



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 4 September 2019

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Scottish Parliament

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[The Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Portfolio Question Time

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

Community Land Ownership (South Scotland)

1. **Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to support community land ownership in the South Scotland region. (S5O-03465)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): The Scottish Government supports community land ownership through legislation, guidance and the provision of advice to community groups and by making available grant funding for communities to acquire land or land assets. Since 2016, the Scottish land fund has awarded £272,000 to 25 groups in the south of Scotland to carry out feasibility studies into buying land or buildings for community use. Of those, 17 groups to date have gone on to secure approval to acquire the assets in question, with funding of just over £1.99 million.

Colin Smyth: Is the cabinet secretary aware that of the 560,000 acres of land in community ownership in Scotland, almost 530,000 acres are in the Highlands and Islands and, so far, just 800 acres are in the South Scotland regions of Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders. Given that there has been an explosion of interest in community land ownership in the south of Scotland in recent months—for example, Langholm Moor, Wanlockhead and Dumfries town centre—will the cabinet secretary consider whether there is anything more that the Government could do to support potential community landowners in South Scotland, where the need to tackle economic challenges is as great as it is in the Highlands and Islands?

Roseanna Cunningham: I am aware of the motion that Colin Smyth lodged, which had cross-party support, so I am aware of the figures on which he founded his question.

There are a couple of things that I should say. Colin Smyth has looked at the issue in terms of acreage but, sometimes, although a community right to buy application is for a small package of land, it is one that would make a massive

difference to the local community. He is right to talk about a recent explosion in interest and it is fair to say that communities in the south of Scotland have been slow to think about community right to buy as applying to them. I suspect that people there have now woken up to the opportunities.

Since the inception of the community right to buy, the Scottish ministers have assisted in setting up 32 compliant community bodies in the south of Scotland area, which has resulted in 39 applications. Those community bodies have purchased land and buildings through the appropriate legislation. I am sure that Colin Smyth is aware of the most recent purchases, so I will not list them.

I also flag up that, with the advent of South of Scotland Enterprise, we expect the new agency to take a positive and practical role in working directly with communities, which could include working with existing legislation that is designed to encourage and support the ownership and control of assets by communities, including through the community right to buy.

I am perfectly able to give Colin Smyth a great deal more detail if he wishes it, but I do not want to provoke the ire of the Presiding Officer.

Climate Emergency Response Group (12-point Plan)

2. **Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the 12-point plan published by the climate emergency response group on 26 August 2019. (S5O-03466)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): The 2019-20 programme for government contains a point-by-point response from the Scottish Government to the 12-point plan that was published by the climate emergency response group. I hope that Mike Rumbles has been able to look at the PFG since he lodged his question.

Mike Rumbles: I am interested in focusing on one of the 12 points in the plan, which is the £100 million agricultural modernisation fund with zero-interest loans for investments and improvements that will secure a reduction in emissions. Will the cabinet secretary accept that request for investment and commit to it being new money and not money that is taken from current funds for agricultural support from the agricultural portfolio or her own portfolio?

Roseanna Cunningham: Mike Rumbles will probably realise that I cannot make that kind of commitment on behalf of my colleague Fergus Ewing. However, I know that Fergus Ewing is

particularly keen to ensure that any agricultural transformation programme delivers across the board in areas such as sustainability. Obviously, there is a budget process to go through, and there might be additional funding implications in that. However, those would be matters for the appropriate cabinet secretary to deal with. I am sure that Fergus Ewing would be happy to engage directly with Mike Rumbles.

Climate Change

3. Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to address climate change. (S5O-03467)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): Scotland is a world leader in the fight against climate change. We have almost halved emissions since 1990, while growing the economy and increasing employment and productivity.

The concrete actions that we will take to address climate change are set out in our climate change plan, which was published in February 2018. We have committed to update that plan within six months of the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill receiving royal assent, and we are looking across our responsibilities to make sure that we continue with the policies that are working and increase action where necessary. The programme for government outlines the areas in which we will do that, including through measures on transport, green finance, land use and investing in innovation.

Neil Findlay: The cycle to work scheme has encouraged many people to buy a bike and use it for getting to work. The United Kingdom Government is expanding the cap on the scheme so that people can purchase electric bikes. Although cycling is not in the remit of the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, given that air pollution and other areas are in her remit, will she lobby her ministerial colleagues to see whether there are other ways in which we can increase the incentives for people to take up use of e-bikes?

Roseanna Cunningham: I reassure Neil Findlay that my ministerial colleagues are probably fed up with me lobbying them on a variety of issues. Nonetheless, I absolutely undertake to continue to do so, across the board, in respect of the sorts of activities that will be required for us to reduce carbon emissions. That will include continuing to focus on alternative modes of transport such as cycling.

Climate Emergency

4. Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to tackle the climate emergency. (S5O-03468)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): Obviously, I gave Neil Findlay an answer on that topic. The 2019-20 programme for government outlines the need to respond to the global climate emergency as well as the actions that the Scottish Government is taking to do so. For example, the development and publication of a climate emergency skills plan will build the right skills in Scotland's workforce to take advantage of new areas of investment.

Stewart Stevenson: Is the cabinet secretary aware that, in a national poll that was run by Quinnipiac University last week, 67 per cent of US voters supported doing more to address climate change? Is that further confirmation that the climate emergency is now recognised worldwide and requires a substantial response from every country, including our own?

Roseanna Cunningham: It may not surprise Stewart Stevenson to hear that I was unaware of that very specific poll from Quinnipiac University. However, I am not sure that the results surprise me enormously. It is encouraging to see that more US voters want action to address climate change.

The global climate emergency needs a global response. Although we can lead by example—indeed, we will end Scotland's contribution to climate change by 2045—we need the rest of the world to follow that lead and work collaboratively with us to tackle the global climate emergency. I meet representatives from many of the state legislatures in the United States that have maintained, and want to forge ahead with, their commitments to reduce emissions, and the sum total of their efforts will mean that we still get a contribution from the United States.

Climate Change (Agricultural Sector)

8. Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making in meeting its climate change targets, and how it works with the agricultural sector to maximise the potential that farmers have to help achieve these. (S5O-03472)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): We are on track to meeting Scotland's world-leading climate change targets, with emissions down by 47 per cent between 1990 and 2017. Scottish farmers already play a key role in that progress, including in contributing to

emissions reduction through forestry, land use and electricity generation.

The Scottish Government is working with the agriculture sector to do even more. Our initiatives include encouraging more tree planting and agroforestry on farms, promoting the multiple benefits of good grassland and grazing management, encouraging farmers to invest in renewable energy and developing models to demonstrate and promote carbon-neutral farms.

Gail Ross: The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report stated that we should look at reducing our meat intake to help the environment. That has led to farmers being unfairly targeted. Does the cabinet secretary agree that agricultural practices are different in Scotland, that there are Scottish farmers who are leading the way in best practice and that that should be recognised?

Roseanna Cunningham: I think that we all recognise that Scots need to significantly increase the fruit and vegetable part of their diets. That is a simple health message that health authorities in most countries would wish to work on.

The Scottish Government recognises the benefits of a healthy, balanced diet that includes lean, quality red meat. Scotland produces some of the best-quality grass-fed red meat in the world, and many farmers are already choosing sustainable methods of production and land use. It is important that that story is told and that more farmers are encouraged to play their part in helping to reduce emissions in Scotland and end climate change, particularly through the agriculture transformation programme that was announced yesterday in the programme for government. I recommend to members who are at all interested in the matter that, if they wish to know more about some of the world-leading research that is being done in Scotland, they should be in touch with Scotland's Rural College and other research institutes that are conducting that work. It is extremely important for the future of agriculture in Scotland, which has a very good story to tell.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): I have a lot of requests to ask supplementary questions and will do my best to take as many as possible.

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con): On tackling climate change, yesterday's programme for government promised to accelerate Scotland's energy retrofit scheme to reach energy performance certificate band C by 2030. Why did the Scottish National Party previously vote against Conservative amendments to achieve that?

Roseanna Cunningham: I do not have specific recollection of the details of Scottish Conservative amendments, but I rather suspect that they were

worded in such a way as to make it almost impossible to support them. Members are shaking their heads, but they know exactly what I mean in that regard.

Our commitment and drive forward on renewable energy are absolutely second to none and, frankly, they would be helped a lot more if we could get the United Kingdom Government to step up on that instead of cutting the legs out from under a great deal of renewable industry and cutting subsidies. In those circumstances, I strongly advise that, instead of there being the wordplay that would undoubtedly have been part of any Tory amendments, the Tories should get on to their colleagues down south and see whether they can find a little chink in all the chaos to have a proper conversation about what is needed for the future of not just Scotland but the UK.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Over the summer, there have been forest fires across the Amazon, and the great barrier reef is in peril. Can other countries learn anything about tackling climate change from the Scottish Government's programme for government?

Roseanna Cunningham: I would say—and it is true—that Scotland is leading the way in its actions. We were among the first countries in the world to declare a global climate emergency, and we followed that declaration with a world-leading net zero target and a programme for government that prioritises tackling climate change. I look forward to discussing that programme in the debate that will follow portfolio questions.

The fight to save the Amazon forest, which is the world's biggest land-based carbon sink, shows the importance of global co-operation in tackling climate change. I hope that other nations will join us in committing to end their contribution to climate change. I know that my colleague Fergus Ewing, who is sitting beside me, will play a very direct part in that in encouraging increased planting of trees in Scotland. We probably cannot make up for the number of trees that have been lost in the Amazon, but we can do our bit. If every country does its bit, that will help enormously.

Andy Wightman (Lothian) (Green): The cabinet secretary talks about deforestation, and the programme for government promises an extra £5 million of investment and an increase in the planting target to 12,000 hectares. However, she will know that hundreds of thousands of acres of land in Scotland are ready for regeneration, which is being stopped only by grazing and burning. Does she agree that the 12,000-hectare planting target should be matched with a 12,000-hectare native forest regeneration target, through statutory regulation of rural upland land use and stopping the farming subsidies that are actively contributing to deforestation over much of Scotland?

Roseanna Cunningham: That is an interesting question. Proportionately, Scotland is doing way more tree planting than anywhere else in the UK, which is an important point to note.

I am not quite sure what Andy Wightman is suggesting. Should we sweep away people from about 70 per cent of our land and stop the food production that is the only feasible form of food production on that land? Then what would we do? I am a little uncertain about the future that the member is suggesting for Scotland. There are areas—this relates to an earlier question—in which the form of food production that is taking place is the only possible form of food production that can be undertaken on that land. In the longer term, I am not sure that taking such land out of food production is the most sensible way forward.

Water Pollution (Almond Valley)

5. Angela Constance (Almond Valley) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how water pollution is being reduced in the Almond Valley constituency. (S5O-03469)

The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon): The Scottish Government supports on-going work by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Water to reduce water pollution in Almond Valley. As well as protecting the River Almond catchment from pollution incidents, SEPA is undertaking a wide range of initiatives to improve environmental water quality.

Angela Constance: The River Almond has received significant investment to enable the return of Atlantic salmon, eels and lamprey. However, the river is still downgraded due to its water quality and many other issues, including the spillage of untreated sewage and litter. The problem has been on-going for years. What commitment can the minister give to ensure that local people can be confident of the water quality for wildlife and recreational use?

Mairi Gougeon: I am aware of the work that the member has been undertaking. Through river basin management planning, the Scottish Government and SEPA have prioritised action on the River Almond to remove barriers to fish and improve water quality when it has been downgraded.

Scottish Water responds to any pollution incident as an absolute priority. In May 2019, when a waste water sewer collapsed, which caused pollution of the River Almond, work was carried out immediately to fix the problem and clean up the watercourse. Following the River Almond strategic study, Scottish Water and SEPA are prioritising long-term upgrades to Scottish Water's assets that will provide water quality

improvements for the local community and for wildlife.

Clean Air Strategy

6. Bill Bowman (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether the holistic approach taken in the United Kingdom Government's clean air strategy 2019 could be applied to Scotland in order to reduce carbon and other such emissions. (S5O-03470)

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): The Scottish Government-commissioned report of the independent review of the cleaner air for Scotland strategy was published last week. The report sets out a number of recommendations for building on our achievements to date in reducing air pollution. We will consider the recommendations and consult on proposals for a revised air quality strategy in due course. If Bill Bowman has not already sourced a copy of the independent review, I recommend that he should do so.

Bill Bowman: It has been reported that three of Scotland's 10 most polluted streets are in Dundee, and we now know that plans for the development of a low-emission zone for Dundee will not be published until March next year. Does the cabinet secretary consider that to be acceptable progress, given that we are in a climate emergency?

Roseanna Cunningham: Of course, I want there to be fast progress across the board. We always understood that the first two cities to have LEZs would be Glasgow and Edinburgh. Dundee is working hard on the development of its low-emission zone. There are hotspots in Dundee, as there are in a number of other places, but the process of establishing a low-emission zone is progressing. If Bill Bowman feels that he has not received enough information about the issue, I would be happy to ensure that he is given an up-to-date briefing. I know that Dundee is on track.

I always want to encourage local authorities to do more if they can, but we are not in the business of dictating to local authorities and I do not expect that the Conservatives would wish me to do so.

Rural Economy

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We now commence portfolio questions on the rural economy. I remind members that questions 1 and 5 will be grouped together. I also remind members that supplementary questions from members other than the questioner will all be taken at the end of the question.

No-deal Brexit (Impact on Farm Incomes)

1. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the findings of the Andersons Centre research on the impact of a no-deal Brexit on farm incomes. (S5O-03473)

The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon): We note the publicity around the Andersons Centre report. Its conclusions echo those of other research and analysis that has been conducted, including by this Government. Although there will be variation in the severity of impacts, no part of the rural economy will not be adversely impacted by a no-deal Brexit. The fact that a no-deal Brexit is still being contemplated shows complete recklessness and how little this Tory United Kingdom Government cares about the fates of thousands of people in rural communities across Scotland. We will continue to do all that we can to avoid a no-deal Brexit.

Richard Lyle: The report highlighted what we have always known to be the case: leaving the UK without a deal would be a disaster for Scotland's farmers. I welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to provide some certainty to farmers in the delivery of the current loan scheme offer. Has the UK Government given any indication that it is seeking to protect Scottish farming, be that in the form of funding post-2020, an appropriate immigration system for Scotland's soft fruit sector or anything else?

Mairi Gougeon: I wish that I could say that it has, but the UK Government has provided nothing but uncertainty for Scottish farming. We are now potentially only 57 days from leaving the European Union without a deal. Richard Lyle mentioned the immigration system, which is a massive concern for the rural economy and our economy as a whole. The UK Government introduced a seasonal workers pilot scheme to secure 2,500 workers across the whole of the UK, but that scheme is not enough to satisfy the labour needs in my constituency, let alone across the whole of Scotland or the UK. With current immigration proposals as they are, the situation will only get worse. We simply cannot rely on the UK Government to resolve the issue with its increasingly hostile environment, which is why we want and need to see migration devolved to Scotland. In the meantime, we have committed to working with rural businesses and industries to encourage more of their employees to stay in Scotland. We will continue to work with our soft fruit and seasonal vegetable sectors to better understand the challenges that they face with their workforce needs.

No-deal Brexit (Impact on Agriculture in Renfrewshire South)

5. Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what impact a no-deal Brexit could have on the agricultural sector in the Renfrewshire South constituency. (S5O-03477)

The Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment (Mairi Gougeon): A no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for farmers and the farming industry in Mr Arthur's Renfrewshire constituency, as it would be across Scotland. We will do what we can with the powers that we have, but, as we have said, we will not be able to prevent or mitigate all the impacts. Scotland was first in the UK to offer advance payments by way of a loan scheme to farmers and crofters to help to address concerns and maintain the vital cash flow within the rural economy.

Tom Arthur: The minister will be aware that farmers who operate in my constituency and the wider area have been engaged in a range of diverse activities, including planting trees. Can she advise what funding will be available for farmers like them to continue to plant trees—diversifying incomes and contributing to our climate change efforts—if we have to leave the EU? I invite her to come to my constituency to meet farmers.

Mairi Gougeon: I would be delighted to go to the member's constituency and to meet anybody who has concerns and would like to discuss them with me. I am glad that the member has raised the issue of forestry. In yesterday's programme for government announcement, we announced our intention to create 12,000 hectares of new woodland this year, which is 2,000 hectares more than the climate change plan target. However, the UK Government is yet to confirm future funding for forestry. So far, the UK Government has committed to providing

"the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of this parliament",

but it still has not set out exactly what it means by "farm support", despite our repeated calls for clarity on that. The programme for government also makes it clear that we will continue to press the UK Government for that clarity, which farming and forestry desperately need.

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP): The British Egg Industry Council has recently contacted me with concerns about catastrophic tariffs and lowered food standards in the event of a no-deal Brexit. To protect our industries and the quality of produce that we consume, will the Scottish Government continue to put pressure on the reckless UK Government to abandon the notion of leaving the EU without a deal?

Mairi Gougeon: Absolutely. As I said in response to Tom Arthur's question, a no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for Scotland, and our primary producers would feel the brunt of that through tariffs, particularly for red meat and sheep meat. We are a responsible Government and we will continue to do everything that we can to prepare for that, but it simply is not possible for us to mitigate all the impacts of leaving the EU without a deal. That is why a no-deal exit must be removed as an option.

Brexit (Impact on Farming)

2. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what impact Brexit could have on farming in Scotland, and what action it will take to maintain current agricultural standards and measures. (S5O-03474)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): A no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for Scotland and our farming industry. Coupled with a lack over certainty of future support payments, that means that many businesses will be facing a cliff edge. Rural areas are particularly vulnerable because they are dependent on sectors such as farming. Sheep farmers are particularly at risk, with United Kingdom sheep meat exports worth £390 million a year and with almost all of those exports going to the European Union. There is a prospect of 40 to 50 per cent tariffs being imposed on those exports, which would be devastating. It is therefore essential that sheep farmers are compensated if we leave the EU without a deal.

Bill Kidd: What measures are in place to protect plants from disease if Scotland has to leave the EU?

Fergus Ewing: The EU is an important resource for knowledge and disease surveillance to aid Scotland in taking preventative measures to protect our plants from the threat of incoming pests and disease. That is an extremely important area, so I am grateful that the member has raised it. We believe that exiting the EU is not in our interests, but we have been preparing Scottish legislation so that our existing protective measures will continue to be robust on exit, and we remain committed to adhering to current and future EU standards and regulations.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Question 3 was not lodged.

Scotch Lamb Exports

4. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what the value is of Scotch lamb exports to Europe. (S5O-03476)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): Information from

Quality Meat Scotland is that almost £31 million-worth of Scotch lamb was exported to Europe in 2018, accounting for approximately 22 per cent of the sector's income for the year.

Jackie Baillie: Lamb prices are okay at the moment, but hill farmers are concerned about a potential reduction in the value of lamb and the loss of the European Union market. What contingency measures does the cabinet secretary have in place to assist farmers post-EU subsidy in the event of a fall in the value of lamb?

Fergus Ewing: I am not sure that Jackie Baillie is entirely correct, because the information that I have had in the past couple of days indicated that in the market in, I think, Newton Stewart, prices fell by about 20 per cent. We closely monitor the price figures from all the marts. We are concerned not only about the fall in beef prices and rising costs but about the overall financial position that the sheep sector faces.

One of the things that we have done—and I am pleased that we are doing this—is arrange that every farmer, crofter and land manager who is entitled to receive pillar 1 payments will receive payments at the earliest possible date. Ninety-five per cent of all eligible claimants have received a loan offer and about half of them have responded. I urge the people who have not responded to do so, so that they can obtain 95 per cent of their full entitlement by the beginning of October. Getting that money in the bank is the most practical thing that we can do in the short term.

If EU markets for lamb are lost because of high tariffs, it will be the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government to come up with a compensation scheme that is based on a headage payment on breeding ewe numbers, with 2018 historical information. That is the only way for us to administer a compensation scheme quickly and successfully.

It would be far better if the problem did not have to arise in the first place. It would be far better to avoid a no-deal Brexit.

Crofting (National Development Plan)

6. Graham Simpson (Central Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government when it plans to publish a national development plan for crofting. (S5O-03478)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): As we set out in the programme for government, the national development plan for crofting will be published in the coming year.

Graham Simpson: I was hoping that the cabinet secretary would enlighten us on what next week's statement on crofting might include. Will it

include something about the national development plan for crofting? The plan was promised in last year's programme for government, as was a crofting bill, which also has yet to appear and has disappeared from this year's programme for government. Perhaps the cabinet secretary can tell us what has happened to that, too.

Fergus Ewing: Graham Simpson is correct in one respect: it is intended that there will be a statement on crofting next week. If I were to accept his invitation to say what will be in the statement, prima facie I would be in clear breach of every parliamentary rule that has been written. With respect, I will not accept the member's invitation, which he will understand.

I am proud that in 2018 there were more than 200 new entrants to crofting. In the last financial year, we have provided crofting businesses with more than £46 million of funding. In the financial year 2018-19, we approved more than 618 crofting agricultural grant scheme applications.

I have driven that forward. I am proud that, as far as crofters in Scotland are concerned, we are getting on with the day job, while Graham Simpson's colleagues in Westminster have, apparently, abandoned the day job altogether.

Beef Efficiency Scheme

7. Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to take forward the beef efficiency scheme. (S5O-03479)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): The five-year beef efficiency scheme is in its third year, and we expect to be able to continue the scheme as it is until its conclusion. However, that depends on the United Kingdom Government including the beef efficiency scheme in its commitment to maintain farm support until 2022.

Any decisions on a future scheme can be made only when there is clarity and certainty from the UK Government on future funding. At present, there is no such clarity and certainty.

Maurice Corry: The available budget in the beef efficiency scheme stands at £600,000, as of August 2019. Will the cabinet secretary give further details on exactly how, and within what timeframe, the funds will be allocated to support beef farmers and optimise sustainability for beef livestock farming across Scotland?

Fergus Ewing: Maurice Corry knows that the funding that is available in the beef efficiency scheme is being front loaded. That is the nature of the scheme, which I think was welcomed by everyone who chose to participate. I am pleased that we—unlike other parts of the UK, I believe—

were able to support our beef sector with such a scheme.

I will be happy to discuss any proposal that the member might have for the future, but the starting point is this: Mr Gove, in his paper, "Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit", said, basically, that direct support for farmers should cease by 2027. Maurice Corry asking me for more money for this or that scheme runs contrary to the UK Government's plan to scrap all support payments for food production in a fairly small number of years. There is just a little inconsistency in that.

Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): For clarification, can the cabinet secretary advise whether there is an equivalent scheme elsewhere in the UK, and if there is, can we learn anything from it to support our beef farmers?

Fergus Ewing: As far as I understand the matter, the answer is that there is no equivalent scheme elsewhere in the UK. That is an example of Scotland benefiting from the devolution of responsibility for agriculture. We have been able to respond to the clear wishes of the farming sector to deliver the scheme, to benefit Scotland's farmers and to meet our needs. That reinforces why farming policy and future arrangements for rural support need to stay devolved, without any strings being attached by the UK Government.

Farm Payments (Lothian)

8. Jeremy Balfour (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how many farm businesses in the Lothian region are still to receive 2016-17 and 2017-18 common agricultural policy basic and pillar 2 payments. (S5O-03480)

The Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy (Fergus Ewing): For the common agricultural policy basic payment scheme, there are no payments outstanding for scheme years 2016 and 2017, and seven businesses are due payment for 2018. For pillar 2, two businesses are due payment for 2016, four for 2017 and 24 for 2018. We continue to work with customers to pay out the remaining claims in line with the scheme regulations.

Jeremy Balfour: Can the cabinet secretary confirm absolutely that these payments will be made to all farm businesses by the end of this year? Yes or no.

Fergus Ewing: I am sorry. I did not quite catch whether Jeremy Balfour asked whether "all beef payments" will be made.

Jeremy Balfour: I said, "these payments".

Fergus Ewing: The member should understand that we are dealing with 17,000 or 18,000 claims for pillar 1 payments. I said in my answer to him

that in 2016 and 2017, the outstanding number is zero. In other words, our record is 100 per cent for those two years, which is a fair result—and not one that I ever achieved in an examination, members will not be surprised to hear. Perhaps Mr Balfour did; I do not know.

I can also say that with such payments, there is always a tail; there are always very complicated cases that involve a great deal of time and effort. I have been overseeing and double-checking some of that work, because we are determined to make all payments that are due to farmers, crofters and land managers in Scotland as quickly as possible.

Frankly, everyone but the Scottish Tories recognises our record in improvement over the last three years.

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP): What arrangements have been made by other UK Administrations to make sure that farmers and crofters get their basic payments ahead of a no-deal Brexit?

Fergus Ewing: As yet, I am not aware that any other UK Administration is offering a loan scheme or advance payments to farm businesses. Here in Scotland, I have been determined to give as much support and certainty as possible, ahead of a potential no-deal Brexit. That is why we are offering advance loan payments that are worth up to 95 per cent of anticipated 2019 CAP BPS and breeding payments. We have issued 16,600 loan offers that are worth almost £395 million to the rural economy. We will start payments in early October. I am pleased to report that, as at today, 9,500 farmers and crofters have returned their loan acceptances.

I know the officials who are administering the payments. They are doing a grand job for Scotland. If our colleagues in England would like to learn how to do it, I am happy to arrange for our officials to offer—at a cost, of course, which we will negotiate—to administer the scheme. I am quite serious. With the risk of a no-deal Brexit, I am astonished that our colleagues in England have not seen fit to make sure that there will be some money in the bank accounts of their farmers down south, because of the challenges that they, too, would face. That is not a fate that I wish on any farmers in the UK.

Programme for Government 2019-20

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business is a debate on the Scottish Government's programme for government 2019-20. I call Roseanna Cunningham to open the debate.

14:40

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform (Roseanna Cunningham): The Amazon in flames, temperatures soaring to record levels across Europe, glaciers disappearing—all stark reminders of a world in crisis, and real evidence of an emergency. That emergency requires an emergency response. This programme for government, the capital spending review and the early update to the climate change plan will build on what we have already done. They show clearly just how seriously the Scottish Government is taking the issue. However, responding to the global climate emergency is not just about Government policies or spend. Scotland's response to the global climate emergency needs to be a truly national endeavour. It will require significant change in what we do and how we do it, in all aspects of our daily lives. By "we", I really mean we—individuals, businesses, civil institutions, faith groups, the public sector and, indeed, Parliament itself. Everyone will have to consider carefully what more can be done.

Yesterday, the First Minister set out the key commitments in the programme for government. She also spoke about the context in which they are given and the political and constitutional emergency that is engulfing the United Kingdom. While a no-deal Brexit remains a threat, the Scottish Government will ensure that we are as prepared as possible while being honest about being unable to prevent all the damage that will ensue. Nevertheless, the Scottish Government cannot and will not simply ignore the needs of our country and the needs of the people of Scotland while the UK Government seems intent on propelling us towards a harmful no-deal exit from our friends and partners in the European Union. That includes responding to the need of current and future generations for us to combat the global climate emergency.

The programme for government is a statement of intent that starts to chart the path towards net zero in 2045 and a decarbonised, inclusive and innovating society. It is a vision of the Scotland that we want to become. As the Committee on Climate Change has noted, it is also a vision that we cannot achieve alone. It is welcome that the UK Government has followed our lead to legislate

for a net zero target, but UK-wide policies still need to ramp up significantly. The Scottish Government has repeatedly called on the UK Government to act in areas in which we still do not have the powers to do what is needed.

There are bold commitments in the programme for government, such as the £500 million that we are spending on bus infrastructure to help transform how we use public transport and start the process of reducing congestion in our cities; our plans to decarbonise flights in Scotland by 2040, working with Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd to achieve the world's first zero emission aviation region across the Scottish Highlands and Islands; and the commitment to increase our carbon sink, with an additional £5 million for afforestation and a total of £14 million this year to restore our vital peatlands.

Green finance initiatives will be crucial in achieving our transition and in maximising the opportunities of that transition. We have placed the 2045 net zero target at the heart of the remit of the Scottish national investment bank and we will create a £3 billion portfolio of projects to bring to market, ready for green investment. We will continue to prioritise the decarbonisation of our energy sources, investing £30 million in a low-carbon innovation fund for renewable heat projects.

We will support our farmers and the farming community as the sector evolves and explores new and exciting opportunities in organic farming and develops pilots to reduce greenhouse gases from agriculture. Supporting our farmers also means maximising our land use and enhancing the potential of every part of Scotland's land, including that which is involved in agriculture and forestry, to contribute to the fight against climate change. At a national level, we will commission independent advice on options for changing land use patterns and practices in Scotland. We will develop proposals for implementing regional partnerships and frameworks, working to enable regional land use partnerships to emerge locally by 2021. That will help us to develop an integrated and strategic approach to sustainable land use.

We will also introduce the circular economy bill, which will advance Scotland's ambitions for the circular economy, through measures that encourage the reuse of products and a reduction in waste and single-use items. A lot of people have been waiting for that for a while.

Leading by example, we will accelerate efforts to use 100 per cent renewable electricity in the Scottish public estate. I am proud to say that, by 2030, Scottish Water will produce three times as much energy as it consumes and that, by 2040, it will be net zero. That is a fine example for the rest of the public sector and our whole economy.

Biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are intimately bound together. We will make an additional £2 million available to fund further projects to address biodiversity loss and climate change. Many of the things that we need to do to help us reduce climate emissions have the effect of also helping us to combat biodiversity loss.

As well as providing a habitat for many species, our marine environment plays an important role in helping to absorb carbon. Next year, we will begin to publish results from our research programme into carbon capture and storage and we will establish a new virtual centre to co-ordinate marine climate change science and research in response to the global climate emergency.

The step change in behaviour and investment flowing from our response to the global climate emergency presents opportunities for us all. The programme for government is the next step in our journey towards a more inclusive society and a society that protects the planet and places the wellbeing and success of its citizens at its heart.

With the United Nations climate negotiations likely to be hosted in Glasgow next year, Scotland will be at the centre of the next critical conversation about global ambition on climate change. It will be the most important global conversation since Paris in 2015. As a nation, Scotland must lead by example. This ambitious programme for government reinforces Scotland's status as a global leader in the fight against climate change. This Government's actions will live up to our ambitions for a greener, fairer Scotland.

14:47

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I thank the cabinet secretary for the spirited fashion in which she opened the debate, compared to the lacklustre presentation that we had yesterday from the First Minister.

The debate occurs on a day when, as a result of spending decisions announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, an additional £1.2 billion in Barnett consequential is coming to this Parliament. Let us hope that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work spends that money wisely to support our front-line services and that he does not squander the money when he still has a black hole to fill.

Yesterday, the First Minister did not inspire many people with her programme for government. At the outset, it was clear that the only thing that this Government cares about is independence. The first bill that the First Minister mentioned in her statement yesterday was the Referendums (Scotland) Bill. The programme for government mentions the word "independence" 13 times, and

the word “referendum” appears no fewer than 25 times. It is the only thing that interests the Scottish National Party. Yesterday, the only time that SNP back benchers woke up was when the word “independence” was mentioned.

As the First Minister mentioned the Referendums (Scotland) Bill, let us look at what the experts have said about it. This morning, we heard evidence on it in the Finance and Constitution Committee. The bill has been slammed by the Electoral Commission, which says that it must have more time to assess any referendum question that is proposed in legislation and that it should not simply be set by Scottish ministers. It has been slammed by Dr Alan Renwick from the constitution unit of University College London, who says that he has found no well-functioning parliamentary democracy that gives ministers blanket authority to call a referendum via secondary legislation. It has been slammed by the Faculty of Advocates, the Institute for Government and the Law Society of Scotland. If that is the quality of the legislation that this Government is bringing forward, it needs to up its game.

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: Not just now.

When it came to the rest of the programme for government, we saw only a load of rehashed reannouncements and delays to previous programmes.

We have been promised a good food nation bill before. It was promised in the SNP manifesto in 2016 and promised again in the 2016 programme for government and in the 2017 programme for government. In January 2018, in answer to a question in the chamber, Fergus Ewing again set out his commitment to the bill. At the fourth time of asking, we look forward to seeing that legislation brought forward.

The Disclosure (Scotland) Bill was promised in last year’s programme for government, but it did not see the light of day. An electoral reform bill was promised last year, but it only saw the light of day yesterday morning. The national manufacturing institute was announced in December 2017, but it is only now that the Government says that work is to begin. It promised last year to introduce increased sentences for animal cruelty and to implement Finn’s law, but again those measures are only in this year’s programme for government.

The Government said that it would begin its parental employability support scheme last year, and it is doing the same again this year. It claimed that it would publish Scotland’s first ever national action plan on neurological conditions last year,

and it is doing the same again this year. It has also delayed the delivery of its funeral support plan.

As I pointed out yesterday, the Government originally promised that it would sign the contracts for its R100 broadband scheme by the end of 2018, but now it says that it will not sign the contracts until the end of this year. Yesterday, the First Minister could give me no date by which that project would be completed. In the meantime, households across rural Scotland are crying out for the superfast broadband that the Scottish National Party promised would be delivered to them by the end of 2021. *[Interruption.]* If the cabinet secretary wants to intervene, I will give way. She does not want to.

As to the detail in the programme for government, we look forward to scrutinising the bills that come forward. Action to promote the circular economy will, I know, be music to the ears of my colleague Maurice Golden, who can talk of little else. Proposals to decarbonise transport will be interesting, but where are the plans for bold infrastructure projects—for example, to extend our rail network? Where is the plan to reopen the direct Edinburgh to Perth rail line, which would have a transformative effect on transport choices for the whole north of Scotland? I would have thought that the cabinet secretary would want to take that forward, given her constituency interests.

There is a proposal to decarbonise internal flights, but we still have a policy commitment from the SNP to reduce air departure tax. If SNP members have a problem with ADT being devolved, why do they not look at devolving it direct from Westminster to local authorities? If they support local democracy, the Treasury has given a way forward for that to be done. That would be a way of empowering local government.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Would you put your card in please, Mr Swinney?

Murdo Fraser: I had better get my time back, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You certainly will.

John Swinney: It was just to increase the sense of anticipation, Presiding Officer.

Mr Fraser is very keen to devolve powers to local authorities. Can he remind us how warmly he embraced the prospect of devolving responsibility to local authorities for a workplace parking levy?

Murdo Fraser: I really think that the cabinet secretary could have picked stronger ground than trying to defend the hated car park tax. Even his

own back benchers do not want the car park tax. He needs to think again.

We wait, after a long delay, for the Scottish national investment bank, although the Scottish growth scheme, which was supposed to deliver £500 million of investment, has delivered virtually nothing. I was interested in what the First Minister had to say about the Scottish national investment bank supporting the green economy. Will that mean that companies that are in the food and drink sector or which are involved in exporting will not be eligible for support? It would be good to get those matters clarified.

The programme is woefully thin. Where are the bold plans to grow the economy? Where are the plans to tackle the 30,000 additional—relative to the rest of the UK—economically inactive adults of working age in Scotland? Where is the action to tackle business rates and remove the large business supplement—the £65 million a year raid on retail premises? Where is the action to rejuvenate our town centres, and where are the plans to tackle productivity? If the SNP wants ideas on how to improve our economy, I can commend to it the interim report of our Scottish future growth council, whose 62 pages are bursting with ideas about how to take this country forward.

It was not the thin gruel in the programme for government that interested SNP members yesterday, because their interest was only in one issue, and that is independence. *[Interruption.]* There we go—right on cue: the only time they wake up is when they hear that word. The reality is that this Government is out of inspiration, out of ideas, out of imagination and running out of time. It has only one thing left to cling on to and it will learn quickly that the Scottish people have no interest in going down that route.

14:54

Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): As I reminded the First Minister yesterday, in last year's programme for government we were told that

"Closing the attainment gap and raising standards in ... schools remains the Government's overriding mission",—*[Official Report, 4 September 2018; c 20.]*

yet this summer's exam results show that the pass rate for highers has fallen for the fourth year running.

Further, time after time, when I meet the parents of children with additional support needs, as I did a couple of weeks ago at the excellent Yard project in Edinburgh, I hear one experience after another of such needs not being met, of children and young people and their families being let down by the system, and of battles that have to be

waged—some won, but far too many lost. I am sorry—although not as sorry as those families—but the £15 million of funding for ASN that was announced yesterday just will not cut it. We know—as does the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills—that, since 2012, there has been a rise of more than 80,000 in the number of pupils who have been identified as having such needs, yet the number of specialist ASN teachers has fallen by more than 400 over the same period. Where is the Government's sense of urgency on and investment in additional support needs services?

Last year, it was also announced that there was to be new investment in child and adolescent mental health services, yet we know that, out in the real world, the pace of such investment has been way too slow. So far, only one fifth of the promised funding in school counselling has been released. Just last week, in Fife, I met a mother whose son had waited 20 months for a CAMHS referral. Yesterday, the First Minister could commit to putting in place the full complement of 350 counsellors in Scotland's schools only a year from now, which means another year lost.

I raise those concerns not to score political points but because our young people are our greatest assets. Yet, they are being let down. I also raise those concerns because many such young people will not have a second chance. We have to get this right now, because if we can break the cycle of austerity and inaction and instead act and invest, we will change the very direction of their lives. The First Minister described the programme for government as "ambitious". My question is: where is the ambition for those young people?

The Government's rhetoric on climate change is good, and we in Scottish Labour applaud it, but it will be judged not by the volumes of strategies and plans that it publishes over the next 12 months but by its actions. Therefore I say to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform and to the Deputy First Minister that while we welcome the renewed emphasis on climate change, we ask why there is no permanent, statutory just transition commission, involving trade unions and workers, to guide it. We need that as part of a national action plan for the economy, not least because of the looming spectre of Brexit.

It is encouraging to hear the announcement of new investment for bus infrastructure. Last month, I visited Alexander Dennis Ltd in Camelon. It continues to be a success story under new ownership, but we need to ensure that that newly announced public investment in public transport brings a jobs dividend here in Scotland in factories such as ADL and in our fabrication yards and

workshops. Scottish Labour has made no secret of the fact that we think that the best way to secure that is by putting passengers before profit and amending the Transport (Scotland) Bill to open the way for the return of buses to municipal ownership.

I say to those Government ministers who are here in the chamber that they cannot declare a climate emergency in April and then just sit back and allow a critical component of our public transport infrastructure, the Caledonian railway works in Springburn that has existed as a centre of excellence for more than 160 years, to close as it did in July. That made no sense. Those industrious women and men were let down in their hour of need by an SNP Government and a political party that, in the end, showed neither courage nor conviction.

It is not good enough for the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work to declare that Government intervention in the Scottish economy is done on a “case by case” basis. That is the SNP Government’s policy: “case by case”. What we need is not a case-by-case approach, but a comprehensive, proactive, forward-looking industrial strategy with a national economic action plan to back it up—one that puts together Lanarkshire steel and Highland aluminium with our engineering base, our renewable energy demand, our public transport needs and our public procurement policy. That is what is needed in the programme for government, not a divisive and unwanted referendum bill.

I began by talking about the treatment of our young people, which is a measure of the kind of society that we are. Another is how we treat our older citizens, so I am interested that the Government wants to develop a future vision for a sustainable care home sector. Over the summer, along with Alex Rowley, I went to Lumphinnans to visit what may be the already-existing realisation of that vision—a mini-village in a former mining village that combines modern, independent living with a warden service, communal spaces, a day centre and a residential care home. It is built and run by Fife Council.

It has long been my view that, with an ageing population, we need to plan and invest now in exactly that type of provision, and it is my long-held view that we cannot rely on the market, the private sector or indeed the voluntary sector alone to do it. We need to drive this through the public sector. We need the courage and the audacity of the 1945 generation, who had the foresight and the vision to establish a public national health service that is paid for out of general taxation and is free at the point of need. We need to make that kind of leap of imagination with our vision of care for the elderly—a publicly owned care service that

is delivered by properly funded local government. Those are the radical ideas that we need to put into practice. Their time has come.

Over the next year, we will work with the Government when we can, we will hold it to account as we must, we will oppose and resist it when it is wrong, and we will challenge it inside this Parliament, but outside as well, in the battle of ideas and in the clash of values, to deliver what is best for the people of Scotland.

15:02

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): I start by broadly welcoming the programme for government. It perhaps sits in stark contrast to the utter chaos and dysfunction of Westminster. At least we have a functioning Government and, in many areas, from the fair work agenda to tackling child poverty, we have a strong consensus in this Parliament. Even on the biggest question that divides us, which is independence, the work to update the prospectus on independence will give us all a starting point to analyse and debate the vision and the technicalities of how an independent Scotland would work.

We also welcome the Government’s adoption of the language of the green new deal. It even gets a chapter heading of its own, with some old policies as well as some borrowed and some new. We might not yet be on the same page, but we are getting into a better place in this Parliament to debate issues such as the future of oil and gas, farming and transport.

I will be frank, though. What is in the programme is not a green new deal. I ask members to look at the original new deal, which transformed the US economy, and the bold green new deal that is currently proposed by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in the US. A green new deal has to be transformative. It has to wield the power of the public sector to not just fix markets, but create entirely new markets for goods and services. It has to use every lever that is available to deliver investment. It is not simply some exciting rhetoric to wrap around an existing policy agenda.

A Scottish green new deal has to be the engine of a just transition, creating new, fairer livelihoods in our institutions, our businesses and our homes and on the land. We can no longer assume that sending policy signals from Government will be enough to nudge the private sector. It will require direct intervention from the state, and that means rebuilding the role of the state nationally and locally, in areas such as energy and transport, with bold, patient public finance investing in our common wealth for the benefit of future generations.

What should that mean, for example, for the homes that we live in? Heating accounts for half of Scotland's climate emissions while a quarter of all our people live with the choice of heating versus eating. The programme for government contains some welcome policies, but they fail to address the sheer scale of the challenge.

The Scottish Green Party's "Scottish Green New Deal", which we launched last week, proposes greater ambition, including a programme of deep retrofits and the requirement for all new homes to meet net zero standards. The climate emergency demands an emergency response, not tinkering at the edges. In the Netherlands, the Energiesprong retrofit programme moves at pace, with armies of installers working street by street and community by community to transform thousands of houses to warm and affordable net zero homes. In its programme, the Scottish Government talks about having net zero heating by 2045, but Sweden will have net zero heating by next year—it will achieve a complete decarbonisation using district heating, heat pumps and biomass.

Yesterday, for the first time, the First Minister talked about support for the oil and gas sector being conditional on a plan for reaching net zero emissions. I welcome that shift in language. It is not exactly the position of Jacinda Ardern and the New Zealand Government, who, in ending exploration for new reserves, have been bolder, but it is a start.

However, the Government's objective, which is shared by the industry today, remains maximum resource extraction. That involves a huge and costly gamble on the unproven technology of carbon capture and storage. Recently, when I met the operators of Mossmorran, which is the second-largest greenhouse gas emitter in Scotland, I learned that there have been no discussions between them and the Scottish Government about CCS, and there are no plans to invest in the technology. We have 10 years left to tackle climate change, so business as usual is just not an option.

We need to plan now for the transition away from oil and gas by reducing the demand and the supply side in tandem, which is what New Zealand is planning for. That is why it is so important that the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill provides for a statutory just transition commission. The oil and gas industry will not end in Scotland this year or next year, but unless we plan now for its sunset in decades to come, we will let down the communities that will remain utterly dependent on it right up until the last day of production.

As well as being at the front line of the impact of climate change, our land is uniquely placed to be part of the solution. The programme for

government is meant to be the response to the climate emergency, but even at the higher rate of tree planting that the Government is aiming for next year, it would meet its target of 21 per cent of Scotland being forested by 2032, which is eight years late. At that rate, the target of 40 per cent that the Scottish Greens have announced—which is the EU average—would not be met for 150 years.

Rather than just topping up the forestry grant scheme, much of which ends up with large landowners, is it not time that the Scottish Government developed a radical plan to accelerate forest restoration everywhere and to encourage more community ownership? That would mean questioning why a fifth of Scotland is given over to driven grouse moors when much of that land could be reforested, creating rural jobs and locking up carbon. It would also mean putting climate change at the heart of farming subsidy support. The programme for government announces a rural support bill, but that appears to be more about resisting change until 2024 than putting the climate emergency at the heart of subsidy support today.

On transport, we welcome the £500 million for priority bus access investment, but that cannot go hand in hand with city deals that are looking to expand road infrastructure. We need to know where that funding will come from and exactly what it will be spent on. Today, we repeat our call for 10 per cent of the transport budget to go on walking and cycling. Just last week, an independent review advised the Scottish Government that that funding should double again. Those modest asks are being ignored while billions continue to be freely spent on new roads. For the £6,000 million cost of the A9 and A96 projects, the Government could buy 86 new rail routes such as the Levenmouth link. There has to be a better balance between those priorities in the capital budget.

Scotland can and must lead the way by transforming our economy through a Scottish green new deal so that it works for people and the planet, but if that is to happen, we will need to see a much bolder and more courageous Scottish Government and Parliament over the coming year.

15:09

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): I am very grateful to have the opportunity to respond for the Liberal Democrats to the programme for government that was laid out by the First Minister yesterday.

Naturally, we welcome a renewed focus on the climate emergency, but that is not really what the First Minister's statement was about. Once again,

Nicola Sturgeon spent the first part of her remarks on Scotland's constitutional future. Therefore, so shall I.

Many questions face Scotland at this moment in our nation's history, the answer to none of which is independence. Since the vote to leave the European Union in 2016, the First Minister has sought to set the constitutional debate in Scotland as an unambiguous choice between two unions. She intends to force that choice on the people of this country before the end of this session of Parliament, yet that choice has always been erroneous, and I will tell the chamber why. Several unassailable realities are fast emerging that will block Scotland's seamless re-entry to Europe, and remain voters need to be crystal clear about the challenges for an independent Scotland seeking that re-entry.

First, there is the unanswerable question of Scotland's finances. The Government's own statistics, released last week, reveal that Scotland's national deficit—the difference between our income tax receipts and our expenditure—stands at more than 7 per cent of our gross domestic product. Article 126 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union stipulates that accession states must have a national deficit no higher than 3 per cent. Just to get to the races and be considered for membership by the EU, we would need to hike taxes and butcher public spending, which would by necessity lead to an era of austerity max.

Naturally, Scottish National Party high command sought to spin the Government's statistics as good news, suggesting that they proved that Scotland could just about afford all public spending and a welfare state at current levels, and could therefore go it alone. Oh really? Well, who is going to pay for the new embassies that we will need, or our trade missions, or our overseas aid budget? Who is going to bankroll the new Scottish armed services? And here is the big one. Where will we find more than £1 billion each year, which represents the 0.7 per cent of Scottish gross national income that the EU expects as a membership fee?

Like my leaders Jo Swinson and Willie Rennie and the tens of thousands of people who have joined our party in recent weeks, I am a passionate internationalist. We believe that Scotland is strongest at the heart of the UK and that the UK is strongest at the heart of Europe. Brexit broke my heart and, if we leave the EU, I will spend the rest of my life trying to get Britain back in, but I will not meet the loss of one international union that I care about by junking the other one, on the insubstantial promises of this Administration.

I am tired of this First Minister and her Government misappropriating my vote to remain as justification for another divisive independence referendum—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): Just a minute, Mr Cole-Hamilton—

Alex Cole-Hamilton: The choice between two unions has always been a false one, and it has led to a paralysis of government—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Cole-Hamilton, I do not know who heard you, because I certainly did not. I want to hear what the member has to say. Mr Cole-Hamilton, you may wish to rewind a little.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: I would be very happy to do so, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: If members wish to comment, they should intervene.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Will the member explain why he has spent half his speech talking about Scottish independence, when the First Minister yesterday did not spend anything like half her speech talking about independence?

Alex Cole-Hamilton: It is the elephant in the room in every decision of this Government.

I will rewind, Presiding Officer. I am grateful for the opportunity to do so. I am tired of this First Minister and this Government misappropriating my vote to remain as justification for another divisive independence referendum. The choice between two unions has always been a false one and it has led to a paralysis of government that has starved all other policy considerations of oxygen—areas that should have front loaded the First Minister's statement but which once again played second fiddle to her lifelong obsession with separation.

The statement of a responsible First Minister—one committed to the wellbeing of the people of Scotland—should have commenced with a laser-beam focus on the scandalous failures of public policy by her Administration: that the number of children waiting more than a year for first-line mental health support has trebled; that suicide in young people is up 50 per cent; that drug-related deaths in Scotland are the worst in Europe; that in the year of young people, this Government failed to meet the international minimum age of criminal responsibility, for which it was rightly criticised on the world stage; that passengers in my constituency still cannot get to work because of cancelled or overcrowded trains; that a hospital for children, seven years in the making, lies empty, unfinished and haemorrhaging money; that a publicly funded child care offer to parents looks unlikely to be deliverable next year; and that patients still receive letters saying that their

operation will happen in 12 weeks by law, only to discover that the wait will be more like 50 weeks.

I could go on and on. That is a powerful index of incompetence and is symptomatic of a Government whose tactical focus has been exclusively on the same thing for 12 years and more.

That the false necessity of Scotland leaving the United Kingdom should be the first thing to leave Nicola Sturgeon's lips in her statement yesterday represents a dereliction of her duties and the office that she holds. She used the statement to again stoke the fires of independence, just as control over Brexit was finally snatched from the Conservative Government. Boris Johnston's defeat in the Commons last night suggests that the tide might be turning against Brexit and I am grateful for the co-operation that Nicola Sturgeon's MPs have shown Opposition parties in that enterprise. Stopping Brexit in that Parliament should be the alpha and omega of the constitutional debate right now. The outcome of that struggle will not be determined in this Parliament, but the answers to the failures of her Government's public policy will, and that should be the focus of our efforts.

Independence is not the lifeboat that the SNP would have remain voters believe, so I ask the Scottish Government to abandon this sideshow today. They must put their shoulders to the wheel on the catalogue of public policy areas that are crying out for their attention.

There is a muscle memory to these exchanges. For the party of government, the union is still the cause of all ills and independence is our salvation. On such occasions, Opposition members who want to retain Scotland's place in the UK respond as I have done today. These debates are exhausting and not a single one of our constituents is any better for it. We were all elected to this Parliament because our communities put trust in us to act in their best interests, to meet the challenges and threats that they face and to build a society in which they can prosper. With every countless hour that is wasted reheating the debates of 2014, we fail to meet the tests of our constituents' expectations.

At the start of my speech, I talked of the many questions that Scotland faces at this moment in history. If the First Minister and her party continue to present just one answer, which is wholly unsuitable to all the public policy challenges that we face, her Government deserves to fall—and fall it will.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that if they are disgruntled about another member's speech, they must intervene. There is time for interventions. It is quite cowardly to just

shout and not intervene to make your point. I say that to members of parties around the chamber. If you wish to say something, intervene; otherwise, we cannot hear what the member is saying.

We move to the open debate. We will have six-minute speeches and there is some time for interventions, which I encourage.

15:17

Angela Constance (Almond Valley) (SNP): Among all the chaos and controversy from Westminster, it was a comfort to return to the normality and routine of our Parliament, where, on the first day after summer recess, we were back to business as normal, with the Government laying out its plans and members, in turn, having the opportunity to fairly and rationally question, scrutinise and debate. In other words, we have been getting on with the day job on behalf of our constituents.

It is clear to anybody listening that responding to the climate emergency is at the heart of this year's programme for government. I am sure that the First Minister will not mind me pointing out to Mr Cole-Hamilton that she spoke at length yesterday about the climate emergency that we face.

I concede that environmental politics is not my hinterland; it is not where I started from. It was entering this Parliament 12 years ago and, if I am candid, all the engagement that we do with children and young people on the issues that matter most to them that opened my eyes.

I used to feel somewhat overwhelmed by the social, economic and climate chaos that will be unleashed if we do not roll back on our misuse of the planet's resources. However, it is more visible than ever before that we now have a much more connected and collective approach to tackling the climate challenge. The fact that the programme for government is more task and investment focused gives me more hope, or at least makes me feel less powerless.

There are some important building blocks. There is the Scottish national investment bank, with its primary mission of helping us transition to a net zero economy. There is massive new investment in public transport, specifically buses, and energy efficiency will also benefit from £0.5 billion-worth of investment. Increasing the spending power of infrastructure investment is also important. On a constituency note, I was glad to see the £30-million low-carbon heat fund, given that Mitsubishi is one of the biggest employers in my constituency, where it manufactures air conditioning and heat pumps. It is also good news that, from 2024, new-build housing will be heated from renewable sources.

All of that—and more—is absolutely my political heartland of fairer work and more affordable and warm homes. Our new social security powers now benefit 90,000 people in Scotland, meaning that, along with the big ticket items—the best start grant and the child payment—there is real impetus and a sense that we are on the road to reducing poverty and inequality.

However, given the current United Kingdom environment, like many people, I worry about our future more than I ever have. I worry about whether we have enough powers to protect our democracy and about whether we have all the levers to meet all our ambitions, when one Government is giving and another is taking. All of that increases my resolve to work harder in making the case for independence—we live in a democracy and I am entitled to do that—and in finding ways to do more with our existing powers and resources.

On that point, I very much welcome the commitment to the good food nation bill. West Lothian Foodbank reports a 40 per cent increase in demand since the roll-out of Westminster's universal credit. I hope that we can all agree that we will never be rich as a society until no man, woman or child has to rely on food banks. I support the calls by Nourish Scotland, the Scottish food coalition and the 1,400 respondents to the consultation on the bill for the right to food to be incorporated into Scots law. I entirely accept that it is far easier to legislate than it is to deliver rights in the real world, but we have to end hunger and poor nutrition in 21st century Scotland.

As well as hunger, we have a problem with obesity that we need to face up to. I support the Government's work on healthy eating and the need to tackle multibuys and heavily discounted food with low, or no, nutritional value. However, I have concerns about potential unintended consequences, which the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing was kind enough to discuss with me. Paterson Arran, which is in my constituency, employs 200 people and, as most people know, produces shortbread. Although I am not for a minute pretending that shortbread is anything other than a treat, it is worth bearing in mind that it contains 17 per cent sugar compared with the 52 per cent sugar that is in a Kit Kat, for example.

Big confectionary companies spend a huge amount of money on advertising, the regulation of which is reserved. Meanwhile, we propose to limit in-store promotion and free samples, which might disproportionately impact on small and medium-sized companies such as Paterson Arran, which are simply trying to sell more shortbread around Christmas and Hogmanay. I hope that we will

consider the evidence and impact, and how that all fits with our food and drink strategy.

Finally, I am delighted to see progress on the elective treatment centre at St John's hospital in Livingston, and I am delighted to endorse a programme for government that is getting things done and which has the courage to face up to, and set out, our long-term challenges and goals.

15:24

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I will use my time this afternoon to set out key policy commitments that the Scottish Conservatives believe should be the education priorities of the Government.

I start with the good news, which was confirmed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer this afternoon, that there will be significant Barnett consequential as a direct result of the boost to schools spending in England and Wales. That boost will see £325 million come to Scotland for the 2021 financial year. I hope that John Swinney agrees that that money is not only very welcome, but can go some way towards restoring teacher numbers.

In recent weeks, we have seen some encouraging signs in some local authorities about improved teacher recruitment, but the fact remains that total teacher numbers are still down by more than 3,000 since the SNP came to power. In particular, we know that key shortages remain in certain subjects and, of course, in additional support for learning. Richard Leonard highlighted that earlier. Over the past 10 years, that has seen a 26 per cent decline across primary and secondary schools.

I am only too well aware that teachers cannot be trained overnight, but the additional money should help the teacher training process and address some of the retention and supply issues that our schools and local authorities have highlighted.

The recent complaints from teaching staff were not just about salaries—the cabinet secretary addressed that issue before the parliamentary recess; they were primarily about workload. Their workload has increased for lots of different reasons, but often because of teacher shortages in the system.

I challenge the cabinet secretary to tell us what he will do with the additional financial resources to address parents' concerns.

John Mason: Is Liz Smith basically arguing against devolution? Should not the Parliament decide how the money is spent, based on a whole range of priorities, including education, or should we just accept whatever Westminster tells us?

Liz Smith: Far from it. The Barnett consequentials have come as a direct result of the increase in education spending south of the border. Consequentials will go to the Scottish Government, and I am making the strong plea that that money should go to helping the teacher shortage situation. I do not see why there is a problem with that.

A month ago, we said very firmly that there is surely a genuine case to try to improve national 4s, which, as we all know, suffer from a lack of status. Employers have highlighted the point that too many young people leave school without the necessary exam-accredited qualifications to their name in basic literacy and numeracy. The Scottish Conservatives believe that we are very much on the side of parents and teachers when we call for basic exam-accredited qualifications in those areas so that all young people can read, write and count to a good standard and have good-quality accredited qualifications behind them that enhance their confidence and make them much more attractive to the job market.

John Swinney: Will Liz Smith clarify for me whether she believes that the accreditation of learning can be undertaken to deliver confidence only if there is an examination associated with it?

Liz Smith: No—far from it, but that is a fundamental part of it. The message that is coming back and the message that we have had several times in the Education and Skills Committee is that the national 4 qualification is not met with the credibility that it should have and deserves. That issue has been raised many times in the Education and Skills Committee, and we think that the cabinet secretary should be investigating it and taking it very seriously.

I come to the issue of subject choice and the Scottish Government's plea that we should look not just at the exam passes that are gained within the individual years but at those that are gained within the entire senior phase as a three-year progression. As I have said before, there is some attraction in that theory, but the current practice is a problem, because the narrowing of subject choice in secondary 4 and the similar effects that that has on S5 and S6 are creating gaps in the well-rounded education that is on offer in our schools. If there was a properly thought-out progression and full articulation between different courses, we would not see schools' reluctance to offer young people the chance to sit highers across two academic years, the two-term dash to highers and a diminishing number of pupils who are able to access advanced highers. As the cabinet secretary knows, the advanced higher is very much one of the shining lights in Scotland's education and is much valued by people elsewhere.

Jim Scott's on-going analysis of what is happening in subject choice is stark, and that surely concerns the cabinet secretary. It draws into question some of the structures under the curriculum for excellence. I hope that that will be reviewed very quickly.

Let me finish on skills participation and apprenticeships, which are crucial to the overall direction of travel. It is clear that some very good things are happening in that area, but they are not enough. That is why the Scottish Conservatives want to see much more commitment and support being given to young people to the age of 18. If they have left school and have not gone to college or university or to a job, surely it has to be beneficial if they are in a structured apprenticeship or traineeship.

We need to do much more to encourage our entrepreneurs, such as Jim McColl, in all their efforts to get more disengaged young people into structured training. I have focused on what I believe are the priorities of young people, teachers and the public, and those should be the Scottish Government's focus when it comes to education.

15:30

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Last night, like many people, I was glued to my television, watching the goings on at Westminster—or, as I like to refer to it, the series finale of the United Kingdom. In between the Prime Minister's calamitous speech and the emergency debate on suspending the UK Parliament, some poor MP had a 10-minute rule debate to which next to nobody was listening. It was on air quality. The poor chap was bookended by high political drama and the denouement of three years of Tory Brexit civil war. What chance did he have to draw attention away from that to environmental issues in a place that has hardly passed any relevant legislation in the past three years, with a Government that has limped along doing next to nothing, particularly when it comes to tackling the biggest issue of our time: climate change?

What a contrast to yesterday's scenes here, as the First Minister laid out her programme for government, which had tackling climate change at its heart. It is a 158-page programme of meaningful policy and legislation that will be enacted, and quickly. That is what a functioning Government and Parliament look like. It is easy to forget that such things exist if our eyes are fixed only on Westminster. As the convener of a committee that has spent the past year scrutinising the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill and producing a comprehensive list of recommendations on how to

reduce emissions, I was delighted to see so many of our asks put into action yesterday.

For a long time, I have been convinced that the private sector must be incentivised to help us to reach our climate ambitions. Without it, we will simply fail. Therefore, the announcement of measures in the green new deal is big news and has real action behind it. The Scottish national investment bank will, as its priority, provide lending for net zero projects; the procurement of public contracts will be dependent on environmental criteria; and huge growth-acceleration funding and support will be available for emissions-reducing infrastructure.

Scotland has a chance to be a world leader not only in meeting the target of net zero by 2045 but in being a green innovation nation that creates technology that we can export to others as we undertake that journey. Yesterday's announcement of a £3 billion portfolio of projects to attract investors in renewables, low-emission transport solutions, waste management and construction that locks in carbon rather than emitting it is of staggering significance.

Alongside the journey to becoming a net zero country, we have a huge opportunity to create thousands of jobs. The just transition away from burning fossil fuels is of particular importance to my area of Aberdeenshire, where so many of us rely on oil and gas for our living. I welcome the climate emergency skills action plan, and the scheme must have a firm foothold in my part of Scotland. The north-east already boasts the biggest concentration of transferable engineering and technical skills in the whole of Scotland, but we desperately need to provide the low-carbon career routes and skills for tomorrow for kids in schools in my constituency today. Their parents might have worked in oil and gas production and services, but the young people in Ellon, Inverurie, Turriff, Mintlaw and Meldrum academies right now could be the future hydrogen engineers who fuel our freight transport or the key to cracking the battery storage challenge for renewable energy.

As an animal lover, I welcome the proposed animal welfare bill. I want to mention a small part of it that has some particular resonance for my constituency. Tucked away on page 32 of the PFG is an announcement that it will be possible to rehome animals that are seized on welfare grounds without the need for a court order. That is in line with best practice in other northern European countries. This year, two constituents of mine were jailed after more than 100 dogs and their pups were seized from horrible conditions at an illegal puppy farm near Fyvie. The court action took two years and, during that time, the dogs were cared for in shelters. With the proposed new legislation, that will never need to happen again.

Dogs will be rehomed or sold and will not live in limbo. I thank the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for its lobbying on the issue over the years, and the Government for its response. It means a lot to us in my constituency.

I also welcome moves to make bus travel infrastructure greener and more reliable. For those of us in rural areas, the expansion of the electric vehicle charging network and the low-carbon transport loan scheme means that ordinary people—particularly rural people—can think about purchasing a used electric vehicle rather than its being an unrealistic pipe dream. That meaningful step will enable a lot of us to move away from petrol and diesel and play our part in meeting the climate challenge.

Electrification of our existing railways is great news, but I will continue to campaign for the reopening of the Formartine and Buchan line in my constituency, to give my constituents more low-carbon public transport options.

When the First Minister declared a climate emergency, she promised that she would make the climate a Government priority, and she has delivered a programme for government that proves that she is true to her word. These policies will propel Scotland into a low-carbon future with huge opportunities for our people. They are in line with what the people of Scotland have asked us to prioritise and will ensure that no one is left behind in that transition.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Sarah Boyack. I welcome Ms Boyack back to the chamber—this is not her first speech here, and it will not be the last.

15:36

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer—no pressure, then.

I am delighted to have the privilege of serving again in our Scottish Parliament. I put on record my thanks to Kezia Dugdale for her work in this Parliament. I am particularly looking forward to working with my Labour colleagues Daniel Johnson and Neil Findlay as we support our constituents across the Lothians. Over the past month, we have worked on affordable housing and health issues—particularly the uncertainty faced by families over delays in the opening of the sick kids hospital and parents' concerns about access to mental health services for their children.

I said in May that I had unfinished business: addressing our climate change emergency and tackling poverty and the crisis in affordable housing in Edinburgh. When I worked with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, I had

the opportunity to see at first hand the quality of the affordable social housing that is being built across the country, the empowerment that comes from involving tenants in shaping their communities and, crucially, the economic benefits that come from not just building new homes but investing in existing homes to make them warm and energy efficient.

However, there is so much more that we need to do. In particular, we need to meet the challenge of eliminating fuel poverty so that no one has to suffer from the choice between heating or eating. A quarter of our children now live in poverty, a household becomes homeless every 18 minutes and we have a widening gap regarding health inequality. We need to make sure that tackling poverty is addressed with urgency alongside our climate emergency.

There is a huge amount to absorb from yesterday's programme for government. Scottish Labour warmly welcomes the focus on tackling our climate emergency. It is an emergency, and it is not a choice but an absolute necessity that we invest in all our infrastructure to make it low carbon and resilient to deal with the challenges that even in Scotland—where we are not at the forefront of the climate difficulties that will come—we have to plan for.

I welcome the focus on ensuring that new procurement, investment and the work of the Scottish national investment bank will deliver zero-emissions investment. We need multiple benefits to be delivered, with more opportunity for apprentices, for decent wages and for communities benefiting directly from investment.

We need to tackle climate change and deliver quality jobs at the same time. A great way to do that would be a properly funded programme of retrofitting to bring all our homes, right across the country, up to the standard that was mentioned yesterday. Think of the local economic opportunities. We need much more rapid progress on renewables and heat projects that are based in communities across the country. There are lots of opportunities for community-based co-ops and community companies to deliver. We have good examples—Aberdeen Heat and Power Company, which has been not-for-profit since 2012; our Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative, which is now working in partnership with the city council; and community renewables in probably every constituency across the country—but we need more. They deliver multiple benefits and must be factored into all our planning decisions, so that we get the low-carbon heat and power that we need now as well as reinvestment in our communities.

I also welcome the focus yesterday on investment in low-carbon transport, because transport is an area in which progress on reducing

emissions has been nowhere near fast enough. Again, however, we need to go further and think about empowering our communities so that local people can access shared electric vehicles and do not all have to buy electric vehicles; so that we can have municipal bus companies again; and so that we can have high-quality, affordable public transport with more routes that reach out to areas where people do not currently have that opportunity. Crucially, we need to link healthier and affordable public transport choices with opportunities for active travel such as walking and cycling, including more electric bikes.

Our communities need to be at the heart of our low-carbon industrial revolution, which is why Labour welcomes the new just transition commission. However, as Richard Leonard said, it must not be a short-term group; it has to be there for the long term so that we always have a focus on the issue and always remind Government that investment has to deliver for people and our environment.

Our local authorities are crucial if we are to deliver the programme that was announced yesterday. I welcome the announcement of a tourism levy, although that is not a new idea—I worked on a member's bill on it in 2016. Will ministers commit to the legislation being in place by the 2021 election? Our local authorities need that opportunity now.

Let me use the example of our capital city to show how hard local authorities are being hit by the reduction in funding by ministers. In the past five years, the Scottish Government has reduced funding per head in our capital city by 7.5 per cent at a time when the population has increased by more than 7 per cent. That means that there are cuts at a time when our communities need more investment. We are losing homes to Airbnb, even though new homes are being built, while the cost of land is increasing, which means that vital infrastructure and new homes are more expensive. We need more progress on community empowerment and the land reform agenda, and we need proper funding for local authorities and the communities that they serve. Local authorities have a crucial role to play, alongside the Scottish Government, in providing public sector leadership if the change that we need in every community across Scotland is to be delivered.

The coming months will give us the opportunity to test the detail of the plans that were announced yesterday and to scrutinise them in detail. I welcome the proposed circular economy bill and good food nation bill. We must ensure that the investment that comes forward tackles our climate crisis, repays us with wider benefits and addresses the long-standing and deep-rooted

inequalities that should not be acceptable to us and that hold us back as a country.

15:42

Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): There is much to welcome in yesterday's programme for government, but, in particular, I welcome the commitment to invest £500 million in buses. The emphasis yesterday was on urban buses, which is absolutely right and fair, but there is also an issue with rural bus services. In my constituency, in villages such as Harthill, Glenmavis, Caldercruix, Plains and Salsburgh, and in Shotts, which is a town, the problem is the closure or running down of bus services. As part of the £500 million, I ask the Government to consider greater subsidy on a permanent basis for such services, because that is what it takes to keep many of them going and to reopen others. Because of the distances involved in rural areas, the carbon savings from getting more people to travel on the bus are significant.

I have a specific proposal that I ask the Government to consider. Through the excellent MyBus service in Lanarkshire—the service exists in other parts of the country, but in Lanarkshire it is called MyBus—anyone over the age of 75 can get the bus to come to their door, pick them up, take them where they need to go and then bring them back to their door. The problem is that the scheme is restricted to people aged over 75. I ask the Government to consider lowering the age at which subsidy for that service becomes available. There is a lot of spare capacity on the buses. Given that they are subsidised, it seems a shame that we are allowing them to travel nearly empty. Providing a wee bit more subsidy and reducing the age limit or broadening the eligibility would tick a lot of boxes.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): I agree entirely with what the member has said so far, but local government requires an increase in funding if it is to subsidise routes and develop projects. We have to end the cuts to local government and increase funding to enable the likes of North Lanarkshire Council to do that.

Alex Neil: I envisage a fair chunk of the £500 million that has been set aside for buses, as announced yesterday, being channelled through our local authorities. Expansion of eligibility for MyBus is a good example of the service enhancement that could be made. A lot can be done, to the benefit of everyone.

I want to concentrate on the wider economy, because an issue that emanates from yesterday's statement, to which Gillian Martin and Sarah Boyack referred, is the economic development and job opportunities that could come from the carbon reduction programme. It seems to me that there are opportunities to create many jobs and

gain expertise not just locally but at national and international levels. Through Scottish Enterprise and similar agencies, we need to exploit to the maximum the economic opportunity that comes from the carbon reduction programme that was set out yesterday.

There is no doubt that the expansion of technology in all its forms, right across the board, whether we are talking about improved insulation in housing, improved efficiency of cars and electric vehicles or other technologies, many of which are being developed in Scotland, can not only reduce carbon emissions but create many new, well-paid jobs, which will have an international export market and will provide opportunities, particularly for young people.

Another priority that needs to be addressed is the skills shortage in a number of key industries. For example, it is estimated that every year in Scotland we need about 12,000 new information technology graduates, just to stand still. However, only 4,000 to 5,000 IT students graduate every year, so there is a deficit of about 7,000 IT graduates every year—just to stand still. There are jobs, and, if we closed the gap, there would be many more people—people of all ages, not just young people—who could fill them.

In the construction sector, there is estimated to be a shortage of about 12,500 people, primarily in the so-called wet skills. Again, there are huge opportunities there. We should be able to incentivise people in lower-paid, less skilled jobs to go up the skills ladder into areas such as IT and construction, where there are thousands of job opportunities and the wages are very good.

We have a shortage of train drivers, who I believe have an average wage of about 45 grand a year—I am thinking of applying for a job myself; I am sure that members will support me and give me a reference. That is another example of an area in which there is the opportunity for an ambitious skills ladder, to fill jobs that need to be filled and to give people in lower-paid jobs the opportunity to go up the ladder and develop their careers.

I am sorry; there are many other things that I would have liked to speak about, Presiding Officer, including the challenge from artificial intelligence, but I will leave them for another day, because you are about to tell me that I have run out of time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You saw me put my glasses on. That was a hint.

15:49

Maurice Golden (West Scotland) (Con): I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests.

It is right that climate change features strongly in the programme for government. As always, I welcome the ambition that the Scottish Government has shown in wanting to tackle climate change. That ambition has, no doubt, been spurred on by unprecedented public concern.

I am sincere in saying that it is regrettable that the SNP Government falls short of delivering on its ambition.

Last year, I highlighted a litany of failures in the hope that they would be given the attention that they deserved. Sadly, little has changed. For example, as things stand, the Scottish Government's target of recycling 60 per cent of household waste by 2032 will be missed by 12 years. Its proposed 2021 landfill ban is wildly off target, and could end up costing Scotland more than £1 billion and see it having to ship waste to England or, indeed, abroad.

On biodiversity, there is more inaction, with 13 of 20 international biodiversity targets missed. A biodiversity baseline would help us to protect our wildlife. I raised the matter three years ago. The First Minister stood in this chamber in May and agreed with me, and yet we are still waiting for action.

Transport has also floundered, with emissions barely reducing in almost 30 years. The SNP has promised to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2032, but so far, just 1 per cent of Scotland's 2.9 million cars are electric—not that the SNP Government has been setting an example for Scots to follow, as just 20 per cent of Scottish Government vehicles are electric.

We then have the proposed deposit return scheme, which also looks as if it will come up short. Despite its model never having been tried anywhere in the world before, the SNP claims that the scheme will be fully operational, with 90 per cent efficiency, in little over a year. More worrying is the lack of detail about the new system. On support for small businesses, the impact on kerbside services, access for vulnerable groups, compatibility with the rest of the UK and more, there is no detail. A deposit return scheme could cut waste and bolster recycling. For that to happen, the cabinet secretary must start to provide the public and businesses with the answers that they deserve.

If we are to achieve net zero emissions, transform to a circular economy and protect our environment, the SNP must focus on results. That can be done in partnership with the United Kingdom, which is decarbonising faster than any other major economy; a colossal £52 billion has been invested in renewables, 400,000 low-carbon jobs have been created, 50 million trees have

been planted and protection has been given to an area of ocean that is the size of India.

Scotland has the ambition to match that, and the Scottish Conservatives have the policies to deliver, some of which, having performed a U-turn on them, the Scottish Government now supports. For example, reducing fuel poverty and giving everyone a warmer home by raising energy efficiency standards to energy performance certificate band C by 2030, is a measure that was put forward by the Scottish Conservatives.

Moreover, we supported climate action through public procurement measures, such as mandating the purchase of zero-emission vehicles where possible. It should not take a climate emergency to ensure that we get best value through Scottish Government procurement.

We have to tackle poor air quality with air quality monitors at every Scottish school. We also have to back our farmers with funding and technical support to modernise equipment and be greener. We have to ensure that renewables and decommissioning jobs stay in Scotland, and create new ones by ensuring that Scottish workers build the new deposit return scheme machines. We also want to turn plastic waste into an asset with a new plastics recycling plant, which would also provide jobs here in Scotland.

On some of those measures we share common ground with the likes of Friends of the Earth Scotland and WWF Scotland. I hope that the Scottish Government can find equally common cause with us, because together we can deliver the results that Scotland deserves.

Before I close, I want to say something about animal welfare. I welcome developments such as the increase in animal cruelty sentences to five years. I also welcome those sentences applying to cruelty to service animals, following our successful Finn's law campaign. From working closely with the Scottish SPCA, Dogs Trust, the Kennel Club and others, I know that they want this Parliament to go further than it has.

Many members are passionate about animal welfare, and I share that view. The forthcoming animal welfare bill is an opportunity to deliver for Scotland's animals. We should aim for nothing less than Scotland having the best animal welfare laws anywhere in the world.

15:55

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I rise to speak of a tale of two cities. The performance of London's Westminster Government could not be more in contrast with that of our Edinburgh Government.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times".

The best of times is in Edinburgh, where we see a programme for government that will transform for the better the lives of our citizens. Opposed to that, we have the worst of times, with a Westminster Government that is obsessed with dragging Scotland out of Europe, inflicting untold damage to our economy, our social cohesion and our EU new Scots.

It was

“the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness”.

The wisdom comes from the SNP Government's intention to put the climate change emergency at the heart of all that it is doing to progress our society on behalf of the people of Scotland. The foolishness is the attempted proroguing of Parliament and the headlong hurtle off the Brexit cliff edge. Deal or no deal, there is no such thing as a good Brexit.

It was

“the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity”.

Belief comes from measures to tackle climate change and poverty and to reduce inequality. Incredulity comes from months of stagnation at Westminster, as it is caught in the headlights of a constitutional crisis. The epoch of belief is also about measures for ending homelessness, initiatives to tackle holiday hunger, the early introduction of the Scottish child payment, grants from the Scottish welfare fund, schemes for period poverty and fuel poverty, discretionary housing payments, council tax reductions, the expansion of early years childcare, the creation of a new statutory body on poverty and inequality and, of course, a new Social Security Scotland agency that is built on the principles of dignity and respect. The epoch of incredulity concerns the fact that, while we are working hard to tackle poverty, we are forced to mitigate the punitive and degrading social security system from Westminster that has given us the bedroom tax and the rape clause.

We are facing a climate emergency. We need skills and we need collaboration. Scotland can be, rightly, proud of its record on tackling climate change. We have already exceeded our target of producing 50 per cent of our electricity needs from renewables by 2015—in 2018, 74.6 per cent of gross electricity consumption was from renewable sources. Investment in walking and cycling in Scotland has been doubled to £80 million a year. In tandem with continued investment in rail electrification and our comprehensive network of car charging points, that will greatly reduce Scotland's carbon emissions and put us well on our way to phasing out diesel and petrol cars by 2032.

However, it is mostly the investment in people and skills in the programme for government that I

take heart from. I welcome the Scotland's future skills action plan that was published yesterday and the commitment to develop a specific climate change skills plan to ensure that Scotland is equipped to deal with the climate crisis and that we have the skills that we need to take on the new economic advantages that will come from investment in renewables. I also welcome the commitment to 30,000 modern apprenticeships.

As someone who, as a member of the Education and Skills Committee, has worked with care-experienced young people throughout my time in this place, I was particularly pleased to see the investment in care-experienced young people by the Government. The care-experienced bursary age limit has been lifted. There will be free dental care for care-experienced young people, along with 24/7 crisis support and access to discretionary housing payments for young people who are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Earlier in the summer, I visited the Who Cares? Scotland summer camp. I spoke to many young people there who were willing to share their concerns and experiences with me so that I could better understand their challenges as care-experienced young people. Therefore, I know the importance of the statutory presumption in favour of siblings in care being placed together, when that is in their best interests, and I know what that will mean to many young people in Scotland.

I thank Amy, who shared her poem at that event. It was poignant and heartbreaking and it helped me to understand better her challenges and the challenges that are faced by care-experienced young people. I am delighted that that presumption is part of the programme for government.

It was

“the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness”.

The light comes from the many organisations that have welcomed this ambitious and important programme for government: Colleges Scotland, NUS Scotland, Who Cares? Scotland, Citizens Advice Scotland and the Poverty Alliance, to mention just a few. The darkness comes from the unknown Brexit black hole that we approach with trepidation. As I said before, there is no such thing as a good Brexit.

Whatever happens, we have major challenges ahead in our country. We do not have a clear vision ahead but thank goodness that independence offers Scotland a choice of the best of times.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that the protocol is that you stay for two speeches after your own, unless it is an emergency. Otherwise, you send a note in

advance to the Presiding Officer, who will say whether it is okay for you to leave the chamber. You do not just send a note after the event. That is directed at one member, but the rest of you can take tent as well.

16:01

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): If there was one thing that stood out in yesterday's statement on the programme for government, it was the fact that the First Minister did not have very much to say about the NHS. The lightness of the programme really stands out in this Parliament's 20-year history.

Given the SNP Government's record of running our health service, it is little wonder that the First Minister did not want to attract attention to her time as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing.

Over the summer, we saw yet more evidence that SNP ministers are incapable of providing the leadership required to improve the performance of our NHS. NHS waiting time targets continue to be missed. The 12-week treatment time guarantee, which has never been met, was missed again. For the quarter ending in June, more than one in four patients did not receive treatment within the 12-week target. The 18-week referral time was also missed, with only 79 per cent of patients seen within the referral to treatment standard during the month of June. The number of NHS patients in Scotland who have had to wait longer than they should for critical diagnostics tests has continued to increase.

Meanwhile, in August, an Audit Scotland report revealed that this SNP Government is still ill-equipped to help address Scotland's general practitioner crisis now and in the future. It confirmed that the Government is struggling to recruit the extra 800 family doctors that we will need over the next decade. The report stated:

"The Scottish Government has not set out what impact these additional GPs will have or how the target reflects retirement rates or changes in working patterns. It has not provided an assessment of how policy initiatives will contribute to reaching the target, or identified what the risks are if it is not achieved."

Given that a third of GPs are over the age of 50 and changing working patterns mean that more family doctors are working part-time, after 12 years of SNP mismanagement of our GP workforce, we are now looking at a GP retirement time bomb in Scotland.

Therefore, the Royal College of General Practitioners Scotland was right to call this programme for government a "missed opportunity" to tackle Scotland's GPs' concerns.

Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): It is now accepted by the British Medical Association and

others that the single biggest contributing factor to the reduction in availability of GPs is the pension reforms that were introduced by George Osborne, which have had a devastating impact on the national health service.

Miles Briggs: That is exactly why the UK Government has announced changes to take that forward and make a difference.

It is interesting that the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, who opened the debate this afternoon, is not here right now. Over the summer, a GP surgery in Bridge of Earn closed. Maybe she wants to get back to intervene in this debate.

This summer has demonstrated the real challenges that face our health service—from the unacceptable and shocking record number of drug-related deaths to the on-going crises across our mental health services.

In Lothian region, we have seen the on-going scandal and the last-minute cancelling of the much-advertised opening of the new sick kids hospital, which caused distress and anger among staff, patients and families across my region.

Despite SNP promises that a new children's hospital would open in 2012, all these years later and following delay after delay, we now await the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport's statement next week to find out when, at long last, we will see the safe transfer of patients and services to that much-needed facility. My constituents across Lothian want answers to why we have seen such mismanagement of that project. Next week has to be the point when SNP ministers start to provide those answers.

Just yesterday, we saw the publication of some of the worst-ever NHS workforce statistics and, sadly, nothing in the programme for government suggests that the SNP has any ideas on how to turn that around. Nursing and midwifery vacancies have broken the 4,000 barrier for the first time—a 28 per cent rise in the space of just three months. Today, there are 328 fewer nurses and midwives working in Scotland's hospitals than there were in the previous quarter.

Consultant vacancies have reached their highest level, breaching the 500 mark for the first time. Of the 514 empty consultant posts that we have across Scotland, many have lain empty for more than six months. SNP ministers have been warned about the NHS workforce crisis for years now and their continuing complacency means that more and more patients in Scotland are waiting longer and longer for treatment.

Elsewhere in this year's programme for government, we hear about the promised Glasgow and Edinburgh major trauma centres. Those have

now been promised three times in different programmes for government. Similarly, we are promised again that this year Scotland will have the national action plan for neurological conditions. Patients and patient groups have been waiting for that for too long; we need to see progress this year.

If SNP ministers are to preserve any credibility, we need to see promises kept and not just re-announced year after year. The statement from the SNP that it will continue to fund the extension of Frank's law rings very hollow in light of SNP-led South Ayrshire Council's decision to use money allocated for that for other purposes.

I know that many of my constituents in Lothian, and people across Scotland, will be genuinely disappointed that once again the programme for government fails to set out proposals that will help to equip our NHS for the long term and meet the healthcare challenges that our nation faces. Scottish Conservatives will continue to work with our fantastic but hard-pressed NHS staff to develop the fresh thinking and new policies needed to safeguard our NHS in the future. After 12 years in office, it is clear that the SNP has nothing to offer to take forward our NHS.

16:07

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): It is a pleasure to speak in the debate. At a time when Westminster is consumed by Brexit and the Tories are playing out a political version of Jonestown, it is great to see the Scottish Government's new and exciting programme for government published. The policy announcements, of which there are many, will make Scotland a fairer, more prosperous and greener country for all.

It is incredibly encouraging to see the range of different bills unveiled for the coming year. Due to my interest in eradicating sectarianism, I look forward in particular to seeing the hate crime bill's progress through Parliament. An impressive 14 new bills are set to be introduced—nearly the same as the number of Labour shadow cabinet reshuffles over the past two years.

I said that those announcements will make Scotland a greener country and it is on that subject that I wish to speak. The programme for government builds on Scotland's already strong, world-leading foundations on tackling climate change and cutting emissions. We were the first country in the world to declare a climate emergency, responding to the calls of youth climate strikers and scientific experts; our emissions have almost halved since 1990; we continue to outperform the UK and most western European nations in delivering reductions; and in

2018 nearly 75 per cent of Scotland's electricity came from renewable sources.

As Lord Deben, the chair of the Committee on Climate Change said in May of this year,

"Scotland has been a leader within the UK with many of its policies to tackle climate change".

However, as a party, we want to go further and end our contribution to climate change completely. Scotland's transition to net zero will affect every part of society, from how we travel to how we use our land.

For example, in Scotland alone, around 9.5 million tonnes of CO₂ are removed from the atmosphere each year by our forests, which is why an increase in tree planting is so important in the fight to tackle the climate emergency. I was, therefore, very pleased to see in this year's programme for government the announcement of an additional £5 million to increase our tree-planting target from 10,000 to 12,000 hectares per year, starting from next year.

Regarding our travel habits and infrastructure, there are a number of exciting and ambitious commitments. Those include maintaining the doubled level of active travel investment; the target of decarbonising Scotland's railways by 2035, five years ahead of the UK's target of 2040; and the plan to change sections of the motorway network around Glasgow to better support high-occupancy vehicles such as buses.

The Scottish Government is taking those encouraging steps to address climate change, but Scotland cannot deliver net zero emissions through devolved policy alone. We require the UK Government to up its game vastly, we need the private sector's support and we must also continue our partnership with the public sector, particularly local authorities.

As has been outlined in the programme for government, the Scottish Government will now put in place a green new deal, harnessing the power of the Scottish national investment bank, a £3 billion green investment portfolio and a green growth accelerator to attract green finance to Scotland. As a result, our local authorities will be able to invest further in emissions-reducing infrastructure for their areas.

Scotland and the Scottish Government are, quite rightly, seen as world leading in addressing climate change, but I also wish to pay tribute to the work of Glasgow City Council. In particular, I commend the work of Councillor Anna Richardson, who represents the Langside ward in my Glasgow Cathcart constituency and is also city convener for sustainability and carbon reduction. The city of Glasgow has made significant progress in reducing emissions, meeting its 2020 target

ahead of schedule, and the council is undertaking great work to do more, much of which is on the back of previous programmes for government.

As members will be aware, the initial phase of Scotland's first ever low-emission zone was launched in Glasgow last year. In the city centre, restrictions are now in place for certain buses, and a further phase is set to commence next year. Understandably, a positive and direct effect of the zone is the increasing demand for ultra-low-emission vehicles and electric vehicle charging points. At present, there are an estimated 100,000 electric vehicles in the UK, and that figure is expected to rise to between 1 million and 1.4 million by 2022, which would be at least a tenfold increase. As referenced in the programme for government, to support that expected increase, the Scottish Government has already delivered 1,500 new electric vehicle charging points and has assisted businesses and communities in buying ultra-low-emission vehicles. That has laid great foundations for Glasgow City Council, which has also been awarded £2.2 million by Transport Scotland to improve infrastructure for electric vehicle charging points.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

James Dornan: Of course I will. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Aha! Your card was not in the console.

James Dornan: I thought that you were rethinking, Neil.

Neil Findlay: Of course climate change is the biggest issue that humanity faces worldwide, but I have been very surprised that no one on the Government benches has mentioned the issue that I think must be at the top of the agenda in Scotland at the moment, which is the drug crisis on our streets.

Mr Dornan is a Glasgow MSP. I do not know whether he would have gone on to mention the drugs issue, but I sincerely hope that he would have. Every year, 1,200 people die on our streets, and there is an HIV epidemic in Glasgow. The £10 million of funding that was announced is nowhere near enough to deal with that. I hope that members who represent cities, as Mr Dornan does, will lobby the Government to increase that funding to address the carnage that is happening on the streets of this country.

James Dornan: No, I was not going to mention that issue in this speech, because I am working with others in Glasgow to do what we can to alleviate the situation. Clearly, there is a lot to be done, some of which relates to reserved powers. Members will know that the Westminster Government will not give us the power to establish

safe drug consumption facilities, but the Scottish Government is already doing a lot. I am not, for one second, denying that the level of drug deaths is a huge issue, which all of us must look at and work on, but I will talk about it at another time. This speech is about what was in the programme for government, and I want to deal with that.

I am not sure where I am in my notes now—it seems so long ago that I started my contribution.

The present estimate is that there are about 1,000 electric vehicles in Glasgow. By maximising the availability of charging points to electric vehicle drivers in the city, Glasgow City Council, in partnership with the Government, will continue to support a low-carbon transport infrastructure and will facilitate the steady growth of electric vehicle users in the city. However, the Government has committed to going further still. It is set to provide an additional £17 million to support the demand for ultra-low-emission vehicles through the low-carbon transport loan scheme, while expanding that scheme to include used electric vehicles.

The climate emergency is embedded in almost every policy and strategy that is being taken forward by the SNP Government. This year's programme for government, which builds upon the work that has already been done, will take massive strides towards our goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 at the latest—a target that is more ambitious than that of any other UK nation.

This is an ambitious Government that is going from strength to strength, in complete contrast to the Tories at Westminster. As a Parliament, we are debating a detailed and progressive programme for Scotland. The Tory Government cannot even control its own parliamentary business programme. If this week has shown our constituents anything, it is that no party other than the SNP has a positive plan for Scotland's future.

16:15

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab): As Scottish Labour's health spokesperson, I begin by saying that the programme for government contains several positive announcements that are very welcome—investment in perinatal mental health support for new mums, a 24/7 system of support for young people who are experiencing mental health issues, a dedicated women's health plan to reduce inequalities and the publication of the first-ever national action plan on neurological conditions. Those are all examples of steps in the right direction that will help thousands of people across the country.

Scottish Labour called for the establishment of a women's health fund in the budget this year, so I am delighted to see ministers commit to bringing

forward the plan. My question is this: what funding will be attached to that? The cross-party group on women's health, which I chair alongside the group's deputy convener, Alison Johnstone, has persistently highlighted a range of women's health issues, from differences in women's cardiac treatment and menopause stigma to the struggles that are faced by those with endometriosis, and lipoedema. Anne Henry has bravely spoken about her painful battle to receive a proper diagnosis and treatment for lipoedema; will the plan improve access to specialists for such conditions?

However, those glimmers of positivity do not offset the real and pressing issues that are facing our NHS and the health of the nation. Twelve years into government, SNP ministers must know that they are still falling short on too many fronts. The programme for government boasts of so-called "record levels" of spending and staff numbers, but the facts speak for themselves. The NHS workforce crisis is deepening, with figures this week revealing the highest rate of medical vacancies for 12 years. The current increase in training places will not do anything to fill the unfilled vacancies, putting pressure on services right now.

Thousands of children and young people are waiting for more than four months to be seen by mental health services, and many are still being rejected for treatment outright. On the setting out of standards and specifications on CAMHS to reduce rejected referrals, why has that not been done in the year since the rejected referrals audit? When will they be in place? What change is expected in CAMHS referrals and rejections?

Audit Scotland is warning that the financial stability of the NHS is increasingly unsustainable as boards are expected to make more and more cuts while dealing with seemingly ever-increasing demand, and there is a £900 million repair bill. Dedicated NHS staff are overworked and stressed, and we are expected to be 850 GPs short of where we need to be in 2021. What work has been done to address Audit Scotland's concerns and criticisms and to determine whether the programme for government's policies will achieve what they are intended to deliver?

The cancer strategy is being refreshed, but is a new strategy planned? If so, when will it be published? The cancer strategy was supposed to involve a £100 million investment, but the programme for government says that only £54 million has been spent so far. What will happen to the remaining £46 million?

In the real world, there is a disconnect between the rhetoric of SNP ministers and the tough experiences of many patients and NHS staff. If we take the drug deaths crisis that my colleague Neil

Findlay mentioned, ministers assert in the programme for government that

"We are doing everything we can"

to prevent further drug deaths. That is just not true, because we can and we must do much more. People who desperately need help now need so much more than a glossy document. They need action and urgency and a culture change spearheaded by the Government to boost services, reduce stigma and improve co-ordination between addiction and emergency mental health services in every single community in Scotland.

The Government is taking positive steps, but it must move more quickly. It is not good enough that the drug death task force, which was announced in March, is still to meet. I know that we will hear more from the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing tomorrow. Meanwhile, more and more people are suffering from poor mental health and substance misuse. They cannot afford to wait any longer.

I turn to private sector failure in the NHS. The programme for government references the ongoing debacle at the Queen Elizabeth university hospital and the new Royal hospital for children in Edinburgh, which Sarah Boyack mentioned. On both, Scottish Labour has consistently called for a public inquiry. It is a scandal that the safety of patients and hundreds of millions of pounds of public money have been put at risk.

It is not just the problems with those huge capital projects that are an issue. We have seen the hand of private profit damaging our health service in various guises in recent times. Let us take the case of Healthcare Environmental Services, which was based in Shotts in my region. That scandal has caused a clinical waste crisis that has resulted in tens of millions of pounds of extra costs for our NHS. It is disappointing that the Government dismissed outright proposals from Scottish Labour to bring that service back into public ownership, instead handing a 10-year, £100 million contract to a multinational private company.

Our health service and our NHS workforce remain in crisis. The programme for government does not fully address the scale of the challenges, nor does it offer the step change that is required to transform our health service. Services are under overwhelming pressure. The Government must go further and take bold, progressive action to support our NHS to tackle inequalities and falling life expectancy and to improve the health of the people of Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches.

16:21

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): As Alex Cole-Hamilton observed at the outset of this afternoon's debate, it did not take long for the First Minister yesterday to reveal what is at the top of her agenda. Nicola Sturgeon had hardly turned the first page of her statement before we had the first mention of independence and an assurance—to the surprise of nobody—that she is intent on separation, do or die. The truth is, though, that the answer to Boris's nationalism is not more of Nicola's nationalism.

That said, once we got beyond the inevitable demand for more constitutional division, many aspects of the programme that the First Minister outlined were worthy of welcome. For example, it was encouraging to hear her acknowledge the challenge that we face in meeting the climate emergency and the urgent, radical and cross-cutting action that will be required in response. Of course, the detail of that response will be crucial, as Mark Ruskell and Sarah Boyack highlighted in their thoughtful contributions. Scottish Liberal Democrats stand ready to work with the Government and members across parties to ensure that we meet that challenge.

I was particularly interested to hear the commitment to make air travel in the Highlands and Islands carbon neutral. I know that Loganair, which operates most of the routes in the region, has long held that ambition, and it appears confident that it can be achieved by 2040. However, we are talking about lifeline services, so it is imperative that, in delivering that commitment, ministers ensure that accessibility and affordability remain at the fore. People and businesses in communities such as Orkney, which depend on those routes, must not be left more isolated or disadvantaged. The ambition to make air travel in the region carbon neutral, along with the plans for hydrogen ferries in Orkney and making the A9 Scotland's first electric vehicle superhighway, show the clear potential that exists for the Highlands and Islands to lead the way in reducing transport emissions.

Sticking with the transport theme, I could not help noticing that certain items appeared to have slipped the First Minister's mind yesterday. I listened intently to what she had to say but heard no reference to a three-year freeze in northern isles ferry fares or a 20 per cent reduction in cabin costs. An urgent resolution to the problem of internal ferry funding for the northern isles was also conspicuous by its absence from the First Minister's transport priorities. As for an increase in freight sailings, a long-term extension to the air discount scheme and the removal of car parking charges at Sumburgh airport, it was as if those promises had never been made by the SNP in the

recent by-election campaign. However, the fact is that they were. Moreover, people in Shetland and Orkney were listening with interest, so they heard Nicola Sturgeon commit to sit down "in pretty short order" to see how those pledges could be implemented. They took careful note when Michael Matheson called the SNP candidate's promises on transport "very reasonable". They made the assumption that those were indeed commitments to Shetland and the northern isles, and not merely cynical bribes in the hope of persuading people to put aside their opposition to independence and vote SNP.

Surely now that almost every single member on the SNP benches has a new-found appreciation not only of the beauty of the northern isles but of how much it costs in time and money to get there and back, they will be happy to support delivery of all those transport promises to the communities that Beatrice Wishart and I represent.

It should concern every single one of us that in Scotland we lock up more people per head of population than almost any other country in the western world. The prison population last month stood at a staggering 8,267, with two thirds of our prisons at or well over capacity. That is unsustainable, unsafe and unacceptable. We have seen a 40 per cent increase in assaults in our prisons over the past year. The number of self-harm incidents has doubled since 2017, while attempted suicides are set to be three times higher this year than last. Meanwhile, back in July, the Scottish Prison Service announced that it was redeploying its entire throughcare team into general prison officer roles. How can that possibly help with the successful management of prisoners back into the community?

Neil Findlay: I visited Shotts prison during the recess and spoke to prison staff there about a range of issues. The one issue that they wanted me to take away with me was the pressures that they are under because of the lack of staff in prisons to deal with the day-to-day work. I hope that the member will join me in urging the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to address that urgently.

Liam McArthur: That is a very fair point. The concerns that staff are raising are not new and they are not confined to Shotts. They are a direct result of the spiralling increase in the prison population, which is putting pressure not just on prisoners but on staff. Add to that the levels of incarceration of women and a lack of capacity in mental health support for prisoners, particularly our young people, and the picture is bleak.

I support moves by the justice secretary to increase the presumption against short sentences and extend the use of electronic monitoring, but I question whether the Government is alive to the scale of the crisis that we face. Moreover, there is

still no sign of how ministers plan to transfer the resources into areas that will allow us to bring down the prison population by diverting people away from the criminal justice system. We know that that is more effective in reducing reoffending, in keeping our communities safe and in allowing every individual the best chance of making a positive contribution. It cannot be done cheaply, but the cost of continuing as we are will be much higher.

As Monica Lennon said, on drug deaths, too, we are at crisis point. There were 1,187 drug deaths in Scotland in 2018—the worst rate anywhere in the developed world. Scottish Liberal Democrats believe that the response to that must be framed through the prism of health rather than justice, but something is not right when last year more people were imprisoned for possession of drugs for personal use than were given treatment orders.

Those are just some of the areas in which the Government and the Parliament have their work cut out, not just over the next year but well beyond. Those should be the priorities for action—they are priorities on which there is the prospect of strong cross-party agreement. We should be committing to those areas rather than reopening the divisions of independence.

16:28

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green):

It has been an interesting debate and, as ever, there have been lots of requests for additional detail. I start by commending a number of elements in the programme for government, the first of which is one that I think no one else has mentioned, which is the £2 million of additional money for the Gypsy Traveller community. I commend the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart, for that. The Traveller community has been impressed with the significant engagement that has taken place. I welcome that.

I also welcome the introduction of the young carer grant, which is a Green policy.

My colleague Mark Ruskell talked about the heat networks bill. Unfortunately, the focus appears to be on regulation rather than transformational change. Transformational change can be significant, as is the case in Amsterdam, which has a heat network of 100,000 houses that is increasing by 8,000 a year.

Thank goodness that the good food nation bill is here. The original vision for the bill was cross-portfolio legislation. The intention was to improve access to healthy, affordable food, and to bring food into the health, environment and social justice agendas. Indeed, it was intended to be about the right to food. I heard someone say that they hoped

that it would not be a watered-down marketing ploy. As someone else said, the issue of procurement—for example the idea of lorries driving past food producers to deliver processed foods to our schools—must be addressed.

It is welcome that quite some distance has been travelled in the few months since the chamber voted down the Scottish Green Party's declaration of a climate emergency. This morning, the Scottish Trades Union Congress responded to the programme for government by saying:

“The current market approach to decarbonisation has failed”,

which is a valid position. All the other parties in the chamber have positively extolled the UK Government giving ever-increasing additional tax breaks to the obscenely wealthy oil and gas sector. That sector has today celebrated an increase in drilling activity. Apparently, more wells were drilled in the first seven months of 2019 than in the whole of 2018. The industry has argued that maximum extraction must continue and is compatible with net zero, thanks to carbon capture and storage. That is not quite how we see things.

The STUC went on to say:

“To be worthy of the name of a Green New Deal, there is a need to consider the role of publicly owned energy, transport and construction companies”.

Words are important. My colleague Mark Ruskell said that he welcomed the Scottish Government's adoption of the language of the “Scottish Green New Deal”, adding that the programme for government is not a green new deal. He said that transitioning away from oil and gas by reducing the demand and the supply in tandem, as the New Zealand Government is planning for, is the way ahead.

As ever, there is modest, incremental change dressed up in grand rhetoric. The “Scottish Green New Deal” is different, with a publicly owned national bank and energy company. A new deal should be a transformational programme of building the public sector and redirecting massive investment into infrastructure. The programme for government is a long way from the bold and transformative change that we need, and we want a commitment from the Scottish Government to work with us to embolden the approach that is being taken.

Much has been made of the quoted sum of £500 million for improved bus priority infrastructure, which is one area on which we would welcome a lot more detail. Alex Neil talked about some of the implications for that. Apparently, it is

“to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage”.

Where is that money coming from? How will it raise patronage outwith areas with priority infrastructure? What will it do for residents in remote and rural areas? It will not make buses any more affordable or accessible to people. The Scottish Government has failed to address the decline in bus usage by expanding its concessionary travel scheme. The Scottish Green Party advocates fully free bus services. Although it is reassuring that some thought is going into it, it is disappointing that the Scottish Government is failing to take even the modest step of introducing free transport for under-26-year-olds.

I have tried to work out how that bus infrastructure money might be spent. Take, for instance, the city of Inverness, which has only modest bus prioritisation measures and whose council positively encourages the public to drive into the city centre, where the air quality is already poor, notwithstanding environmental impact assessments. That shows that co-ordination is needed, not only of local policy but between national and local policy.

We need local transport strategies. That is a key element of the workplace car parking levy, which would dovetail with national strategy.

What is the Scottish Government's strategy for transport? It is to continue to not slow—let alone abandon—the £6 billion expenditure on two roads in the north. What the Government needs to do is re-examine all its existing policies. On page 92, the programme for government says that the Government will “embed sustainable travel principles”, but there has been a dearth of that.

Congestion is caused by vehicles, so their mode of propulsion does not matter, whether that is diesel, petrol or electricity. We need the Government to set traffic reduction targets. Earlier, I mentioned the requirement for public ownership, and that is required for our bus services, as well as our rail and ferry services. That could lead to better integration.

We are a maritime nation and we have a growing but ageing fleet. We have the current issue of the two ferries and we have a lot of ferries to replace. That provision cannot be left to the private sector. As I did yesterday, I urge the Scottish Government to nationalise the Ferguson yard.

In the short time that I have left, I note the lack of ambition in the programme for government. Where is the mobilisation of the public sector? Where are the new jobs? The active travel budget is frozen.

Do I have six or seven minutes, Presiding Officer?

The Presiding Officer: Six minutes.

John Finnie: I beg your pardon. Perhaps you will indulge me for just two minutes—or one minute.

The Presiding Officer: Try 30 seconds, Mr Finnie. [*Laughter.*]

John Finnie: We have an emergency. An emergency is a crisis, a disaster, a tragedy, a danger and a trauma. We have had warm words but unambitious targets. None of them suggests that there is a crisis at hand; none suggests that the disaster that has befallen our planet and our nation is being addressed; none acknowledges that we are already seeing the tragic effects of increased extreme weather; none acknowledges that we are in danger if we do not address the situation forcefully; and none acknowledges that we have to act on the trauma that is faced by our environment.

Future generations will judge us not on our words but on our actions. Sadly, the programme for government does not read like the response to a declared climate emergency.

16:35

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): As always, the test of a programme for government is the degree to which the reality matches the rhetoric—although, to be honest, this year's statement fell pretty flat on rhetoric, never mind the reality. Indeed, this is probably the one and only time of the parliamentary year that I rather miss the First Minister's predecessor, whose rhetoric on such occasions seldom failed to soar. I remember, of course, the Saudi Arabia of the seas. There was also the vision of Scotland one year as not so much cold, wet and dreich as the foremost hydro nation on the face of the planet. Of course, that was all rubbish. It was florid fantasy supercharged by high-octane hyperbole, but it was, well, a bit more entertaining than yesterday's rather dull fare. [*Interruption.*] I say to Clare Adamson that I had no great expectations when the First Minister got up to speak yesterday—and I was not disappointed.

There was, of course, some welcome stuff—not least the welcome agreement to the care review's interim recommendations on health, childcare and education for care-experienced young people. That was very welcome indeed.

Welcome, too, was the focus on addressing the climate emergency. However, I am not sure that the programme actually contains an emergency response. In fairness, when opening today's debate, the cabinet secretary made a better job of trying to demonstrate that it does. It contains an updated plan, an updated energy efficiency route map, a hydrogen plan and an offshore wind policy statement—those speak of bureaucracy rather than urgency.

Mark Ruskell eloquently debunked some of the Government's rather vainglorious claims on climate change, and Sarah Boyack showed exactly why the return of her knowledge, expertise and experience in the area will be such an asset to the Parliament.

Meanwhile, in the critical area of public transport, the Government still fails to grasp the nettle of public ownership of our buses and railways. Though we may be electrifying our railways, and though three quarters of passenger journeys may be on electric lines, while we tolerate the cancellations, late trains and overcrowding that are ScotRail—which has today again defaulted on its latest improvement plan—passengers will not want to use trains. Today, my constituents in North Berwick found all their trains cancelled, yet again—and that is the experience of most of us, is it not?

As for buses, bus lanes and low-emission buses are very welcome. However, until we are prepared to extend subsidised or, indeed, free bus travel to other groups of passengers, passenger numbers will continue to fall. I say to Alex Neil that private bus companies will never resolve the issues around rural bus routes that he quite correctly raised. I come from East Lothian, where, when the private bus company moved out, a municipal bus company came in and transformed bus travel. That is the nettle that we must grasp.

Of course, the trouble with something being a programme for government priority is that that often turns out to mean very little in reality. Last year, we were still being told that the Government's overriding priority was education: closing the attainment gap and raising standards for all. However, as Richard Leonard pointed out, higher pass rates fell again this year, for the fourth year in a row. In addition, although the Government asserts that the attainment gap has narrowed, it has abolished any sensible means of measuring it at all.

There was no new money in yesterday's statement to restore the Government's cuts to education. School budgets are £400 million less than they were in 2010. That includes the pupil equity funding, which is supposed to be additional, but is really backfilling cuts. The £15 million for additional support needs goes nowhere near restoring the cuts to funding—it is about a tenth of them—for those pupils over recent years. That is an emergency for those children, who have only one chance at school. The response is not adequate.

My colleagues Neil Findlay and Monica Lennon are right. The drug death figures are also an emergency, and £10 million is not an adequate response.

Last year, one of the flagship commitments—it is an important one—in the programme for government was the incorporation into Scots law of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, we are told this year that there will be no legislation. There is no explanation for the delay. Why cannot we get on with that important consensual move?

On the subject of rights, I agree with Angela Constance that the good food nation bill should contain the right to food. However, it does not. Why does it not? I hope that Angela Constance will argue with her Government that it absolutely should contain that right.

At the weekend, the First Minister promised a calm, considered and consensual programme. The truth is that, for calm, we got pedestrian, and for considered, we got unambitious. As for consensual, if the First Minister's statement had climate change at its centre, she began and ended yesterday on independence, which is her one true passion. There is nothing calm, considered or consensual about wasting time on a referendum bill, seizing one constitutional crisis to try to stoke another, and sowing new division when healing is what our country and our communities need at this time.

In that, the programme for government is the same as every one of the past 12. It is not really about climate change, education, health or poverty; it is about independence, which is always the top and hem of the Government's story, with patients, pupils, parents and passengers left behind.

16:42

Dean Lockhart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):

I congratulate Sarah Boyack on her excellent first contribution in this parliamentary session.

The background to this debate is, of course, that we are now in the 13th year of SNP government. Surely that is enough time for any Government to show whether it can make a difference. What a difference the SNP has made to Scotland. There are declining education standards and international rankings in Scottish education, as Liz Smith highlighted; the NHS is in crisis, as Miles Briggs made clear; there is a low-wage, low-productivity and low-growth economy, as described by Murdo Fraser; and there is a dysfunctional transport policy, which has caused the insolvency of the last shipbuilder on the Clyde. It is no wonder that, earlier this week, a leading global shipping company accused the SNP of running Scotland like "a banana republic". That is not a record to be proud of, as the First Minister claimed yesterday. It is a record to be ashamed of.

The programme for government will change nothing. It is a programme for government with the same old promises that never get delivered. The Scottish growth scheme promised half a billion pounds of investment in the economy. Three years later, as the First Minister admitted yesterday, only a quarter of that money has been invested. There was the promise to create a new publicly owned energy company to reduce energy costs. Two years later, that policy has not even passed the feasibility test. The SNP's economic targets promised to take Scotland into the first division of productivity but, instead, they have seen us relegated to the third division. It is not just about productivity. The SNP has failed to meet every single one of its own economic targets. That is the reality of the SNP's track record for the people of Scotland to judge. Targets have been missed, policies are undelivered, and promises have been broken.

The Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy (Kate Forbes): Who is responsible for Scotland having the lowest unemployment rate in the UK?

Dean Lockhart: It is a combination of the UK and Scottish Governments. *[Interruption.]* I will tell members why. Under the UK Government, interest rates are at record lows. I will come on shortly to how the economics of independence would damage the Scottish economy.

Let me turn to some of the detailed policy announcements that the First Minister made yesterday and which have been debated today. As we have heard, the First Minister announced a new Scottish green deal that will lay the foundations for sustainable economic growth. To many, that might sound like the policy of a new incoming Administration, but we all know that the SNP has failed to deliver sustainable growth over the past 12 years. That was made clear earlier this year by the STUC's report, "Broken Promises and Offshored Jobs", which said that the SNP has failed to

"ensure that workers, businesses and Government in Scotland benefit from Scotland's natural resources"

and low-carbon economy. The STUC's report also highlighted the negative balance of trade in the low-carbon sector in Scotland: we import £230 million more than we export in the low-carbon economy. Gillian Martin and Alex Neil said that the green deal will allow us to create new jobs and increase exports to other countries, but the reality is that we are subsidising the low-carbon economies of other countries, and we are not seeing the real economic benefits of Scotland's natural resources.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Dean Lockhart: I need to make some progress.

Yesterday, the First Minister announced that the SNP's policy on taxation is aimed at encouraging business investment and economic growth. Again, the reality paints a very different picture. According to the Fraser of Allander institute, business investment in Scotland has been declining since 2015—long before Brexit. On taxation, the SNP has broken key manifesto commitments by increasing the basic rates of income tax and council tax, and, over the past 12 years, economic growth in Scotland under the SNP has been a full 6 per cent lower than growth in the rest of the UK.

What is most remarkable about the programme for government is what it fails to mention. In its 160 pages, there is not one mention of the state of Scotland's finances. Let me remind members of the state of Scotland's finances, as set out in Scottish Government figures from two weeks ago. Scotland has a record fiscal deficit of £12.6 billion, which is equivalent to 7 per cent of Scotland's GDP. We now have the highest ever gap between the fiscal position of Scotland and that of the rest of the UK. We have the highest ever union dividend for the people of Scotland, as every single person in Scotland receives £2,000 a year as a result of Scotland being part of the UK.

John Mason: Will the member take an intervention?

Dean Lockhart: No. I will make progress.

The union dividend will increase even further as a result of the record increase in public spending that was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer today. An extra £1.2 billion has been provided for Scottish schools, the NHS and other public services.

Yesterday, the First Minister told the chamber that the SNP is determined to deliver independence. What the First Minister did not say is that independence would result in £7.2 billion of cuts to public spending in Scotland, which is equivalent to half the entire NHS budget in Scotland. If this was a programme for government for an independent Scotland, the First Minister would not be announcing a transformational capital investment programme, because that is based on UK Government capital funding; a Scottish national investment bank, because that is being funded by UK Treasury financial transactions money; or extra NHS and education spending, because that is being funded by extra Barnett consequentials as a result of extra UK Government spending. Instead, the First Minister would be explaining to the people of Scotland why and how £7.2 billion was being cut from Scotland's budget and what services would have to be slashed as a result of independence.

In the months ahead, we will outline an alternative approach to the 12 years of SNP failure. It will be one that will restore Scotland's long-term economic growth to 2 per cent, restore standards in Scottish education, fix the NHS and other public services, and protect and enhance Scotland's place at the heart of the United Kingdom.

16:49

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): I welcome to the chamber Beatrice Wishart, as the member for the Shetland Islands, and Sarah Boyack, as a member for the Lothians region. They are filling the vacancies that have been left by Tavish Scott and Kezia Dugdale. I wish them both well in their parliamentary experiences. Sarah Boyack, of course, has formidable experience, which was evident in her enormously thoughtful speech, to which I will come back later.

It was difficult to work out from a couple of contributions whether I had heard the same statement being delivered by the First Minister yesterday as Murdo Fraser and Alex Cole-Hamilton heard. From listening to them, the First Minister's statement was exclusively, unreservedly, entirely and completely dominated by independence. However, Sarah Boyack, Mark Ruskell, Monica Lennon and Liam McArthur showed much deeper appreciation of the substance of what she said.

The First Minister, of course, set out the Government's ambition for Scotland to be an independent country; it should not really be a surprise to anybody that the Government's ambition is that Scotland be independent. With the powers of independence, we could tackle a wide range of issues that are currently outwith the responsibility of this Parliament. I do not see why the Government should be prevented from aspiring to deliver independence, because we believe that it will deliver the best outcome for the people of this country. When I look at the fiasco of Westminster, I am confident that the people of Scotland are coming to the same judgment on that important question.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: If the Deputy First Minister is so confident that independence will bring about a more prosperous future for this country, how does he propose to reduce the 7 per cent national deficit?

John Swinney: We would make our choices in Scotland about the resources that are available to us. We would make policy choices to grow and expand our economy, we would make policy choices to invest in our infrastructure, and we

would be able to reap the rewards in the process. That is not available to us under the United Kingdom system.

Clare Adamson did us all a great service by outlining a contrast of experiences. In the Scottish Parliament yesterday and today, we have taken forward the "calm, considered and consensual" programme for Government—I am glad that Iain Gray cited that, because there is no danger whatever that I would associate those three words with him. That is in contrast to the dire emergency situation that prevails in the House of Commons. It is supposedly under the leadership of a Conservative Government, but it looks, in how it is conducting itself, like leadership by a Brexit Party Government, with behaviour like that of Nigel Farage.

The contrast between the two Governments could not be greater, which brings me to the substance of the programme for Government. My colleague Roseanna Cunningham opened the debate by setting out the clear and emphatic programme of leadership that she is deploying in the agenda to tackle climate change. I am glad that many measures that have been set out in the programme for Government have been welcomed across the chamber. Of course, they will be the subject of debate and consideration with colleagues in this parliamentary year.

Angela Constance made the substantive argument that action on climate change cannot be taken forward in one compartment of Government, but must be taken forward across the policy spectrum. I assure Parliament of the Government's determination to do exactly that.

Angela Constance went on, in that spirit, to make an important link comparing the welfare reform that the United Kingdom Government has inflicted on us—through which universal credit is making our citizens increasingly reliant on food banks to properly and effectively feed themselves—with the policy agenda of the Scottish Government, in making sure that a fair, civilised and respectful approach underpins the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People's establishment of Social Security Scotland in order to meet our people's needs in a supportive way.

The second major theme of the programme for government is education. I want to cover a few of the arguments about it that have been debated today. Members have questioned whether we are making progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, but I will demonstrate to Parliament that we are making progress.

At Scottish credit and qualifications framework levels 3, 4, 5 and 6, the gap in attainment between the most deprived pupils and the least deprived

pupils is narrowing. It has reduced. At level 3, it has reduced from 5.3 per cent to 3.2 per cent; at level 4, it has reduced from 11.3 per cent to 6.1 per cent; at level 5, it has reduced from 33.3 per cent to 20.3 per cent; and at level 6, it has reduced from 45.6 per cent to 37.4 per cent.

Crucially, for school leavers, the gap between those from the most deprived communities and those from the least deprived communities has halved, from 14.6 per cent to 6.8 per cent, which means that more and more of our young people from deprived backgrounds are going on to the positive destinations that we want them to go to as a consequence of their education.

That is the evidence of the attainment gap closing, and that is why I am so pleased that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work has agreed to extend the Scottish attainment challenge beyond 2021, to at least March 2022, which gives funding certainty to the measures that are being taken throughout the education system to close the poverty-related attainment gap and to make a positive impact on the life chances of young people in our society. In doing that, we must be alert to the challenges of ensuring that all young people have the skills that are required in the labour market. Mr Neil's point about the focus on IT and construction that is necessary in schools is a crucial element of what the Government must take forward in its future priorities.

The third major area that I want to concentrate on relates to the commitments in the programme for government that the Government has given to care-experienced young people, who are some of the most vulnerable young people in our society, and who face the greatest of challenges. We promised those care-experienced young people that we would not wait until the care review produced its report, and that we would take whatever action we could at the earliest available opportunity to address their issues.

I am therefore delighted that we have been able to remove the age limit on the care-experienced bursary to make it clear to individuals who are care experienced that there is a place for them in our further and higher education systems when they get to the point at which they can contribute in that way.

I am also delighted that we are able to remove the costs of dental care. That was something that care-experienced young people said matters to them, so we can put that in place as a consequence of the Government's programme.

The last area that I want to mention is the link between housing and inequality, which Sarah Boyack raised in her excellent speech. The Government is undertaking sustained investment in social housing in Scotland. We are on track to

deliver 50,000 affordable homes by 2021, including 35,000 for social rent, and that is backed by record investment of more than £3.3 billion. That is the type of commitment that is necessary to ensure that our housing infrastructure supports individuals and meets the challenges that they face in life. It will ensure that we provide housing for people who have drug addiction and who require support, not just in dealing with that addiction but with wider issues including housing, employability and other aspects of life, in order to ensure that they fulfil their potential.

Those are the measures of a rounded programme for government, which is represented by the "calm, considered and consensual" leadership of the Government, as the First Minister characterised it at the weekend, and those are the attributes that we will take forward in the coming period.

I have been struck by the willingness of Opposition members to attack the progress that the Government is making on our policy commitments. However, over the past year, we have delivered five different social security payments to support some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We have demonstrated the investment that is coming to expand early learning and childcare, with 20,000 children already accessing the expanded funded early learning and childcare. The work on the attainment challenge is now investing £182 million in our schools to meet the needs of young people.

There has also been increased funding of the national health service, including investment in major trauma centres in Dundee and Aberdeen. We have taken forward commitments to green transport, and commitments to fair work, and have embedded that in the work of the Government.

That is what the Government has achieved in the past 12 months. The programme for government builds on it. We will continue to deliver for the people who sent us here, in order to create a fairer and more prosperous Scotland.

Business Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item is consideration of business motion S5M-18684, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 10 September 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Ministerial Statement: Creating a Sustainable Future for Crofting

followed by Scottish Government Debate: The Impact of the UK Government's Planned Immigration Policy and Mobility Restrictions on Scotland's University and Scientific Research Sectors

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 11 September 2019

1.15 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

1.15 pm Members' Business

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Justice and the Law Officers;
Government Business and
Constitutional Relations

followed by Ministerial Statement: The Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Citizens Assembly of Scotland

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 12 September 2019

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:
Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

followed by Justice Committee Debate: Post-legislative Scrutiny Report on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Tuesday 17 September 2019

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 18 September 2019

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Education and Skills;
Health and Sport

followed by Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 19 September 2019

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Portfolio Questions:
Communities and Local Government

followed by Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee Debate: Bill Proposal on Pre-release Access to Statistics

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

(b) that, for the purposes of Portfolio Questions in the week beginning 9 September 2019, in rule 13.7.3, after the word "except" the words "to the extent to which the Presiding Officer considers that the questions are on the same or similar subject matter or" are inserted.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next item is consideration of business motions S5M-18644,

S5M-18685, S5M-18686 and S5M-18687, on the stage 1 timetables for four bills.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Disclosure (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 17 January 2020.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 29 November 2019.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 28 February 2020.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Consumer Scotland Bill at stage 1 be completed by 24 January 2020.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motions agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S5M-18643, on designation of a lead committee.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the legislative consent memorandum in relation to the Domestic Abuse Bill (UK Legislation).—[*Graeme Dey*]

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The question is, that motion S5M-18643, on designation of a lead committee, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Justice Committee be designated as the lead committee in consideration of the legislative consent memorandum in relation to the Domestic Abuse Bill (UK Legislation).

Hamish Henderson

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S5M-16000, in the name of Joan McAlpine, on celebrating Hamish Henderson. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes that 2019 marks the centenary of the birth of Hamish Henderson, who it considers was one of the most brilliant Scots of his age; acknowledges that he was a poet, scholar, songwriter, folklorist, a co-founder of the University of Edinburgh's School of Scottish studies and the catalyst of Scotland's post-war folk revival; notes that Hamish was born to a single mother in Blairgowrie on 11 November 1919, and went on to win a scholarship to study modern languages at Cambridge; understands that he helped smuggle Jews to safety from Nazi Germany while a visiting student in the 1930s; praises his distinguished service as an intelligence officer in the Second World War, when he oversaw the drafting of the Italian surrender order of Marshal Graziani; notes that Hamish translated the prison diaries of Antonio Gramsci; praises his poetry collection, *Elegies For The Dead in Cyrenaica*, which received the Somerset Maugham Award; notes that, after the war, Hamish taught with the Workers Educational Association, founded the Edinburgh People's Festival and began collecting and recording folk songs and stories from across the country, including South Scotland, which form part of the 9,000 field recordings at the School of Scottish Studies, where Hamish taught from 1951 to 1987; understands that he brought bearers of Scotland's oral tradition, including travelling people such as Belle Stewart and Jeannie Robertson, to international attention; considers that Hamish wrote many beloved folk songs, including *Freedom Come All Ye*, *John MacLean March* and *The 51st Highland Division's Farewell to Sicily*; remembers Hamish as an internationalist who campaigned for Scottish home rule, an end to apartheid in South Africa and nuclear disarmament; notes that he died in 2002 and is survived by his widow, Kätzel, and his daughters, Janet and Christine; understands that events are planned to mark his centenary, including in November at the Hamish Matters Festival in Blairgowrie and the Carrying Stream Festival at Edinburgh Folk Club, as well as in publications such as *The Darg*, a new anthology in tribute to Hamish by *The Poets Republic Press*; anticipates more events commemorating Hamish's legacy throughout 2019, and believes that these are a fitting tribute to what it considers a visionary talent whose contribution to Scottish culture remains immense.

17:03

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): It gives me great pleasure to open this debate to mark the centenary of Dr Hamish Henderson, who was one of the most brilliant Scots of his age. Members might notice that a large number of people are in the public gallery to hear the Parliament pay tribute to Hamish: our visitors include his wife, Kätzel, his daughters, Tina and Janet, and his grandson David.

I also welcome people who are attending from the department of Celtic and Scottish studies at the University of Edinburgh, who are supporting a

celebratory event after the debate, along with people from the Hamish Matters festival in Blairgowrie and the Scottish Poetry Library. I am delighted that the Deputy First Minister will speak at the event, given his constituency interest and his great interest in this debate.

The great American folk musician Pete Seeger once said that Hamish loved Scotland as much as he loved life itself. He was right. Now, Scotland is reciprocating that love, with a flurry of events for his centenary.

For many years, Hamish Henderson dominated Scotland's intellectual landscape. He linked the 1920's literary renaissance, spearheaded by that unapologetic elitist Hugh MacDiarmid, with the unapologetically egalitarian folk revival of the 1950s, of which Hamish was the driving force.

Hamish's work with the school of Scottish studies, recording and popularising the living tradition of Scotland, is unsurpassed. The singers and songs that Hamish discovered inspired a generation of artists, including the young Bob Dylan. Like Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg in previous centuries, Hamish collected, preserved and promoted the lives and concerns of otherwise invisible people in bothies, mills, fields and factories. He also added wonderful songs of his own.

Hamish Henderson was born in Blairgowrie a year after the armistice, on 11 November 1919, to Janet, a single mother. His earliest years were spent in the Spittal of Glenshee, where he first learned to appreciate the songs that his mother pointed out could not be found in books.

Poverty forced Janet to go into service in Somerset, but she died when Hamish was just 13 years old, leaving him completely alone in the world. Hamish won a scholarship to Dulwich College in London, which he attended by day while living in an orphanage in Clapham in the evening. He then went to Cambridge, on another scholarship, to study modern languages.

From an early age, Hamish had a strong sense of social justice. As a student, he spent summers in Germany, where he was horrified by Nazism and helped young Jewish people escape. During the war, he served with distinction as an intelligence officer in north Africa and Italy, where he collected ballads from the soldiers, including his captives, and wrote songs, including the famous "The 51st Highland Division's Farewell to Sicily".

Put in charge of one prisoner, Marshal Rodolfo Graziani, Hamish helped to write the order demanding the surrender of all Axis troops in Italy. He also had the job of liaising with Italy's anti-fascist partisans and, through them, discovered the work of Antonio Gramsci, whose prison letters

he later translated into English. His collection, "Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica", is considered to be among the finest poetry of world war two and won the Somerset Maugham prize in 1949.

Hamish then assisted the American folklorist Alan Lomax in capturing Scotland's undiscovered traditional singers for Columbia Records with the latest technology—the reel-to-reel tape recorder. That is perhaps the defining experience of his life, because he went on to pursue that field collection work at the newly formed school of Scottish studies at the University of Edinburgh, where he worked until his death in 2002, latterly as an honorary fellow. The school of Scottish studies archive is one of the most important collections in Europe—it is an aural and visual record of the lives of Scotland's working people, their social conditions, customs, beliefs, songs and stories.

Hamish's recordings are among the 33,000 that are held in the archives, around 10,000 of which are field recordings. Support from the lottery and other partners, including the Scottish Government, allowed online access from 2010 to a selection of extracts from the school's collection through the Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches website. The university is exploring future approaches to providing online access to the collection, and we support it in that important work.

Hamish recorded and popularised tradition bearers such as Jeanie Robertson in the north-east, the berry-picking Stewarts of Blairgowrie, Aberdeenshire bothy singer Willie Mathieson and Jimmy MacBeath of Portsoy, a farm servant and wandering bard. There are many more.

Some of the best singers were from the marginalised travelling community. Hamish lived among them as a true friend, and many of those singers performed at the people's ceilidh that he launched at the Edinburgh festival in 1951, which marked the beginnings of the folk revival in Scotland.

The singer-songwriter Adam McNaughtan, writing in *Chapman Magazine* in 1985, had this to say about Hamish's contribution:

"Three strands are distinguishable in the Scottish folksong revival: the academic, the club/festival movement and the traditional. Perhaps the only person who has striven to intertwine the three has been Dr Henderson."

Hamish believed that it was important to add to the vibrant "carrying stream" of folk tradition with new work. This he did with great verve. His contributions include "Farewell to Sicily", "John MacLean March" and "Rivonia", which called for the release of Nelson Mandela long before the world woke up to the true injustice of his imprisonment. When Mandela came to Glasgow after his release, it was Hamish whom he embraced on stage.

“The Freedom Come All Ye” was written in 1960 for the protests against Polaris in the Clyde. It is sometimes suggested as a national anthem for Scotland, although I understand that Hamish did not approve of that idea. It is an international anthem of peace. It condemns the impact of colonial wars on the working-class Scots who fought them and the families in Africa and Asia who suffered as a consequence. In the second verse, he imagines an end to all of that:

“Nae mair will the bonnie callants
Mairch tae war when oor braggarts crouselly craw
Nor wee weans frae pit-heid and clachan
Mourn the ships sailin’ doon the Broomielaw.
Broken families in lands we’ve herriet,
Will curse Scotland the Brave nae mair, nae mair”.

The song has been recorded and performed by dozens of artists and it will be sung again in the Parliament tonight, in a concert featuring different generations of singers, including Hamish’s friends, Margaret Bennett and Sheena Wellington. For the younger generation, Mike Vass of the school of Scottish studies archive and pipe major Callum Douglas of Hamish Matters have composed new work in Hamish’s honour.

Last month saw the launch of “The Darg”, a collection that was inspired by Hamish and edited by Jim Mackintosh for the Poets’ Republic press—and available today, I am glad to say, from the Scottish Parliament’s shop. Next week will see a celebration by the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, and Hamish Matters takes place in Blairgowrie in November, as does the carrying stream festival, in the Edinburgh Folk Club. A memorial plaque will be unveiled at the school of Scottish studies on Hamish’s birthday, and there will be a symposium at the university in December, followed by a concert in the Queen’s Hall. His collected poems will be published by Birlinn before the year’s end.

There is, however, something fitting about this particular tribute in our national Parliament. The folk revival in which Hamish was pivotal changed Scotland. It began a steady, subtle growth of national self-confidence that led eventually to the opening of the Scottish Parliament, and it is appropriate that we honour him here, in this way, on this day. [*Applause.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I know that I am being a right killjoy, but I ask those in the public gallery not to show appreciation or otherwise during the proceedings of the Parliament. Maybe we can all have a collective cheer at the end.

17:12

Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): I am delighted to be able to take part in this debate to celebrate Hamish

Henderson. I thank my colleague Joan McAlpine for lodging the motion and securing the debate.

Hamish Henderson’s contribution to Scotland’s cultural heritage has been immense. It is perhaps not as well known as it should be, and we have the opportunity to remedy that tonight in a small way, as the Parliament did in 2002 with a debate to mark his passing—I understand that you took part in that debate, Presiding Officer.

I feel immensely privileged to have met Hamish Henderson. He came to my home town of Keith to attend the first ever Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland music festival. That festival is now an annual fixture in the TMSA calendar. Of course, Keith is now the Scots language toon, and the north-east is still the home of traditional music and bothy ballads. I can say that the Scots heritage of the north-east is still strong, and pupils from schools in and around Keith are always winners in Burns festivals and the like.

That festival took place in the late 1960s, when I had just started university. It was an excellent night in June, as far as I can recall. We sat singing folk songs well into the night, and I ended up walking the 2 miles home in the dawn light. I recall that Hamish Henderson was a very tall man with a great head of white hair and a moustache, and he always wore a trademark brown suit. He just blended into the ceilidh, rather than dominating the proceedings. Also there were Belle Stewart and her daughter Sheila, and I think that we will be forever indebted to Hamish Henderson for recording the oral traditions of Scotland’s travelling folk, such as Belle and Sheila, and the songs of the Scots language. We should also congratulate the University of Edinburgh on supporting the compilation of all that he recorded and on the work that it continues to do in Scottish studies.

I, too, was fascinated by Hamish Henderson’s distinguished service during the second world war. He was a proficient linguist and, as Joan McAlpine said, he was in Sicily during the evacuation, which prompted the famous “Banks of Sicily”. His experience at Monte Cassino interested me, because I used to work with a German soldier who had been captured at Monte Cassino and was a prisoner of war in Scotland. He stayed here for the rest of his life. That resonance also made me interested in listening to Hamish Henderson.

I am delighted that we have the opportunity during this debate to recognise Hamish Henderson’s huge contribution to capturing Scotland’s rich cultural heritage. Later this evening, I look forward to listening to people who probably know a hell of a lot more than I do.

17:15

Alexander Stewart (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to Joan McAlpine's members' business debate this evening. I congratulate her on bringing it before Parliament.

As we have heard, 11 November 2019 will mark the centenary of the birth of Dr Hamish Henderson. During his life, he was acknowledged as a scholar, a poet, a songwriter and a catalyst of Scotland's folk revival. Born in Blairgowrie in Perthshire, Hamish—despite what many thought of him later in his life—had an esteemed military career and he was always a compassionate man.

As a youngster, Henderson won a scholarship to Dulwich College. Unfortunately, his mother died but that did not stop him progressing and he got the opportunity to go to Downing College, Cambridge. During his time at Cambridge, he made many visits to Germany in the late 1930s and he began to run messages and money back and forward, because he was no admirer of Nazi Germany; he supported individuals and smuggled Jews out of Germany during that time.

Throughout his life, Hamish was seen as a man who put a strong emphasis on peace. However, as he matured, he saw that peace was not accessible at that time in Europe, so he immersed himself in the war effort. Hamish was a first-class individual. Initially, he joined the British Army's Pioneer Corps as a sergeant, before he gained a commission in the Intelligence Corps.

Due to his command of six European languages, Hamish became an effective officer and acquired an in-depth knowledge of German culture. Not long after that, he took part in the war in Africa. Hamish's biographer, Timothy Neat, suggests that, during that time, with his in-depth knowledge of the history of the St Andrew's cross, Hamish might have been responsible for the famous saltire in the sky—created by searchlights—that signalled the Highland division's attack at El Alamein. While in North Africa, he began work on his epic poem, which detailed the experiences of ordinary soldiers. Over time, that was refined into his most accomplished poetic work, "Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica". As a war poem, it is deeply humane and opposed to the waste of young men's lives.

Throughout his life, Hamish saw the opportunities that were there. His poems and work enhanced that. He won many accolades and prizes for his poetry.

Although Hamish Henderson was often accused of being a communist, he never joined the Communist Party. He was too much of an internationalist to fall into any of those party lines. When he returned to Italy after the war, he was

eventually told to leave the country because of his views and opinions. Hamish is still remembered there, with great fondness, as a military and cultural liberator. To this day, there is still a Hamish Henderson folk club in Rome.

It is right and proper that someone who made such a contribution is recognised for that, whether it be in his military career, his songwriting, his poetry or anything that he did to revive culture in Scotland. Hamish's legacy is his talent, and his contribution to Scottish society cannot be underestimated. As I said, it is right and proper that we have the opportunity this evening to recognise that.

17:20

Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): I congratulate Joan McAlpine on securing this members' business debate, which properly recognises the huge contribution that Hamish Henderson made to Scottish society.

Like Maureen Watt, I am in the fortunate position of having met Hamish on a number of occasions. I first met him in 1976 in one of his favourite pubs in Edinburgh, which, fortunately, was also one of my favourites. He had joined the so-called breakaway Scottish Labour Party, which in his eyes, I think, combined the best of what he believed in politically: a socialist-type society, and promoting Scotland and all things Scottish as part of his internationalism.

It has stuck in my mind all these years that in the conversation—admittedly after one or two drinks—I asked Hamish, "Why are you so much in favour of Scottish independence?" He said, "Actually, I have two objectives and then I want a cultural revival in Scotland. Culturally, we are already becoming independent and it is only natural that we will eventually become politically independent."

I asked him, "What are your two objectives? What would you like to happen in an independent Scotland that is not happening today?" and he said, "Well, the first thing is that I want to abolish the *Sunday Post* and *The People's Friend*"—let me say, in case any of the editors is listening, that I am quoting Hamish. When I asked why he wanted to do that, Hamish said, "Because the kailyard mentality that they promote in Scotland is not my kind of Scotland and it's not the kind of Scotland or society I want to live in or have our children grow up in." I was totally convinced—and I told Jim Sillars that we should write the abolition of *Sunday Post* and *The People's Friend* into the manifesto for the SLP.

I then asked Hamish, "What is your second objective?" and he said, "To get rid of Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers." That, in a way, was

an even more serious point. While he was semi-joking about getting rid of Celtic and Rangers, what he wanted was to rid Scotland of the sectarianism that, particularly at that time, was far too prevalent—it is still too prevalent today. Hamish took people as they were. He did not judge individuals unless they were people who did and believed in things that he thought were alien to the culture of Scotland.

Before joining the SLP, I was very friendly with the late Norman and Janey Buchan, both of whom had, in their own ways, made a tremendous contribution to the revival of folk music and culture, particularly, but not exclusively, in the north-east of Scotland. Hamish, given his background, lived a very nomadic life, even in his teens and his 20s. I am not sure, but I think that he probably did not have a house of his own until he got married. He lived in other people's houses and travelled round the country. I think that Hamish had a key to the Buchans' house in Peel Street in Glasgow, and they might go in of an evening and lying there would be Hamish, stretched out, fast asleep, enjoying himself, and they never knew how long he would stay. However, they had the utmost love and respect for Hamish because he was such a giant.

When the history of 20th century Scotland comes to be written, there will probably be two giants of cultural Scotland: Hugh MacDiarmid and Hamish Henderson. Of course, the relationship between them was sometimes difficult, but at the end of the day they had the highest respect and love for each other.

Hamish Henderson deserves to be celebrated—and not just in this debate or at the event that will take place after it. He was a cultural giant both in Scotland and internationally, and he fought against fascism and for the underdog. The strength of his personality, which allowed him to overcome his background and upbringing in his early life—which was one of the most difficult and challenging that anybody could have had—and the way in which he grew into the massive hero and champion that he was, both when he died and for a long time before, that show us that he was a remarkable individual and a lovely human being.

17:25

Elaine Smith (Central Scotland) (Lab): I, too, thank Joan McAlpine for securing the debate. It is difficult for me to follow Alex Neil's personal reminiscences, but I will put my points on the record.

It is important that Scotland's Parliament remembers a man who was a towering figure in 20th century Scottish life. Although Hamish Henderson was not with those of us who were at

the Parliament's opening in 1999, he was reportedly delighted that his friend Sheena Wellington stole the show with her rendition of "A Man's a Man for a' That"—a song that encapsulated both the cultural traditions that he did so much to revive and the egalitarian political views with which he identified.

Hamish's own stirring words are to be found in the Parliament's *Official Report*. On 27 March 2002, in a debate held on her motion to mark his passing, my good friend and colleague the former Labour MSP Cathy Peattie sang a verse from "The Freedom Come All Ye". I imagine that we probably would not encourage singing in the chamber these days, Presiding Officer.

Hamish Henderson was one of the most important contributors to Scottish culture and identity in the 20th century. However, he left a legacy that goes beyond that, as is evidenced by members' contributions to this debate. His commitment to the recording of folk music, the oral tradition and the way in which songs reflected the lives of the people who sang them reveals his wider views on culture: that it belongs to the people and that the cultural contributions of real people should be nurtured and not sidelined. I understand that such views were very much in his mind when he founded the Edinburgh people's festival.

Hamish's poems and songs tackled the political issues of his time—many of which still affect us today, including opposing nuclear weapons, supporting the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and campaigning on land ownership and access issues. He was also a committed anti-apartheid campaigner. As we have heard, as a committed socialist and internationalist, he expressed his horror at what he described as the servile complicity of Britain during the Vietnam war. In a letter to *The Scotsman* he stated that that war was the first in which 90 per cent of the casualties were civilian. Unfortunately, when we reflect on subsequent conflicts, we see that civilian casualties have been similarly high. Hamish enlisted to fight in the second world war against the forces of fascism that clashed so strongly with his political views.

As has been touched on, Hamish was a man who supported many great and worthy causes throughout his life, including the Clydeside shipyard workers and the miners. In a letter to the socialist newspaper the *Tribune*, he warned that socialism

"will not be fashioned in a vacuum; it will be fashioned by the painful and difficult struggles of definite communities, in definite places; it will be achieved on farms and in workshops, in mines and in shipyards, and not only by courtesy of an Act of Parliament."

As the motion notes, Hamish translated the prison diaries of Antonio Gramsci. He also taught at the University of Edinburgh for more than 35 years. I understand that representatives of the university are here in the Parliament, and they are most welcome. Hamish's legacy continues in his more than 9,000 recordings, his 10,000 letters from almost 3,500 correspondents and his diaries dating from the 1930s to the end of his life, all of which were acquired by the University of Edinburgh and are kept in its special collections centre.

Interestingly—and, I understand, to his surprise—Hamish was offered an OBE by Margaret Thatcher's Government in the 1980s. It is somewhat less surprising that he rejected that honour. However, he continues to be honoured in a far greater way today. His contributions to Scotland's culture, tradition and politics continue to influence our country profoundly. As Cathy Peattie said in the Parliament's chamber in 2002:

"Hamish was an authentic voice of Scotland. We would do well to remember his work and carry it forward into the 21st century."—[*Official Report*, 27 March 2002; c 7688.]

More than 17 years on, this debate highlights that we are doing exactly that.

17:30

Clare Adamson (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP): I, too, thank Joan McAlpine for bringing the debate to the chamber this evening. It is a real honour to speak in it.

I knew the songs of Hamish Henderson before I knew about the man. I was not lucky enough to meet him, but my adulthood has been filled with my love of folk music and I am very pleased that, down the years, while I learned the songs, my friends in the folk scene and the TMSA made me aware of Hamish the man and his incredible contribution to the social history, culture and politics of our country, which has been so well detailed by my colleagues this evening.

Hamish's influence on Scotland is palpable in so many walks of life. To demonstrate that, I have with me a recent publication from the all under one banner march in Ayr in July, which is called "Songs for Independence". Only Hamish and Robbie Burns get two songs in it. It features "The John MacLean March" and a song that I want to talk about because it has had a great influence on me: "The Freedom Come All Ye". Whether being sung so poignantly and beautifully by Pumeza Matshikiza at the Commonwealth games, being sung in communal singing at a folk festival or—dare I say it—featuring in an impromptu sing-song here in the Parliament, in Queensberry house, the song has personally touched me, and I will seek to explain why.

A few years ago, my son asked me what I wanted to do for mothers day. I asked that he come with me to gather in protest outside Dungavel detention centre. My son said, "I was expecting you to say flooers or chocolates", but he came with me, and we joined the justice and peace movement and others who had gathered to show solidarity for those detained on Scottish soil.

Over the years, the focus of the protest has changed. I know that the deputy presiding officer has been an attender for many more years than I have. The focus has changed from challenging dawn raids and challenging the fact that, in a country where we have a minimum wage, G4 was using detainees as labour at slavery wages to maintain centres, to highlighting mothers being fined for feeding their bairns a biscuit in the middle of the night and, this year, highlighting the terrible Serco evictions of people in Glasgow. Those things are not done in my name, and I hope it is not too presumptuous to say that I believe that they are not done in Hamish Henderson's name.

At those gatherings down the years, we have always sung "The Freedom Come All Ye". My son is now a music graduate, and it is part of his repertoire because he was so moved by hearing it in that location on that day. Never have the lyrics been more powerful than outside the blight on Scotland that is Dungavel. It is a song of protest and a song of solidarity and humanity, but most of all it gives me the hope that, in Scotland, in oor hoose,

"a' the bairns o' Adam
Can find breid, barley-bree and painted room."

17:33

John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Green): I congratulate Joan McAlpine on lodging her motion to mark the centenary of the birth of Hamish Henderson, which is most certainly worthy of recognition. For people who are listening who are not sighted on the motion, I will mention some parts of its text. It refers to:

"Hamish Henderson, who it considers was one of the most brilliant Scots of his age".

Indeed, Joan McAlpine repeated that statement. It might be seen to be very bold, but I do not think that anyone who has any grasp or knowledge of Mr Henderson would think that that was the case. The statement is one that I fully endorse—the value of our culture and respect for others that is shown is important.

The motion then lists his various professions or whatever else we wish to call them:

"poet, scholar, songwriter, folklorist ... Co-founder",

and so on, and it goes on to refer to his being

"the catalyst of Scotland's post-war folk revival".

The fact that something needed to be revived suggests that there was something a wee bit adrift. It is perhaps the mode of Scots' psyche that our traditions are not worthy. Mention has been made of bothy ballads, and the oral tradition is very important, certainly for Gaels.

That revival was and remains connected with the growing confidence—it is a confidence, not a cockiness—that we have as a nation, which Hamish personified. That applies to the rich heritage of the Gàidhealtachd, geographic communities and communities of interest, such as farming, fishing and mining, as well as the Travellers, of course. I mentioned Travellers in the previous debate, in relation to whom the Scottish Government has done very good work. That is important, because a relationship is being built up with the Travellers, and that is to the credit of Hamish, who worked with that community. Understandably, people in that community lack trust. Hamish earned that trust—he earned the respect of Travellers because of his general demeanour and how he went about his business.

I also had the good fortune to see the documentary about Hamish a couple of times. His demeanour was very important: he was authoritative without being in any way arrogant. Although world war two represented a small passage of his life, I happen to think that that part of it would make an excellent film, never mind a documentary. His bearing was such that he was not threatening; he was a warm person. Members have talked about his distinguished service and the surrender. That was not about humiliation; it was about warmth and engagement on a human level.

I would not be considered a well-read man, but I have an appreciation of Hamish's use of language. He used his warmth and humanity to paint pictures of real folk. That warmth and humanity would have been tested in the theatre of war, but he never wavered from his position. The fact that he was involved with great organisations such as the Workers Educational Association and the people's festival epitomises his outlook and his sense of community. Mention has been made of the field recordings, which are a rich source of heritage.

Hamish's engagement with the Travellers cannot be underestimated. His work in bringing to people's attention the likes of Belle Stewart and Jeannie Robertson was positive and will have a lasting effect.

The motion goes on to say that the Parliament

"considers that Hamish wrote many beloved folk songs, including *Freedom Come All Ye*",

which is sung at the Scottish Green Party conference. It is sung hesitatingly by me, not because I do not like it, but because it is in very

broad Scots for a Highlander. Hamish touches on that issue in "The John MacLean March", with his reference to the different communities of Scotland, including big Hielan teuchters, of whom I am certainly one. I like Tonight at Noon's version and Dick Gaughan's version—I am a big fan of Dick Gaughan, who also performs "The 51st Highland Division's Farewell to Sicily". I recall from the documentary Hamish diddling along to that when he was explaining the basis of it.

Hamish will be fondly remembered by me. I loved his humanity, his regard for his homeland and the fact that he wanted to make things better, which others have alluded to. Given his role in campaigning against apartheid and nuclear disarmament, I can imagine him along with Clare Adamson protesting at Dungavel, as many of us have done. I imagine that he would be repulsed by things such as the rape clause and the siege of Gaza.

The motion says that Hamish had "a visionary talent". I think that we do not appreciate people during the time that they are with us, even though we might appreciate them retrospectively. I mentioned Dick Gaughan. Another person like that is the late Andy M Stewart, who was not well known in his own time.

Hamish made an immense contribution to Scottish culture and we will certainly not forget him.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Fiona Hyslop to respond to the debate. You can have as long as you like, cabinet secretary.

17:38

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): But I'm not going to sing. [*Laughter.*]

I am very grateful to Joan McAlpine for lodging her motion and securing the debate, and for her wonderful tribute. I would also like to thank the various members who have taken part in the debate for their contributions. Maureen Watt spoke of her personal experience of meeting Hamish Henderson, while in another personal and entertaining contribution, Alex Neil celebrated his internationalism and praised him as a hero of Scotland.

It is important that the Parliament remembers Dr Hamish Henderson, who was one of the most influential Scots of the past century, and recognises his significant achievements, which have influenced and shaped Scotland and beyond.

This is not the first time that Hamish Henderson has been the focus of debate in this Parliament. We recorded our appreciation of his lifetime devotion to international solidarity, peace and

socialism and his many contributions to Scottish culture and politics shortly after his death in March 2002.

Back in 2011, we debated the 60th anniversary and legacy of the Edinburgh people's festival ceilidh, which was set up by Hamish Henderson. Hamish also has an enduring legacy in the Parliament. He played a key role in helping us to attain it, and in reviving the confidence of Scotland. He has also played a key role both in spirit and in stone. I am sure that many of those listening will have reflected on the words in his powerful song, "The Freedom Come All Ye", as they have walked past the Canongate wall of the Parliament. As Clare Adamson set out so poignantly, those words are still relevant today. I learned the words of "The Freedom Come All Ye" as a teenager, when I lived on Peel Street in Glasgow. I never met Hamish Henderson, or indeed the Buchans. I wish that I had.

It is appropriate that we remember and celebrate Hamish Henderson on the centenary of his birth. Centenaries are important times for us to consider and reflect on people and events that have had a profound impact on shaping our lives, our history and our country, and to consider their legacy. A number of events that have been arranged around Hamish's centenary, including a parliamentary event this evening, will help to raise the profile of this exceptional man.

Hamish Henderson changed Scotland forever: in the way that we think of ourselves, our culture and our nation. In his polymath career, he made an impact in every avenue to which he turned his attention, whether as a folklorist and folk revivalist, a poet, a songwriter, a political activist, a translator or a public intellectual. He was a visionary and a folk hero. Alexander Stewart mentioned the importance of Hamish's experience of the war and how that influenced his work. Central to his life and legacy was the University of Edinburgh's school of Scottish studies, where he taught from 1951 until his retirement in 1987. The words of one of Hamish's colleagues, Calum MacLean—brother of the poet Sorley MacLean—tell us much about the importance of the oral tradition: the songs, stories and traditional tales in Scots and Gaelic that Hamish and his colleagues collected. Calum said:

"There are two histories of every land and people: the written history that tells us what is considered politic to tell and the unwritten history that tells us everything".

Hamish found outstanding tradition bearers in his native Perthshire and beyond who had a wealth of traditional lore that was not held or remembered by the settled population. He always spoke passionately of his work with the travelling community, including the Stewarts of Blairgowrie. As John Finnie described, Hamish was readily

accepted into that community. He always said that the biggest achievement in his life was "discovering" Jeannie Robertson, one of the most acclaimed folk singers in the world. He was able to give those tradition bearers a voice, and was able to give their community, and others, recognition, helping them to be accepted by society.

Elaine Smith: It was slightly remiss of me not to mention the fact that the Presiding Officer was the first speaker in the open debate in Cathy Peattie's debate in 2002. Linda Fabiani may recall that she mentioned that we should not forget the tradition of the Gypsy Traveller community.

Fiona Hyslop: As the Presiding Officer would say, that is now on the record. I thank Elaine Smith for recalling the Presiding Officer's contribution, and her love of Hamish Henderson.

Elaine Smith described that important part of Hamish Henderson's work, as well as his politics. As she intimated, Hamish's collecting work ensured not only that all that traditional lore would be safeguarded for future generations in the archives of the school of Scottish studies but that it would be brought to a much wider audience. He was considered to be the father of the folk song revival, and he did so much to ensure that the "carrying stream" of tradition continues.

I am grateful for all the work that Hamish Henderson undertook, which contributed significantly to today's truly vibrant folk culture, especially around music and song. Traditional musicians and singers play an important part in our music scene. We have figures that are nationally and internationally known and renowned. We are able to provide first-class training for them at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Its traditional music course is the United Kingdom's only bachelor of music degree dedicated to traditional and folk music—a course that, as education secretary, I encouraged the newly established Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council to support.

Professor Margaret Bennett, one of the course lecturers, was a contemporary of Hamish. Hamish thought that she

"embodies the spirit of Scotland",

and I agree.

Celtic Connections in Glasgow is the largest winter festival in the world and the United Kingdom's premier celebration of Celtic music. The festival, which has now run for 26 years, plays an important role in promoting our traditional and contemporary cultures. It helps to promote artistic links and cultural exchanges across countries and helps to share our traditions, which was an important aspect of the Edinburgh people's festival ceilidh that Hamish was involved in.

We are able to support our historical languages that were so central to the lore that Hamish was collecting. We recognise that the Scots language is an integral part of Scotland's heritage, national identity and current cultural life. We support the Scottish language dictionaries, which were housed in the school of Scottish studies in George Square for many years. We also encourage Scots writers and publishers.

Hamish Henderson recognised that our culture is always evolving and changing. It is important that it is available and easily accessible for our current and future generations to enjoy. The school of Scottish studies continues to play an important role in that regard. Our national collections, including those of the National Library of Scotland—which is the Scottish hub for the unlocking our sound heritage project and holds the Scottish moving image archive—are also important.

I am delighted to announce that, this year, the Scottish Government will give £30,000 to the Tobar an Dualchais project, which includes recordings from the school of Scottish studies. I am proud that we have been able to support the project since 2010. I have taken a personal interest in it and I recognise the important work that the project team has undertaken.

Hamish Henderson's devotion to Scotland and, especially, its traditional cultures has left a remarkable legacy for us today. It is important that we continue to recognise and value his contribution. More importantly, we must value, protect and nurture our culture, including the spirit and values of what he communicated in those precious words. They say so much about who we are, everything that we do as a country and, as Clare Adamson said, everything that we hope to be in our country.

I congratulate everyone who took part in the debate and I wish everyone every success with the Hamish Henderson centenary events. Hamish Henderson—hero of Scotland. [*Applause.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Okay then—I will join in.

Meeting closed at 17:47.

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* for this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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