

Defence

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

On a point of order, Mr Speaker. It is now more than four months since the general election, but still the Liaison Committee cannot meet formally to carry out its functions on behalf of the House. Will you assist us, Mr Speaker, because I am afraid that repeated representations from across the House by Select Committee Chairs are not yet making a difference in ensuring that all Select Committees are properly constituted?

John Bercow Speaker of the House of Commons, Chair, Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, Chair, Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion Committee

I am grateful to the hon. Lady for her point of order. It is absurd and indefensible that more than four months after the state opening of Parliament, that Committee, which, of course, consists of the Chairs of the Select Committees, has yet to be constituted. I might add—almost in parentheses, because I am sure that the hon. Lady will feel empathy with other colleagues on this front—that the same situation, I think, applies to the European Scrutiny Committee, and also to another Committee which is not a Select Committee but which is a Committee of Parliament, and a very important Committee at that, namely the Intelligence and Security Committee. Those Committees are there to scrutinise the Executive branch.

I discussed this important matter in a most co-operative exchange with the Leader of the House at the start of the summer recess, and I know that she used her best endeavours, with others, to ensure the constitution of many of the Select Committees some little while ago. However, the fact that the remaining Committees are as yet unconstituted is simply not acceptable.

It would obviously be most unfortunate if it were necessary for Members to keep raising points of order day after day after day after day before those Committees were established, and, as I am sure the whole House would want to avoid such an embarrassing fate, I can only assume that proper action will now follow. However, the hon. Lady is always attentive to her responsibilities, and I am certain that, in the grisly event that it is necessary for her to raise a further point of order, she will not hesitate to do so.

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