

2. Representation of the People (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2015 – First Reading approved

Mr Cretney to move:

That the Representation of the People (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2015 be read a first time.

The President: We turn now to Item 2 on our Order Paper: Representation of the People (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2015 for First Reading.

I call on the Hon. Member, Mr Cretney.

Mr Cretney: Thank you, President.

Hon. Members, I beg leave to move that this Bill be read a first time. As I indicated to Hon. Members by email yesterday, if supported, it is my intention to seek to suspend Standing Orders to take all stages of the Bill today.

The background to the Bill is that, in line with the policy of the Branches, an Independent Boundary Commission was established to consult and subsequently redraw the electoral map for House of Keys' elections from the forthcoming one in September this year into 12 two-seat constituencies.

My view at the time was that, having established such an independent body, it was incumbent upon elected Members to accept the findings, despite any concerns they may have about new boundaries.

The issue that this Private Member's Bill is seeking to resolve is that for some reason, unknown, the constituency of Douglas South – in as much as it remains – has been renamed 'Douglas West' and Douglas South disappears.

When canvassing for election, Mr Malarkey MHK met considerable concern from the electorate who could not understand the logic for the change. Geographically and historically, the constituency is and should remain as before.

When the matter was before the Keys, matters not directly related to the Bill were put forward as amendments and the long title was amended together with another revocation process. These two amendments were put forward and carried but a third amendment was not, which is why Her Majesty's Acting Attorney General will be moving amendments in his name later on. I support such amendments because the net result was that the long title of the Bill, as before us now, includes a reference to something which is not actually referred to in the Bill, and the revocation provision refers to an amendment which would have been made by a clause which was never added to the Bill. In those circumstances, the Bill needs further revision to reverse the two amendments which were successfully made by the Keys.

If I may be so bold, this constitutes a timely indication of the need for a reviewing procedure and the value of the Second Chamber – this, despite warnings given at the time by several Keys' Members.

I trust Hon. Members can support this Bill and I beg to move its First Reading.

Mr Anderson: I beg to second.

The President: The Hon. Member, Mr Anderson, seconding.

The motion is that this Bill be read a first time. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.