

## 6. LANDLORD AND TENANT (PRIVATE HOUSING) BILL 2014 COMMITTEE

### Statement by Chairman of the Committee (Mr Thomas)

**The Speaker:** I call on now, in relation to Item 6, the Chairman of the Committee on the Landlord and Tenant (Private Housing) Bill, Mr Thomas.

**Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Landlord and Tenant (Private Housing) Bill is a Government-sponsored Bill, introduced by the Hon. Chris Robertshaw MHK. It received its First Reading in this House on 25th March and its Second Reading on 15th April 2014, when its clauses were referred to a committee for consideration and report. Mr Cretney MHK, Mr Singer MHK and I were elected to the Committee. The Committee was instructed to report by the end of October.

The Committee met on 6th May and elected me as its Chair.

The Committee had in mind this reporting instruction, both when organising its schedule for taking evidence and reporting; but the difficulties of taking a wide range of oral evidence on this complex matter have meant that we have not been able to report today.

The Committee has received written evidence from: the Member in charge of the Bill, who submitted an initial memorandum on the various clauses in the Bill, and answered subsequent questions; the general public and various bodies including Housing Matters, the Landlord Association, Douglas Corporation, Ramsey, Onchan and other Commissioners; the Environmental and Public Health Officers, the National Farmers' Union, the Office of Fair Trading, Treasury, Social Security; and the Tribunals Office.

The return date for the initial memoranda was 30th May 2014. Subsequently, the Committee invited written evidence from landlords who were in the current voluntary scheme; the Minister for Home Affairs; Treasury, Social Security; Public Health and the Bill drafter, Ms Alison Evans. The Committee has published its written evidence during the inquiry to enable further comment from interested parties.

The Committee has taken oral evidence from: Mr Robertshaw and officials on 20th June; Mr Charles Garside, Chair, and Mr Stephen Moore from the Manx Landlords Association; and Ms Joanne Chapman, Project Manager/Mediator of Housing Matters on 18th July; Members and officers from Douglas Borough Council, Ramsey and Onchan Commissioners on 8th and 9th September; the Director of the Environment, Safety and Health Directorate, Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, and environmental health officers on 9th September; Mr Ian Abrahams, a landlord, and Mr David Quirk MHK, the Hon. Chair and Chief Officer of the Office of Fair Trading on 16th September.

The Committee will take oral evidence this afternoon from Ms Alison Evans, the Bill drafter, with Mr Robertshaw and officials, and this is our final oral evidence session.

As the Bill drafter works outside the Island, we will be bringing her into the Legislative Council through a video link. To integrate this technology with the requirements of *Hansard* has taken some initiative, and I thank the officers involved for dealing with the technical challenges – touch wood! *(Laughter)*

The Committee will meet this Friday, 31st October, to deliberate on its findings. We hope to report by the end of next month.

Thank you, Hon. Members.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Member.

Do you have a question on the Statement?

**Mr Quirk:** I do, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Mr Quirk.

**Mr Quirk:** What time is the oral evidence this afternoon?

**Mr Singer:** Two-thirty.

**Mr Thomas:** Mr Speaker, the oral evidence is at 2.30, as announced in the press release.  
*(Interjections by Mr Quirk and Mr Cretney)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Members, that concludes the business of the House today.

There will be a lunchtime presentation by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, to which you have been invited.

The House will now stand adjourned until the next sitting, which will take place at 10 o'clock on 4th November in this Chamber.