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Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

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Thursday 21 August 2014

Session 4

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Thursday 21 August 2014

CONTENTS

	Col.
GENERAL QUESTION TIME	33777
Welfare Benefits Changes (Impact on Poverty)	33777
Major Trunk Road Works (Consultation of Cyclists).....	33778
Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (Annual Service Charge)	33779
Scottish Economy	33779
Dumfries and Galloway Council (Meetings)	33780
North Sea Oil Reserves	33781
Benefits Reductions (Impact on Disabled People)	33783
Queensferry Crossing (Consultation Forums).....	33784
Labour Market Statistics	33784
FIRST MINISTER'S QUESTION TIME	33786
Engagements.....	33786
Prime Minister (Meetings).....	33791
Shipbuilding (Lower Clyde).....	33793
Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy in Scotland	33794
Scottish Government Economic Strategy.....	33795
Cancer Mortality Rates	33796
GLASGOW THE CARING CITY	33798
<i>Motion debated—[James Dornan].</i>	
James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)	33798
Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con).....	33801
Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab)	33802
Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP).....	33804
The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf).....	33806
SCOTLAND'S FUTURE	33809
<i>Motion moved—[Alex Salmond].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Johann Lamont].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Ruth Davidson].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Willie Rennie].</i>	
The First Minister (Alex Salmond)	33809
Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)	33814
Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con).....	33819
Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)	33822
Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP)	33824
Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab).....	33827
Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)	33829
Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)	33832
Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)	33834
Alex Rowley (Cowdenbeath) (Lab).....	33836
Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP)	33838
Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab)	33841
Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP).....	33843
Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con)	33845
Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP).....	33847
Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab).....	33848
Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP)	33850
Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP).....	33852
Willie Rennie	33853
Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con).....	33856
Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab)	33857
The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Nicola Sturgeon).....	33861

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTION..... 33865
Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].
DECISION TIME 33866

Scottish Parliament

Thursday 21 August 2014

[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 11:40*]

General Question Time

Welfare Benefits Changes (Impact on Poverty)

1. Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the recent comments by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions regarding further changes to welfare benefits and the impact that these changes would have on poverty in Scotland. (S4O-03481)

The Minister for Housing and Welfare (Margaret Burgess): On 1 July 2014, the Scottish Government published statistics that show that the reduction in poverty in Scotland that has been seen in recent years is now being reversed. One million people in Scotland are now living in relative poverty after housing costs, including more than 200,000 children. That is simply unacceptable in a country as wealthy as Scotland.

Separate analysis shows that Scotland could potentially see its welfare budget reduced by around £6 billion by 2015-16. Further, estimates suggest up to 100,000 more children could be living in poverty by 2020 if we continue with Westminster policies.

Taken together, those statistics suggest that the unacceptable increase in the number of children living in poverty that was revealed in our most recent statistics could be just the tip of the iceberg—and that is before the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions makes any further changes to the current benefit arrangements.

Jamie Hepburn: In his speech last week, Iain Duncan Smith said that his Government sought to focus on “independence, not dependence”. Does the minister agree that, for the more than 100,000 disabled Scots who stand to lose about £1,120 from their income, the performance of Iain Duncan Smith’s Government will actually negatively impact on their independence?

Margaret Burgess: Yes. The figure is agreed and is set out in the recently published Scottish Government analysis paper, “Financial Impacts of Welfare Reform on Disabled People”. The Scottish Government is doing all that it can to mitigate the harmful effects of Westminster welfare reforms but, unfortunately, the majority of the cuts are still to come and will hit the vulnerable hard.

With a yes vote on 18 September, we can do much more than mitigate. We can halt the roll-out of universal credit and personal independence payments, and we can end the work capability assessment and replace it with a system that is fit for purpose. Further, in an independent Scotland, we will ensure that those with long-term disabilities are treated with dignity and receive a decent level of support.

Major Trunk Road Works (Consultation of Cyclists)

2. John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind): To ask the Scottish Government what methods of consultation it uses to gauge the views of cyclists regarding major trunk road works. (S4O-03482)

The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown): The views of cycling groups are sought throughout the development of our trunk road projects by correspondence and through cycling workshops, exhibitions as part of scheme proposals, web-based materials and statutory materials that are published at draft and made-order stages.

John Finnie: The minister will be aware of some of the challenges that existed for cyclists in relation to the upgrading of the Kessock bridge and the frustrations that they had regarding some expectations that were built up.

The Scottish Government rightly promotes active travel. Would the minister agree to meet me and the Highland cycle campaign to discuss ways of ensuring more positive engagement in the future?

Keith Brown: I am more than happy to do that. We have been actively seeking to establish a non-motorised user forum in order to provide the opportunity for representatives of groups, possibly including the group that John Finnie refers to, to provide them with an opportunity to consider issues of relevance to the A9 dualling programme. Again, I am more than happy to meet the member and the groups that he has mentioned.

David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): The minister will be aware that, on 12 September, 800 cyclists will be travelling on the A82 through Fort William and onwards to Fort Augustus as part of the Deloitte tour. As the minister knows, the A82 is subject to major road works. The A82 partnership is concerned that normal traffic on the road will be brought to a standstill, with an unnecessary negative impact on the economy. Can the minister raise the issue with Transport Scotland and Police Scotland, and inject some common sense into the proposal by rerouting it?

Keith Brown: Of course I will raise those concerns. They have been raised with me already, and I am involved in discussions with Transport

Scotland. This is the initiative of the organisers, who have come forward with the proposal, and we are seeking to accommodate it as best we can. However, as I said to the member, we will happily look at any concerns that have been expressed about possible congestion.

Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (Annual Service Charge)

3. Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will confirm the latest total annual service charge payable by NHS Lothian to Consort Healthcare for the most recent financial year in relation to the Edinburgh royal infirmary. (S4O-03483)

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): The total annual service charge payable to Consort Healthcare in respect of the Edinburgh royal infirmary for 2013-14 was £47 million.

Jim Eadie: As an Edinburgh MSP, I welcome the stricter management of the contract of the Edinburgh royal infirmary, which is delivering annual savings of £1.3 million. However, should Consort Healthcare not restore to the national health service the resources for patient care that have been lost over the years in which the contract has operated and that were lost before the savings were identified? Will the minister now instruct NHS Lothian to carry out a full financial health check of the contract to identify what further resources are due to the hospital and the health service?

Michael Matheson: NHS Lothian is in the process of establishing an expert review group that will look at the contract in great detail. Part of the review group's work will be to conduct a health check of the contract's performance—both current and retrospective. That work is due to begin shortly.

In addition, a new private finance initiative and public-private partnership specialist support team has been established within Health Facilities Scotland. It will be responsible for carrying out detailed commercial reviews of all NHS Scotland PFI contracts, including the contract for the Edinburgh royal infirmary.

Scottish Economy

4. Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to strengthen and grow the economy. (S4O-03484)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): The Scottish economy is continuing to strengthen and grow. Scottish gross domestic product grew by 2.6 per cent in the year to quarter

1 of 2014 and has passed its pre-recession peak. As the chief economist's recent assessment of the state of the economy points out, the underlying data and trends indicate that 2014 will be Scotland's strongest year of growth since 2007. Furthermore, last week's labour market figures show that Scottish employment has increased to the highest level on record.

The Scottish Government is continuing to take action to support sustainable economic growth in Scotland. We are investing in infrastructure to support growth, building a supportive business environment, investing in innovation and helping our young people to obtain the skills that they need to succeed in the labour market.

Dennis Robertson: I welcome the recent publication of the document "A Jobs Plan for an Independent Scotland", which looks at the long-term aspects of strengthening our economy and providing opportunities in the labour market. Does the cabinet secretary agree that, to take full control of strengthening our economy for the future, we need the full fiscal powers and tax revenue powers of an independent Scotland?

John Swinney: As I said in my previous answer to Dennis Robertson, we have taken a number of measures within our existing powers to deliver as much impetus to the Scottish economy as we possibly can. However, there are decisions relating to the economy that are outwith our control. The opportunity of independence—highlighted by the contents of "A Jobs Plan for an Independent Scotland"—is a range of policy interventions that we could make that would strengthen and support the development of the Scottish economy. We will be able to undertake those measures only if we have the full range of powers that will be on offer to the people of Scotland in the referendum on 18 September.

Dumfries and Galloway Council (Meetings)

5. Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government when it last met Dumfries and Galloway Council and what matters were discussed. (S4O-03485)

The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Derek Mackay): Ministers and officials regularly meet representatives of all Scottish local authorities, including Dumfries and Galloway Council, to discuss a wide range of issues as part of our commitment to working in partnership with local government to improve outcomes for the people of Scotland.

Alex Fergusson: The minister will be aware that the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 gave local authorities the right to charge up to 200 per cent council tax on properties that have been empty for

12 months or more. He may not be aware that, in Dumfries and Galloway, that currently amounts to 926 properties, many of which have been on the market for the entire duration of their vacancy—indeed, 663 of them have been on the market for over 24 months.

Will the minister confirm that the provision in the legislation was not intended to penalise people who are genuinely unable to sell their homes in a stagnant market? Will he also confirm that the legislation gives local authorities the ability to include further categories where exceptional circumstances could allow an exemption to the 200 per cent charge?

Derek Mackay: Alex Fergusson characterises accurately the intention of the Local Government Finance (Unoccupied Properties etc) (Scotland) Act 2012 and the associated regulations. Therefore, I confirm that the position on both questions is that his was a fair and accurate assessment of what is intended and that those who are genuinely trying to sell their property on the markets should not be punished. I will provide further supporting information in writing if that would assist the member.

North Sea Oil Reserves

6. Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to recent reports that the North Sea could hold more than £40 billion worth of unforeseen oil reserves. (S4O-03486)

The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing): Recent reports illustrate the important role that innovation and new technological solutions can play in achieving significant cost savings for the industry, boosting production and ultimately increasing tax revenue from North Sea oil and gas extraction.

With the powers of independence, the Scottish Government would be able to ensure that North Sea revenues are used to provide long-term benefit to the Scottish people instead of being squandered by Westminster Governments as in the past. We know that Scotland has vast, untapped potential that could be unlocked by applying innovative production systems and world-leading technology.

Kevin Stewart: We all get very excited about new fields such as Bentley, Faroe and Clair ridge, but opportunity also exists in fields that are in production. Does the minister share my view that successful innovative solutions such as enhanced oil recovery techniques are essential in order to maximise recovery and that the adoption of such solutions will lead to increasing and maximising the tax yield for the people of Scotland?

Fergus Ewing: Yes, I do. In addition to fiscal stability and predictability, that is something that the industry has never had under the United Kingdom's stewardship.

As the Wood review highlighted—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Order.

Fergus Ewing: As Sir Ian Wood, a hugely respected figure in the oil and gas industry highlighted, implementing his report's recommendations could add £200 billion to the economy. That includes the effective implementation of enhanced oil recovery—EOR—which could secure up to 6 billion barrels of oil in a best-case scenario, something which I discussed at length earlier this week with BP.

I also agree with Sir Ian Wood when in 2012 he advised young people:

“My headline message for the youth of today—get involved. The North Sea oil industry will see you through your lifetime.”

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): Does the minister acknowledge that, even if all the changes are made that Sir Ian Wood recommends in his report on maximising economic recovery of oil and gas, Sir Ian believes:

“The Scottish Government central prediction of what's still to come is between 45 per cent and 60 per cent too high.”

Does the minister accept or reject that view?

Fergus Ewing: We have always recognised, as Sir Ian Wood said in his report—he mentioned it six times—that the amount of recoverable oil and gas reserves could be between 12 and 24 billion barrels. It depends entirely on whether the right or the wrong policies are pursued. The truth is—Sir Ian once again records this in his report—that, sadly, the UK's stewardship of oil and gas over the past 40 years has been characterised by fiscal instability and a lack of predictability. That has happened under the UK; we do not offer that under independence.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Listening to Fergus Ewing's response, one would have thought that Sir Ian Wood had come out in support of independence, which he has not. When did Sir Ian go from a much-respected oil expert to someone who does not know what he is talking about?

Fergus Ewing: Murdo Fraser has been here long enough to know that one should listen to the first answer before asking a question. The issue is not about personalities. Sir Ian is a hugely respected figure across the world. Just as we respect people on the other benches, we disagree with their prescription for the future of Scotland.

I point out that, just yesterday, Sir Ian confirmed that with the right policies he would expect that between 15 billion and 16 billion barrels should be recoverable over a relatively short period of a couple of decades. That compares with the Office for Budget Responsibility's prediction of 10 billion barrels. Sir Ian yesterday simply confirmed once again—along with Sir Donald Mackay and many other leading experts—that the OBR's figures are between 50 and 60 per cent too low and, therefore, increasingly look utterly discredited.

Benefits Reductions (Impact on Disabled People)

7. Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what analysis it has carried out on the cumulative impact of United Kingdom Government reductions in benefits on disabled people in Scotland. (S4O-03487)

The Minister for Housing and Welfare (Margaret Burgess): Scottish Government analysis published last week found that disabled people in Scotland are likely to experience disproportionate loss of income due to the cumulative effects of welfare reform. Spending on disability benefits in Scotland is expected to be around £310 million lower per year by 2018.

The report also pointed to independent research from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and Landman Economics. The authors of that work concluded that, due to UK Government welfare reforms, households with a disabled child face an average annual loss of income of around £1,400, while households with disabled adults and disabled children are expected to lose around £1,900 a year.

Gil Paterson: Following the Labour Party's absolutely shameful refusal last week to commit to halting the implementation of personal independence payments, what impact does the minister believe that a yes vote would have?

Margaret Burgess: The white paper and our recent report on disabled people recognise that the roll-out of personal independence payments will create hardship for many families with a disabled person in Scotland. "Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland" sets out on page 158 a clear commitment to halt the further roll-out of personal independence payments in Scotland, which would allow the first Government of an independent Scotland to implement reforms to the welfare system that meet Scotland's needs and reflect our priorities. The Labour Party has not matched that commitment, so I absolutely agree that the only way to stop the roll-out is to vote yes on 18 September.

Queensferry Crossing (Consultation Forums)

8. Colin Keir (Edinburgh Western) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether a review has been carried out on how effective the Queensferry crossing consultation forums have been in dealing with local groups and people. (S4O-03488)

The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown): The effectiveness of the consultation forums is kept under regular review and audited to ensure that proper and efficient communication is undertaken with local groups and people through the project's community communication and stakeholder liaison teams.

Colin Keir: Have contractors for the Queensferry crossing improved communications to local residents, particularly in the Echline area of South Queensferry, in the light of complaints from those affected by the major civil engineering works and changes to work schedules, including extra work at weekends?

Keith Brown: The Forth crossing constructors have been proactive in providing effective and sustained communications throughout the project. That includes regular neighbourhood notifications for upcoming works, including to the local residents in the Echline area of South Queensferry.

All project work must be, and has been, carried out in accordance with the working hours that are permitted in the code of construction practice. Any complaints received have been thoroughly investigated and, where necessary, the communication of information to residents has been improved. That is the hallmark of the scheme.

I refer the member to the editorial in today's *Scotsman*, which says:

"there can be little doubt that the Queensferry Crossing has been remarkably free of financial, practical or contractual difficulties.

It has been a public works project worth celebrating."

We intend that that should also be true for the local community.

Labour Market Statistics

9. Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the most recent labour market statistics from the Office for National Statistics. (S4O-03489)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): With a record number of people in work and the unemployment rate at its lowest since early 2009, the latest labour market statistics show

a clear and sustained strengthening in the Scottish economy. The fall in youth unemployment over the past year is also welcome.

Christian Allard: Does the cabinet secretary agree that, although independence is not a magic wand, with the policy levers available to us through a yes vote there can be transformational plans for childcare and we can get more people in Scotland into work or training?

John Swinney: Through the activities and policies that it has implemented, the Government has ensured that the Scottish economy has been able to recover to pre-recession levels of activity earlier than the rest of the United Kingdom. We want to have the wider range of powers to ensure that we can cement that recovery and ensure that we deliver new and better opportunities for the people of Scotland with the exercise of the full responsibilities of an independent Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: Before we come to First Minister's questions, members will wish to join me in welcoming to the gallery the Hon Richard Msowoya, speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi. [*Applause.*]

First Minister's Question Time

12:00

Engagements

1. Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S4F-02266)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): Engagements to take forward the Government's programme for Scotland.

Johann Lamont: Presiding Officer, the First Minister and I can agree on two things: Sir Ian Wood is the pre-eminent expert on North Sea oil, and Sir Ian does not have much time for politicians. Yesterday, he reluctantly entered the referendum debate, saying that he did so

"as a father and grandfather",

and saying that he did not want future generations to ask why he had stood silent. He warned that the Scottish Government had overestimated oil and gas production by between 45 and 60 per cent. He warned that the First Minister had overestimated oil tax revenue by £2,000 million a year. Is Sir Ian Wood right or would the First Minister care to explain to him, his children, his grandchildren and the generations to come why he is wrong?

The First Minister: I hope that Johann Lamont and I can agree on more than two things. We agree, as I remember from just two weeks ago, that Scotland has the potential to be a prosperous independent country. I think that everybody agreed with that in the chamber.

Let me agree that Ian Wood is an authority on North Sea oil and gas. He is not the only authority, of course—Professor Alex Kemp and Sir Donald MacKay are also major authorities on oil and gas—but I think that what Ian Wood has to say on matters should be considered very carefully indeed.

I point out to Johann Lamont that the figure that I have often quoted of up to 24 billion barrels of oil and gas equivalent remaining in the North Sea is not a Scottish Government figure at source. It is the figure that the industry produced and has used for a number of years, and I think that it is a robust figure. It shows the extraordinary potential that remains in the waters round Scotland, if indeed the policies are pursued and the stewardship is correct to make sure that these resources work for the Scottish people.

Johann Lamont: There are two things. The First Minister recognised that Sir Ian Wood is an authority, but if Sir Ian says something that the First Minister does not want to hear, he simply

ignores it. That is not good enough. Secondly, I would have imagined that Sir Ian knew exactly what the First Minister said about these figures. He is offering a critique that we must address.

The First Minister has rightly praised Ian Wood in the past, and it is for the public to judge why he disagrees with him now. Sir Ian said:

“relevant to Scotland’s independent debate is how long offshore oil and gas production will last ... young voters must be fully aware that by the time they are middle aged, Scotland will have little offshore oil and gas production and this will seriously hit our economy, jobs, and public services.”

Can the First Minister tell our children and grandchildren why Sir Ian Wood was wrong to give them that warning?

The First Minister: Presiding Officer,

“My headline message for the youth of today - get involved. The North Sea oil industry will see you through your lifetime”—

Ian Wood, BBC, 9 November 2012. Yes, of course Ian Wood is an authority on North Sea oil and gas and he has been foremost in pointing out the future potential of the oil and gas province.

I listened to Ian Wood today on the radio, and he said—I think that he was right to do so, because Alex Kemp is the foremost authority on the modelling of North Sea oil and gas and what remains—that he had spoken to Professor Alex Kemp over the past few days and he felt that 15 billion to 16.5 billion barrels was an appropriate estimate. Incidentally, that compares with the Office for Budget Responsibility estimate of 10 billion over the next 30 years. In my calculation, the figure is 60 per cent higher than the one offered by the agencies of Her Majesty’s Government.

Ian Wood said that he had been speaking to Professor Alex Kemp over the past few days, so I consulted Professor Alex Kemp’s statement on the University of Aberdeen’s website. What Sir Ian Wood said is absolutely correct. The statement says:

“Professor Alex Kemp and Linda Stephen”—

his research partner—

“have conducted substantial modelling on the potential long term recovery of oil and gas”.

It goes on to make certain projections and says:

“If targeted tax incentives were introduced the economic recovery to 2050 could increase to 15-16.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent.”

It goes on—and this is available on the University of Aberdeen’s website:

“But there is potential for further developments after 2050 if other fields can be rendered economically viable. Professor Kemp and Linda Stephen found that at the year

2050 no less than 125 known existing discoveries remained undeveloped ... With further ... progress and oil prices ... This should also apply to new discoveries from future exploration.”—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Order. Let us hear the First Minister.

The First Minister: It finishes:

“Thus the ultimate potential of 24 billion barrels of oil equivalent foreseen by Oil and Gas UK appears plausible.”

Now we have a point of agreement: 16.5 billion barrels up to 2050 and 24 billion barrels as the total of the oil province. Listen, that is a lot of billions of barrels, and Scotland should welcome it.

Johann Lamont: Well, that will give a lot of confidence to people who are worrying about the future. The First Minister said that he listened to Sir Ian Wood, but he did not hear—or he wilfully refused to hear—what Sir Ian Wood was saying. He should reflect on the fact that Sir Ian Wood said that he felt obliged to intervene on the debate because he was frustrated at being misrepresented and misquoted.

What the First Minister has just given us is a hallmark of his approach to persuading people to support his lifelong political project—say whatever has to be said to get by in the moment but ignore the substance of the argument.

In his warning, Sir Ian Wood envisaged that, far from exporting energy to the rest of the United Kingdom, an independent Scotland would have to import from the rest of the UK. This pre-eminent expert, as identified by the First Minister, said:

“Unfortunately, I think Scotland will also lose out on renewables. The UK is currently heavily subsidising our renewable energy pricing.”

He added of the oil industry—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Let us hear Ms Lamont, please.

Johann Lamont: This is about the future of our country, not the future of the First Minister’s political project.

Sir Ian Wood added of the oil industry:

“most operators would feel more confident if Scotland was to remain part of the UK.”

I ask the First Minister again: why was Sir Ian Wood wrong to say that, in the interests of our children, our grandchildren and the generations to come?

The First Minister: I have already pointed out that Sir Ian Wood is on the record as saying, addressing the youth of Scotland:

“The North Sea oil industry will see you through your lifetime”.

He is right to say so, because 2050 is not the limit of the oil industry; it will go on long beyond that.

Johann Lamont says that I am misquoting Sir Ian Wood, but I have the transcript of his interview this morning. I have spoken to Alex Kemp two or three times recently and he is pretty clear in his view that the 15 billion to 16.5 billion range that I have quoted is probably the right sort of range.

That is exactly the point that I was making. Yes, Alex Kemp says that there will be 15 billion to 16.5 billion barrels up to 2050. He goes on to say that it will be up to 24 billion, if you take into account the resource in reserves.

This poor, benighted country of Scotland, with only 16.5 billion barrels of oil up to 2050, which will be worth only £1 trillion in wholesale value over that period, or, perhaps if we go on longer, only £1.5 trillion—a trillion is a thousand billion. This poor, benighted country, visited with a great curse of 15 billion barrels of oil. Every other country in the world would give its eye teeth for such a substantial resource. Why do the Labour Party and its allies think that it is a great curse on Scotland?

Incidentally, having 25 per cent of the offshore renewable energy potential of the continent of Europe is also an asset, not a disadvantage, for an independent Scotland. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Johann Lamont: The First Minister calls Scotland a “poor, benighted country”. It is not; it is a wonderful country that deserves not to have its intelligence insulted by that kind of response. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Johann Lamont: This argument is not a debating point between me and the First Minister; it is about what a senior person in the oil industry is saying. It is about the future of our country.

Let us review the record over the past two years. The First Minister said that he had European Union legal advice. That was not true. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order. Carry on, Ms Lamont.

Johann Lamont: I think that it has been established beyond peradventure that that was not true.

John Swinney said that he was in discussions with the Bank of England on a currency union, and that was not true. Nicola Sturgeon told the Scottish National Party conference in April this year that, under devolution, the national health service in Scotland could not be privatised. That is true, but Alex Salmond now says that it is not. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order. We will get through this a lot quicker if the applauding and the jeering stop.

Ms Lamont, this is your last question. Will you just get to it?

Johann Lamont: Let me hope in all optimism that we will get an answer to the question.

Scotland’s greatest oil expert says that independence would be bad for Scotland and he is derided by his own First Minister.

Is it not the case that Alex Salmond does not have a plan B on currency, on Europe, or on oil? The trouble is that Scotland does not trust Alex Salmond because he is the man without a plan. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: I put on the record that Sir Ian Wood, as I said in the answer to the first question, is a respected authority, as are Alex Kemp and the range of experts, including Sir Donald MacKay, who have analysed the Scottish Government figures and produced their own estimates, which are very similar indeed to the Scottish Government’s projections. They say that the United Kingdom Treasury is missing a “mountain of black gold”.

I have pointed out that the figure of up to 24 billion barrels is an industry estimate. It has been used by many people, including the Wood review. I have also pointed out that the 16 billion barrels is up to 2050. Alex Kemp, who is the foremost authority on this area of the oil industry, says that there is more to come and that the 24 billion barrels looks entirely “plausible”.

On the question of the health service, if Johann Lamont cannot bring herself to agree with me, how about agreeing with Unison? The union said:

“Devolution means they can’t run down and privatise our NHS directly”

from London

“the way they are doing in England. But what they can do is starve it of resources. They are cutting back on the money provided to the Scottish Government and”

putting the Scottish budget

“under pressure.” *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: Johann Lamont asked me who is to blame for what. I was struck, encouraged and excited by Ian Davidson’s comments only this week. He identified that Labour’s failure was the reason for the SNP’s success and spoke out. He said:

“The reasons why the SNP have done well [over recent years] has been more to do with the failures of the Labour

party—the lack of modernisation of the Labour party ... The SNP have been what the Labour party should have become.”

His argument was that Scottish voters moved from Glasgow to the new towns of Scotland and many of them became SNP supporters. He said that they did not want the

“Tammany Hall politics of Labour”. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order. Can we get a conclusion, First Minister?

The First Minister: If we get to the situation where I am able to quote Ian Davidson against Johann Lamont, perhaps the reality is that the Labour Party in Scotland does not have a plan A, never mind a plan B. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Prime Minister (Meetings)

2. Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister. (S4F-02263)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): No plans in the near future.

Ruth Davidson: Sir Ian Wood is the most respected business figure in the North Sea oil industry. For two and a half years in this debate, he has kept his own counsel; he has stayed studiously neutral. As he said yesterday, he had no wish to get involved. I have just heard all the chaff that the First Minister has been firing out to deflect from Sir Ian’s critique yesterday, but what I have not heard, and what I am asking the First Minister, is this: why does he think Sir Ian now feels so compelled to speak out?

The First Minister: Sir Ian Wood wanted to clarify that his opinion is that oil reserves are between 15 billion and 16.5 billion barrels—that is his estimate. I am pointing out that I think that that is based on the forecast of Professor Alex Kemp, who points out today in his University of Aberdeen blog that that applies up to 2050.

There are already oilfields on the west coast that will produce beyond 2050. Alex Kemp has identified more than 100 oil discoveries that are not in the calculations to 2050. He and many industry figures believe that the overall value of the reserves of the oil province is therefore up to 24 billion barrels, which is Oil & Gas UK’s estimate. In a briefing to MSPs last year, Tim Smith, the vice-president of British Petroleum, talked about 41 billion barrels being produced to the end of 2012, and potentially 27 billion barrels of resource in yet-to-recover production beyond 2050.

If the industry estimate is up to 24 billion barrels and major companies are saying 27 billion, does

Ruth Davidson not realise that—whether it is 16.5 billion to 2050 or 27 billion beyond 2050—that those many, many billions of barrels of oil are, in wholesale terms, worth many trillions of pounds? Every country in the world would believe that that is an enormous asset. Why do only the Tories and the Labour Party believe that it is an extraordinary liability?

Ruth Davidson: With all due respect to the First Minister, that is not why Sir Ian Wood says that he felt the need at this critical time to speak out. Sir Ian has no worlds left to conquer and he is not trying to win any votes. He just wants the Scottish people to know the facts before they make what will be an irreversible decision.

Throughout the whole debate, the First Minister has twisted facts, ducked hard truths and simply closed his ears to anything that does not fit his lifelong obsession with independence. But not everybody out there is like that; people want to know what is best for their children and their grandchildren. Cannot the First Minister just have the decency, even at this late stage, to concede Sir Ian’s point that

“our young voters must be fully aware that by the time they are middle aged, Scotland will have little offshore oil and gas production and this will seriously hit our economy, jobs and public services.”

That is a direct quotation from Sir Ian. Will the First Minister not concede it?

The First Minister: If Ruth Davidson checks the records, she will find that even her boss, the Prime Minister, has not said that; on the contrary. I have already read out Sir Ian Wood’s rallying call to the youth of Scotland in which he said that they could enter the oil industry and North Sea production would last their entire lifetime. For goodness’ sake, do not misquote—this is an important argument. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order. Settle down.

The First Minister: When we get to a position in which Alex Kemp—who is cited as a person to be relied upon for forecasts—points out in his blog that there are “125 known existing discoveries” that, in his estimation, will still be undeveloped in 2050, and when the Clair ridge field is already going to produce beyond 2050, can Ruth Davidson not admit that it is a long-term business that will be with us for generations to come?

Ruth Davidson will know that major figures in the Westminster Government have now admitted that they rather underestimated the significance of oil and gas. Denis Healey said:

“we did underplay the value”

of the resource, and Bernard Ingham said that it was part of his normal “patter” to question the value of the resource. Given the history and track

record of Westminster, is it possible that Ruth Davidson's Government, with its estimate of 10 billion barrels over the next 30 years, is doing exactly the same thing?

Given the evidence of the past 40 years, I think that most people in Scotland will say, "Let's get our turn of using our natural resources for the benefit of the Scottish people."

Shipbuilding (Lower Clyde)

3. Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): To ask the First Minister how the Scottish Government will ensure the future of shipbuilding on the lower Clyde. (S4F-02267)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): On Tuesday I met the Ferguson Shipbuilders shop stewards, and I spoke to them again this morning. Tomorrow I will visit the shipyard itself to speak to employees, and I will reiterate the Scottish Government's commitment to the yard's future and to their employment.

As Duncan McNeil knows, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth has convened a multi-agency task force, which is due to have its next meeting on Monday.

I assure all members that the Scottish Government is doing, and will do, everything within our power to ensure the continuation of shipbuilding at Ferguson's.

Duncan McNeil: I thank the First Minister for his response. I am sure that, like me, he is encouraged by the number of bidders who have expressed serious interest in continuing shipbuilding at Ferguson's, which clearly demonstrates that there is confidence in the yard, the workforce and the future. That is good news in a bad week for the people of Port Glasgow and the Inverclyde community.

We all express serious regret that a yard that has such potential was allowed to close. The closure was brought about by the failure of CalMac Ferries and Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd to place orders for ferries 3 and 4, following the successful builds of MV Hallaig and MV Lochinvar.

The Presiding Officer: Can we have a question, Mr McNeil?

Duncan McNeil: It is the stated position of the Scottish Government that it wants commercial shipbuilding to continue on the lower Clyde at Ferguson's. I do not question that, but is the First Minister confident that his view is shared by CMAL and CalMac? How will he ensure that, given the requirement for 12 new vessels, £240 million of public investment will be used in support of Ferguson's and the wider Scottish economy?

The First Minister: When John Swinney made his statement on Tuesday, I thought that Duncan McNeil struck the wrong note in his analysis of the situation. Substantial orders have been placed with the yard, and there are substantial opportunities in relation to the new generation of environmentally sensitive ferries. We have great hopes that we will arrive at a situation in which shipbuilding can continue under new ownership.

Duncan McNeil talked about what encouraged him; two things encourage me greatly. First, I am encouraged by the spirit and determination of the workforce in Ferguson's. Every commentator on the issue has been unanimous on that issue; no one has questioned the skill, dedication, application, resilience and resolve of the workforce. Every member in this Parliament should give the workforce the maximum support. That encourages me greatly.

Secondly, I was encouraged by the receiver's statement yesterday. Blair Nimmo made it clear that he is moving to an early deadline of 5 o'clock this evening in relation to offers to be analysed. In his statement, he said that he is doing so because he wants to ensure that there is a chance of continuing Ferguson's as an ongoing concern. He said that he would be looking particularly at holding the workforce together and ensuring that there are prospects for the future.

Therefore, although we are not there yet, and there will be more anxious hours and days for the workforce at Ferguson's, I think that we have reason to feel substantial encouragement that is founded not just on this Government's determination and the support of all members in the Parliament, but on the resolve and resilience of the shipyard workers.

Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy in Scotland

4. John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's response is to the final report by the commission on strengthening local democracy. (S4F-02270)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): We welcome it. Independence provides the opportunity to empower councils and communities to consider the right level for all decisions to be made, as we set out in our prospectus for Scotland's island communities.

Local government will be an integral and essential element of an independent Scotland. Its status, in my estimation, can be guaranteed only by a written constitution after independence.

John Wilson: The First Minister will be aware that the report follows the report in 2012 by the Jimmy Reid Foundation, "The Silent Crisis: Failure

and Revival in Local Democracy in Scotland". Does he agree that the only way that we can get a truly democratic society in Scotland is by voting yes on 18 September, to ensure that Westminster Governments do not interfere with the democratic structures that we want in a future Scotland?

The First Minister: I agree with that position.

The point that John Wilson makes is very apposite. There are a range of vital institutions that are part of the fabric of Scotland and to which a written constitution would give entrenched protection. That would be one of the benefits of having a written constitution.

We recently had the Commonwealth games in the city of Glasgow. The games, in which 71 nations and territories competed, were a fantastic success. With the exception of New Zealand, which has an important basic law, every one of those independent countries has a written constitution that preserves and protects the rights of its citizens, as well as enunciating free rights. I agree with John Wilson that the position of local government would be entrenched in a written constitution in an independent Scotland.

Scottish Government Economic Strategy

5. Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): To ask the First Minister how the Scottish Government's economic strategy will help to achieve the aims of its Arbroath "declaration of opportunity". (S4F-02281)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): As I set out in Arbroath, only independence offers the opportunity to release the vast potential of Scotland's extraordinarily talented population.

Last week, we published our jobs plan for an independent Scotland, which shows how, through independence, we can create more and better job opportunities and help our young people to realise their aspirations and ambitions here in Scotland. It seems to me that, while we offer a declaration of opportunity, Neil Findlay and, of course, his colleagues in the Conservative Party have nothing whatever to declare.

Neil Findlay: We now know that the First Minister's oil forecasts are a mere 60 per cent out and that his corporate tax gift to big business would rip £350 million a year from our public services. Will he now accept that it is his voodoo economics that would result in a separate Scotland having an £8.6 million black hole in its finances? Will he apologise for what cancer specialist Dr Anna Gregor says is the complete "and utter lie" about NHS privatisation in the event of a no vote?

The First Minister: I know that, given the member's alliance with the Conservative Party, it

is extremely difficult for him to reflect on the position that lots and lots of people in Scotland agree with the surge of support for protecting our national health service through independence for Scotland and within a written constitution. However, he will have paid close attention to the quote from Unison that I read out, which made the point that, as the health service budget and the public service budget are reduced in England, that will affect Scotland. Surely he does not believe that privatisation is intended to increase the budget of the health service in England. As that happens in England, it will be enforced in Scotland through financial pressure, as Unison identified.

Luckily, of course, the SNP and John Swinney have been in administration and have ensured a real-terms increase in the NHS budget over the past few years, but what has happened in Wales? There has been a 3 per cent decline. Either we believe that the Labour Party in Wales wanted to reduce real-terms spending on the NHS—which even I do not believe—or we believe that that has been forced on Wales through financial pressure from Westminster.

I agree with the Labour Party in Wales, and I agree with the Labour Party in England that the privatisation that the Tories are pursuing in England is endangering the health service. I also agree with Unison, and it is high time that the member did as well. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Cancer Mortality Rates

6. Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what progress has been made in reducing cancer mortality rates. (S4F-02272)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): We welcome the figures that were released by Cancer Research UK on Monday 18 August, which show that mortality rates in the four main cancers in Scotland have reduced by around 25 per cent in the past 20 years. We are working with Cancer Research UK in a number of areas, and we endorse its new strategy, which aims to push cancer survival to three in four within the next 20 years.

In recent years, we have invested to improve Scotland's cancer treatment infrastructure. That investment has included £22 million for the new Beatson centre that is being built at Monklands hospital to help to meet the rising demand for radiotherapy treatment over the next 10 years.

Jim Eadie: Although improved specialist care, better treatments and fewer people smoking have all contributed to the fall in the death rates from the top four cancer killers, does the First Minister agree that the health inequality gap between the

lowest and highest deprivation groups is still far too wide for too many cancers, including lung, cervical and stomach cancer, and that programmes that detect cancer at the earliest stage are absolutely vital to ensuring that everyone in Scotland receives the life-saving treatment that they need and which only a publicly funded and clinically driven health service can provide?

The First Minister: Yes, I do, and that is why the Government has targeted £30 million of investment at early cancer detection through the detect cancer early programme and invested a further £12 million in modernising the Scottish breast screening programme. In addition to screening, the detect cancer early programme focuses on addressing fears about cancer and on recognising signs and symptoms of cancer, and encourages people to get checked if they are worried. As we know, diagnosis and treatment at the earliest stage help to improve survival rates, and this programme will ensure that every patient, regardless of where they live, receives timely treatment and follow-up.

Jim Eadie mentioned the importance of a public health service, and I hope that everyone in the chamber understands the importance of protecting and preserving our national health service in Scotland. That is absolutely vital, and we believe that it can be done through Scottish independence. If there is an alternative route for doing that, it had better get spelled out. However, Labour Party members should remember Ian Davidson's words, which have already been mentioned at this First Minister's question time:

"The SNP have been what the Labour party should have become."

The Presiding Officer: That ends First Minister's questions.

Glasgow the Caring City

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The next item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-10661, in the name of James Dornan, on celebrating Glasgow the Caring City. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I would be grateful if the members who wish to speak in the debate would press their request-to-speak buttons now. I would also be grateful if the guests in the gallery who are leaving could do so quietly, as the Parliament is still in session.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament celebrates the 15th birthday of Glasgow the Caring City in 2014; notes that Glasgow the Caring City is a Scottish charity based in Cathcart that supports children in crisis at home and overseas; notes that the charity achieves this aim by supporting a range of health, education and security programmes worldwide, from what it considers its successful Give a Kid a Goal campaign for children across Glasgow to helping to fund the Himbaza School in Burundi's capital city, Bujumbura; notes the work that it has done in organising the Celebration City Festival for the Commonwealth Games; considers its contribution over the last 15 years to children worldwide and closer to home to be invaluable; thanks the charity for the work that it does, and wishes it every success as it moves forward with its plans for future development.

12:33

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):

This debate is on a subject that is very important to me. I could speak on it for half an hour, but members will be delighted to learn that I will not do so and that I will try to stick to my seven minutes.

I welcome to the chamber the Rev Neil Galbraith, founder of Glasgow the Caring City. Many members will know him. He has been tireless in his work both in the city of Glasgow and further afield. He is the minister of Cathcart old parish church; he is a police chaplain; and he also works with veterans, particularly in his coming home project, which he runs from his church. The project, which was discussed with the minister, Keith Brown, before it began, is for veterans who find it difficult to reintegrate into society. It gives them somewhere to go and meet their peers, and it is becoming a place where they can move on, get jobs and move back into society. It is invaluable; in fact, I was speaking to a couple of people involved in it the other day.

For many, however, the Rev Neil Galbraith will be known as the founder of Glasgow the Caring City, the charity that I am delighted the Parliament is recognising today. It was founded in May 1999 as Glasgow's very own aid agency. It was originally set up to help those who had been made homeless by the wars that were raging across the

Balkans, and its aim was to help as many as possible of the thousands of asylum seekers and refugees who were arriving in Glasgow at that time. At its core, the charity's central aim is to provide care, help and love to the most fragile and destitute children at home and abroad. It has worked tirelessly towards that aim for the past 15 years.

Glasgow the Caring City works with a number of projects around the world to provide help and support, locally and internationally. It also provides emergency relief where it can.

The charity's first theme is education, which is a key part of its development strategy. As the late, great Nelson Mandela said,

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

The Caring City has taken that mantra to heart.

At home, the organisation has worked on its give a kid a goal project for the past couple of years. That started as a way to encourage primary 6 and 7 pupils to think in a different way about the issues that are closest to them and has grown into a much bigger project. It gets kids involved in their communities: they can organise or take part in a community event, take part in a youth organisation, find out a wee bit more about people's history or get involved in a local campaign. It helps to foster links between children worldwide: children can, for example, support the work of an international charity, gather resources that are to be sent or take the time to learn about what life is like for children in different parts of the world.

The Caring City is clear that it wants to work towards its projects becoming self-sufficient. It provides help and expertise on education as the initial set-up, but the endgame is to empower communities around the world to decide what is best for their school or college. It has been fantastic to see the charity's vision in action when I have visited the many projects that it has been involved in. I have been fortunate to travel abroad to see some of the great work that it has done in Uganda and South Sudan, which I will talk about in a moment.

The charity does a lot of work on disaster relief in relation to its key themes. In education, that means assisting and rebuilding schools that have been destroyed by natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes. That was clear from its support for the people of Cité Soleil in Haiti, helping to rebuild a school after the devastating earthquake there in 2010.

Another theme of the charity's work is security. I believe that Glasgow the Caring City is one of the best examples of a charity that sees security not

only as physical security from harm but as human security—the belief that being secure means more than just having police and an army but also comes from having easy access to food and water and having a secure job, home, relationships and family life.

Human security was at the heart of the Caring City's work in post-tsunami Sri Lanka, where it invested in medium to long-term projects in the fishing and hospitality industries that became self-sustaining. That meant that the community could start to build a better future for itself out of the horrors of that fateful boxing day.

That approach is also apparent in the charity's work in South Sudan at Matthew's farm, which helps young men and women to become farmers and teaches them the skills that they need to farm the land; it also teaches them to read, write and do basic maths.

I have had the pleasure of visiting Matthew's farm, which was funded by Ross Galbraith, the Caring City's international development officer, to whom I give a special mention. He has seen the farm grow from being just a patch of land into a sustainable farm. The people who use it can now grow their goods, take them to the market, sell them and feed their families on the basis of what they get. That was not the case before. I have spoken to a number of people who have benefited from the farm, which is fantastic to see.

Closer to home, the organisation's sofa-cycle initiative gives recycled furnishings and white goods to people across Glasgow who might need a helping hand to make their home life more secure.

Under the health banner, the Caring City has done great work around the beautiful game. When I was in Uganda, I watched a football match between local children who all wore Scotland strips that Scotland's captain, Darren Fletcher, had donated. That is a great initiative and I hope that it will get continued support.

I have only scratched the surface of the many great projects that the Caring City has worked on and is working on. It is fair to say that its work has had a huge impact at home and around the world. I have been fortunate to see at first hand a lot of the work that it is doing in my constituency and in Glasgow, as well as further afield, as I said. The charity is a brilliant example of the sort of work that epitomises the Glasgow spirit. In a previous debate, I spoke about the brilliant celebration city festival during the Commonwealth games, which showed the city at its best.

It will come as no surprise to anybody in the chamber that I am proud of my constituency, where lots of great things are going on—I could bore members to death with all the examples.

However, not many examples show my constituency, the city of Glasgow and the country of Scotland in a better light than Glasgow the Caring City. It has done great work over the past 15 years and I look forward to the work that it will do over the next 15 years.

I know that the minister has visited and has a close relationship with the charity, and I am sure that he will have kind words to say about it. I am delighted that the organisation is there for all the people whom it helps and that it is based in my constituency of Glasgow Cathcart. I thank again the Rev Neil Galbraith and the others involved for all the work that they do.

12:39

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):

I welcome the debate as an opportunity not only to celebrate the 15th birthday of Glasgow the Caring City, but to highlight the charity's achievements and raise its profile. I thank James Dornan for lodging the motion for us to discuss in the chamber; it is exactly the type of motion for which members' business was designed.

As a spokeswoman on education and lifelong learning, I find that many of the projects that are supported by Glasgow the Caring City resonate with me—for example, those involving the Ikotos school in South Sudan and the Himbaza school in Burundi, which James Dornan mentioned.

We regularly debate education issues in the chamber, but we often fail to consider just how fortunate we are, with universal opportunities for education from pre-school all the way to university giving Scottish children, male and female, the chance to discover and realise their potential.

That is not the case in some parts of the world, so I am proud that charities such as Glasgow the Caring City are working in countries such as Burundi and South Sudan to help to deliver education opportunities to those who need them most. I may be old-fashioned, but I have always believed that access to education and training is one route—although not the only route—out of poverty.

I praise the charity's give a kid a goal campaign, which encourages children in Glasgow to fundraise for the Himbaza school project. That not only makes those children more aware of the world around them, but demonstrates just how fortunate they are to have a good education, economic security and more, as James Dornan outlined. We often take those things for granted.

The projects that the charity supports in Malawi, such as the David Livingstone clinic, reflect the special partnership between Malawi and Scotland. The clinic, which was founded in 2006, provides

training facilities for student nurses and primary care to mothers and babies. We have previously debated in the chamber the dire state of maternity care in Malawi and the effects on mother and child. I remember the Deputy Presiding Officer's input to those debates and her concern for many of the issues.

Another Scottish charity, Project Trust, sends approximately 10 17 to 19-year-olds across five projects to Malawi each year on 12-month placements. The charity is a member of the Scotland Malawi Partnership and has contributed to teaching and social care in the country for many years. As well as sending up to 300 young people to 20 other countries each year, Project Trust is another great example of young Scots and people of other nationalities striving to make a difference for those who are less fortunate. We should all be very proud of them.

Glasgow the Caring City not only carries abroad the great name of Glasgow, but is an ambassador for Scotland and the United Kingdom, demonstrating our compassion and outward-looking vision. As a Highlands and Islands MSP, I cannot claim to be a representative or resident of Glasgow, but I recognise good work when I see it being done.

The United Kingdom has the second largest aid budget for international development in the world, and it is the only country in the G8 to meet its aid target regularly. On top of that, Scotland contributes an additional £9 million through its international development fund towards projects in Malawi, such as the David Livingstone clinic, which was one of the first Malawi millennium projects, and through Glasgow the Caring City.

As I see that my time is coming to an end, I will just say that, through the work of charities such as Glasgow the Caring City, and many others such as Mary's Meals, Scotland has demonstrated that it can and will continue to make an impact on the international stage. I wish Glasgow the Caring City a happy anniversary and continued success in its charitable efforts. I praise the work of Neil Galbraith and thank James Dornan for bringing the debate to the chamber.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have a little bit of leeway with time. I call Hanzala Malik, to be followed by Linda Fabiani.

12:44

Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab): Thank you very much and good afternoon, Presiding Officer. I thank James Dornan for lodging the motion to celebrate the 15th birthday of the charity Glasgow the Caring City. I also thank the Rev Neil Galbraith, whom I have known for many years. James Dornan informed us that the charity is

based in his constituency, and it is in my region of Glasgow.

I have had the privilege of travelling with Neil Galbraith in a number of countries as he carried out charitable work. The charity has supported a range of health, education and security programmes worldwide. Among the prominent examples of the charity's influence is its funding of schools around the world. I will cite one or two examples that will show how Glasgow the Caring City has carried out that work.

It is indeed a charity that cares. It works in many countries throughout the world. To give members a flavour, the countries that, to my knowledge, the charity has engaged with include Cuba, India, Pakistan, South Sudan, Uganda and Scotland.

Let me give two examples of the charity's work in Scotland. When the factory in Firhill in Glasgow exploded and when Glasgow airport was attacked, it provided blankets and water immediately, and a lot of hard work was done by its volunteers.

The charity has also helped schools in Glasgow, including in Hillhead, where I was a councillor. The charity assisted the secondary school there with funding and support for its twin school in Lahore in Pakistan. The charity has also supported countries such as Malawi and Sri Lanka, particularly following the tsunami in Sri Lanka.

We can see the practical results of that work around the world. For example, I had the privilege of going to Sri Lanka during the Commonwealth games, and I know that the Sri Lankan community was very proud to say that they knew of Scotland and Glasgow because of the charity work that we had done for them. They did not know of Nigeria, because it was nowhere to be seen. I am sure that the Nigerian people supported the Sri Lankan community, but I am not sure to what extent. However, the Sri Lankan community certainly remembered the work that Glasgow the Caring City did. That is a tribute to Neil Galbraith, because he was very active in Sri Lanka and worked very hard. In fact, I was concerned about his health when I saw him—I felt that he was overdoing it, but that is the nature of the business that he is in.

One of the other charities in Glasgow that do a tremendous amount of work around the world is the Ucare Foundation, which funds schools around the world. Another is Islamic Relief, which is renowned for its work around the world and which has been supported by the Scottish Government on occasion in rebuilding and refurbishing schools and stocking them with equipment to provide children with the quality of education that they deserve, for which it is to be congratulated. Most recently, Islamic Relief has worked in Afghanistan and Iraq, which are in a

very troubled part of the world. I believe that our charities do a tremendous amount of work, and I am really proud of that.

Glasgow the Caring City has also worked with Rescue 1122, which provides fire and rescue services in Punjab. Rescue 1122 was twinned with Strathclyde Fire and Rescue. Fire engines from Glasgow were delivered to Lahore, contributing immensely to the saving of life and limb and property. Such small measures go a very long way in supporting people, who appreciate the help and support that they get from other people around the world.

When I first realised that it was the 15th birthday of Glasgow the Caring City and that a parliamentary motion was to be lodged, I was pleased. It brought a smile to my face because I genuinely feel that we do not say thank you enough to the volunteers and donors who make it possible to support people at very short notice. I take this opportunity to say a huge public thank you to industry and all the private businesses, volunteers and individuals who make an immense contribution to charity and the charity movement in Scotland. That helps to make our charities matter and succeed around the world, which is very important.

I congratulate Glasgow the Caring City, and I congratulate Neil Galbraith on all his hard work. I hope and pray that he will continue it in the future.

12:50

Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP): It was interesting that James Dornan said that he could speak for half an hour about this subject—and I am sure that Hanzala Malik could speak for double that—because that is a mark of how much Glasgow the Caring City has achieved in the 15 years since it was set up. I say happy birthday and thank you to Glasgow the Caring City. I thank Neil Galbraith and his team and everyone who is involved in the charity, not least the ladies in Cathcart parish church who always make great cakes when we go along for events.

I am fascinated by the work that Glasgow the Caring City does, and I find the breadth and depth of it quite amazing. Even having listened to three contributions already, I can still think of other things that Glasgow the Caring City has been involved in, such as the wonderful link with the New York firefighters. I remember attending a very moving service at Cathcart parish church in honour of the victims of 9/11.

I was interested, too, to hear that James Dornan and Hanzala Malik have travelled to various places in the world with Glasgow the Caring City. I must be doing something wrong, because the furthest that I have ever got is East Kilbride. I

mention East Kilbride mainly because it is my constituency but also to make it quite clear that Glasgow the Caring City does work at home outwith Glasgow the city itself. It is that kind of charity; wherever there is felt to be a need, we will find Glasgow the Caring City.

One thing in East Kilbride that I have been involved in is the give a kid a goal project, which I find uplifting. Hunter primary school and St Vincent's primary school in EK have both been involved in the project, and their headteachers are to be commended for having realised the value of it. It makes it quite normal and natural for children to work towards goals themselves while recognising that they should work towards those goals for children in other parts of the world, too. Too often we hear phrases such as "charity begins at home." Glasgow the Caring City makes it quite plain that charity may well begin at home, but it certainly should not end there, because we are all one big global family.

The fact that it imparts that message to young people and makes it fun is what makes the charity so precious. It is a long time since I was at primary school and I will except the minister from this, but I think that just about everyone else in the chamber would agree that if their teacher ever said that the reverend from the local church or the priest from the local Roman Catholic church was coming along, the children thought, "Oh no." In the schools in East Kilbride, if the teacher says that the Rev Neil Galbraith is coming along, the children think, "Yahoo! This is wonderful. We're going to have a great time". That raises their self-esteem, too.

Another thing that has not been mentioned today is the cross out child poverty initiative, which was started and carried through by Glasgow the Caring City. I want to extend that initiative to East Kilbride; I hold my hands up and admit that I have been quite lax in so doing, but that is on-going.

That initiative is a recognition that we have to work across borders and boundaries. There is absolute poverty in other parts of the world, which we should address and raise awareness of, but we should also recognise that there is relative poverty in our country—in our cities, satellite towns and rural areas. If we are truly talking about having successful cities and towns and a successful nation, and extending that across the world, we have to recognise that we are all in it together. That is what Glasgow the Caring City does in a wonderfully non-judgmental way, from which we can all learn lessons.

I am delighted to recognise the 15th anniversary of Glasgow the Caring City. I do not just wish it another 15 years; I hope that it continues way beyond that.

12:55

The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf): It is a privilege for me to close this debate on behalf of the Scottish Government and as a proud Glaswegian. I thank James Dornan for securing this precious parliamentary time and I fully endorse the motion in his name.

I join other members in the chamber in complimenting Glasgow the Caring City on the excellent work that it does in Glasgow and overseas, as well as congratulating it on its 15th birthday. I also add my compliments to the Rev Neil Galbraith, whom I hold in high regard. It is a testament to him that everyone in this chamber, across the political parties, speaks highly of him. I also know him as an individual. He is one of those forces of nature to whom—sometimes even somewhat annoyingly—it is difficult to say no.

Although I fear that Linda Fabiani might have got herself into trouble with her priest or her minister, there have been some excellent speeches today reflecting on the facets and strands of work—too many to mention—that have been done by Glasgow the Caring City.

As the discussion was going on in the chamber, I reflected on my two favourite parts of the Commonwealth games opening ceremony. We all, universally, enjoyed the UNICEF moment, which showed off Glasgow as the caring city and Scotland as the caring nation and made that opening ceremony the first ever to raise money for orphans across the world.

My other favourite moment was when the African singer Pumeza sang "Freedom Come-All-Ye". Leaving aside the issue of what freedom might mean in a traditional sense, what I liked about that was that it encompasses everybody in its come-all-ye stance and includes freedom from poverty, freedom from deprivation, freedom from social stigma and freedom from having one's life opportunities hindered. It means freedom not only for Scottish children and Glaswegians but for those across the world. If ever there was a charity that summed up that approach, it would be Glasgow the Caring City, because of the work that it does domestically in Scotland as well as overseas—there are few organisations that manage to do both as successfully as Glasgow the Caring City does.

Many of the charity's projects have been mentioned. I want to mention again its training programme, which provides training opportunities to young adults and empowers people to make the most of the skills that they have. It is a great example of its work, as is the give a kid a goal campaign, which helps our schoolchildren to gain a better understanding of their place in the world

and how they can make a difference in tackling the challenges that are faced by our planet.

The Scottish Government fully endorses that ambition to help our young people to become fully global citizens. It is a key part of our curriculum for excellence. Last year, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning and I jointly announced funding for six development education centres to work with our young people in Scotland in accordance with the ethos of the give a kid a goal campaign in order to empower them and give them a knowledge of the world that we live in, so that they can gain an appreciation of the difference that they can make.

That is hugely important. In a world in which, as Linda Fabiani said, people are cynical about giving money overseas—asking, “Why do we do it?” and saying, “Charity begins at home”—and in this day and age, when finances are tough and we are in difficult economic times, we have a real obligation to ensure that our children are educated to understand the responsibilities that they have as individuals and global citizens.

When it comes to partnership working, which the Scottish Government is keen on, a great example was provided by Glasgow the Caring City’s superb contribution to the celebration city festival during the Commonwealth games. The phrase “people make Glasgow” was one of the slogans of the games, and Glasgow the Caring City helped to demonstrate that through the work that it did, working with 40 other partners, to showcase the very best of Glasgow hospitality through a superb cultural programme of activities that were attended by more than 10,000 people.

The work that it is doing domestically is on the record, and that brings me to the overseas work that Glasgow the Caring City has been involved in over the past 15 years, much of which has been mentioned.

Hanzala Malik mentioned the genesis of that work at the time of the Balkans conflict. The motion also rightly recognises the support that Glasgow the Caring City has been giving to Himbaza school in Burundi. That is just a flavour of the work that it is doing. It is also working in South Sudan, Malawi and Uganda and throughout the developing world.

I was interested to hear about James Dornan’s trip to Uganda and South Sudan. I read some of the articles that he wrote on his return. I am pleased that he got to see the football game, but I am also pleased that he was not playing—otherwise, the poor Ugandans might have needed to be sent some shin pads as well.

Through its international development policy, the Scottish Government aims for Scotland to be seen not only as a good global citizen but as a

global leader, in which context I acknowledge the work that Scottish charities such as Glasgow the Caring City do. However, as every member who has spoken has said, that work is underpinned by the volunteer network that those charities have. People have a real affiliation not just through Cathcart old parish church, which I have had the pleasure of visiting, but more widely across the city and the country. We politicians have the easy job of putting the funding together and making the resources available where and when we can; those who work on the ground through charities such as Glasgow the Caring City actually get the work done, and I commend them for that.

The Government is determined to play its part in helping to make that happen through our international development work. We have made a commitment, in the event of a yes vote, not only to meet the target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income on overseas development assistance but to enshrine it in legislation. However, whatever the result of the referendum, we are committed to helping those in the poorest parts of the world. That means helping women and girls into education, helping those who do not have access to energy or clean water and addressing the simplest and most basic challenges that nobody in the 21st century should have to suffer.

I add to what Hanzala Malik said by placing on record the Scottish Government’s appreciation of all the non-governmental organisations throughout the country, which do a phenomenal job. He mentioned the Ucare Foundation and Islamic Relief. This morning, I had the pleasure of meeting the new director of the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund. I also acknowledge the work that is done by all the members of the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland, the Scotland Malawi Partnership and many others.

I commend the motion. Over the past 15 years, Glasgow the Caring City has done not only Glasgow but Scotland proud. As is customary in discussing such a motion, I look forward to James Dornan providing the 15th birthday cake. I wish the organisation every success for more than another 15 years. I commend the work that the Rev Neil Galbraith and his team are doing, and I look forward to working closely with them in the future.

13:02

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Scotland's Future

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business is a debate on motion S4M-10843, in the name of Alex Salmond, on Scotland's future. I give all members a bit of warning that time is really tight.

I call Alex Salmond to speak to and move the motion. First Minister, you have 14 minutes.

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the motion in my name, supported by my colleagues. Today, 120-plus members of the Parliament are debating Scotland's future. In four weeks' time, the people of Scotland will get the opportunity to decide on Scotland's future. That peaceful and consented process and the debate and discussion that are taking place across the country are not unique in the world, but they are rare and precious and we should regard them as such.

The referendum has re-energised politics in Scotland. I was canvassing in Northfield in Aberdeen a few weeks ago when a 16-year-old girl ran across the street and demanded to know whether she was on the voters roll to vote in the referendum. I was not even canvassing her house at the time.

That is an example of an enthusiasm seldom seen by any of us before. There is an enthusiasm to participate in the referendum that we have not seen for any Westminster or Scottish election. I know that all of us will have had similar experiences, often with people who would not normally be interested in the political process. They all want to have their say in this great national debate.

The referendum has inspired an outpouring of ideas about the sort of country that we seek—the sort of Scotland that we want. Very often—this has been a hugely positive development—those things have been outside what we might call traditional party political structures. People who have felt excluded from the normal political processes have responded enthusiastically. New media have thrived and town hall meetings have been packed in villages and towns across the country. After the referendum, one of the challenges for all of us will be to retain that sense of creativity, energy and engagement as we work together to build a better country.

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): I share the First Minister's ambition for us to use the energy from the referendum for the good of politics in the long run. I hope for a no vote, as he hopes

for a yes vote, but I hope that we will capture the energy.

I will bring the First Minister back to some of the detail. In the past week, Crawford Beveridge, Professor Stiglitz and the First Minister have all used the term "transition" in respect of the currency. Will the First Minister tell the chamber about that new aspect of his policy?

The First Minister: If there were a new aspect of the policy that was not contained in the fiscal commission's report of more than a year ago, I would look at Mr Rennie's question with a bit more consideration. What has been said is exactly what the fiscal commission working group said more than a year ago.

I have recommended a number of times that Mr Rennie read the white paper on independence. I also recommend that he read the fiscal commission working group's report, to see the profound common sense that that galaxy of distinguished economists has presented—lo, even unto the Liberal party—and to consider that. In there, he will find the answers that he seeks.

As we did two weeks ago, we all—even Mr Rennie—agree that Scotland has got what it takes to be a successful independent country, so let us use this occasion and this national debate to celebrate our country, our people and our potential.

Scotland is one of the world's wealthiest nations. Our gross domestic product per head is higher than that of the United Kingdom as a whole, France and Japan. We have contributed more in tax revenues per head of population than the rest of the UK in each and every one of the past 33 years.

We have creative genius. We are a nation of innovators. We have a brilliant manufacturing industry and a truly world-class food and drink industry.

We have astonishing natural resources. We have huge potential in renewables and—yes—an oil and gas industry that will produce many billions of barrels of oil for many decades to come. Many of us regard that as a substantial bonus for the nation of Scotland, not a burden that will have to be tolerated.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): Will the First Minister give way?

The First Minister: I give way to the former member for Aberdeen Central. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Lewis Macdonald: I am grateful to the current member for Aberdeenshire East for giving way in that gracious fashion. Can he tell me, in light of the revision this morning of his central estimate of

future oil production from 24 billion barrels of oil equivalent to 15 or 16 billion barrels, his revised estimate of the revenues to come from oil in the next five years?

The First Minister: If the member had been following the debate at First Minister's questions, he would know that I pointed out from the work of Alex Kemp that the 16 to 17 billion barrels seem to go up to 2050, and that, as there is further to come after that from the more than 100 fields that are expected to be developed at that stage, Mr Kemp thinks that it is entirely reasonable for the UK oil industry's forecasts of up to 24 billion barrels to be perfectly realisable.

I know that Lewis Macdonald thought that I was being unfair, but I was not. The reason that I referred to his being a member for Aberdeen is that I was trying to create a link with those members from Aberdeen who have in the past suggested that perhaps the oil was running out. As Lewis Macdonald and I well know, it is a long time since we had a Conservative member for an Aberdeen constituency, but in the 1970s there was one. The late Iain Sproat, who was then Conservative MP for Aberdeen South, speaking in the House of Commons in 1976 said that oil will last for only another 20 to 30 years. If what the Conservative Party and the Labour Party had to say in the 1970s and 1980s had been true, there would not be any oil left at all now. Therefore, if Lewis Macdonald will pardon us for saying so, we think that 18 or 17 billion barrels to 2050, and up to 24 billion barrels in total, is a fantastic resource and bonus for the Scottish people.

Above all—

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con): Will the First Minister give way on that point?

The First Minister: If the member gives me a few seconds, I will make some progress and then gladly take an intervention.

I was going to say—and I know that the Conservative Party have this dear to their hearts—that the challenge is not to establish the enormous wealth of the country: that is a given. The challenge is to ensure that the people of this country have the opportunity to share in that enormous wealth.

At its heart, the case for independence is a simple one. It is better for all our futures if decisions about Scotland are taken by the people who care most about Scotland—the people who live and work in this country. No one, but no one, is more likely to create a fair and prosperous country than we will.

Eighty per cent of Scotland's MPs at Westminster opposed the current UK Government's wider changes to social security,

and 90 per cent of them opposed the bedroom tax. With independence, the people of Scotland will get the policies that this democratically elected Scottish Parliament votes for, 100 per cent of the time.

It is worth looking at this Parliament's record; I will be generous to all the parties on all sides of the chamber. The first session of Parliament introduced world-leading homelessness legislation. The second session of Parliament tackled Scotland's health inequalities through the ban on smoking on public places. The third session of Parliament reintroduced free university tuition and unanimously passed ambitious climate-change targets. The current session of Parliament is seeing world-leading action to address Scotland's relationship with alcohol, and legislation to expand and transform early-years education and care.

Alongside that, we have adopted policies to support economic growth: cutting business rates, promoting Scotland abroad and giving co-ordinated support to infrastructure and to key sectors of the economy. We now have higher employment and lower economic inactivity than the rest of the UK.

That does not mean, of course, that this Parliament has not sometimes taken the wrong course, but it reflects the fact that members of the Parliament from all parties have worked together to reflect the values, priorities and aspirations of the people who voted for us.

Because of that, this Parliament has been able to resist the privatisation and constant reorganisation that has been pursued in the national health service south of the border. However, funding for our national health service is still at the mercy of a Westminster Government that is led by a party that, in the words of Alistair Darling, relishes

"the chance to swing the axe at the public services millions rely on."

It was Nye Bevan who once said of the national health service that you do not need a crystal ball

"when you can read the book."

Today, we can read the book produced by the Labour Party called "The Choice: NHS", which discusses what Labour calls "the Tory threat". It says that under the Tories the prospect for the NHS is that

"more services are likely to be charged for, with fewer services provided free at the point of need."

It follows that, if patients are charged and private money replaces public money, those cuts in public spending are passed directly on to the public services of Scotland under the devolution settlement. Therefore, increased privatisation and

charging in England, on top of the £25 billion of cuts promised by George Osborne, are a direct threat to national health service funding in Scotland.

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): I am glad that the First Minister has moved on from the early scares about privatising the health service in Scotland and from the earlier misinformation about privatised services costing less money. However, now that he has moved on to charging, does he not realise that the reason why Labour is saying what it does is because we know full well that no UK Government would be elected that had pledged to abolish healthcare free at the point of need? That will not happen and it is an insult to the people of England to believe that it will happen. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: Andy Burnham is saying that the Conservative Party is going to abolish free healthcare. Has Malcolm Chisholm really got to the stage at which he is defending the Tories as defenders of the health service? *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: Can he not understand what Unison said in its blog this afternoon about the threat from Westminster cutbacks to the health service in Scotland? People will be astonished that the Labour Party has come to the stage that it has to defend Tory cuts and privatisation of the health service so that it can defend the better together campaign.

The contrast of the constitutional guarantee that independence gives to the health service is quite a different matter. We can guarantee a fairer Scotland because we can guarantee that the minimum wage rises in line with inflation. We can guarantee to ensure greater gender equality in the boardroom and in the workplace. It will be a fairer Scotland because we can outlaw outrages such as the bedroom tax, which 90 per cent of MPs from Scotland oppose.

At the moment, the Government is launching its assault through austerity on the poor, and it is also starting to replace Trident, at an estimated lifetime cost of more than £100 billion. Would it not be rather better if we could remove Trident, abolish measures such as the bedroom tax and get on with building a decent society for the Scottish people?

Alongside building a fairer country, let us create a more prosperous country that can offer a lifetime opportunity for the people of Scotland. At present, almost 70,000 people leave Scotland every year, with more than half of them aged 16 to 34. Every single family in Scotland knows of a friend or family member who has to leave to get a job or

further a career. We have huge hydrocarbon reserves for the next half century, but we need to build the renewable wealth that will last for ever. We want to transform childcare provision to unleash the full potential of all of our population. With independence we can use our wealth and control over our taxation to attract more employers to invest in Scotland, creating more and better local jobs, and more opportunities for young people closer to home that will keep families together: a powerful legacy from a yes vote.

We believe that, if we take the powers that we need and use them well and work hard, over time we will create a more prosperous country and a fairer society.

In four weeks' time, when the polling stations open, it will be the first time ever that the people of Scotland have had democratic control of their own destiny. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

The First Minister: This is the first democratic referendum on national independence.

When the polls close, let us not hand that control back. Let us keep Scotland's future in Scotland's hands and then come together to build the better Scotland that we know is possible. We have the ability, the talent and the resources in abundance. The people of Scotland are waking up to the greatest opportunity that we will ever have. On 18 September, let's take it.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that Scotland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, is rich in human talent and benefits from vast natural resources; believes that a Yes vote on 18 September 2014 is the opportunity of a lifetime to build a fairer, greener, more prosperous country for everyone who lives in Scotland; agrees that the best people to take decisions about Scotland's future are the people who care most about Scotland, those who live and work here; further agrees that an independent Scotland will protect the founding values of the NHS, build a more secure, sustainable economy with greater job opportunities and will provide parents, children and disabled people with the support expected of a decent society, and agrees therefore that Scotland should be an independent country.

The Presiding Officer: I call Johann Lamont to speak to and move amendment S4M-10843.1. Ms Lamont, you have 10 minutes.

14:45

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): As I came in to the Parliament this morning, it felt to me that this was a very important time in the history of this place and of our country. It is an immense privilege for me to speak on behalf of the Labour Party and to move an amendment in my name at the point when the people of Scotland are making an important decision. If we are to come

together after that decision has been made, it is important that we do not impugn the motives of those who are arguing for no or for yes—we all care deeply about our country.

Before I set out the case for a no vote, I want to talk about how we got here and the importance of settling the question. Earlier today, I had my weekly set-to with the First Minister and we debated the current issues in our usual robust and forceful way—it is important that we do that. Over the next four weeks, we will no longer be focusing on debating with each other; we will be talking directly to the people of Scotland—something that I have welcomed and relished since the debate began. I recognise the interest and appetite in our communities and towns to have such debates.

It is no secret that I did not support holding a referendum. While I respect the mandate that the current Government has to hold it, I believe that its prominence has had negative consequences. Only last night, a woman expressed to me her concerns about the way in which families and communities have been divided and, equally, about the way in which Scotland has been on pause on the big decisions facing our country.

It is incumbent on us all to find a way through the debate without leaving us so damaged at the end that we cannot go back to democratic debate and policy making. I embrace the opportunity that the referendum presents—the opportunity finally to answer the constitutional question and agree among us the settled will of Scotland. Whatever happens on 18 September, Alex Salmond can claim this important legacy: the question on Scottish independence will have been put to the Scottish people and they will have been given a fair opportunity to answer it.

For those who have argued for Scottish independence for so many years, I am pleased that they will get the opportunity to test their argument in a vote. For those of us who believe that we are better off as part of the United Kingdom, we will get the chance to reaffirm our place in the UK. If we vote no, the UK will no longer be a historical decision taken by the few; instead, Scotland's place in the United Kingdom will have been actively confirmed and decided by the democratic will of the people. For all of us who care about a better Scotland, it is vital that we agree on a settled constitution and get on with the job of delivering that vision.

I have heard many times over the last few weeks that this is not a vote for Alex Salmond. I agree. However, it is his prospectus that is being put to the Scottish people, so I congratulate the First Minister on his determination in bringing this referendum before us and giving us the opportunity to settle the question once and for all.

The First Minister will not be surprised to know that there is much that I disagree with in his statement. My party has made clear this week its feelings on the latest NHS argument. I also do not believe that the people of Scotland should be going to the polls with such little certainty on something as basic as the currency. I have serious doubts about the cavalier economic assumptions and estimates that have been presented to counter the predictions of the independent experts who say that we will have £6 billion-worth of cuts to make. Indeed, in the past 24 hours, those doubts have been compounded by comments made by Sir Ian Wood.

It is for Alex Salmond to decide which arguments the yes campaign will deploy. That will not stop me asking the hard questions, rebutting his assertions and countering his claims. I will put forward our case as to why people should vote to stay in the UK.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Johann Lamont: Let me make some progress.

Ultimately it will be for the people of Scotland to decide who is right and what is best. I have every confidence that they will get that decision right.

As a young woman I instinctively believed that Scotland should stay in the United Kingdom, but in the last period I, like many of my fellow Scots, have tested the arguments. While some people have come to a different conclusion, there is no doubt that people who are voting yes and those who are voting no often share the same ambitions for a fairer, more equal Scotland. That will be the challenge for us after the referendum vote.

I hope that the people decide to vote no, because I believe that it is in the best interests of Scotland. I believe it with my head and with my heart. With my head, I look at the economic forecasts from the experts and I believe that the strength of the United Kingdom gives us the best chance of achieving our goals here in the Scottish Parliament.

On areas such as pensions and welfare, I believe that the pooling and sharing of resources across 60 million rather than 5 million makes sense. On jobs, I believe that, by being part of something bigger, we are given the security and the opportunity that we want. On the currency, I believe that we should be in a monetary union with the rest of the United Kingdom, but with Scottish voices representing us at the heart of Government.

Those are the arguments of the head, but the arguments of the heart are every bit as strong. I believe in working in partnership and in co-operation with our friends and neighbours,

whether they are in Liverpool or Manchester, Belfast or Cardiff, Glasgow or Edinburgh. That is a co-operation that saw us stand up against fascism, create the welfare state, create the national health service and make significant steps on the road to tackling inequality and disadvantage. Those prizes came out of Westminster, and, throughout that whole period, the SNP opposed Labour Governments that delivered that change.

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): The member talked about the health service, standing against fascism and so on. All of those things are positive reasons for and good things that came out of the union. Could she give us an example of something over the past 20 years that shows how the people of Scotland have benefited from being a member of the union?

Johann Lamont: The national minimum wage, tackling poverty, creating greater equalities in our communities and creating this Parliament, which brought power closer to people.

At the heart of this matter—this is why it matters to me in my soul—is that, when I look at the rest of the United Kingdom, I do not see people whose job is to do us down; I see families who are facing the same challenges as the family that I have and families across Scotland. I believe that we should celebrate what we have in common, not emphasise our differences.

I believe that borders—literal or metaphorical—should be broken down, not thrown up where they are not necessary. It is simple for me. I believe that sovereignty lies with the Scottish people, and we can choose to share that with our neighbours when it is in our interests without compromising our Scottishness. Therefore, I disagree with Alex Salmond. He disagrees with the values that are at the heart of the Labour Party—that, by the strength of our common endeavour, we achieve more than we achieve alone. [*Interruption.*] People who have said, right throughout time, not to vote for the Labour Party can hardly say that they have concerns about the Labour Party now.

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

The Presiding Officer: The member is not giving way.

Johann Lamont: I remind people that, in 2010, Alex Salmond told the people that he wanted them to vote for the Liberal Democrats rather than for a Scottish Labour Prime Minister, but we will put that to one side. Let us agree on this: whatever the result, Scottish politics will never be the same again. If there is a yes vote, that seems obvious. However, I believe that it is equally true if there is a no vote. In one month, the constitutional question will be answered and the settled will of the Scottish people will be decided, whether that is

to go our own way or to continue to work in partnership with our neighbours.

I have never claimed that a no vote will unlock a bounty of treasures and opportunity. Indeed, I welcome the comments of Nicola Sturgeon and John Swinney that independence, equally, is not a magic wand. Even Alex Salmond admitted that we would face serious challenges and that it would not be easy. To my mind, a constitutional arrangement is not an end in itself. We disagree about what the best arrangement is for delivering our ambitions, even though many of those ambitions are shared right across the chamber.

Therefore, on the constitutional question, on which we fundamentally disagree, let the people of Scotland decide on 18 September, and then let us get on with the hard work of changing Scotland, whatever hand we are dealt. Let us move past grievance and alibi, and talk about what we can do rather than what we cannot. We all agree that the educational attainment gap in Scotland must be improved if we are to achieve a fairer society. We all recognise that our NHS and our care system face real pressure from changing demographics, and that we must act and innovate if our sick and vulnerable are to get the treatment that they deserve.

I make this commitment: if there is a yes vote, I will accept it. However, if there is a no vote, I demand an equal commitment from the people on the other side of the chamber. That is because not only will politics never be the same again; it cannot ever be the same again. Rather than have a politics that elevates the interests of party and the political priorities of politicians, we need another kind of politics. We need the Parliament to mature and do its job, opening up its thinking to the challenges that people face in the real world with decisions that will define the future of our country and the wellbeing of our people.

We stand at an important moment in the history of our country. The challenge for all of us in here is that we cannot go back to the politics of the past few years. It is incumbent on all of us to accept the result on 18 September, come together and start doing the business of creating a fairer, more equal society in this country.

I move amendment S4M-10843.1, to leave out from first “agrees” to end and insert:

“looks forward to the democratic decision of the people of Scotland on Scotland’s future and recognises that it will be they who determine whether Scotland leaves the United Kingdom or continues to enjoy the benefits of devolved government within the UK; believes that remaining in the UK is best for jobs, best for schools and hospitals, best for business and best for pensions, and that a strong Scottish Parliament, which will gain new powers, backed up by the strength and security of the UK, represents the best of both worlds for Scotland; notes that, if the Scottish people say ‘No Thanks’ to separation, Scotland will continue as a

partner in a political, social, economic and currency union that pools and shares resources with its closest neighbours and friends in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; looks forward to that positive partnership continuing to evolve in the event of a No vote, and resolves to support every effort to unify the country again once the votes have been counted”.

14:55

Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con): Like many members in this chamber, I have made more speeches on the constitution in the past two and a half years than I can remember. I have made speeches in church halls, in town halls, in school halls and in conference halls. In every one, I have made the economic and political arguments for staying together. I have made some personal arguments, too. However, I do not think that, in any of those speeches, I have fully articulated what I feel—the sense of loss that I would have at seeing my country broken up before me and the grieving that I would do if it came to pass that Britain no longer existed.

I am Scottish first. I will always be Scottish first, and I will always put Scotland first. Nevertheless, there is a part of me that feels that I get to be British, too, and it feels to me as if those who are proposing separation want to take that British part away from me, tell me that it is bad, broken or wrong and throw it in the bin, giving me something less in return. I do not believe that it is broken, bad or wrong.

When I look at Britain, I see one of the great nations of this earth. Yes, Britain has a large economy, sits at the top table of the world's decision-making bodies, is a trading powerhouse and all the rest of it. More than that, though, I see a country that is willing to shoulder a burden and that offers a platform of opportunity, and that makes me proud. I am not blind to Britain's faults—

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): What about disabled people?

Ruth Davidson: I may be jeered or sneered at, as I am being today, but, looking around the world, I think that we are one of the good guys. We are one of the countries that others aspire to be like. From our art to our freedom, our humour, our decency, our sense of fair play and—yes—even our politics, we make a huge contribution to this planet. I want us to keep doing that, and I want us to keep doing it together.

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): The member suggests that people look up to the UK as it currently is. Do they look up to the UK being the fourth most unequal society in the world?

Ruth Davidson: It is not the fourth most unequal society in the world. Since 2010, inequality has been reducing—the member knows that because her own Government has stated that that is true.

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP) rose—

Ruth Davidson: I want us to keep contributing to the world together, and I want to stand shoulder to shoulder with my friends, my family and my allies in England, in Wales and in Northern Ireland, too. I want us to continue to make that contribution.

The Presiding Officer: Sit down, Mr Doris.

Ruth Davidson: There are people alive in the world today because Britain shoulders her share of the burden and because we act together. We are the second biggest giver of overseas aid on the planet. Children are saved by our immunisation programmes who would otherwise die. It is not that an independent Scotland would not give aid—of course, it would. However, it is precisely because of our size and scale that we are able to do more with what we have.

I know that I have talked of this before in the chamber, but I have never been prouder of my country than when, as a young journalist, I was sent to Kosovo to see the Black Watch and saw soldiers of my age and younger, who went to my school in Buckhaven and schools just like it, patrolling the streets, protecting schoolchildren from attack, clearing bombs and stopping bullets. The First Minister called our involvement in Kosovo “unpardonable folly”. He is entitled to that opinion. However, I know that the world is a safer place for Kosovars, ethnic Serbs and Albanians because of the servicemen and women of our country and because we have an integrated fighting force and the capability to act.

Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Ruth Davidson: Not at this time.

Even here at home our research and medical expertise reach far beyond our borders. Because of the UK's support structure nine out of 10 women and eight out of 10 men are surviving skin cancer, which is in part thanks to the work that is being done at the University of Dundee—Scottish expertise, UK support, worldwide benefits.

The First Minister: Is the world a safer place because of the illegal intervention in Iraq?

Ruth Davidson: The world is a safer place because of our ability to act, and of course that ability must be used judiciously. There are people who are huddling on a mountainside in Iraq who have cause to thank us for using our troops to deliver them to safety. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Ruth Davidson: There are people in Kosovo who would not be alive had we followed Alex Salmond's advice on the situation.

That is how it should be—we are stronger, safer and better able to deliver because of Black Watch soldiers serving next to their Royal Welsh colleagues in Pristina, because of Department for International Development teams operating in Africa being run from East Kilbride and because of academics from across the UK conducting research in Scottish universities.

Labour migration is estimated to be up to 75 per cent higher because the UK is one country. The UK is four nations but a single state. I want a kid growing up in Birmingham who is good at science to decide that they want to work with the Dolly-the-sheep team. I want a student in Aberdeen to decide that London's tech centre in Shoreditch is for them. At the moment, it does not matter whether you are Scottish, English, Welsh or Northern Irish, because people can go anywhere and do anything and all be equal under the union flag.

I am 35 years old. In those 35 years, I have never lived or worked anywhere other than Scotland. I love to travel, but I always know where home is. The Scotland that I know and love is part of the UK. Scotland has been shaped by the UK and it, in turn, has done the shaping.

Every UK success in the world is our success, too, because we built the UK and we have driven it. Britain did not colonise us; it does not oppress us. Britain only exists because of us. Leaving it would be to lose something and to see what is left behind become diminished, too.

I have heard the nationalists' arguments and, while I do not agree with them, I respect them. In return, I ask that they see what I see. I see them asking us to vote for something less than we have. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Ruth Davidson: I do not want something less. I want to be part of something bigger, and to put all the strength and resource, imagination and infinite talent that we have in Scotland towards a common endeavour with our friends, neighbours, allies and countrymen in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The UK is ours; we built it. To leave it would be to lose something of ourselves and to leave behind less.

I move amendment S4M-10843.1.2, to insert after "within the UK":

"is proud of the contribution that Scotland makes to the UK as well as the benefits that it receives; recognises the

shared institutions that have grown and developed over time to the benefit of all nations in the UK and is committed to furthering these shared institutions;".

The Presiding Officer: If a member is not taking an intervention, I ask that other members sit down, please, and stop standing in the hope that they might do so.

15:03

Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): When I heard Ruth Davidson talk about her pride in being Scottish, I shared her pride. When I heard Scottish National Party members scoff at her claim about being Scottish, I was disgusted by their attitude. The SNP does not have a monopoly on being Scottish: I am as proud a Scot as its members are, and they should not deny that.

When I was 17, I became politically active. I did so because I was impatient for change. I wanted to tackle injustice and to make the world a better place. That drive is as strong today as it was 30 years ago. For me, liberalism was the answer; it still is.

I want to help all individuals achieve great things. I want people to be all that they can be and to fulfil their potential. When I shout, "Freedom!" that is not a cry for national freedom; rather, it is a cry for individual freedom. As my great Liberal forefathers would have said, our vision is for freedom from ignorance, poverty and conformity. That is why I support education from the early years and throughout life; that is why personal freedom is important, too—to live life as you wish as long as it does not impinge on someone else's freedom.

As a Liberal, I believe in the outstanding power of the individual to do great things. Human nature is innately good, generous and open. That is why I have never warmed to nationalism, as I have always viewed its central philosophy as being inward rather than outward looking. It divides rather than unites. I recognise that not all supporters of independence regard themselves as isolationists, but the effect and outcome of their desired destination feed that philosophy.

Of course Britain is not perfect, but it is not as imperfect as the nationalists would like people to believe. The fact that it is not perfect does not mean that I want to break it up and the fact that I want change does not mean that I want just any change that happens to come along.

There is a lot to be proud of in our United Kingdom, and a lot that helps people to achieve great things. Let us take science and innovation. Even though Scottish universities form only one tenth of the UK university base, they get 13 per cent of UK funding against a population share of 8 per cent. That is 50 per cent more than elsewhere

in the UK. That happens because of the combination of talent and access to that bigger pool of funding.

The First Minister: I struggled to understand the idea that liberalism is incompatible with wanting an independent Scotland. I could not understand that. I heard today that John Barrett, the former Liberal MP for Edinburgh West, is voting yes in the referendum—he has publicly announced that today. Is that not an indication that it is perfectly proper to be a loyal Liberal who avows liberalism and to support yes in the referendum?

Willie Rennie: Members of our party are free to vote as they wish. We are not the strict party that the SNP seeks to be, driving out division and difference.

I respect John Barrett for who he is—*[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Willie Rennie: I wonder whether the First Minister agrees with John Barrett's criticism of him, because I suspect that he does not. There is not necessarily unity on that.

Let us take energy. To achieve our ambitions for Scottish renewable energy, it makes sense to share the UK consumer base during development to advance renewables and keep energy bills lower.

Let us take food and drink. Scotland and Scottish businesses have been able to take good advantage of our natural food and drink products, to innovate and to add value to Scottish produce. The global network of 270 UK embassies, consulates and trade missions supports those businesses. In the past four years, UK exports have risen by 28 per cent to Brazil, by 55 per cent to India and by 115 per cent to China. Our ambition should be that those embassies step up their work for us to open doors to new markets, not close their doors to Scotland.

Let us take the single market, regulatory regime and currency that the First Minister refused to talk about. They mean that a business here in Edinburgh can trade across the UK with limited barriers. That trade is worth 270,000 jobs to Scotland.

Those examples speak to the United Kingdom as a great platform from which Scots can be all they can be.

I do not want a Scotland that retreats from other countries, cutting two thirds of our overseas representation just when there has never been a better time to promote Scottish excellence and businesses. I do not want a Scotland that cuts the opportunities for Scottish universities to keep the

huge funding boost that they get from the UK at the moment when the 21st century western economies demand more innovation. I do not want a Scotland that shrinks our ambition on climate change with our great renewable energy developments just when the climate needs the whole world to rally round.

My ambition is to build on the 250,000 jobs that come from trade with the rest of the United Kingdom, to use that large network of embassies and to increase UK research funding, not cut it. That is our positive vision.

I simply do not accept that the maximum potential of people in Scotland can be achieved only if we create a separate nation. A no vote is a vote of confidence in the ability of Scots to be all that they can be and to aspire in the finest traditions of our nation, confident to be part of something bigger, with the global reach of 60 million people, within a UK economic base with broad shoulders, and proud to stand with the rest of the UK family, together. We are truly better together.

I move amendment S4M-10843.1.1, to insert after "both worlds for Scotland;":

"applauds the ambition of the people of Scotland to reach their individual as well as collective potential in all spheres of life, building on the achievements of Scots over the last 300 years and recognises the array of additional opportunities that they each enjoy as a strong part of the UK family of nations;".

The Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate. I reiterate that we are extremely tight for time this afternoon. There is a distinct possibility that at least one member will not get to speak at all and we may have to cut some of the speeches by a couple of minutes.

15:10

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): I am delighted to speak in the debate and to set out the reasons why I want to see Scotland's future decided by the people who live and work in Scotland. That can be assured only with a yes vote on 18 September.

Last weekend, like many in the chamber, I read with considerable interest the report in Sunday's *Observer* that Professor Sir Tom Devine, one of Scotland's outstanding public intellectuals, will vote yes in the independence referendum. The point is not simply that one of Scotland's most internationally acclaimed academics has endorsed Scottish independence, important as that is. More significant are the reasons that he gave for reaching that decision. Professor Devine stated:

"It is the Scots who have succeeded most in preserving the British idea of fairness and compassion in terms of state support and intervention. Ironically, it is England,

since the 1980s, which has embarked on a separate journey.”

In those short sentences, Professor Devine expressed exactly what an increasing number of Scottish voters, particularly among the undecided, know to be true—that if we are to continue to deliver, and to be able to deliver, policies that reflect our shared commitment to upholding the values of fairness, compassion and social justice, which have been at the very heart of public policy in Scotland for decades, we must choose independence over the status quo.

Nowhere are those values of fairness, compassion and social justice more in evidence than in Scotland’s national health service. Today, the Scottish NHS is publicly funded and delivered and its staff—the doctors, nurses and a vast array of trained support workers—work tirelessly to support the sick and vulnerable across our communities. There is no doubt in my mind, and there should be none in the minds of Scotland’s voters, that the only way of ensuring that Scotland’s NHS remains true to the founding principles that Nye Bevan set out all those years ago—that it should meet everyone’s needs, be free at the point of delivery and be based on clinical need and not the ability to pay—is to vote for independence.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Aileen McLeod: As the First Minister made clear on Monday, those principles will not be mere aspirations or guidelines in an independent Scotland. Aspirations and guidelines are vulnerable to betrayal as political fashions change, as has clearly been, and remains, the case south of the border—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): The member is not taking an intervention.

Aileen McLeod: Instead, in an independent Scotland, we will seek to enshrine the NHS principles in a written constitution for an independent Scotland, thereby ensuring that no future Government can undermine what is a foundational building block of a fair and just society, and protecting future generations from the vagaries of neo-liberal political opportunism. [*Interruption.*]

Aileen McLeod: Mr Findlay can laugh.

Ruth Davidson: Will the member take an intervention on that point?

Aileen McLeod: On Tuesday, the health secretary set out the risks to Scotland’s NHS under the status quo.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is not taking an intervention.

Aileen McLeod: Of those risks, none is so great as the risk to the Scottish budget from the continual cuts imposed on public spending by the Tory and Liberal coalition Government—cuts that the Labour Party is committed to implementing should it be elected in the UK general election next May. As the health secretary also said, for every £10 that is cut by Westminster from spending on health and public services, £1 will be lost to Scotland’s budget for public spending on essential services, including health.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Aileen McLeod: Not just now.

Independence will ensure that Scotland’s finances are under the control of this Parliament and that the people of Scotland are thereby free to make their own choices about the quality of public services, including health services, that they want to have available for themselves and their fellow citizens now and in the future.

What is most extraordinary in this entire debate is the position of the Labour Party in Scotland. It seems that in every other part of these islands—in England and in Wales—we hear Labour politicians issuing dire warnings of the devastating impact that Tory-Liberal spending cuts and privatisation are having on the NHS in England and Wales. From Andy Burnham in Westminster to Mark Drakeford in Cardiff, the clarion calls have gone out to save the NHS from privatisation and cuts.

The irony is that in that regard I agree with the Labour Party in England and the Labour Party in Wales. Contrast those positions with that of the Labour Party in Scotland, where we find Labour campaigning hand in glove with its Tory and Liberal Democrat partners, which are the very parties wielding the public spending axe in Westminster, trying—

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Aileen McLeod: —to convince the Scottish public that Scotland’s NHS is safe inside the union. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order. The member is in her last minute. [*Interruption.*] Order, please. I did not hear what Mr Findlay said. If it is in the *Official Report*, I will check it. Time spent discussing, jeering, interrupting—

Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP): He should apologise.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Maxwell!

Any time spent doing that will be taken out of back-bench speeches.

Ms McLeod, please continue.

Aileen McLeod: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

I do not buy that, and it is increasingly clear that a majority of Scottish voters are not about to be fooled into believing it either.

The message to the Scottish electorate is clear: if you want to protect Scotland's NHS and public services from the privatisation and cuts coming from this and future UK Governments at Westminster, on 18 September you should vote for independence.

People across Scotland are waking up to the fact that voting yes on 18 September will give us the one opportunity to ensure that we protect our NHS. It is not only for this generation that a yes vote is so important. It is to secure for future generations an NHS that not only remains true to the principles that were set out by Nye Bevan all those years ago but in every respect is representative of the fundamental values of Scottish society.

I support the motion in the First Minister's name.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before we continue, I reiterate that I will not add any time on to members' speeches to allow for interruptions. Unfortunately, speeches will probably now have to be reduced.

15:17

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): An independent Scotland, or a political, social, economic and currency union with our closest neighbours and friends: at the end of this campaign, it is a very simple choice, and it is a choice for the people of Scotland to make.

The campaign really is historic, because after 15 years of devolution we stand at a crossroads and the choice that we make will set the direction for future generations as well as our own. The decision of the Scottish people in 1997 to set up this Parliament was a decision that no future Government could overturn. The choice of either independence or union will be decided by the self-determination of the Scottish people and will be just as irreversible a decision.

Whatever we choose, there are tough challenges ahead. The world remains a dangerous place, divided and ill-divided. Finite resources must by definition come to an end, and competitive advantage must be won and won again in every generation.

Sir Ian Wood has had some important things to say on these issues this week, laid out in full in today's *Press and Journal*. I first worked with Sir Ian when I was vice-chair of the Government oil and gas industry forum PILOT a decade ago, when he chaired the industry leadership team.

Even at that time, his clear focus was on what more could be done to maximise the recovery of oil and gas from the North Sea.

Sir Ian Wood is happy to work with Governments of any party, as ministers well know. When he says that he cannot stand idly by while his words are misquoted in the referendum debate, we should all pay attention to what he actually says. Sir Ian Wood has never said that there are 24 billion barrels of oil equivalent waiting to be extracted from the UK continental shelf. His report says that there may be as little as 12 billion barrels, or as much as 24 billion barrels, but nothing is certain other than the scale of challenges to be overcome along the way.

Sir Ian Wood believes that, if Government implements all his recommendations for taxes, licensing and regulation and if the industry gets back to carrying out new exploration—it has largely ceased to do that—and finds a lot more oil and gas in future years, it might be able to produce between 15 billion and 16.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent over the next 40 years.

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Lewis Macdonald: Not at the moment.

If that is done, future revenues for Government might come in at around £5 billion a year, as they did last year. That is £2 billion a year less than the Scottish National Party predicted, or a shortfall of around £370 a year for every man, woman and child living in Scotland.

Even more important than the numbers is what Sir Ian Wood has said about the impact of independence on that vital industry. Costs in the North Sea rose by 15 per cent last year and exploration in UK waters is at an all-time low. Stability and certainty going forward are critical to maximising economic recovery. In Sir Ian Wood's view, a yes vote in the referendum

"would inevitably cause a significant loss of momentum over the next three or four years—a critical development period in maximising recovery of our reserves."

None of the optimistic projections that he or anybody else has made will be realised unless we secure that certainty. That is why he chose to highlight the risks of a vote for Scottish independence.

A yes vote would not bring certainty and stability to the North Sea. Instead of a single fiscal, licensing and regulatory regime across the UK continental shelf, we would have one regime in Scottish waters and a different regime in the rest of the UK. That clearly has implications for employment in the sector, not least in Aberdeen, from where many companies operate their entire UK assets. It also means that much time and

many millions of pounds would be spent disaggregating the assets and liabilities of companies that operate across the UK continental shelf, although that time urgently needs to be spent on creating a new approach to maximising recovery in the future.

It makes more sense for the offshore industry in Britain to stay together, and the same applies across the economy. The United Kingdom provides Scottish business with a home market of more than 60 million people. That would no longer be true in the event of independence.

The other day, I received a letter from Richard Lochhead, who wanted to talk to me about access to that home market for Aberdeenshire farmers. He said that they should not worry about losing preferential access in the event of a yes vote, because

“Britain is a geographical term”,

so Scottish farmers could still describe what they grew as “Produce of Britain”. Britain is indeed the name of an island, but it is much more than that: it is also the name of a state, a culture and a country that we share with our closest neighbours and friends.

Those who work in Scotland’s food and drink sector have to make a choice, just like those who work in our oil economy and everyone else who has a vote next month. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order, please.

Lewis Macdonald: They have a choice to stay together, renew our union and seek to make it stronger and better in the years ahead or, alternatively, to listen to Mr Salmond and walk away. That is a choice not just for this generation, but for the generations to come. I look forward to the majority of the people of Scotland voting no next month.

15:23

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Despite Alistair Darling’s refusal to admit during the recent televised debate that Scotland could be a successful independent nation, other prominent unionist politicians, including the Prime Minister, David Cameron, accept that it could be. How do we know that? We know that because David Cameron said so. He said:

“Supporters of independence will always be able to cite examples of small, independent and thriving economies across Europe such as Finland, Switzerland and Norway. It would be wrong to suggest that Scotland could not be another such successful, independent country.”

However, the Labour amendment seeks to leave out everything after the first “agrees” in the Scottish Government motion, including the first line, which says:

“agrees that Scotland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, is rich in human talent and benefits from vast natural resources”.

Sadly, the other unionist amendments are in similar vein. I wonder what makes people so unable or unwilling to see the obvious positives in their own country. Do they not believe that we are rich in human talent? Why can they not acknowledge our vast natural resources?

Scotland is the 14th wealthiest nation in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and there is no doubt that it has a dynamic and successful economy, a highly skilled workforce, strong manufacturing, tourism, knowledge, and growing food and drink sectors. The most recent industry figures show that turnover in the Scottish food and drink sector alone reached £14 billion in 2012, which is a 40 per cent increase since 2007.

It is no wonder that, over the past five years, Scotland’s finances were stronger than the UK’s as a whole by £8.3 billion, or £1,600 per person. That is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the ratings agency Standard & Poor’s stated:

“Even excluding North Sea output ... Scotland would qualify for our highest economic assessment.”

Of course, it would be foolish to underplay the importance of our oil and gas resources, which is something that the doomsayers have strived to do since the no campaign began, and not least today. New discoveries in the Clair field suggest that there is plenty of life in Scotland’s oil and gas industry. As BBC news has pointed out,

“Oil industry experts have described it as a ‘monster’ field containing an estimated eight billion barrels of oil and some analysts believe oil produced there could see the Atlantic overtake the North Sea as the UK’s biggest oil-producing region.”

Only the no campaign would try to persuade Scotland that oil is a burden and that nuclear weapons, which, as Michael Heseltine admitted last week, have hindered exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels in the west, are an asset.

Why do we have some of the highest levels of child poverty in the western world? Why are working families relying on food hand-outs? Why is our state pension among the lowest in Europe relative to earnings? Why do people living in an oil, gas and renewables-rich nation suffer fuel poverty? Why have living standards fallen in each of the last five years and why will they not reach 2002 levels until 2009? It is because welfare, pensions, energy and defence policies are controlled by Westminster. To me, it is obvious that decisions that are made in Scotland for Scotland must surely be better for the people living here than decisions that are made elsewhere on our behalf.

Only with a yes vote can we ensure that Scotland's wealth is placed in Scotland's hands and used to improve our society. Only with a yes vote can we use the powers of independence to establish policies that are tailored to Scottish needs and create more opportunities for the people who live here, including the nearly 40,000 young people who feel the need to leave Scotland every year. With independence, Scotland would have access to Scottish taxes that currently flow to the Treasury and would cease to pay for Scottish members of Parliament and our share of running the House of Lords or Trident.

With independence, even relatively small changes could make a big difference. For example, according to aviation industry leaders, the abolition of air passenger duty would double the number of visitors to Scotland within five years, thereby greatly enhancing our international connectivity and bolstering our tourism industry and all the jobs that go along with it. The Scottish Government's transformational childcare proposals would lead to increased participation in the labour market, which would further expand our economy.

The opportunity to make Scotland wealthier is, alone, an argument for Scotland to reassert itself as an independent nation. However, there are consequences of remaining shackled to Westminster. According to Oxfam, Britain's five richest families are now worth more than the poorest 12 million people and, in the years ahead, welfare cuts will see more disabled people in Scotland losing disability benefits and more children pushed into poverty. Adam Smith said:

"No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable."

Canon Kenyon Wright outlined his concerns about the impact of a no vote in *The Scotsman* this week. He said:

"Don't be fooled by the various vague promises of more devolution. The press called me the Godfather of Devolution. Well, ... I tell you this—the child has grown up and outgrown devolution, no matter how Max, for two reasons. Firstly, because it leaves crucial constitutional and economic areas to be decided by London. Secondly, because devolution is power by gift; or, perhaps, it is really power on loan, for gifts can't be taken back. Power devolved is power retained."

In yesterday's *Herald*, Alan Taylor wrote:

"all the fresh, innovative, imaginative ideas have come from those eager for change. They are the ones who want to make a fairer, more equitable society and who have inspired people to become involved in the hope of making that happen. They have made an often selfless investment. The same cannot be said for many on the No side. What they want to do is protect what they have"

For those in the yes campaign, the referendum is not about protecting vested interests. It is about

Scotland, our country and our people, being all that it and they can be. Colleagues, it is surely time that Scotland rejoined the family of independent nations and set about creating the better Scotland that we all wish to see. To do that, I urge everyone in our country to vote yes on 18 September.

15:29

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): The First Minister began by saying that the referendum debate has re-energised Scottish politics, and I believe that that is true. As the First Minister said, there has been an outpouring of ideas and enthusiasm. Members on both sides of the debate have recognised the need to retain that energy and engagement after the vote. I believe that Scotland can be proud of the debate that has been taking place. What has re-energised Scottish politics has been not members of the Scottish Parliament debating here in the chamber, or other politicians and political parties, large or small, but the broad, creative, inclusive national debate that has been taking place in communities throughout Scotland. That is the debate of which Scotland can be proud.

As we think about how to retain that energy, engagement and creativity after the referendum, we can be clear about one thing: we will not achieve that if politicians on either side, whoever wins or loses, pull up the drawbridge and decide that they know what Scotland wants. The engagement has to continue in a participative sense, ensuring that all people feel able to shape Scotland's future direction.

Some people have suggested that this debate will cut us off from one another in our communities and from friends and family south of the border. Nothing could be further from the truth. By bringing us more into connection with the question of power in our society, the debate is giving us the ability to build the kind of relationship that will be beneficial to all.

I spoke recently in London to Green colleagues and a range of Green Party and other activists from England and Wales. They are looking at the opportunity for democratic renewal throughout these islands that could come from Scottish independence. They are looking at the opportunity to question the existence and renewal of weapons of mass destruction on these islands that could come from Scottish independence. They are looking at the opportunity for a clean, renewable energy system that could come if Scotland ensured that we harnessed its renewable energy potential, not just for our needs but for export. There are opportunities, not just for Scots to make decisions about our domestic affairs but for a better relationship within these islands.

Whether there is a yes vote or a no vote, there will be a danger that politicians on the winning side will be triumphalist and decide that they know what is best. In the case of a no vote, that will be one flavour of devo max or another. I have friends and party colleagues who might vote no in the referendum, but none of them is voting no because they are signed up to one of the—in my view—slightly dubious versions of devo max that have come from the UK political parties, which seem to me to be designed not to transfer the ability to run different economic policy in Scotland but rather to transfer the responsibility for implementing the cuts that will come from ideological austerity economics south of the border.

I also have friends and colleagues who will vote yes in September—indeed, like me, most of my party colleagues will do so. We might be voting yes in sympathy with some of the elements in the famous 650 answers in the white paper, but we are not in sympathy with all of them. We will vote yes on the basis of a question. Every member in this chamber, and every voter in the country, will vote yes or no on the basis of the question that is printed in black and white on the ballot paper. Should Scotland be an independent country?

The ethos of participative engaging and re-engaging in political debate that we have enjoyed over the past few months would be undermined if the winning side in either scenario pulled up the drawbridge and said, “We know what to do next, on every question.” A mandate on issues that are currently reserved will be sought in 2016 if we are independent; it is not what is sought next month.

For example, the Greens will never agree with Governments, whether they are in Edinburgh or London, who simply want to secure the conditions in which to maximise oil and gas extraction, burning through the stuff ever faster. There is an absolute contradiction between the goal of extracting fossil fuels from the North Sea ever faster and the goal of keeping carbon fossil fuels out of the atmosphere, to which both Governments, north and south of the border, have committed.

We will never agree with the exposure of our economies, not just in Scotland but throughout the UK and in much of the western world, to the carbon bubble. A dramatically overvalued industry is sitting on reserves of four or five times more carbon than we can afford ever to burn. We need to break our reliance on the carbon bubble before it bursts.

I finish on a point on which I am sure that we can all agree—I certainly hope so. It is not so very long since we gathered in what used to be our temporary home, at the top of the Royal Mile, to mourn the passing of our friend Margo MacDonald

and to hear of her call for us to treat one another as opponents, perhaps, but never enemies in this debate. In these last few weeks, every one of us has a responsibility to remember that, every day that we get out of bed and go into the communities that we represent in Scotland to continue the debate. We have a responsibility to remember it every day as we end our campaigning—to treat one another with respect and to have the debate in the spirit of friendship that Scotland deserves.

15:35

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): It is very telling that, in drafting their amendments, the better together parties could not find it in themselves to leave the first clause of the Government motion in place:

“That the Parliament agrees that Scotland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, is rich in human talent and benefits from vast natural resources”.

Whatever their views on the constitution, I would have thought that we could all agree that Scotland is a wealthy country, that it is rich in talent and that it has vast natural resources. That statement is rooted in fact and is backed up by countless authorities, which colleagues have quoted.

On 2 February this year, the *Financial Times* said that Scotland is

“richer than the rest of the UK and in the top 20 countries globally in terms of GDP per head”.

Only yesterday, the world’s most eminent economist, the Nobel prize-winning Professor Joe Stiglitz, told Bloomberg that Scotland could be an independent country. I was also encouraged to hear Professor Stiglitz acknowledge the different directions that the Scottish and Westminster Governments were taking, in his view, in relation to social policy, with the Scottish Government having a far greater commitment to social democratic values and public services.

Professor Stiglitz’s book is called “The Price of Inequality”, so he knows what he is talking about. This is the best opportunity to address inequality—a yes vote is the best opportunity that we will ever have to address inequality. I want to talk in particular about the geographical inequality that pulls our young people out of Scotland, towards London and the south-east.

On several occasions, I have had the pleasure of speaking beside Dr Philippa Whitford, the consultant breast surgeon who is one of the most inspirational figures in the grassroots movement for yes that has brought our country alive in recent months. Philippa is one of a growing number of clinicians to speak out about the threat to the Scottish NHS from the privatisation agenda in England, which my colleague Aileen McLeod outlined. However, as Philippa speaks to full halls

all over the country, she makes another striking point. Most of her patients are older women and, like any good doctor, she asks them what support they have at home to help them to recuperate from surgery. Far too often, they tell her that they have no support because their grown-up children have moved away—sometimes abroad, but more often to the south of England.

As the First Minister said, Scotland loses almost 40,000 young people every year, and they are our brightest and best. According to recent figures from the Office for National Statistics, Scotland has the best-educated population in Europe, in terms not just of the high proportion of people with degrees but of the high number of people with good vocational qualifications. In an area that this Parliament fully controls—education—we have established ourselves as a world leader. However, in an area that we do not control—economic and fiscal policy—we are victims of our success in education, because we cannot provide the sort of jobs that those highly educated and ambitious young people want.

That is not a new trend. Professor Tom Devine, our most eminent historian—who, as my colleague Aileen McLeod said, has come out for yes, like so many other Scots—wrote in his book on the Scottish diaspora about the union dividend, which resulted in huge mass migration from Scotland.

Scotland was the only country among European countries of a similar size—Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Ireland—to have a falling population between 1950 and 2000. That trend has reversed under the present Government, but we need to do so much more because the outward migration of our young people is greater than in other parts of the UK. That is partly because of the pull of London: eight out of 10 new jobs in the private sector are created in London, and the sort of jobs that are being created in London are attracting our young people. London has 14 per cent more jobs in the top employment categories of managers, professionals and technical staff than Scotland. That imbalance has existed for many years.

Business research and development in the UK is concentrated in the east and south-east of England, a pattern that has held since at least 1990. Scotland has a very low business R and D spend of 0.5 per cent of GDP.

That explains why, despite being one of the richest countries in the world according to the *Financial Times*, Scotland is still losing its best talent and why, even in these better times when Scotland is doing relatively well economically—according to Ernst & Young, we are one of the best-performing areas for inward investment—we are still losing a high proportion of our young people to outward migration. We need the fiscal

levers that are reserved to Westminster and the Scottish tax revenues that flow there to keep our most precious resources of all: the aspirational young Scots who leave in search of a better life.

The economist Margaret Cuthbert thinks that these things are only going to get worse. She says:

“The regional disparities”

in the UK

“are not some short term phenomenon. Rather they are the result of the fast growing south, particularly London and the City, acting as a magnet for capital and labour from the other parts of the UK.”

Borrowing a rather more colourful phrase from the coalition’s business secretary, Vince Cable, I believe that London is “a giant suction machine”, swallowing up not just Scotland’s wealth but our future wealth creators.

That is why I am urging a yes vote. Independence is our greatest opportunity to combat the power of the “giant suction machine” that Mr Cable has so vividly described. We can do that in several ways, and over the past weeks and months we have outlined several plans for growth, including “Reindustrialising Scotland for the 21st Century: A Sustainable Industrial Strategy for a Modern, Independent Nation” and the jobs plan. By taking our economy and our future into our own hands, we can create a much better future for our young people and keep them here in Scotland.

15:41

Alex Rowley (Cowdenbeath) (Lab): As someone who came into this Parliament only in January—and under circumstances that I certainly did not want—I am delighted that we have reached this point. I will be even more delighted when we get to 19 September, regardless of the result, because we can then start to focus on what I came into this Parliament to do, which is to fight for the communities that I represent and a better Scotland. I have found it difficult to do that over the last period because, regardless of our views on the matter, the whole focus seems to have been on the referendum.

I have never had any problem with my identity: I was brought up—and have always been proud to be—a Fifer. I was brought up by my mum, who, although she did not have any label, could be fairly described as a socialist. She brought me up to believe that we had to fight for better opportunities for working people, that working people had never got anything for nothing and that we always had to fight for what we got. It would be fair to say that my mum was not keen on the Tories—and neither have I been.

That is my starting point in looking at the best way of moving forward with regard to this debate. Joan McAlpine talked about our talent going south, but what angers me and, I think, many people is seeing the masses of young people in Scotland—Scotland's precious resource—not getting the opportunities. If we are talking about ambition for Scotland, our ambition must be to give every child, no matter what household or area they were born into, the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Surely the key objective that we must fight towards is the eradication of poverty and deprivation right across Scotland. We must be tough on poverty, and tough on the causes of poverty. However, when I look about me, I have to say that I have seen more direction, more policy and more political leadership with regard to tackling poverty and inequality and giving young people opportunities in the past two and a half years of a Labour administration in Fife than I have seen in the past seven years of the Government led by Alex Salmond.

For a start, we need to invest in housing. Surely every child has the right to a roof over their head, but over the past seven years the money that has come into local authorities for housing has been cut. We also need to focus on early intervention and family intervention. One of the first things that the Labour administration in Fife did two and a half years ago was redirect £8 million into family centres to focus on those in greatest need. We can either introduce populist policies that make us popular with everyone, or prioritise and direct resources at communities, schools and the areas that need them most—and that is what there has been a lack of.

When I think about the issue, I think about how we can best move forward and tackle the priorities. I conclude that the way to do that is to pool and share resources across the United Kingdom. We need a strong Scottish Parliament that uses the powers that we have. Another point that must be made is that I have yet to see the use of a range of powers that the Parliament has and which we could use to tackle inequality across Scotland.

Joan McAlpine: The member talks about pooling resources across the United Kingdom. The UK welfare cuts will take £6 billion out of the Scottish welfare budget and will result in up to 100,000 children being plunged into poverty. How does he see that as a fair pooling of resources?

Alex Rowley: Under the previous Labour Government, more than 1 million pensioners were lifted out of poverty across the UK, and many of them were in Scotland. Under the previous Tory Government, pensioners had to choose between heating and eating, which is unacceptable. Under

Labour, more than 200,000 children in Scotland were lifted out of poverty.

As a teenager, I was a shop steward in the National Union of Public Employees when that public sector union campaigned for a national minimum wage. I was told at that time—even by some trade unionists—that that would never happen, but it did happen, under a Labour Government.

We need a poverty strategy for Scotland. We must devolve powers to local government. We must look at this place again, because I am not convinced that it is working to create joined-up government that will tackle inequality and poverty. The best opportunity to tackle the big issues and give every youngster in Scotland the best chance in life comes from a strong Scottish Parliament that is focused on doing that as part of a strong United Kingdom.

I would describe myself as not just a socialist but an internationalist. At a time when we have many problems around the world, we need to look outwards, not inwards.

15:47

Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP): Four weeks from today, the people of Scotland will decide between two futures. We can vote no and accept the consequences of leaving our national health service in the hands of Westminster parties that are intent on cuts, austerity, health charges and the privatisation of our NHS. We will also have to accept the years of austerity and the damage to our cherished public services that will flow from the £25 billion of cuts that the UK Government will implement, irrespective of the party that forms that Government after the 2015 UK general election.

Alternatively, the people of Scotland can choose to vote yes and take Scotland's future into Scotland's hands. We can choose to protect our NHS from the market-driven ideology of the Westminster parties that is unpicking the NHS south of the border; we can choose to rid our country of the wasteful and immoral weapons of mass destruction that despoil it; we can choose to invest in transformational childcare policies for families across Scotland; and we can choose to have an education system that is based on the ability to learn and not the ability to pay.

I consider it a great privilege to be part of the historic events that are taking place in Scotland, but I know that some in the chamber would rather that none of this was taking place. They think that having a democratic debate and a passionate discussion about Scotland's future and how we can create a better society is somehow a distraction—it is just a wee thing.

I challenge those members to recall any other time in recent memory when town and village halls have been filled with people wanting to re-engage with the democratic process and when talk of what we can do has replaced the depressing dirge of what we cannot do. That enthusiasm arises because the independence debate is opening up new possibilities about how we can create a fairer and more prosperous society and about how we can take Scotland's vast wealth and make it work for the many and not just the few.

Johann Lamont: I am happy to concur with the member that this democratic debate has been exciting and energetic. Will he confirm that he will accept the result of the vote and that, if it is a no vote, he will make devolution work?

Stewart Maxwell: We have always said that we will accept the democratic decision of the Scottish people, and I am surprised that Johann Lamont has yet again to ask a really rather silly question.

People feel a new-found sense of empowerment. They are waking up to the opportunities of independence and are realising that Scotland is not a poor country, but is in fact one of the wealthiest countries in the world. It is wealthier per head than countries such as France and Japan, and wealthier than the rest of the UK, but it does not feel that way, and it often does not look that way.

Those new-found feelings of opportunity, hope and ambition contrast sharply with the disempowerment and stagnation of the Westminster system. After all, that is a system that regularly imposes Tory Governments on Scotland without any democratic mandate from the Scottish people. Scotland's future must be in Scotland's hands.

Our Parliament has already shown that, where we have the power, we make the best decisions for Scotland, and nowhere is that more evident than in our education system. While we have adhered to the principle of access to education based on the ability to learn and not the ability to pay, Westminster is burdening English students with fees of up to £9,000 a year. A Sutton Trust report concluded that many students will still be repaying student loans into their 40s and 50s, and that some will never clear their debts.

However, having a bit of power over a bit of the system is akin to a boxer fighting with one hand tied behind his back. He might strike the odd blow, but ultimately he cannot win. Our lack of macroeconomic power means that more than 700,000 Scots have emigrated in the past 10 years, including more than 30,000 young people a year. We need to ensure not only that we continue to be a world leader in education, but that the Scottish Parliament has the economic levers to

create opportunities for our young people here at home in Scotland.

If people choose to travel the world to seek out new opportunities and experiences, that is absolutely fantastic, but if they are forced to leave, splitting up families because they can only find work elsewhere, that is a failure and a disgrace. Watching the grandchildren grow up via Skype is not the kind of future that I want for the families of Scotland.

The no campaign continually uses the negative language of splits and separation to describe the universally recognised normal state that others call independence, but the truth is that independence will provide us with the opportunities to keep families together. It will allow young people to choose to stay and work here in Scotland, near to their families, if that is what they want to do.

However, Westminster's damage has extended beyond its failure to balance economic opportunities across the UK. The UK Government has made it increasingly difficult for international students to study here. Professor Wright of the University of Strathclyde said that UK Government policy on international students was "a disaster" that makes us "less competitive".

International students contribute hundreds of millions of pounds to the economy every year, yet Westminster's ideology-driven immigration policy is putting that at risk. To prevent further damage to our economy and to our higher education sector, Scotland needs a yes vote and the transfer of powers over immigration to the Scottish Parliament.

Every day, on doorsteps and in public meetings throughout Scotland, more and more people are waking up to the opportunities of independence.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): The member should draw to a close, please.

Stewart Maxwell: The referendum is about many things, but fundamentally it is about the desire to seize the opportunity of a lifetime; to choose between two futures that could not be more different; and to decide whether to leave our future in the hands of Westminster or to bring power over Scotland home to Scotland. That is no wee thing.

All three generations of my family are united in saying, "We choose hope over fear and we choose Scotland over Westminster, and on September 18 we choose yes."

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Members have up to six minutes, as we are very tight for time.

15:53

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): There have been too many political funerals in the past year. I was saddened by Sam Galbraith's death earlier this week. He was a combative politician, but he somehow managed to be both spiky and very likeable at the same time. His death got me thinking about how far we have travelled since those heady days of the new Scottish Parliament in 1999. We may recently have forgotten, but the early days and years of devolution were marked by a sense of common purpose and a willingness to work together.

The huge expansion of nursery education, the introduction of free personal care and the growing self-confidence that allowed us to ban smoking in public places are all products of devolution—not of independence, I note, but of devolution within the United Kingdom.

In fact, it struck me in passing—SNP backbenchers may find this hard to believe—that there was also a time when John Swinney, Nicola Sturgeon and their Cabinet colleagues were among the staunchest advocates of a strong Scottish Parliament holding a potentially overbearing Executive to account. How times change.

However, that train of thought took me, like Patrick Harvie, straight to the very moving celebration of Margo MacDonald's life, and in particular to her parting message, which was read by her husband Jim Sillars, appealing for—whatever the result of the referendum in four weeks—divisions to end, and for us as a nation to seek unity of purpose. That is a message that I have taken comfort from in the face of the occasional bad-tempered spat or ill-judged intervention and—I admit—when struggling to contain my own frustration at what I often feel is the pointlessness of the offer that is before us.

What I have found even more encouraging is that underneath the froth of constitutional discussion, I can see common themes underpinning many of the contributions from both sides, and a meaningful, achievable political vision for Scotland around which we could coalesce post-September.

Those themes—ideas that support our building a modern progressive country—are echoed by voices from civic Scotland. For example, the Church of Scotland's recent publication "Imagining Scotland's Future: Our Vision" talks about the church's commitment to ensuring that issues of social justice will be a focus for action after September, regardless of what happens. The Scottish Trades Union Congress in its "A Just Scotland" report similarly talks about the quality and the collective values of the labour and trade

union movement. I thought that teachers' union the Educational Institute of Scotland put it very well when it said that

"we are not 'neutral' ... we firmly believe that ... it is imperative that there emerges a strong sense of the type of Scotland we wish to live in, irrespective of the constitutional settlement."

Clare Adamson: Will Ken Macintosh take an intervention?

Ken Macintosh: I will in a second, perhaps.

Many political observers have commented that the SNP has tried to reinvent itself over the past couple of decades as a party of the social democratic left. I have highlighted previously my misgivings that populism is as powerful a force within the SNP as genuine progressivism, but nonetheless the fact is that ministers feel obliged to use the language of progressive politics simply to ensure that their assertions on the constitution have a chance of being heard. Some contributions, such as the repeated and increasingly desperate attempts to trade on the legacy of Nye Bevan, are slightly cringeworthy, but they are a recognition of where both mainstream and majority political opinion lies in Scotland.

Even though the result of the 2011 election might not necessarily suggest it, most analysts viewed the Labour and SNP manifestos at the time as being remarkably similar documents. The point that I want to emphasise is that there is much in the way of common ground between Labour and the SNP.

Clare Adamson: I absolutely agree with Mr Macintosh that there is much in our history and experiences that binds us together. Indeed, I come from a very similar background to that of his colleague, Mr Rowley. Does it not concern Mr Macintosh that his colleague Roy Hattersley said on Radio 4 this week that he does not think that the Labour Governments of Blair and Brown had been real Labour Governments because when he now challenges the Tories about the consequences of soft-touch banking and the damaging welfare reforms, he is told that they were started under Labour Governments? The only chance for Labour values to be reflected in the governance of this country is through a yes vote for independence.

Ken Macintosh: Unfortunately, despite my attempts, Clare Adamson has made a very small party-political point rather than rise to the constitutional debate that we are having today. I acknowledge that it is difficult to put political tribalism behind us, but I am appealing to the SNP to try to do so after 18 September. That will be difficult for members of the Labour Party, too, because many supporters and members of the party are cynical about the SNP's commitment to

progressive politics and see it simply as a means to an end: a nationalist vision for Scotland.

However, many of us across Scotland and across political parties are agreed on not just the necessity of reducing the inequality that divides our society, but on giving political importance and priority to reducing it. We agree on the priority that we need to give to promoting a sustainable economy, to decent jobs, to a more caring society, to supporting education not just as the route out of poverty, but as the route to genuine national prosperity, and to an emphasis on common wellbeing and not just on wealth.

Constitutional change is not a pre-requisite for agreeing to any of the above. In fact, I believe that it is clear to most Scots that not only do we not need independence in order to deliver progressive change, but that breaking away from the United Kingdom would positively damage our chances. Separation would threaten the very social solidarity that we are striving to build, and would create new divisions, rather than heal existing ones.

I think that we can unite in pursuit of a better Scotland, but let us not break up the NHS or give up our currency. We do not need independence to deliver childcare. Let us vote “No thanks” and deliver a better Scotland together.

15:59

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): It is an absolute privilege to have been called to speak in this key debate on Scotland's future. What a momentous moment we have arrived at in our country, when in just four weeks we will have the one opportunity of a lifetime to decide what kind of country we want to live in and what kind of country we wish to build for future generations.

On Thursday 18 September we will, each of us, have the opportunity to make a choice between two futures: a Scotland that controls her vast resources and puts them to use to build a better, more prosperous and fairer country, or a Scotland whose decisions continue to be taken by out-of-touch Westminster Governments that we do not vote for, which place a ceiling on our ambitions and squander our resources. Aspiration to something better, or the same old same old from Westminster—that is the choice of two futures that faces all the people who live and work in Scotland on 18 September.

Many areas of importance to our daily lives have been discussed this afternoon. In the time that remains to me I, as a member of the Welfare Reform Committee, would like to direct my remarks to the important issue of welfare. What has emerged very clearly from the inception of the

work of that committee over the past two years or so is that the welfare system that is, sad to say, still controlled by Westminster, is no longer fit for purpose, and is being dismantled before our very eyes, with the safety net that should be embodied in it being removed by stealth. What other conclusion could be reached by people—people at home, who have the notion of the common weal—when we look at the deeply damaging impacts of so-called welfare reform on individuals and families across Scotland?

Who could not feel diminished, as a human being, by Westminster policies that force people who have motor neurone disease to take in lodgers in order to avoid paying the bedroom tax, or that harass recently bereaved widows to leave their homes of many decades because the UK Government says that they have too many rooms? I see the Tory front bench laughing, as they did in the debate last week. I do not think that that is funny; I do not think that the lady who came to the Welfare Reform Committee to give evidence on that very issue thinks that it is funny.

Who could not feel diminished by Westminster's work capability assessments—which were, of course, introduced by the previous Labour Government, with the help of Tony Blair's friend the Tory Lord Freud, and which have been kept on by the Tories? Those assessments turn medical orthodoxies on their head by finding vulnerable ill people somehow fit for work and forcing them to go through hoops in efforts to maintain their health, their sanity and their dignity.

Who would not feel diminished by Westminster Government policies that will see more than 100,000 disabled Scots lose some or all of their disability benefits as a result of the roll-out of the new personal independence payment—a benefit that was introduced by the current UK Tory-Liberal Government and which Labour plans to keep?

Of course, a welfare system should have the objective of supporting people into work that is paid at a decent rate, but at the same time, who would wish to choose a society in which a bit of help is taken away from some of its most vulnerable members? That is the miserable, rotten place that we have reached under the union. For me, that is the unacceptable price that our most vulnerable members of society—our poorest members of society—are now paying for the union.

Scotland is wealthier per head than the UK, France and Japan, yet we have in the past year alone seen 22,387 children having to rely on food banks in order to eat. The country has vast resources both in human talent and natural resources, but if we stay on the Westminster path, we will see 100,000 more children being pushed into poverty by 2020.

It does not have to be that way; we cannot, each of us, in all conscience allow it to continue to be so. This is the opportunity of a lifetime—the opportunity to say that we want a decent society that has fairness at its heart. That is what voting yes means; that is what voting yes is about; and that is what voting yes will deliver for Scotland.

16:04

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): This is an important day for this Parliament because, whatever the outcome of the referendum, this Parliament will change.

When we meet again in this chamber after 18 September, Scotland will have decided her future. Either she will have rejected the United Kingdom and endorsed separation, or she will have rejected separation and endorsed the United Kingdom. It is right that, in this place of all places, we mark today the magnitude of that decision by holding this debate.

It is important to be clear about what the referendum is not about. It is not about whether Scotland can be independent. It can be. It is not about whether we are doing down independence or talking up the union. It is quite simply about what is the better future for Scotland. It is not about whether one likes or dislikes Tories, Labour or the Lib Dems, however much some of the yes campaign might want to reduce it to that.

The referendum is certainly not about who is the better Scot or the bigger patriot. We all believe in our country, we all love our country and we are all fighting for what we believe is the best future for Scotland. Alex Salmond believes that separation is patriotic. I believe that partnership is patriotic. It is very important that the referendum is not a choice between independence and no change. David Cameron, Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg have all committed to including more powers for the Scottish Parliament in their manifestos, and to delivering on that in Government. The Scottish Parliament will get more powers.

Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): Baroness Goldie rightly says that the unionist parties have committed to saying that there shall be more powers for the Scottish Parliament—guaranteed. Can she tell us which ones and when?

Annabel Goldie: That will be very much down to the electorate, who will decide which party's proposals they favour. The common theme from all of those politicians is that there will be more powers for this Parliament.

In the time that is allocated to me, I cannot deliver a forensic and lengthy dissertation on the merits, attributes, strengths, stability and security

that are implicit within the partnership that is the United Kingdom, but I do not have to. The case for staying within the United Kingdom is so compelling and so self-evident that brevity is all that I need. It is a partnership of over 60 million friends and customers, working with each other, for each other; a partnership with over 30 million people paying taxes and contributing jointly to our common good; and a partnership in which businesses, not least in the financial sector, can invest and operate freely because of a UK-wide system of regulation. It is a partnership that, in a global age, gives us a global reach, in the United Nations, the G7 and G8 groups of major powers and in the EU, which allows us to help those who are less fortunate; a partnership that, in an age of international uncertainty, gives us a strategic defence capability and a global diplomatic presence; and a partnership that has an established, proven and respected currency—the pound. In all of those are strength, stability and security.

Alex Salmond does not want that. He wants separation: an irrevocable and irreversible step. There are two certainties about Alex Salmond, and I am sorry that he is not here to hear this paean of praise. The first is his passion and enthusiasm for what he wants, and the second is his complete and utter inability to tell the rest of us what we will get. What will be our currency? He does not know. Will we have a central bank to support it? He does not know. When will we get into the European Union? He does not know. What conditions will be imposed on Scotland's EU membership? He does not know. How will we pay the pensions of an increasingly ageing population? He does not know. How many thousands of defence jobs in Scotland will be lost? He does not know. What will be our credit rating? He does not know. What is the effect of our biggest trading partner becoming our biggest commercial competitor? He does not know. How will Scotland deal with a continuing budget deficit? He does not know. Will he cut expenditure or put up taxes or do both? He does not know. And, if it all goes belly-up, what will we do and who will we turn to? He does not know.

I have compared that gamble to being asked to put one's life savings on a 100 to 1 outsider with a limp at the 3.30 at Ayr. Given the recent telling interventions from Sir Ian Wood and Dr Anna Gregor, the odds have just lengthened. I am not going to take a punt on Scotland's future. On 18 September, I shall choose partnership and say no to separation. I shall choose mutual support and say no to severance. I shall choose union and say no to isolation. I shall choose certainty and say no to risk. I shall do that because I have the best of both worlds—I know that—and so do hundreds of thousands of voters the length and breadth of

Scotland. On 18 September, united and together, we shall reject independence.

16:10

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): The choice today is between the hope and opportunity of independence and the austerity and indifference to Scottish needs that characterise so many policies of the unionist parties. How dare Scotland vote to end poverty and create a fairer nation for rural and urban Scots alike?

It was ever thus. When the radical young Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham MP was arguing about Scottish home rule in the House of Commons in 1889, he suggested that the demand came not from any sentimental ground whatever, but

“from the extreme misery of a certain section of the Scottish population, and they wish to have their own Members under their own hands, in order to extort legislation from them suitable to relieve that misery.”—[*Official Report*, House of Commons, 9 April 1889; Vol 335, c 97.]

In 2004, I commented that

“Over a century later that misery takes startlingly similar forms, such as lack of steady work, poor health, shortage of decent housing, serial misuse of our land and sea resources and yet more unwanted wars.”

Just yesterday, the poverty and social inclusion project confirmed that that misery continues. The director of Poverty Alliance, Peter Kelly, has said:

“It should not be the case that, in 21st century Scotland, one in four adults has skimped on their own food to ensure others in the household eat. The fact that 30,000 children in Scotland live in families who cannot afford to feed them properly is a national disgrace.”

Today, food banks are the mark of misery from Wick to Wigtownshire. That shows that fair sharing of our resources does not exist.

For example, half of rural Scotland is in the hands of about 430 people. In response, the land reform review group’s report “The Land of Scotland and the Common Good” shows how to end speculation on our land and how to put that land into the hands of our people in order to feed and house us and to sustain the nation. Land reform has progressed, in part, under devolution, but independence is needed if we are to control tax avoidance and property trusts that are based in tax havens, and we need tax powers to incentivise better land use. Those powers are conspicuously absent from the unionists’ list of “more powers” that will be transferred if we vote no. Westminster has never shown the slightest wish to relinquish tax powers that are fundamental to our most basic needs and resources.

What about food production? The scandal of the common agricultural policy settlement that was

brokered by the UK in Europe shows how limited Scotland’s devolved powers are. Scotland gets a lower average rate of subsidy per hectare than any other member state in Europe, and a lower rate than the rest of the UK itself gets in basic payments. The same goes for rural development. Scots farmers and crofters will lose €1 billion before 2020 because we are not at the top table.

Despite that, under the SNP Government, Scotland’s food and drink sector has produced the third-highest per capita output in Europe, with only Iceland and Ireland ahead of us. With independence, we can fully promote our food and drink overseas and properly resource export certificates, unlike the UK’s dilatory bureaucracy.

Clean energy is key for rural and island Scotland, and our renewables already meet almost half of Scotland’s electricity demand. Our output has more than doubled since 2007 and the aim is to banish fuel poverty, which is one of the three major markers of deprivation, and which is hitting old rural housing hardest. The renewables industry has wide general public support. Despite the scare stories of the better together campaign, between January 2010 and April 2013 the industry announced £13.1 billion of investment promising 9,100 renewables jobs across Scotland. That will benefit local contractors, shops and hotels and will build our economic resilience.

Westminster, unlike the Scottish Government, is gung-ho for fracking and offers a huge support package for new nuclear power at Hinkley Point. With a no vote, would it try to dump the waste in Scotland?

With Scotland’s energy wealth, consumers should not face rising prices, the misery of fuel poverty and the risk that our renewable energy ambitions will be thwarted. We need a smoothly functioning energy market. We need Westminster to listen to and join with us, rather than to ignore us. Underinvestment in energy generation over decades has led to a looming security-of-supply crisis, most of all in England. Off the shores of my constituency in the Pentland Firth we have infinite tidal power. That is the symbol of opportunity compared with the lack of ambition in Westminster.

Let us turn these days of hope into years of opportunity with a tidal wave of yes votes. It is an honour to support the First Minister’s motion.

16:15

Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab): The decision that we make in just a few weeks’ time has been described as the biggest political decision for Scotland in 300 years. It is indeed the opportunity of a lifetime; it is our

opportunity to settle this constitutional question once and for all.

As has been said, between now and polling day, my Labour colleagues and I will campaign for a no vote because we believe that we achieve more when we pull together. When the votes are counted and the results are declared, we will accept the judgment of the people of Scotland, whatever they have decided. I hope that others will respect the people's judgment, too, even if the vote does not go their way next month.

When we say that the referendum is a big decision, that is not just because of the ramifications that it may have, whatever the final result, but because of what the turnout levels might be. The press have quoted estimated turnout levels of 80 per cent. We have to go back to the 1950s to find a turnout figure that has exceeded 80 per cent in a general election. I will not predict what the level of voter participation might be but, like most people, I expect turnout to surpass the previous general election's figures, even if it does not match the most optimistic estimates.

The operation that we are expecting on the day and overnight, as well as the operation that we are seeing to get people registered and to manage postal votes in all Scotland's 32 local authorities is unprecedented. The size of the operation, the scale of the decision and the nationwide effort to ensure that the people of Scotland have their say reinforces that basic point.

It is not a majority in this Parliament that will determine the outcome of the referendum; rather, that will be determined by a majority in the country. On 18 September, the future of Scotland is in the hands of Scotland's people. We have a choice. Much of the debate has, understandably, been an attempt by politicians to frame that choice for people. The purpose of a political campaign—this is also part of politicians' unwritten job description—is to persuade and convince, to make people see how our beliefs and priorities lead us to approach decisions in different ways and come to different conclusions.

As others have done, I will set out what the choice is about on 18 September. We could vote as the Scottish Government wishes, but what we would gain from independence must be balanced against the new pressures that we would face, the uncertainties that would remain and what we would lose from leaving the UK. Alternatively, we could democratically decide as a nation to share power with the UK—a union in which we have representation; a union that is becoming less centralised and more flexible while still retaining its essential strength.

We have a strong Parliament in Scotland—it is growing stronger—and we are part of something bigger. We have a resilient economy with oil and gas, whisky and renewables, and we have an integrated market with the rest of the UK, where we sell more goods and services than we do in the rest of the world. We have sweeping powers over economic development and planning and we are part of one of the world's largest economies with a stable currency and the Bank of England behind us.

What we have is not perfect; neither is what is on offer in the white paper. However, in constitutional terms, we have the best of both worlds and the best of both worlds is best for Scotland.

Most people who are making their minds up about the referendum next month want to do what is best for their community, their family and the country. The Labour amendment makes clear what we believe is best for Scotland, but that is for the people to decide. I trust the people's judgment; whatever the decision—yes or no—when Parliament reconvenes next month, we must respect that decision and make it work.

16:20

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Like others, I find it a privilege to be asked to speak in this final debate in the Scottish Parliament before the people of Scotland decide our future in just four short weeks' time.

It has been a long campaign since the signing of the Edinburgh agreement—which signed us all up to respect the result, by the way—in October 2012, but now we enter the end phase. Colleagues and friends I have spoken to across the political divide have expressed a range of emotions and experiences.

I can truly state that it has been the most rewarding and liberating campaign that I have ever been involved in. To have had the chance at this remarkable time in Scottish history to discuss with many thousands of people the opportunities for my country's future has been a hugely uplifting experience.

That feeling has been shared by many in the yes campaign teams across the country. New and enduring friendships have been forged with people who have never before been politically active. People's lives have literally been turned around, as a woman who has become an important campaigner as part of the Stirling yes campaign told me last week. The campaign has provided her with a new positive focus in her life and given her an injection of new energy that she thought she would never see.

That has happened only because she and countless others have been involved in a campaign that has tried hard to be relentlessly positive about the opportunity that independence brings for Scotland. It is a campaign centred on hope, aspiration and being all that we can be while giving Scotland the opportunity to make her own mark on the world stage. It is a campaign of which, incidentally, I am incredibly proud.

Two small words sum up best why I want Scotland to become an independent country: dignity and respect. I want the opportunity to be able to decide our own future with the security and dignity that being in control of our own lives brings. I also want to ensure that our people have the chance to live in dignity and that our children do not have to live a life of poverty.

It is an unfortunate fact that, no matter who people in Scotland have voted for at Westminster, the gap between the rich and the poor has only become larger. Figures from organisations such as the Child Poverty Action Group tell us that, as a result of Westminster policies, we can expect another 100,000 children to be in poverty by 2020.

That is not acceptable in modern-day Scotland. We are a rich country—I know of no one who now seriously doubts it—but we have been warned what to expect if we stay on the current course. The people of Scotland are waking up to the fact that independence provides them with the opportunity of a lifetime to change the structure of how we are governed and create a better and fairer future for all our people.

Of course we will make mistakes, but they will be our mistakes and we will have the dignity of putting them right for ourselves. Yes, we will need to face up to the real challenges that independence will bring, but we will do that with the dignity of being able to tackle those challenges using our people's undoubted skills, intelligence and ability.

The dignity of being normal is all that I seek.

The respect that Scotland has on the world stage matters very deeply to me and goes to the core of why I think that it is hugely important that Scotland chooses to vote yes. A yes vote will make me very happy, but the respect that we will gain from having a constitution for Scotland that outlaws weapons of mass destruction from our land is what I seek most. Providing Scotland—and, indeed, the rest the UK—with the opportunity to press the restart button on the obscenity of nuclear weapons is, on its own, reason enough for me to want independence.

The debate on whether Trident should remain on the Clyde has tended to centre on the cost, the economy and its effectiveness or otherwise as a deterrent. Yes, the cost of renewing Trident is truly

abhorrent at £100 billion, and more and more significant military experts question its strategic relevance in today's world but, for me, the debate goes way beyond those parameters. I want the respect of living in a normal country, because not having nuclear weapons is the normal condition of the overwhelming majority of the world's countries. I want Scotland to be respected and not feared, as the UK is, through the politics of power and domination and through hanging on to the last vestiges of its imperial past.

This is Scotland's one opportunity to gain respect by building an alternative future as a co-operator and a peacemaker, promoting international law and social justice. This new beginning is the one opportunity for Scotland to be a beacon of hope for a world that so desperately needs it, given the conflicts all over the world—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you draw to a close, please?

Bruce Crawford: —in Syria, Iraq, Gaza and Israel, Ukraine, Somalia, Afghanistan, Libya, west Pakistan and Sudan. The list goes on and on. I say to Alex Rowley and others who have made accusations that this is not isolationism but internationalism in action.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You must close, please.

Bruce Crawford: In conclusion, I say that I want the respect of living in a normal country without weapons of mass destruction. That is what I seek, and a yes vote is Scotland's one opportunity to achieve that, by putting Scotland future in Scotland's hands.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Bob Doris, who has up to three minutes. We will then move on to the closing speeches.

16:26

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): Thank you for finding the time, Presiding Officer. I know that time has been tight in the debate.

I became politically active when I was 17 years old because of a UK Tory Government that Scotland did not elect, that was not accountable to Scotland and that did not represent the values of the people of Scotland. I am now 41 years old and I see another UK Tory Government wreaking havoc in the communities that I represent. That is a fundamental reason why I want a yes vote.

I get sick and tired of hearing misty-eyed romanticism about the UK. That does not exist in the towns, cities and villages across Scotland, but let me tell members what does exist there. Food banks exist in the towns, cities and villages across Scotland. Men, women and children are going to

food banks because of the £6 billion of UK welfare reforms in the past five years. I know individual female constituents who are now unemployed because of reforms to the tax credit system. Working poor are now benefit-dependent poor.

I also know individual constituents who are among the 100,000 adults with disabilities who are being targeted by the current UK Government and are, to be frank, terrified that the abandonment of disability living allowance and the move to personal independence payments and the roll-out of universal credit will leave them much poorer. I know families whose kids have been pushed into poverty because of UK tax credit reforms for children. No member in the chamber should give me misty-eyed romanticism about the UK, because it did not exist then and it does not exist now. We want a better future for the people of Scotland.

In the minute or so that I have left, I will make some suggestions. One is to increase the minimum wage by at least inflation every year. The poorest workers would have been £600 better off in the past five years had a UK Government done that. Another is to abolish the roll-out of PIP, which is a commitment that this Scottish Government has given. Another is a root-and-branch review of benefit sanctions that are targeting the most vulnerable in society. That would happen with a yes vote.

Another is to uprate carers allowance in line with jobseekers allowance so that the weakest people in society can benefit. Another is to make the tax system fairer, particularly for women, with an earnings disregard that would allow women to earn more money before benefits started to be clawed back. Those are real equality measures.

Do you know something, Presiding Officer? It kind of does not matter whether any member in the chamber agrees with any of the suggestions that I make. The people of Scotland will decide, in the first election after Scotland votes for Scottish independence, how we make society fairer and more socially just. However, one thing is for sure. That can happen only by bringing democracy back to this country and only with a yes vote.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches.

16:29

Willie Rennie: It has been, in parts, a half-decent debate, although perhaps not one fitting to the historic moment, given the decision that we will face in a few weeks' time.

Bruce Crawford started off by saying that he is trying hard to be relentlessly positive in this campaign. He must not have been speaking to

Aileen McLeod, Joan McAlpine, Kenneth Gibson, Rob Gibson, Annabelle Ewing or even Bob Doris, who sometimes tries to be positive.

One would think from the speeches today that there was nothing good about the UK. I have already said that the UK is not perfect, but it is not as imperfect as SNP members sometimes want us to believe.

We have heard about the creation of the trusted and respected BBC. The national health service, whose budget has expanded every year since its creation—spending on the NHS as a share of our national income has doubled in the past 50 years—has now been judged the best in the world by the Commonwealth Fund. The welfare state is worth billions, even though it goes through substantial changes. We had the defeat of Nazi Germany. The state pension has grown by £800 since 2010 thanks to the triple lock.

The UK is seen as a force for good around the world. We hold tremendous soft power. We were judged the greatest soft power in the world by a specialist magazine that covers global affairs. As a family of nations, we are using that to tackle gender-based violence, to campaign against the death penalty, to fight for religious and sexual freedom, and to champion the rule of law. Together we have the second largest aid budget in the world. For a relatively small country that is a great achievement.

Those are things that we can all be proud of and factors that the nationalists omit as they seek to break up the United Kingdom.

Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): Has Willie Rennie spoken recently to Alan MacRae, the Lib Dem candidate who stood against me in 2011, or Dr Michael Foxley, the erstwhile Lib Dem leader of Highland Council? They would not classify themselves as nationalists, as Mr Rennie says, but both have decided to vote yes.

Willie Rennie: Dave Thompson obviously was not here earlier. Unlike the nationalists, we tolerate difference and respect people's different views. The SNP could learn one or two things from that.

Of course we want the United Kingdom to change. I favour home rule in a federal UK, which is the basis of our plan for more powers, published by Sir Ming Campbell. People know that there is something missing from this Parliament. If we want to do something different, sometimes we cannot because we do not have the necessary financial power. Our plan sets out proposals for the Scottish Parliament to raise the majority of the money that it spends, through the transfer of income tax, inheritance tax and capital gains tax, as well as the proceeds from corporation tax.

That means that if we want to cut taxes for those on low and middle incomes, as we have done at Westminster, that can happen. If we want to increase childcare, which the SNP members resisted for so long but which we have made progress on, we can raise the money to pay for it if that is required. If we want to do something different in our domestic affairs, Holyrood will have the power to do so.

Of course people need to vote no next month to see further development of devolution, which has been widely praised. If they vote no, they need to know that more powers will be on the way. The beauty of those proposals is that we have the broad shoulders and the strength of the United Kingdom behind us, to ensure that we can continue to make devolution the great success that it has been since its creation. People have security about that because Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have committed absolutely to different but substantial change. That is definitely on the way.

I genuinely admire the nationalists' passion for their cause of national independence. What I regret is that their passion drives them rarely to question the consequences of their plans. What will be the hit on public spending from the first six years of the policy to cut corporation tax for big business? How will we get the correct balance in our armed forces, and from where will the security for Scotland come while we are waiting? How will we tackle the £6 billion black hole identified by the Institute for Fiscal Studies? From where will the promised £2.5 billion of extra money for welfare come? It was not identified in the white paper, and if it is not in the white paper, it does not count.

What services will be cut if the oil revenues are not as wildly optimistic as the nationalists claim they will be? Most fundamental of all, what will the currency be?

Members: The pound.

Willie Rennie: The Scottish Government reads out a list of options for the currency.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Order. Willie Rennie is in his last 30 seconds.

Willie Rennie: One minute, all the options are ruled in; the next, they are all ruled out. We need clarity on that issue.

If we do not get clarity on all those fundamentally important questions for the future of our country—I have the interests of this country as much at heart as the SNP does—and if the SNP is to have any hope of anywhere near a respectable result, it needs to answer those questions so that people have the knowledge, the truth and the facts when they go to vote on 18 September.

16:35

Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con): The nationalist case is not just that we would be a successful independent country; the case that the Scottish Government is campaigning on is that we would be a country that is wealthier than the rest of the UK. That is what it is putting forward to the people of Scotland. It claims that we will be £5 billion—£1,000 per head—a year better off and, as a consequence of that, it is able to put forward the policies that it does.

It is time for a bit of realism from the Scottish Government, because the independent economists and analysts say that it is likely that we would be financially worse off as an independent Scotland and poorer than we would be if we were to remain part of the United Kingdom. Analysts will say that we would begin life in 2016-17 in a weaker financial position, and that that would become more challenging as time moves on.

That is probably why the white paper has figures for a single year only. If a business goes to a bank wanting to borrow £1,000, it has to show a five-year business plan, but the Scottish Government thinks that it is acceptable to put forward one year's figures when it is deciding to separate and break up a 300-year union.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies was very clear. It thought that the deficit that we would face would be 5.2 per cent of gross domestic product. On the other hand, the Scottish Government claims that our deficit would be 2.4 per cent, potentially up to 2.8 per cent. If the IFS is right—and most economists agree with it—we would need to have greater austerity in an independent Scotland than we would as part of the United Kingdom, regardless of who was in power at Westminster and here. The IFS said:

“the main conclusion of our analysis is that a significant further fiscal tightening would be required in Scotland, on top of that already announced by the UK government, in order to put Scotland's long-term public finances onto a sustainable footing.”

The Scottish Government has managed to give the impression that we would be richer by doing two things. The first has been by looking back into the past and talking about what would have happened five or 10 years ago instead of talking about what will happen in 2016, were we to be independent. The second thing that it has done is to assume that we could have only a high oil price and production scenario, which is a completely false prospectus. Anyone anywhere knows that that is very unlikely to happen year in, year out.

In its financial paper, instead of looking at what it thought the finances would be, the Scottish Government's starting point was, “We have to show that we would be better off than the rest of

the UK.” It then put in the figures to try to prove that that would be the case. The only figures in its financial paper assume what it calls scenario 4 for oil. It discards any other potential scenario for oil. In its paper, of course, it makes it look as though we would be better off and that we would have more money to spend, but that works only if we pull in £7 billion in oil revenues in year 1, £7.3 billion in year 2, and £7 billion after that. That was the question that Lewis Macdonald put to the First Minister during his opening remarks—what would the tax revenues from oil be like? The First Minister spent two minutes responding to the question on oil revenues, but he did not come anywhere near answering it.

Nobody out there—not a single person—agrees with Alex Salmond’s figures on future revenues from oil.

The First Minister: Will the member give way?

Gavin Brown: The First Minister would not give way to me, but I will gladly give way to him.

The First Minister: Sir Donald MacKay, who spent 25 years as an adviser to successive secretaries of state for Scotland, agrees with the Scottish Government’s oil forecast. *[Applause.]*

Gavin Brown: I do not know why members are clapping. It is clear that Mr Salmond has not even read the three-page letter from Sir Donald MacKay because, on his central scenario—I can see that Lewis Macdonald knows what I am going to say—he is almost £1 billion out from the Scottish Government in year 1 and almost £1 billion out from the Scottish Government in year 2. Even the person whom the First Minister quotes in his support does not agree with him on the figures for the first and second year of so-called independence.

If Sir Donald MacKay is right, we will suddenly have to find an extra £1 billion from somewhere, but what if Sir Ian Wood is right, and we are £2 billion out for each of the first five years of separation? Suddenly, there will be an extra £10 billion to be found. What about if the other economists are right, too? There will be billions to be found.

Independent analysts show that we would be slightly poorer financially were we to separate. If that is the case, there will not be the money to fund the tax cuts that the SNP says that it will bring in, or for the extra pensions, the extra welfare, the childcare or the protection of the NHS, and there certainly will not be money to put aside for an oil fund.

16:41

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab): The debate marks the final consideration of the issue by the

Scottish Parliament, but neither I, the Deputy First Minister nor any other member will have the last word on the question because, rightly, the decision is now a matter for the people of Scotland. Self-determination is their right, and they will decide whether Scotland leaves the United Kingdom or whether we continue devolution within the United Kingdom. When we next meet, their answer will be known and all will be bound by their decision, with a responsibility to make their choice work.

We in the Labour Party believe that the Scottish Government has failed to make a compelling economic, social or political case for ending our partnership with the people of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our view is the minority one in the Parliament, but I believe that it will be the majority wish of Scotland’s people. When the old Scots Parliament, to which the First Minister is fond of referring, decided for union some 300 years ago, ordinary Scots were not asked. The course of history was set by Scottish men, untroubled by the people’s will. Today, this democratic Parliament, a modern institution that was created in a spirit of hope and progress, calls for the people to decide their own future.

I believe that a no vote will represent a decision to democratically join Britain and to continue devolution. It will send a message to the rest of the UK that Scots want and choose to work with our closest neighbours and friends for the benefit of all our people. Scotland will never be the same again, whatever the result, and Britain will be forever changed, too. With Scotland as a committed member of the United Kingdom, we will all be bound to put forward our political arguments in that spirit, and that will be a healthy thing.

The long campaign that has already run has re-energised my party in our belief in an idea that is bigger than independence. It involves the pooling and sharing of resources across the UK; a strong Scottish Parliament that is backed up by the strength and security of partnership; and social progress and change here in Scotland and across the UK. That remains an idea and an ideal that is worthy of the Labour movement.

The campaign has been a long one. Throughout 300 years of union, voices have been raised for repeal. All my life, this question has been the dividing line of Scottish politics. For some on the other side, it has been a motivation that has driven lifelong political activism. Over the past seven years, Government has in our view been on pause but, in the SNP’s view, it has been preparing for the next four weeks and for the day when Scotland will decide its future.

We on this side of the chamber can acknowledge the achievement of nationalists in getting to this point, even if they have failed to convince us of their case. We will all welcome an

answer to the question, and we are committed to putting this Parliament back to work in the nation's interest, whatever the result.

I hope that the debate that will continue, not in the Scottish Parliament but in the homes, schools and workplaces of Scotland, will be worthy of us all. The Government motion makes, by and large, familiar arguments. After all, independence was the nationalists' answer when the great Labour Government of 1945 was building our welfare state. It was their answer when the previous Labour Government created this Parliament and embarked on its quest to tackle child poverty and build a fairer economy. It was their answer when the banks were booming and when the banks went bust. Today we heard little that is new. We heard the same arguments, which have been rehearsed over so many decades but are soon to be settled.

Our questions have been consistent throughout two and a half years of campaigning. How is the enormous risk to our public finances, which independent experts have identified, to be managed? How do the admirable ideas about a better society, to which we should all aspire, square against corporation tax cuts and the creation of competition on this island, which will inevitably lead to a race to the bottom, for Scots and our neighbours? What are the set-up costs? What will be the cost of renegotiated European Union membership? How can it be that postal voting will begin in just days but a party that has campaigned for an independent Scottish state for nearly 90 years cannot tell us what its plan is if a currency union, which is not in the SNP's gift, is not agreed to?

What is the principle behind breaking up so many of our institutions and starting afresh, when there is so little evidence that people's hopes and aspirations in life differ greatly on either side of the Tweed? Are Englishmen and Scots really so different that no form of Government between our nations can be made to work? Are our values so different from those of the Welsh that they preclude any adjustment of our partnership such that we can continue to live together under different devolved Governments but within one union? Is the desire of people in Belfast for recognition of national differences so far removed from the sense of identity of Glaswegians, Highlanders, Borderers and Aberdonians that we cannot share citizenship in a United Kingdom?

I acknowledge the right of nationalists to put the case that nationhood must be demonstrated by independence. I even accept that some nationalists will carry on making that case even if the nation tells them that it does not agree. I also acknowledge that not everyone who is arguing for a yes vote is a nationalist. I hope that many of

those people will put the enthusiasm that they have found in this debate back into the mundane old world away from constitutional politics—those questions of decent housing, fair pay and the chance to better our lives and those of those around us.

A positive choice to work together is the best option for Scotland. The existence and extension of devolution mean that Scotland can have the best of both worlds. The struggle to make Britain better governed and a better place to live is a bigger idea than the idea of withdrawing into ourselves. To say that the Tories can never be defeated is the politics of despair, just as to say that Tories do not and will not exist in Scotland is conceit.

Time is running out in the debate and in the campaign. For many months we have heard the Scottish Government make the case for freedom, armed with focus groups, unhearing of those who do not agree with it. The challenge for us all over the next four weeks is to put the case as well as it deserves to be put, for tomorrow's generation, so that when today is history they will be able to discern the honest disagreement that there was among us and understand the decision that we took.

Malcolm Chisholm mentioned the national health service. Labour has a special attachment to the national health service. It is Labour's greatest achievement in office and our biggest task is always to defend it. However, the NHS does not belong just to the Labour Party; it belongs to people throughout Britain. Devolution allows us to steer our own course, but the ideals of the NHS are burned deeply in our sense of who we are whether the service is administered from Cardiff, Belfast, London or Edinburgh.

There are ideals on either side of the debate, and to pretend, when all the arguments for independence have fallen away, that the cause is somehow the defence of our national health service is to cheapen the value that is placed on Britain's greatest achievements, across the nations of the UK. Indeed, it is to dishonour the genuine and heartfelt arguments that nationalists have made for an independent Scotland over many decades.

The Presiding Officer: You need to start winding up, Mr Smith.

Drew Smith: I hope and believe that Scotland will choose partnership over disunion on 18 September, and I hope that that is done on the basis of an honest evaluation of the merits of the arguments. We covet, as much as any member on the other side covets the prize of independence, the prize of returning this modern institution of men and women to the work that it was created to

do, ending grievance and enabling a new politics in Scotland to flourish at last. I urge the Scottish Parliament to support the amendment in the name of Johann Lamont.

16:50

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Nicola Sturgeon): Ken Macintosh started his speech with a reference to the late Sam Galbraith and I want to end the debate today—on behalf of all of us, I am sure—by paying tribute to Sam Galbraith. In the early years of the Parliament, I shadowed Sam Galbraith in his role as education minister. It is fair to say that I learned a thing or two about the art of politics from him. He would have been on a different side of the debate from me but, had he been here today, he would have injected into the debate wit, spirit and a good old dose of straight talking. Those are characteristics that we will all miss, and our condolences are with his family. [*Applause.*]

It is a real privilege to make the last speech in the last debate in this Parliament before the referendum—before our once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put the future of our country exactly where the future of our country should be: in the hands of the people who live here.

Today marks the day that the debate formally moves out of the chamber to the doorsteps, the streets, the communities and the workplaces of our country. I say “formally” because, in truth, that is where the debate has always been.

I have been active in politics for 28 years now and—as others have said—I have, for all my life, never known a more vibrant, engaged, enthused and informed debate than the one that we are having right now. This week alone, I have attended public meetings with combined audiences of nearly 3,000 people: people crammed into village halls, church halls and school halls, actively imagining what a better Scotland could look like. We should all be proud of that. More than that, we should all be determined not to let that evaporate. We should be determined to build on it.

During her speech, Annabel Goldie was asked what further powers Scotland would get if we voted no. Her answer was that it would depend on the party that won the next Westminster election. That is the nub of it: if we vote no in four weeks, control over our future passes straight back to the Westminster establishment. Only by voting yes will we keep power here in our own hands.

Annabel Goldie: Will the cabinet secretary give way?

Nicola Sturgeon: Yes, of course.

Annabel Goldie: I thank the cabinet secretary for taking an intervention. I am sure that she did not deliberately intend to misrepresent me. I said that the solution would rest with voters. That is right and proper. Voters will be given proposals and they will decide what they want. That is called democracy.

Nicola Sturgeon: I think that Annabel Goldie has made the point that I was trying to make.

Today, I will do what I will be doing each and every day between now and 18 September—I will make the positive case for Scotland being an independent country.

Willie Rennie: Will the member take an intervention?

Nicola Sturgeon: I will make some progress and take the member’s intervention later.

I want Scotland to be independent not because I think that we are better than any other country but because I know that we are every bit as good. I want us to be independent not to break the ties of family and friendship that bind the countries of the British isles but to ensure that we can play our part in that family of nations on the basis of equality. I want us to be independent not just so that we can celebrate what is great about our country but so that we have the powers in our hands to tackle what needs to be made better about our country.

Ruth Davidson asked us to see what she sees. I do see what she sees. I can see our achievements as a country and I am as proud of them as she is—many of those achievements are shared by our friends across the United Kingdom. However, unlike Ruth Davidson, I cannot close my eyes to the 100,000 children who are being sentenced to a life of poverty by Westminster policies that we cannot stop. I cannot close my eyes to the 100,000 disabled people who are having their support ripped away from them.

I will not close my eyes to the obscenity of billions being spent on nuclear weapons while cuts threaten our health service and parents struggle with the cost of childcare. I will not close my eyes to the democratic outrage that sees Scotland time and again landed with Tory Governments that we did not vote for. If we vote no, we continue to be bystanders in these decisions; if we vote yes, we get to come off the sidelines and be the ones in charge of shaping this country.

Canon Kenyon Wright, the architect of devolution—and someone who is voting yes—summed it up this week when he asked:

“Where should the final word over Scotland be—in Westminster or in Scotland?”

To me, the answer can be only Scotland. I will never understand why good men and women in

the Labour Party prefer Tory Government at Westminster to Scotland governing ourselves.

Willie Rennie: The Deputy First Minister has less than five minutes to answer the many questions that have been posed across the chamber on oil, currency, corporation tax and so many other issues. Is she going to bother even to try to answer those questions?

Nicola Sturgeon: I have four weeks to continue doing what the yes campaign has been doing: answering questions and campaigning. As we have done so, support for yes has risen and will continue to rise.

This has been a heated debate, but one fact that has been established beyond doubt is that we are one of the world's wealthiest countries. I find it sad that politicians on the no side struggle so hard to bring themselves to admit that. Last night, I attended in Leith a very good debate of undecided women at which Kezia Dugdale and Cat Headley, two rising stars of the Labour Party, put forward the case for no. They did that very well, but during the debate, under scrutiny from the audience, they were forced to admit that the better together leaflet that claims that Scotland is poorer than Pakistan was "probably misleading". You bet it is misleading—it is outrageous, and if there is any decency on the part of the no campaign it will be withdrawn.

The reason why the no campaign cannot admit what the rest of us know is that once it does so the rest of its case falls apart. Once it has been established that we can be independent—and we can—the question becomes: why should we not be? Why should we not take control of our resources and make our own decisions? Why should we not take the power to protect our national health service? Westminster cuts threaten our precious NHS. I know that; the public know that; and Labour in Wales knows that. It is tragic beyond belief that Labour in Scotland has become so assimilated by the Tories in the no campaign that it cannot see the reality that is staring everyone else in the face. Drew Smith said that the public own our health service, but in England it is increasingly Virgin Care that owns the health service. We need to vote yes to ensure that that never happens to our health service.

As with the NHS, so, too, with welfare.
[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Nicola Sturgeon: Johann Lamont says that we need to stay with Westminster to pool resources. That is not the reality for hundreds of thousands of people across our country; the reality for them is the pulling away of vital resources. There was a time when Labour would have stood up for those people, no matter what establishment it had to

challenge to do so. Today Labour stands up for the right of the Tories to do them down, and that is a disgrace.

At the heart of the yes campaign—[*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order! Let us hear the Deputy First Minister.

Nicola Sturgeon: At the heart of the yes campaign is not only a pride in our country but an ambition to make our country better. Independence is not a magic wand, but it is a huge opportunity. It means that the decisions about how we use our vast resources as a country—the decisions that shape our country—lie with us, the people who care most about this country, the people who live here.

Four weeks today, I will proudly vote yes, not to fulfil a lifetime ambition—that will be an added bonus—but to play my part in building a better country for my niece and nephews and every other young person in this generation and for generations to come. I will do it because I believe that no one will ever make a better fist of running this country than the people who live here.

Above all else, I will vote yes because I have confidence in the people of this country. We are a fantastic nation, but we can be so much better. Voting yes gives us the opportunity to ensure that we are.

It is my great privilege to support the motion in the First Minister's name and to ask all the people of Scotland to vote yes on 18 September.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motion S4M-10853, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Treatment of Historic Environment Scotland as Specified Authority) Order 2014 [draft] be approved.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are five questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S4M-10843.1.2, in the name of Ruth Davidson, which seeks to amend amendment S4M-10843.1, in the name of Johann Lamont, on Scotland's future, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)

Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 47, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-10843.1.1, in the name of Willie Rennie, which seeks to amend amendment S4M-10843.1, in the name of Johann Lamont, on Scotland's future, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)

Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 47, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-10843.1, in the name of Johann Lamont, which seeks to amend motion S4M-10843, in the name of Alex Salmond, on Scotland's future, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)

Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahan, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)

Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 47, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-10843, in the name of Alex Salmond, on Scotland's future, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)

Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hilton, Cara (Dunfermline) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)

McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
Rowley, Alex (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 61, Against 47, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that Scotland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, is rich in human talent and benefits from vast natural resources; believes that a Yes vote on 18 September 2014 is the opportunity of a lifetime to build a fairer, greener, more prosperous country for everyone who lives in Scotland; agrees that the best people to take decisions about Scotland's future are the people who care most about Scotland, those who live and work here; further agrees that an independent Scotland will protect the founding values of the NHS, build a more secure, sustainable economy with greater job opportunities and will provide parents, children and disabled people with the support expected of a decent society, and agrees therefore that Scotland should be an independent country.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-10853, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Treatment of Historic Environment Scotland as Specified Authority) Order 2014 [draft] be approved.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time. I look forward to us all coming together again on 23 September.

Meeting closed at 17:06.

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice to SPICe.

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