

How do you want the government to proceed?

This Parliament has argued and voted itself into an impossible position. 82% of the votes were cast in the General election for two main parties promising to deliver Brexit. Now one of those is doing everything to prevent it, and some Conservative MPs have also assisted them or have joined the Lib Dems. The Lib Dems make a mockery of their name by insisting on not implementing the referendum, saying they want a second vote and finishing off their anti democratic credentials by telling us if that went the wrong way they might ignore that too. We have a Leader of the Opposition who has gone on and on about the need for an early election. Now he is faced with the opportunity of one he looks as if he might instruct his party not to vote for it.

Today the Commons will seek to drive a dangerous Bill through all its stages in one short sitting. Its purpose will be to deliver the UK into the power and control of the EU. The PM will be required to ask for an extension of our membership, and to accept any terms the EU wishes to dictate. No sensible Remain voter, let alone a Leave voter, can think that a good idea. The Commons procedures have been changed to allow this to happen. An urgent debate which was always on a neutral motion has been attached to a detailed Timetable motion not of the government's choosing, binding the Commons and changing Standing Orders. This teems with irony. The MPs who have done this claim to be the true democrats and the defenders of the constitution. Instead they warp the constitution to seek to pass a Bill which would bind the UK into EU servitude against the express wishes of the electors in the referendum and in the 2017 General election.

There are usually constraints on MPs other than the government legislating. Only a Minister can move a Money Order, so any new legislation entailing substantial expenditure requires government agreement. This proposed Bill involves spending £1bn or more extra a month for however long we have to stay in the EU. Yet we are told the Speaker is unlikely to agree it needs a Money resolution. This Bill affects royal prerogative. It therefore should require Queen's Consent – usually offered by the PM on her behalf- before its third reading. It will be interesting to see if this convention is observed. The government would wish to use Queen's consent to stop the debate on this Bill to prevent its passage. In recent times Queen's Consent has been withheld from Bills the government did not favour. As this is a fundamental constitutional Bill of great significance, it would usually get substantial debating time in both houses, yet yesterday's timetable motion tramples over this normal protection.

Issues being debated include would an early election help? Should Conservative MPs who back this legislation lose the whip? The danger of that is then there are fewer MPs to whom the government can look to get any aspect of its programme through, making it even more difficult to govern.