

	<i>Page</i>
Introductory	1
1.Failure to Implement the Renton Report (Address by Rt. Hon. Sir David Renton, Q.C., M P., to the Statute Law Society, 6 April 1978) ( <a href="http://www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/non-fb/1979/1979-001-nfd-renton.pdf">http://www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/non-fb/1979/1979-001-nfd-renton.pdf</a> )	2
2.Oral evidence to the Renton Committee by Hedley Marshall, C.M.G., Q.C., and Brian Russell on behalf of the Statute Law Society.	9
3.Written evidence to the Renton Committee by Francis Bennion. ( <a href="http://www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/non-fb/1979/1979-004-renton-part3-written.pdf">http://www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/non-fb/1979/1979-004-renton-part3-written.pdf</a> )	27
4.Oral evidence to the Renton Committee by Francis Bennion ( <a href="http://www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/non-fb/1979/1979-004-renton-part4-oral.pdf">http://www.francisbennion.com/pdfs/non-fb/1979/1979-004-renton-part4-oral.pdf</a> )	70
Appendix-Answers to Parliamentary Questions	97

Page 27

3.

## WRITTEN EVIDENCE TO THE RENTON COMMITTEE

BY FRANCIS BENNION

### 1. *Introductory Note*

1. This paper was prepared, and is submitted, entirely as my personal evidence to the Committee. It does not represent in any way the views of the Parliamentary Counsel Office, or any other official body. I am grateful to Mr. A. N. Stainton, C.B., First Parliamentary Counsel, for permission to prepare and submit the paper, given without his having seen it.

2. So that the paper can be properly evaluated, I ought to explain how the views expressed in it came to be formed, and my claim to speak on the subject. I became interested in statute law before call to the Bar in 1951, having spent a year as editorial assistant on *Halsbury's Statutes* after coming down from Oxford. In 1953 I joined the Parliamentary Counsel Office (left 1965, rejoined 1973).

1956            Constitutional drafting in Pakistan.

1959-1961    Drafting on secondment in Ghana, Produced new system of publishing statutes and statutory instruments (loose-leaf). Wrote Constitutional Law of Ghana

1963-1965    Part-time lecturer in legislation at Treasury Centre for Administrative Studies, and also at Marlborough House courses for Commonwealth draftsmen.

1965-1968    Secretary of Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

1968            Founded Statute Law Society.

1968-1971    Draftsman of financial legislation for Jamaica Government. Member of

general committee, Bar Association for Commerce, Finance and Industry. Member, official working party on Classification of U.K. statutes. Member of Heap Committee, Vice-Chairman of Stow Hill Committee (both set up by the Statute Law Society - reports published in 1970 and 1972 respectively by Sweet and Maxwell).

1970 *Tangling with the Law* published.

3. In 1965, after twelve years in the Parliamentary Counsel Office, I left to become Secretary of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the leading professional body in the field of valuation, estate management and surveying. This position brought me into contact with other professional bodies, such as the RIBA, the Law Society and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, whose members, like those of the RICS, were heavily involved in the operation of Acts of Parliament. I speedily realised that there was great dissatisfaction among the professions with the state of our statute law, and the difficulties it caused for professional people. Indeed, I was informed by Sir Henry Wells, the RICS President, that one reason why

Page 28

they had appointed a draftsman as Secretary was the hope that he might be able to do something about it.

4. About this time I read the important paper submitted by Hedley Marshall, C.M.G., and Norman Marsh (later a Law Commissioner) to the Third Commonwealth and Empire Law Conference at Sydney in 1965. I was particularly struck by their criticisms of the methods of drafting in use at Westminster, e.g. the following:-

‘One major defect of the United Kingdom method of drafting statutes must here be mentioned. As stated above, legislation in this country is largely ad hoc and framed to deal with particular situations as they arise. Leaving aside the subject of amendment and consolidation for the moment, there appears to be little attempt to integrate new principal Acts of Parliament dealing with substantive aspects of a particular subject with existing Acts of Parliament dealing with other substantive aspects of that same subject. Such Acts exist side by side, often without reference to one another, and the courts have the duty to try to interpret their often obscure and complicated provisions in relation to one another and to the common law.

‘The Limitation Act, 1963, is stated in its long title to be an Act to extend in certain cases the time-limit for bringing legal proceedings where damages are claimed which consist of or include damages or solatium in respect of personal injuries (including any disease or impairment of a person's physical or mental condition) or in respect of a person's death; to limit the time within which proceedings for contribution may be brought under s.6 of the Law Reform (Married Women and Tortfeasors) Act, 1935, or s.3(2) of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act, 1940: to make further provision as to the application of the Limitation (Enemies and War Prisoners) Act, 1945, to Northern Ireland, and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid. The Act then proceeds to vary the operation of the provisions of the Limitation Act, 1939, and the Acts above referred to without specifically amending them. The Limitation Act, 1939, was an Act which consolidated with amendments certain enactments relating to the limitation of actions and arbitrations and, while not a code, at least reduced to some coherence some of the statute law relating to the limitation of actions as it existed at that time. The Law Reform (Limitation of Actions, etc.) Act, 1954, preserved this situation by effecting certain alterations to the Limitation Act, 1939, by ad hoc, textual amendments to specified sections of that Act. The Act of 1963 has, however, undone much of the good effected by the consolidation of 1939 since it has piled new provisions on to those of the Act of 1939

by referential and not textual legislation, and has failed to integrate the two sets of provisions.

‘Similarly, the Homicide Act, 1957, which made radical changes in the law relating to murder, stands by itself on the statute-book as a principal Act, and although ss.2 and 3 of the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, were repealed by it, numerous other sections relating to murder were left standing and *no attempt was made to integrate the*

*Page 29*

*provisions of the Act of 1957 with those of the Act of 1861-another example of piling statute upon statute.*

‘Two different methods of drafting amendments appear to be in vogue in the United Kingdom-the referential and the textual.

‘The referential amendments are drafted in a narrative or discursive style producing an interwoven web of allusion, cross-reference and interpretation which effectively prevents the production of a collection of single Acts each relating to a particular subject otherwise than by the legislative processes of consolidation and repeal. As Sir William Graham Harrison has pointed out, often Act is heaped upon Act until the result is chaotic, and almost completely unintelligible. Indeed much of the confusion existing in the statute-book today is directly attributable to referential legislation.

‘The second method, the textual, is used chiefly, but not exclusively, for consequential amendments to statutes other than that which is the main subject of amendment, such consequential amendments being set out in a schedule to the amending Act. By textual is meant the specific and seriatim insertion, substitution or deletion of words, paragraphs, sections, or subsections in or from the principal Act, in the same way as a new spare part is inserted into an engine in the place of an old one.

‘So far as statutes [of Commonwealth countries other than U.K.] which enact provisions relating to entirely new subjects or concepts are concerned, i.e. those that may be said to break new ground, the drafting technique in many Commonwealth countries is on the whole simpler than that which obtains in Westminster. Where substantive enactments are drafted relating to specific matters upon which legislation already exists, it is the practice not to pile a new and independent Act indiscriminately upon the existing legislation, but to endeavour to integrate the new provisions with the old, either by amendment of the old Act Or by the enactment of a completely new, comprehensive statute, embodying the new law and the old, and by the repeal of the existing Act. Therefore, under this system it would be unlikely that Acts like the Homicide Act, 1957, and the Limitation Act, 1963, of the United Kingdom, would exist Their provisions would be incorporated in or integrated with the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, and the Limitation Act, 1939, respectively. Under this method all amendment is, of course, textual and an examination of the statute-books of any of the territories that have adopted this method will give examples of the scheme of such drafting.

‘It will be apparent to those who have studied the details of the discussion in this paper on the respective merits of referential and textual drafting, that much of the undoubted advantage brought about by the preparation of a comprehensive code or codes would be lost if the codes were not preserved in their original state of clarity. It is suggested that any continuance of the present system of referential drafting is likely to reduce the condition of any future codes to a state of obscurity, and indeed confusion, after a few years of Parliamentary legislative activity, whether of a principal or amending kind. It therefore necessarily follows that for a code to be a success and to achieve the aim of accessibility and coherence,

*Page 30*

the textual method of legislative drafting should be universally adopted for the future,'<sup>1</sup>

5. In 1966 I produced a paper (unpublished, but widely circulated) entitled "Some Suggestions on the Form and Publication of Statute Law". This outlined the reforms I have sought to promote ever since. In the first annual report of the Law Commission it was acknowledged in these words:-

'We are greatly indebted to Mr. F. A. R. Bennion for a detailed and thought-provoking memorandum.....'<sup>2</sup>

The thoughts it provoked were not, however, disclosed either then or subsequently.

6. In 1968 I conceived the idea of setting up a body representing users of statute law, including publishers and academics. A steering group of four lawyers (one of the other three being Hedley Marshall, co-author of the paper referred to above) set to work, and the Statute Law Society was formed. It early sought to persuade the Law Commission to draw up a *comprehensive* programme of consolidation, as indeed it had been asked to do by the Lord Chancellor in 1965. In this we were unsuccessful, as shown by the correspondence reproduced in the Stow Hill Report (pp.20-8). The response of the Commission to the closely-reasoned proposals in the Report itself was brief and equally negative (pp. 64-5). This surprised me, since Mr. Norman Marsh, one of the Law Commissioners, was the other co-author of the 1965 Sydney Paper and the Stow Hill report is really a working out of suggestions made in that paper.

7. Naturally, I stand by the findings of the Stow Hill Committee. What follows is an amplification and development of those findings. It is put forward in full consciousness of the enormous difficulty of the Renton Committee's task. The record is littered with high hopes doomed to disappointment, ambitious schemes that proved unworkable, and over-sanguine expectations. Sir Granville Ram, First Parliamentary Counsel, remarked in 1946, in words which remain true to this day:-

"The chaotic condition of the Statute-Book has been the subject of complaint for at least four hundred years, and it must be acknowledged that the long attempts to improve its form and arrangement is in the main, a story of failure. experience has abundantly proved that no progress in the task of producing a reasonably well ordered Statute-Book is to be expected until *a definite place is made for such work among the duties of Parliament and of the Executive Government.*"(Emphasis supplied.)

8. A brief outline history of attempts to reform the statute-book is given in Appendix A. The field for reform is so wide, and the topics for discussion so numerous, that, in the time available to me, I had to confine myself in this paper to two main topics. These are the imperative need to change to a textual amendment system, and the way in which the object of making a "definite place" for statute law reform might be achieved.

Page 31

## 2. Textual Amendment - the Essential Reform

9. Parliamentary draftsmen suffer more than most from the imperfections of the statute-book. After twenty years as a draftsman I can say without hesitation that my main difficulty in understanding the statute law of the United Kingdom, and therefore in drafting amendments to it, has arisen from the widespread use of the referential amendment system. It must be difficult for those whose work has not consisted, day in and day out for many years, of drafting amendments to the statute-book to grasp the essential importance of this point. I take

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<sup>1</sup> *Case Law, Codification and Statute Law Revision* by H. H. Marshall C.M.G., Q.C., LL.B., F.R.G.S. and Norman S. Marsh M.A., B.C.L., 1965, pp.19, 20, 21, 32-3, 40-1.

<sup>2</sup> The Law Commission, First Annual Report 1965-1966, p.21.

it therefore that my main task in this paper is not so much to explain the difference between the two systems or illustrate their practical working, but to convince the Committee that I am right in identifying this as the main cause of obscurity. To this end, a detailed exposition, with numerous examples, is set out in Appendix B. This is a highly technical matter, not offering immediate rewards to the reader. I can only say that its importance justifies the intellectual exertions needed to follow it. Here, I will merely try to outline the points which need to be kept in mind if the thesis in favour of widespread use of the textual amendment system is to be accepted.

10. I begin with the concept of the principal Act. This is a familiar term, used in this paper in a slightly special sense. I mean by it the Act in which the statute law on a particular topic is embodied. In my view the major part of our statute-book would ideally be arranged, as the first Statute Law Commission said in 1854, in "300 to 400 statutes", each with a convenient scope and title. If this were done, each Act would be a "principal Act".

11. In the United Kingdom principal Acts are identified broadly as of two kinds. One is the consolidation Act and the other is the Act which either embodies initial legislation on a novel topic or is a substantially-altered version of a previous principal Act. An example of the latter is the huge Local Government Act 1972 (c. 70). I believe consolidation Acts should be planned so as to constitute for some years into the future the sole Act on a topic. This does not always happen even in relation to the enactments consolidated—for example the Hire-Purchase Act 1965 (c. 66) did not include hire purchase law relating to advertising, which was separately consolidated as the Hire-Purchase (Advertisements) Act 1967 (c. 42). A similar split, inexplicable on any grounds of rational classification, occurred with the Housing Act 1957 (c. 56) and the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1958 (c. 42), and the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970 (c. 10) and the Capital Allowances Act 1968 (c. 3).

12. Imperfect as it is, our present system still produces a considerable number of principal Acts each year. In 1972, for example, out of eighty public general Acts passed, nine were consolidation Acts and seven others were Acts which replaced a block of existing statute law and so may be counted as principal Acts also. Sixteen out of eighty does not sound a high proportion, but it is put into perspective by comparing the number of pages. The 1972 Acts total 2,527 pages, of which 1,371 pages, or more than half, were taken up by the sixteen new principal Acts. Another six Acts, totalling only thirteen pages, were amending Acts relying entirely on the textual amendment system. Nine other Acts, totalling 74 pages, were of a kind which would probably have had to be drafted in the same way under any

*Page 32*

system. This leaves forty-nine Acts, of 1,048 pages, which were amending Acts using the referential method. On a changeover to a purely textual system, these forty-nine Acts are the only ones which would have had to be drafted differently, and the differences, though vital, would not have involved significant additional effort by the draftsman. In most cases, indeed, no extra effort at all would have been required.

13. What is the gravamen of the charge against the referential amendment system? I would express it as follows:-

*Referential amendments destroy the integrity of the principal Act, requiring the reader to conflate two or more enactments dealing with the same point. It is this task of conflation, imposed separately on every person who needs to consult the enactments in question, that is the bugbear.*

Detailed examples are given in Appendix B. Here it may suffice to illustrate the point with a relatively simple example.

14. Section 17 of the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1963 (c. 11) runs as follows-

"The powers of the Minister . . . under section 2 (2) of the Improvement of Livestock (Licensing of Bulls) Act 1931, or under that section as applied to pigs by section 6 of the Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1944, to refuse to grant a licence to keep a bull or boar for breeding purposes shall include power to refuse to grant such a licence if he is not satisfied that the bull or boar conforms to such standard of suitability for breeding purposes as may be prescribed for bulls or boars respectively under the said Act of 1931; and different standards may be so prescribed for different classes of bulls or boars."

15. When the 1963 Act was going through Parliament as a Bill, the wording given above provided in itself a reasonably clear indication of what the Bill sought to do. Once, however, the 1963 Act was on the statute-book, section 17 simply added another obstacle in the process of conflation. Section 2 (2) of the 1931 Act had then been amended by two different provisions, and all three provisions needed to be read together and conflated by anyone seeking the authoritative expression of Parliament's will on the matter. This is the concept, so often bewailed by hapless statute users, of "one Act being piled upon another". The result is difficult enough when a narrow point has to be investigated, but for anyone seeking, for example, to master the whole statute law relating to pig breeding the multiplicity of such instances defeats even the stoutest-hearted. Under the textual amendment system of course, the amendments would have been written into the 1931 Act so that, as noted up or reprinted, section 2 (2) would indicate the up-to-date position without any need for conflation.

16. Conflation of different enactments by the statute user is usually difficult, sometimes extremely difficult, and occasionally impossible. *The right course is for the draftsman to do the job of conflation initially, and reproduce the result by the form of his textual amendment.* The resulting saving in the time taken by practitioners and, correspondingly, in the costs charged to their clients, would be enormous. As the famous American draftsman Reed Dickerson remarked nearly twenty years ago:-

*Page 33*

"Suitable standards and conventions not only save the draftsman's time, but the time of private citizens, administrative officials, and the courts. (It is safe to say that the lack of these things cost the government and the public many millions of dollars annually.)"<sup>3</sup>

17. Another substantial advantage of keeping a principal Act "clean" by using only textual amendment is that the need for consolidation becomes less frequent. On a topic such as housing or road traffic, where Parliamentary amendment occurs in every session, it is not always possible to keep the principal Act in coherent shape by textual amendment. There comes a time when the whole corpus needs to be reorganised and re-enacted. Subject to this, Acts can continue for many years without the need for consolidation. Furthermore, when consolidation does become necessary it is a far easier task if the amendments to the principal Act have all been textual.

18. A further argument in favour of the textual system is its naturalness. If one has a document the wording of which does not achieve its intended purpose, the natural thing to do is to alter the wording textually, so that the document when copied out as amended is self-contained. At the instance of the Colonial Office, this system was exclusively used for British colonies in one of two forms. Either an ordinance would be amended textually, or, if the Legislature enacting it was small, or indifferent, a new ordinance embodying the required

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<sup>3</sup> *Legislative Drafting* by Reed Dickerson.

amendment would replace the existing one. Either way, the person who had, at intervals of ten or fifteen years, to prepare a revised edition of the statutes had a relatively easy task.

19. Naturally, the methods they were taught from London when they were colonies have continued to be used by self-governing nations like Canada and Australia. It is an historical anomaly that we should have taught our colonies a superior method which, owing to contemporary political conditions at Westminster, could not be used here and yet have retained our own inconvenient system long after it seems to be necessary.

20. The views of those familiar with the colonial system are illustrated in a memorandum submitted by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law in June 1967 in reply to a questionnaire on the form and arrangement of the statute-book issued by the Statute Law Committee. In paragraph 3 of this memorandum the following appears-

"The one subject-one Act 'system which makes possible a clean and tidy statute-book is itself made possible only by the system of textual drafting adopted in Canada, in parts of Australia and in New Zealand, which was universally used in the colonies by the Colonial Legal Service and still is in general use in the newly independent territories of the Commonwealth. In our opinion, this is immensely superior to the referential system of drafting both for substantive and amending Acts. . . . In our opinion, the textual method of drafting is the key to all reforms and improvements that it is suggested should be made to the statute-book of the United Kingdom. It conduces' to clarity, eliminates obscurity in the statutes, and so lightens the burden of those whose duty it is to interpret the statutes. It must be

*Page 34*

emphasised, however, that once this system is introduced, either universally or in a particular sector of legislation, referential drafting as we know it should be excluded universally or in that sector. Perhaps the most important result flowing from the introduction of the textual method of drafting is that under it the greater part of statute law revision can be carried out by a comparatively junior lawyer in an office and can be given effect to by the publication of a reprint of the Act in question. The referential system precludes this course being taken and necessitates the repeal, consolidation and re-drafting of Acts by Parliamentary draftsmen and the consumption of Parliamentary time for their debate and their passage through the Houses. Again in the textual system of drafting, it is the draftsman who interprets the law by integrating it with the existing statutes as he goes along whereas under the referential system the draftsman and Parliament merely *declare* a part of the law *ad hoc*, usually without reference to the existing law, and leave it to the courts to carry out the interpretation of the several parts and the whole as best they may."<sup>4</sup>

21. I agree with this passage wholeheartedly, except that I would not base any argument on the amount of Parliamentary time taken by consolidation Bills. Usually this is minute, though a flood of consolidation Bills may give rise to difficulty in finding Members to man the Joint Select Committee.

22. Further telling passages in the same sense are to be found in a recent book on legislative drafting by G. C. Thornton, who has drafted in New Zealand, Hong Kong and East Africa. He comments:-

"A broad distinction exists between two widely differing techniques of drafting amending legislation. One method may be described as direct and textual, the other as indirect, referential and cumulative.

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<sup>4</sup> British Institute of International and Comparative Law, Memorandum June. 1967 (unpublished), para. 3.

"The indirect method, which is less familiar outside the United Kingdom, consists of a narrative statement in the amending law stating the effect of the amendment. The amending law does not in so many words purport to amend the principal Law, nor does it merge with it and lose its separate existence on enactment as an amending law generally does when the direct method is followed. Inherent in the method is the use of much referential legislation. The effect is a cumulative one as statute is piled on statute making comprehension progressively more difficult....

"The cumulative effect of the use of this technique may be observed in straightforward form by reference to the legislation in the United Kingdom for the protection of birds. A principal Act of comparatively small dimensions (16 sections) was enacted in 1954. When amendments were required in 1967 this purpose was achieved by the enactment of a further separate Act of just 12 sections. The content of the amending provision could undoubtedly have been integrated directly with the 1954 Act if the direct method of amendment had been followed. It may be noted that the indirect technique produces unnecessary complexities such as the following

*Page 35*

penal provision which creates in Section 4 of the 1967 Act an offence under the 1954 Act:

‘4. (1) Subject to this section, if any person wilfully disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 to the principal Act (wild birds protected by special penalties) while it is on or near a nest containing eggs or unflown young of any such bird he shall be guilty of an offence against that Act and liable to a special penalty under that Act.’

"The interweaving process is seen further in two later subsections of the same section:

‘(5) In section 4 of the principal Act (general exceptions to liability under section 1 or an order under section 3 of that Act) references to the said section 1 shall include references to subsection (1) above and references to such an order shall include references to such an order made by virtue of subsection (2) above.

‘(6) A licence under section 10 of the principal Act to take or kill any wild birds or to take the nests or eggs of any wild birds shall be taken as authorising any act reasonably incidental to that taking or killing which would otherwise constitute an offence against that Act by virtue of this section.’

“The practice which prevails in the United Kingdom is singular and unlikely to be used as a model elsewhere, but as English statutes are widely used as precedents, it may be as well to pursue the matter a little further.

In the United Kingdom, most statutory amendments of substance are effected indirectly or referentially while consequential amendments are effected directly, frequently in schedule form. Often the same amending provision that is made indirectly is immediately repeated in the form of a direct amendment. This practice is seen in s.2 of the Protection of Birds Act 1967 [U.K.] which states:-The powers of the Secretary of State under section 2 of the principal Act to prescribe common wild birds whose eggs may be taken or destroyed without contravening section 1 of that Act shall cease; and, accordingly, in subsection (4) (a) of the said section 2 the words from ' or of any other common wild bird 'to the end are hereby repealed.

“The United Kingdom style, therefore, produces a pottage comprising direct amendments, indirect amendments and provisions incorporating both techniques. The effect, at least to one not nurtured from his early years on English statutes, is confusing, particularly so as it rests on a stream of consistently invidious but inevitably inconsistent decisions as to which

amendments should properly be effected by one method, which by the other and which by both."<sup>5</sup>

*Page 36*

23. In the present state of our statute-book there are certain limitations on the use of the textual amendment system. A provision of an Act which has been heavily amended referentially will probably have to go on being amended in that way until it is consolidated. In the example given above (paragraph 14) it is difficult to see how any further amendment of section 2 (2) of the 1931 Act could be drafted other than referentially. Another limitation arises in the case of old Acts whose language is different from present-day usage. If it is not possible to re-enact the original Act with amendments, the objective may well have to be achieved by referential amendment. Another exceptional case arises where a term used in a great many Acts is being altered or abolished. For example, the Criminal Law Act 1967 (c. 58) abolished the concept of felony and misdemeanour. These terms were to be found in hundreds of enactments and, in the absence of a computerised statute-book, it was not possible to discover them all.

24. If it is decided to go over to the system where textual amendments are to be used except in cases, such as those just mentioned, where this is impracticable, the question arises how it is to be achieved. For reasons given in the next section of this paper, it seems desirable that Parliament itself should make the necessary decision rather than Ministers or civil servants. Accordingly I would propose that each House of Parliament be invited to adopt a new standing order running as follows: *A bill amending any enactment shall do so by directly altering its text unless this is impracticable.*

25. If this were done, a Bill containing unnecessary referential amendments would be out of order, as, strictly speaking, would be an attempt to move an amendment to a Bill so as to include in it a referential amendment. The question whether textual amendment was impracticable " would, like other questions of order, ultimately be one for the Speaker. In practice, no doubt, the guidance of officials from the Public Bill Office, advised by the draftsman, would be accepted by the chair. In debates leading up to the adoption of the new standing order it would be made clear what "impracticable" was considered to mean and future decisions would be taken accordingly. This should not produce any inconvenience in practice.

### *3. The Four Corners Doctrine*

26. Why has the system of referential amendment obtained such a hold at Westminster? It seems there is just one reason—the traditional desire to make a Bill comprehensible to Members of Parliament without their having to consider other documents. This principle was stated by Lord Thring, the first Parliamentary Counsel appointed when the Office was set up in 1869, as follows:

"It is not fair to a legislative assembly that they should, as a general rule, have to look beyond the four corners of the Bill in order to comprehend its meaning."<sup>6</sup>

27. A fuller statement of this traditional doctrine (which for convenience

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<sup>5</sup> *Legislative Drafting* by G. C. Thornton, M.A., LL.B, Butterworths 1970, pp.295-9.

<sup>6</sup> *Practical Legislation* by Lord Thring. G.C.B., London 1902, p. 8.

I will call the four corners doctrine) was made by another distinguished draftsman, Sir Courtenay Ilbert:

"...the draftsman of a public Act of Parliament has to be guided by rules, not only of logic, but of rhetoric. A Bill for such an Act may be regarded from two points of view. From one point of view it is a future law. From another point of view it is a proposal submitted for the favourable consideration of a popular assembly. And the two points of view are not always consistent. The mode of expression and arrangement which is most suitable to officials who have to administer the law, or to lawyers who have to explain the law, is not always that which is most suitable to the Minister or other Member of Parliament who has to pass the law. Lord Thring's aphorism, 'that Bills are made to pass, as razors are made to sell', expresses an important half-truth. The Minister in charge of a Bill will often insist, and wisely insist, on departure from logical arrangement with reference to exigencies of discussion. He will have considered how he intends to present his proposals to Parliament, and to defend them before the public, and will wish to have his Bill so arranged and expressed as to make it a suitable text for his speech. If the measure is at all complicated, he will desire to have its leading principles embodied in the opening clause or clauses, so that when the first fence is cleared the remainder of the course may be comparatively easy. In settling the order of the following clauses, he will consider what kind of opposition, and in what quarter, they are likely to evoke. He will deprecate unnecessary length, and will often wish to have his measure so drawn that it can be contained in a single clause or appear on a single page. He will prefer a few long clauses to many short ones, bearing in mind that each clause has, as a rule, to be separately put in Committee. His theoretical objections to legislation by reference will often yield to considerations of brevity. He will eschew technical terms, except where they are clearly necessary, remembering that his proposals will have to be expounded to, and understood by, an assembly of laymen. . . . The draftsman has, of course, to bear in mind all these considerations. Indeed it may be said, without disrespect, that he has to study the idiosyncrasies of Parliament much as a nisi prius barrister has to study the idiosyncrasies of a common jury."<sup>7</sup>

28. That the four corners continues in full force at the present day is illustrated in an article by Sir Noel Hutton in the *Modern Law Review*, where he says:-

"The same document has to be designed to satisfy two distinct legislative audiences: first (in point of time) the Parliamentary audience, mainly composed of laymen, whose primary need is to ascertain, with the minimum of labour and preferably no reference to any document other than the Bill itself, what is the general purpose and effect of each clause or section which they are asked to pass; and secondly, the expert lawyers and other professionals who will seek to

Page 38

find in the Act as passed a specific answer to each specific question upon which they have to advise or decide. One customer wants a picture and the other wants a Bradshaw."<sup>8</sup>

29. When I first read this statement, in 1961, I accepted it uncritically as an expression of ineluctable necessity. Looking back, it seems to have taken me a remarkably long time to appreciate the full force and effect of the four corners doctrine and the way it destroys any hope of securing a statute-book free of major obscurities. I am bound to assume, out of respect for great Victorian draftsmen who made radical improvements in the style of drafting, that in their day the four corners doctrine was a political necessity, and that governments would not have secured their legislation without it. This is illustrated by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, writing towards the end of the 19th century:

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<sup>7</sup> *Legislative Methods and Forms* by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Oxford 1901, pp.241-2.

<sup>8</sup> *Modern Law Review*, Jan. 1961, p.21.

"If the increased vigilance of Parliament and the public has checked legislation by private Members, it has also augmented the difficulties of government legislation, and materially affected the form which that legislation has assumed. A generation or two ago a Minister would satisfy himself, or accept the assurance of his Department, that his Bill contained the necessary provisions, would explain his theme in Parliament, and would leave form and details very much to the draftsman. The number of Members who took an active part in the discussions in committee was not large: the amendments moved were not numerous. Under these circumstances the length of a Bill was not of great importance. It might contain details which, although not necessary, were usual, and might be useful. In the present day a Minister demands before all things that his Bill should be short. Clear it ought to be, short it must be. The more words it contains the more pegs it offers for amendments."<sup>9</sup>

30. In my view, the most important question to be faced by the Renton Committee, and those who will consider its report, is whether conditions have changed sufficiently for Members of Parliament to accept being deprived, in the interests of a clear statute-book, of the convenience of having Bills drafted in accordance with the four corners doctrine. This is essentially a question for experienced politicians, and all I can do is venture to put forward some relevant considerations. Before doing so, I would confidently assert that no draftsman who takes an objective view would question the desirability of scrapping the four corners doctrine and resorting entirely to textual amendment if that accords with the wishes of Parliament. The decisive question is therefore whether Members of Parliament, weighing the advantages and disadvantages, would still wish to assert their need of the four corners doctrine. If they would, that settles the matter and the doctrine must remain. If they are prepared to give up the doctrine then I can see no justification whatever for preserving it.

31. Speaking as an observer, rather than a practitioner, of current Parliamentary style, I would assert that the modern Member of Parliament

*Page 39*

(in both Houses) has a much higher level of social awareness, knowledge of affairs and political sophistication than his mid-Victorian counterpart. It has not been my experience that Ministers are unwilling to accept a Bill of sufficient length to carry out its intention, or that they fuss about the arrangement of clauses. This reflects the fact that the Opposition, and private Members, will find ways of debating points they wish to debate, within the limitations laid down by the power of selection of amendments, the closure rule and (in rare cases) the guillotine. These techniques of controlling the length and the subject-matter of debates are of recent growth, and in this respect the position has changed radically within the past hundred years.

32. A further change is the much greater length and complexity of modern statute law, occasioned not by any drafting techniques but the spread of state activity and regulation into almost every part of the nation's life. Members of Parliament suffer more than most people from the problems which, under any system of drafting, necessarily confront those who are concerned with legislation. Therefore they stand to gain more than most from improvements in the clarity of statute law, and are well aware of it. A notable incident of a Member who was not content to put up with obscurity, but did something about it, was Mr. Keeling, whose name has been given to the type of Schedule (setting out the text of enactments amended by the Bill containing it) which resulted from pressure by him and other Members supporting him over a number of years. For a long time, complaints have been frequently voiced in both Houses of Parliament about the complexity of Bills and the statute-book generally. If Members were asked whether as a contribution to clarity they would be prepared to give up

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<sup>9</sup> Ilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

the four corners doctrine, provided adequate alternative means of providing information were designed, my own feeling is that they would readily accept.

33. The final reason I would put forward for suggesting that the abolition of the four corners doctrine might be acceptable today lies in the technical improvements in book production and other methods of communication we now enjoy. In the last century textual amendments required to be noted up by hand, a laborious process productive of error and much untidiness. Today we can; if we want to, devise highly effective loose-leaf systems under which replacement pages, reprinted to incorporate amendments, can be speedily issued without excessive cost. I saw this operation from the inside when in 1960 I devised and carried into effect a new system of looseleaf publication of statutes and legislative instruments in Ghana. I do not want to add to the length of this paper by embarking on the topic of computers, but as Chairman of the Computer Committee of the Statute Law Society, I came to realise the immense convenience which will result when we get round to putting our statute law on computer tape and devising a search and retrieval system

34. Because of the crucial importance of the decision about retaining or discarding the four corners doctrine, I think it as well to put before the Committee an extended quotation from Sir Courtenay Ilbert which deals fully with the reasons for the doctrine. This describes the three ways in which an enactment can be amended. These are by repealing it and

*Page 40*

substituting a new provision, by textual amendment limited to altering the words in question, and by referential amendment.

35. In the following extract I have, for ease of reference, inserted numbers to the paragraphs:-

1. " The English legislator rarely, if ever, finds himself in a position to inscribe a brand-new law on a blank sheet of paper. The utmost that he can usually aim at is to remove some blemish from, or to alter or add to some provisions of, an existing law or institution; in other words, to pass an amending Act. And the best mode of framing an amending Act, so as to be intelligible both to those who have to pass it and to those who have to observe and administer it, is often a problem of considerable difficulty.

2. "From the point of view of administration the most convenient plan is to repeal the old law, and re-enact it with the necessary modifications. But the law to be amended is often contained in more than one Act, and experience has shown that attempts to combine consolidation with substantial amendment are rarely successful. Even where there is only one Act that need be amended, a proposal to repeal the whole Act for the purpose of making a single amendment, or two or three amendments of minor importance, is open to many objections. It gives the proposed legislation an appearance of being more important and more extensive in its scope than it really is, and the prudent legislator will usually prefer to minimize rather than magnify his proposals. It obscures, and distracts the attention of the legislature from, the immediate point or points in issue. It throws the whole law into the crucible, exposes to amendment, not merely the particular provisions which the introducer of the Bill desires to alter; but all other provisions of the law which appear to be in any way open to criticism, and consequently multiplies the points of attack and the obstacles to progress in Committee. The proposal to repeal and re-enact, not the whole of an Act, but merely a particular section of an Act, is often open to similar objections from a parliamentary point of view. For the section may embody a principle, or may contain provisions, which the introducer of the Bill does not desire to question, but which cannot escape criticism if the whole section is proposed for repeal.

3. " In some cases also the law embodied in the new enactment is intended to apply only to events and transactions happening after a particular date, leaving events and transactions happening before that date to be governed by the old law, and in such cases, if the old law is repealed, it is often not easy to express the precise operation of the law with respect to occurrences at different dates.

4. "For all or some of these reasons the promoter of an amending measure usually has to content himself with altering the form or substance of existing sections, or adding sections to an existing Act.

5. " If, for any of these reasons, the method of repeal or re-enactment is not adopted, the next most convenient course, from the point of view of administration, is to express the amendments in a technical form, like notices of amendments to Bills in Parliament, or like errata or addenda in books, that is to say, in the form of directions

*Page 41*

to strike out particular words or sentences from an enactment, and to add others, This is the form frequently adopted by the Indian legislature. It has considerable advantages. It enables a clerk to note up, almost mechanically, the alterations in the statute law, by simply striking out or writing in the necessary words. Thanks to this method of amendment, the Legislative Department of the Government of India is able to issue periodically revised editions of the most important Indian Acts, which embody the amendments up to date, and thus, for many purposes take the place of repealing and consolidating Acts.

6. " The substitution is not completely satisfactory, partly because it is always necessary to bear in mind the date from which the new enactments incorporated in the old law began to operate, and partly because, for this and other reasons, if a case on the amended Act comes into court, the judge or magistrate often finds it necessary to inspect the original Act instead of relying on the reprint. But for purposes of practical administration such reprints are of great convenience.

7. " On the other hand, from the parliamentary point of view, an amending Bill drawn in the technical form adopted by the Indian legislature is open to serious objections. In the first place it is absolutely unintelligible without the text of the enactments which it is proposed to amend, and even if these objections can be removed by means of an explanatory memorandum, a Bill thus drawn is, as any one who has watched attempts to amend parliamentary amendments will readily understand, extremely difficult to amend, and thus presents unreasonable obstacles to legitimate discussion in Committee. For these reasons the technical method of amendment is hardly ever adopted in England except in the case of non-contentious measures.

8. " Under these circumstances, the ordinary mode of amending an Act is to state in the amending Bill the effect of the amendment proposed to be made. This is the commonest mode, and for parliamentary purposes is the most convenient, because under it every member of Parliament who knows anything of the subject, learns at once the nature of the amendment proposed. And in some cases, where the amendment virtually overrides a large portion of the existing enactment, it is practically the only possible method.

9. "There are cases in which it may be possible to combine what may be called the popular and the technical mode of amendment, by stating at the beginning of a clause the substance of the amendment proposed to be made, and adding, in a separate subsection or

otherwise, technical amendments, which make the requisite alterations in the language of the enactment amended."<sup>10</sup>

36. I fully agree with the objections expressed in paragraph 2 of the above to wholesale repeal and replacement of enactments to be altered. On paragraph 3, I do not myself share the difficulty expressed. Paragraphs 5 to 7 discuss critically the textual system. Paragraph 6 expresses a criticism which, with respect, does not seem well founded. Anyone applying the amended law will find it easier to grasp in the form of the original Act with

*Page 42*

the amendments written in, and this more than compensates for the need, in the cases cited, to refer also to the unamended version. Paragraph 7 contains the two most serious objections to the textual system. The first I fully accept, and the next section of this paper suggests the type of explanatory memorandum to meet the need mentioned by Sir Courtenay. The second objection is less easily dealt with, but I shall try.

37. Sir Courtenay's second objection is that it is extremely difficult to devise Parliamentary amendments to a Bill drafted on the textual system, and that therefore this system can only be used for non-contentious measures. If this were true in modern conditions it would of course require the four corners doctrine to be retained for contentious Bills. In order to explain why, in my view, it has ceased to be true I need first to go into more detail about the mode of drafting a Bill on the textual system. I distinguish two types of Bill.

38. The first type is one which makes a number of relatively small amendments to the principal Act. A good example is the Furnished Lettings (Rent Allowances) Bill 1973. The other type is one for which no English example can be given, namely the major Bill which replaces whole sections of the principal Act or adds sections to it. Up to now these have always been drafted as self-contained measures by the referential method.

39. Suppose it is desired to amend the law on town and country planning, embodied in a recent consolidation Act. The new provisions, under the present system, might occupy about twenty sections in the new Act, which is drafted as an independent measure. Under the textual system, the twenty sections would be inserted in their appropriate places in the principal Act. It is important to note that using the textual system would make virtually no difference to Parliamentary proceedings on the Bill. Under the present system each clause would be debated separately in Committee, and the question would be proposed that the clause stand part of the Bill. Under the proposed new system the appearance of the Bill would be almost unchanged. There would still be twenty clauses, and they would be drafted in virtually the same way. Instead however of beginning straight away with each substantive clause the Bill would have clauses each beginning something like this: ' After section 21 of the principal Act there shall be inserted the following new section: '. It is clear that the same debate on the clause could take place under both systems, and that it would be just as easy to frame amendments to the clause under the new system as the old.

40. There are two further arguments I would advance against Sir Courtenay Ilbert's second objection in his paragraph 7. One is that with the kind of textual memorandum suggested in the next section of this paper it is far easier to see what the effect of a Bill is (so as to be able to frame amendments) than under the present system. The other, relating to the framing of Opposition and back bench amendments, is that the House of Commons has greatly relaxed its rules against amendments to Bills which are not properly drawn. This goes along with the prevailing practice under which virtually all amendments are drafted by Parliamentary Counsel if they are to be effectively made in the Bill. The sensible practice has grown up of

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<sup>10</sup> Ilbert, *op. cit.*, pp.256-9.

allowing amendments to be drafted in a way which proclaims the real point sought to be made rather than being technically correct. An additional

*Page 43*

factor, if my suggestion for the setting up of a Statute Law Commission providing drafting services for Members of Parliament were adopted, would of course be the help that such a service could give. Even under the present system Members of course gain much assistance from the advice of officials of the House.

41. Finally I would comment on the last sentence in paragraph 8 of Sir Courtenay's exposition. I do not accept that referential amendment is the only method possible where the amendment has to override a large portion of the existing enactment. It would always be possible to add a new section to an Act commencing with the words "Notwithstanding anything in this Act. . .". For good measure, one could also insert in the overridden enactment words such as "Subject to the provisions of [the new enactment]".

#### *4. The Textual Memorandum*

42. The proposal for use of a textual memorandum to inform members of Parliament, and others interested in a Bill, about the effect of the Bill's provisions is explained in paragraphs 30 to 35 of the Stow Hill Report. Since that was written I have been able to put the idea into practice. The only departure from the Stow Hill proposals was that the memorandum was made a command paper. Two revisions of it were also issued as command papers, and therefore the suggestion in paragraph 34 that it should be revised by the Public Bill Office was not followed.

43. The Bill in connection with which the textual memorandum was issued was the Furnished Lettings (Rent Allowances) Bill 1973. This was an ideal vehicle for the use of the textual amendment system. The purpose of the Bill was to amend Part II of the Housing Finance Act 1972 (c. 47) so as to provide, in addition to the rent allowances given by the Act to tenants of unfurnished dwellings, rent allowances on the same basis to tenants of furnished dwellings. As my instructions said, the provisions necessary for this would have been "knitted in" when the 1972 Act was being drafted if the Government had then decided to grant rent allowances to tenants of furnished dwellings. There was only the 1972 Act to amend, and by far the simplest method was to do the "knitting in" by way of textual amendment so that at the end of the day the 1972 Act would be in the form it would have taken if originally drafted to include furnished tenancies. There was a particular need for adopting this method because the Housing Acts were in course of being consolidated and this might have been complicated if the usual referential method had been employed. Three editions of the memorandum were published, the Bill being amended at two stages in the Commons but not at all in the Lords.

44. As will be seen from an inspection of this memorandum, it makes the Bill simple to follow, and equally simple to amend. Certainly, as the draftsman, I found it a great help to use the memorandum myself when considering the effects of the Bill and any proposed alterations to it.

45. There were no complaints during the Parliamentary proceedings about the Bill being drafted in the textual form, and one or two Members expressed approval of the textual memorandum. I was interested to see that Members accepted and referred to the memorandum quite readily, and did not find it in any way strange to use. It is of course a natural and obvious

*Page 44*

way of giving an explanation. It required little time to prepare, since its wording follows automatically from the wording of the Bill.

46. One criticism that might be made is that the printing of the memorandum involved extra expense. This is true, and with a major Bill that might require a lengthy memorandum, perhaps reprinted four or five times to match revisions of the Bill during its progress through Parliament, the printing costs and calls on the printing resources of the Stationery Office could be heavy. Against this must be weighed the enormous gains that would result in a wide variety of spheres from having a clear statute-book, and also the advantage to all those concerned with the Bill in being able to see the exact effect of provisions which necessarily have to be thoroughly worked out. All draftsmen are familiar with the fact that when a Keeling schedule is prepared it invariably brings to light necessary amendments to the Bill, which have lain undiscovered because no one has carried out the operation which necessarily has to be done to prepare either a Keeling schedule or a textual memorandum.

47. In the case of a more complex Bill it would be desirable to indicate in the memorandum which provisions of the Bill effected the various alterations shown in the memorandum. The memorandum need not necessarily deal with all the provisions of a Bill. For example, in the case of the Town and Country Planning Bill referred to in paragraph 39 above, the twenty new sections would not of course need to be set out in the textual memorandum, since their purport would be obvious from a reading of the Bill. Indeed it can be said that the repeal or addition of an entire section need not be shown in the memorandum because there is no difficulty in understanding its effect. This fact would ensure that even with lengthy and complex Bills drafted on the textual amendment system the textual memorandum need not be of unwieldy size.

48. Finally I should mention that the textual memorandum to the 1973 Bill was not the first of its kind. I have found at least two previous examples, a memorandum to the Companies Bill 1928 (Cmd. 3032) and one to the Transport Bill 1968 (unnumbered).

## *5. Consolidation*

49. The 1875 Select Committee reported that four objections were held against the statute-book, the third being "From the want of consolidation where groups of statutes on similar subjects are left in a state of great perplexity".<sup>11</sup> They went on to remark that "current legislation would be much more clear if a draftsman had always Acts to work upon, which in themselves were made clear and intelligible"<sup>12</sup>

50. A witness before the 1875 Committee, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who had consolidated virtually the whole of the Indian statute-book, said of consolidation "both legislation and the administration of justice would be simplified to an extent of which you can hardly have 'an idea until you have seen it done"<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons on Legislation 1875, p. iv.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p.v.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, Q.266.

51. In the light of these remarks, it is interesting to observe that the pace of consolidation seems to have altered very little since 1875. Part I of Appendix C to this paper sets out the number of consolidation Acts, and the total of their pages, compared to figures for Acts of all kinds. Taking the 32 volumes of the Third Edition of Statutes Revised first, it will be seen that the Edition as published in 1948 included only 166 consolidation Acts out of a total number of 4065 Acts. By pages, the record looks better, there being 6549 pages of consolidation against 26089 total pages. Taking consolidation Acts in the Third Edition which were still in force at the end of 1971, we find that the number of pages has dropped to 2890. Nevertheless, out of a total of 70 consolidation Acts in the Third Edition which remained in force (though in most cases heavily amended) at the end of 1971, as many as 29 were enacted in the nineteenth century, and a further 34 enacted before the Second World War.

52. Looking at consolidation Acts dating from 1949 onwards, it is convenient to split the period into two: 1949-65, as being pre-Law Commissions and 1966 onwards, as indicating the impact of the Law Commissions. Part IB of Appendix C gives the figures, and it will be seen that during the first post-1948 period the average number of consolidation pages in the annual volume was 361 (out of 1204), while in the second or Law Commission period, it was 512 (out of 1927). Thus, although the total consolidation pages increased, as a proportion of the total output they dropped from 30 per cent to 27 per cent.

53. Part II of Appendix C gives a list of present candidates for consolidation by subject. In the time available to me I could do no more than read through the Index to the Statutes and note the subjects which seemed likely to need consolidation. The number of these totals 155, but is likely to be an under-estimate. There are some striking instances of urgently-needed consolidation. For example, the Customs and Excise Act 1952 is affected by no less than 101 other Acts. The subject of Death Duties has never been consolidated and 92 different Acts are relevant. Cases where 50 or more different Acts relate to the subject in question are given below, with the number of relevant Acts in brackets-

Administration of Estates (75)	
Animals (50)	Housing (61)
Bankruptcy (63)	Justices of the Peace (50)
Children and Young Persons (56)	Land Drainage (56)
Commons (68)	Landlord and Tenant (50)
Companies (70)	London Government (70)
County Courts (53)	Merchant Shipping (122)
Criminal Procedure (91)	Metropolitan Police District (74)
Damages (50)	Mines and Quarries (76)
Education (66)	Parliament (60)
Evidence (148)	Public Health (64)
Fisheries (62)	Stamp Duties (139)
Forgery (53)	Supreme Court (133)
Fraud (104)	Telegraphs (65)
House of Commons (132)	Trustee (61)

*Page 46*

54. When one bears in mind that almost all the 193 consolidation Acts now in force have been amended, many substantially, by the referential method, it is clear that our present statute-book could not by any stretch of the imagination be described as a consolidated statute-book. Indeed, it has never merited that description. It is also clear that the remarks quoted at the beginning of this section from the proceedings of the 1875 Select Committee are as appropriate today as they were a century ago.

*6. A Keeper of the Statute-Book?*

55. In my submission the history and present state of the statute-book irresistibly point to one conclusion. It is that the problem of obscure statute law will not be solved until a body is established whose primary function is to keep under continuous review the state of our statute law, and to promote and execute the activities needed to put the statute-book into a satisfactory condition, and keep it there. This body would be, as it were, the keeper of the statute-book, and might well take the form of a statutory commission, analogous to the Law Commission. Legislation would in any case be needed to amend the Law Commissions Act 1965 to take away from the Law Commission the functions assigned to the new body.

56. It would probably suffice to have a three-man Commission, with of course the necessary supporting staff. One Commissioner might concentrate on public general acts, including consolidation and Statute Law Revision Acts; the second might tackle local and private Acts and statutory instruments, while the third could deal with organising and operating a scheme for recruitment and training of draftsmen, the provision of a drafting service for Members of Parliament, and the formation of links with universities, law publishers, professional bodies and other interested parties.

57. *Public General Acts.* The most important aspect of the Commissioners' task would undoubtedly be the production of a satisfactory set of public general Acts. A thorough and comprehensive consolidation programme should be worked out, with the object of reducing the whole statute-book (excepting only Acts for which this treatment is unsuitable, such as ancient Acts and Acts dealing with individual cases) to a fully consolidated state of between 300 and 400 principal Acts. It would obviously be highly desirable for the textual system to have been brought into operation, so that the new principal Acts would remain "clean". If this had been done, I would advocate making a start with the easier consolidation, so that the number of "clean" principal Acts would rapidly grow; In many cases this operation would be relatively simple, and would place little extra burden on government departments. If, on the other hand, it were decided that the four corners doctrine should remain in operation, there would be a pressing need to devise and execute methods of minimising its deleterious effect on the statute-book. I am not hopeful that much could be done in this way, but the continuance of the doctrine would increase, rather than reduce, the need for a Statute Law Commission as the only way of securing such mitigation of the evils of the four corners doctrine as is

*Page 47*

practicable. Probably this would rely on frequent consolidation of amended Acts—a very heavy burden.

58. It follows that the Commission should be a permanent body, though its size could no doubt be reduced once the initial task of putting the statute-book into consolidated form had been achieved. The Commissioner responsible for public general Acts would clearly need to have had a wide experience of statute law, including service as a draftsman. He should be allowed a long enough period in his post to enable him to frame plans in the knowledge that he will have to carry them out himself. One of the drawbacks to the system established by Sir Granville Ram of having a separate consolidation branch within the Parliamentary Counsel Office is that almost without exception the draftsmen assigned to that branch know that they are going to be there only for one or two years, and will then return to the main stream. This system was continued with the Law Commissions in 1965 and must inevitably induce a short-term view of the work by draftsmen temporarily assigned to the Law Commission. This does not matter as far as concerns drafting of consolidation Bills, but it is important to secure that forward planning is on a long-term basis.

59. Apart from consolidation, the Commissioner dealing with public general Acts would supervise the preparation of Statute Law Revision Acts, the preparation of the annual Index to the Statutes and Chronological Table, and anything else that needed to be done in relation to the body of the public general Acts. For example, a new Interpretation Act is long overdue and would pose great difficulties in its preparation. The whole subject of interpretation of statutes would be a function of the new Commission, who would therefore inherit the

problems associated with the Law Commissions' 1967 working paper. It might be helpful to prepare, for use by Parliamentary Counsel, model clauses dealing with the situations which frequently have to be provided for in Acts, e.g. criminal liability of corporations and their directors, the setting up of statutory corporations, service of notices, rights of entry, civil actions for breach of statutory duty and *mens rea*.

60. The new Commission might well be a suitable vehicle for operating an advisory service to Members of Parliament, and a service of drafting private Members' Bills and amendments. I do not suggest that such a service should in any way interfere with the practice under which almost invariably private Members' Bills or amendments which are likely to become law are drafted in the Parliamentary Counsel Office. Indeed, one important purpose of setting up the Commission would be to leave the Parliamentary Counsel Office free to carry on without distractions its vital task of processing all new legislation which finds its way to the statute-book. While, however, the Parliamentary Counsel Office would be spared the task of devising consolidation programmes, and dealing with the other matters suggested as falling to the lot of the Commission, it would be desirable for there to be very close liaison between the Parliamentary Counsel Office and Statute Law Commission, and for assistant Parliamentary Counsel to do a spell of consolidation, at least until the necessary corps of draftsmen is built up by the new Commission.

61. *Local and Private Acts*. Preoccupation with the tangled state of the

Page 48

public general Acts tends to mean that little attention is paid to local and private Acts. In this field, however, the confusion is much worse. Whereas for many years an annual Index of public general Acts has been published, this has not been so with local and private Acts and the latest Index is over a quarter of a century old. The preparation of a new Index is long overdue, and it might be desirable for the Index to be produced annually in future.

62. The new Commission might give some attention to the drafting of local and private Acts, which has not been reviewed for many years and is different in a number of respects to the method used for public general Acts. For this reason, if for no other, it would be desirable for the Commission to form links with the Parliamentary Bar and Parliamentary Agents. Overhaul of the Parliamentary procedure concerned with local and private Bills is probably needed also, and the Commission could play its part in this. Indeed, whenever Parliament concerned itself with matters related to its functions, the Commission would have a duty to assist.

63. *Statutory Instruments*. Also within the scope of the Commission would be the form and publication of statutory instruments, including consolidation of the frequently-amended instruments. The Commission would no doubt be able to assist the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments, and the Counsel to the Speaker. Supervising preparation of the Annual Guide to Government Orders would be within the province of the Commission.

64. *Other functions of the Commission*. It would no doubt be convenient for the Commission to supervise the Statutory Publications Office and concern itself with all publications relating to Statute Law generally. In this connection it would be important to establish communications with the law publishers so that all parties concerned could coordinate their services to users of statute law. There is scope for much progress in the use of computer typesetting, and other computer applications. For example, with computer typesetting the Stationery Office could supply tapes to commercial and other users on a profitable basis, so that the latter could reproduce the authentic texts. More important are the possibilities for computer search and retrieval techniques, and the Commission would have an important part to play in developing these and other methods (such as algorithms) aimed at helping practitioners and the public generally to grasp statutory requirements.

65. Another important function of the Commission would be the working out and operation of a training-scheme for draftsmen. It would be vital to produce as quickly as possible a number of new draftsmen, and for some service with the Commission could be a prelude to joining the Parliamentary Counsel Office. I do not suggest that the Commission

should try to instil techniques which can only really be learnt in the practical drafting of programme legislation, but it would be within the Commission's resources to give general instruction on the science of legislation and specific instruction on the technique of consolidation. There is room for investigation of the best method of carrying out and presenting a consolidation, and it must be advantageous for the Commission to produce a code of practice in this respect as a guide for consolidating draftsmen.

66. The functions of the Commission, especially in relation to the

*Page 49*

training of draftsmen should bring it into contact with university law departments. Study of the science of legislation needs to be extended, and it is a subject which certainly should rate a professorial appointment in at least one United Kingdom university. Whether London University shared this view or not, it would obviously be useful for there to be close liaison between the Commission and at least one of the colleges of London University. Law students could provide a useful addition to the Commission's strength in carrying out routine tasks connected with its functions where these called for some, but not much, legal knowledge.

67. Since all our law reform has to use the medium of legislation, it is important that lawyers should have, as part of their general training, instruction in the preparation, enactment and interpretation of Acts of Parliament, and this could well be promoted by the Statute Law Commission.

68. It would not be appropriate for me to embark on speculation as to the Ministerial arrangements that would be made in relation to the *Commission*. That is a *question of the machinery of government*. It would be important, however, if the Commission is to remove statute law from the Cinderella role it has hitherto occupied, for it to be in the charge of a Minister, preferably of Cabinet rank. It is particularly vital that the Commission should be given sufficient funds to carry out its task properly, and its case for getting these would be strengthened by Cabinet representation. It would not be worth setting up the Commission if it were to be starved of funds, and such funds would be well invested-for reasons which have already been mentioned. One aspect of the manpower problem, key to the success of the Commission, concerns extra burdens which would be put on government departments by dramatically increasing the momentum of consolidation. It would relieve this problem if the Commission were permitted to have members of their legal staff seconded to government departments to help in work generated by the Commission, and make sure it was kept moving. The problems of departmental lawyers in connection with consolidation are similar to those experienced by the Parliamentary Counsel Office. The departments are primarily concerned with their current legislation programme, and must give first priority to that. Consolidation brings few rewards in the shape of votes, and is invariably last in any queue. The position might be improved if at least one lawyer in each department were concerned only with the Commission's operations.

69. Setting up a Statute Law Commission would leave the Law Commission free to concentrate on reforms of substance in " lawyers' law " and the preparation of codification Bills. There would thus be three different bodies each concerned with a separate and vital aspect of legislation: the processing of current Bills, the promotion and execution of schemes for law reform in non-departmental fields (where political repercussions are insignificant), and the condition of the statute-book from a general and technical point of view. I do not presume to speak for Scotland, but I would expect similar arrangements would be found convenient there.

*Page 50*

### *7. Summary of Proposals*

70. By far the most important reform, and one that stands by itself and could be implemented immediately, is to insist on use of the *textual amendment system* in amending

Acts. This could be done by adopting in both Houses of Parliament a new standing order as follows:-

*A bill amending an enactment shall do so by directly altering its text, unless this is impracticable.*

During a transitional period, while Bills in the pipe-line were continuing their progress, textual amendments would often be " impracticable ". After this, the change would mean that principal Acts would remain "clean ".

71. Coupled with the textual amendment system would be the production of *Textual Memoranda*. For Government Bills these would be white papers, issued by the Minister in charge of the Bill, as in the case of the Bill for the Furnished Lettings (Rent Allowances) Act 1973 (c. 6) (Cmnd. 5183, 5235, 5242). So far as necessary they would set out the text of enactments amended by the Bill, indicating changes by typographical means. A similar system would need to be devised for private members' Bills.

72. A separate reform, vital if centuries-long dissatisfaction with the statute-book is to be finally ended, would be to set up a separate *Statute Law Commission* under the authority of a Minister, charged with the permanent duty of keeper of the statute-book. The Commission would take over from the Law Commission the tasks of consolidation and statute law reform, but not codification. Other functions of the Statute Law Commission would be keeping under review the state of the body of statutory instruments and local and private Acts, compilation of indexes and chronological tables, preparation of a new Interpretation Act, supervision of all official publications of statutory material, devising and executing a training scheme for draftsmen, and providing a drafting service for Members of both Houses of Parliament.

Setting up a Statute Law Commission would leave the Parliamentary Counsel Office free to carry on unimpeded its vital task of processing Government programme legislation, and enable the Law Commission to concentrate on reforms of substance in " lawyers' law " and the preparation of codification Bills. The three bodies would work in close cooperation. Similar arrangements would be made for Scotland.

73. Adoption of the above would indicate acceptance by both Houses of Parliament of a shift of emphasis from the amending Bill to the principal Act. Amending Bills would no longer be drafted so as to be self-explanatory, but would concentrate on preserving the integrity of the principal Act as a complete expression, logically arranged, of the statute law on the topic in question. This would be facilitated by the inclusion in each principal Act of a *permanent Schedule of commencement dates, transitional provisions and repeals*. This Schedule (called the " Jamaica Schedule "by the Stow Hill Committee) would be amended each time the principal Act was amended, so that the text of the Act, with amendments carried into it, would at all times be up to date in all respects. The amending Act would be a mere shell and, once the amendments had been physically

*Page 51*

carried into the principal Act (by noting up or reprinting) no further reference would need to be made to the amending Act. Though desirable, this proposal is not essential to the adoption of proposal 1.

*Page 52*

## APPENDIX A

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPLAINTS

#### I

##### *Year*

1550

I would wish that . . . the superfluous and tedious statutes were brought into one sum together, and made more plain and short, to the intent that men might better understand them; which thing shall most help

- to advance the health of the Commonwealth "-Edward VI.
- C. 1565" . . . where many laws be made for one thing, the same are to be reduced and established into one law, and the former to be abrogated "-Lord Keeper Bacon.
- 1609 A complaint by James I about " divers cross and cuffling statutes both these statutes and reports, as well in the Parliament as common law [should] be once maturely reviewed and reconciled; and that . . . all contrarieties should be scraped out of our books. .
- 1616 Sir Francis Bacon, Attorney General, puts forward proposals " touching the compiling and amendment of the laws of England ",one of which was the reducing of concurrent statutes, heaped one upon another, to one clear and uniform law " .
- c. 1650 2 committees appointed" to revise all former statutes and ordinances now in force, and consider . . . how the same may be reduced into a compendious way and exact method for the more base and clear understanding of the people."
- 1796 House of Commons committee reports on consolidation Acts and the problem of obsolete and expired statutes, discrepant statutes, and the habit of legislating in one Act on a variety of subjects.
- 1816 Both Houses of Parliament resolve that a digest of the statutes should be made and that an eminent lawyer with twenty clerks under him should be commissioned to do the work, which was" very expedient to be done."
- 1833 Royal Commission appointed to digest criminal law and report on practicability of other consolidations.
- 1845 Further Commission appointed on criminal law.
- 1853 Lord Cranworth, L.C. embarks on" Code Victoria"
- 1854 Statute Law Commission set up. It reported that the existing statute law might be consolidated into 300 to 400 statutes over a period of about two years.
- 1856 First Statute Law Revision Act passed.
- 1868 Statute Law Committee set up by Lord Cairns L.C.
- 1869 Parliamentary Counsel Office set up.
- 1870 Vol.1 of Statutes Revised (1st edn.) published. (Completed 1885)
- 1875 Select Committee report "that the work of consolidation should be carried out upon a regular system, and by skilled hands, acting under the authority of some permanent government force, with a Minister, or separate department constituted for the purpose, in connection with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel."
- Page 53*
- c 1885 Statute Law Committee work out" a systematic long-term programme of consolidation."
- 1888 Vol.1 of *Statutes Revised* (2nd edn.) published. The preface said: "It is expected that the Edition will be completed within 3 or 4 years ". In fact it took 41 years, the final volume being published in 1929.
- 1947 Long-term programme of statute law reform inaugurated.
- 1950 *Statutes Revised* (3rd edn.) published as a whole, in 32 volumes. In the preface Lord Jowitt L.C. said:
- 1965 Law Commission and Scottish Law Commission set up. Law Commission requested by Lord Gardiner L.C. " to prepare a comprehensive programme of consolidation and statute law revision ". (Their programme was not in fact comprehensive and when a second programme was requested in 1971 the word was dropped.)

## APPENDIX B

### THE FOUR CORNERS DOCTRINE IN OPERATION

1. To show by examples the full cumulative effect of piling one Act upon another when the Acts are drafted in accordance with the four corners doctrine is, for obvious reasons, difficult to do without inflicting impossible burdens on the reader. Nor would it be right to single out the worst cases and put them forward as typical. What I have decided to do therefore is to take, as offering a sufficient variety of examples, housing Acts amending consolidation Acts passed in 1957 and 1958, and in particular the Housing Act 1961. I became familiar with these Acts when doing a recent consolidation, and the difficulties imposed by drafting under the four corners doctrine in this field are fresh in my mind. I want to make it quite clear however that I am far from wishing to criticise the skill and technique of whichever draftsmen happened to handle the Acts in question. This Appendix is intended to illustrate the way in which the four corners doctrine *necessarily* produces added length and complexity, regardless of the abilities of individual draftsmen. Since the Parliamentary Counsel Office was set up in 1869, individual draftsmen have had little choice but to draft in accordance with the four corners doctrine. Naturally, the skill and experience of different draftsmen varies, but no one can produce a draft which is more artistic than the method he is compelled to use allows.
2. The last housing consolidation was carried out in two instalments- in itself a cause of some additional complexity. The Acts in question are the Housing Act 1957 (c. 56) and the Rousing (Financial Provisions) Act 1958 (c. 42). The first amendments to these Acts were made by two Acts which received Royal Assent on the same date in 1959.
3. One of these 1959 Acts was very brief and it is convenient to deal with this first. It was the Housing (Underground Rooms) Act 1959 (c. 34), and it only had one effective section. Nevertheless this is of interest for our purpose. We notice first that section 1(1) is more than doubled in length by the inclusion of two parentheses explaining the meaning of provisions being amended by the Act. It is a point constantly to be borne in mind when studying the effect of the four corners doctrine that it adds greatly to the length of statutes-in itself a cause of added complexity.

"under modern conditions the public interest is becoming increasingly affected by the unsatisfactory condition of the Statute Book. It is no longer lawyers alone who are mainly concerned in ascertaining the law, but a much wider section of the public, comprising Central and Local Government administrators, representatives of employers and workers, and those of public bodies and private associations.

. . . The reconstituted, Statute Law Committee decided that arrangements ought to be made whereby the Statute Law of the United Kingdom may be constantly revised so that new and completely revised editions . . . can be brought out as occasion requires. This is the salutary practice in many territories within the Commonwealth. . . it is one that ought to be established in the Mother Country as soon as possible . . . I hope that this edition . . . will suffice until further progress with the work of consolidation and statute law revision makes possible the production of a more concise edition of what will then, I trust, be a greatly simplified Statute Book."

4. Section 1 of this 1959 Act illustrates a mixture of referential and textual amendment. Section 1(1) amends the 1957 Act referentially, though it would have been possible to cast both amendments, instead of one only, in textual form. Thus, section 1 of the 1959 Act could have been worded as follows-

1. The Housing Act 1957 is amended as follows-  
(a) in section 4(1), after ' Act, 'insert' (except section 18 (1) (b) and (2)) ';

(b) in section 18 (2), the words from ' Subject 'to' deemed unfit for human habitation 'are repealed."

5. In the textual memorandum the provisions of section 4 (1) and 18 (2) of the 1957 Act, printed so as to indicate the words being inserted and those being repealed, would have made the position entirely clear. It is worth noting that, as so often happens with the referential method of amendment, section 1 of the 1959 Act as actually drafted poses a small but quite difficult question, namely, whether subsection (1) has any independent effect or is there merely to pave the way for subsection (2) and could therefore be repealed by a Statute Law Revision Act. With slight hesitation, I conclude that it could not be so repealed. For the statute user who wishes to note up amendments as soon as they are made, the drafting of section 1 is a minor irritation, the prelude of many more to come in the housing field.

6. The other 1959 Act ran to 32 sections and two Schedules. Many of its provisions applied to Scotland, which has its own housing legislation. Accordingly, since I am unwilling to inflict on the reader more than is absolutely necessary, I will instead make the next major Act applying to England and Wales only the main source of examples. This is the Housing Act 1961 (c. 65).

7. Part I of the 1961 Act contains provisions applying in substitution for sections 1 to 6 of the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1958 (c. 42). Sections 1 to 4 of the 1961 Act are direct replacements of sections 1 to 4 of the 1958 Act. Under the system now proposed these sections would have been put into the 1958 Act in place of the sections repealed, as from the operative date specified in 1961 5. 1(3). 1961 5. 1(4) contains a referential amendment which begins another tangle of complexity, this time in relation to the New Towns Act 1959 (c. 62). 1961.5. 5(2) applies provisions in the 1958 Act which would have applied automatically if the new sections had been added to that Act. Similarly 1961 S. 6 would have been unnecessary if slight textual amendments had been made to the 1958 Act. 1961 ss.5 to 8 could also have been added (by way of substitution) in the 1958 Act.

8. 1961 s.9 is a mixture of textual and referential amendment which, every time it has to be referred to by the reader, poses difficult problems of conflation. Subsection (4) is striking, since it applies one existing provision of the 1958 Act (the definition of " hostel " in s.15) to two other *unchanged* provisions of that Act. Nor is it any easier to construe in relation to 1961 s.9 itself so far as it relates to part of a hostel. This is because section 9 (1) refers to ' part ' of a hostel, and therefore does not seem to need the treatment given by the final words of s.9 (4).

9. Since 1961 s.9 is a typical example of the obscurity produced by even one layer of referential amendments, it is perhaps worth illustrating how the operation could have been carried out relying entirely on textual amendment. In this case s.9 would have been drafted somewhat as follows-

*"Revised version of Housing Act 1961, s. 9*

"Grants for 9.-(1) Section 15 of the Housing (Financial Provisions) hostels. Act 1958 is amended as follows-

- (a) in subsection (1), for " or development corporation substitute " development corporation or housing association ", after " provisions of " insert " sub-section (2A) below and ", and for " or corporation insert " corporation or housing association ";
- (b) after subsection (2) insert the following subsections-(2A) In relation to a housing association, subsection (1) above shall apply only where the building

was provided or converted by the association under arrangements made by them with the Minister; and if the Minister is satisfied that the housing association has made default in giving effect to the terms of the arrangements, he may reduce the amount of the contributions

payable to the housing association under the said subsection (1), or suspend or discontinue payment thereof, as he thinks just.'

(2B) Where a building which has been provided or converted by a housing association for use as a hostel becomes vested in a local authority, and at the time of the vesting the building is one in respect of which a contribution is payable under the said subsection (1)-

(a) no further contribution shall, after the time of the vesting become payable under that subsection, but

(b) the Minister may, if he thinks fit, pay out of money provided by Parliament to the local authority sums not exceeding any sums which would after that time have become payable by him under that subsection in respect of the building if all conditions precedent to the payment of the sums had been fulfilled;

(c) in subsection (4) for " board " substitute either board or facilities for the preparation of food adequate to the needs of those persons, or both; and, in relation to a building provided or converted after the commencement of the Housing Act 1961 for use as part of a hostel includes part of a hostel ".'

(2) In section 22 of the said Act of 1958, at the end insert the following subsection-" (4) In this section " hostel " has the same meaning as in section 15 of this Act."

(3) In section 50 (3) of the said Act of 1958, at the end insert the following paragraph-"In this subsection " hostel " has the same meaning as in section 15 of this Act.""

10. If 1961, s.9 had been drafted in this way, the section amended (1958, s.15) could have been reprinted as shown below, so that the relevant statutory provisions would all have been located in one place-

*"Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1958, s. 15 as amended by Housing Act 1961, s.9*

*"Grants for hostels.*

15.-(1) In respect of a new building provided, or a building converted, by a local authority, development corporation or housing association for use as a hostel, being a building approved for the purposes of this subsection by the Minister, the Minister shall (subject to the provisions of subsection (2A) below and section 22 of this Act) make to the authority, corporation or association, a contribution-

(a) payable annually for such number of financial years, not

*Page 57*

exceeding sixty, as he may determine, being years beginning with the year in which the building is, or, as the case may be, the works of conversion are, completed;

(b) of such amount, not exceeding the sum produced by multiplying £5 by the number of bedrooms contained in the building, as he may determine having regard to the standard of construction and amenity of the building.

(2) Subject to the provisions of section 22 of this Act, the like contribution, if any shall be payable in respect of a building which, under authorised arrangements made by a local authority with a development corporation or housing association, has been provided or converted by that

corporation or association for use as a hostel as would be payable if the building had been provided or converted by the local authority for such use, and shall be paid by the Minister to the authority, who shall pay to the corporation or association by way of annual grant an amount not less than the contribution.

(2A) In relation to a housing association, subsection (1) above shall apply only where the building was provided or converted by the association under arrangements made by them with the Minister; and if the Minister is satisfied that the housing association has made default in giving effect to the terms of the arrangements, he may reduce the amount of the contributions payable to the housing association under the said subsection (1), or suspend or discontinue payment thereof, as he thinks just.

(2B) Where a building which has been provided or converted by a housing association for use as a hostel becomes vested in a local authority, and at the time of the vesting the building is one in respect of which a contribution is payable under the said subsection (1)-

(a) no further contribution shall, after the time of the vesting, become payable under that subsection, but

(b) the Minister may, if he thinks fit, pay out of money provided by Parliament to the local authority sums not exceeding any sums which would after that time have become payable by him under that subsection in respect of the building if all conditions precedent to the payment of the sums had been fulfilled.

(4) In this section " hostel " means a building wherein is provided, for persons generally or for any class or classes of persons, residential accommodation (otherwise than in separate and self-contained sets of premises) and either board or facilities for the preparation of food adequate to the needs of those persons, or both, and in relation to a building provided or converted after the commencement of the Housing Act 1961 for use as part of a hostel, includes part of a hostel."

11. 1961 s.10 in substance makes a number of simple textual amendments, but since it is drafted so as to indicate on the face of it the effect of the changes it makes, it is much longer than it would otherwise have been. It illustrates that the four corners doctrine applies even where textual amendments are made, though often they are not fully textual as here. Subsections (1) to (3) of s.10 each incorporate commencement provisions not designed to be inserted textually in the enactments amended.

*Page 58*

12. 1961 s. 11 (U) applies provisions of the 1958 Act which would apply automatically if the 1961 Act had been textual in form. 1961 s.11(2) brings into operation. the Second Schedule to the Act, which contains consequential amendments. It is noteworthy, however, that nearly all these amendments (including one to another corpus of statute law, relating to town and country planning) are referential rather than textual in form.

13. Part II of the 1961 Act, although entitled " Amendments of Housing Act 1957 " does not amend the 1957 Act textually and is largely self-contained. It introduces a new corpus of law relating to the management of houses in multiple occupation and, under the system advocated in this paper, would have been added in an appropriate place to the principal Act. 1961 s.20 is of interest. It amends the 1957 provisions relating to certain offences in a way which, although the amendments might have been made textually, means that for ever afterwards both s.20 and the amended section must be referred to.

14. 1961 s.21 performs the curious operation of applying provisions of the 1961 Act itself to a wider context. It is probable that this was the result of a late amendment to the Bill for the 1961 Act, and in the consolidation the effect of s.21 has been written into the clauses reproducing ss. 12 to 15.

15. 1961 s.22 (4) modifies indirectly a provision of the 1957 Act which, if it had been changed textually, would have continued to stand by itself without the need for other reference. A similar observation can be made about 1961 s.23(2) and (6). 1961 s.25 is an interesting example of textual amendment which nevertheless informs the reader of the effect of the amendments. Even so, it would be easier to understand them if the whole of s.24 (1) of the principal Act were set out in a textual memorandum, with the words to be inserted printed in bold type.

16. 1961 s.27 illustrates the common technique of repealing enactments twice over. The statute-book is cluttered with a whole section which is unnecessary except for the purpose of conveying to the Members of Parliament the effect of repeals set out in the Fourth Schedule.

17. 1961 s.29 is an interesting example of what might be unkindly called bogus textual amendment. Subsection (1) appears to be a simple alteration of a figure in the Rent Act 1967. On reading subsection (2) however we find that the alteration applies only to cases arising after the commencement of the 1961 Act. This is not so surprising, but we find in subsections (3) and (4) much more complicated limitations on the effect of the textual amendment. It is worth noting too, that s.29 is operating on the Rent Act 1957, once again a different corpus of law to the housing Acts. 1961 s.30 contains a mixture of referential and textual amendments. It is particularly striking that s.4 (1) (d) of the 1959 Act is first amended referentially (in 1961, s.30 (3)), and immediately afterwards textually (in 1961, s. 30 (4)). This means that s.4 (1) can be noted up partly, but not completely.

18. 1961 ss. 32 and 33 again operate on a different corpus of law, this time the law of landlord and tenant. In a fully consolidated statute-book the right course would have been to write in these provisions as textual amendments to the landlord and tenant code.

19. A great deal more could be said in illustrating how the 1961 Act complicates the law, but to do so would be wearisome. When it is considered that the 1961 Act was to be followed by numerous other Acts operating in the same way it can easily be seen how obscure the housing enactments, newly consolidated in 1957-8, rapidly became. I would stress that this was by no means a special case, but the ordinary working out of the four corners doctrine.

20. Tempting though it is to leave the matter there, I feel obliged to give a very sketchy indication of the way in which, throughout the following decade, the complexities of housing legislation multiplied. I take one instance only, that stands

#### *Page 59*

for many. All the Acts referred to in the remainder of this Appendix are Housing Acts.

21. 1961 ss.14 to 16 gave local authorities power to require the landlord of a defective house to carry out repair work within a specified period, and gave the landlord a right of appeal. If the notice was not complied with, 1961 S. 18 gave the local authority power to do the work and recover the cost from the landlord. Nothing was said about the consequences to the landlord of disregarding the notice, apart from his liability to pay for the work done by the local authority. It could be argued that disregard of the notice would be a breach of statutory duty, and therefore a common law misdemeanour. The next major Housing Act was the Housing Act 1964, running to 108 sections and five Schedules. It was decided to take the opportunity in this Act of clarifying the position over the default of a landlord under ss. 14 to 16 of the 1961 Act, and this was done in 1964s. 65, which is a mixture of referential and textual amendments. 1964 s.64 also amends 1961 s.18 in the same mixed way. I will forbear going through these sections in detail, but anyone who does so will quickly see in what a complicated state they left the law.

22. That is not the end of the story about a landlord's default. It was discovered that 1964 s.65 left a doubt about whether, after conviction, the landlord was still liable to do the work required by the original notice and, if he failed to do so, was liable to further penalties. This was rectified in the next major housing Act, which was the Housing Act 1969 (c. 33). The provision in question is 1969 s.61, again a mixture of textual and referential amendment.

23. The provisions we have just been discussing are criminal in character, and it is accepted that there is a special obligation to make the law clear where penalties are involved. The

secretary of a property company, asked to advise the directors on their personal liability and that of the company where the company has defaulted in complying with a notice to carry out work under 1961 s.16 would face a difficult task. He might go through the following processes-

1. He would observe that 1961 s.16 had received textual amendment in three places. Finding it quite easy, he enters these amendments in his copy of the 1961 Act.
2. He observes from 1961 5. 16 (3) that 1961 5. 15 (3) and (4) apply to a notice under s.16, and then discovers that s.15 (4) has been textually amended, so he writes that into his copy too.
3. He sees from 1961 s.17 that the company has a right of appeal, but finds that s. 17 has been amended referentially by 1964 5. 64 (7), so he tries to conflate the two provisions.
4. He then notices that under 1961 s.18 the local authority have power to carry out the work themselves. He finds it difficult to weigh up the full effect of this, since 1961 s.18 has been heavily amended both textually and referentially.
5. He wonders whether the company are liable to a penalty if they fail to comply with the notice. He sees nothing about this in the 1961 Act, but then discovers that 1964 s.65 (1) does provide for a penalty, but leaves it doubtful whether after conviction the company is still liable to do the work.
6. He also finds from 1964 s.65 that a local authority has powers of entry, since 1957 s. 159 is applied by s.65 (4).
7. He also sees that by applying s.23 of the 1961 Act, s.65 (b) has rendered him and the directors liable to personal penalties.
8. Having worked his way through to 1969 s.61 he finds that this contains a fresh set of penal provisions, and tries to master the way in which they operate on the earlier Acts.

*Page 60*

24. The above gives an inadequate picture of the problems of the statute user faced with doing his own conflation. With the passage of further amending Acts a clear exposition (which depends on the result of conflation) becomes more and more difficult, and often impossible.

*Page 61*

APPENDIX C  
CONSOLIDATION  
PART I

*Consolidation Component in Annual Statutes  
A. Statutes Revised (3rd edn.)*

Vol.	Date	Total Pages	Pages of † Consolidation	Total No of Acts	Number of Consolidation Acts
1	1235-1770	689	0	359	0
2	1770-1821	804	61	236	4
3	1822-35	750	184	191	12
4	1836-44	765	17	175	1
5	1845-9	815	0*	102	0
6	1850-9	862	15	230	3
7	1860-6	904	300*	225	10
8	1867-71	812	118	185	3
9	1872-7	837	263	186	10
10	1878-83	938	462	148	12

11	1884-90	835	220	201	16
12	1891-4	987	552	132	12
13	1895-1905	844	187*	215	5
14	1906-1911	1,017	413	154	14
15	1912-18	777	256	145	11
16	1918-21	789	176	147	2
17	1922-4	515	112	79	3
18	1924-5	846	472	58	10
19	1926-9	706	75	119	3
20	1929-32	920	112	93	3
21	1932-4	915	366	71	5
22	1934-6	925	452	64	7
23	1936-8	821	257	76	4
24	1938-9	791	448	69	7
25	1939-41	703	0	113	0
26	1941-1	761	116	67	1
27	1944-6	825	3	68	1
28	1946	802	108	32	1
29	1946-7	741	294	42	2
30	1947	656	0	7	0
31	1947-8	896	375	43	1
32	1948	841	135	33	3
		<u>26,089</u>	<u>6,549</u>	<u>4,065</u>	<u>166</u>

\*Clauses Acts omitted, as facilitating local and private Acts only.

† includes Scottish

Page 62

B. Annual Volumes 1949-72								
Year	All Acts		All Consolidation Acts		Consolidation - Acts (S.)		Consolidation Acts (S.)	
	No.	Pages	No.	Pages	No.	Pages	No.	Pages
1949	93	2288	10	679	2	94	8	585
1950	50	1000	11	413	1	142	10	271
1951	63	675	4	75	2	45	2	30
1952	63	1437	6	895	1	27	5	868
1953	55	815	5	257	-	0	5	257
1954	65	1198	4	153	1	60	3	93
1955	48	747	3	397	0	0	3	397
1956	58	1016	5	168	2	77	3	91
1957	61	1103	9	539	0	0	9	539
1958	76	1188	11	288	0	0	11	288
1959	72	1451	8	592	1	123	7	469
1960	65	1157	4	313	0	0	4	313
1961	65	1048	2	179	0	0	2	179
1962	59	1335	5	516	1	123	4	393
1963	59	1416	4	211	1	48	3	163
1964	98	1421	2	192	0	0	2	192
1965	52	1166	4	275	0	0	4	275
1966	52	1060	3	196	1	171	2	25
1967	91	2155	13	510	2	65	11	445

1968	77	2426	10	564	2	151	8	413	
1969	65	1709	3	89	0	0	3	89	
1970	58	1509	3	805	0	0		3	805
1971	81	2107	10	721	1	139	9	582	
1972	80	2527	8	701	1	359	7	342	

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1949-65.	1102	20471	97	6142	12	739		85	5403
1966-72	504	13493	50	3586	7	885		43	2701
AV.49-65	65	1204	6	361	1	43		5	315
AV.66-72	72	1927	7	512	1	126		6	387

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Page 63

PART 11  
*Candidates for Consolidation*

*Note:* This list has been compiled very roughly by simply looking through the Index to the Statutes. Figures in brackets give the number of Acts entered in the Index under the title given (or a related title). Year is date of last consolidation or principal Act. Purely Scots entries disregarded.

Administration of Estates (75)	Civil Aviation (30)
Adoption of Children (19)	Civil Defence (24)
Agricultural Credits (16)	Civil List (1)
Agricultural Holdings * (23)	Clean Air(9)
Agriculture * (40)	Colonial Stock (15)
Agriculture, Fisheries & Food, Ministry of (18)	Commons (68)
Air Corporations (6)	Commonwealth Development (13)
Air Force (48)	Companies 1948 (70)
Alien (14)	Compensation (Defence) (20)
Alkali, etc. works (10)	Comptroller and Auditor General 1866(11)
Allotments * (20)	Conveyancing and Law of Property 1925* (48)
Ancient Monuments (12)	Copyright 1956(14)
Animals (50)	Coroners* (35)
Arbitration (13)	Costs (40)
Army (77)	County Courts 1959(53)
Arrest (14)	Criminal Procedure * (91)
Atomic Energy (23)	Crown Proceedings 1947 (20)
Auxiliary Forces (17)	Customs and Excise 1952(101)
Bail (14)	Damages * (50)
Bank of England (40)	Death Duties (92)
Banknote* (14)	Defence (41)
Bankruptcy * (63)	Dentists 1957 (9)
Betting, Gaming & Lotteries (32)	Diplomatic Privileges (12)
Bills of Exchange 1882(13)	Distress (30)
Bills of Sale 1878(11)	Dogs 1906(21)
British Nationality 1948 (17)	Education 1964* (66)
Building Society 1962(17)	Electricity (40)
Burials * (28)	Employment (42)
Business Names (4)	Evidence* (148)
Canals (22)	Exchange Control 1947 (9)
Capital Allowances 1968 (11)	Execution* (18)
Capital Gains Tax (8)	Explosives (25)
	Factories 1961(15)

Caravan Sites (7)	Fire Services (15)
Carriers (6)	Firearms 1968 (4)
Census (5)	Fisheries* (62)
Charities 1960 (22)	Food and Drugs 1955* (20)
Children and Young Persons 1933 (56)	
Cinematograph (26)	

\*Separate Acts needed for EW and Scot. (figure in brackets EW only)

*Page 64*

Forestry (6)	Metropolitan Police District (74)
Forgery 1913 (53)	Mines and Quarries 1954(76)
Fraud (104)	National Health Service* (38)
Friendly Societies (33)	National Insurance (26)
Fugitive Criminals (20)	National Parks (13)
Game* (39)	New Towns 1965* (7)
Gas (22)	Notary Public (12)
Habeas Corpus (17)	Nurses 1957* (9)
Harbours and Docks (17)	Oaths 1888 * (29)
Highways 1959(41)	Parliament (60)
Historic Buildings (7)	Patents 1949(23)
Horticulture (8)	Perjury 1911 * (21)
House of Commons (132)	Pests (16)
Housing 1957* (61)	Petroleum (17)
Hovercraft (7)	Physical Training and Recreation 1937(12)
Indecency (23)	Plate (27)
Industrial and Provident Society 1965(11)	Police* (35)
Industrial Injuries Insurance 1965(11)	Prisons* (21)
Insurance (28)	Prize (20)
Intoxicating Liquor (22)	Prosecution of Offences 1879* (15)
Iron and Steel (11)	Public Health 1936 * (64)
Isle of Man (19)	Public Utilities Street Works 1950(11)
Judicial Committee of Privy Council (36)	Public Works Loans (15)
Juries* (41)	Race Relations 1965 (2)
Justices of the Peace * (50)	Rating (30)
Land Drainage * (56)	Registration of Births etc.* (34)
Landlord and Tenant * (50)	Representation of the People (33)
Legal Aid and Advice * (7)	Riot etc. (20)
Libel and Slander* (16)	Sexual Offences (23)
Limitation* (33)	Shops 1950 (7)
Livestock Industry (11)	Slaughter (10)
Livestock Rearing and Hill Farming (16)	Social Security (9)
London Government (70)	Stamp Duties (139)
Magistrates' Courts 1952* (43)	Supreme Court (133)
Marriage * (40)	Telegraphs (65)
Married Woman * (22)	Treason (35)
Master and Servant (32)	Trustee 1925 * (61)
Matrimonial Causes * (22)	Water* (29)
Medical Profession 1956(17)	Wills (28)
Mental Health 1959* (25)	
Merchant Shipping 1894(122)	

*Total: 155 subjects*

\*Separate Acts needed for EW and Scot. (figure in brackets EW only)

Page 65

### PART III

#### *Consolidation Acts now in Force*

Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure) Act (S.) 1947  
Administration of Estates Act 1925  
Adoption Act 1955  
Advertisements (Hire-Purchase) Act 1967  
Affiliation Proceedings Act 1957  
Agricultural Holdings Act 1948  
Agricultural Holdings Act (S.) 1949  
Agricultural Marketing Act 1958  
Agricultural Wages Act 1948  
Agricultural Wages Act (S.) 1949  
Air Corporations Act 1967  
Air Force Act  
Air Force Reserve Act 1950  
Alkali etc. Works Regulation Act 1906  
Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913  
Arbitration Act 1950  
Army Act  
Army Reserve Act 1950  
Attachment of Earnings Act 1971  
Auxiliary Forces Act 1953  
  
Bankruptcy Act 1914  
Bankruptcy Act (S.) 1913  
Betting Duties Act 1963  
Betting and Gaming Duties Act 1972  
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963  
Bills of Exchange Act 1882<sup>c</sup>  
Bills of Sale Act 1878  
Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953  
Building Societies Act 1962  
  
Capital Allowances Act 1968  
Chelsea and Kilmainham Hospitals Act 1826  
Children and Young Persons Act 1933  
Children and Young Persons Act (S.) 1937  
Circuit Courts and Criminal Procedure Act (S.) 1915  
Civil Aviation Act 1949  
Coinage Act 1971  
Coinage Offences Act 1936  
Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1959  
Commissioners for Oaths Act 1889  
Contracts of Employment Act 1972  
Coroners Act 1887  
Costs in Criminal Cases Act 1952

<sup>c</sup>Codification Act

Courts Martial (Appeals) Act 1968  
Criminal Appeal Act 1968  
Criminal Appeal (N.I.) Act 1968  
Customs and Excise Act 1952

Dangerous Drugs Act 1965  
Deeds of Arrangement Act 1914  
Defence Act 1842  
Dentists Act 1957  
Development of Inventions Act 1967  
Diseases of Animals Act 1950  
Dog Licences Act 1959  
Dogs Act 1906  
Dramatic and Musical Performers' Protection Act 1958

Education Act (5.) 1962  
Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866  
Export Guarantees Act 1968

Factories Act 1961  
Factors Act 1889  
False Oaths Act (S.) 1933  
Films Act 1960  
Firearms Act 1968  
Food and Drugs Act 1955  
Food and Drugs Act (S.) 1956  
Food and Drugs (Milk, Dairies and Artificial Cream) Act 1950  
Foreign Jurisdiction Act 1890  
Foreign Marriages Act 1892  
Forestry Act 1967  
Forgery Act 1913  
Friendly Societies Act 1896

General Rate Act 1967  
Government Annuities Act 1929  
Governors' Pensions Act 1957  
Guardianship of Minors Act 1971

Highways Act 1959  
Horse Breeding Act 1958  
Housing Act 1957  
Housing Act (S.) 1966  
Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1958  
Housing (Financial Provisions) Act (S.) 1968  
Hydrocarbon Oil (Customs and Excise) Act 1971

Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970  
Industrial Assurance Act 1923  
Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965  
Industrial Injuries and Diseases (Old Cases) Act 1967

Insurance Companies Act 1958  
Interpretation Act 1889

Land Charges Act 1972  
Land Compensation Act 1961  
Land Compensation Act (5.) 1963  
Land Drainage Act 1930  
Land Registration Act 1925  
Late Night Refreshment Houses Act 1969  
Law of Property Act 1925  
Legal Aid Act (5.) 1967  
Licensing Act 1964  
Licensing Act (5.) 1959  
Limitation Act 1939  
Local Employment Act 1972  
Local Government Act (5.) 1947

Magistrates' Courts Act 1952  
Manoeuvres Act 1958  
Marine Insurance Act 1906c  
Marriage Act 1949  
Matrimonial Proceedings (Magistrates' Courts) Act 1960  
Medical Act 1956  
Merchant Shipping Act 1894  
Midwives Act 1951  
Midwives Act (S.) 1951  
Military Lands Act 1892  
Mines (Working Facilities and Support) Act 1966

National Debt Act 1972  
National Insurance Act 1965  
National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act 1965  
National Savings Bank Act 1971  
National Service Act 1948  
Naval Discipline Act 1957  
New Towns Act (S.) 1968  
Nurses Act (S.) 1951  
Nurses Act 1957  
Nurses Agencies Act 1957

Offences Against the Person Act 1861  
Overseas Resources Development Act 1959

Partnership Act I 8<sub>90</sub>C  
Patents Act 1949  
Pawnbrokers Act 1872  
Perjury Act 1911  
Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928  
Pharmacy Act 1954

*c*Codification Act

*Page 68*

Pilotage Act 1913

Plant Health Act 1967  
Poisons Act 1972  
Post Office Act 1953  
Police Act (5.) 1967  
Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958  
Prevention of Oil Pollution Act 1971  
Prisons Act 1952  
Prisons Act (5.) 1952  
Private Legislation Procedure Act (S.) 1936  
Protection of Animals Act 1911  
Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968  
Public Health Act 1875  
Public Health Act (5.) 1897  
Public Health Act 1936  
Public Health Act (5.) 1945  
Public Stores Act 1875  
Public Works Loans Act 1875

Regimental Debts Act 1893  
Registered Designs Act 1949  
Registration Service Act 1953  
Representation of the People Act 1949  
Rent Act 1968  
Rent Act (5.) 1971  
Road Traffic Act 1972  
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1967  
Road Transport Lighting Act 1957

Sale of Goods Act 1893  
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1923  
Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967  
Sea Fish Industry Act 1970  
Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1966  
Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967  
Settled Land Act 1925  
Sexual Offences Act 1956  
Sheriffs Act 1887  
Shops Act 1950  
Slaughter of Animals Act 1958  
Slave Trade Act 1824  
Slave Trade Act 1873  
Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908  
Solicitors Act 1957  
Solicitors Act (5.) 1933  
Stamp Duties Act 1891  
Stamp Duties Management Act 1891  
Summary Jurisdiction Act (S.) 1954  
Supreme Court of Judicature (Consolidation) Act 1925

Taxes Management Act 1970  
Teachers Superannuation Act 1967

*Page 69*

Television Act 1964

Therapeutic Substances Act 1956  
Titles to Land Consolidation Act (5.) 1868  
Town and Country Planning Act 1971  
Town and Country Planning Act (5.) 1972  
Trade Marks Act 1938  
Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1971  
Trustee Act 1925  
Trustee Savings Banks Act 1969  
Trusts Act (5.) 1921

Universities and College Estates Act 1925

Vehicles (Excise) Act 1971

Wages Councils Act 1959  
War Damage Act 1943  
Weeds Act 1959