise the member's whip in advance. Second, the Speaker could take a more liberal approach towards personal votes. This way an MP who plans to vote against their party could call for a personal vote, and defect on this vote. Finally, and most radically, the current system could be replaced with a form of electronic voting. The changes introduced into the New Zealand House of Representatives following the review of the Standing Orders do provide a useful model for a multi-party chamber wishing to streamline its procedures. However, for a house wishing to be able to exercise real scrutiny over the executive, the new procedures are quite problematic.

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