



The Scottish Parliament: **An Agenda for Reform**

David Hume Institute
30 March 2015

Rt Hon Tricia Marwick MSP
Presiding Officer

INTRODUCTION

I WISH TO START BY THANKING THE DAVID HUME INSTITUTE FOR HOSTING THIS EVENT TONIGHT AND FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU.

I KNOW THAT THE INSTITUTE HAS NOW HEARD FROM ALL THE PARTY POLITICAL LEADERS IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, DURING YOUR SPRING SEMINAR SERIES. I HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED THE RANGE OF POLITICAL DISCUSSION ON OFFER.

NOW, PRESIDING OFFICERS DO NOT OFTEN MAKE SPEECHES. SO I HOPE TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS OPPORTUNITY.

BUT LET ME START WITH A QUOTE FROM MICHAEL MEACHER MP WHO HAS EDITED A SERIES OF ESSAYS ABOUT PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"REFORMING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE PROBABLY RANKS WITH MOST PEOPLE AS ONE OF THE MOST BORING SUBJECTS IMAGINABLE. BUT IT ISN'T. IT'S THE OPPOSITE OF THE TRUTH. LET ME EXPLAIN WHY."

I COMMEND THIS DOCUMENT TO YOU AS IT SETS OUT QUITE STARKLY THE REFORMS THE AUTHORS BELIEVED NEEDED TO BE IMPLEMENTED AT WESTMINSTER.

NOW I KNOW THAT THE SUCCESS OR OTHERWISE OF OUR OWN PARLIAMENT MEANS A LOT TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE HOLYROOD BUBBLE AND THAT OUR PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES CAN BE A BIT OPAQUE TO THOSE LOOKING IN.

MY HOPE IS THAT BY THE END OF THIS EVENING WE WILL HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND DISCUSS MATTERS ON PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, WHICH, AS I AM SURE YOU AWARE, IS CLOSE TO MY HEART.



"We are fallible. We will make mistakes. But we will never lose sight of what brought us here: the striving to do right by the people of Scotland; to respect their priorities; to better their lot; and to contribute to the commonweal."

**Donald Dewar
1 July 1999**

THIS QUOTE FROM DONALD DEWAR EMPHASISED - AT OUR REINSTITUTION AS A PARLIAMENT IN 1999 - THAT WE WOULD MAKE MISTAKES, BUT THAT WE WOULD LEARN FROM THOSE MISTAKES.

DONALD ALSO WARNED WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET WHO WE SERVE.

I LIKE THAT!

IT IS A GOOD PLACE TO START.

TONIGHT I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE REFORMS WE HAVE MADE IN THIS SESSION OF PARLIAMENT AND TO CONSIDER WHAT OTHER CHANGES COULD BE OF BENEFIT.

I ALSO WANT TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SET OUT SOME OF MY OWN VIEWS ON FURTHER CHANGES THAT COULD BE MADE.

I'D LIKE TO MOVE FORWARD FROM THE FIRST MINISTER'S WONDERFUL 1 JULY SPEECH IN 1999 TO EXACTLY 12 YEARS LATER.

I SAID THIS.



"The Scottish Parliament, now 12 years old, is an institution of growing maturity. Our greatest challenge over this extended five-year session is to continue to drive this parliament forward.

We have the knowledge and we have the experience, and now we have an opportunity to reflect as a mature parliament on how we can find new ways of working in this chamber, in our committees and in all of our other activities"

Tricia Marwick
1 July 2011

THAT WAS MY SPEECH AT OPENING OF THIS SESSION OF THE 2011 PARLIAMENT.

IT WAS MY MANIFESTO AS PRESIDING OFFICER FOR THIS 5 YEAR TERM.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE THE PRESIDING OFFICER JUST FOR THE SAKE OF BEING PRESIDING OFFICER.

I WANTED TO BE PRESIDING OFFICER BECAUSE I BELIEVED THERE WAS AN IMPORTANT JOB TO DO IN ENSURING THAT THE PARLIAMENT AS AN INSTITUTION WAS ALL IT COULD BE.

I WANTED TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY WHETHER THE PROCEDURES WE INHERITED FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL STEERING GROUP WERE STILL FIT FOR PURPOSE 12 YEARS LATER

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING ABOUT ME.

I WAS A DEPUTY BUSINESS MANAGER IN 1999 AND THEN THE SNP BUSINESS MANAGER AND SAW AT CLOSE HAND HOW OUR NEW STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES WERE PUT TOGETHER.

I HAVE BEEN A FRONTBENCH SPOKESPERSON AND I HAVE SAT ON MANY OF OUR PARLIAMENT'S COMMITTEES, OVER THE LAST DECADE. IN THE 2007-11 SESSION I WAS ELECTED TO THE PARLIAMENT'S CORPORATE BODY.

BECAUSE OF ALL THAT EXPERIENCE I KNEW THAT OUR PROCEDURES HAD TO CHANGE AND THEY HAD TO CHANGE IN THIS TERM.

IF WE FAILED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY THEN A FURTHER 5 YEARS WOULD PASS AND OUR PROCEDURES, OUR WAYS OF WORKING, WOULD BE SO FIRMLY ENTRENCHED THAT ANY ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE IN THE FUTURE WOULD BE GREETED WITH THE CRY THAT " IT'S AYE BEEN".

WHEN I STOOD FOR THE POST OF PRESIDING OFFICER IT WAS ON AN AGENDA OF REFORMING PARLIAMENT.

I STOOD AS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THE ULTIMATE INSIDER TO OUR DETAILED PROCESSES, BUT HAD INCREASINGLY BECOME A CRITICAL FRIEND OF HOW WE DID OUR BUSINESS IN THE COMMITTEES AND THE CHAMBER.

SOME MAY HAVE HAD DOUBTS – I WAS THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDING OFFICER AND I WAS THE FIRST TO COME FROM THE RANKS OF A PARTY THAT NOW HELD GOVERNMENT - AND A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT AT THAT.

BUT I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT STANDING HERE TONIGHT, NEARLY FOUR YEARS AFTER BEING VOTED BY MY FELLOW MSP'S SOME OF THOSE DOUBTS HAVE DISSIPATED.

I HOPE I HAVE PROVED THAT I AM BOTH AN ADVOCATE AND GUARDIAN FOR THE ENTIRE PARLIAMENT.

NOW, ON THE 6TH MAY THIS YEAR – ALL BEING WELL, AND YOU NEVER CAN TELL IN POLITICS - I WILL BECOME THE LONGEST SERVING OF THE 4 PRESIDING OFFICERS IN OUR SHORT, BUT VERY EVENTFUL, HISTORY.

NOW I KNOW THAT IS ONLY BECAUSE WE EXTENDED OUR PARLIAMENTARY TERM FROM 4, TO 5 YEARS BUT I'LL TAKE THAT ACCOLADE NO MATTER HOW IT WAS ACHIEVED.

AND I AM LUCKY THAT IN THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED TO ME, THIS EXTENDED PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

IT HAS GIVEN ME A LONGER TIME TO LOOK OVER THE PARLIAMENT'S BLUEPRINT.

I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT EACH PARLIAMENTARY SESSION HAD A PRESIDING OFFICER FIT FOR THE TIMES IN WHICH THEY HAVE SERVED:

- DAVID STEEL AND HIS EXPERIENCE IN OUR FORMATIVE YEARS;
- GEORGE REID IN MANAGING SO EFFECTIVELY THE TURBULENT TIMES ON THE HOLYROOD BUILDING PROJECT AND MULTI-PARTY REPRESENTATION;
- ALEX FERGUSSON'S SENSE OF EVEN-HANDEDNESS IN OUR FIRST MINORITY ADMINISTRATION.

I LIKE TO THINK THAT WITH THE EXPERIENCES I HAVE OUTLINED THEN I AM THE RIGHT PERSON AT THE RIGHT TIME TO ENCOURAGE CHANGE.

I DO NOT COME HERE TONIGHT TO CRITICISE. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT AS PRESIDING OFFICER TO SET OUT A POSITIVE AGENDA.

IT IS MY JOB TO LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED AND WHERE WE CAN STILL IMPROVE.

AND IT'S MY JOB TO MAKE SURE ANY CHANGES WE MAKE ENDURE.

CHANGE HAS TO WORK FOR WHATEVER FORM OF GOVERNMENT THE SCOTTISH PEOPLE DELIVER FOR US WHETHER THAT IS A COALITION, MAJORITY OR MINORITY GOVERNMENT.

AND IN THAT SPIRIT I WOULD LIKE TO SET OUT TONIGHT WHAT I THINK WE STILL NEED TO DO, IN THIS SESSION AND BEYOND, TO CONTINUE THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S AGENDA OF REFORM.

TONIGHT I WILL:

- LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGES WE HAVE ALREADY MADE IN OUR PARLIAMENTARY CHAMBER AND COMMITTEES.

- I WILL DISCUSS HOW WE HAVE TRIED DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO LINK THE PARLIAMENT TO PEOPLE FROM ACROSS ALL OF SCOTLAND.
- AND I ALSO WANT TO SET OUT MY OWN PERSONAL VIEWS AROUND SOME CHANGES THAT I THINK WE NEED TO MAKE.

THESE FURTHER CHANGES THAT, IN MY VIEW, WE NEED TO START THINKING ABOUT NOW.

WE HAVE A UNIQUE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY BEFORE OUR NEXT ELECTIONS IN 2016.

WE NEED TO WORK ACROSS PARTIES TO ASSESS AND AGREE WHAT WE NEED, WITHOUT THE PRESSURES AND TENSIONS THAT INEVITABLY EXIST FOLLOWING AN ELECTION.

NOW, I DON'T HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS. I KNOW THERE ARE SOME WHO MAY NOT SEE FURTHER REFORMS IN THE EXACT WAY OR STYLE THAT I DO. OR AT ALL.

BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT MANY MSPS ACROSS THE PARLIAMENT BELIEVE AS I DO THAT FURTHER CHANGE IS NOT ONLY DESIRABLE BUT IS NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO DEAL WITH THE CURRENT WORKLOAD AND ALSO FURTHER POWERS WHICH MAY COME TO THE PARLIAMENT.

HOWEVER I KNOW THAT WE WILL ALL SHARE A CAUSE. TO MAKE SURE WE BUILD OUR INSTITUTION TO BE THE BEST THAT IT CAN BE.

I HAVE ALREADY HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CONVENERS GROUP, BUSINESS MANAGERS AND INDIVIDUAL MSPS ACROSS THE PARLIAMENT.

AND I WANT TO HEAR THE VIEWS OF OTHERS, JUST AS I WANT OTHERS TO HEAR MY OWN VIEWS TONIGHT.

PART 1: REFORMS TO PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

I THINK YOU WILL BE SURPRISED AT HOW MUCH WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN TERMS OF PARLIAMENTARY REFORM IN THESE LAST FOUR YEARS.

IT'S EASY TO FORGET HOW THE PARLIAMENT LOOKED, ONLY LAST SESSION.

IT'S ALSO POSSIBLE TO FORGET THE BACKDROP TO ALL OUR REFORMS. THE PARLIAMENT, LIKE ALL OTHERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, FACED SOME SERIOUS HARDSHIPS FOLLOWING THE LAST COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW.

SO, BACK IN 2011, WE HAD THE CLASSIC CONUNDRUM - AIMING TO DELIVER MORE BUT WITH LESS RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO DO IT.

I WAS HOWEVER DETERMINED TO MAKE CHANGES, EARLY ON IN THIS SESSION, DESPITE THAT DIFFICULT BACKDROP.

ONE OF THE FIRST DECISIONS I MADE WAS TO SHAKE UP THE WAY **FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTIONS** WORKED.

MORE TIME WAS FREED UP FOR BACKBENCH MEMBERS TO ASK QUESTIONS AND TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT.

MSP'S CAN NOW SUBMIT A BID FOR A CONSTITUENCY OR NATIONAL QUESTION AS A SUPPLEMENTARY AFTER RUTH DAVIDSON'S QUESTION NUMBER TWO.

IN ADDITION, EVERY THIRD WEEK I SELECT THE 'BEST OF THE WEEK' QUESTION, AS QUESTION NUMBER THREE.

THE REASON FOR THAT IS THAT THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS ONLY HAVE AN AUTOMATIC QUESTION TWICE EVERY THREE WEEKS.

OVER THIS SESSION 46 QUESTIONS AT NUMBER 3 HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO MSPS.

WHILE I AM AT IT LET ME DISPEL SOME MYTHS ABOUT THE FMQ SESSION AND THE PARLIAMENT AS A WHOLE. IT IS NOT MY JOB TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT.

THAT IS THE JOB OF MSPS. MY JOB IS TO CREATE THE STRUCTURES TO ALLOW THEM TO HOLD THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT.

IN JUNE 2012 AND AFTER MONTHS OF SOMETIMES VERY PAINSTAKING DISCUSSION WITH BUSINESS MANAGERS THE PARLIAMENT AGREED A WHOLE NEW PACKAGE OF REFORM, CENTRED ON OUR **SITTING PATTERN**.

I PAY TRIBUTE TO OUR PROCEDURES COMMITTEE WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY TO PRODUCE A REPORT WHICH AGREED TO THESE REFORMS.

IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS I ASSERTED THAT WE NEEDED A NEW STRUCTURE DESIGNED TO MAKE THE PARLIAMENT MORE RESPONSIVE TO TOPICAL AND EMERGING ISSUES.

THE PARLIAMENT'S CHAMBER NOW SITS ON THREE AFTERNOONS A WEEK, WITH OUR COMMITTEES MEETING IN THE MORNING. THIS ALLOWS US MUCH GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN OUR USE OF THE CHAMBER AND ALLOWS US TO START BUSINESS EARLIER OR FINISH LATER.

EACH SITTING DAY NOW BEGINS WITH QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS. WE HAVE TOPICAL QUESTIONS ON A TUESDAY; PORTFOLIO QUESTIONS ON A WEDNESDAY AND GENERAL AND FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTIONS OF COURSE, EACH THURSDAY, ALLOWING MORE TIME IN THE CHAMBER FOR QUESTIONING MINISTERS.

AND TO HELP IMPROVE THE TOPICALITY OF QUESTIONS WE ALSO INTRODUCED SHORTER PERIODS BETWEEN LODGING QUESTIONS AND THOSE QUESTIONS BEING ASKED IN THE CHAMBER.

THE SITTING PATTERN CHANGES ALSO INCREASED THE TIME AVAILABLE FOR DEBATES AND CREATED AN EXTRA MEMBERS' BUSINESS DEBATE A WEEK, WITH A KEY SLOT NOW IN PLACE DIRECTLY AFTER EACH FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTIONS.

BOTH THESE CHANGES FURTHER INCREASED THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BACKBENCH MEMBERS GETTING TIME IN THE CHAMBER.

BACKBENCHER INVOLVEMENT AND INCREASED SCRUTINY OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERS IN THE CHAMBER WERE AT THE HEART OF ALL THIS CHANGE.

PERHAPS THE REFORM THAT I AM MOST PROUD OF, AS I HAVE SEEN AT CLOSE HAND FROM THE CHAIR THE IMPACT IT HAS HAD, WAS THE INTRODUCTION OF **TOPICAL QUESTIONS**.

TOPICAL QUESTION TIME NOW ENABLES BACKBENCHERS TO QUESTION THE GOVERNMENT AT SHORT NOTICE ON MATTERS THAT HAVE EMERGED FROM THE TIME THE PARLIAMENT RISES ON A THURSDAY UNTIL MONDAY MORNING, WHEN A TOPICAL QUESTION CAN BE LODGED FOR ANSWER IN THE CHAMBER ON A TUESDAY BY THE RELEVANT MINISTER OR CABINET SECRETARY.

AND IT IS A SERIOUS EXAMINATION OF A MINISTER. I TRY TO CALL EVERY MEMBER WHO WISHES TO ASK A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION TO THE ORIGINAL QUESTION.

ON ONE OCCASION 13 SEPARATE MEMBERS QUESTIONED THE JUSTICE SECRETARY ABOUT COURT CLOSURES.

IN ADDITION, QUESTIONS CHOSEN BY ME FOR THIS SESSION ARE NOT BASED ON PARTY STRENGTH IN THE CHAMBER BUT BY THE STRENGTH AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT.

IT MEANS THAT EVERY MSP GETS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE THEIR QUESTION CHOSEN PROVIDED IT IS TOPICAL AND IMPORTANT ENOUGH.

PART 2: OUTWARD FACING REFORMS

ONE OF MY GREATEST FRUSTRATIONS OVER THE YEARS HAS BEEN THE PARLIAMENT'S INABILITY TO ENGAGE WITH PEOPLE OTHER THAN THOSE WE COULD CALL THE USUAL SUSPECTS.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS BEING THE PROFESSIONAL WITNESSES, THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR, ACADEMIA AND OF COURSE THE WHITE MIDDLE CLASS MEN. A BIT LIKE THE AUDIENCE TONIGHT!

LET ME SAY THAT THIS SITUATION AROSE NOT BECAUSE THERE WAS ANY LACK OF WILL ON THE PART OF MSPS OR OUR PARLIAMENTARY STAFF BUT THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING AND ENCOURAGING THOSE OTHER VOICES TO BE HEARD.

WE DID TWO THINGS. WE TRIED TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO COME INTO THE PARLIAMENT AND THROUGH OUR PARLIAMENT DAYS WE WENT OUT ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE COUNTRY.

IN ADDITION, OUR COMMITTEES WITH THEIR OWN PROGRAMMES HAVE ALSO BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

LET ME TALK ABOUT GETTING PEOPLE INTO THE PARLIAMENT. IN ADDITION TO OUR REVAMPED FESTIVAL OF POLITICS, HELD AT THE SAME TIME AS THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL, WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR OWN UNIQUE SELLING POINT.

THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING ITSELF.

NOW, I AM NOT GOING TO ARGUE WITH ANYONE ABOUT THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING. IT IS BEAUTIFUL, STUNNING AND EVERY SUPERLATIVE I CAN THINK OF. IT IS THE MOST WONDERFUL SPACE AND AS WE HAVE FOUND IN THE LAST FEW YEARS IT IS SO ADAPTABLE.

TURNING ONE OF OUR COMMITTEE ROOMS INTO A GALLERY FOR A WORLD CLASS EXHIBITION OF ANDY WARHOL PAINTINGS, FOR EXAMPLE.

THE EXHIBITION "POP, POWER AND POLITICS" WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE GREAT GENEROUSITY OF THE ANDREW CARNEGIE FOUNDATION AND THE PITTSBURGH MUSEUM OF ART WHICH HAS THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF WARHOL ART ANYWHERE.

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF BEING PRESIDING OFFICER WAS VISITING PITTSBURGH. BEING GIVEN A PERSONAL TOUR OF WARHOL WORKS AND LITERALLY BEING ALLOWED TO CHOOSE THE ARTWORKS FROM THE WALL OF THE GALLERY. I WENT AROUND SAYING "I'LL HAVE THAT, AND THAT AND THAT".

MY ONLY REGRET WAS THAT I COULDN'T THINK OF ANY REASON TO ASK FOR THE FANTASTIC PRINTS OF MARILYN MONROE. IT WASN'T UNTIL AFTER THE EXHIBITION WAS OVER THAT I REMEMBERED THAT SHE ALLEGEDLY HAD SOME LINKS TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY AND HIS BROTHER ROBERT.

I COULD HAVE SHOE-HORNED ONE OF THE PRINTS INTO THE EXHIBITION IF I HAD BEEN THINKING CREATIVELY. AH WELL.

I'D LIKE TO PLAY FOR YOU A QUICK CLIP FROM A LARGER PIECE WE PRODUCED FOR YOUTUBE IN AUTUMN 2013.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnxljrnc4f4>

THAT EXHIBITION LED TO 22,511 PEOPLE VISITING THE PARLIAMENT. IT WAS FREE TO GET IN AND THANKS TO THE GOODWILL OF ALL INVOLVED, THE COSTS WERE A FRACTION OF WHAT IT WOULD HAVE COST A MAJOR GALLERY TO PUT ON.

AS FAR AS WE ARE AWARE IT WAS THE FIRST EXAMPLE OF ITS TYPE IN ANY PARLIAMENT, ACROSS THE WORLD.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, AT THE HEART OF IT'S THEME WAS POLITICS. WE WANT PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT POLITICS. AND WE WANT POLITICAL THINKING AND PARTICIPATION TO BE IN THE PLACE WHERE OUR OWN POLITICS ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE.

ANOTHER EXHIBITION WAS THE GREAT TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND. SANDY MCCALL SMITH AND ALISTAIR MOFFATT CAME TO SEE ME WITH THEIR GREAT IDEA FOR A TAPESTRY TO TRACE THE HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

THERE WERE NO FUNDS PROMISED THEN AND SANDY WAS GOING TO UNDERWRITE IT HIMSELF.

I WAS BLOWN AWAY BY THE WHOLE CONCEPT AND WHEN THEY ASKED IF THEY COULD LAUNCH IT AT THE PARLIAMENT I SAID YES. THEY ASKED IF WE WOULD EXHIBIT AT THE PARLIAMENT WHEN COMPLETED AND I SAID YES.

I HAD THE HONOUR OF STITCHING THE FIRST AND THEN THE LAST STITCH. WHAT A THRILL BUT NOTHING COMPARED TO THE FIRST SHOWING OF THE COMPLETED TAPESTRY IN THE PARLIAMENT'S MAIN HALL.

I CAN REMEMBER THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT WAS LAUNCHING THE INDEPENDENCE WHITE PAPER. TV CREWS AND REPORTERS WERE DISPATCHED FROM LONDON FOR THE EVENT.

REPORTERS BREATHLESSLY CLAIMED THAT SUCH WAS THE INTEREST IN THE REFERENDUM PEOPLE WERE QUEUING ROUND THE BUILDING. THE QUEUES WERE FOR THE GREAT TAPESTRY!

85,000 PEOPLE CAME TO THAT EXHIBITION. THE PUBLIC CAFE WAS RUNNING OUT OF SCONES AND OUR CHEFS STARTED TO COME IN AT 5 AM TO MAKE SURE WE HAD ENOUGH EVERY DAY FOR ALL WHO WANTED THEM.

BUT, AND THIS IS THE IMPORTANT THING, OVER 55 PER CENT OF THOSE WHO VISITED THE PARLIAMENT FOR THOSE TWO EXHIBITIONS HAD NEVER BEEN TO THE PARLIAMENT BEFORE.

WE HAVE ALSO ATTRACTED PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.

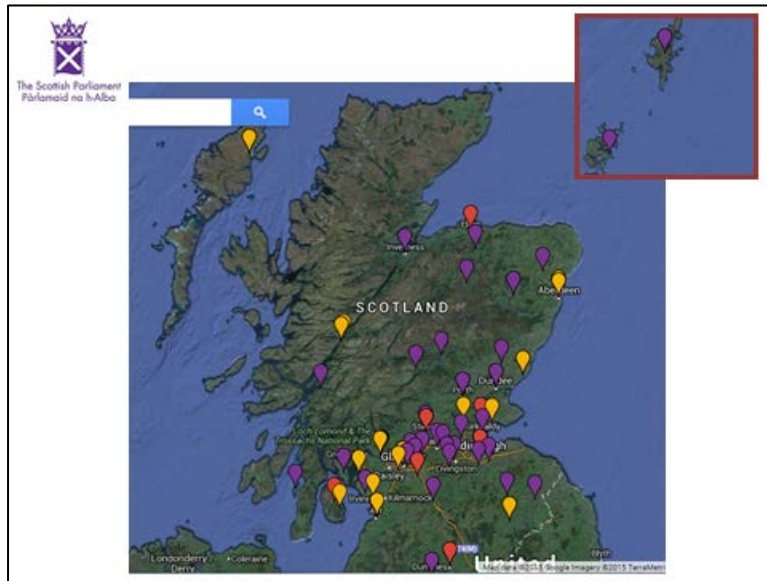
EVENTS LIKE THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURE SUMMIT - WORKING IN THAT CASE WITH OUR PARTNERS THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL, THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND THE UK CULTURE DEPARTMENT.

WE HAVE NOW HOSTED TWO INTERNATIONAL CULTURE SUMMITS AT THE TIME OF THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL BRINGING TOGETHER ARTISTS AND CULTURE MINISTERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD. THE NEXT ONE WILL BE IN 2016 AND PREPARATIONS ARE WELL ADVANCED.

THANKS TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES IN THE UNITED STATES, WHICH WE HAVE NURTURED FOR MANY YEARS, WE WERE ALSO ASKED TO HOST THEIR ANNUAL CONFERENCE. THE FIRST TIME IT HAD BEEN HELD OUT WITH NORTH AMERICA.

WE HOPE WE'LL HAVE MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE COME THROUGH OUR DOORS BACK AS REPEAT VISITORS AND NOT JUST FOR EXHIBITIONS AND CONFERENCES, OF COURSE.

LET ME NOW TURN TO THE PARLIAMENT GETTING OUT INTO OUR TOWNS AND CITIES.



THIS PICTURE I HOPE HELPS TO ILLUSTRATE WHERE THE PARLIAMENT, AS COMMITTEES, ON FACT FINDING TRIPS OR ON PARLIAMENT DAYS HAS ACTUALLY VISITED IN THIS SESSION ALREADY.

IT'S ALSO HELPS ME TO DISCUSS THE REASON WHY I WAS DETERMINED TO INTRODUCE OUR **PARLIAMENT DAYS**. PARLIAMENT DAYS ARE NOW A KEY PART OF OUR OVERALL OUTREACH WORK ACROSS SCOTLAND.

PARLIAMENT DAYS WERE AIMED AT AREAS OUTSIDE OF THE CENTRAL BELT WHOSE CITIZENS FOR REASONS OF RURALITY, DISTANCE OR COST SIMPLY COULD NOT VISIT US. SO WE WENT TO THEM INSTEAD.

SO FAR WE HAVE HELD PARLIAMENT DAYS IN HAWICK, STORNOWAY, STIRLING, ARBROATH, DUMBARTON, FORT WILLIAM AND DUMFRIES. IN JUNE WE ARE GOING TO ORKNEY.

PARLIAMENT DAYS ARE TAILORED TO A PARTICULAR TOWN AND COULD INCLUDE A FORMAL COMMITTEE MEETING, A CONFERENCE, WORKSHOPS, PUBLIC MEETINGS AND VISITS TO SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, BUSINESSES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS.

THE CONSTITUENCY MSP, THE REGIONAL MSPS AND MSPS ON THE COMMITTEE ALL TAKE PART IN THE ACTIVITIES.

AS WELL AS THE ELECTED MEMBERS, THE PARLIAMENTARY STAFF HAVE HAD TO FIND NEW WAYS TO WORK. I SENSED IN 2011 THAT WHILE SOME REALLY GOOD WORK WAS GOING ON ACROSS THE PARLIAMENT IT WAS NOT COORDINATED.

THERE WAS NO NEED FOR OUR EDUCATION, EVENTS AND COMMITTEE STAFF TO COMMUNICATE WHAT THEY WERE SEPARATELY DOING IN TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT.

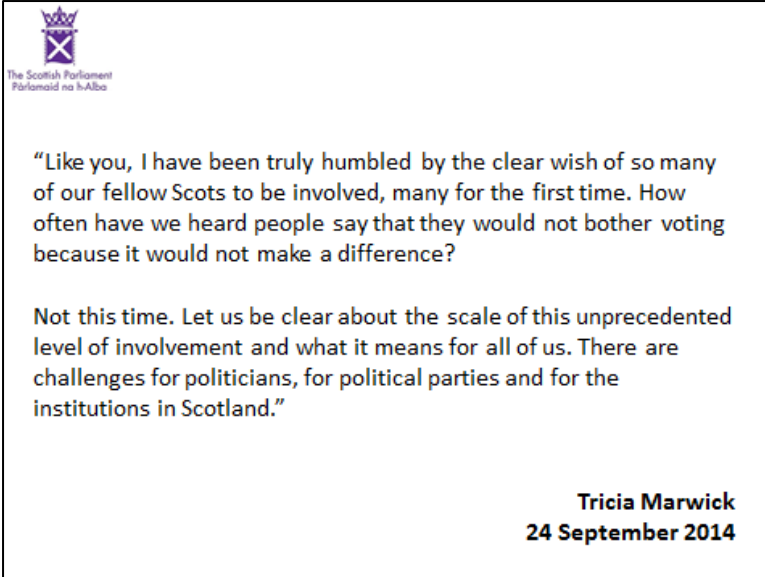
PARLIAMENT DAYS CHANGED THAT. NOW OUTREACH, COMMITTEE, EDUCATION, MEDIA AND EVENTS STAFF ALL WORK TOGETHER TO DELIVER THE PARLIAMENT DAYS.

THE PARLIAMENT DAYS HAVE BEEN A GREAT SUCCESS. I HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY HOW MUCH IT MEANS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES THAT THEIR PARLIAMENT HAS VISITED THEM.

WE HAVE LISTENED TO THEIR CONCERNS, GIVEN THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE A COMMITTEE AT WORK AND EXPLAINED A BIT MORE ABOUT HOW THE PARLIAMENT WORKS.

LAST SEPTEMBER SCOTLAND SURPRISED ITSELF. AFTER YEARS OF LOW TURNOUTS IN ELECTIONS AND A GENERAL DISENGAGEMENT FROM POLITICS THE REFERENDUM GALVANISED PEOPLE IN A WAY WE HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

WE NOW HAVE THE BEST INFORMED AND MOST ENGAGED ELECTORATE IN THESE ISLANDS, IF NOT IN THE WORLD. WHEN THE PARLIAMENT RECONVENED AFTER THE REFERENDUM I SAID THIS TO MY COLLEAGUES.



I ALSO INDICATED THAT DAY THAT I HAD ALREADY ASKED OFFICIALS TO DRAW UP A PROGRAMME TO EXPAND OUR NUMBER OF PARLIAMENT DAYS INTO OUR MORE URBAN COMMUNITIES AND ANNOUNCED MY INTENTION TO HOLD A CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG WOMEN.

WE WENT TO LEVENMOUTH, THE FURTHER POWERS COMMITTEE MET WITH 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS AT BUCKHAVEN HIGH SCHOOL WHO HAD VOTED IN THE REFERENDUM AND THAT EVIDENCE SESSION WAS PART OF THE COMMITTEES REPORT.

TWO WEEKS AGO WE TOOK THE PARLIAMENT DAY TO EASTERHOUSE. THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE VISITED PROJECTS, HELD A COMMITTEE MEETING AND I CHAIRED A PUBLIC MEETING WITH A CROSS PARTY GROUP OF MSPS.

WE HEARD THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT POVERTY, FOOD BANKS, LACK OF TRANSPORT, DISABILITY AND CARE PAYMENTS.

THIS TIME LAST MONDAY I WAS THRILLED TO HOST 128 YOUNG WOMEN FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS ALL PARTS OF SCOTLAND, FOR OUR FIRST EVER “INSPIRING YOUNG WOMEN” CONFERENCE IN THE PARLIAMENT.

WE INVITED YOUNG WOMEN FROM SCHOOLS ACROSS SCOTLAND. THESE YOUNG WOMEN CAN EXCEL, GIVEN THE RIGHT ROLE MODELS, AT THE RIGHT TIME AND WITH A BIT OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND EMPATHY.

WE INVITED SOME TRULY INSPIRING WOMEN LIKE CARA HENDERSON WHOM FOUNDED NIL BY MOUTH AND AMAL AZZUDIN OUR GLASGOW GIRL WHO CAMPAIGNED FOR HER FRIENDS WHO WERE BEING REMOVED FROM THEIR COMMUNITIES.

MANY OF OUR OWN FEMALE PARLIAMENTARY STAFF TOOK TURNS TO VISIT ALL THE SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND PRIOR TO THE EVENT, TO TALK ABOUT WHAT WE WERE TRYING TO ACHIEVE.

I ALSO WANTED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR GOLDEN MOMENT IN THE PARLIAMENT WITH THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDING OFFICER, THE FIRST FEMALE FIRST MINISTER AND THE LEADERS OF THE LARGEST OPPOSITION PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT BEING LED BY WOMEN.

WE HELD WORKSHOPS ON CONFIDENCE, SEXISM, BODY IMAGE AND LEADERSHIP.

I FOUND IT INSPIRING AS OUR POLITICIANS TALKED FRANKLY ABOUT THEIR OWN STRUGGLES AND THEIR MECHANISMS TO COPE. WE ENCOURAGED THESE YOUNG WOMEN TO BE THE BEST THEY COULD BE AND TO ASPIRE TO ACHIEVE.

PART 3: COMMITTEE REFORMS



LET ME NOW TURN TO THE FURTHER REFORMS I BELIEVE WE NEED.

TURNING BACK NOW TO MY SPEECH TO THE CHAMBER AFTER THE REFERENDUM, I ALSO TALKED ABOUT MY FURTHER AMBITION FOR OUR **COMMITTEES**.

I SAID THAT OUR COMMITTEES:

“NEED TO CONTINUE TO ASSESS THEIR OWN PROGRAMMES TO CONSIDER WHEN THEY MEET, WHERE THEY MEET AND WHO IS INVITED TO SPEAK TO THEM”.

AS I HAVE MENTIONED ALREADY THERE ARE MANY GOOD EXAMPLES OF OUR COMMITTEES GETTING OUT AND ABOUT.

THE ‘YOUR SAY’ INITIATIVE FROM THE WELFARE REFORM COMMITTEE TOOK COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO THE PEOPLE MOST AFFECTED BY WELFARE CHANGES AND HEARD DIRECTLY WHAT THEY THOUGHT.

WE ARE INITIATING MORE RESPONSIVE INQUIRES, TO DEAL WITH TOPICAL ISSUES, ACROSS COMMITTEES.

WE ARE TAKING ON IMAGINATIVE POLICY BASED INQUIRIES, SUCH AS THE HEALTH & SPORT COMMITTEE'S WORK ON HEALTH INEQUALITIES.

THAT WAS DEBATED JUST LAST WEEK IN THE CHAMBER. ITS REACH CROSSED OVER A NUMBER OF OUR COMMITTEES AND IT WAS GREAT TO SEE JOINT WORKING LIKE THIS, WITH ELEVEN DIFFERENT CONVENERS ACTIVELY INVOLVED DURING THAT DEBATE.

IT WAS MAKING POLICY FIT ACROSS THE PARLIAMENT, PROMOTED BY AN IDEA THAT STARTED IN THE HEALTH & SPORT COMMITTEE AND SPANNED OUT INTO POLICIES TACKLED BY OTHER COMMITTEES.

BUT TO DO MORE THEN OUR COMMITTEES NEED TO HAVE THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE PARLIAMENT.

WE NEED TO ALLOW SPACE FOR MORE INNOVATION. THE COMMITTEES NEED TO HAVE MORE TIME AND THEY NEED TO HAVE THE RESOURCES FROM PARLIAMENT TO BACK IT ALL UP.

AND THAT THEME FITS BETTER WITH THE SECOND PART OF MY SPEECH, WHICH I PROMISED EARLIER. THAT IS, TO SET OUT SOME OF MY PERSONAL VIEWS AROUND SOME OF THE CHANGES I THINK WE STILL NEED TO MAKE.

IN TERMS OF **FURTHER REFORM OF OUR PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**, TO GO FORWARD WE ACTUALLY NEED TO GO BACK.

THAT MEANS THE CONSULTATIVE STEERING GROUP, OR CSG, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OUR COMMITTEES IN DECEMBER 1998.

Committees of the Parliament

58. In section 2, we set out our proposals for all-purpose subject Committees, which would combine the role of the Westminster Standing and Select Committee, with the following functions:

- to consider and report on the policy and administration of the Scottish Administration;
- to conduct inquiries into such matters or issues as the Parliament may require;
- to scrutinise primary and secondary legislation and proposed European Union legislation;
- to initiate legislation;
- to scrutinise financial proposals and administration of the Scottish Executive (including variation of taxes, estimates, appropriation and audit); and
- to scrutinise procedures relating to the Parliament and its Members (including adherence to those procedures).

59. In all cases the Committees should report to the Parliament with recommendations.

THIS IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE CSG OF THAT TIME.

TO SUM UP A VERY LONG DOCUMENT THE CSG THOUGHT OUR COMMITTEES SHOULD BE:

- o HOLDING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY TO ACCOUNT
- o CONDUCTING INQUIRIES
- o SCRUTINIZING GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION **BUT** ALSO INITIATING OUR OWN LEGISLATION.
- o REVIEWING THE LEGISLATION WE PASS.

I HAVE TO SAY IT WAS ALSO MENTIONED AT THE TIME THAT OUR COMMITTEES NEED ONLY MEET ONCE EVERY MONTH!

I WOULD DARE YOU TO MENTION THAT TO AN OVERWORKED COMMITTEE MEMBER TODAY AND SEE THE REACTION YOU MIGHT GET.

SO TODAY'S REALITY AND THE AMBITIONS OF THE CSG I THINK WE CAN FAIRLY SAY DON'T MATCH UP. THAT IS NOT TO UNDO THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THEY WERE FOUNDED, WHICH I FIRMLY BELIEVE IN.

I HAVE BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH ALL THE CONVENORS OF OUR COMMITTEES OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS AND EVEN MORE SO, IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS.

WE HAVE A SHARED PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE AND I THINK WE HAVE MADE CHANGES FOR THE BETTER IN HOW COMMITTEES REPORT AND IN THE STYLE AND APPROACH TO ACCESSIBILITY WHEN REPORTING.

I SET OUT EARLIER A NUMBER OF WAYS IN WHICH WE INCREASED BACKBENCHER'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCRUTINY IN THE CHAMBER.

AS PRESIDING OFFICER, IT IS MY JOB TO SET OUT A POSITIVE AGENDA, ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE PARLIAMENT. I'D RATHER FOCUS ON HOW WE LOOK AT OUR PARLIAMENT 16 YEARS ON AND FIND NEW WAYS TO HELP US WORK BETTER.

THAT'S MY FOCUS HERE THIS EVENING.

FIRST I'D LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT SOME GOOD WORK BY CURRENT COMMITTEES, WHICH HAS LED TO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE.

FOR EXAMPLE, THE FINANCE COMMITTEE'S WORK ON PREVENTATIVE SPENDING HAS BEEN INFLUENTIAL IN SHAPING THE POLICY DEBATE, NOT LEAST IN TERMS OF THE COMMITTEE'S INITIAL REPORT WHICH INFORMED MANY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIE COMMISSION. THE COMMITTEE HAS CONTINUED TO PRESS THE GOVERNMENT ON THEIR PROGRESS IN DELIVERING.

THE HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE'S WORK ON NEW MEDICINES LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO INDEPENDENT REVIEWS AND THE RARE CONDITIONS FUND. ADDITIONALLY, THEIR WORK EXPOSED MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S PART ABOUT WHAT ASPECTS OF DRUGS PRICING WERE RESERVED AND DEVOLVED.

THE RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE RECENTLY PUBLISHED STRONG CONCERNS ABOUT THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S DRAFT MARINE PLAN.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED SETTING UP AN INDEPENDENT CROSS-PARTY COMMISSION TO LOOK AT ALTERNATIVES TO THE COUNCIL TAX AND THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT HAS NOW ANNOUNCED THERE WILL BE SUCH A COMMISSION.

THE EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE MADE RECOMMENDATIONS AROUND SUPPORT IN ITS INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT IS NOW IMPLEMENTING A NATIONAL MENTORING SCHEME.

I WANT THE PARLIAMENT TO BE AT THE CENTRE OF POLICY DEBATE AND THE PARLIAMENT'S COMMITTEES TO BE AT THE CENTRE OF SHAPING THAT DEBATE.

WE CAN DO MORE AND WE WILL DO MORE. BUT I REALLY THINK WE NEED TO HAVE A LOOK AT WHAT STANDS IN OUR WAY.

THE FACT IS THAT THERE ARE TOO FEW MEMBERS TO SERVE ON ALL THE COMMITTEES WE CURRENTLY HAVE.

IF WE ARE TO EVER TO DELIVER THE AIMS OF THE CSG – AND SOME SAY WE HAVE NEVER COME CLOSE – THEN I FEEL WE HAVE TO ADDRESS THE **STRUCTURE** OF OUR COMMITTEES TOO.

LET ME ILLUSTRATE.

- o SOME MEMBERS SIT ON 3 COMMITTEES. MANY SIT ON 2;
- o THERE ARE CURRENTLY 17 COMMITTEES;
- o OF THOSE THAT EXIST NOW, 7 ARE MANDATORY WITH THE REST BEING SUBJECT COMMITTEES WHICH GENERALLY MIRROR CABINET SECRETARY AND MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS ;
- o 1 COMMITTEE HAS 5 MEMBERS; 1 COMMITTEE HAS 6 MEMBERS;
- o 8 COMMITTEES HAVE 7 MEMBERS; 6 COMMITTEES HAVE 9 MEMBERS, AND
- o 1 COMMITTEE HAS 11 MEMBERS;
- o THIS GIVES A TOTAL OF 132 COMMITTEE PLACES;
- o NOT INCLUDING THE 4 PRIVATE BILLS COMMITTEES THIS SESSION EACH WITH 4 MEMBERS.

ARE YOU STILL WITH ME? I HOPE SO. REMEMBER THAT NUMBER OF 132.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT THOSE 132 COMMITTEE PLACES HAVE TO BE FILLED BY ABOUT 80 MEMBERS BECAUSE THE CABINET, OTHER GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, PARTY LEADERS AND SOME OPPOSITION SPOKESPEOPLE ARE NOT ON ANY COMMITTEES THEN YOU CAN RECOGNISE THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM.

I HAVE NOW COME TO THE VIEW THAT CHANGING OUR CULTURE IS NOT ENOUGH AND WE NEED TO CONSIDER STRUCTURAL CHANGE.

DOES OUR CURRENT COMMITTEE **STRUCTURE** SERVE US WELL ENOUGH?

WHY HAS NO COMMITTEE PROPOSED ANY COMMITTEE LEGISLATION SINCE 2002, APART FROM PROCEDURAL LEGISLATION?

WHY HAVE WE CARRIED OUT VIRTUALLY NO POST LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY?

THE CSG PROPOSED A HYBRID COMMITTEE SYSTEM WHICH COMBINED WESTMINSTER'S SELECT COMMITTEE AND STANDING COMMITTEES.

ALL COMMITTEES ARE BUSY BUT THE SITUATION IS MORE NUANCED – THEY ARE NOT EQUALLY SO. I KNOW THAT, AS EVERYONE CLAIMS THAT THEIR OWN COMMITTEE IS BUSIER THAN EVERYONE ELSE’S!

BUT IN ALL SERIOUSNESS, CAPACITY IS AN ISSUE SHARED ACROSS THE COMMITTEES. WE NEED TO FIND A SHARED SOLUTION.

TURNING BACK THEN TO STRUCTURE. IN MY OWN VIEW THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO LOOK AT THIS – BUT BOTH REQUIRE FEWER COMMITTEE SPACES.

AS I SET OUT IN THE NUMBERS ABOVE, TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS FROM THE CURRENT 132 WE HAVE TO LOOK AT OUR STRUCTURE.

BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO BE MINDFUL OF D’HONDT ARRANGEMENTS. SO, WE EITHER HAVE **FEWER COMMITTEES** WITH MORE MEMBERS; OR WE HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF COMMITTEES WITH FEWER MEMBERS.

ANY CHANGE TO STRUCTURE, WHETHER IT IS LARGER COMMITTEES WITH MORE FREEDOMS IN HOW THEY WORK OR SMALLER COMMITTEES WITH MORE SPECIFIC AGENDAS, HAS TO BE WORK-DRIVEN.

I BELIEVE LARGER COMMITTEES COULD PROVIDE A BETTER OVERALL POLICY FIT, BRINGING TOGETHER SOME SUBJECTS THAT ALTHOUGH SEPARATE JUST NOW, MAY WORK BETTER TOGETHER UNDER ONE LARGER COMMITTEE.

I WILL NOT VENTURE INTO THE ACTUAL RE-MODELLING OF THE COMMITTEES. THAT WOULD BE A MATTER FOR DISCUSSION.

HOWEVER I CAN SAY THAT IF WE WERE TO REDUCE TO JUST TEN OR ELEVEN COMMITTEES THE NUMBER OF PLACES NEEDING TO BE FILLED WOULD DROP BY BETWEEN 49 AND 44.

THESE LARGER COMMITTEES COULD BE FOCUSED ON WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THE PARLIAMENT IN TERMS OF POLICY FIT.

I THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO NOW ENVISAGE A SYSTEM WHERE EACH COMMITTEE WOULD FOLLOW ONE MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIO DIRECTLY.

I BELIEVE THE PARLIAMENT SHOULD BE CLEAR IN SETTING OUT ITS OWN POLICY PRIORITIES AND, AS SUCH, SHAPE ITS OWN COMMITTEES ACCORDING TO ITS OWN NEEDS.

LARGER COMMITTEES WOULD BE ABLE TO BREAK INTO SMALLER SUB GROUPS, PERHAPS TO CONSIDER LEGISLATION, OR TO HOLD INQUIRIES OR TO UNDERTAKE FACT FINDING VISITS.

IT SIMPLY DOESN'T NEED **ALL** THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO BE WORKING ON **ALL** THE COMMITTEE BUSINESS, **ALL** AT THE SAME TIME. WE NEED TO BE MORE CREATIVE IN HOW WE WORK.

I THINK LARGER COMMITTEES WOULD ALSO HELP US TO PREVENT ANOTHER SHARED CONCERN – AND THAT IS THE PROBLEM OF THE CONSTANT CHURN OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS MOVING FROM ONE COMMITTEE TO ANOTHER.

I RECALL WHEN I WAS PUT ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE IT HAD BEEN CARRYING OUT A VERY WORTHY INVESTIGATION INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE AND AN ALTERNATIVE TO COUNCIL TAX.

THE INVESTIGATION HAD TAKEN SO LONG THAT VERY FEW MEMBERS WHO HAD STARTED THE INVESTIGATION WERE STILL THERE WHEN IT WAS COMPLETED.

I CAME IN ALMOST AT THE END OF THE PROCESS AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH ANY VIEW BECAUSE I HAD HEARD VERY LITTLE OF THE EVIDENCE.

AS I RECALL THE REPORT IS STILL GATHERING DUST ON A SHELF SOMEWHERE AS NEITHER THE GOVERNMENT NOR ANY OTHER POLITICAL PARTY PICKED UP ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

EVERY TIME THERE IS A MINISTERIAL OR SHADOW CABINET RESHUFFLE THAT TRIGGERS ANOTHER RESHUFFLE OF THE COMMITTEE PLACES. MEMBERS SIMPLY DO NOT GET THE TIME TO BUILD UP EXPERTISE BEFORE THEY ARE MOVED ON TO ANOTHER COMMITTEE.

SPECIALISMS NEED TO HAVE MORE TIME TO DEVELOP.

THE SUB GROUPS WOULD ALLOW MEMBERS TO FOCUS MORE AND DEVELOP AN EXPERTISE, IN TURN BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THEIR COMMITTEE ON AN ISSUE.

WHERE POLICY STILL SPREADS BEYOND THE REMIT OF A NEW LARGER COMMITTEE, TAKE THAT ISSUE OF HEALTH INEQUALITIES I MENTIONED EARLIER FOR EXAMPLE, MORE EXPERT KNOWLEDGE COULD DEVELOP BETWEEN COMMITTEES.

IN THOSE CASES COMMITTEES COULD NOMINATE MEMBERS TO WORK TOGETHER ON ISSUES, TO HELP DEVELOP A SHARED POLICY VISION ACROSS PARLIAMENTARY WORK.

I THINK BEING MORE RADICAL IN HOW WE SET OURSELVES UP; BY ALLOWING MORE FLEXIBILITY WITHIN A STRUCTURE OF FEWER, BUT BETTER POLICY ALIGNED COMMITTEES, WILL BENEFIT MEMBERS.

AND ALL MEMBERS ARE MY PRIMARY CONCERN.

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT WE WILL HAVE THE SAME LARGE INTAKE OF NEW MSPS IN 2016 THAT WE DID IN 2011.

I THINK AN APPROACH SUCH AS THE ONE I HAVE BEEN SETTING OUT WILL HELP CONFIDENCE TO GROW AMONG NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN HOW THEY CAN APPROACH AND DEVELOP IN THEIR WORK.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THINK THE PRINCIPLE OF FEWER COMMITTEES, ACTING MORE POWERFULLY AND BEING MORE FOCUSED IN ONE POLICY AREA WOULD BE WELCOME BY ALL MSPS, CURRENT OR NEW.

AND IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY GOT THERE, IT MAY COME AS NO SURPRISE TO YOU WHEN I SAY THAT I SEE **ELECTED CONVENERS** AT THE HEART OF THIS SEA-CHANGE IN THE WAY WE APPROACH COMMITTEE BUSINESS.

TONIGHT, I WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR ABOUT HOW I SEE THE REALITY OF ELECTED CONVENERS, WORKING IN THE PARLIAMENT.

SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW I HAVE ALREADY ASKED THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE TO LOOK INTO ELECTED CONVENORS AND MANY PEOPLE HAVE SUBMITTED VIEWS.

ELECTED CONVENORS ALREADY OPERATE IN THE UK PARLIAMENT.

WHAT I AM SETTING OUT IS NO DIFFERENT TO WHAT IS OPERATING WITHIN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS; SOME WOULD SAY WITH SOME REAL SUCCESS.

PUT QUITE SIMPLY, AS WITH WESTMINSTER, PARTIES WOULD EACH HAVE A PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF THE COMMITTEE CONVENERSHIPS, DIRECTED AS IT IS JUST NOW, THROUGH REFERENCE TO D'HONDT.

THE KEY DIFFERENCE I AM SETTING OUT TO CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS IS THAT WE ELECT CONVENORS HERE IN SCOTLAND FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE REASONS FOR THIS ARE TO ME, VERY IMPORTANT.

FIRSTLY, IT MAKES THE CONVENORS, THROUGH A VOTE OF THEIR FELLOW MSP'S ACROSS ALL THE POLITICAL PARTIES, DIRECTLY ACCOUNTABLE TO PARLIAMENT.

THEY WILL OWE THEIR APPOINTMENT TO THE PARLIAMENT AND DERIVE THEIR AUTHORITY FROM THE PARLIAMENT.

PARLIAMENT IS THEREFORE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR POSITION AND HOW THEY UNDERTAKE THOSE DUTIES.

IT IS NOT A CRITICISM OF THE CURRENT PARTY APPOINTMENT SYSTEM - I SEE IT AS A DEVELOPMENT IN OUR APPROACH AS A PARLIAMENT. REMEMBER, I WAS ONCE A WHIP MYSELF!

SECONDLY, IT IS A VOTE BY SECRET BALLOT, ON THE FLOOR OF OUR CHAMBER.

I KNOW THERE ARE SOME DOUBTS THAT WE WOULD NOT, AS A PARLIAMENT, HAVE THE MATURITY TO VOTE FOR THE BEST CANDIDATE, IF IT MEANT SOME SHORT TERM POLITICAL CAPITAL.

I DON'T BUY THAT. I THINK WE'VE SEEN EXAMPLES LIKE THAT FLOUNDER IN THE PAST AND I THINK WE WOULD IN THE FUTURE.

I DO BELIEVE THAT BEING DIRECTLY APPOINTED BY YOUR PEERS WOULD CREATE AN IMPORTANT CULTURAL SHIFT. IT IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO MORE INDEPENDENT MINDED CANDIDATES PUTTING THEMSELVES FORWARD.

IT WOULD PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE CAREER STRUCTURE WITHIN THE PARLIAMENT FOR THOSE WITH THAT KIND OF AMBITION.

IN THE MODEL I PROPOSED EARLIER, THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE CONVENOR COULD BE A REALISTIC CAREER CHOICE.

IT WOULD BE A REAL CHANCE TO INFLUENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SCOTLAND AND MANAGE A SIGNIFICANT AND ENERGISED COMMITTEE, ACTIVE ACROSS THE RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITIES FIRST ENVISAGED BY THE CSG.

IT WOULD PROVIDE STRONGER LEADERSHIP ROLES AT THE HEART OF THIS COUNTRY'S PARLIAMENT.

I WANT TO SEE MORE POWERFUL CONVENERS WITH A STRONGER VOICE, WHO SET THEIR OWN AGENDA AND ARE NOT DRIVEN BY A GOVERNMENT'S LEGISLATION PROGRAMME.

I WANT TO SEE MORE IDENTIFIABLE CONVENERS AND DEPUTY CONVENORS, IN THE PUBLIC'S EYE.

I SAID EARLIER THAT TO ACHIEVE ALL THIS THE COMMITTEES NEED TO HAVE THE RESOURCES FROM PARLIAMENT TO BACK IT ALL UP.

THE MODEL I PROPOSE, OF LARGER AND MORE FLEXIBLE COMMITTEES, WOULD NEED THAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCE.

I HAVE DISCUSSED THE STAFFING SUPPORT WE PROVIDE WITH THE PARLIAMENT'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HE IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE STAFF WILL BE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT ANY NEW STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES.

THE MODEL OF FEWER, BUT LARGER COMMITTEES, WOULD ENABLE FLEXIBILITY AROUND THE STAFF SUPPORT FOR BOTH COMMITTEES AND SUB GROUPS.

ALSO, WE WILL BE IN A POSITION OF ENSURING THAT WE HAVE STAFF WITH THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE NEW POWERS.

ALL THIS SUPPORT ONLY COMES IF YOU CREATE THAT CAPACITY, TO LOWER OUR COMMITTEE NUMBERS SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE CURRENT 132.

THIS ALL TOUCHES DIRECTLY ON ANOTHER KEY THEME I WANT TO EXPLORE WITH YOU TONIGHT.

I WANT MEMBERS TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP AND SEE THEMSELVES **NOT JUST** AS POLITICIANS, BUT AS **PARLIAMENTARIANS**.

WHAT MAKES A PARLIAMENTARIAN?

EXPERIENCE FOR ONE THING!

I READ WITH INTEREST THE VALEDICTORY DEBATES FROM RETIRING MEMBERS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. MANY HAD BEEN MPS FOR 40 YEARS.

IT STRUCK ME THAT ONLY 33 OF OUR 129 MSPS HAVE SERVED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1999. THAT'S ONLY 16 YEARS. IT IS HARDLY ENOUGH TIME TO BUILD A CULTURE BUT WE MUST TRY.

THE PARLIAMENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO PUT RESOURCES INTO SUPPORTING MEMBERS TO HELP THEM GROW AND DEVELOP AS PARLIAMENTARIANS.

WHEN I WAS ELECTED AS PRESIDING OFFICER I OFFERED TO MEET PERSONALLY WITH EVERY NEW MSP. THOSE MEETINGS WERE ENORMOUSLY HELPFUL TO ME.

IT WAS SO VALUABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE WORRIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF THOSE NEW MEMBERS. IT CONVINCED ME TO SET UP A CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, OR CPD, PROGRAMME FOR MEMBERS.

THE CPD PROGRAMME WAS QUIETLY WORKING AWAY AS A PILOT DURING 2013.

HOWEVER, I THINK IT SIMPLY STARTED TOO LATE. I THINK THE BENEFITS WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF WE COULD HAVE INTRODUCED SUCH A PROGRAMME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE LAST ELECTION.

AS SUCH I WILL BE ENSURING THAT A FULL CPD PROGRAMME WILL BE IN PLACE FOR MEMBERS, BOTH NEW AND RETURNING, AFTER THE 2016 ELECTIONS.

AS PART OF THAT PROGRAMME I'D LIKE TO SEE THE OCCASIONAL COMEBACK FROM SOME MEMBERS WHO WILL BE CHOOSING NOT TO STAND AGAIN.

I'M GUESSING A NUMBER OF THOSE WILL BE SOME OF OUR MOST EXPERIENCED AND WISEST PARLIAMENTARIANS, STRETCHING BACK TO OUR FIRST INTAKE OF 1999.

WE NEED TO HELP MEMBERS ACQUIRE EXPERIENCE.

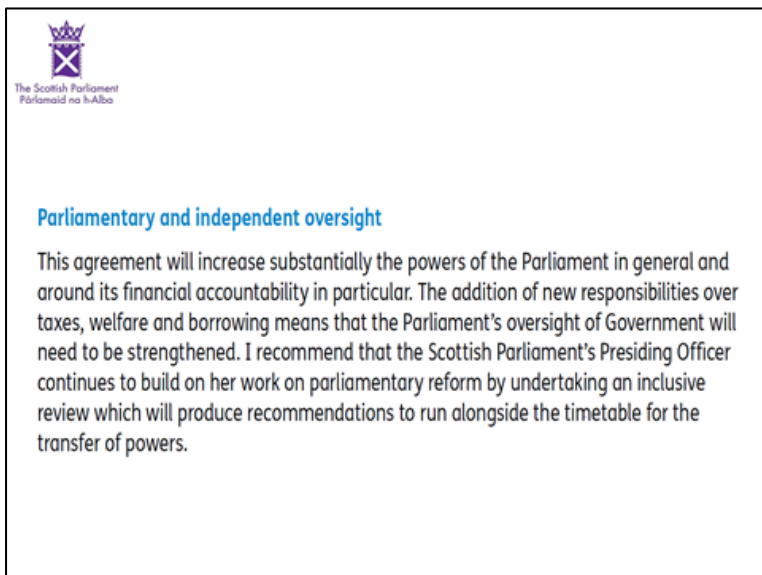
THE COMMITTEE REFORMS I MENTIONED EARLIER ARE PART OF THAT.

ELECTED CONVENORS ARE ALSO PART OF THAT.

THESE SIMULTANEOUSLY REINFORCE AND INTRODUCE THE IDEA OF A CAREER STRUCTURE FROM WITHIN THE PARLIAMENT, NOT JUST IN PURSUIT OF MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

AND NOW THAT WE ARE ON THE SUBJECT OF MONEY, CAN I TURN TO MY LAST TOPIC FOR THIS EVENING AND THAT IS LOOKING AHEAD TO FURTHER POWERS FOR THE PARLIAMENT.

PART 4: NEW POWERS



I WELCOME THE ADDITIONAL POWERS THAT THE SMITH COMMISSION PROPOSES AND I WELCOMED LORD SMITH'S PERSONAL COMMENTS HERE, IN HIS REPORT, ENCOURAGING ME TO CONTINUE TO BUILD ON PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

I WORKED WITH LORD SMITH TO MAKE SURE THE PACKAGE IS ONE WHICH PLACED THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AS AN INSTITUTION, AT ITS CORE.

THE SMITH COMMISSION REPORT REPRESENTS AN EXTENSIVE PACKAGE OF NEW POWERS FOR BOTH THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT AND THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT.

IF THE POWERS ARE AGREED AFTER THE ELECTION WE WILL HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISABILITY AND HOUSING PAYMENTS, THE ABILITY TO CREATE NEW WELFARE PAYMENTS AND TO SET THE RATES OF INCOME TAX.

AND I VERY MUCH LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING IN PARTICULAR POWERS FOR THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT TO RUN ITS OWN AFFAIRS IN FUTURE.

- POWERS EXTENDING THE FRANCHISE TO 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS;
- POWERS TO DISQUALIFY MEMBERS WHERE WE SHOULD DO SO;
- THE RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF OUR OWN ELECTIONS AND THOSE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT; AND
- POWERS OVER OUR OWN DAY TO DAY PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS.

HOWEVER, I TALKED THROUGHOUT TONIGHT ABOUT A SENSE OF URGENCY AND REFORM.

WE ARE GATHERED HERE NOW, ON 30 MARCH 2015 – THE EVE OF WHEN SIGNIFICANT NEW TAX POWERS UNDER THE SCOTLAND ACT 2012 TAKE EFFECT.

MORE WILL OF COURSE FOLLOW. A YEAR FROM TOMORROW WE WILL BE OPERATING A NEW SCOTTISH RATE OF INCOME TAX.

A NEW SCOTLAND BILL, RESULTING I HOPE FROM THE SMITH COMMISSION AGREEMENTS, WILL BRING US EVEN MORE.

AND THESE FURTHER POWERS PROMISED TO THE PARLIAMENT WILL INEVITABLY IMPACT EVEN MORE ON CAPACITY AND HOW COMMITTEES UNDERTAKE SCRUTINY.

WE HAVE TO LOOK NOW AT WHAT LIES AHEAD.

HOW WILL WE MANAGE EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY ON THE NEW FISCAL POWERS THAT COME OUR WAY?

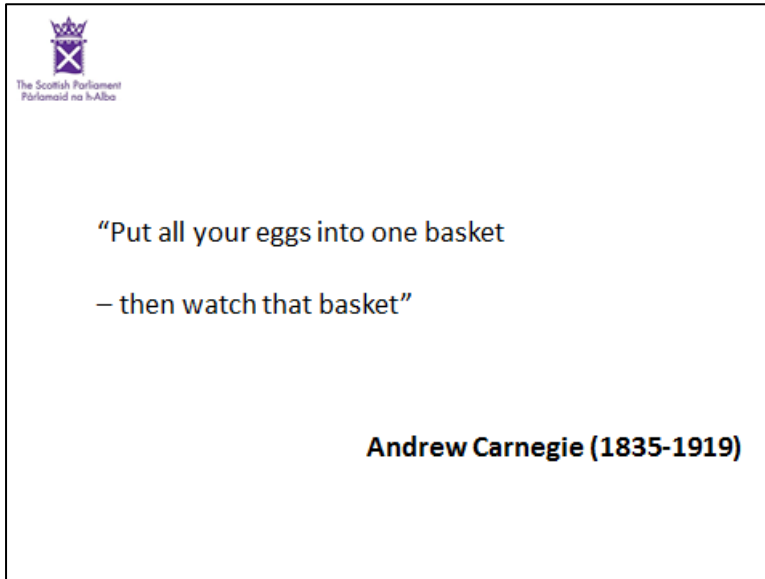
HOW CAN WE BUILD OUR EXPERTISE IN AREAS THAT WE HAVEN'T DEALT WITH BEFORE?

THE PARLIAMENT HAS STARTED WORK ON THIS BUT I THINK THAT COULD BE THE SUBJECT OF ANOTHER WHOLE LECTURE, AND I THINK I HAVE KEPT YOU LONG ENOUGH ALREADY.

I WOULD HOWEVER BE VERY INTERESTED TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS OVER THE REMAINDER OF THE EVENING ON THIS.

PERHAPS IT'S A CHANCE ALSO FOR US TO COME BACK AND HAVE ANOTHER EVENING TOGETHER, LATER IN THE YEAR.

PART 5: CLOSING REMARKS



BUT I WANT TO DRAW MY COMMENTS TO A CLOSE NOW.

I HOPE THAT IN THIS SPEECH TONIGHT I HAVE HELPED TO:

- HIGHLIGHT AND ILLUSTRATE REFORMS – MANY UNHERALDED – THAT HAVE BEEN OUR AGENDA IN THE LAST 4 YEARS.
- THAT I HAVE HELPED TO RAISE THE DEBATE AROUND FURTHER REFORMS – I TRULY HOPE WE WILL MAKE FURTHER CHANGES IN GOOD TIME FOR THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION AND THAT THESE CAN PAVE THE WAY FOR A FUTURE REFORM AGENDA TO HELP US MANAGE THE ADDITIONAL POWERS WHICH WILL FOLLOW IN THE YEARS THEREAFTER.

IT WILL NOT BE EASY.

NO-ONE LIKES CHANGE.

CHANGE ONLY COMES WHEN THERE IS A GROUNDSWELL FOR IT.

I HOPE TO CONTINUE MY DISCUSSIONS WITH COLLEAGUES TO ENSURE THE NEXT PARLIAMENT IS READY TO GET UP AND GO AFTER OUR NEXT ELECTION.

WITH EASTER JUST AROUND THE CORNER - AND AS YOU KNOW FROM TONIGHT HOW MUCH I LIKE TOPICALITY - I LEAVE YOU WITH A TOPICAL QUOTE. IT'S FROM MY FELLOW FIFER, ANDREW CARNEGIE.

IT IS A QUOTE CARVED INTO THE PARLIAMENT'S OWN WALL, IN THE CANNONGATE.

I CAN ASSURE YOU, AS WE APPROACH THIS EASTER AND NEXT, I WILL CONTINUE TO BE WATCHING OVER ALL THE EGGS IN THE PARLIAMENT'S BASKET.