

Parliamentary Paper
No. 418/1979

The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Report relating to Sessional Orders
for the operation of Estimates
Committees

20 September 1979

The Commonwealth Government Printer
Canberra 1980

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MEMBERS OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

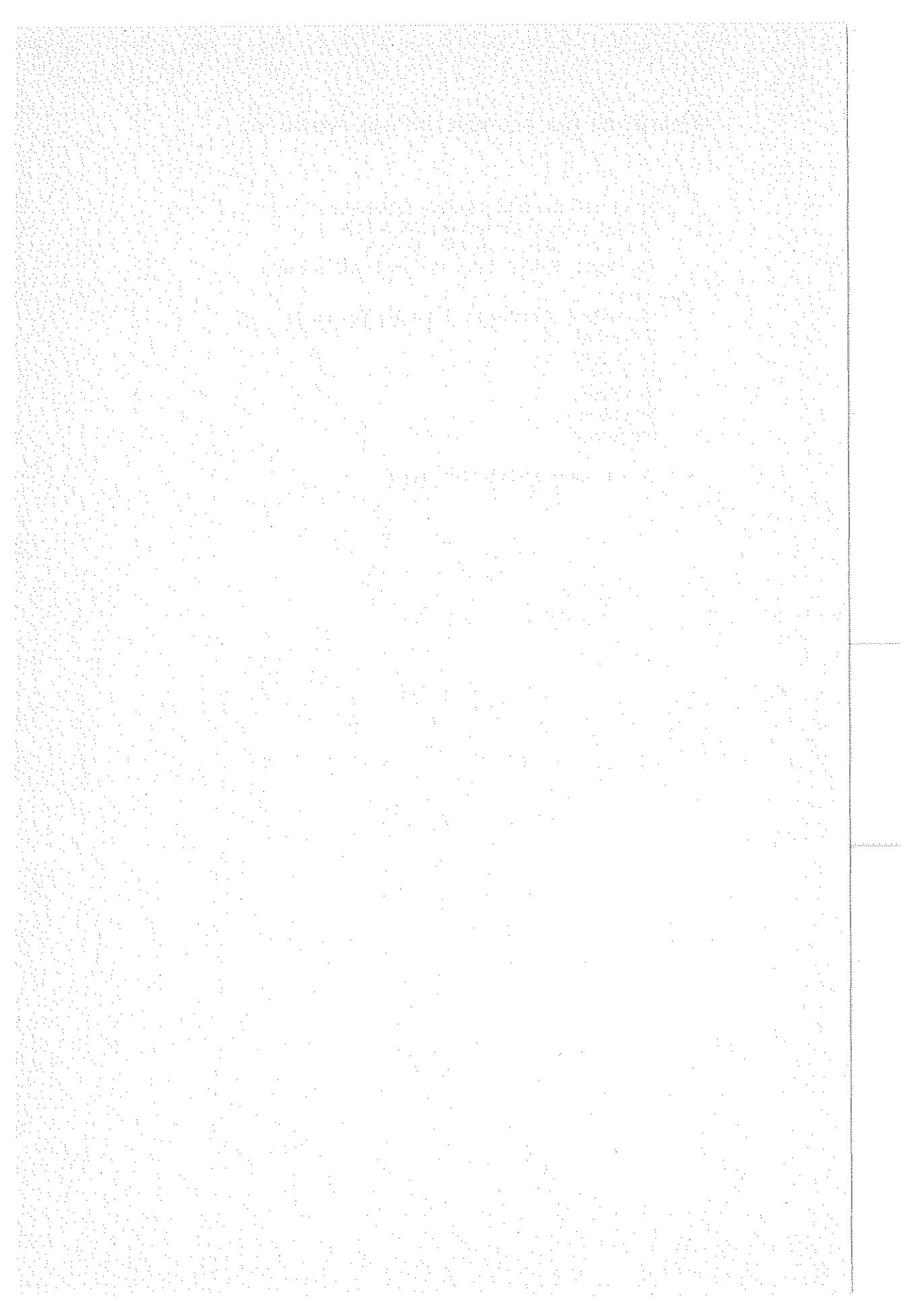
Ex officio:

Mr Speaker (Sir Billy Snedden)—Chairman
The Chairman of Committees (Mr Millar)
The Leader of the House (Mr Sinclair)
The Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr Bowen)

Appointed:

Mr Anthony (Minister for Trade and Resources)
Mr Bryant
Mr Cairns
Mr Giles
Dr Jenkins
Mr Scholes
Mr Young

Clerk to the Committee (Mr Blake)



REPORT

Your Committee met on 19 September 1979 to consider the following resolution:

That whilst endorsing the principle of estimates committees, the House is of the opinion that the manner of their implementation should be referred to the Standing Orders Committee.

Your Committee agreed to the following recommendations:

- (1) That estimates committees meet during sittings of the House:
 - (a) during the budget debate, and
 - (b) during consideration of other business only after consultation and agreement between the Leader of the House, the Member in charge of Opposition business and the Speaker.
- (2) That estimates committees should not meet whilst the House is not sitting without leave of the House.
- (3) That for the time being two committees be appointed.
- (4) That the Leader of the House prepare after consultation with the Member in charge of Opposition business:
 - (a) a schedule of the proposed expenditures to be considered in each committee, and
 - (b) an allotment of time for each proposed expenditure based on the experience of recent years.
- (5) That the 'Blue Program' list:
 - (a) the time and place of each estimates committee meeting, and
 - (b) the order of consideration of the proposed expenditures for the various departments and services.

Your Committee recommends that action be taken by the House to adopt the following sessional orders to provide for the operation of estimates committees.

Committal and consideration in estimates committee

- (1) After the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, or a Member deputed by him, on the motion for the second reading of the main Appropriation Bill for a year, the proposed expenditures for the departments and services contained in the Schedule to that Bill may be referred to an estimates committee. Such referral (which shall not affect the second reading debate on the Bill) shall be on motion, moved by a Minister, of which notice has been given. A committee may be ordered to report by a specified date.
- (2) There shall be two estimates committees, to be known as Estimates Committee A and Estimates Committee B, which shall not vote on, but shall examine and report upon proposed expenditures for the Parliament, Advance to the Minister for Finance and each Department of State; such report may contain a resolution or expression of opinion of the committee but shall not vary the amount of a proposed expenditure.

Members

- (3) Each estimates committee, to consider each proposed expenditure, shall consist of the Minister responsible in the House of Representatives for the proposed expenditure under consideration, together with not fewer than twelve Members and not more than eighteen Members, excluding the Chairman.

- (4) Members of an estimates committee shall be nominated by either the Prime Minister, the Leader of the House, the Government Whip or the deputy Whip and either the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition Whip or the deputy Whip and every nomination of a member of the committee shall be forthwith notified in writing to the Speaker.
- (5) In nominating Members to an estimates committee to consider each proposed expenditure regard shall be had to the qualifications and interests of those Members nominated and to the composition of the House. Either the Prime Minister, the Leader of the House, the Government Whip or the deputy Whip and either the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition Whip or the deputy Whip shall have power to discharge from time to time any of those Members nominated by them and to nominate others in substitution for those discharged. The responsible Minister may nominate another Minister to act for him as required.
- (6) The nomination of Members to consider the proposed expenditure of each department or service shall be incorporated in the Votes and Proceedings.

Chairman

- (7) The Chairman of an estimates committee shall be:
 - (a) the Chairman of Committees; or
 - (b) a Deputy Chairman of Committees to be appointed by the Chairman of Committees.
- (8) The Chairman of Committees, a Deputy Chairman of Committees or any member of the committee shall take the Chair temporarily whenever requested so to do by the Chairman of the Committee during a sitting of that committee.

Quorum

- (9) The quorum of an estimates committee shall be five, excluding the Chairman, and, if at any time a quorum be not present, the Chairman shall suspend the proceedings of the committee until a quorum be present, or adjourn the committee.

Participation by other Members

- (10) Members of the House, not being members of the committee, may participate, at the discretion of the Chairman, in the proceedings of the committee, but shall not vote, move any motion or be counted for the purpose of a quorum.

Minutes of Proceedings

- (11) All proceedings of a committee shall be recorded by the Clerk to the Committee, and such records shall constitute the *Minutes of Proceedings of the committee*, and shall be signed by the Clerk to the Committee.

Proceedings in estimates committee

- (12) Consideration of proposed expenditures in an estimates committee shall follow, as far as possible, the procedures observed in a committee of the whole with the following exceptions:
 - (a) Speech time limits and the restriction on the number of times a Member may speak to each question (S.O.91) shall not apply.
 - (b) Voting shall be taken by a show of hands; tellers shall not be appointed.

