

The House of Commons

MetMUNC XLIX



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Special Procedure

Chairpeople: Aidan Davis, Simran Goraya, and Jenna Rabin

[Delegates are encouraged to dress in standard Western business attire, with some added ‘flair.’ It is encouraged that you wear a pin of your party symbol or of a country flag, although this is by no means necessary. If any Labour Party members intend to wear a rose (their party symbol), please make sure the rose does not have any thorns in an effort to prevent potential injury. As per the actual rules of the House of Commons, you may not attend committee in a full suit of armor (nor may you have a sword or longbow).]

Introduction

This House of Commons committee will not operate exactly in the way that a normal Model UN Committee operates. In order to create an authentic, unique, and most importantly fun experience, some of the rules and regulations of the House of Commons will be implemented and modified to fit MUN. Don’t worry, you won’t have to call your fellow delegates “The Right-Honorable Gentleman from Aberdeenshire West and Kincardine.” You can call them by their Member of Parliament.

Unique Procedure

With this committee seeking to emulate the House of Commons, there will be some notable rule changes. We recognize that this may seem like a daunting prospect, but we can hope to guarantee that these changes in procedure will be enjoyable and will help make debate as

realistic as possible. If you have any questions, concerns or just want to say hello, feel free to email us using our emails on the welcome letter.

The Committee Space

We will try to utilize Zoom to emulate the House of Commons as best we can. We require delegates to change their names to match the following template: MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT NAME, CABINET POSITION (If applicable), PARTY. While we had initially planned for this to be in a physical space, the circumstances have made this impossible. Instead, breakout rooms will be used to emulate the physical voting spaces of the House of Commons, such as the lobbies.

How a ‘Government’ Works

A government is formed when a party has more than 50% of the seats in the House of Commons. This party chooses a Prime Minister, which is usually the head of the party. This Prime Minister will choose cabinet officials from his party, who will act as their advisors and allies in the House of Commons. Sometimes, when no party reaches a majority in a Parliament, they will form a coalition with a smaller party and convince them to help them form a government. The largest party that does not constitute the Government is called the Opposition. The Opposition leader appoints ‘Shadow Cabinet’ officials, who are basically who would be in charge in the case the Opposition gained a majority. The opposition may form a coalition if it wishes, in order to gain more power against the Government.

Should the circumstances of the committee call for it, the Prime Minister may call for a snap election. Snap elections are usually called to gauge the public’s approval of major policy points, such as the 2017 and 2019 elections called by Prime Ministers May and Johnson. Both of

these snap elections were called to gauge public approval on the Brexit process. It is a great opportunity for the Prime Minister's party if they feel they can expand their House of Commons majority, but can also be used by the opposition to capitalize on the government's weakness. A snap election may only be called when a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of Parliament votes in favor.

The MPs in the frontbenches are the legislators who have cabinet or shadow cabinet positions, and the MPs in the backbenches are the ones who do not. We want to make it abundantly clear that if your MP is in the backbenches, it does not mean you are less important than the delegates in the frontbenches. A backbencher may become a frontbencher if the Prime Minister or Opposition Leader appoints them to the cabinet or shadow cabinet in place of another cabinet member. If an MP is no longer in the cabinet, they become a backbencher. If a delegate decides to defect from their party to a party in opposition, they must change their zoom name accordingly. Please do not do this often unless there is a major shift in committee. **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A GOOD REASON TO SWITCH PARTIES, YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO.**

Debate

Debate starts as normal, with the Speaker's List. Voting on topics and speaking time, as well as any other motions, are unchanged. It is encouraged that during unmoderated caucuses, the delegates join breakout rooms to further debate and draft resolutions.

Voting Procedure

Voting procedure will be very different when compared to the traditional Model UN method of voting. The motion to recognize a bill remains the same, as does voting on a grammar period and question and answer (Q&A) period. In this committee, Q&As take their inspiration

from the 'Prime Minister's Questions' policy that is currently employed in the House of Commons. After a Q&A time is set, the Speaker (chair) will pick someone to ask a question, and then another one and so on. No matter the length of the Q&A Period, there will always be a one minute time slot at the end of the Q&A for the Leader of the Opposition, where they are allowed to ask one question. This question may be a two-part question (mirroring the six questions the Leader of the Opposition gets to ask in real life). Two-part questions are otherwise not permitted in the Q&A period. Amendments may be proposed and are voted on in the normal Model UN fashion. As debate on a resolution winds down and voting procedure approaches, three breakout rooms entitled aye (for), nay (against), and abstain (abstain) will be opened. Delegates may not enter these rooms until voting procedure. When a motion to move into voting procedure is passed, the delegates will move to the lobby of their choosing depending on their support for the resolution. Exactly when a voting procedure begins, there will be 8 minutes for delegates to make up their minds. Undecided delegates are encouraged to stay in the main room to debate the merits and detractions of the resolution. They should also move between the various voting rooms to discuss with other members of parliament. To indicate this process beginning, the Speaker will yell "Division! Clear the Lobby!" This will serve as a small unmoderated caucus, and cannot be extended. Delegates may move freely between rooms during this 8 minute period. Delegates will be given updates every minute to make sure they are timely in their voting. After the 8 minutes are up, voting is closed and delegates will be locked from moving from room to room. The chair that is not serving as the Speaker at the moment (the teller) will tally up how many people are in each room. The breakout rooms will be closed and the teller will announce the results to the committee by saying "The ayes to the right: (number of votes). The nos to the

left: (number of votes),” at which point the Speaker shall announce if the bill has passed by saying which group “has it.” After this, the Speaker will say “Unlock!”, and debate will continue.