

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 12 March 2003
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

3rd Meeting 2003, Session 1

CONVENER

*Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)

*Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con)

*Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)

Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab)

Alex Johnstone (North-East Scotland) (Con)

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP)

*attended

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Sam Jones

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Sarah Robertson

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

Scottish Parliament

Standards Committee

Wednesday 12 March 2003

(Afternoon)

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 12:55*]

The Convener (Mr Mike Rumbles): Good afternoon and welcome to the third meeting this year of the Standards Committee. We have received apologies from Paul Martin and Kay Ullrich. Unless there is any unforeseen business, this will almost certainly be the committee's last meeting in this parliamentary session.

Annual Report

The Convener: We have only one item on the agenda today, which is a draft annual report, as required by standing order 12.9. Members should have seen a copy. Are there any comments on the report?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): I have one. I am content with everything in the report, but paragraph 9 on page 2 states that the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner Bill provides for "mandatory registration". I argued for voluntary registration. Is it possible to enter "subject to the reservation of one member"?

The Convener: We agreed on the draft bill. The sentence that you quote gives a factual statement. The report is a factual account of what we have already agreed. Your comments will be noted in the *Official Report*, which certainly can be read as an appendix.

Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): Paragraph 11 on page 3 is about meetings. It is quite right that the committee records how many times it met in private, but we need to say that, when we are dealing with complaints against members, although we consider draft reports in private, our deliberations are done in public and our findings are made public. I recognise that the report is factual, but we need to stress that our inquiries on MSPs were conducted not behind closed doors, but in public.

The Convener: I think that we can agree to that. The clerks will add that.

Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab): I have a separate and minor point on cross-party groups, which are mentioned on page 2. I have expressed my hope at previous

meetings that the issue of cross-party groups will be taken up actively and speedily by the new committee and the new Parliament. To reinforce that point, rather than saying,

"Both will help form a revised and robust framework",

we could indicate that the matter is not done and dusted and that work still has to be done.

The Convener: That is a fair point.

We will e-mail the amended report to members so that we have a final report before we sign it off.

Meeting closed at 12:58.

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