

**4. Leave to introduce –
Bill to abolish Legislative Council –
Motion lost**

The Hon. Member for Rushen (Mr Gawne) to move:

That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to abolish the Legislative Council; and for connected purposes.

The Speaker: We turn to Item 4, leave to introduce – the motion in the name of the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gawne. I call Mr Gawne.

Mr Gawne: Gura mie eu, Loayreyder.

I would ask Hon. Members to just do one thing, and that is listen (*Laughter*) with an open mind. I know that the vast majority of Members will have already decided how they are going to vote, and I think that is probably unfortunate, and possibly that is one of the reasons why we ought to get rid of the Legislative Council – and I will explain why as we go through.

I should say, because I had not appreciated just how sensitive some of our colleagues in the Legislative Council are... I must apologise to them publicly for upsetting them. Certainly that was not my intention. This is not about personalities. I believe that the Legislative Council provides a very useful function. I believe the Members are rather excellent people – they do a fantastic job, they work hard and they are diligent – so this is not about the Members. This is about the structure.

In the same way – and perhaps this is not the best of analogies, but I will use it anyway – my family grew up on a particular settee. That settee ended up getting rather ripped and battered – cats were clawing at it, children were being sick on it (*Laughter*) – and we got to the point where we decided we needed to get rid of that settee. The kids were up in arms: ‘This is terrible! This is part of our heritage – we have grown up on this settee.’ And indeed they had, and it is absolutely right. (*Interjection*) Despite what it might sound like, I am not trying to undermine the Legislative Council, but we hear about heritage and, ‘This is all about ancient traditions,’ and all this. It may well be. Our natural instinct is to protect these things, but actually we have now got a new settee and it is a far better settee. The dirty, smelly old thing which was part of our heritage has now gone to the tip and we have got a new settee – and it does a better job than the other one.

So, what I am saying is please listen with an open mind. Perhaps you will hear something that might encourage you to support me; but if you do not, please do not support me out of some sympathy or because there is some ancient right that we should automatically have to introduce legislation. I do not think that that is right. I do not need to waste my time if Members are not going to support this. Equally, we do not need to waste the legislative drafters’ time.

So let’s just have a look at what the Legislative Council is and was. The Legislative Council had been, for much of its existence, the executive: it was the Government; it was the Council of Ministers. That is what the Legislative Council was. That is why it was formed. It was not formed for some ancient, magical, fairy-dust reason. It was formed to be the Government of the Isle of Man. It was the henchman of the Lord of Mann. That is what the Legislative Council was: the executive – the unaccountable executive, the undemocratic executive, but it was the executive.

We now have a new Council – it is called the Council of Ministers. It *is* actually accountable, despite what some people might say. (**A Member:** Government henchmen.) I am inviting comments, I am sure, as I go through with this speech, but actually the Council of Ministers is accountable, it is the executive.

What some Members seem to be implying is that the House of Keys is not up to the job of scrutinising the work of the Council of Ministers and holding the Ministers to account, and we need an unelected, unaccountable body – the Legislative Council – to do that work for us.

That seems a very strange turning around of events. We have had a situation where both branches were unelected: the executive branch, which was the Legislative Council; and the House of Keys, which for most of its existence has been there to question the executive – that has been the main purpose of the House of Keys.

Then, in the mid-19th century, this remarkable idea came along that perhaps we should not pick who we would have as Members of the House of Keys from amongst ourselves, we should actually... and indeed an ancient relative of mine was quite adamant that this was going to be the end of the world by actually allowing the people to decide who their Members should be. But we decided to do that in the middle of the 19th century, and the House of Keys, the body which scrutinised the executive, became democratic. We, the people, decided who should sit in here and who should scrutinise the work of the executive.

Gradually, over the course of the 20th century, the Legislative Council stopped being the henchman of the Lord of Mann. It gradually gained some semblance of accountability, in that at least we, as Members of the House of Keys, decided who the Members should be.

So we have had this complete turning around of events now, certainly since the 1960s, where actually Legislative Council is seen to be some kind of scrutiny body, some sort of body which holds the executive to account – quite extraordinary, in terms of the overall history of the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council had always been the executive – it was the Government – and now the arguments against what I am proposing seem to be that we need an unelected, unaccountable body to help scrutinise the executive. It seems a very strange argument, to my mind.

The proposal that I am putting forward is relatively simple; in fact, it is very simple. We would get rid of the Legislative Council, ideally by the next election; however, I would be open to suggestions. We could drag it out, we could have a painful farewell over several years, if that is where we want to go, if we want to make it a bit easier on Legislative Council Members. But the top and the bottom of it is that we get rid of the Legislative Council.

We would introduce a new committee stage in the House of Keys. That could take up to an extra month in terms of the delivery of legislation through the Keys, but that would still be several weeks shorter than the process of having to go through the Keys and then into the Legislative Council, so it would not necessarily add to the time. It might actually reduce the time that is taken. The legislation would be thoroughly scrutinised by a scrutiny committee at that committee stage. We could use the existing structures that we have – the three Policy Review Committees of Tynwald – or we could come up with some other form of scrutiny.

Legislative Council roles in Departments could be undertaken by members of the public chosen for their experience and ability, if it is felt that we need lay members in Departments. There are plenty of people out there with lots of experience, who probably do not want to spend their time sitting in the Legislative Council but could provide very valuable support for Departments, if that is what we actually feel that we need. *(Interjection by Mr Anderson)*

A Member: Totally unelected. *(Laughter)*

Mr Gawne: Yes, totally unelected and totally not making any decisions on the future of the Isle of Man, *(Laughter)* but helping people run Departments if that is what we believe is the right thing to do, if we seem to think that these members are not up to staffing all the posts that are required.

Also, the expense of servicing the Legislative Council can be transferred into servicing the committee stage, which would allow potentially for more professional advice and support in terms of scrutiny, so we would actually probably end up getting better levels of scrutiny by having this more intense committee stage.

So, why now? We have just had the debate about modernising ministerial government. I believe that that is a step in the right direction. It is not the whole journey in terms of reform –

we have been hearing a lot about journeys towards fairness; the Hon. Member for Glenfaba is particularly keen on this – but I believe that we will continue to simplify the way in which we run our Government, and there are likely to be even fewer roles for Members of the House of Keys in Government as the reform process continues.

So we will be left with a position where we have quite a few spare Members of the House of Keys looking for things to do, but we will also have this fantastic and vitally important unelected Chamber, without which Chamber somehow the whole system of scrutiny will fall apart, according to some Members.

We are also in a position – of which if Members are not aware I would be very surprised, and certainly the Treasury Minister would be disappointed – where we have a third less income. Painful decisions are being taken across the public service. However, the parliamentary side of Government expenditure appears to be largely unaffected by the massive changes that are going along elsewhere. That is not to say that parliament is not doing its bit. The Clerk of Tynwald's Office is trying to slim things down, but the scale with which parliament is slimming down is quite small compared with certainly what a number of the Departments are having to face.

So my view – and I know it is not shared by the majority in here, but I do believe that I have the right to put my view (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) – is that we do not actually need the Legislative Council. We would miss it if it was gone, but we do not actually need it.

What we need is democracy – proper democracy, true democracy – where the people decide who they want to represent them. Those people do their best, and come General Election time, if the people who have been elected fail to deliver, fail to provide the services and the standards that the people expect, then new people will be elected. Why we think that we have to have this Legislative Council, where people can go and sit in their retirement, I am not entirely sure.

So this is a genuine attempt. I know people love to think of cynical and underhand reasons why certain motions may be put. This is a genuine attempt to do the right thing. It is a genuine attempt to look for fairness, to look for a better system, a simplified system. We are simplifying Government, but we do not appear to have the stomach – or some of us at least do not appear to have the stomach – to simplify the parliamentary structures. I think it is probably time that we did. We have had a long history of simplification or reform of parliament over many centuries, and I do believe that we seem to have slowed down in terms of that reform. It is time we speeded up again.

This is bold, perhaps a bit radical – maybe too radical for some Members – but it is a genuine attempt to do the right thing. As I said at the start, please do not waste my time or the time of the legislative drafters in supporting my leave to introduce if you have no intention of supporting this at a later stage. It is a genuine attempt to try and do the right thing.

I beg to move.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas West, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I rise to second, but reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Mr Speaker, actually, if there had not been a seconder, I would have stood up and seconded this motion but made it quite clear that I intended to vote against it, because I believe these proposals need discussing to expose the hypocrisy of the Member who has put them forward. *(Laughter)*

I am absolutely astonished at this time –

The Speaker: Hon. Member, I ask you to withdraw (**Mr Gawne:** Hear, hear.) the accusation of hypocrisy.

Mr Singer: Under your instruction, I will do that.

I am astonished that, at this time of important and game-changing restructuring of Government and the pressure on Ministers to deliver, the proposer has the time to bring forward a Private Member's Bill and the time to devote to its format and the necessary wide-ranging consultation, whilst expecting also the Attorney General's Chambers, who are under pressure to produce very important legislation at this moment, to find time to draft the Bill.

I have listened to the argument put forward by the proposer and I have to say, to me, there is not a cogent and pressing reason for the Bill at all. Certainly there has not been any clear indication of the consequences of getting rid of the Legislative Council if it were to become law.

I should think that certainly if the Minister had any ideas of seeking election to the Legislative Council in the future I would doubt that there would be a climate change in here to accommodate him.

One of the first things he said was that the Legislative Council produces a useful function. That is what he said – some of the first words that he said. And then he started to talk to us about the Legislative Council, if it was disbanded, and he put all his arguments around a life's trauma of all the happenings on his settee. Certainly that is hardly a case. Then he seemed to be saying the Legislative Council should go because of its previous history, not what it actually does now.

I would have understood if the Minister had come forward with proposals to increase efficiencies and reduce expenditure, with suggestions perhaps, such as to reduce the number of Members of the Legislative Council, limit their responsibility, limit their pay structure, or even reduce the number of Members in this Hon. House (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) to save money. If so, I would have been happy to allow him to bring a Bill to the House; but this proposal has, in my view, nothing to do with such principles, as I will come to shortly.

I am the only Member of this House who has experience both of the House of Keys and the Legislative Council, and I am aware, therefore, of the necessity for a revising chamber to scrutinise legislation. You cannot just do away with the Legislative Council.

We have to remember that Legislative Council Members are there because they wish to closely scrutinise legislation. That is the reason they are there. It is totally different to voting Members from this Chamber onto a committee on which they might not want to go, on which they might not want to sit, and therefore you could not guarantee that there would be that close... even then of the Bills. We know, even though Bills go through this House and then go to the Legislative Council, where they do find matters that need altering... sometimes even they do not find that, so just to get rid of them is not the answer.

So I think there was a very weak argument by the proposer in seeking leave, and one has to to... I have come to the conclusion that there is a totally different reason behind this proposal coming forward at this time, and I think some others might have ideas what it might be: currying public favour for the future.

I would speak to the proposer via the Chair, and say to him: concentrate on the important matters of the day as a priority, not being the captain of a ship... leaving a ship in stormy waters and wanting to return when the sea is calm. You are there for leadership now on the matters affecting this Government, and it suddenly does not seem to be that it is all hands on deck.

I hope that Hon. Members, who rarely refuse a request to introduce a Bill... but in this case I think there is neither the sincerity, in my view, nor the belief in the Bill from the proposer himself, and I would hope that Hon. Members vote against this motion.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

Mrs Cannell: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I think, although it is provocative to suggest that we ought to consider abolishing the Legislative Council, I actually find it, in some weird fashion, to be quite refreshing.

A Member: Why did you stand for Legislative Council, then?

Mrs Cannell: During my time in this House, we have tried on no less than four of five occasions to reform the Legislative Council and make them publicly accountable, and each time we have failed. Each time we have failed because they like what they are doing, how they do it and where they are, and they really do not want any change and certainly do not want any interference from this House – ‘How dare they?’

Honestly, if some Members had been here some years ago when we had some very sterling speakers from the Legislative Council, who defended it to the hilt and suggested how dare we even consider that they should change or be reformed or be modernised or be publicly accountable... And then we had a change of mood several years later, where... ‘Well, yes, we are prepared to be publicly accountable, but we want to be senators and we want the whole Island vote.’ Of course, that was bound to fail, wasn’t it, because that would have made them more supreme, had that worked, than the actual publicly elected people’s representatives, the House of Keys. And so it goes on, and it goes on, and it has gone on and we have not changed.

I think there is one thing for sure: we have lost a third of our income. The Government are looking at the scope of what they provide with possibly the view of accommodating that loss of the third of income. Government is shrinking, the services that Government provide going forward are going to shrink, so it does beg the question... if the money is reduced, the income has reduced, the services will be reduced from what the public can expect to be publicly financed, then surely the legislator should be reduced too. So I think it is actually quite timely.

What I would say is that I support it and I will support him going forward, and if he is successful after Second Reading, I would refer it to a committee of this House, (**Mr Quirk:** For examination.) because there are ramifications. The Legislative Council is so closely entwined within our parliamentary structure – we rely on it an awful lot, and a lot of that reliance we have taken for granted over the years. If we were to change it or abolish it, we would seriously have to consider a whole new structure to take account of what they have actually done over the years.

An example of that: the Legislative Council the way it is, currently rolls on, whereas we will go out every five years for an election. There comes a date in election year and that is when we cease to be Members; but the Legislative Council can roll on, so Government business can roll on. It is complicated, but it is not so complicated that it cannot be undone and a new structure put in. But it is complicated, so it needs proper thought. It also needs proper public consultation, because it is a very radical move – but still I find it refreshing.

I want to remind the previous speaker that when he first came into this place with me in 1996, we were members of a group of politicians who called themselves the Alliance for Progressive Government, and their policies of the time – which I still uphold, and I would hope the Hon. Member for Ramsey still upholds somewhere... is that the Legislative Council should be reformed, they should be publicly elected. The other policy – and there was a report and a Select Committee that followed – proposed a unicameral system.

Mr Singer: I opposed that.

Mrs Cannell: The APG policy was in support of a unicameral system. The Hon. Member said he did not support that, but the rest of the group did.

What the Hon. Member for Rushen is proposing sounds to me like a unicameral system, only the numbers will be greatly reduced. We would only have 24, as opposed to 32, so there would be a reduction in numbers, which conforms with the loss of income, the restructuring of Government and the scope of Government.

We would need to strengthen scrutiny, because that is where a very important role is still there and alive... that if a Bill is passed, it is not that we are incompetent and cannot read... Some of us do read the legislation. I have noted others do not, but it is our primary function, as a Member of the House of Keys, to actually scrutinise legislation as we are passing it to make sure that it reflects good law for the people and that there are no mistakes in it.

Occasionally, after all the readings have been completed here and it goes to the Legislative Council, the Department which is sponsoring the said Bill will suddenly realise that there is a change that is required, or something has moved, internationally, quicker than the Bill has kept pace with, and so therefore the opportunity is there for the Legislative Council to make an amendment to it. They then have to pass it back to us. We have to agree the amendment. If we do not... Going back not so very long ago, if we disagreed with their amendment, the Bill fell and that was it – it just went into the long grass. Now we have a system where, if they propose an amendment and we say no, we do not like that, the Bill is still live but it is just delayed. We have to wait a while before we can send it off for Royal Assent.

Things have evolved and they have got slowly better, but *very* slowly have they moved, so I think it is refreshing to actually look at... It has never been suggested to me in my time here that we should completely abolish the Legislative Council. I have always favoured reform and making them publicly accountable, but to completely abolish them... I had never considered the thought, but I think it is one that is worthy of considering.

Mr Singer: With a unicameral system, you must have done.

Mrs Cannell: I think it is one that is worthy of considering, so I am going to support the Hon. Member. I would not have used the words in his opening remarks about his couch, (**A Member:** That's true.) his children, vomit and cats, but I can see where he is trying to come from. He is trying to put it very simply for everybody to be able to understand: it is time to modernise, it is time to move forward, it is time to look at it now.

We can always say this is not the right time: Government is up to its neck in this and the Attorney General's Chambers are swimming, trying to keep up with legislation. There will always be excuses for not doing something, but I think it would be unreasonable not to at least look at it, let it get to... give him permission to put it together, let it get to its Second Reading and then refer it to a committee of the House and take it out for public consultation.

It is going to take it beyond the next General Election, so Hon. Members here who wish to be re-elected should not be worried about that; (**Mr Singer:** He is.) but it is good to have public debate on it, so I would encourage Hon. Members to give the Member support.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Hall.

Mr Hall: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I think the case that was put forward by the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gawne, was less than convincing.

I think that the Hon. Member for East Douglas, Mrs Cannell, talking about how many debates have been had and that everything has failed... I think we have to ask ourselves why is that.

As I see it, one of the difficulties for reform of this is that perhaps we take the existence of the Legislative Council as a given and the flaws that go with it, and then it can either remain as an unelected composition, so to speak, or it will be directly elected – and that almost appears then to duplicate the House of Keys. I think this is one of the difficulties that we are facing here with this whole issue and how we keep going round and round in circles.

I think those who have been in power over the previous years have not ever warmed to the idea of holding a referendum on the issue, which I have previously put on record that I would be in favour of. I believe that the people of the Island, when we are talking about constitutional

issues... especially that they are sovereign, and I do not think there could be a better way of sorting this whole issue out once and for all than by asking the people to decide on the future of the Legislative Council. Following years and years of never being able to actually come to a consensus or decision on the issue here, it is quite clear, it appears to me, that you never are going to reach a decision on it, and it is just going to go round in circles.

I do not think that anybody would seek to completely get rid of a particular section of the parliament, just based perhaps on, 'Well, let's just reduce the number of politicians,' or, 'We'll save a few pounds here.' I think that broadly it is outdated. I do not think it reflects modern thinking and I think the whole basis on which it was formed does not really reflect modern society.

I think that when we look at parliamentary democracy all around the world, it has moved on quite considerably; and I think that maintaining a section of the parliament, to which the Members are re-elected by the people in the House of Keys of that day, is not defensible.

When you look at the issue about the second Chamber and say, 'Well, it absolutely is crucial to democracy,' I think that is untrue, because if you go and look around the world...

For example, I think it is important to note that in all of the Scandinavian countries they have abolished their second houses, and those countries in Scandinavia have probably got the most accountable and effective political systems in the entire world. In other small successful countries, such as New Zealand... If we look at that as an example, I think New Zealand has shown that it is perfectly possible to establish the balances and the checks within a single chamber of a unicameral system of parliament. Then, if we go and look at Central and Eastern Europe, they have also decided that they do not need to have the second chamber either.

So, if the second chamber is the cornerstone of democracy, as a lot of people would argue, then why have so many democracies around the world decided they do not need one and they have done away with them?

We have got a very long-established democracy here, a lot of history. I think it is perhaps even less of a requirement and it is no more necessary here than it is in other states.

I think really the question is: do we want a parliament that is going to be fit for the 21st century? So it needs to be taken in a much wider context.

In principle, I am going to support the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gawne, but it is a very complex area, it will need an incredible amount of work – and it is not simple, that is for sure.

I think it is disappointing that the case that he stated was less than convincing –

Mr Anderson: He convinced you, though.

Mr Hall: – and I think perhaps he would have done a bit better... [*Inaudible*] putting it in a different way.

I think it should be taken that we should reform the entire parliament as a whole, and I think that we will do ourselves a lot of good service if we do that and make it fit for the 21st century, because I think that if you vote against the motion that is being put forward by the Hon. Member, Mr Gawne, in my view you are very much saying, 'No, we want to actually stay in the past, effectively, and we do not want to change, we do not want to reform, we do not want to make ourselves more effective, and we want to sit there.' That is not really how societies, it is not how countries, it is not how governments are working these days, and it is not how they can work.

I think if you want to run with the Minister and you will give him the support to give him the opportunity to bring something forward and then look at the detail afterwards, then we are saying, 'Well, actually, yes, we want to move our parliament, we want to change it and we want to make it fitter – we want to make it a lot more effective.'

Where there is a will there is a way. It can be done, and I do think and hope that perhaps Hon. Members should just give their backing to the Minister, the Hon. Member for Rushen, and then all of the other issues... I think it will take quite a bit of time. That is how I see things, anyway.

The issue about the referendum, I do think that is really a cornerstone, because otherwise I do not think... That is what will give us the strong mandate to change, and that can be done. It is there, that provision to do it, and putting it to the people to decide is the right way to go about it in this particular constitutional change.

That is all I have really got to say about it, and I will pass over to the next Member.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister (Mr Bell): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I only intend to make a couple of comments about this.

I do not want to get drawn into the wider debate at this stage; other than, first of all, I would like to congratulate the Member for moving this. This is a wonderful example of a red-herring that has been dragged through the House of Keys to muddy the waters in relation to the Representation of the People Act, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and I congratulate him on his efforts to defend the *status quo* of three-seat constituencies.

Mr Speaker, this is being presented in a very simplistic way: let's just abolish the Legislative Council; let's save £300,000 a year, or whatever the figure is, and suddenly democracy will be restored to the Isle of Man and everything in the garden will be wonderful for the future.

Nothing could be further from the truth. What you are doing here, in voting for... I accept it is leave to introduce at this stage, but if you vote simply to abolish the Legislative Council, you are in fact also voting to abolish the House of Keys, because the two are totally connected and the role of the House of Keys in future will be entirely different from what it is today if this legislation goes through.

So I would urge Hon. Members, before you jump in and follow what is clearly a populist issue – and in some cases a popular issue, I accept that – just stop to think of the huge amount of work and the implications, particularly the constitutional implications, of this step. This is not a baby step to reform the Legislative Council. It is a major constitutional upheaval of the governmental structure that we have enjoyed for many hundreds of years, so please be aware of that.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to go into the pros and cons of reform of Legislative Council, because everybody has their views on that, and I think most people in the Legislative Council themselves agree that some sort of reform will be appropriate in due course.

The only comment I would make to Hon. Members – and it is a practical one; it is nothing to do with the pros and cons of the recommendation – is the incredible pressure at the moment that the Attorney General's office is under, and the legislative draftsmen in particular, to get very urgent and very serious legislation drafted and before this House.

We know we have struggled over the last few months to get Bills here for discussion. It is because we have a shortage of legal draftsmen in the Attorney General's office. We are having incredible difficulty recruiting. The last one had to come from Australia, because there is a worldwide shortage of legal draftsmen.

I know it is tradition here that we would vote to give any Member the right or the leave to introduce whatever legislation it might be. I would just ask Hon. Members to please... In the past, we have done that, very often in the knowledge that we are going to vote against that legislation anyway. Be honest this time in your voting. If you do not intend to support this Bill beyond this particular measure, please vote against it now, rather than put the extra burden on the legislative draftsmen; because if this Bill goes forward, it is going to be a very complex Bill. It is not just going to be a one-liner: 'We abolish Legislative Council'. It is going to take a huge amount of work in the draftsmen's division to actually put this Bill together and it will undoubtedly hold up, or even prevent in some cases, other important legislation, which is urgent for the greater good of the Isle of Man, getting through.

So please, the request I would make, Mr Speaker: regardless of views of the wider issues, if you do not intend to support this Bill beyond the leave to introduce, then vote against it now and prevent even further damage further down the road in trying to get our legislative programme through.

Mr Gawne: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Malew and Santon, Mr Cregeen.

Mr Cregeen: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am disappointed with the mover bringing this forward at the moment. (**A Member:** Absolutely.) We are all very much aware of his passion towards climate change and the environment, and he talks endlessly about climate change and what we should do about it; yet this is a hand grenade into the political arena without much discussion in the last year or two years.

I would have thought, rather than voting this through now and then putting it to a committee, surely the best thing to do is to actually discuss what you want to do first of all and then bring it here. You are doing it the wrong way round. Show people what you really want, instead of saying, 'Well, I've got this idea and I want somebody else to work it up in a committee to see where we are going to go.' It is a bit disappointing.

I would actually hope that he would withdraw it and then ask a number of Members privately to see whether they will work with him, because as a Member who actually supported previous legislation to review what the Legislative Council do, I think it is more beneficial to all of those if we actually see where we are going to go, rather than just blindly accept this and say, 'I'll tell you what, we've now got to find something to make this work.' It wastes an awful lot of people's time and I think there are many Members, even in the Legislative Council, who will discuss this with the Member and he will actually have something better to come to this Hon. House to discuss.

It was disappointing, given his comment, 'Well, if you are not going to support me, then you are not supporting change.' He has taken a line from the Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Karran, who constantly tells us, 'I am right, and if you do not support me, you are all wrong.'

I think Members want to see a review of the Legislative Council, but just by saying we are going to abolish it is not actually fixing it. You could say it is a cheap move to try and distract things, but I would hope he would withdraw it. I am quite willing to work with him on how we are going to review the legislative Chamber, but his suggestions about Members of the House of Keys working in committees... We are all very much aware of certain Members who do not pull their weight, working in Departments. It may be alright for those people who have not put much time in to be able to work on committees, but there are a lot of people in this Hon. House who are very dedicated to their job, and to then say we are now going to get rid of the Legislative Council – and by the way, you will now find some additional time... The Member has got three Members for his own Department: does he really need three Members? I know from my own Department, I was one pushing to dissolve my Department because I felt it would be better to go somewhere else. (*Interjection*) Let's look at this practically.

I would hope that he would withdraw it and come back later on.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Skelly.

Mr Skelly: Gura mie eu, Loayreyder.

Controversial and radical – well, I would not expect anything different from my hon. friend and colleague from Rushen.

I have to say I do like his analogy of the settee and I know we have got a change of furniture coming in Rushen, so he will get some change. *(Laughter) (Interjection by Mr Cregeen)* I have to thank the Hon. Member for Malew and Santon for that.

It can be seen in many ways, and we have already heard that in this debate. For me, I think it is healthy to challenge the core functions of Tynwald and Government, and there is nothing wrong with that at all. In fact, it is part of the Scope of Government Report: no stone unturned; every part of Government has to be examined; is it value for money? Because that is what we are asking. We want a smaller Government.

So what the Member is asking is can we operate with a smaller number of politicians. Yes, we probably can. The public constantly criticise us, saying there are too many politicians, we are too well paid, and 'Are we getting value for money?' That is what they keep asking us. We, in this House, know we get measured every five years by the public. Of course it is very different for MLCs; we all know that.

It is unfortunate, actually, and a great shame that the Hon. Member for Michael, who put forward a motion in Tynwald just over a year ago to have a look at the political pay and reform, that aspect of Tynwald... It was a really important motion, because it would have given a fantastic opportunity – an opportunity now missed – where we would have been independently evaluated.

It has already been mentioned by several Members about the difference in service given by Members – and I say 'Members': MHKs and MLCs. We could have talked about should we be paid the same, should we have the same level of expenses, should we remove the financial incentive to work in a Department? That would have given the ultimate question: are MHKs and MLCs giving value for money? So it is unfortunate that was not supported over a year ago, because then we would have had that opportunity. I think seven MHKs supported it; no MLCs – you wonder why.

We have also had reared the age-old issue of MLCs: should they be publicly elected? There have been numerous efforts to try and bring that forward, and Mr Karran of course is working on one which we will debate in due course. However, in my view, personally, I think if that is ever realised, that is going to be more MHKs (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) effectively. Do we want more politicians? I do not think the public do – they say we have got enough.

With MLCs, I think you have to consider what is their primary function. Their primary function is revising legislation, and I very much support MHKs going in there because they do understand legislation because they have come through here – but it is about balance. You remove the Legislative Council and you have got no revision.

The Hon. Member talks of committees. Well, that effectively becomes a Legislative Council, so what is the difference? What happens to Tynwald? What happens to the role of President? Constitutional complications are what I see going forward.

I have said it before: MLCs I regard as non-executives of national importance – the only difference being the compensation, to be quite frank – but when you talk of non-executives on a board, I look at the business analogy and think of the shareholders: the shareholders are the public and the public vote the board, which is the MHKs, and then the MHKs can vote for MLCs, the support, the wise independent counsel. That is very necessary, because that wise independent counsel gives us advice on strategy, it understands the financial controls that we need to have and the extra pair of eyes. Can we rely solely on us? We have talked about mistakes – we know mistakes happen – that happen right here in this House, and not having a revising chamber... So I think it is too complicated, to be quite frank.

I also need to look at what would happen if we did support this. The Member would go away, would prepare, would submit. It would then have to go to the Legislative Council. I think we know which way they would vote, so we would end up in dispute, in disagreement; and as far as I can research, that means if we last in disagreement for 18 months, we have the authority, we have the power... The power is still right here. We could send that up for Royal Assent, but that is going to require 17 Members to support. Is it realistic? Do we need to spend all that time?

So, for me, to abolish I say no, to reform I say yes, and I look forward to Mr Karran bringing forward his motion so we can look at that.

Gura mie eu.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I was quite surprised to hear the Chief Minister suggest that the people were wrong. People do talk sense and people are what democracy is all about.

The Chief Minister: I did not say the people were wrong.

Mr Thomas: I thought the Hon. Member for Onchan was much more persuasive when he talked about a referendum, and I just wanted to put it on record that that is very much what I would support in conjunction with the local authority and general elections in the spring of 2016.

There are a few more issues I would like to bring up. The first one is I took the chance to begin to investigate the financial basis of this legislature. In the last 25 years, since we had the current form under which we are operating, there are a couple of striking things. One of those is that the pension costs of Members have gone up by 11 times. The cost to Members has only doubled and the cost of administration has tripled, but the cost of Members' pensions has gone up by over 10 times – by 11 times. That is an issue that is now on the public record and can be investigated further.

Another point I wanted to raise is the one which again was made very powerfully by the Hon. Member for Onchan, which is that New Zealand did not just abolish its second chamber yesterday: it abolished it in 1951, and disaster has not happened. Likewise, in our sister parliaments based on the Norse model, they were once like us, and they have stopped being like us and have gone to the unicameral... So it is not as if people like us have not reformed successfully.

The other point I wanted to stress was that Mrs Cannell, the Hon. Member for East Douglas, was persuasive inasmuch as although this is not a completely new approach... For instance, Mr Quine in 1983, Mr Quine in 1988, Mr Quine in 1990, Mr Cannan in 2000, Mr Rodan in 2004, I believe, and Mr Cannan senior in 2007 have all tried to bring the idea of a single General Election to a Tynwald, a single Chamber, before; so there is plenty of debate in the past about this issue. It did not go through, for the reasons of Legislative Council not voting for it, but it is an issue that has been around, and I think it would be wonderful to actually have a published debate initiated by the process of drafting this legislation to go back to that idea of a single Chamber that has been considered for nearly 20 years.

The other point I wanted to make is it is not only legislative drafting that is involved. As has been suggested in this debate, we need to review the role of Members – all types of Members, elected and unelected. Why couldn't the Attorney General start sitting with us to improve our scrutiny process?

We also need to think about the number of politicians. Previously, it has always been proposed that we had a direct election for a 32-Member single Chamber, and I heard one of the Members of the Legislative Council e-mailing into Manx radio this morning, suggesting 16 two-Member constituencies, going back to that old idea. But another question is: do we need 24; do we need 32? Both of those numbers come from the history of this parliament of ours.

Obviously, the role of the Bishop has been mentioned, and that to me is a side issue. It is a separate issue.

So, in summary, I am fully supportive and I congratulate the Hon. Member for Rushen for bringing this motion. It is not as complex... It is not going to waste legislative drafting time. (**The Chief Minister:** Yes, it is.) Democracy is at the heart of all of this. The 1919 Constitution Act, on

which all this is based, is a very simple piece of legislation. It is not going to take any time whatsoever to propose an amendment to that and to work with the public to debate these issues, so that at the General Election in 2016 we have a clear idea about what people think about parliamentary reform and how this great Tynwald of ours should look going forward.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

Mr Karran: Vainstyr Loayreyder, I have to say that in the nearly 29 years of being in this House, I have never heard such a speech that is so *lhiam-lhiat-ish* as far as the issues concerned – with me, with thee, and not really sure where we are as far as the input for the original leave.

It does concern me that the fundamental principle is that... Outside, when we had some horrendous times where people were actually wanting to support things that would be against minorities as far as their civil rights... I fundamentally believe that we have a responsibility to give the Member, unless there is real damage or real attack on minorities, as far as the leave is concerned...

I have to say that I totally agree on part of that issue with the Chief Minister on this subject, because his input and the input from the Member for Ramsey, Mr... I do think that maybe the Member for East Douglas has hit it on the head about the 32-Member Tynwald issue.

But we have to leave that at the side, because at the end of the day we are supposed to be all Hon. Members, and the fact is that the Hon. Member for Rushen has asked for leave to do away with the Legislative Council. The only difference, I would say, is if they are not going to be elected, then there should be consideration as far as doing away with the Legislative Council, and this Bill would have been better waiting until the situation as far as my Private Member's Bill is concerned... and if it had been done then, it would have been in the much clearer position that we were in a position of no change.

I have to say that the argument about the parliamentary time... We are booked in from 10 o'clock until half past five, and we will be finished by one o'clock, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) so the point is we cannot argue the fact that we have not got the time, (**The Chief Minister:** The drafters.) and we should have the time as far as the legislative drafting is concerned.

One of the biggest concerns I have is I get annoyed that we are always portrayed as wanting to attack Government, but the problem is the role in this House is actually to hold them to account, and unfortunately maybe we have not done a good enough job in the impossible positions that a few of those who have taken that role on over the last 20 years to stop some of the things that have happened...

I feel that the situation is that, whilst I would prefer to see reform of the Legislative Council, I feel it would be wrong of us not to give leave to introduce. There is no excuse as far as parliamentary time is concerned. What I hope will happen with other legislation that is coming in front of you... will actually recognise the fact at the moment, and I think there are a number of we parliamentarians who are deeply concerned that there seems to be far more scrutiny of primary legislation in the Upper House than there is in the Lower House. I think the point is it is the role that has gone away. It is not sexy, it is not hip, it is not the thing that will get you the real headlines, doing that, instead of handing out bucket-loads of taxpayers' money when you are part of the executive club.

The fact is Hon. Members should give leave to introduce. What are the reasons behind this Bill is up to the Hon. Member and what the reason is behind this Bill, in my opinion, is an issue maybe, but I do feel that if we do not get the Legislative Council elected by the people of the Isle of Man, then I am afraid that I would support the abolishment of the system, because I do believe that they are not performing an important role as far as the audit of the executive – they are part of the club – but what they *do* do, to be fair to them, is a very good job of scrutinising legislation.

To be fair to the Government Ministers, they work as a team – or as we say, as a party. They have a party line on primary legislation and they cannot be criticised as far as that party line on legislation is concerned – and I cannot criticise them as far as their input into the legislative process, because they are part of executive Government. If those Bills are promoted by executive Government, then they have a party line on that, and I am not denying that. If any criticism can be put at the feet... it is the rest of us, who are not part of ministerial duties, who do not scrutinise enough.

So I think, Hon. Members, whilst I understand the sentiments of the Ard-shirveishagh and the Oltey son Rhumsaa, I think we should give the Hon. Member the opportunity and give leave to introduce, and let him come back with this thing – and I just hope he comes back with a more spiritual defence of why he is coming here, instead of some sort of Manxie who is trying to be *lhiam-lhiat* and does not want to upset anybody. That is with thee, with me, and really... because there was no real assertion to actually want to see this through.

I do hope that the Hon. Member, if he does get leave to introduce, will not bring the Bill forward to whatever happens as far as *my Private Member*' Bill is concerned – and on that understanding, I am very happy to support the leave to introduce.

Hon. Members, the spirit might not have been there as much as it should have been for leave to introduce, but it is important that the first role, when you get your writ as an Oltey Kiare-as-feed, as a Member of the House of Keys... Your primary role is primarily legislation, and if the Hon. Member wants to do something, and it is not an attack on civil liberties or is going to do a terrible job on minorities or that sort of thing, I think we have a duty to support the leave to introduce, and let's see what the Bill says.

But please, Hon. Member, I hope you leave your Bill until after the passage of my Bill, whichever way. Thanks.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Quirk.

Mr Quirk: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Interesting, the analogies here today regarding the Legislative Council.

If I could just touch on the mover of the private legislation... regarding his sofa, normally what a person would do is try and recycle that sofa first, so I had a little bit of sympathy with him, but not a lot. I think he may be posturing. I like the Member for Ramsey, Mr Singer's little comments too – I suppose I echo them slightly.

With reference to is it the right time, or what the Legislative Council do... Is it a retirement home? I do not think it is that. Okay, some of the Members are getting a bit older, but I look at why I would put a Member up to the Legislative Council, and I always exercise my vote in a conscious way to make sure of what that person would actually give to the Isle of Man, give to the parliament itself, and I do exercise that vote. Although it is in private, I do not mind that. I would not mind doing it in public because I assess that a person who wants to be a Member of this Legislative Council has to give something back to the community and the Island as a whole, and I just do not want it to be seen as a super-elected Chamber.

I have supported a number of initiatives going forward for the reform of the Legislative Council, but I see it as one where there should have been an opportunity... My colleague in Onchan here, Mr Karran, does have a Bill, and I was reading it the other day, the comments that were actually made, where we are really looking at what the terms and conditions are of a Legislative Council Member, which is the role, the remuneration... Those are the sort of issues that maybe are highlighted to the public and are raised in the Island again – and it gets a headline in the paper and we look at it. It has not really been an issue for a long time.

I can see the Member's point regarding if others are suffering and the parliament is suffering, but at the end of the day, somebody has to lead out from the unfortunate times we have had in the past, and we are moving on to a new era.

I want to see both Houses go forward on legislation. To me, as I have been in parliament since 2006, I have seen a better role or a better... *[Inaudible]* to the Members of the Legislative Council. I talk to all of them. There is nothing that they would not share with you or exchange with you, or give you views on the past; and they certainly do give you a steer of some of the Members who are in this particular House as well and what we should be doing.

So, to that point, I am not happy to support the Member. He is wanting an indication at the beginning: would I be happy to dissolve the Legislative Council now, today? I do not think I would, so I would rather be fair to the Minister and actually tell him that.

I am looking forward to whatever comes of the Bill, of which it is going to be the anniversary in June; and we have not seen anything coming forward at the minute, but we are likely to in the future, I am sure. Hopefully, it will not be too close to the election, because otherwise our Hon. Member for Onchan could be accused of electioneering at the same time as the Member for Rushen has.

So, if I could give that to the Member, that I will not be supporting the leave to introduce.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft.

Mrs Beecroft: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I will be brief. There have been an awful lot of points put into the debate this morning, which are all worth considering.

I do hope, when Minister Gawne says it is a simple Bill, that if he is given leave to introduce today, when he brings it back to us it actually is not that simple, because there are concerns that have been raised by Members.

I will cut to the chase: my main concern is the scrutiny, not just of primarily legislation but of policy and secondary legislation. Whilst I agree that we should not have unelected people voting on our policies and secondary legislation, I do believe that we need a few more numbers than 24 if you are going to be governed by collective responsibility, which the Council of Ministers have. Plus, if there are any financial implications, you have automatically got the support of the departmental Members, and if there are any financial implications and it has gone through Treasury, you have those Members of Treasury tied with collective responsibility as well.

So we do not have sufficient numbers to form any sort of scrutiny – *effective* scrutiny – as it is, with 24 of us. We struggle with 32, because it is rare that the Legislative Council go against the Council of Ministers, and if they were popularly elected it might sharpen their minds to actually think about it a bit more and perform that scrutiny process that is so important. I know people knock the scrutiny and say, ‘You’re just looking for things to criticise,’ but it is not the case. Scrutiny is *very* important in any democratic process.

I will be voting to give Mr Gawne, the Member for Rushen, leave to introduce, because my understanding is that he can be given leave but he does not actually have to introduce it if he does not think he has support, or he can introduce it with some sort of other safeguards in it.

Like my colleague who spoke just before me, I do hope he waits until after we have brought our Bill forward before he would introduce it, to take this any further.

But it is the scrutiny side, it is the lack of numbers that is my biggest concern by just abolishing it.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Glenfaba, Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I will be even briefer than the Hon. Member who has just resumed her seat.

I rise to my feet following contributions by several Members who said, on principle basically, that they would be giving the Hon. Member leave to introduce. I just wonder, when the Hon.

Member responds to comments this morning, if he will make it very clear, as I think he did when he moved his motion to start with, that he would not be asking people to give leave to introduce if they are only doing that out of parliamentary privilege, and that if they have hesitation about what it actually says in his motion to abolish the Legislative Council, they will be upfront and honest and vote against this at the leave to introduce stage.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Peel, Mr Crookall.

Mr Crookall: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

There have been some very good points made by everybody this morning, but I think that the point that has come across more than most is that everybody would like to see some sort of reformation of the Legislative Council, but not the abolishment.

I would echo the sentiments of a few Members this morning who have asked the Minister to withdraw this motion and reconsider, and then, having discussed it with other Members, come back at some other stage maybe with an amendment to the Hon. Member for Onchan's Bill, Mr Karran. I would ask him to do that. I do believe that reformation is needed in the Legislative Council, and I would ask him to do that, sir.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Castletown, Mr Ronan.

Mr Ronan: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I again will be very brief. I came in here today – I will be honest with you – with an open mind. I wanted to hear what Hon. Members had to say. There has been very little lobbying on this since it came out in the paper a week ago, which is always a cause of surprise to me. If the Member had lobbied me and given me the full details and reasons for why he wanted to do it, I think I might have been more receptive to his thinking.

I would like to touch on a couple of points that have been made today. I think the Member for Onchan, Mr Hall, made some very interesting comments – the way he put about the way other houses have reformed around the world was interesting and worth... I think that had more relevance to what the mover said.

I would like to focus on what the Chief Minister said. Maybe the reason behind this is the Representation of the People Act – I do not know, but I have got my doubts for the reasons behind this, and for that reason I will not be supporting it today.

The Speaker: I call on the mover to reply. Mr Gawne.

Mr Gawne: Gura mie eu, Loayreyder, and thank you to all Hon. Members for your contributions.

I think my colleague from Rushen, my hon. friend, suggested that radical and controversial was the order of the day – and certainly that was my intention. That actually was one of the reasons why I did not go round lobbying. I have not spent a lot of time trying to persuade people outside of this debating Chamber what the right thing to do is in my view, because I believe that occasionally, on topics, for example, like this one, we should actually debate them in here and maybe just explore some ideas and see where we go with them.

I apologise to my hon. friend for Onchan, Mr Karran, for not being robust enough in my opening remarks, and indeed that is a sentiment first expressed by the Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Hall. I bow to their experience on getting motions through Keys and Tynwald, and perhaps if I followed their advice I would be less successful. Apologies for that, because I do try and be positive, and that was a bit cheap – apologies. *(Interjection)*

Mr Singer, Hon. Member for Ramsey, began by calling me a hypocrite, which he then withdrew. He then suggested that in some way I have not got enough time to be doing this, I

should be focusing on the big picture; and then accused me of being a populist. He said that he is aware of the necessity for Legislative Council, but did not actually share his reasons for being aware of that, what the necessity was. So actually, if you read back through *Hansard*, he did not actually give any reason why this was a bad thing to do. He called me names, and that was about it.

That was a theme that developed from those who oppose this particular motion. They have not actually come up with any convincing reasons why they should not support this. They have said, 'Oh, we are far too busy,' and 'There are other things to do,' and 'This is all a distraction.' But actually, there is no convincing reason why we need to have the Legislative Council, certainly not that I have heard. Maybe I was not listening as carefully as I should have done. (**A Member:** Probably.)

I thank Mrs Cannell for her supportive comments.

Yes, I am proposing a unicameral system – a unicameral system with fewer Members. This is a simpler thing to do than trying to go the way we have tried in the past, of looking at an expanded 32-Member Chamber. My view is that there is an argument that says that when everywhere else, across the whole public service, we are radically reducing the size and scale, we should look to do the same in our parliamentary setting. So I do believe that what I am about here is to create a unicameral system, a smaller unicameral system than has been suggested in the past.

'Could do better – see me at the end of the lesson,' seemed to be the general tenor of Mr Hall's comments. I thank him though for presenting the argument in a way that I did not. That does not necessarily mean to say that I was wrong – but perhaps I was; I do not know – but yes, there is a wide range of ways in which I can present my arguments and I am very grateful to the Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Hall, for presenting that argument.

It is clear there are plenty of parliaments around the world that used to have two or possibly three chambers and they are now unicameral, and they have not collapsed: the government still goes on, the parliament still scrutinises, it works – so it can happen.

Again, the analogy I was trying to use with the old settee was really... I could have used the combustion engine – that is another good example. I am quite sure that when the combustion engine was first being introduced, people would have said, 'Yes but think of the noise! Think of the possibility that these engine-driven carts could actually start killing people!' Yes, they were right: we *have* got all this noise pollution, we *have* got deaths on the roads – these things are actually happening. (*Interjection by Mr Quirk*) But it is a lot better, it is a lot more efficient, it is a better system.

Loads of people at loads of different crucial points in history have argued against advances, and they probably have come up with convincing arguments why the advances should not happen; (*Interjection*) but that does not mean to say that they were right. It really does not mean to say they were right.

All I am doing is suggesting that we have a constitutional equivalent of the combustion engine introduced, and Members can decide whether they agree or not. (*Interjection*)

Mr Bell, Hon. Member for Ramsey, accuses the fisheries Minister of introducing red-herrings! (*Laughter*) So be it. 'This is a major reform, and we cannot do it because we are far too busy doing an even bigger, *much* bigger major reform, in terms of Government.' I think actually that is the reason why we *should* do this (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) at this stage. The very fact that the whole of the rest of what we are doing in Government – the *massive* reform which the Chief Minister is leading, and in my view doing a particularly good job of it... (*Laughter and interjections*) That is the very reason why we cannot ignore it in parliament.

How can we possibly face the public sector unions, or whoever else it is, and say, 'Well, actually, we think you have to radically reduce the scale – you have got to work harder, you have got to do more for less – but we are just going to carry on doing things the way we have for the last 200 years.' I think that is the very reason why we do have to engage in this.

Mr Cregeen, my hon. friend for Malew and Santon, is disappointed. He says the idea is too simple. Again, I would apologise if I have suggested that if Members do not support me in some way they do not like change. This is radical and controversial, as my colleague for Rushen has suggested, and perhaps I could have spent a bit more time just warming up the water a little bit so that Members did not get quite such a big shock when they dipped their toes in – but I do think it is the right thing to do. We have to start moving, we have to make some big changes.

I accept the offer which was made by my hon. friend, Mr Cregeen, and indeed I think that was also made by the Hon. Member for Peel, Mr Crookall, that we can talk about this and we can discuss other options and ways in which we can do this. But I will not withdraw, obviously, because we have had the debate now. I think it would be a bit silly not to just conclude the debate and then see where we go from there.

I thank my seconder, the Hon. Member for Douglas West, Mr Thomas, who again pointed out that disaster has not happened in New Zealand. The world has not collapsed in those areas where countries have chosen to go to a unicameral system: it does work, it is possible.

He also mentions the costs. I have not specifically referred to the costs because I do not want to be accused of being a populist, but £400,000 – give or take – is how much Members of the Legislative Council's salaries would be, for example, and that is without even starting to look at pension liabilities.

It does not need to be complex – I think that was another point that the Hon. Member for Douglas West made.

The Hon. Member for Onchan wanted me to be more spirited and not to be a *lhiam-lhiat-ist*. I think we agree to differ on how to get motions through the Keys, and perhaps on this occasion he is right and I am wrong. I do not know – we will find out soon enough.

I hope I am putting up a reasonably spirited defence now – I am certainly doing my best – but absolutely, if I am successful, I would leave my Bill until such time as the Hon. Member for Onchan's Bill has had the opportunity of being debated; and hopefully that Bill will be supported and perhaps I will not need to bring my Bill forward.

The Hon. Member for Quirk, again... (*Laughter*) The Hon. Member for Onchan –

Mr Cregeen: Is that a new constituency?

Mr Gawne: No, it is the Hon. Member for Onchan. Apologies to the Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Quirk. Again, I thank him for his comments and I thank him for his honesty: if that is the way he wants to go, that is fine.

The Hon. Member for... not Beecroft – the Hon. Member for Douglas South, *Mrs Beecroft*, is concerned about whether we will have enough numbers. I believe that if we follow the lead that the Chief Minister is providing us with, in terms of slimming down the size of Government, then we will have fewer roles for political Members. There will be fewer jobs in Government for political Members; therefore, there will be more Members available to do the scrutiny in the House of Keys. So I would hope that she would take some reassurance from that.

Mr Ronan, the Hon. Member for Castletown, suggested that I should have done a bit more lobbying. I hope that I have addressed that. I do actually think that occasionally we are better having an open debate in here, rather than fixing it all up before we get in here; and on this occasion I think this was the right thing to do.

I have referred to the Hon. Member for Peel's comments, and again I am more than happy to discuss other alternatives, assuming that Members choose not to support me on this occasion.

Then we come back to the issue that, for some reason, I am doing this purely to muddy the waters. Well, okay, I will concede that perhaps the Hon. Member for Glenfaba's Bill has prompted me to start looking at some of the bigger constitutional reforms that are necessary, but I can absolutely put on record that I have supported the moves to improve the democracy in our boundaries in Tynwald. I have supported Second Reading. I have got some very helpful

amendments (*Laughter*) at the clauses stage, which I hope will be supported; but if they are not, I will support him at clauses stage and I will support him at Third Reading. So there you are. Whether I have other motivations or not, I will leave that to others to decide.

Mr Singer: Don't you know, then?

Mr Gawne: The top and bottom of it is I believe that now is the right time to consider some fairly radical reform of our parliamentary system. We are doing this across Government.

I was told at a Tynwald Banquet, when I was only elected probably a year – maybe it was two years – by the Deputy Speaker of the Dáil, or one of the Deputy Speakers of the Dáil... I was talking to him about constitutional reform, and I said, 'Probably, I ought to wait a little while, because I do not know that I have got the experience and the knowledge to actually really understand the situation and come forward with meaningful change and meaningful suggestions for reform.' He waved his finger at me and he said, 'No, young man, you need to do it *now, before* you get comfortable, *before* you understand how that system works, because you will *never* make the significant changes, you will *never* do the big reform that is required once you have become comfortable with the system.' (*Interjection*)

That was what really led me on to the settee – and apologies for finishing with the settee, but that was where I was coming from with that: we have grown comfortable with the system as it is; it is *very* easy for us not to change. It is *very* easy for us to invent some reasons, which are probably quite plausible, why we should not do this. That is the easy bit. Much harder to say, 'Actually, we do need to have this reform now – we cannot carry on running the system in the same outdated way as we have done for so many decades, if not centuries.' It is time to start living in the 21st century. I do hope that I will get support from this Hon. House.

I beg to move

Mrs Cannell: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the motion is that set out at Item 4 in the name of the Hon. Member for Rushen, Mr Gawne. Those in favour that leave be granted, please say aye; against, no. The noes have it.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

FOR

Mr Hall
Mr Karran
Mr Cannan
Mr Houghton
Mr Henderson
Mrs Beecroft
Mrs Cannell
Mr Thomas
Mr Gawne

AGAINST

Mr Quirk
Mr Ronan
Mr Crookall
Mr Anderson
Mr Bell
Mr Singer
Mr Quayle
Mr Teare
Mr Cregeen
Mr Robertshaw
Mr Shimmin
Mr Cretney
Mr Skelly

The President: There are 9 votes for and 13 against. The Chair has abstained. The motion therefore fails to carry.

Hon. Members, that concludes the business of the House today. The House will now stand adjourned until the next sitting, which will take place at 10.30 on 18th February in the Tynwald Chamber.