



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 9 March 2016

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 9 March 2016

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

## Portfolio Question Time

### Culture, Europe and External Affairs

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The first item of business this afternoon is portfolio questions. To get as many people in as possible, I would be grateful for short and succinct questions and answers.

#### European Union (Impact of United Kingdom Leaving)

**1. George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what the impact in Scotland would be of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. (S4O-05626)

**The Minister for Europe and International Development (Humza Yousaf):** The Scottish Government believes whole-heartedly that European Union membership is in the best interests of Scotland and the rest of the UK. We will focus our resources on continuing to make the strongest and most positive case possible to remain in the European Union.

We get many benefits from the EU right now. In 2011, 336,000 jobs were associated with exports to the EU. Almost half of our exports go to the EU. EU funding to the tune of €1.9 billion supports projects up and down Scotland. However, it is not just about the economy. We will also make the positive case on the social protections, the cultural connections that we have with the EU and the mutual support that it gives in taking on some of the global challenges that the continent faces.

**George Adam:** Does the minister agree that it would be extremely unjust for Scotland to be dragged out of the EU if a majority of Scots voted to stay in it? Is this not a further example of how out of touch Westminster currently is?

**Humza Yousaf:** I agree with the member whole-heartedly. It would be democratically indefensible if Scotland were dragged out of the European Union against its will.

We were told during the run-up to the Scottish independence referendum that a no vote would mean that our place in the EU would not be at risk at all. That has proved to be untrue. The First Minister has been clear that, if the scenario that George Adam mentions played out, it could precipitate a demand for a second independence

referendum. Despite that, she has made it extremely clear that she will campaign vociferously and robustly for Scotland to remain in the EU and hopes that the rest of the UK will follow suit.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** It is no secret that the Scottish Government is having trouble delivering the common agricultural policy subsidies to farmers in Scotland. What budget would those subsidies come from if we were no longer part of the EU?

**Humza Yousaf:** That is a fair point to make. I have suggested it to people who believe in Britain's exit from the European Union—Brexiteers. Jamie McGrigor will be pleased about the announcement of the Scottish Government stepping up to the mark to put £200 million in place for advance payments. I say to members who believe in Brexit that I struggle to believe that the UK would match the support that the EU gives farmers, so Jamie McGrigor makes the point very well that the EU is important for them. That is why the majority of farmers up and down the country are saying that European Union membership is best for the United Kingdom.

### Film Studio

**2. Cameron Buchanan (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met representatives of the film and television industry to discuss the building of a film studio. (S4O-05627)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The film studio delivery group, which comprises the Scottish Government, Creative Scotland and Scottish Enterprise, meets regularly to drive action on delivering a film studio for Scotland. That includes meetings with Wardpark Studios Ltd, which today announced plans to expand its existing facilities in Cumbernauld to provide an additional 30,000 square feet across two new 50-foot-high sound stages. Scottish Enterprise and Creative Scotland, on behalf of the FSDG, also regularly meet representatives from the screen industry to discuss potential proposals to develop screen facilities.

It is worth noting that Creative Scotland, as our lead agency for screen, has established the screen sector leadership group, which is chaired by John McCormick and is made up of industry representatives. The group met in December 2015 and January 2016 and will meet again in March 2016.

**Cameron Buchanan:** The plans for a film studio in Cumbernauld are, of course, welcome, but today's announcement is only about the intention to seek planning permission to extend an existing facility. There is still no major film studio in

Scotland that can compete with Wales and Northern Ireland. Film makers are saying that that has a catastrophic effect on the industry in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has already delayed a decision on the proposals for a private facility in Midlothian until after the election, despite support from local councillors and the TV and film industry.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question.

**Cameron Buchanan:** Given that the Scottish Government has stated many times—including in the white paper on independence—the critical importance of the industry to the Scottish economy, will the cabinet secretary assure us that the Government can, this time, turn aspiration into reality and not delay these important decisions any further?

**Fiona Hyslop:** All those developments and, indeed, the developments in other parts of the United Kingdom are private sector led. It is not in the capabilities of ministers to make pre-announcements or to drive actions by the private sector. It is in control of its own actions in both the cases that the member referred to.

I emphasise that the Pentland studios proposal is currently with the Scottish ministers. The member's understanding of planning will tell him that that means that I cannot make any comment about that particular development. The proposal is with the Scottish ministers because Pentland studios requested that it be called in—that is what is currently under way.

Despite today's very major announcement, which is a major milestone in the development of film studios in Scotland, we are still looking at different proposals and means to expand the studio opportunities for Scotland. As of now, there are four productions filming in studios in Scotland. We need to make sure that we have permanent facilities, not just temporary ones. For today, we can welcome the announcement as a major milestone in the development of film studios in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you. Short questions and answers are the order of the day, please. There is a supplementary question from David Stewart.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** The cabinet secretary will be aware that the Highlands and Islands has a proud track record of being a prime location for films such as "Harry Potter", "Rob Roy" and "Monarch of the Glen". The cabinet secretary will be well aware that Skye has a first-class built film studio in Sabhal Mór Ostaig. What more can be done to advertise that first-class facility? Surely Scotland is large enough to have two film studios.

**Fiona Hyslop:** In my evidence to the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee this morning, I made it quite clear that Scotland has the opportunity to realise the potential of film production and to have a number of studios. I have visited Sabhal Mór Ostaig. It has been used on a regular basis for "Bannan" but also for "Katie Morag" and other productions. It is very important that people are aware of the existing film studio provision at Sabhal Mór Ostaig, and I undertake to do everything that we can with the agencies to help to publicise it and make the most of that facility on the Isle of Skye.

### Music Tuition (Traditional Instruments)

**3. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how traditional instrument tuition fits in with its strategy for Scottish traditional arts. (S4O-05628)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Scottish Government primarily supports traditional music and the traditional arts through Creative Scotland, which integrates traditional arts into its broader arts strategy. The youth music initiative, which is backed by £10 million of Scottish Government investment and managed by Creative Scotland, provides a wide range of music-making opportunities, including traditional instrumental tuition, and reached over 225,000 young people in 2014-15.

Last week at Platform in Glasgow, I announced the final tranche of 2015-16 YMI funding, which is being awarded to 32 organisations, including £100,000 to the National Piping Centre; more than £39,000 to Hands Up for Trad to run a traditional music summer school in South Lanarkshire; and £10,000 to Shapeshifter to deliver a musical and cultural exchange between young people living in the Shetland Islands, north-east England and east London.

**Rob Gibson:** Although the youth music initiative offers traditional instrument tuition in some places, the delivery is patchy, as is the music tuition delivered by schools. Will the cabinet secretary review the spread of traditional musical instrument tuition with a view to offering students in Scottish schools a chance to play and understand their own indigenous musical riches?

**Fiona Hyslop:** Much of the YMI is delivered in schools. We are looking to refresh the YMI, and I will make sure that the refresh acknowledges the point made by the member that we need to integrate with existing school provision and enhance that, but not to replace school provision in the traditional arts.

## Historic Buildings and Built Heritage

### 4. Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands)

**(Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how it supports the historic houses and built heritage sector. (S4O-05629)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Scottish Government supports our historic environment in many ways, including historic houses and the wider built heritage. Historic Environment Scotland is charged with investigating, caring for and promoting Scotland's historic environment. We launched our first ever heritage strategy—our place in time.

The vast majority of built heritage is in private hands and the Scottish Government expects Historic Environment Scotland to work with its partners and communities to deliver the common vision and priorities set out in the strategy. We recognise that that heritage continues to make a strong and growing contribution to the wellbeing of the nation and its people. To that end I am very pleased that Lord Hopetoun, chair of the Historic Houses Association in Scotland, sits on one of the strategy's key working groups looking at heritage tourism. I also look forward to attending the association's reception here this evening.

**Jamie McGrigor:** I am very glad that the minister mentioned that event in committee room 1. All members and staff are very welcome to come to it.

What extra support can the Scottish Government provide to historic houses that are in need of urgent repair? Will the minister urge ministerial colleagues and others to redouble their efforts to promote heritage tourism in particular?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I absolutely recognise that heritage tourism is vital. We are looking at how we can ensure that we take a long-term view of the major investment that is required not just in the private sector, which is the biggest sector, but in National Trust for Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland properties. Despite real pressures on our budget, I have managed to ensure that we have maintained the grant schemes—the building repair grants and other grants—that are available. That is a challenge, but we need to see things in the round, and that includes looking at things from a tourism point of view. We need to ensure that the products that people can go and visit are there, whether they are historic houses in the private sector or those that are managed on behalf of ministers.

## European Union (Benefits of Membership)

**5. Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what it considers the

benefits to Scotland are of the UK's membership of the EU. (S4O-05630)

**The Minister for Europe and International Development (Humza Yousaf):** There are many benefits from Scotland and the United Kingdom being in the European Union. I will not rehearse the economic arguments, which have been well made. We can sometimes lose sight of the fact that many protections, including social protections in particular, benefit us in Scotland. They include the right to maternity pay, the right to paternity pay, the right not to be forced to work for more than 48 hours a week, and the right not to be discriminated against because of gender, race or any other factor. Those benefits are also very important.

The benefits from independent countries being able to come together to take on some of the most difficult global challenges that we face as a continent are also important. Those challenges go from climate change right the way through to the global refugee crisis.

Therefore, there are many benefits. There are economic and social benefits, and benefits from coming together collectively to tackle some of the world's most difficult challenges.

**Richard Lyle:** Last Sunday, I watched Boris Johnson MP, the mayor of London, on the television debating why the UK should leave the EU. His comments during that show reinforced my belief in voting to stay in the EU. In light of the comments that the Brexit campaign is making, what would the Scottish Government's position be and what action would it possibly take if England voted to leave the European Union?

**Humza Yousaf:** I do not focus much on what Boris Johnson has to say, but what I have heard thus far from the leave campaign has been very negative. We have also seen that from elements of the remain campaign. The Scottish Government will look to make a very positive case about why not only Scotland but the rest of the United Kingdom should vote to stay in the European Union.

We have been asked about a number of constitutional hypotheticals, and we have commented on what would happen if Scotland stayed in the European Union, as polls tend to indicate. We will not be complacent about that. We will work hard to ensure that that is the case, but I have said that, if the rest of the UK voted to leave the EU, the situation would be democratically indefensible, and the First Minister is right to say that that might well precipitate demand for a second Scottish independence referendum.

### **Culture and Traditions (North East Scotland)**

**6. Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what value it places on the culture and traditions of North East Scotland. (S4O-05631)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Scottish Government places great importance on the traditional culture, language and heritage of north-east Scotland and supports Creative Scotland, Event Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland to promote its rich local culture and traditions in different ways.

In 2014-15, Creative Scotland invested over £2.4 million in organisations and individuals that are based in north-east Scotland. Under the time to shine strategy, £400,000 has supported the youth arts collective north east hub in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, which has provided 1,000 opportunities for young people to progress and excel in the arts. Last year, Creative Scotland published its first Scots language policy, which underlined the organisation's commitment to supporting the language through its own work and the work that it funds across the arts, screen and creative industries.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Foo are ministers gaan tae gie a haun up tae Doric?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I do not know the answer to that one. It is very important that we provide support for our languages, and most of that is done through the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Alasdair Allan, to whom I direct the member's attention.

On culture, I refer the member to Creative Scotland's website. Yesterday, it put a piece up about "Netting", a Morna Young play that is touring. It is funded by Creative Scotland and is an important promotion for using Creative Scotland's resources. In the piece, Morna Young talks about writing in Doric, about "Netting" and "Lost at Sea". She is also a Scots language ambassador. That is one thing that we are doing, as of now, to give a haun up to Doric.

### **Aye Write! Festival**

**7. Hanzala Malik (Glasgow) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government whether the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs will be attending any events in the Aye Write! festival in Glasgow. (S4O-05632)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Aye Write! festival in Glasgow, which is Scotland's second largest book festival, is taking place for the 11th year running and I am sure that its success

over those years will be continued. Although I have no plans at present to visit the festival, it is welcoming leaders from all parties in the Parliament at separate events in the series entitled "The Books That Made Me", including the First Minister, who is due to close the event on Sunday 20 March.

**Hanzala Malik:** Glasgow City Council is very proud to hold the Aye Write! book festival as it has done for the past 11 years.

It has been observed that the festival has a low level of participation by people from ethnic minority communities—as participants and contributors. I know of several Glaswegians from diverse backgrounds who have published books in the past few years. I want to mention some of the writers in Glasgow who I am proud to know: Ahmad Riaz, Aman, Bashir Maan, Charan Gill, Farha Malik, Imtiaz Ali Gohar, my own mother Philomena Malik, Rahat Zahid and Tareh Nehar. Those are just 10 writers from Glasgow who have written books but they have not had the opportunity to participate in the festival. What will the Scottish Government do to increase participation in literary and cultural events for such talented people?

**Fiona Hyslop:** The member makes a valid point although I am not sure how appropriate it is for him to plug his mother's book in Parliament. [*Laughter.*] I am sure that it is a wonderful book.

Creative Scotland has given Aye Write! funding of £105,000. I have asked Creative Scotland to make sure that the people and organisations that it funds take on equalities issues. Since Aye Write! receives Creative Scotland funding, that will be one way of doing what the member suggests.

I do not often agree with the leader of the Labour Party in Scotland, but she chose "A Thousand Splendid Suns" as one of her favourite books in the interview with Phil Miller; it is also a favourite of mine. Perhaps we can share that across the chamber.

### **Creative Scotland (Meetings)**

**8. Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met Creative Scotland and what matters were discussed. (S4O-05633)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** I last met officials from Creative Scotland at the exchange 2016 event on 4 March at The Platform in Easterhouse, Glasgow, presented by Music for Youth, where I was delighted to announce the investment of £10 million to boost youth music.

The event featured performances by young musicians and it was a great opportunity to



network and hear about the music industry. The youth music initiative provides high-quality music-making opportunities. YMI, as administered by Creative Scotland, has been a great success.

**Jim Eadie:** What further evaluation is the Scottish Government undertaking to ensure that Creative Scotland meets its objectives and priorities as set out in its film strategy? What progress has been made to incentivise film and television production so that we can nurture home-grown talent and encourage people from across the world to come and live and work in Scotland?

**Fiona Hyslop:** I set some of that out during this morning's Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee meeting. On top of the record investment of £24 million in the screen industry in Scotland in 2014-15, we have provided additional funding of £4.7 million. Of that, £1 million is for skills development and some is for production development. Indeed, two films are being discussed with Creative Scotland at the moment. Progress is therefore being made with skills and production development and I was able to go into some detail on that at this morning's meeting.

### Culture (Highlands and Islands)

**9. David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to support culture in the Highland and Islands. (S4O-05634)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):** The Highland youth arts hub has received £400,000 to support more than 2,700 young people. In 2015-16, Creative Scotland is funding and supporting 69 projects across the Highlands and Islands. I have a number of examples but we are tight for time.

**David Stewart:** The cabinet secretary will be aware that, following financial problems, Eden Court Theatre in Inverness has cancelled its Scottish vocational qualification in drama. Its star graduate is Karen Gillan, the star of "Doctor Who" and "Guardians of the Galaxy". Can the cabinet secretary provide any help, advice or guidance on the reinstatement of this well-respected course?

**Fiona Hyslop:** On Scottish Government or agency funding, Creative Scotland provides regular funding at a level of £2.1 million over three years. I am well aware of the very good work that Eden Court carries out, including on skills, training and wider development. It is very successful in raising funds from a variety of sources, both private and indeed in revenue terms.

On skills and training, we can perhaps look at different areas across government, whether it is Skills Development Scotland or other areas, to make sure that provision for drama and indeed

other areas can support the very good work that Eden Court does.

## Infrastructure, Investment and Cities

### Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

#### 1. Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP):

To ask the Scottish Government what progress is being made on the construction of the Aberdeen western peripheral route. (S4O-05636)

#### **The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Keith Brown):**

Construction of the AWPR is well under way and we are on programme to open the road in winter 2017. We are working closely with the contractor to ensure successful delivery of the project, and will continue with regular engagement with local communities and elected representatives.

**Kevin Stewart:** The progress is welcomed by the people of the north-east, who have been waiting for the bypass since 1948, when it was first planned. Can the cabinet secretary assure me that work to improve further Aberdeen's roads infrastructure by dealing with the notorious Haudagain roundabout will commence directly after completion of the western peripheral route?

**Keith Brown:** I thank Kevin Stewart for his comments. He is right to say that there has been a long wait for the route, and I am proud that the Scottish Government is delivering this long-awaited project—albeit that it was initially a local roads project for which we took the responsibility, working with our partners in Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council.

The Scottish Government has given a clear commitment to commencing improvements at the Haudagain roundabout following completion of the AWPR. I am sure that Kevin Stewart knows that the Haudagain and Bridge of Dee improvements could cut journey times by up to 20 per cent. Indeed, the AWPR could cut journey times by up to 50 per cent, so these are hugely welcome developments for the infrastructure of the north-east.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** The cabinet secretary will be aware that the Deputy First Minister announced an additional £306 million of borrowing following reclassification of the Aberdeen western peripheral route under Eurostat. Will that cover all the outstanding costs of construction or will there be a need for further borrowing in the future?

**Keith Brown:** No further borrowing will be required beyond that which the Deputy First Minister has already announced for the project. The general borrowing of the Scottish Government—the increased borrowing that we

can now undertake—and other borrowing have been factored in.

It is unfortunate that the project has been reclassified, because that potentially crowds out further projects, but the borrowing for the project has been set and there is no question either that the costs will increase or that it will take longer to complete because of reclassification, regrettable as it is.

### **Transport Infrastructure (Glasgow)**

#### **2. James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP):**

To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to develop transport infrastructure in Glasgow. (S4O-05637)

**The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay):** The Scottish Government is delivering over £2 billion of investment in transport infrastructure in and around Glasgow, including completion of the motorway network, improvements to journey times by rail between Glasgow and Edinburgh and investment in the Glasgow subway, fastlink and the Glasgow and wider area city deal.

**James Dornan:** What economic benefits does the Scottish Government anticipate for Glasgow as a result of that substantial investment in the city's infrastructure?

**Derek Mackay:** The infrastructure investment is all about supporting sustainable economic growth through better connectivity, improved journey times and enhanced public transport, which has to be good for business, for employment opportunities, for education and for healthcare. It is delivering economic recovery and improving the infrastructure of our region and our nation.

### **Procurement (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises)**

**3. Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how its procurement processes encourage the use of local small and medium-sized enterprises. (S4O-05638)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Keith Brown):** The Scottish Government will introduce legislation in June this year that will require public bodies, when buying goods or services over £50,000 or when involved in construction-type contracts over £2 million, to conduct the procurement exercise with a view to involving SMEs, the third sector and supported businesses in the process.

That legislation will also require public bodies to advertise such contract opportunities on the public contracts Scotland website, thereby increasing the visibility of such opportunities. The PCS website allows main contractors on public sector contracts

to advertise sub-contracting opportunities, thereby giving smaller firms the chance to bid for contracts further down the supply chain. When a main contractor is appointed to manage a project, it is able to use the service to identify local suppliers, as part of the Scottish Government's drive to create a more sustainable supply chain for public sector contracts.

**Linda Fabiani:** I was impressed by a recent meeting with Scotland Excel—which last night won a procurement innovation award. However, I wonder whether there is a lack of understanding in public bodies about how local enterprise can be used to the advantage of companies, local authorities and the local area in general. Could the Scottish Government take that point on board and issue some clear guidance about how we can promote local companies in their local communities?

**Keith Brown:** In my first answer, I tried to explain how, from the other side, SMEs are being helped to access opportunities. However, Linda Fabiani is right to point out how we can emphasise the benefits of using local SMEs. Of course, local authorities are responsible for their individual procurement decisions, and the Government has committed to ensuring that Scottish SMEs get a fair opportunity. We have also developed a suite of tools to improve and standardise the public procurement process, and to support SME access. We are currently working with a supplier development programme to improve opportunities for SMEs.

Statutory guidance on the sustainable procurement duty, which is particularly relevant to the point that Linda Fabiani raised in her supplementary question, will be published shortly. That will build on the range of tools and support that are available to encourage all public bodies to make contracts accessible, and it will help to emphasise the extent to which employing local companies benefits the local economy.

### **Infrastructure Improvements (North of Aberdeen)**

**4. Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has to make infrastructure improvements north of Aberdeen. (S4O-05639)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Keith Brown):** The completion of the Aberdeen western peripheral route and Balmedie to Tipperty scheme will provide a dual carriageway to Ellon, and provide significant travel benefits to communities and businesses north of Aberdeen, in the next few years. The transport needs of the corridor north of Aberdeen will be considered further as part of the work that is associated with the Aberdeen city

region deal, which I announced in January. The AWRP and Balmedie to Tippetty scheme is expected to be open in winter 2017, with the Balmedie to Tippetty section scheduled to open in spring 2017.

**Alison McInnes:** The cabinet secretary will be aware that Transport Scotland has supported the north-east of Scotland transport partnership in progressing the Aberdeen to Fraserburgh and Peterhead multimodal study, which is important work to establish the best option for improving connectivity between the key ports in the north to the city of Aberdeen and beyond. What assurances can the minister give that he will work with the city and shire councils and Nestrans to deliver the outcome of that multimodal study?

**Keith Brown:** On 28 January, I announced the city deal, plus additional investment from the Scottish Government, which comes to a combined total of £554 million, which will improve infrastructure and housing, and support jobs in the north-east. [*Keith Brown has corrected this contribution. See end of report.*] As Alison McInnes suggests, part of that commitment included a transport appraisal project that will take a long-term strategic view across all modes and transport needs of the area north of Aberdeen, and the study will be considered in that context. The transport needs will be considered as part of the city deal transport appraisal, and the emerging outcomes of the Nestrans initial appraisal work will be reviewed in that context.

I could also mention other investment—for example, the £170 million investment in the railway from Aberdeen to Inverness and, of course, the £3 billion-plus project to dual the A96. A huge amount of work is going on in the north-east just now.

**Alex Johnstone:** The minister might be aware of the “Why stop at Ellon?” campaign, which is trying to make the case for dualling the road north of Ellon to Peterhead and Fraserburgh. Is there any prospect that the minister might consider that idea outwith the multimodal study that has been described?

**Keith Brown:** I am aware of that campaign. Consideration of that project would have to be in relation to the transport project appraisal that is being undertaken.

### **Stirling Railway Station**

**5. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what improvements have been made at Stirling railway station to improve the experience for passengers. (S4O-05640)

**The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay):** Stirling station has received significant investment in passenger facilities over

the past few years. That investment has delivered full refurbishment of the ticket office, new ticket counters, automatic doors at the waiting areas, automatic ticket gates, two ticket machines, platform resurfacing and new customer information screens.

With its attractive layout and excellent backdrop, Stirling was chosen as the venue to mark the beginning of the new ScotRail franchise in April 2015.

**Bruce Crawford:** I feel totally spoiled by the minister’s answer. Will he please confirm that he is aware that individuals who have a mobility disability can face difficulties accessing some platforms at Stirling station? Will he tell me whether Stirling Council has ever made a bid to the Scottish stations fund to improve disability access at Stirling station? Does he agree that it is, given the huge importance of tourism to the Stirling economy, important that left-luggage facilities be introduced at the station, and will he encourage Network Rail to introduce such facilities at the earliest possible date—to spoil me even more?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That was more than one question. Minister.

**Derek Mackay:** I will be brief, Presiding Officer.

The left-luggage issue is a commercial decision for Abellio. I would encourage having left-luggage facilities, because it would make commercial sense to have them, with Stirling being the tourist destination that it is.

I am aware of the accessibility issues. United Kingdom accessibility funds are involved, to an extent. We have not received a bid to the Scottish stations fund. I would welcome such a bid because of Stirling station’s issue with disabled access. I have been working on that, as has Keith Brown, and we will continue to do so.

### **Prestwick Airport (Railway Station)**

**6. Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what recent discussions it has had with Network Rail regarding the upgrading of the railway station at Prestwick airport. (S4O-05641)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Keith Brown):** The Scottish Government has not had any recent discussions with Network Rail regarding the upgrading of the railway station at Prestwick airport, but Transport Scotland officials met the owner on 9 February. Any potential upgrades to the station are the responsibility of the owner, Glasgow Prestwick Airport, which operates on a wholly commercial basis and at arm’s length from the Scottish Government.

**Chic Brodie:** Three years ago a full development plan of £4.2 million was produced by Network Rail in concert with the owner. The report anticipated bringing the existing railhead up to a standard that is expected by tourists. It may be in a locked cabinet somewhere. Will the cabinet secretary ask Network Rail to resurrect it?

**Keith Brown:** I refer the member to the part of my first answer that explained where the responsibility lies. The 2013 Network Rail report to which he refers indicated that it would cost between £4 million and £5 million to bring the station up to the standard required of an international gateway. I repeat the point that any future investment will be considered by the business.

I know that the member is regularly involved in discussions with Prestwick airport. Investment in the station will be considered alongside other investment demands across the Prestwick airport estate.

#### **Forth Road Bridge Closure (Effect on Road Condition)**

**7. Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government how the Forth road bridge closure has affected the condition of roads on diversionary routes. (S4O-05642)

**The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay):** Where possible, Transport Scotland kept diverted traffic, including heavy goods vehicles, on the trunk road network to avoid disruption on local roads. For example, we utilised the prearranged standard incident diversion route for the Forth road bridge, using the M9, M876, A876 and A985.

To keep the diversion route running freely, Transport Scotland completed additional pavement inspections during the bridge closure. Any perceived accelerated deterioration will be taken into account when planned remedial works and reconstruction schemes for those routes are decided in the coming months and years.

The maintenance and management of local roads is the responsibility of the relevant local authorities. The Scottish Government greatly appreciates their efforts during the closure period.

**Mark Griffin:** Can the minister tell me whether the assessment of the trunk road network has flagged up any issues related to the higher than normal volume of traffic, especially during the extended period when HGVs were using the routes? Have local authorities made any claims in relation to additional damage to the road networks that they are responsible for? Does the minister have an indication of the cost to central and local government of the diversions that were in place?

**Derek Mackay:** I assume that the question is really about the condition of the carriageways. I do not have that level of detail on accelerated deterioration, but the general wear and tear would have increased as the roads were potentially more heavily used by HGVs.

I am not aware of any detailed claim from a local authority, but there has been engagement with the business sector, local authorities, communities and others following the issues around the Forth road bridge. As regards future investment decisions, as I said earlier, roads are inspected and remedial works and reconstruction are programmed on the basis of need. It is on that basis that we will proceed.

#### **Active Travel**

**8. Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what actions it is taking to increase active travel. (S4O-05643)

**The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay):** We are increasing our investment in active travel, with the annual budget for walking and cycling in 2015-16 at record levels and 70 per cent higher than in 2013-14. The funding has helped to deliver 330 miles of new paths, with a further 95 miles being upgraded or resurfaced, between April 2011 and April 2015. In addition, 40.1 per cent of schools now offer bikeability Scotland on-road cycle training, which is up from 31.5 per cent in 2010.

**Gordon MacDonald:** Scottish Canals is currently upgrading towpaths across Scotland, including the path on the Union canal in my constituency between Ratho and Hermiston, which will benefit walkers and cyclists. Does the minister agree that such investment is desirable, not only in reducing carbon emissions but in improving health, fitness and wellbeing?

**Derek Mackay:** Yes, I entirely agree with Mr MacDonald. As it happens, I started off the ministerial week with a visit to a canal, looking at regeneration opportunities and investment. Such investment is good for healthier lifestyles, for the environment and for economic opportunities, so I absolutely concur with what Mr MacDonald has said. I think that Scottish Canals is doing a good job with the settlement and the resources that it has.

#### **Lifeline Ferry Services (Clyde and Hebrides)**

**9. Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the RMT union-commissioned report, "The Economic Benefits of Public Sector Ferry Provision", on lifeline ferry services in the Clyde and Hebrides. (S4O-05644)

**The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay):** The Scottish Government fully recognises that Scotland's ferry services provide economic benefits to our island communities. We are fully committed to the continued delivery of safe, reliable, publicly owned ferry services, as evidenced by the record £1 billion investment in those services, vessels and ports since 2007.

**Michael McMahon:** I point the minister to the report's conclusion, which suggested how damaging the privatisation of the ferry services in the Clyde and Hebrides would be should the tender process go to Serco.

Is the minister also aware that, prior to the Scottish Government overturning North Lanarkshire Council's decision to reject the planning development proposed by Peter D Stirling Ltd in my constituency, Transport Scotland officials had approached a freight transport company in my constituency to encourage it to speak to that developer before it had been given planning permission in order to take advantage of the potential privatisation of the Hebrides ferry services, pushing it towards Serco?

How could Transport Scotland officials talk to a private company and advise it to speak to another private company to take advantage of a decision that has not yet been made?

**Derek Mackay:** I have no direct knowledge of the secondary issue that the member raises. However, I have deep concerns about the accusation that has been made about Transport Scotland officials—very deep concerns indeed.

On the ferry services issue, this Government has invested substantially in ferries, including the procurement of two new ferries that will be built in Scotland at Ferguson's shipyard. However, when it comes to the tender process, Mr McMahon of all people is well aware that the previous Executive undertook a tender process—in fact, I am fairly sure that Mr McMahon said that not to undertake that process would have been dangerous and risky in itself and would put the services at risk.

We are not putting the services at risk. The vessels will stay publicly owned, we will continue to set the fares and the timetables, and we will continue to invest in the ferry services of Scotland. We will comply with the law.

I think that the people of the islands know that, when it comes to the islands, this Government has delivered on ferries, on the road equivalent tariff, on enhancements to aviation and on a whole range of areas. We will continue to deliver for the public services of our island communities.

## Rural Payments

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-15844, in the name of Alex Fergusson, on rural affairs. I invite members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak button now, or as soon as possible, and I call Alex Fergusson to speak to and move the motion. Mr Fergusson, you have 14 minutes or thereby.

14:40

**Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer.

Well, what a difference a well-timed Scottish Conservative debate and an impending election can make. *[Interruption.]* It is a little early for Mr Swinney to get so excited.

Finally, at the last moment, the Scottish Government has magicked up £200 million to ensure that, according to its own press release,

"any farmer or crofter who has not received an instalment" of their basic payment

"by the end of March"

will

"receive a nationally funded payment from the Scottish Government in April".

It would be churlish not to welcome that stunning change in direction on the basic payment, even if it played havoc with my beauty sleep last night as I had to largely rewrite my speech.

I welcome the announcement, and I welcome it warmly. I also have to point out in passing, however, that the cabinet secretary originally assured Scotland's farmers and crofters that they would receive the entirety of their basic payment by the end of April. That now seems to be unreachable, and the cabinet secretary would do himself and, indeed, the industry a lot of good if he would just come out and say so. At least people would then know exactly where they stood. All they know right now is that, if the cabinet secretary's plans are carried through—and we have yet to hear any details of how those April payments will be made—all farmers and crofters will have received a percentage of their due payments by the end of April, which is a far cry from his original assurances.

The panic button has been well and truly pressed. I just hope that, this time, the cabinet secretary can deliver. Yesterday's announcement certainly followed the recent trend of last-minute announcements that a cynic might think was designed purely to deflect growing criticism. First, we had the announcement of a £20 million last-

ditch loan fund at the NFU Scotland annual general meeting—a meeting that had previously promised to be fairly tempestuous. Last week, in the face of growing pressure about the timing of the less favoured area support scheme payments—not least in this chamber just two weeks ago—the cabinet secretary announced that he would make national funds available to ensure that those payments, worth £67 million, would be paid in March as usual.

Now, faced with this debate and a rally outside Parliament tomorrow, the cabinet secretary has waved his magic wand and found the money from national funds to deflect the growing crisis once again. No wonder that, yesterday, Mr Lochhead was able once again to smile in the chamber—that was nice to see—following weeks of growing and justified criticism. It is as well for Mr Lochhead that his colleague Mr Swinney, sitting on his left, appears to have such deep pockets when it is expedient to do so. That opportune announcement may deflect immediate criticism, but it will not make the underlying problems disappear, and we need to look at just how we have arrived at this sorry state of affairs.

It was on 11 June 2014 that the cabinet secretary made the eagerly awaited announcement on how the new area-based common agricultural policy support system would operate in Scotland. It was in many ways a truly momentous announcement, because it moved us away from a support system based largely on productivity to one based on area alone, which, in a Scotland in which 85 per cent of land is classified as less favoured, presents no small challenge. What that change would bring about was essentially a massive shift in support payments away from the south and east of the country to the north and west—a truly great challenge indeed.

Thanks to the eminently sensible decision of the United Kingdom Government to negotiate Scotland's ability to design and implement a CAP support system that was tailor-made for Scottish conditions, the responsibility for that system lay solely and squarely with the Scottish Government from day 1.

**Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Alex Fergusson:** I will later, if I have time.

How to best mitigate the most damaging impact of the reforms had been the subject of intense discussion, debate and consultation over many preceding months, and they continued right up to the 59th minute of the 11th hour, as various sectors within the agricultural industry made their case for special consideration. Indeed, I recall meeting the cabinet secretary along with Tavish

Scott to discuss the concerns of the beef breeding sector on the very eve of the cabinet secretary's announcement. Clearly, the final decisions were made at the very last minute.

The eventual outcome, as detailed in the cabinet secretary's announcement in June 2014, was thought to be a genuine effort to please everyone by—as the cabinet secretary put it at the time—fitting square pegs into round holes.

The problem with trying to please everyone, as I said at the time, is that one can end up pleasing practically no one. That is pretty much what seems to have happened, when we look at where we are today. Despite yesterday's announcement, the whole regime is in disarray. It is an unfortunate situation that remains 100 per cent of the Scottish Government's making.

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy (John Swinney):** Will Mr Fergusson specify the bits of the arrangements that were put in place and approved by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment that he would have done differently?

**Alex Fergusson:** I am coming to that, because we do not need to look any further than the new information technology system that the cabinet secretary commissioned to operate the new regime. The warnings were there for all to see from the moment that the single application form window for applications opened in March 2015. In fact, we now know that industry experts were issuing warnings about the likely problems in mid-2014, but the Government had other priorities on its mind at that time.

From the outset, those who were trying to use the online application system reported extreme difficulties, describing it as unfit for purpose and totally flawed in many respects. I vividly recall being taken through the process by one agent, and I could only agree with his frustrated assessment that it would have been far better to have reverted to a paper-based application process—something that I would have considered doing—which is what later occurred. That is exactly what the United Kingdom Government did, in an action that was much derided by the cabinet secretary but which resulted—surprise, surprise—in farmers south of the border being furnished with paper forms that were pre-loaded with the previous year's information, thereby enabling applications and payments to be made on time.

Furthermore, the delay allowed technicians to get on with building a system that I believe is now fit for purpose and ready to receive 2016 applications. That is what I call a sensible plan B, and it appears that the Scottish Government simply did not have one. Every time that the

cabinet secretary was challenged about the problems, he repeated that the changes in Scotland were really complex and that staff were working round the clock to overcome the difficulties; that is emphasised again today in his proposed amendment to our motion. I am sure that staff worked hard—I do not doubt that—and that the system was indeed complex. However, I repeat that it was—and still is—a system that was designed, implemented and signed off by the cabinet secretary alone, and the responsibility for that system and its failures rests with him alone.

The IT problems remain to this day. A system that was supposed to cost less than £90 million has already cost more than twice that amount, and is forecast by some to end up costing approximately £300 million. If so, it would represent a staggering amount—between £15,000 and £16,000—for every application that the scheme will process. That is totally unacceptable from the taxpayer's point of view, and surely it should be totally unacceptable from the Scottish Government's point of view. Such a shambles cannot just be put down to complexity.

As members may have read in last weekend's *Sunday Times*, considerable controversy surrounds the whole IT project, which began back in 2013. The former delivery director is quoted as saying that the blame lies with the "poor work ethic" of the staff and contractors who were in post when he was brought into the project.

Others, including some of the aforementioned staff and contractors, point the finger of blame at that delivery director and his company, Spectromax Solutions, through which 87 new contractors were hired for the project, many of whom—it is alleged—were on tier 2 visa contracts, replacing some of the 180 original staff who had been removed and sidelined from the project.

I have no idea of the rights and wrongs of those assertions and allegations, but I know a subject that merits a full, open and independent inquiry when I see one, and this is surely one such subject. My colleague Mary Scanlon will say more about Audit Scotland's on-going investigations, but—as our motion suggests—we would strongly support calls for such an inquiry if Audit Scotland's final report leaves unanswered many of the questions that surround this embarrassing fiasco.

Those questions are for a later debate, but the immediate consequences of the fiasco are too important to leave until later. They demand immediate attention, as the cabinet secretary finally recognised yesterday afternoon. The reality of the failure to pay the first instalment of the basic payment to the majority of claimants by the end of January, as the cabinet secretary had assured the industry would be the case, is a £300 million black hole in the rural economy. That comes against the

backdrop of a 15 per cent fall in total farm income in 2015, which in turn follows an 18 per cent drop in 2014.

If we add to that the significant drop in their CAP support payment—more than 50 per cent in some cases—that most farmers in the south and east of the country will experience and are experiencing, we can understand why so many people in the industry remain angry and distressed, despite yesterday's announcement. Some £300 million is not circulating in the economy as expected and as budgeted for.

I am sure that the cabinet secretary will say that the payment window is open until June, but I remind him that he alone raised the expectation that most farmers would receive their money by the end of January. That expectation has been well and truly dashed. It is also worth pointing out that although some 54 per cent of farmers had received their first instalment by the end of last week, only about 25 per cent of the actual money has been paid out.

An old and established fact has well and truly come to light: if farmers do not have money, they do not spend money. We need only talk to machinery dealers, fencers, drainers, feed merchants and the host of rural businesses that are needed to support the sector and which do so much to feed the rural economy, to realise that farmers are not spending right now. Indeed, not only are they being denied £300 million, but most of that sum is by now, I suspect, having to be borrowed from banks at commercial rates of interest, which adds further costs to the individual businesses involved.

Why does any of that matter? As long ago as 1998, a report by Dr Ronald Wilson, of the University of Edinburgh, highlighted the effectiveness of direct subsidies to farmers as a principle driver of the rural economy. The findings of that report are as relevant today as they were in 1998.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (Richard Lochhead):** If the findings of that esteemed report on the importance of direct payments to farmers in Scotland are as relevant today as they were many years ago, why did the Conservatives try to scrap direct payments during the negotiations in Brussels a couple of years ago?

**Alex Fergusson:** The cabinet secretary will be aware that we are in Scotland now and dealing with—

**Richard Lochhead:** Ask for powers to be devolved, then.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Alex Fergusson:** The cabinet secretary cannot just deflect criticism of his handling of the system by looking at the UK Government. He knows full well that my party will support his Government and other parties against decisions that are made by the UK Government, if necessary, as we did on the convergence uplift. Let us concentrate on the point in hand, which is his responsibility, rather than something over which he has no control.

The findings of Dr Wilson's report are as relevant today as they were when the report was written, but the rural economy has been and is being starved of core funding to the tune of some £300 million, due to the Scottish Government's inability to deliver CAP support.

Until yesterday, the cabinet secretary's only reaction had been to offer a £20 million loan of last resort if the banks refuse to extend an individual farmer's overdraft facility while the farmer is waiting for their payment. I suggest that very little of that money would be taken up, first, because the banks, to their credit, appear to be applying considerable sympathy to the sector when it comes to extended borrowing, and secondly, because any farmer who is refused further bank credit in such circumstances must be in imminent danger of becoming insolvent, and the last thing that such a farmer will need is further indebtedness.

I suggest to the cabinet secretary that he draws down that money and puts it into hiring the extra staff who are clearly still required to sort out the IT system. That is the best way in which he can restore faith in his Government's ability to deliver. Such faith has been massively eroded over the past few months.

It is not as if the cabinet secretary's problems are going to go away in the near future. It has been clear for some time that there will be considerable delays to other payments, further down the line. I am told by the most reliable of sources that the IT programme to process the Scottish suckler beef support scheme, on which the cabinet secretary will make an advance payment in April, has not even been written yet.

Pillar 2 schemes all face extensive delays, and a considerable negative impact will be felt by, in particular, new entrants and young farmers, who are hampered by a complete lack of information about their circumstances.

Yesterday's panic-induced announcement will not solve any of those problems, which still need to be sorted out, and quickly.

The cabinet secretary has successfully bought off long-term criticism of his grip on the basic payment scheme, but the underlying problems that led to that criticism remain. As we approach the opening of the next single application form

window, he needs to make certain that this scandalously expensive system is sorted out once and for all or abandoned, if necessary. Perhaps he secretly hopes that that is one legacy item that he can leave to his successor.

I move,

That the Parliament acknowledges the financial difficulties facing Scottish farmers following the delayed payment of common agricultural policy funds as a result of the Scottish Government's failed £178 million Futures Programme IT system; understands that only 50% of farmers had been paid by the end of February 2016, notwithstanding the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment's assurances that "most" farmers would have received their payments by the end of January; notes that this is the third indicative deadline that the Scottish Government has failed to meet; recognises that current payments to farmers represent only a quarter of the available basic payment and greening funds; believes that these delays have left the rural economy facing a financial black hole of some £300 million; recognises that farmers across the country have lost trust in the ability of the cabinet secretary to deliver funding before the end of the financial year and supports calls for a full independent inquiry into the Scottish Government's IT failures; notes that Scottish farm income has fallen by 15% over the past year, which is only the second time this century when incomes have fallen in two consecutive years and, as a result, calls on the Scottish Government to take whatever steps are necessary to process the outstanding £300 million of basic payment and greening funds and the £38 million of Scottish beef scheme funds, including the hiring of temporary staff if necessary; commends the Scottish Government for having taken steps to ensure that less favoured area support scheme payments are received promptly, and calls on the Scottish Government to guarantee that all claimants will receive the first instalment of their basic payments by no later than the end of March 2016.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call the cabinet secretary, Mr Lochhead, to speak to and move amendment S4M-15844.3. Cabinet secretary, you have 10 minutes—we are tight for time today.

14:54

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment (Richard Lochhead):** I very much welcome the opportunity to debate what is an important subject for rural Scotland—and the whole country—and to discuss the implementation of the new common agricultural policy, which supports our farmers and crofters to put food on our tables and manage our landscapes and in turn helps the downstream industries to sustain jobs.

As I said at the NFUS annual general meeting last month, farming is facing a perfect storm. Unfortunately, the bad weather that we have experienced over the past 12 months and unfavourable market conditions have coincided with the biggest CAP reform ever. That is no exaggeration: never before have both pillar 1 and pillar 2 of the policy been reformed in the same



year. Not a single scheme from the previous CAP—in either pillar—has come through unchanged into the new policy. Every one of the old schemes has been changed or replaced by a new scheme—or sometimes by more than one new scheme.

Over 2015, the Government launched about 20 schemes across the whole CAP, which are being taken forward this year. Some of those schemes are radically different from their predecessors, not least that which relates to the biggest reform—the allocation of about £400 million on the basis of a business's land area rather than historical activity. On top of that, we have greening and the new rural development programme.

That is why it was essential for us to engage deeply and in detail with our stakeholders from the very beginning of the reform process. Throughout that process, the industry in general and the NFUS in particular gave us—the Government and the negotiators—a very clear message. They were adamant that the top priority was to get the right policy outcomes. After all, decisions that were taken in the most recent reform will determine how the CAP operates for many years to come.

After a lot of discussion and negotiation, we finally agreed with the industry that we needed new activity rules to halt and phase out the scourge of slipper farming. That move was supported by all parties in the Parliament. We agreed that, as part of the new basic payment scheme, Scotland should be split into payment regions with different payment rates for different types of land, in order to deliver the right level of payments to the right places. That move was widely supported by all the political parties in the Parliament.

We agreed that coupled support or headage payments must be extended to the sheep sector and that we should look after the needs of beef producers—particularly those on our islands, where the payment rate would be different. I remember that that, too, attracted widespread support in the Parliament. Finally, we agreed that we must not repeat the mistakes of the past, when unlucky new entrants found themselves frozen out of payments for the life of the previous CAP reform.

We spent many months developing those policy details with stakeholders. Like, I am sure, most people—except Alex Fergusson, given his speech—I believed then and firmly believe now that they were the right decisions to take. Europe imposed on us a complex new policy that covers greening, the move away from historically based payments and so on, and our decisions here in Scotland, which were taken jointly with industry and supported by the Parliament, added a lot more complexity on top.

The timescale for getting those decisions implemented was tight. For pillar 1—or direct payments—the EU did not adopt the main regulations until about a year before the new schemes had to start, and the detailed rules came later than that. For pillar 2—the rural development pillar—the situation was even worse. Strictly speaking, the new Scottish rural development programme should have started on 1 January 2014, but Europe had not even set out all the rules by then. It was only because of the transition arrangements, which the Scottish Government fought for, that we avoided a disastrous gap between rural development programmes.

In the light of that timescale, we made it very clear to stakeholders that the extra policy details that they were asking for—and, in some cases, insisting on—would inevitably affect payments to some degree, at least in the first year. After all, in the first year, we have a new system being implemented for the first time and many one-off tasks to undertake. We all knew that achieving the same timetable as applied under the previous CAP was a tall order but, as I said at the time, we were determined to get payments out as early as possible within the seven-month payment timetable window that Europe had laid down. As the industry has acknowledged, we all knew the risks, but we all agreed that they were worth taking.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** In light of the cabinet secretary's point about the seven-month payment timetable, will he confirm that every crofter and farmer across Scotland will receive their full CAP payments by 30 June?

**Richard Lochhead:** That is absolutely our determination, because we want to avoid fines from Europe. If we do not have 95 per cent of payments made by 30 June, we are potentially subject to fines, which is not in Scotland's interests. We will make every effort to avoid that.

As I said, we agreed that the risks were worth taking, but I completely understand the difficult position that farmers and crofters find themselves in now because of the poor prices and extreme weather that we have experienced in recent months. I said at the Royal Highland Show last year that, although we would do everything possible to get payments out as soon as possible, this was not a normal year and farmers should be prepared for that. I also discussed the issues with the banks.

**Alex Fergusson:** Does the cabinet secretary think that, had we had better weather and better prices, the shambles of the IT system would have been more acceptable? [*Laughter.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Richard Lochhead:** If Mr Fergusson speaks to any farmer or crofter in Scotland, they will tell him that those are serious issues that have affected their cash flows. He might find that a laughing matter, but many businesses out there are suffering right now because of those issues.

We have been working tirelessly. We started paying the first instalments in December. We have now made basic and greening payments to more than 10,500 farmers and crofters, which are worth about 80 per cent of their total payments, whereas our initial target was to make at least 70 per cent. About 59 per cent of farmers and crofters have been paid as of today.

However, we have not been progressing as expected and, as I have said many times, that is deeply disappointing. Where we are is not good enough, and for that I apologised to the industry. The IT system is working, but not anywhere nearly as quickly as we all want, and I fully accept that.

Under the EU rules, we have to complete detailed checks on every claim before we can authorise payment, and it is only after payments are made that the EU reimburses us. The IT system has to validate each and every claim against 400,000 fields and more than 500 EU rules. I ask members to just think of that for a second: every claim involves 400,000 fields and more than 500 EU rules. Officials are constantly having to improve the IT system—which we are using for the first time and which Europe said that we had to build and implement—to speed up the process and unblock cases. We have drafted extra staff into our offices and our IT teams have been working day and night.

As I have said before, ministers absolutely believe that we have to learn lessons. We are co-operating with Audit Scotland, which will produce its report in due course, and we will support any subsequent inquiry. That is clearly a matter for the next Parliament, as the NFUS president rightly said this morning.

In the meantime, the absolute priority is to get the payments out the door. In particular, getting the whole of Scotland sorted into three payment regions has been a massive challenge. Regionalisation was one of the huge problems that the Rural Payments Agency in England faced in the previous CAP reform, when things went disastrously wrong for it. I am told that, at the same stage as we are at now, the agency had paid less than 4 per cent of businesses. We are going through the reforms that England went through in 2005, plus another set of reforms. In Wales, this time, the Government could not find a workable regionalisation model at all, so it abandoned the idea.

Here in Scotland, many key players in the industry were absolutely insistent, for good reasons, that there had to be three regions and not the two that the Scottish Government originally consulted on. We have been working hard to deal with those challenges and to get the payments out the door. In the meantime, in light of the rate of progress and the challenges that farmers face, we have been taking decisive action.

As Alex Fergusson mentioned, I announced the cash-flow scheme for farmers and crofters who are facing severe hardship. I also announced the national LFAS scheme for hill farmers, under which payments will begin later this month. It will inject £55 million into many of the more remote and fragile areas of Scotland. In addition, we announced that the payment of coupled support for the beef sector will be accelerated to mid-April to match last year's timing, and yesterday we earmarked up to £200 million of national money for a national basic payment scheme—similar to the LFAS scheme—to get payments in April to every eligible farmer and crofter who has not had a first instalment by the end of March. That is on top of the £115 million that has already been paid out since payments started in December.

My amendment reflects those important steps. It also points out the irony of the Conservative Party's position. The fact that we are weeks away from an election might have made the Tories suddenly realise that direct payments are vital to Scotland but, if the issue was left to them, farm payments would be abolished. That is not just pillar 1 payments; LFASS has already been abolished in other parts of the United Kingdom. It has to be said that that is also the Labour Party's position. If it was up to those parties, we would not be talking about late payments; we would be talking about non-existent payments.

The Government will continue to defend farming and crofting in Scotland and to work flat out to support the sector through these tough times. I urge Parliament to support the Government's amendment.

I move amendment S4M-15844.3, to leave out from "the financial difficulties" to end and insert:

"that the common agricultural policy (CAP) currently being implemented is the most radical and ambitious ever, with unprecedented simultaneous reforms to both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 of the CAP requiring around 20 schemes to be launched during 2015 and the introduction of greening measures and three payment regions; notes that the timetable of EU negotiations and decisions left administrations with a short timescale in which to implement such radical reforms; welcomes the fact that the Scottish Government engaged comprehensively with stakeholders during the development and negotiation of the policy, and that both stakeholders and the Scottish Government agreed that securing the right policy outcomes for Scotland was the priority even if this risked impacting on the timing of payments within the 1 December to 30 June

Pillar 1 payment window; notes that the Scottish Government had issued over 10,000 payments worth around 80% of basic and greening payments to 56% of eligible farmers and crofters as of 7 March 2016; acknowledges that, at the same time as the transition to the new CAP, farmers are facing additional difficulties due to market trends and unfavourable weather and therefore welcomes the announcements of steps by the Scottish Government to accelerate basic payments to farmers using Scottish Government funds and the national less favoured area support scheme expected to deliver payments to the vast majority of eligible farmers and crofters by the end of March 2016; commits to learning lessons from the implementation of the new CAP, and supports the continuation of CAP payments as one of the benefits of Scotland's continuing membership of the EU".

15:05

**Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab):** We certainly welcome yesterday's announcement of a £200 million funding package, however late in the day it was, but it is vital for lessons to have been learned and for confidence to be fully re-established for next year's payments. It is troubling that, even today, the cabinet secretary could not give Tavish Scott a straight or definitive answer about when this year's payments will have been made by.

NFUS president Allan Bowie has said:

"For months, NFU Scotland has been looking for focused thinking and clear leadership from the Scottish government to resolve this farm payments crisis for the benefit of the whole rural economy."

Our amendment would add text that focuses on next year. We have known for months that the Scottish Government's IT system was not fit for purpose, so that should not be a shock to anybody. I thank the whistleblowers who came forward. Scotland is a small country, so they took a personal risk in being prepared to tell it like it was.

In a series of answers to freedom of information requests and a host of answers that colleagues across the chamber have had to parliamentary questions, the failures in the system have been laid bare. Worryingly, that has raised more questions than have been answered—about issues such as failures of procurement and the management and development of the system.

It was clear from the evidence to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee last June that agents, farmers and farming representatives knew that the system was not working. From the start, the Scottish Government failed to get to grips with that fundamental issue. There has been chaos for our rural industries and complacency from the cabinet secretary for months. We have seen that in the repeated reassurances that have come to naught, days or weeks after they were given. That led to the unusual situation of the committee asking for weekly updates, which have laid bare the failure to

make the CAP payments. The situation has been a long time in the making.

The impact is uncertainty in our industries, which were already under pressure. In the past 12 months, our farmers have had to endure a perfect storm, with turmoil in the markets, market failures for different products and crops, the flooding experiences and the weather last summer. We do not expect the Scottish Government to fix the short-term weather, but it could have done much more to support our rural communities and to make the industry more resilient for the future. That is why, for the past few weeks, we have been calling for automatic payments to be made. It is why our amendment raises the issue of payments that farmers have had to make to banks for interest incurred specifically as a result of the delays that have occurred, despite the reassurances that the cabinet secretary gave.

Our amendment refers to the dairy industry, which is in crisis. Many farmers are already teetering on the edge. That is not just because of the CAP payments fiasco, although that is a crucial issue for them. Some farmers whom we have spoken to are now asking whether it is worth continuing, which is a desperate state of affairs. Although we welcome the 11th-hour action, it is the hallmark of the Scottish Government to sit on a problem for months and then act at the point of crisis.

We are talking about how we move forward. When I spoke to farmers from the Lothians last night, what came across from every one of them was massive uncertainty. They gave me information about the Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution, which is an important rural charity that is dealing with the financial pressures and stress. Many farmers have not been able to get credit from the banks, so they have put all their money on the table. Others have gone into huge debt, with great instability for their businesses for the future. Alternatively, the supply industries—whether that is the seed suppliers, the machinery suppliers or the logistics industries—have taken the hit.

That is not publicly obvious but, when we speak to the rural communities that are affected, we find that the problem is clear and urgent. Our rural communities have been put on hold, and there is worry and anger. We need clear accountability and clear commitments on action for the future.

It is good that an Audit Scotland report is to be produced, but that will come after the May election, so there will not be accountability. That is why our amendment asks the cabinet secretary and his officials to issue a statement on what will happen next. Farmers and crofters will soon be submitting forms for the 2016-17 process. Will those forms be paper forms or electronic forms?

No one has any confidence in the system, because of its complexity.

The issue that has not been addressed over the past 12 months is the reality of the situation in rural Scotland, where we do not have broadband connections that can cope with the complexity of the cabinet secretary's system. We know that the system fell down last year as people submitted their forms. We have not had the beginnings of a reassurance on such basic practical issues. We want a commitment on that and we want accountability before the Parliament dissolves for the elections.

There is an issue with the procurement and management of the systems. The processes must be laid bare. We need to find out what went wrong with the Scottish Government's IT system. It is not good enough for the cabinet secretary to blame everybody else. The failure of the project is truly scandalous; it has put in jeopardy our farming, our crofting and our rural communities.

We need to move forward for the future. Money is now on the table, but we need to have confidence in the process for 2016-17. Our cabinet secretary must tell us how next year will be different and, to date, he has not even begun to address that.

I move amendment S4M-15844.2, to insert at end:

"and to compensate farmers for interest incurred on loans that have resulted from the Scottish Government's failure to make payments as planned; expresses concern about the 2016-17 payments and calls on the Scottish Government to issue a statement before the dissolution of the Parliament as to what changes will need to be made to ensure that next year's payments process will be ready in time; further notes the continuing crisis in the dairy industry, and calls on the Scottish Government to take further action to ensure the survival of the industry across the country."

15:11

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I, too, welcome the £200 million fund that the Scottish Government announced last night, which is to be spent on crofters and farm businesses across the country, but I suggest that that should have been done months ago. Why did the Government not take decisive action earlier?

The French Government paid a 70 per cent instalment to its farmers in October from national reserves. The French knew then that they had processing problems with a new system, just as Scotland does, so they invested to help agriculture. Here, the cabinet secretary claimed that all was well. As late as 10 December, he was declaring that

"most people would get an advance by the end of January with payments starting in December".

None of that happened.

**Christian Allard:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Tavish Scott:** No.

Questions remain, and they are big questions. Can the Scottish Government guarantee that the £200 million will reach farmers and crofters before the end of April? Worryingly, the cabinet secretary could not tell Parliament that all farmers and crofters will receive their full CAP payment by the 30 June deadline. If he can do that in his winding-up speech, I will be absolutely delighted. Why should any farmer or crofter believe that a failed IT system that cost £200 million will make payments of £100 million in March and April when it has paid out only £103 million in the past three months? We would all appreciate an answer to that.

How are farmers and crofters meant to submit a single application form by 15 May when they do not have a final entitlement letter, never mind a balancing payment? That has never happened in all the years of devolution. What provision has the Government now made for the EU fines that will inevitably follow?

The failure of the Government's £200 million IT system is nothing short of a national disgrace. Last night's decision was taken because farmers and crofters from Shetland to Galloway are to lobby Parliament tomorrow. They have not stopped—they are still coming. Yesterday, the First Minister faced what can only be described as a shellacking from the NFUS. She had listened to the cabinet secretary defending the indefensible yesterday morning, and something had to be done. Last night, the Government changed its position, and rightly so. It is just as well that the First Minister finally understood that telling farmers that they should be grateful to be paid in June, as she did last Thursday, was not acceptable.

Why did the Government not make this decision earlier? It could have made it in January or February or, as the French Government did, it could have made it last year.

**Christian Allard:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Tavish Scott:** I want to make some progress. *[Interruption.]* If Mr Swinney wants to stand up and answer the questions that I have asked, I would be quite delighted to give way. He makes many interventions from a sedentary position.

If farmers and crofters receive their instalments in April—and it is a big if—that will be four months later than the cabinet secretary promised. He also promised full payment by the end of April, not just a percentage.

Why is it a £200 million fund? The total CAP budget for Scotland is £400 million. As of this week, the Government has paid only £103 million, so where is the other £100 million? Is the cabinet secretary telling Parliament that the busted IT system will manage to make £100 million of payments before the end of April although it has failed to do that in the past three months?

People who know have told me that the IT futures system crashed yesterday. It could not make any payments. That has happened time and again. Anyone who has been in touch with the local department offices in any part of Scotland knows the reality of what has been going on. Therefore, farmers and crofters will find it extraordinary that the Government still believes that that IT system can work. Why does the Government not just come clean with all of us—Parliament and agriculture—and admit that the computer system does not work and will never work as intended? The Government should ditch it now.

I also ask the cabinet secretary to answer the following questions for agriculture. As he said, LFASS will be paid this month. He is right to make that happen but I am told that it will be done using the old payments system. Is that the only system that is now working in the cabinet secretary's department? Which IT system will be used to pay the beef and ewe hogg payments that he mentioned in his speech?

Crofters grants are also late. They have not been late before, but they are late now. I have constituents who have not been paid on agricultural sheds because of everything that has been going on. I can give the cabinet secretary case after case on that. When will they be paid? People who are waiting for money—it is their cash flow—want to know. Neither the local department office nor national Government can tell them. Why is all that happening?

Crofters, farmers and NFU Scotland want a full, independent inquiry and rightly so. Audit Scotland is poring over all the incompetence and chaos but will report only in May. How much money has Spectromax Solutions made in supplying staff to the Government?

Audit Scotland will no doubt be followed by the EU auditors. Penalties, I am sad to say, appear certain. Who will pay those fines? Will they come from the CAP budget or somewhere else?

Audit Scotland will also report this month on the opening of the next single application form. We will wait to see what the auditors say, but will the cabinet secretary agree now to extend the 15 May deadline for single application forms, given that most farmers and crofters throughout Scotland simply do not know what they are doing for their

cash flow for next year, never mind this year, because of what has happened?

The policy questions need to be answered by a wider inquiry. I will finish with a point about the hard-working Scottish Government staff in the local department offices on whom farmers and crofters depend in my and the cabinet secretary's constituencies. They have been let down by their superiors. If I was a senior civil servant who was responsible for the disaster, I would be apologising not only to Scottish agriculture but to my staff.

I move amendment S4M-15844.1, to insert at end:

“; notes the impact on the agricultural supply chain of the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) delays, with merchants, vets and machinery supplies also among those being financially affected, and that store livestock prices have fallen as a result of the delays causing considerable pressures on primary livestock producing areas, notably in the crofting counties; further notes delays to other agricultural grant schemes, such as the Crofting Counties Agricultural Grant Scheme and the Scottish Rural Development Programme, and recognises the hard work and dedication of local Rural Payments and Inspections Division officers across Scotland, who have endeavoured to make their part of the BPS system function”.

15:18

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** To try to put some perspective on what has been going on, we should consider a couple of quotations. Today, the Scottish Tenant Farmers Association produced a news release headed “CAP Relief Package Should Not Be Marred by Political Posturing”:

“Many tenant farmers anticipated payment delays in their forward budgets. As tenants, they are at the sharp end unable to use rented land as borrowing collateral but the extremely wet winter and low commodity returns have undoubtedly heightened the need for prompt CAP payment delivery”.

said Chris Nicholson, the STFA chair.

On the LFASS payment, the chief executive of the Scottish Crofting Federation, Patrick Krause, said last week:

“The Scottish Crofting Federation very much welcomes this initiative. A lot of crofters will be really pleased to hear payments will be made by the end of March, as LFASS is so important to us. It is great to see the Scottish Government is being so creative in finding ways to ease crofters' cash flow concerns during this difficult time.”

However—[*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Rob Gibson:** What we have here is a motion that starts to discuss the problem that we face. Alex Fergusson's motion

“notes that Scottish farm income has fallen by 15% over the past year, which is only the second time this century when incomes have fallen in two consecutive years”.

That issue is being conflated with the issue of CAP payments.

For a start, I will dwell on the first issue. In my experience in this Parliament we have been held to ransom by the UK Government, which failed to put in place a competition commission through which we can hold the supermarkets and the middlemen to account. Christine Tacon, the groceries code adjudicator, does not have the powers to intervene on behalf of producers.

The Labour Party, the Liberals and Tories, and the Tories to follow them each failed to take the farmers' side and make sure that our people get decent prices for their products. As far as I am concerned, that is right at the heart of the problem that Scottish agriculture faces just now.

**Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD):** It was the Liberals who introduced the groceries code adjudicator when in Government down south and who are calling for the groceries code adjudicator to have further powers right across the supply chain.

**Rob Gibson:** Well, we are awaiting that with great interest.

In the meantime, because our farmers have less support and are getting lower commodity prices, they failed to get the £180 million that Scotland was due from the CAP. It might have helped our producers a little bit if they had got from the CAP settlement what was their due right.

We also see, over our heads, that the agriculture department of the UK Government is split between those who want to be in Europe and those who want to be out: Liz Truss wants to be in, George Eustice wants to be out. There is no certain sound from there to back us up. Indeed, the cabinet secretary has already talked about Westminster's experience of trying to make CAP payments and the mess that they got into in 2005. The difference now is that we cannot go back to paper calculations; we have to use a computerised system. That is what the European Union said.

NFUS representatives wrote to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee about our legacy paper. They said that:

"Food sufficiency in Scotland and the UK"

was a high aim, including:

"how to promote local food and better procurement; developing supply chains and collaborative projects with UK and EU partners designed specifically for exports, with tools to review successful food exports."

How do we deal with that situation and make sure that our agriculture can meet those goals, if we do not have a system in place in London that backs us up?

People may tell us that we have a difficult land in which to grow crops and to raise cattle and sheep, but the point is that if the London Government had been in any way interested in making sure that that happened, it would not have allowed us to be underfunded for a start, and it would have offered extra means to help us to provide the payments.

**Sarah Boyack:** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is in his last minute.

**Rob Gibson:** We are talking at the moment about the cost of the IT system. The actual cost of the computerised system is 4 per cent of the whole cost over this particular CAP period. If anyone thinks that they can set up something as complex as that, in as simple a fashion, that is purely political posturing. I have heard far too much of that already, and many of my other colleagues will make sure that they tell it as it is.

The farmers and the crofters out there know that the Scottish Government is right behind them. They will make sure that we are a success. It is very unlikely that many of the other parties, who look to London for their bosses and their ideas, will do the same. London did not give us competition safety and, as far as I am concerned, we can see exactly how hypocritical the other parties' attacks are right now.

15:24

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** I am pleased that the Conservatives have chosen the important issue of rural affairs to be debated in their time.

The Scottish Government's failure to timeously pay farmers their basic farm and other payments has caused great concern among my constituents—not just those who are directly involved in farming, but also those who appreciate and rely on the enormous contribution that farming makes to the economy and the environment of Dumfriesshire.

Anyone who listened to "Good Morning Scotland" yesterday will have heard several of my constituents—Robin Spence, who is a beef farmer from Lockerbie; Robbie Dalgleish, who runs an agriculture-related business in the town; and Andrew and Aileen Marchant from Thornhill, who are new entrants to sheep farming—speaking about the effects that those delays in payments were having on them, their colleagues and the local economy. I therefore welcome the remedial action that the Scottish Government has eventually decided to take.

We are told that the problems are due to the Government's new IT system. Public sector-commissioned IT is, of course, notorious for overspend and underperformance, so the Government should have been prepared for problems. In particular, it should have been alerted as there were problems in the system last year.

In April 2015, I contacted the cabinet secretary on behalf of the Eskdale sheep farmer Dianna Staveley, who had tried for almost a month to complete her single application form online. Despite the much-appreciated assistance of staff in the Dumfries office, she was continually locked out of her account. In reply to my correspondence on her behalf, the cabinet secretary advised me that

"the account had become corrupt for some unknown reason",

but that the problem had been corrected. Mrs Staveley subsequently advised me that it had not been corrected and that the system was still reverting to the previous errors. Mrs Staveley presciently commented in her email to me:

"Frankly the system, although possibly expensive, is too complicated and not fit for purpose".

That was the conclusion of a sheep farmer who described herself as "not computer brilliant". She seems to have been rather more computer brilliant than the Scottish Government.

A further letter in reply from the cabinet secretary on 30 May last year advised that

"there was a defect identified on our Rural Payments and Services system";

that he was

"committed to ensure that our new systems continue to improve";

and that "customer feedback" would be "taken on board". So much for those words of reassurance. Ten months later, the system is still not fit for purpose. Did the cabinet secretary or his officials check what progress was being made in improving the new systems before he promised that most farmers would receive their first payment by the end of January?

Complacency and blaming others are, of course, the hallmarks of the Government. I listened to the cabinet secretary on "Good Morning Scotland" yesterday trying to pass the blame over to the EU for the complexity of the new payments methodology along with the need to tailor it to the specifics of Scottish farming. However, the new CAP regime was hardly a surprise. It was discussed for several years prior to implementation, and the new regime was agreed by the EU in 2013. In fact, the Scottish Government consulted on implementation of the new rules in December of that year. The new pillar

1 direct payments, basic farm payment and the greening payment came into force in January last year. Surely there must have been time either for the IT problems to be resolved or for alternative back-up plans to have been put in place. Can the Government advise what actions it has taken since last year? Did ministers just cross their fingers and hope for the best?

Anyone who dares to suggest that the Government might in any way be responsible for anything that goes wrong under its watch is immediately accused of whingeing from the sidelines. That monotonous refrain is constantly repeated by the First Minister and her party, and that accusation will doubtless be levelled at Opposition members again today. However, the failure to meet the promises that were given to Scotland's farmers and crofters comes at a particularly difficult time, particularly for dairy farmers, who are suffering from the record low price of milk.

As a member of the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee in the previous session of Parliament, I was a member of a dairy summit that was first convened by the cabinet secretary in 2009, which is over six years ago. What did that achieve for the dairy industry in Scotland? It seems to me to be just as bad as it ever was, if not worse. Farmers could not be blamed for thinking that that was all just words and that there was just a desire to be seen to be doing something. No wonder they have little faith in politicians.

The Scottish Government is fortunate that it deals with stoical Scottish farmers. Tavish Scott mentioned the French. French farmers would not just have threatened to demonstrate outside Parliament; faced with those problems, they might have blockaded the place and poured milk into the ministerial petrol tanks.

I know of a couple of constituents who went in desperation to their bank to ask for help at the end of last year. Their dairy farm had been in the family for generations and they had kept going through foot-and-mouth disease, but they had been brought to the brink of bankruptcy by the milk price and the Government's incompetence in getting their pillar 1 payments for them. They were considering throwing in the towel. How many other farmers have considered abandoning farming altogether? I hope that yesterday's announcement came in time for my constituents and any other farmers or crofters who are facing the agonising decision about whether to give up the living and lifestyle to which they have devoted so much time and work.

Perhaps the cabinet secretary could explain how he has got round the issue he referred to in yesterday's "Good Morning Scotland" broadcast when he said that he would not be able to access

EU funds if the applications had not been verified. Within the space of a few hours, that problem seems to have been resolved.

The Scottish Government should apologise to Scotland's farmers and crofters, and it should, as the Labour amendment states, cover the interest costs of the loans that farmers and crofters have been forced to take out in order to survive.

15:30

**Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):**

There is no doubt in my mind that none of us in the Parliament or around the country wants to see the agricultural industry where it is today. We are seeing falling beef prices, rock-bottom dairy prices, other commodity prices dropping, supermarket price wars, the wettest winter on record, and of course the delayed CAP payments, all of which has helped to create a perfect storm, as many have said.

Our farming industry is a vital part of our economy and our society, and it is right that it gets the support that it needs to thrive. While the complications of a new IT system have led to extremely regrettable delays, the fact is that the Scottish National Party is taking real action to protect farmers. That was proven last night with the announcement that the Scottish Government will use up to £200 million of national funds to provide cash support while CAP claims are being processed, as well as ensuring that the LFASS payments are made on time. There is also the new £20 million hardship fund—the Scottish Government-backed loan scheme, which, thankfully, might not now be utilised to the full thanks to last night's announcement.

The current perfect storm is clearly not a good position to be in, but it is not the first time farmers and crofters have faced difficulties in an industry that has had more than its fair share of difficulties in the past.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Angus MacDonald:** No. I need to get on.

The Tory motion before us today is nothing short of political opportunism and posturing. While I recognise that the current situation is far from ideal, it is incumbent on all political parties to rally together during difficult periods, not turn on each other, which sadly seems to be the case today. However, it has to be said that it is quite spectacular hypocrisy from the Tories to try to score political points over farm support when their own UK farming minister is set on seeing that support abolished in its entirety by dragging Scotland out of the EU.

The truth is that the Tory Government has refused to give our farming communities any information about the future of the support payments that they will receive if we are out of Europe. The Tories in Scotland have to come clean about their own farming minister's plans, and I hope to hear more about their post-EU-membership plans in their summing-up speeches today. I doubt that we will, somehow.

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Will the member give way?

**Angus MacDonald:** I need to get on. Time is limited.

**Members:** Oh!

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** Order, please. It is up to members to decide whether to take interventions.

**Angus MacDonald:** While I hoped for more constructive criticism from the Tories, sadly I am not so surprised by the conduct of the NFUS, particularly its leaders, in recent days and weeks. We have come to expect scathing criticism from the NFUS leaders, but their most recent utterances really take the biscuit.

I am glad that the NFUS leaders had the good grace to welcome the Scottish Government's announcement last night, despite having a selective memory and attempting to rewrite history. In an attack on the Government over LFASS payments that questioned the Scottish Government's assurance that the £65 million in payments would be delayed by only a few weeks, Alan Bowie, the NFUS president, said that he did not believe the Scottish Government. I was glad to see Alan Bowie proved wrong with last Thursday's announcement that LFASS payments will be made on time. Implying that the Scottish Government is lying over LFASS is far from helpful, but it is sadly typical of the rhetoric coming from the NFUS in recent weeks.

In complete contrast, the Scottish Tenant Farmers Association welcomed the action taken by the Government, with the STFA chair, Christopher Nicholson, stating:

"Farmers across Scotland will be pleased to hear that the Scottish Government is making plans to ensure that the vast majority of LFASS claims will receive a payment by the end of March with most getting 90% of the previous year's claim. This will provide vital liquidity to Scottish agriculture at a time when farm cashflows are under pressure."

STFA's warm welcome for last night's announcement and its warning that the CAP relief package should not be marred by political posturing are welcome.

The NFUS would do well to remember that the CAP payments system has been made more complicated by its insistence on the inclusion of



three payment regions and not two. At its insistence, 400,000 fields in Scotland have been newly assessed into three payments regions rather than the two that were originally proposed. The NFUS accepted in October last year that that could lead to a delay in payments, but it was considered to be a risk worth taking.

NFUS president Allan Bowie said in *The Scottish Farmer* on 30 October last year:

"Yes, we knew and were told that more complexity would increase the risk of payments coming later. That was a risk we judged, the industry judged, was worth taking".

Former new entrants leader Jim Simmons said that the union had—I quote—an "absolute bloody cheek" pointing the finger of blame at the Scottish Government. In *The Scottish Farmer* on 23 October last year, he said:

"I clearly remember former chief agricultural officer Drew Sloan with his head in his hands saying all of the NFUS demands would lead to significant complexity, and inevitable delays".

He continued:

"In short the NFUS were at the root of the cause of these delays, were warned what their demands would mean to the timescale of payments, were told to warn their members of the delays, and now have the absolute bloody cheek to start nipping at the government."

**Angus MacDonald:** The Scottish Government was clear to the NFUS all along about what it would mean should it grant the NFUS's wish for a more complex system. It is perhaps worth noting as an aside that the Scottish Crofting Federation has always advocated a two-region system, which would have been far simpler and would have favoured crofters.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Will you close, please?

**Angus MacDonald:** Although the Scottish Government clearly has to shoulder some of the blame for what we hope are temporary inadequacies of the new computer system, the NFUS should acknowledge some responsibility for where we are today, but I doubt whether it will do that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I appreciate that the member was quoting, but I ask members to be careful about the language that they use in the chamber.

I understand that Mary Scanlon is making her valedictory speech. We were both new members of a new Scottish Parliament in 1999. On behalf of the Presiding Officers team, I wish Mary all the best for the future. [*Applause.*]

15:37

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I thought that I would keep the tears until the end.

I thought that that was a shameful speech for Angus MacDonald, the son of a crofter from Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, to make. He should be ashamed of himself. The crofters will certainly not be dancing in the streets of Stornoway tonight after hearing that.

The Public Audit Committee has been looking at Audit Scotland reports on the Government's IT systems, particularly for farm payments, for some time. There is no political posturing and absolutely no hypocrisy in any of those reports.

I start with Audit Scotland's 2012 report on Registers of Scotland. Its IT costs went up from £66 million to £112 million, which represents a £46 million overspend. The Government has form, and much more has been spent since then. Audit Scotland stated:

"Effective ICT is essential to allow public bodies to deliver services that are more timely, coordinated, less bureaucratic, and to improve their efficiency."

We can all agree on that, and that is what every farmer, crofter and politician wants today. However, the report stated that

"a lack of specialist skills and experience ... contributed to a lack of understanding",

and Audit Scotland added that

"The Scottish Government was unable to provide"

Registers of Scotland

"with all the advice and support"

it sought. That was the Scottish Government's fault.

Audit Scotland said that the roles and responsibilities were not clear. It asked for

"effective governance and risk management arrangements",

"robust performance management arrangements",

"detailed skills assessments",

strategic reviews, gateway reviews, better monitoring, a lessons learned exercise and steps to address inadequate risk management. Did the Scottish Government do that? No.

The Scottish Government was also told that it should

"compare the costs and benefits of investing in skills ... against the risks of failing to deliver ICT".

In other words, it should spend taxpayers' money investing in success rather than waste it on paying for failures.

It is all there: the problems; the analysis; and, most importantly, the solutions. The Government responded. It carried out a skills review, and it only took it two years to do so. Then it had an action plan for a central Government IT workforce, and it piloted the Scotland-wide area network IT programme, otherwise known as SWAN, which paddled away with another £70 million overspend on the farm payment system, along with a £50 million overspend on the NHS 24 system, which is still not working.

The Audit Commission's 2015 report said that "Information Systems ... did not have sufficient information", did not receive information from central Government and "did not have the staff to pursue the lack of information."

It also says that the Scottish Government was still finding it difficult to access skills. I just want to remind the Government that it is also in charge of education and training so, if there is a skills shortage, it is responsible.

The recommendations in 2012 were totally ignored.

That brings me to "The 2014/15 audit of the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts". There has to have been a serious failure before the Auditor General includes someone in that document, but here we are: serious concerns expressed by the Auditor General about the Scottish Government's CAP payments.

I want to put on record the fact that the £78 million overspend is last October's figure. I am aware that staff have been seconded from as far afield as Shetland to try to sort out the situation. The Public Audit Committee is getting an update by next Monday—not after the election, because that committee works well—and I can say that we will see that the overspend will be a heck of a lot more than £78 million.

I lay the blame fairly and squarely on the Scottish Government, and on Richard Lochhead in particular. I might have just a little respect for ministers if they would stand up and take just a little bit of responsibility for their actions.

This is my last speech and is probably the hardest to do. First, I want to thank my wonderful son and daughter for their support and forbearance. I want to thank everyone in the Highlands and Islands who gave their second vote to the Scottish Conservatives and placed their trust in me. It has been a great privilege to represent the Highlands and Islands in four sessions of this Parliament and to see so much of the amazing and stunning country that we live in.

Having been brought up in a tied cottage, where my father worked, and having left school at 15, I

never dreamed that my life circumstances and sheer hard work would bring me here. I thank the Scottish Conservative Party. It has tolerated me through thick and thin over many years.

I remember the opening of the Parliament, when we marched down the Royal Mile in alphabetical order, and I was marching in between Alex Salmond and Tommy Sheridan. I do not think that any of us could forget that opening day, with Sheena Wellington singing, "A Man's a Man for A That".

I thank Sir Paul Grice and all the Parliament staff, because they are so thoroughly professional. I particularly thank our security staff. I think that they are just amazing.

I still feel excited about coming here. I still feel excited about going to committees. I have never forgotten the great privilege it is to be here and to be a public servant. I still read all my committee papers, and I always turn up half an hour before every committee meeting. I have enjoyed every minute of the Public Audit Committee, and I thank Hugh Henry and Paul Martin for their management of it.

I thank all MSPs for their friendship, and I acknowledge the commitment of members of all parties in this chamber to serve the people of Scotland.

I would particularly like to thank my pal, Christine Grahame. There are not many cross-party friendships, but I hope that ours will endure.

**Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):** I have to remind Mary Scanlon that this is a revenge intervention. During my very first speech in this Parliament—my maiden speech—Mary Scanlon intervened on me with such devastating impact that I vowed that I would never speak again. I have been practising ever since.

**Mary Scanlon:** Revenge, indeed.

Finally, I thank Ruth Davidson and my Conservative colleagues for their friendship and their support over the years. They are the best bunch of people I have ever worked with, and I will miss every one of them. Thank you.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Michael Russell to be followed by Margaret McDougall. We need to try to stick to time, please.

15:45

**Michael Russell (Argyll and Bute) (SNP):** I regard it as a privilege to speak after the last significant chamber intervention and speech from my friend—I think that I am allowed to say, with affection, my old friend, as I have known her for a long time—Mary Scanlon, who has made as

robust, direct and memorable a speech as ever. I am very glad to be the next speaker in this debate.

For those of us who represent largely rural constituencies—or, in my case, rural and island constituencies—this debate is welcome, because it gives us the opportunity not only to address the problem but to put on record the many achievements of this Government in support of rural Scotland. That opportunity is welcome.

No one is pleased or proud regarding the present problems with the rural and agricultural payments system, but we should be very pleased that further work has been done, not least to guarantee the LFASS payments this month—which are crucial in my constituency—and also to provide an interim payment and safety net for any farmers who have not received moneys by the end of March.

The reason for the problems is somewhat more complex than presented by any of the Opposition parties. The hard work being undertaken to solve them—led by the cabinet secretary—is both more intense and more successful than any of them have acknowledged.

I am not alone in regarding some of the criticism that we have heard today as being somewhat misplaced, given that many of the critics inside and outside this Parliament have been cheerleaders for—in fact, some have been architects of—the very complex system that is being put in place, despite warnings from none other than Richard Lochhead.

It is tough for someone in the Government when the Opposition is baying for their blood. I know—I remember the sound of the hounds in pursuit. People begin to lose a sense of proportion. Hyperbole rules. Speeches are full of over-the-top demands, littered with unanswerable questions and bristling with indignation—as we have heard in one or two already—and they do no service to those of our constituents who have genuine difficulties and are suffering genuine hardship as a result of the issues.

Sometimes such hyperbole gets out of rational control and becomes something else. That is what happened this week with the involvement—salivating—of the Countryside Alliance. People can be tarnished by those whom they associate with, as Labour found out with the better together campaign. Having the Countryside Alliance on board was not an advantage to the NFUS leadership in its understandable and intense campaign, nor was the personalised and intemperate language used by Jim Walker last week.

There is something that the current NFUS president might like to reflect on. I say it as

someone who gets on well with him and enjoys his company.

**Jamie McGrigor:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Michael Russell:** I want to finish my point and then I will take it.

By all means, in the cause of effective representation, the NFUS president should bring pressure and feel anger—even indignation and fury. That is what he is there for. No one will criticise him for doing his job. However, he should avoid being used by those who have their own and other agendas, particularly at this time of land reform. That type of entanglement devalues his actions and damages his brand.

Rural Scotland is damaged by such language and by language that is already used by some in this chamber. Rural Scotland is not “on hold”, to use Sarah Boyack’s phrase this afternoon, and my constituents are ill served by that type of remark.

I give way to Mr McGrigor.

**Jamie McGrigor:** The head of the Young Crofters, Mr James Shewan, said in a newsletter:

“Discussion in the Young Crofters group has found that most of our members have not even received their Illustration of Entitlements, which shows how much they are due to be paid, let alone any money”.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Could you hurry along, please?

**Jamie McGrigor:** He continued:

“What impression does this give to any young crofters, but especially those on the fence about whether or not to take on the family croft?”

**Michael Russell:** The problems exist; they are being solved. They are being solved by the work of Richard Lochhead, and that is what we should pay attention to.

That language alienates those who are doing the job. I had a phone call this week from a Kintyre farmer and NFUS member. He said, “Tell Richard Lochhead not to resign.” I thought, “I cannot tell him anything—he has never listened to me,” but I am sure that he would not have resigned anyway because he and this Government have made significant achievements in rural Scotland.

With a produce output of around £2.3 billion a year and around 65,000 people directly employed in the sector, it is Richard Lochhead who has worked tirelessly to get the best deal for Scotland’s farmers and crofters in Europe. He has introduced major and beneficial changes in agriculture tenancies and land reform, which we are completing in the next week. He personally wanted to drive forward the Scottish food industry, which is now valued at more than £5 billion, with 14,000 new jobs.

People have businesses and jobs because of Richard Lochhead's work. The clean, green status of our valuable food industry has been developed and protected because there has been a policy to reject genetically modified food—a policy that he has led on.

I could go through a range of Richard Lochhead's and the Government's achievements. The key point is this: Richard Lochhead has been willing to be personally helpful on these issues to many members from across the chamber. I know that because I used to work with him and now I am one of those petitioners. Just last week, he helped the Bute dairy farmers with their transport costs again, something that was desperately needed. He has helped, too, with the milk industry because it has required his intervention.

There is lots of work still to be done—more work is required on the milk issue and on supermarkets. Richard Lochhead, I and others want to see more land reform; there is more to do on the food issue. In the legacy round-table discussion that the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee had last week, we talked about agriculture and the purposes of agriculture.

There have been problems but, when there are problems, it is the leadership of the cabinet secretaries and the Scottish Government that makes a difference.

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

**Michael Russell:** That leadership has been seen in the past weeks and months and was seen again yesterday, so we should celebrate what is being done and we should be glad that work is being done to improve things. We should not be trying to capitalise on that; we should be following that lead and trying to help.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you very much. I am afraid that we are incredibly short of time.

15:51

**Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in the debate on rural affairs. I will use my time to discuss the CAP payments situation and the plight of dairy farmers.

The current situation with CAP payments combined with the spiralling costs of the IT system is nothing short of scandalous. The new IT system was meant to make the process easier and more efficient. Instead, there have been significant delays and a massive increase in cost. It is now expected that the total cost of the system will be around £178 million, which is 74 per cent higher than originally forecast.

The delays have had far-reaching consequences, with many farmers still waiting on their CAP payments. To date, only £100 million has been paid out of the £400 million. The most recent figures tell us that only 7,887 out of a total of 18,300 farmers have received their basic payment. The NFUS states that there is a £365 million financial black hole in Scotland's rural economy.

A cash-flow crisis for farmers does not just affect farmers but has ramifications for businesses across Scotland. If one part of the chain stops working, the whole of Scotland's rural economy could grind to a halt, which could have long-term effects on the sector. That is why I support Labour's call for farmers to be paid as soon as possible. Although I welcome the Scottish Government's announcement yesterday that it is going to pay out £200 million of Scottish Government funds to ensure farmers get some payments, in my view it is too little too late and, as always, the devil will be in the detail.

The IT problems and delays have been pointed out to the Government time and again, yet nothing was done until yesterday. The situation was entirely avoidable and we need to hear a statement from Richard Lochhead before dissolution, setting out clearly how he will ensure that payments are made on time in 2016-17 and assuring us that the situation will never be repeated. There has been a complete lack of action by the cabinet secretary until, it seems, his hand was forced by today's debate. He should have been more proactive on the issue and he should have done everything possible to support farmers who are suffering because of this Government's failure.

Another part of Scotland's rural economy that is facing an uncertain future is that of the dairy industry. Having spoken about the industry before in the chamber, I will revisit it today as it will be my last chance before I stand down.

Last summer, I saw dairy farmers in Ayrshire protesting in local supermarkets over the price of milk, because they felt that no one was listening to them. When I spoke to dairy farmers in North Ayrshire, they told me that, at present, producing milk is a loss-making business. The situation does not seem to have improved; in fact, it is getting worse.

Yesterday, at a meeting with dairy farmers, we heard that the industry has been in free-fall over the past 12 months. Those who do not have a contract with a big supermarket are forced to sell milk at 14p per litre, with the threat of the price falling even further to 12p in spring. That has already had a huge effect on the 55 dairy farmers in Ayrshire, 15 of whom are looking to sell. Their yearly turnover has been halved and up to £11

million lost from the local economy. The situation needs direct intervention now. The current position is simply untenable, and the industry needs greater support to secure a long-term sustainable future.

The Scottish Government's dairy action plan was launched last March and predicts that, by 2025, the industry will have increased by 50 per cent. That will not happen unless we get action now. Whoever is in government after the election needs to tackle that head on. For example, a regulatory body could be established for the dairy industry. Further direct intervention by the Government is needed and there has to be greater transparency across the sector. For example, why have milk prices fallen for farmers, yet supermarkets have not reduced the price of milk? We also need to look into the prospect of longer contracts for farmers and retailers to increase security in the industry.

Dairy farmers clearly face cash-flow problems and are at risk of losing their businesses and livelihoods. Given that we are at risk of losing the dairy industry in Scotland, it is time that they were given a helping hand.

That situation, combined with the CAP payment delays and IT issues, has the potential to bring Scotland's rural economy to its knees, which would have massive consequences, not just for farmers but for all Scottish businesses that depend on the rural sector.

It is time that the Scottish Government stops playing catch-up, admits that mistakes have been made and lays out a plan to make it right. Anything less is a disservice to struggling farmers, not only in Ayrshire but across Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** If members could take a little less than six minutes from now on, I will not have to cut the time for our final two speakers.

15:57

**Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP):** I am grateful for the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate. I recognise, as others have done today, the action taken yesterday by the Scottish Government to ease the situation caused by the delay in subsidy payments to Scotland's farmers. The £200 million support package will come as a relief to many farmers in my part of Scotland, Ayrshire, and it is important to acknowledge that that help has been provided.

In my speech, I want to focus on the IT issue in some detail and see whether we might be able to uncover the real reasons why software systems can take much longer to implement than we would want.

The new IT system for processing assessments has come about principally as a result of requirements made by the European Union but also as a result of changes requested by the industry itself, including changing from two schemes to six regionalised schemes, and from trying to allocate each of the half million farmers' fields in Scotland into one of three new payment regions using the half million EU rules that must be satisfied into the bargain.

It is said that people in glass houses should not throw stones. Some have rushed, predictably, to throw their stones at the Scottish Government, because it is the easy thing for some politicians to do when they do not understand the complexity of what is being demanded. For others, it diverts attention from their own role in the specification process.

Make no mistake, all Governments are, exposed to recurring IT issues. We can look back at the not-so-distant past and see some fairly spectacular examples of IT system failures at the heart of successive UK Government projects. Let us take a brief trip down memory lane. In 2011, there was the English national health service patient records fiasco. The project started in 2002, cost more than £12 billion and had to be discontinued. In 2004, there was the Child Support Agency IT disaster, in which nearly 2 million people were overpaid and nearly 1 million were underpaid after two totally incompatible systems clashed with each other. That cost nearly £1 billion, and for every £1 that was taken in payments it was costing 70p to administer the system.

In 1999, there was the failed IT passport registration system, when half a million new passports were delayed and thousands of holidays were cancelled. There was the Ministry of Defence's failed recruitment partnering project, which cost more than £1 billion but did not work. There was the Border Agency's IT system to manage immigration casework, which cost £750 million and was cancelled. The system that is currently being used to try to work out universal credit payments is still not working. It has cost nearly £13 billion, and it has now been outsourced. The list goes on, but I have been careful not to lay the blame directly at the door of the political parties that procured those multibillion-pound projects.

The cost of the system that is currently being developed in Scotland for our farming payments is a fraction of the cost of those disasters, and a fraction of the total value of the £4 billion payments that it will administer over the next seven years of the CAP.

**Sarah Boyack:** Will the member give way on that point?

**Willie Coffey:** No—I want to get through a number of points, thank you.

There is something else going on here, and if we all look beyond the politics for an explanation, we might be able to see what it is.

Audit Scotland and the UK National Audit Office have been reporting for years that the fundamental element that is critical to any successful software public procurement project is the production of early, clear and detailed specifications for the actual requirements before project costings and implementation timescales are agreed. If you do that, you stand a good chance of success. If not, you run the risk of poor specifications leading to multiple changes and uncontrollable cost overruns.

If we pick through the embers of all those past IT disasters, I am sure that we will see the latter result replicated across most—if not all—of them. In our case, you cannot underspecify a complex IT system close to the date that it is required and then try to graft on more complex changes requested by partner agencies and still hope that it will all be ready on time. Warnings were given about that by the Scottish Government, but we are where we are. It would be like starting to build the new Forth crossing bridge using incomplete and late drawings and then changing the design as you go. Software is the same. If you give the software engineers proper specifications well in advance and do not change the plans too much, you will get a good system on time and on budget.

Why does the same thing happen again and again when we know what the reasons are? In my view, it is clear that all Governments—in Europe, the UK and Scotland—need to have strong IT systems professionals directly within and as part of the decision-making processes. They need to be allowed to go on the record with their advice on major IT systems development projects. Far too much of that expertise is outside all Governments, and the services are mostly procured commercially.

**Sarah Boyack:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Willie Coffey:** No—I have said no thank you.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is approaching his final minute.

**Willie Coffey:** Why did the European Union proceed with the directive if the IT advice was that it was extremely high risk? It was probably because there was no such strong IT advice within the decision-making circles in European policy making. All that has to change if we are to have any hope of delivering large-scale IT projects on time and within budget in the future.

I am very proud of our cabinet secretary and his attempts to deliver an extremely complex requirement from Europe within tight timescales, and to accommodate the further demands from the industry. The demands were probably unrealistic, but a huge effort has gone in to try to meet them all. The cabinet secretary certainly does not deserve to be attacked for his efforts by those whose only contribution has been to make political capital rather than to invest some thinking in how IT systems can be delivered effectively in future.

16:03

**Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP):** Like most people, I am seriously concerned about the financial difficulties that are facing Scottish farmers and crofters following the delayed payment of the common agricultural policy funds. My constituency of Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch has a great number of farmers and crofters—many of whom operate on the most difficult ground in all weathers—who rely heavily on those payments. They are struggling, and we must acknowledge that mistakes have been made that have resulted in financial hardship for my constituents.

However, we have a collective responsibility to ensure that those mistakes are quickly rectified and that the outstanding farm payments are made as quickly as possible. That is exactly what Richard Lochhead and his team have been doing, and they deserve credit for that.

I am very pleased that farmers and crofters who are still waiting for a direct subsidy payment at the end of March, just a few weeks away, will receive a cash advance directly from the Scottish Government, to tide them over. That follows the First Minister's confirmation that the Scottish Government will provide £200 million from national funds, as members said, to support farmers and crofters while common agricultural policy claims are being processed.

That is good news, which comes off the back of the cabinet secretary's recent announcement that national funds will also be used to ensure that farmers and crofters in Scotland's most fragile and remote rural areas, who rely on less favoured area support, receive a payment in March, as usual.

The delay in payments has a knock-on effect. A constituent of mine, George McLaren, of McLaren Tractors in Dingwall, has been in touch with me to say that his business has been affected because farmers are not able to pay for equipment that they have purchased from him. I am sure that that is the case more widely. Indeed, as members said, all the strata around the farming community have been affected, including trailer workers, vets,

delivery drivers and other people who are connected with farming. I feel for them all.

However, it is worth noting that, as members said and as some members want to deny, the NFUS insisted on the scheme with three areas that we now have, which made for greater complexity and added to the problems that we are facing. The NFUS was well warned but accepted that that was a risk worth taking. Indeed, NFUS president Allan Bowie said:

“Yes, we knew and were told that more complexity would increase the risk of payments coming later. That was a risk we judged was worth taking”.

*The Scottish Farmer* reported that on 30 October.

A number of people are playing politics with the issue. That is not unusual for politicians, but it is dangerous for bodies such as the NFUS to go down that road. An NFUS vice-president, who did not realise that I was the local MSP when he met me at the Black Isle show a year or two ago but who saw my Scottish National Party badge, started to make provocative remarks, clearly showing his own colours. He was not in favour of the party that I represent.

**Tavish Scott:** It is a free country.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Dave Thompson:** The man was somewhat taken aback when he realised who I was.

It is ironic that the motion was lodged by the Conservatives—the very party that has argued for the scrapping of direct support to UK farmers and crofters. That is a view that Labour has also previously supported. The Conservatives also presided over the pinching of the pillar 1 convergence uplift—some €223 million, which was due to Scotland and came to the UK only because of Scotland. That leaves Scotland at the bottom of the league in pillar 1 euros per hectare. We wait in vain for news of the promised review and for a fairer allocation of CAP funds for Scotland.

**Alex Fergusson:** Does the member accept that my party, along with other parties in this Parliament, opposed the UK Government's position on the convergence uplift? Will he also accept my assurance that if the UK Government were to take steps to remove pillar 1 direct subsidies, we would oppose that, too?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Thompson, you need to begin to close.

**Dave Thompson:** The member is quite correct but, unfortunately, this Parliament and his party, my party and any other party here do not have the power to stop that. I look forward to the member telling me that, when his party in London decides to do away with support for farmers, he will back

independence, so that he and I can fight for Scottish farmers right here.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid to say that we are out of time and that, after Alex Johnstone, members will have only five minutes for their speeches.

16:09

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):**

It has been a very long time since I last spoke in an agriculture debate; in fact, it has probably been more than 10 years. First of all, then, I had better take care of the niceties and refer members to my entry of the register of members' interests. I should further clarify that I take no income from any farming business that is in receipt of farm payments and have not done so for a very long time.

That said, I spent a considerable part of my life as a dairy farmer in a family business that used only family labour, working seven days a week to keep it afloat. That experience colours my attitudes; many of my family and indeed many of my friends are still in farming and have suffered as a result of the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Although appreciated by many at the time, the decision made half a generation ago to collect the European agriculture funds together and pay most of them in an annual single farm payment had the effect of putting most of our eggs in one basket, with the risk that, if anything ever went wrong, problems such as those that we are seeing right now would arise. Indeed, the reason why I have not been asked to speak on agriculture for a long time now is partly to do with the fact that I am one of those people who believe that single farm payments are, at best, a necessary evil. I believe that Scottish agriculture's value should be accrued from the marketplace, and the fact that we rely on single farm payments is in itself evidence of failure in many regards.

Nevertheless, we are where we are, and the Government is making policy changes that will affect many farmers in Scotland.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** Will the member give way?

**Alex Johnstone:** No, thank you.

The decision to move farm support from the south-east to the north and west has resulted in many farmers in my own area expecting payments that are only 50 or 60 per cent of those that they received only a few years ago. For many, though, those payments have not arrived. For nearly two years now, Richard Lochhead's promises have appeared to indicate that everything is going smoothly and that there would be no problem;

indeed, as recently as December, when payments did not arrive on the expected dates, we were assured that as many as possible would be made by the end of December and that most of the rest would be made from January onwards.

The fact is that many farmers have not received their payments, and the effects have been dramatic. The banks have been prepared to extend credit, but that increase in debt will be a burden on the farming industry, and it does not come without additional interest charges. Many rural businesses that trade with the farming community remain unpaid and know that they are at the end of a long payment chain that starts with the Scottish Government. Many businesses have incurred another winter's feed costs—or certainly will have by the end of April. In other words, we are talking about two winters' costs. As we move into spring, another year's seed and fertiliser will have to be bought, and as a result, farmers will have to meet two years' costs on the basis of less than one year's income. Today's promises on the less favoured area support scheme will reassure some, but trust is now at a very low ebb, and many farmers relying on that payment will believe it when they see it.

Many farmers, especially those at the beginning and at the end of their careers, will be influenced in their forward planning by their experience of this winter. They will become risk averse, and it is inevitable that in many areas we will see a slow contraction of the industry as confidence is undermined. In spite of the confident remarks that have been made today, land reform is also undermining that confidence.

We have heard the phrase "a perfect storm" used many times in the debate—I, too, have used it—but the problem is that this perfect storm has been one of policy failure and administrative incompetence. The result is that Scottish farming—and the Scottish countryside—is on hold: it is holding its breath in the hope that something will go right. The promises made today will hold out some further hope, but I have spoken to businesses that know that the status of their application is now marked "Application ready for payment", and they are still waiting for that payment—the money has not yet arrived. In his closing remarks, I would like to hear the cabinet secretary tell us at least one fact: how long does it take to go from "Application ready for payment" to money actually appearing in the bank account?

16:15

**Christian Allard (North East Scotland) (SNP):** I want to make a point to Alex Johnstone, who is a farmer. He talked about using the market and making sure that in the far future our farming communities and farming industry will not need so

much help. However, we need to be very careful about that because this is not the time and place to have that argument. I ask him to make sure that, as Alex Fergusson said, we are all behind our farming industry and that we understand that the CAP payments have to be made.

I was delighted to hear Mr Fergusson say that he will oppose the UK Government, which is formed by his own political party, and support the SNP Government's line on CAP payments. However, I did not hear a lot from Labour on that. We know that Alistair Darling said in 2008 that he thought that it would be a good idea to scrap the CAP payment to farmers. We need to be a little bit more united on that point.

**Sarah Boyack:** At some point, members will have to accept that there is a Scottish Labour Party and that where issues are devolved, we have our own policy in Scotland.

**Christian Allard:** We heard it here first: Alistair Darling is not part of the Scottish Labour Party—that is incredible.

It would be good if it is made very clear in the closing speeches that we all stand for farming and for making sure that farmers get help, whatever happens in the future.

As the First Minister said, and as the cabinet secretary has confirmed,

"We are less than halfway through the payment window allowed by Europe and the majority of Scottish producers, more than 10,000, have already received a subsidy payment. However, payments are not being made as quickly as we would like."

With regard to what farmers and Alex Fergusson have said about the cabinet secretary, the cabinet secretary apologised at the NFUS AGM for what has happened. He did so clearly—we have all done that at meetings with the NFUS. I think that there has been a lot of honesty from our party in that regard.

The cabinet secretary's confirmation that the announcement to help farmers will also enable payments to the Scottish beef sector to be made in the middle of April is very welcome in my region, which has suffered from flooding, and where the market prices have not helped. I had a very busy farming surgery at the Thainstone centre recently—most people now know where the centre is because it is regularly on the BBC—to which a lot of people came to discuss not only the CAP payments but market prices and flooding.

Unlike some of my colleagues, I have a very good relationship with the NFUS. I am quite happy to have that special relationship with it in my region, which means that I have been invited regularly to NFUS meetings. I was invited to one three or four weeks ago about the flooding



situation, and I was delighted to participate in it. Two weeks ago, I was asked to talk to the NFUS locally about the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill. It is important that we do such things. Last Friday, I was asked to speak to more than 100 farmers about the CAP payments. Other political parties decided not to go to that meeting, which I think was maybe a mistake. That engagement with farmers is so important at such a difficult time. I encourage all members to do a little more of that.

The situation has been very difficult, but the cabinet secretary has responded very well. Mike Russell spoke about the future for the cabinet secretary. I put it on record that the current cabinet secretary should be the first choice to represent our farmers in the next session of Parliament. I have asked a lot of farmers, "If not Richard Lochhead, who else?" There is no answer to that because, since he took office in 2007, he has shown that nobody else can take forward Scotland's farming industry in the way that he has done.

Food is an issue that is very close to my heart, and Richard Lochhead has really put Scottish food on the map. It is so important to have Scotland the brand out there, not only for export, but for our market as well.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Draw to a close, please.

**Christian Allard:** For many years, I have told farmers in the north-east that they should take their lead from their French counterparts. Elaine Murray and Tavish Scott talked about France. I remind Mr Scott that Scotland, unlike France, is not a member state.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that I have to ask you to close.

**Christian Allard:** I say to farmers: be more French. I will tell those who come to the Parliament tomorrow that that is important. We need CAP reform. We need a payment for farmers. We should buy local and trust our Scottish farmers.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that that has taken time from the last speaker in the open debate. Rhoda Grant will have five minutes, but I am afraid that I can give Joan McAlpine only four minutes.

16:21

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I pay tribute to Mary Scanlon, who made her valedictory speech this afternoon. Her hard work and dedication have won her the respect and affection of people throughout the Highlands and Islands. I am sure that they will miss her as much as she is obviously going to miss them.

Those of us who represent rural areas know that life is tough and that rurality breeds disadvantage. CAP payments can be the difference between viability and not being viable, and it is therefore not good enough that the cabinet secretary blames everyone else and takes no blame on himself. We are debating a degree of negligence that puts our farming and crofting communities in peril. It has led to hardship and it will lead to animal welfare problems. There are so many issues to raise that I hardly know where to start.

I welcome the fact that, ahead of the debate, the Scottish Government belatedly decided to pay from its own funds, but why did it wait until now? Surely it must have known about the shambolic state of the system and should have paid out before now. Was the cabinet secretary monitoring things and ensuring that the computer system that was being developed was fit for purpose? What checks and balances were there to ensure that the colossal cost of the new system was appropriate? The cost comes to around £10,000 per application. Many of my constituents are particularly angry and concerned about that. Many of them are waiting for payments that are much less than that, albeit that those payments are crucial to their businesses.

What impact has land registration had on the process? What anomalies are being caused by having three separate systems to map crofts? There is the Crofting Commission register of crofts, the integrated administration and control system maps and the Scottish land register maps. To what degree are conflicts between those three systems causing a problem and when on earth can that be sorted out?

I have heard about people who are not feeding themselves because they have to buy feed for their animals. Those people do not have the base to borrow commercially. Asking the banks to be flexible assumes that people have the wherewithal to borrow in the first place. The Scottish Government loan scheme asks for confirmation that the bank will not lend, and if the bank will not provide that confirmation, people have no access to the scheme. Bank lending brings interest payments and charges, but will people be compensated for that?

Is the loan fund being superseded by the new pay-out system? If so, will that happen automatically, or will people need to sign their lives away to access it? I have been sent a copy of the old form, which basically asked people to sign up to some horrendous statements. One of the statements that people had to sign up to was:

"I am aware that if this loan payment is found to constitute unlawful state aid within the meaning of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Scottish Government may be forced to seek its

repayment, along with interest on the payment insofar as it constitutes unlawful state aid.”

Who on earth could understand what that means? I for one would not be happy to sign up to that.

Last week, I spoke to members of Lewis Crofters Ltd, which is a co-op that provides feedstuff and other supplies to crofters. As a co-op, it tends to keep prices down. It is finding that although crofters are still buying feedstuff, because of the poor summer, which meant that they had to buy feedstuff for longer, they are not renewing things such as fencing, equipment and infrastructure because they cannot afford to do so. I have spoken to people who have had to change their business plans and adapt their operations because of the lack of funding. Those decisions will put them back a number of years.

There are also knock-on impacts on those who support such businesses. People who build fences are going out of business, as are associated infrastructure developers. The implications of the Government's incompetence reverberate throughout our rural communities and have a huge economic impact.

I want to touch briefly on the crofting agricultural grant scheme, which Tavish Scott mentioned. I wrote to the cabinet secretary to ask why it had been frozen last year. He wrote back to assure me that it would soon be reopened and that the delay was a result of the strategic spending review—it was all George Osborne's fault for being late with the budget. We know that the money in question comes straight from Europe, and while I hold George Osborne responsible for many things, I would not hold him responsible for that. It is little wonder that we are in such a mess if the cabinet secretary does not even know where the money comes from.

If the Scottish Government does not clear up the mess in the very near future, it will be sanctioned by the EU. What impact will that have on farmers and crofters? It would be utterly wrong if they had to fund the Government's incompetence.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Joan McAlpine. I apologise for being able to give you only four minutes.

16:26

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** Thank you very much, Presiding Officer.

I would like to open by agreeing with Alex Fergusson and others, which may be surprising, but we agree sometimes. I agree with him on the difficulties that farmers are currently facing, which my colleague Angus MacDonald described as a “perfect storm”. There is an issue not just for farmers, as Mr Fergusson said, but for many other

rural businesses and employers, from fencers to feed suppliers. I think that everyone in the chamber understands that, and none of us underestimates the impact. I hope that we can work together to deliver for our rural communities and farmers, which is exactly what Richard Lochhead is doing.

I think that it is important that we acknowledge the role of Mr Lochhead in securing £200 million at a time of extreme financial pressure. To put that into context, the entire bill for welfare mitigation that the Government has had to meet since the start of the welfare reform process is £300 million, and we must not forget the overall context of the £3.9 billion of cuts that the Conservative Government in London has imposed over the two spending review periods.

I am very proud that we have a cabinet secretary who has always fought for farmers. Colleagues are quite right to remind us that Labour and the Conservatives have both in the past argued against single farm payments. The current Conservative agriculture spokesman wants us to leave the EU, and Labour's shadow farming spokeswoman, Kerry McCarthy, is a vegan who wants to campaign to stop people eating meat—not a great message to send out to UK farmers.

Mr Lochhead has, by contrast—as my colleague Michael Russell pointed out—consistently promoted agriculture as an industry and has elevated food and drink in the national consciousness. Thanks to his efforts, the contribution of the sector is now rightly praised and recognised.

Members might expect me to say that, but back in 2011 the industry lobbied then First Minister Alex Salmond to reappoint Mr Lochhead as the rural affairs minister. In fact, for a few people, his being reappointed was a condition of their support for the Scottish National Party in the 2011 election. When Mr Lochhead was reappointed, the then NFUS president Nigel Miller told *The Scottish Farmer* that the industry would welcome the news, and was quoted in the magazine as saying:

“Over the past few years, Mr Lochhead has shown a refreshing and genuine commitment to taking forward Scotland's food and farming sectors and it is good news for both industries that he remains in the driving seat.”

If I was to make a gentle criticism of the cabinet secretary, it is perhaps that that commitment may have played some part in his bending over backwards in 2014 to accommodate the sector's demands for three payment regions. That is not an example of trying to please everyone, as Alex Fergusson suggested; it is called listening to the farmers and going the extra mile.

I want to provide a little bit of context. England implemented the main feature of this reform—the

move to area-based farm payments—back in 2005. The then Labour-Lib Dem Scottish Government decided not to make the change. When the reforms were implemented in England, serious problems were experienced, although the changes that were implemented there were far less complicated than the ones that are being made in Scotland. In 2005, the English payments were promised for February 2006. The number of farmers who were paid in February 2006 was 2,400—2 per cent of claims. In March 2006 it was 4,500, which was 4 per cent of claims. In April, it was 56,000, which was just under half the claims. The United Kingdom Government set aside £400 million at that point for late and inaccurate payments.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that you must close.

**Joan McAlpine:** I suggest that the Opposition parties have a look at the legacy report of Westminster's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee for 2010-15 because—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am sorry, Ms McAlpine, but you are out of time.

**Joan McAlpine:** Paragraph 5 of that report is extremely critical of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It just shows that the UK Government has been here before under the Conservatives.

16:30

**Tavish Scott:** Parliament will certainly miss Mary Scanlon—possibly most in the first few months of the next session, when the Public Audit Committee of that time will have to look into what has gone on. There will be an Audit Scotland report some time before the summer recess, and whoever chairs and is part of that committee will undoubtedly have the first chance to examine closely what has happened. I would like to record, along with many colleagues across Parliament, that Mary Scanlon has been one heck of a performer—if I may put it that way—on that committee. One or two witnesses have visibly blanched under her stare. I spoke to someone who was recently in front of the committee who confessed to being slightly relieved to hear that she is retiring. Many of the rest of us, whatever political party we are in, will be sorry not to see her in Parliament, especially on that committee, in future years.

I will mention a few points that the cabinet secretary made. He is absolutely right that a combination of the weather and the complexity of CAP reform has created some real challenges. That is without question or dispute. Also without dispute is the point that every SNP back bencher has made this afternoon that the NFUS and others

argued for three payment regions. Those things are not in question, and it is important to recognise, as the cabinet secretary made clear in his opening speech, that Parliament endorsed that position.

No one disputes those points. We dispute how payments are being made to crofters and farmers. It is the system that we dispute. I suspect that, in his private moments, Richard Lochhead thinks that the system has let him down personally, as well. However, he is a Government minister and, ultimately, all Government ministers have to take responsibility for their departments. I comment in passing that if Ross Finnie had made such mistakes, some people might have called for his head and would probably have burned effigies of him—led by Mike Russell. I simply do not agree that Parliament should not take a close interest in an issue that is profoundly important to rural Scotland, and should not question the ministers of the day.

I also absolutely do not accept the attacks by SNP members on Allan Bowie, the president of the NFU Scotland. He has a job to do, as any leader of any industrial body in Scotland has, and he has done the right thing by pointing out that the rural economy is £300 million light on investment that it should have had, and which the Government promised it would have in the early part of the year. For him to be attacked by all the SNP back benchers just for doing his job is a sign of a Government—or maybe a party—that needs to reflect on the fact that we all have a job to do in politics, and that Governments are better if they are held properly to account by Parliament and by organisations outside Parliament that represent their members.

Joan McAlpine rightly mentioned the environment committee—she got the title right and I cannot now remember it—of the UK Parliament. As I recollect, that committee absolutely took apart the Rural Payments Agency for the mistakes that it made when, as the cabinet secretary rightly said, it made an utter mess of making payments south of the border. The point is that the members of that committee from all political parties—including Conservatives, who attacked their own minister—did proper scrutiny of what had gone wrong. I commend that model to Parliament.

**Christian Allard:** Does Tavish Scott agree with me that the Government in England at least took the decision in 2005, while the then Minister for the Environment and Rural Development in the Scottish Government sat on his hands?

**Tavish Scott:** I do not have a clue what Christian Allard is on about. What I remember about 2005 is that Richard Lochhead backed Ross Finnie's decisions about CAP reform at that time. You might want to go and read your history books,

because you are incredibly badly informed—and not for the first time.

Let me move on to Mr Russell and Mr Walker. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order. Speak through the chair, please.

**Tavish Scott:** Jim Walker used to be prayed in aid by members on the SNP benches when he was a prominent supporter of the yes campaign, but Mr Walker wrote an article in *The Scottish Farmer* last week that Mr Russell attacked earlier. It seems to me that Jim Walker just pointed out the facts about some of the points that Mary Scanlon made about Audit Scotland—he quoted Audit Scotland extensively.

Willie Coffey rightly made remarks about IT projects that have gone wrong south of the border. He used to make that point very effectively in the Public Audit Committee in previous years. However, the NHS 24 computer system in Scotland is £40 million over budget, and two of its chief executive officers have gone. Perhaps we want also to look a little at the context north of the border.

I will finish with two points. The first is simple: I hope that the cabinet secretary will accept today that he has a responsibility to crofters and farmers across Scotland to come back to Parliament before this session finishes to answer the many reasonable questions that have been asked by members of all political persuasions about the many aspects that remain outstanding. There are heaps of questions about 30 June, the SAF deadline, entitlement trading and what will happen if the £200 million cannot be paid for the reasons that other members have mentioned.

Finally, I make it very clear that the overall impact on the rural economy is very significant. It is significant now, which is what any Government would have to address—not least because store cattle prices and finished cattle prices are lower per head than they were a year ago, as the cabinet secretary will know from his constituency.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close.

**Tavish Scott:** The pressure in the whole system—the way the money flows—is very important in resolving the problems.

16:36

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** Early in February, I met members of NFUS Forth and Clyde and representatives of local businesses including an auction firm and one that sells farm machinery. The situation has been dire for those people and many others across Scotland. The

mood was gloom-ridden and, at the same time, very anxious, and there was talk of concern for the mental wellbeing of farmers and their families. There was also worry about how long local businesses could carry on putting off hire-purchase payments. The knock-on effects across the local economy were starkly apparent.

Why do I raise that again, at the end of this long debate, when the cabinet secretary has finally managed to find the funding for interim payments? As the NFUS has stated, “essential liquidity” will be provided by the Scottish Government payment advance. It is in large part due to the efforts of the NFUS and its lobbying that that is now happening. I raise the issue again for two reasons. The first reason is that it took so long. As Tavish Scott stressed earlier in the debate, there was action in France on the issue last year. The tone of the cabinet secretary’s amendment to the motion today seems to put far too much blame on the stakeholders, although it is, in the end, for the Scottish Government to have sorted out the problem more quickly, or to have acted sooner on interim payments.

The second reason is that this must never be allowed to happen again. The debate has highlighted that second point over and over again. I know that everyone involved will continue to seek assurances from the Scottish Government that we are on track for a relatively smooth process in the next CAP round.

Before I focus on another issue, I ask the cabinet secretary specifically whether the Scottish Government will compensate farmers for interim bank-loan interest. To do so seems to be only fair, so I hope that he will comment on that in his closing remarks.

In the throes of the CAP chaos, Parliament must not fall guilty of neglecting the serious on-going difficulties for one specific sector—the dairy sector, which has been mentioned by other members today. It is, indeed, in freefall and the volatile open-market price threatens to drop even lower. The disparity between hard-working dairy farmers with contracts with big supermarkets and those without contracts to big supermarkets continues to be untenable. Supermarket-contracted farmers are paid more than double the price per litre that farmers without contracts are paid. That creates an atmosphere of instability and sometimes competition, which makes things difficult in some areas.

Margaret McDougall highlighted the concerns of the Sorn Milk group. I met some of its farmers this week, and they delivered a stark warning: without more intervention by the next Scottish Government, family-run firms may well not survive, and the future of a prized Scottish industry will be in fewer and larger factory-style farms.

Elaine Murray reminded us that the issue has continued since 2007—if not before. It is now about a year since the Scottish Government published the five-point dairy action plan. Given the deepening crisis, can the cabinet secretary give us an update on progress? It would be encouraging to hear something about new investment in processing capacity, because it is vital for supporting the industry at home for niche markets. Has the cabinet secretary looked to Ireland as a good model? Its early investment has been a great support.

We all know that power in the milk supply chain is skewed to the big retailers. There must be more regulation in Scotland to ensure transparency. Another issue to do with Scottish milk and other products that I want to raise and which must be addressed in the Scottish Parliament is Scottish labelling and what that means.

To look further into the future—this was stressed in the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee legacy evidence session last week—we must start early to plan for the next CAP if it is to be truly visionary and take account of the complexities of rural Scotland. We must ask where farming is going for the next decade and far beyond.

To build on Rhoda Grant's comments on the Highlands, it is essential that we also support our crofting communities in the future. Where does the organics industry fit? How can it be developed? The same question applies to agroecology. What of climate change imperatives and the place of agroforestry in tackling flooding and meeting biodiversity targets? How do we best support our farmers and rural communities through the future CAP and other support mechanisms?

In this shameful age of food banks, how do we ensure—this is important—that Scotland's people have access to fresh, affordable and, where possible, local food? How do we better link rural and urban Scotland so that we can all work together across the parties for good food for Scotland and for exporting, and for vibrant and strong rural communities?

16:42

**Richard Lochhead:** I thank all members for their contributions. I am the second-last speaker in the debate, but I have paid close attention to many of the powerful points that have been made across the chamber.

On behalf of the Government, I pay tribute to Mary Scanlon for her service to the Scottish Parliament. Although I did not agree with the first half of her speech, the second half was dignified and, indeed, moving. Our swords have often crossed on the streets of Moray, but I pay tribute

to her contribution to the Highlands and Islands and the Scottish Parliament.

I also pay tribute to Margaret McDougall. Her speech was not her last one, but it was probably her last on an agricultural topic. I wish her all the best for the future, as well.

We all agree on the importance of agriculture to Scotland and on supporting our primary producers—our farmers and our crofters—who underpin Scotland's successful £14 billion food and drink industry. That simply would not exist to anywhere near the extent that it does without the hard work of our farmers and crofters and without our fantastic natural environment. They provide the raw materials that underpin many of our world-famous products. That has a huge economic value.

Despite the massive success in food and drink in recent years, the industry is encountering cash-flow issues because of the factors that many members have raised—particularly the low commodity prices that are affecting the dairy sector and other sectors. That is taking its toll, and I will return to that near the end of my speech.

There is also the recent weather. I have visited many farms that have been impacted by unbelievable, biblical-style flooding, which has damaged farming businesses. That is why John Swinney announced £1 million for repairing man-made flood banks on farms. Last week, I announced that we were providing an additional £1 million to cope with the number of applications in the affected areas. We are doing our best to help farmers in that context.

On the wider farm payments, which are the main topic of the debate, we have been taking every possible step to recognise the cash-flow problems that the sector is facing and to deal with the issues. As I said in my opening speech, 59 per cent of farmers and crofters have had their first instalment, which is equivalent to 80 per cent of their overall payment. That is £115 million that has gone out the door.

Last week, I announced that payments for the less favoured area status will be going out in the final week in March, so we will be close to the usual timescale for those vital payments, which are important to particular parts of Scotland. Last night's announcement of £200 million of national money to ensure that those who do not have their application processed this month get the first instalment of their payment in April was the latest announcement.

I point out gently to the Labour Party and the Tories, who both made the point that the timing of that announcement was decided on because of the timetabling of today's debate, that I said to the industry when I met it last week—before the topic

for the debate had been announced—that we are working hard to address the cash-flow problem, that we are looking for solutions and that we are considering whether there are options to help the industry at this crucial time. That led to the First Minister's announcement last night of the £200 million that has been made available.

**Murdo Fraser:** We all recognise the hard work that the cabinet secretary and his officials have been putting in to solve the problem. However, does he associate himself with the disgraceful comments that we heard from his colleague Angus MacDonald about the leadership of the NFUS?

**Richard Lochhead:** I will talk about the role of the stakeholders shortly.

The beef scheme is important to many producers in Scotland. It is a £40 million scheme and the money will be paid on the same timetable as applied to last year's payments. We are making every effort possible to tackle the cash-flow issues.

Tavish Scott said that I might in my private moments wish that the IT system was performing better and that I have been infuriated by what is happening. I am very public about that. We recognise that there are issues with the IT system. As I have said many times, many people are working flat out to deal with it. I wish that I was a software specialist, but I am not. We employ people to do that work and, if they do not do a good enough job, we get more staff in—as we are doing now—to make sure that the system improves.

**Alex Fergusson:** If the single application form process shows any signs of difficulty this year, will the cabinet secretary have a plan B in operation?

**Richard Lochhead:** We are taking steps to ensure that the system is working, but we cannot divorce the complexity of the schemes from the payments. If we had chosen a system with two payment regions, we would not have encountered the same number of IT problems. We chose a system with three payment regions because we listened to the stakeholders, the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee and the political parties across the chamber.

In the last CAP, the UK Government had to pay disallowance of £642 million. We have to abide by EU rules to avoid paying disallowance in Scottish circumstances. I am not defending the IT system—as we have publicly acknowledged, there are problems with it—but we cannot divorce it from the complexity of the scheme. The complexity has to be dealt with so that we can avoid disallowance. We are not allowed to pay one single claim unless it is error free, has been validated and is compliant. We have to process the claims properly before we can pay out the money. That is an

important point for us all to keep at the forefront of our minds.

Many members talked about the £178 million IT system. A lot of public money is being invested in delivering £4 billion of support to our agricultural communities. So far, £131 million has been committed—just over £98 million has been for the IT system and just under £33 million is non-IT spend in the futures programme, which relates to the £178 million. I wanted to get that on the record.

A number of issues have been raised and I will seek an opportunity to write to the committee or to Parliament to wrap up some of those issues before dissolution. However, I want to point to this week's farming press. I like to read the farming press. Sometimes I feature in it; sometimes that is positive and sometimes it is not so positive. I was looking at the headlines this week, which said, "Inept civil servants failing UK farming", "MPs demand payment timing clarity as 'bizarre' communications continue", "Childish turf war blamed for farm payment delays" and "MPs brand CAP delays unacceptable".

I thought that that must have been about me, because of what is happening in Scotland, but it turns out that it was about the Tory Government south of the border. Do I say that to make a cheap political point? Maybe. [*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order. Let us hear the cabinet secretary close.

**Richard Lochhead:** The real reason why I said it is that these are immensely difficult issues. In 2005, Ross Finnie, with the support of other political parties, decided not to move to the area payment system, because it is so complicated and difficult to do in Scottish circumstances. This time around, we had no choice: Europe said that we had to move to it. Even without the complication of what we are doing in Scotland, the UK authorities are struggling south of the border with their CAP payments.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Cabinet secretary, you must close.

**Richard Lochhead:** If we add that to the fact that the Conservative Party did not even want the payments in the first place and argued for scrapping them, that amounts to blatant, sheer hypocrisy in the debate.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am afraid that you really must close. We are out of time.

**Richard Lochhead:** I have worked flat out for the farmers and crofters in Scotland and I will continue to do that in the times ahead to get a better return from the market and ensure that the payments get out the door as quickly as possible. I

urge Parliament to support the Government amendment.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Murdo Fraser to wind up the debate. I apologise for your having lost a bit of time; you have until 5 o'clock.

16:51

**Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** I thank all the members who contributed to the debate, and I will try to respond to as many points as I can. First, I single out my colleague and friend Mary Scanlon for her valedictory speech in the chamber, which gave us a flavour of what the next parliamentary session will miss without her presence. A number of members, including Tavish Scott and Richard Lochhead, were generous in their praise of her contribution, not least to the Public Audit Committee. I saw in press reports that at lunch time a semi-naked man was arrested by the police on Holyrood Road. I am assured that there is no truth in the rumour that that was a senior civil servant who had just had a bruising encounter with Mary Scanlon in the Public Audit Committee and who was trying to escape. [*Laughter.*] Mary will indeed be missed.

At the outset of the debate, my colleague Alex Fergusson set out the background to the issue. As of 3 March, 54 per cent of CAP claimants had received part payment under the basic payment scheme. That statistic masks a rather more worrying figure. The total that has been paid out equates to £103 million, or approximately a quarter of the total amount that is expected to be paid out. That means that some three quarters of the total funds have not yet been paid.

We know why we are here. As Mary Scanlon said, in October 2014, Audit Scotland produced a helpful section 22 report for the Public Audit Committee that looked at failures in IT management. The cost of the futures programme has escalated to some £178 million, which is in itself a scandal. These are large sums of public money that could and should be spent in other areas, and they are indicative of Government failures in IT that we see elsewhere, including those in NHS 24.

As we have heard, the impact of the failures has been dire. Delays in CAP payments and LFASS payments mean that there is a hole in the rural economy that represents some £365 million. As a number of members have reminded us, that money should be in the bank accounts of farmers, who would be spending it on paying invoices, settling with suppliers or ordering new supplies and equipment. Who knows what damage has been done to the supply chain and the wider rural economy by the failure to pay the money out?

The problem was recognised even by SNP members. Dave Thompson recognised the damage that is being done to the rural economy, but I was concerned by the suggestion that he made when he recounted his anecdote about his encounter at the Black Isle show. He seemed to suggest that it is no longer acceptable in Scotland to hold a different political opinion from that of the Scottish National Party. It seems that we all have to conform to the SNP's view of the world or we are not allowed to have a voice. There is a name for that: it is called a one-party state. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Order.

**Murdo Fraser:** As we heard from a number of members, there has been a huge burden on farmers, with increased waits, expense and worry. Sarah Boyack and Elaine Murray gave a number of examples of that. Recently I spoke to one constituent farmer, living in highland Perthshire, who told me that because of difficulties with their broadband—that is another issue altogether—they had to make the journey to Perth, which is a return trip of two hours, in order to visit the area office to discuss their application and entitlement letter. When they got there, they found that the area office could not access the IT system and therefore had great difficulty in assisting them. Many other members can report constituents having similar problems.

Throughout the debate, we heard from SNP back benchers all the excuses about how this was such a substantial CAP reform, about all the individual claims that had to be processed, about all the farms that had to be inspected and about how much more complex the system is than previously. However, each of those challenges was known in advance, before the IT system was put in place.

Those excuses simply do not wash. Whenever the Government runs into problems, its default response is to turn around and blame someone else—it is Westminster's fault or Europe's fault. However, in this case, it is no one's fault but the Government's own. The buck stops with the Scottish Government.

We heard the first line of defence from the likes of Rob Gibson and others on the back benches. People such as Mr Gibson would do well to come up with a show of humility for the failures of their Government on such issues. Then we had the extraordinary attack from Angus MacDonald on the NFUS leadership. I thank him for two things: first, for giving me helpful lines about the SNP's view on rural communities to deploy in election literature; and secondly—sincerely—for circulating to all members the list of the SNP's attack lines, which let us know in advance what the interventions would be in the debate.

**Angus MacDonald:** As the *Official Report* will show, I was highlighting the fact that the NFUS leadership acknowledged last October that having three payment regions could delay payments but thought that that risk was worth taking.

**Murdo Fraser:** I thank Mr MacDonald for reading out rebuttal line 5 on the SNP's list of lines to deploy.

As we heard, when similar problems occurred in England, the English Rural Payments Agency reverted to paper-based application forms. However, at least English farmers got paid, which is more than can be said for the situation in Scotland today.

I acknowledge the steps that the Scottish Government has taken. First, there was the £20 million hardship scheme, then there was the announcement that the Scottish Government would use its own funds to make LFASS payments to the majority of farmers in March and, just last night, we heard the announcement that £200 million would be invested to ensure that basic payments were made by the end of April. I know how welcome that announcement is to the farming community. However, we have to wonder how the Government, which is always pleading poverty and telling us that it cannot find money for anything, can suddenly find £200 million down the back of the sofa to get the cabinet secretary out of a deep political hole. That demonstrates the power of the Scottish Conservative Party as the real Opposition in the Parliament.

**John Swinney:** Here we go—the fight for second place.

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Murdo Fraser:** We schedule a debate in our parliamentary time and lodge a motion for action and, within 24 hours, the Government produces £200 million out of thin air to address the problem. What a pity that the session is about to end and there are no more Opposition debate slots for the Scottish Conservatives. Who knows what problems we could have solved by championing them here in the Scottish Parliament? I can imagine a long queue at our door of those who need emergency Government cash. Sadly, they will have to wait until after the election before we can deal with those problems.

The Government action so far is welcome, but it is not the end of the story. We need to know that the entitlement letters that have been issued are accurate. Many constituents have said to me that those letters are riddled with errors that will take a long time to resolve.

We need to know the additional administrative cost of what is going on. We already know about the IT cost overruns so far; we know that extra

staff have had to be drafted in by the Scottish Government and that the latest move is going to involve extra administration. How much does that total, and where in the Scottish Government's budget will that come from?

Finally, we need a full independent inquiry into what has gone wrong. Audit Scotland has already done sterling work, and I understand that it is continuing its investigations. We need to see what it concludes, but we should not close the door on further scrutiny.

Despite all the scuttling around over the past couple of days, there is no doubt that the cabinet secretary has lost the confidence of rural Scotland. The former NFUS president Jim Walker—formerly an SNP supporter, and someone who voted yes in the independence referendum—has called for the cabinet secretary's resignation and said that he

“could never support a party, a Minister or a Government who have been quite so incompetent and frankly naïve.”

We on the Conservative benches are more generous. We are not calling for resignations. We are not here to score political points or to throw bricks—we will leave that to others. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order. Let us hear Mr Fraser.

**Murdo Fraser:** What we—and Scotland's farmers—want is firm action to make sure that our farmers get the money that they are due, without any further delay. We want this matter sorted. It has dragged on for too long and we need a thorough investigation so that it can never happen again. That is what our motion calls for, and I commend it to the chamber.



## Business Motions

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-15873, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme for Thursday, 10 March.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees to the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 10 March 2016—

delete

6.00 pm                      Decision Time

and insert

6.15 pm                      Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-15852, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 15 March 2016

2.00 pm                      Time for Reflection

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by*                      Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by*                      Ministerial Statement: Scotland's Energy Strategy

*followed by*                      Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee Debate:  
Inquiry into the Circumstances surrounding the Closure of the Forth Road Bridge

*followed by*                      Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee:  
Legislation Inquiry/Hybrid Bills

*followed by*                      Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee:  
Admissibility of Petitions and Minor Rule Changes

*followed by*                      Business Motions

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm                      Decision Time

*followed by*                      Members' Business

Wednesday 16 March 2016

9.00 am                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

9.00 am                      Supplementary Legislative Consent Motion: Scotland Bill – UK Legislation

*followed by*

Stage 3 Proceedings: Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

2.00 pm                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm                      Portfolio Questions  
Education and Lifelong Learning

*followed by*                      Stage 3 Proceedings: Land Reform (Scotland) Bill

*followed by*                      Business Motions

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm                      Decision Time

*followed by*                      Members' Business

Thursday 17 March 2016

11.40 am                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am                      General Questions

12.00 pm                      First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm                      Members' Business

2.30 pm                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm                      Stage 3 Proceedings: Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Bill

*followed by*                      Business Motions

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

6.00 pm                      Decision Time

Tuesday 22 March 2016

9.00 am                      Time for Reflection

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by*                      Stage 3 Proceedings: Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Bill

*followed by*                      Stage 3 Proceedings: Bankruptcy (Scotland) Bill

2.00 pm                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm                      Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by*                      Stage 3 Proceedings: Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill

*followed by*                      Business Motions

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm                      Decision Time

*followed by*                      Members' Business

Wednesday 23 March 2016

10.15 am                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

10.15 am                      Members' Business

*followed by*                      Portfolio Questions  
Fair Work, Skills and Training;  
Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights

11.40 am                      General Questions

12.00 pm                      First Minister's Questions

*followed by*                      Business Motions

*followed by*                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Motion of Thanks  
 12.45 pm Decision Time—[Joe FitzPatrick.]  
*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of seven Parliamentary Bureau motions.

Motions S4M-15853 to S4M-15857 are on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Scotland's Adoption Register Regulations 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 4 and Part 5 Complaints) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification of Schedules 2 and 3) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Kinship Care Assistance (Scotland) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Public Services Reform (Social Work Complaints Procedure) (Scotland) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

**The Presiding Officer:** Motions S4M-15858 and S4M-13859 are on the suspension of standing orders.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purposes of stage 3 consideration of the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill, Rule 9.5.3B of Standing Orders be suspended.

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purposes of stage 3 consideration of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Bill, Rule 9.5.3B of Standing Orders be suspended.—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

**The Presiding Officer:** The questions on those motions will be put at decision time.

## Decision Time

17:02

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** There are seven questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S4M-15844.3, in the name of Richard Lochhead, which seeks to amend motion S4M-15844, in the name of Alex Fergusson, on rural affairs, 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)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (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)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (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)

Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brennan, Lesley (North East 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)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 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)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West 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)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 62, Against 53, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-15844.2, in the name of Sarah Boyack, which seeks to amend motion S4M-15844, in the name of Alex Fergusson, on rural affairs, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brennan, Lesley (North East 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)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 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)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West 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)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)

#### 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)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (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)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (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)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 53, Against 62, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-15844.1, in the name of Tavish Scott, which seeks to amend motion S4M-

15844, in the name of Alex Fergusson, on rural affairs, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brennan, Lesley (North East 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)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 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)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West 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)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)

**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)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (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)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (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)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 54, Against 61, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-15844, in the name of Alex Fergusson, on rural affairs, as amended, 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)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (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)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (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)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**Against**

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)

Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Brennan, Lesley (North East 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)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 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)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West 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)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (Ind)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 62, Against 53, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament acknowledges that the common agricultural policy (CAP) currently being implemented is the most radical and ambitious ever, with unprecedented simultaneous reforms to both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 of the CAP requiring around 20 schemes to be launched during 2015 and the introduction of greening measures and three payment regions; notes that the timetable of EU negotiations and decisions left administrations with a short timescale in which to implement such radical reforms; welcomes the fact that the Scottish Government engaged comprehensively with stakeholders during the development and negotiation of the policy, and that both stakeholders and the Scottish Government agreed that securing the right policy outcomes for Scotland was the priority even if this risked impacting on the timing of payments within the 1 December to 30 June Pillar 1 payment window; notes that the Scottish Government had issued over 10,000 payments

worth around 80% of basic and greening payments to 56% of eligible farmers and crofters as of 7 March 2016; acknowledges that, at the same time as the transition to the new CAP, farmers are facing additional difficulties due to market trends and unfavourable weather and therefore welcomes the announcements of steps by the Scottish Government to accelerate basic payments to farmers using Scottish Government funds and the national less favoured area support scheme expected to deliver payments to the vast majority of eligible farmers and crofters by the end of March 2016; commits to learning lessons from the implementation of the new CAP, and supports the continuation of CAP payments as one of the benefits of Scotland's continuing membership of the EU.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motions S4M-15853 to S4M-15857, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Scotland's Adoption Register Regulations 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 4 and Part 5 Complaints) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification of Schedules 2 and 3) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Kinship Care Assistance (Scotland) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Public Services Reform (Social Work Complaints Procedure) (Scotland) Order 2016 [draft] be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-15858, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the suspension of standing orders, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purposes of stage 3 consideration of the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Bill, Rule 9.5.3B of Standing Orders be suspended.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-15859, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on the suspension of standing orders, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purposes of stage 3 consideration of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Bill, Rule 9.5.3B of Standing Orders be suspended.

## Marie Curie Great Daffodil Appeal

### **The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):**

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-15287, in the name of Linda Fabiani, on the Marie Curie great daffodil appeal 30th anniversary. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament welcomes Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal, which is now in its 30th year and runs throughout March 2016; understands that, since 1986, the Great Daffodil Appeal has raised over £80 million for the charity across the UK; applauds what it sees as the substantial contribution made by over 80 local Marie Curie fundraising groups, such as the East Kilbride Fundraising Group, to the Great Daffodil Appeal every year to support Marie Curie services across Scotland; believes that money raised in Scotland in 2015 funded over 30,000 hours of nursing care and emotional support; understands that this means there is support for over 7,500 people living with a terminal illness, and their carers and families, in their own homes in 31 local authorities and in Marie Curie hospices in Edinburgh and Glasgow; considers that fundraising allows the charity to work in partnership with NHS boards and local authorities to develop new and innovative, integrated services that provide person-centred care; applauds the work of staff and volunteers across Marie Curie who, it considers, work toward its vision of a better life for people and their families living with a terminal illness, and notes calls to encourage as many people as possible to support the campaign this year.

17:08

**Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** I am honoured to again host Marie Curie staff and volunteers in our Parliament and to head up the members' business debate. It is a particularly special year for Marie Curie, as this year marks the 30th anniversary of the great daffodil appeal.

It might seem strange to refer to the annual Marie Curie daffodil appeal as a happy event when one considers the work of the charity, but it is. It gives a sense of us all working together to help our neighbours, friends and family. The yellow spring flower, to me, is a mark of an organisation that—from the volunteer fundraisers and helpers through to the professional and admin staff and the medical and nursing staff—is determined to provide the best possible care and attention to those living with terminal illness and those who love them. As Marie Curie states,

"Every day matters when you're living with a terminal illness",

and it wants to help people make the most of the time that they have. Marie Curie fulfils that aim in different ways. "Person-centred" is the technical jargon: it means "the best way possible", with the wishes of the individual always at the forefront.

The hospice service has hospices in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and they are friendly and

welcoming places, whether residential or day care. Annually, care is provided to more than a thousand in-patients in addition to the many thousands of home visits and additional day services.

The helper service currently operates in four local authority areas and provides emotional and practical support to people living with terminal illnesses and their families and carers. The service operates through volunteer helpers, and I am delighted that Marie Curie plans to roll it out across the rest of Scotland.

Everyone knows about the Marie Curie nursing service, which consists of expert nurses working 24/7 in people's homes right across the country. It is such a vital service, helping people to stay at home, surrounded by those they care about most and where they are most comfortable.

The Marie Curie nurses supported over 4,700 people in 31 local authorities across Scotland in 2014-15, providing over 36,000 visits.

The information and support service offers the Marie Curie support line, which provides confidential help for anyone who has questions, needs support or just wants to talk. The informative website has expanded to become the Marie Curie community, an online forum where experiences can be shared and support given. Again, that shows inclusive working together in care.

Another aspect of the work of Marie Curie is participating in policy formation. It is always constructive and speaks from the broad base of experience.

The starting point is that everyone should have the right to palliative care when they need it, and the campaign run by Marie Curie and other voluntary organisations has raised awareness of the issue with successive Governments and Parliaments, resulting in a much greater understanding of the issues and a greater willingness to talk about them.

It is excellent that Marie Curie gets involved in that work. It shows in so many ways in our Parliament; for example, the recent Health and Sport Committee report "We need to talk about palliative care" recognised the work that the voluntary sector has done in the area, as did the Scottish Government's vision in the strategic framework for action on palliative and end-of-life care.

People are living longer, with more complex and multiple conditions. More people are dying in hospitals, putting more pressure on acute services. The investment in palliative care in communities provides the care that people want and has the potential to prevent unnecessary

admissions and delayed discharges, and to reduce acute care costs.

Provision of palliative care in communities requires partnership working between health and social care and with the voluntary sector.

Not everyone living with a terminal illness in Scotland is getting the care and support that they need. Marie Curie reckons that around 40,000 of the 54,000 people who die each year need some form of palliative care. Around 11,000 people in Scotland miss out on that care every year.

The research evidences inequity of access over palliative care, especially for those over 85, those who live alone, those from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, those from deprived communities and those with terminal conditions other than cancer.

We can make palliative care better, but we can do it only by partnership working between health and social care services and great use of the voluntary sector. As Marie Curie says, palliative care is integrated health and social care if it is done sensitively and properly. Hospital staff know that. Marie Curie gave us a quote from a member of a hospital's staff that sums up much of this:

"In the past, we've had patients fit enough to go home but, by the time the service was available, they weren't and so they ended up stuck in the hospital until they died".

That is not what we want for people we love, or indeed for anyone in our society.

There is much to do, but I believe that the will is there to do it and that, if we all work together, we can make it better.

I know that my colleagues have much more to say, so I will close by referring once more to the 30th anniversary of the great daffodil appeal. In that 30 years, more than £80 million has been raised across the UK and more than 80 local Marie Curie fundraising groups have been set up, including a very active group in East Kilbride, which I represent.

In 2015, the appeal funded more than 30,000 hours of nursing care and emotional support. As a result of the work by fundraisers, there is support in Scotland for more than 7,500 people who are living with a terminal illness and for their carers and families. That work covers 31 local authorities—there is still one to go, but Marie Curie will get there.

The fundraising allows the charity to work in partnership with national health service boards and local authorities to develop the innovative and integrated services that we know are necessary. I applaud the work of staff and volunteers across Marie Curie, who are working towards their vision of a better life for people who are living with a



terminal illness and for their families. I encourage as many people as possible, in and outwith the chamber, to support this year's great daffodil appeal.

17:16

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** I congratulate Linda Fabiani on once again lodging a motion in support of Marie Curie's work.

Like Linda Fabiani, I applaud the work of all the volunteers and staff who make such an indispensable and invaluable contribution in the care that they provide. In particular, I endorse and applaud the great daffodil appeal, which is in its 30th year. All over the country, volunteers and fundraising groups are getting behind the daff, using the hashtag #getbehindthedaff to raise awareness on social media. They are taking lots of practical actions too, such as bake sales and quizzes, and dressing up, down or daft for the day. Let us praise them and celebrate their work, as well as that of the volunteers in the helper support project to which Linda Fabiani referred, and the volunteers and staff who work in the many Marie Curie shops. I was pleased, on make a difference day, to work for a day in the shop at Goldenacre in my constituency.

Of course, we also celebrate and acknowledge the work of Marie Curie's dedicated, motivated and amazingly caring staff. There are two great hospices: one in Edinburgh and one in Glasgow. I know that the one in Edinburgh had 480 admissions last year. Increasingly, however, Marie Curie is working in the community. We are told that 4,700 patients throughout Scotland were supported in the community last year; in Lothian, there were 4,152 community nurse visits and 2,237 clinical nurse specialist visits.

The motion refers to the collaborative work between health boards, local authorities and the third sector, which is increasingly important as more work is done in the community. I hope that the new integration joint boards, which now have responsibility for palliative care, will recognise the vital role of the third sector in that area and in many other areas of work in the community.

The hallmarks of Marie Curie care are that it is holistic and patient centred, and—most important—that the services respond to patients' choices. I was pleased to see that 95 per cent of patients in Lothian last year were able to die in their place of choice.

The quality of care is central, and the participation of many staff in the research facilitator scheme is a way of enhancing quality and ensuring that staff understand even better patients' needs and the nature of quality care.

There are other facets of the work. Linda Fabiani referred to the information and support service, and we should also acknowledge Marie Curie's contribution to policy. Marie Curie has produced important reports such as "Changing the conversation: Care and support for people with a terminal illness now and in the future" and "Triggers for palliative care: Improving access to care for people with diseases other than cancer", which highlighted discrepancies in provision and the fact that many different groups did not access the palliative care that they needed.

In particular, during the Health and Sport Committee's inquiry into palliative care, we found out that people with a terminal illness other than cancer often lost out. It was important that Marie Curie's research fed into the Government's policy document—the strategic framework for action to which Linda Fabiani referred—as well as the Health and Sport Committee's report.

Marie Curie has also campaigned on benefits. The Scottish Government has committed to fast-tracking benefits for people who are living with a terminal illness, but Marie Curie is concerned that the carers allowance also needs to be fast-tracked for people who are caring for someone with a terminal illness. I do not think that such a commitment has been made. It is probably difficult for the Minister for Public Health to make such a commitment, but I am sure that she will pass the message on to the responsible minister.

My time is nearly up. I apologise for not being able to go to the reception; I have a very important constituency meeting in west Granton, where the community centre is threatened with closure. I hope that I will be able to stay until the end of the debate, although if there is a large number of speakers perhaps the Presiding Officer will forgive me if I leave slightly early.

17:20

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** I thank Linda Fabiani for securing the debate. I appreciate the chance to speak about Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal, which is in its 30th year, and about how the appeal facilitates much of the good work that the organisation carries out. I welcome the Marie Curie representatives and volunteers who are in the gallery.

Marie Curie is a charity like no other. It has been carrying out work for more than 65 years, and during that time it has managed to remain cognisant of how it is perceived and of what people in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom need from the services that it provides. With that in mind, in 2015 it rebranded itself from Marie Curie Cancer Care to Marie Curie: care and support through terminal illness. The charity

supports more than 7,400 terminally ill people in Scotland each year, providing services in 31 local authorities and in two hospices, in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

It is of great importance that we take time today to honour the achievements and continued hard work of Marie Curie staff and the many volunteers who give their time.

Marie Curie is there for people who are living with terminal illness, whether cancer or another illness; it also supports those people's families. It offers expert care, guidance and support, to help people to get the most from the time that they have left.

The implementation of new information and support services, such as the Marie Curie support line, the information hub on the website and the Marie Curie community online forum, is helping the charity to achieve its goal of raising awareness and maximising the number of people who can access and benefit from the different types of support that are available.

Various initiatives take place annually to raise funds. One of the biggest successes for Marie Curie in raising funds for services is the annual great daffodil appeal. Last year the appeal raised half a million pounds in Scotland alone and more than £8 million nationwide.

Over the past few years, I have been able to join volunteers in my Kirkcaldy constituency in the great daffodil fundraising appeal and I never fail to be impressed by the effort that is put into organising collections. The dedication and commitment of everyone involved in the appeal at different venues in the area is inspiring. I am equally amazed by the generosity of the public towards Marie Curie. The money that was raised in Scotland in 2015 funded more than 30,000 hours of nursing care.

In the past two years, new local Marie Curie fundraising groups have formed in Fife, which do much to raise funds, not only through the great daffodil appeal but through many other events. In my constituency, Kirkcaldy, the fundraising group, which has raised more than £6,000 since its formation, recently held a joint event with the local Marie Curie shop, which I attended. I understand that it was the first such event to be held. It was a great success and £1,000 was raised, which will provide 50 hours of Marie Curie nursing.

I am also looking forward to the great tea party and the mass keep fit sessions that Marie Curie is organising in conjunction with the upcoming beach Highland games in Kirkcaldy to raise funds. I might even be persuaded to take part.

Marie Curie works constantly to enhance its services so that it can deliver the right care. It

encourages involvement from patients and feedback from families about issues to do with terminal illness, prognosis, dying, bereavement and symptom control.

Marie Curie will continue the good work that it does to support people who are suffering from a terminal illness, but that is no easy task. Services such as those that I have mentioned, which rely on the dedication and hard work of the many staff and volunteers who work for Marie Curie, are invaluable.

I have talked about Marie Curie's accomplishments in Scotland, including in my area. I also want to raise awareness of the work that will be necessary if we are to meet the challenges ahead. The future will bring greater demands. People are expected to live longer and to have more complex illnesses. By 2033, some 1.2 million people will be more than 90 years old.

It is important not only to relieve the pain of those who are terminally ill but to ensure that they are provided with quality end-of-life care. We must, in the words of Marie Curie,

"deliver the right care in the right place at the right time."

I encourage all fellow Scots to wear a daffodil and show support for Marie Curie's invaluable services.

17:25

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I, too, thank Linda Fabiani for lodging this motion on an issue that we discuss every year. Of course, this year is special, given that we are celebrating Marie Curie's 30th anniversary of its great daffodil appeal.

At last week's Scottish Conservative Party conference, where Marie Curie had a stall, Richard Meade of the organisation told my researcher of his disappointment at many members' business debates in the Parliament being so badly attended and supported. I very much share that sentiment, and others in the chamber will no doubt agree. Mr Meade then went on to say that they are actually occasions when we do not have party political point scoring but demonstrate why we came into public life in the first place. I think that many members will agree that these debates are some of the most constructive and thoughtful that take place in the chamber—and, indeed, this particular debate is proving to be one such.

I take this opportunity to put on record my thanks to Richard Meade and his team for showcasing the work of Marie Curie to MSPs and the wider public. With a dedicated outfit who understand that cancer is not something that

should be ignored or hidden away, Marie Curie is at the forefront of that important message.

Recently Marie Curie has been very active in highlighting the importance of palliative care and starting the conversation about it early in a patient's journey through a non-curable health condition—not just cancer but long-term progressive conditions such as heart failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It has long promoted the need to speak openly about death and dying in an attempt to change the culture in this country, where such hugely important issues are swept under the carpet or ignored completely. As a highly respected organisation, it tends to be listened to, and it could have a big impact on changing attitudes to end-of-life issues.

I have often said that I am not a huge fan of badges and ribbons to mark different charities and their events—although I stress that that does not mean that I do not support such causes—but there are two whose emblems I do wear. The first is Poppyscotland's red poppy in November, and the other is Marie Curie's bright yellow daffodil at this time of year. Such simple and easily recognised emblems have a significant impact on people's willingness to contribute to very worthwhile causes, and many people have benefited over the years as a result.

I support Marie Curie and wear the daffodil proudly because of the remarkable palliative care that it provides to people across the United Kingdom. In the north-east of Scotland, which I represent, people are now cared for in a way that I did not see when I was a young hospital doctor. Dedicated Marie Curie nurses now go into people's homes, and they understand the needs of the thousands of people in Scotland who live with a terminal illness. They know how to support them and their families during such a stressful time, they comfort them and they often enable them to gain some enjoyment during their last days and to experience the good death to which we would all aspire.

Hospices in Edinburgh and Glasgow look after people from all walks of life, of all ages, from different backgrounds and of all creeds. Many of us will have seen at first hand in these hospices the dedication to loved ones shown by staff who provide not only the necessary medical care but an understanding of the emotional support that relatives and friends need in end-of-life situations.

In 2014-15, over 1,600 people in north-east Scotland alone benefited from almost 10,000 hours of care from community nurses; a total of 21 Marie Curie volunteers supported 54 people through the organisation's helper service; and 85 per cent of Marie Curie patients in NHS Grampian and 90 per cent in Tayside were able to die in their

place of choice. I think that we will agree that such a level of care is remarkable and outstanding.

My researcher tells me that Frank Sinatra had more farewell tours than anyone else in show business, and then he had umpteen comebacks. This is not my final speech, but I assure members that I will not be making any comebacks to this chamber as an MSP. However, one thing that I will be doing is retaining my connection with the cross-party group on cancer, which I am sure will mean my continued support for and involvement with Marie Curie. It is a charity that demonstrates the very best of the voluntary sector.

17:29

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I, too, congratulate my good friend Linda Fabiani on securing the debate. I am happy to confirm that I am going to get behind the Fab in getting behind the daft.

As well as allowing us an opportunity to acknowledge the phenomenal work done by Marie Curie nurses, staff and volunteers on behalf of terminally ill people and their families, this debate enables us to focus on the challenges that they face going forward. Marie Curie is no doubt a victim of its own success because, as Linda Fabiani reminded us, estimates suggest that around 11,000 people who need palliative care in Scotland miss out.

With annual death rates due to rise by 13 per cent over the next 25 years, the risk is that the numbers missing out on the end-of-life care that they need will increase. In that context, it is encouraging that the Government's action plan for palliative and end-of-life care envisages that by 2021 everyone who needs palliative care will get it. For that to happen, however, we will need to see greater priority given to the issue by health and social care partnerships, as well as firm commitments from the incoming Scottish Government after May.

We are already seeing an inequality of access. Marie Curie points in its briefing to the difficulties faced by particular groups: those over 85, those living alone, ethnic minorities and those from deprived communities. As Malcolm Chisholm testified earlier, disparities also exist between those affected by cancer and those with other terminal conditions such as dementia, motor neurone disease and heart failure; sufferers of those conditions seem to be overrepresented in the numbers of people not accessing end-of-life care.

That in part might reflect the public perception still that Marie Curie is for people affected by cancer. However, as others speakers in the debate have said, that perception is wrong. I hope

that that perception is beginning to change, and I know that local volunteers in Orkney are working hard to achieve that. However, there is still some way to go.

As well as awareness raising, local volunteers are part of a remarkable fundraising effort on behalf of the Marie Curie charity. The amounts raised in Orkney have been a testimony to the generosity of the local public and a recognition of the importance of good-quality, widely available palliative care. After all, there can be few people in Orkney or, indeed, any community who do not know of somebody who has been affected in that regard. Orkney has a population that is ageing faster than the national average, living longer with more complex conditions and dispersed over a number of islands and rural parishes, so it is clear that its challenges are likely only to increase, as is the need for funding to meet those challenges.

That is why I want to pay particular tribute to those who volunteer their time to help raise those funds. Barbara Todd deserves particular mention for her heroic efforts. Barbara is due to step down in May as the local chair of Marie Curie in Orkney, but I know that she will remain closely involved and very active. I give a special mention, too, to Terri Paton, who I hope has been able to make it to Parliament this evening, and to Linda Lennie, who I am sure has made it along, assuming that she has escaped the clutches of Marks & Spencer. It is great to have a strong Orkney presence in the public gallery and at the reception later this evening.

I also put on record again my gratitude to Dr Andrew Trevitt and his colleagues for the commitment that they have shown in delivering the palliative service in Orkney. That is a relatively recent development, and it leaves Shetland—sadly—as the only area without such a service.

At the time when I spoke in the Marie Curie debate last year, only patients in the west mainland of Orkney were able to access Marie Curie support. I am delighted to confirm to Parliament that access has been expanded to cover all of the Orkney mainland, with three Marie Curie nurses now in place. In time, I hope that constituents living in the inner and outer isles might benefit similarly—I think that fairness demands no less. It is vital that capacity is built and momentum maintained.

The service fits with not just the palliative care strategy that I mentioned earlier but the clinical strategy. In that sense, I hope that it can become more firmly embedded in the near future through a partnership between health and social care and the voluntary sector. The number of patients in Orkney who have benefited so far is relatively small, but the impact has been significant. Patients and their families are hugely positive about what

the support gives them, which I believe speaks volumes.

Again, I congratulate Linda Fabiani on allowing us to have this debate. To all the Marie Curie nurses, staff and volunteers, I offer my sincere thanks for the exceptional work that they do in allowing people to die with dignity and in the place of their choice.

17:34

**Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate my colleague Linda Fabiani on securing the debate, which is an annual event. The Marie Curie Glasgow hospice is based in my constituency and I feel honoured and humbled to have had the opportunity to visit it on a great many occasions. It is one of those places that you always leave feeling much better than you did when you entered, because there is such a feeling of calm, joy and peace and of enthusiasm for the work that is done there. I pay tribute to all the Marie Curie staff who help to make that atmosphere and ethos so obvious to everyone who enters the hospice.

We are celebrating the great daffodil appeal, which is in its 30th year. It is worth thinking about the amount of effort, enthusiasm and initiative that went into establishing that wonderful idea in the first place.

One of the great things about Marie Curie is that it has allowed so many people to leave this world in the manner of their choosing, but I want to speak a little about those who remain behind. In 1992, a young man called Alan Young was bereaved. Unfortunately his mum, Margo, died while Alan was still at school. Margo had been a patient at the Marie Curie hospice in Glasgow prior to her death. As an adult, Alan Young established a foundation in his mother's memory, the Margo Young Foundation, which creates and organises events to raise money to go towards the work of Marie Curie hospices.

For example, last year, the foundation organised a 99-hole golf event. I find it difficult to get my head round how that worked, but I understand that the golfers set out at 3.30 am in order to play 99 holes over five and a half courses, and that they completed it by 9 pm. In the process, they raised a great deal of money for the Marie Curie hospice. In conversation with the Margo Young Foundation, Marie Curie has set up a child bereavement project, to recognise that some children who are bereaved at a very early age of their parents, a sibling or another loved one find it difficult to deal with the consequences of that. That is a very fitting memorial to Margo Young. All praise to Alan and everyone who works with him to raise the money that makes all that possible.

In the main, it is the fundraising efforts of volunteers that make all of the work of Marie Curie possible. I am fortunate to have two Marie Curie shops in my constituency—one in Springburn and one in Maryhill—both of which are extremely popular locally and which raise a great deal of money for the charity. The work of Marie Curie volunteers is second to none, and long may that continue.

We have heard about the disparity in palliative care. In last year's debate, I perhaps majored on that issue. It is incumbent on every one of us who has an interest in Marie Curie and its work to help by raising our voices and using all the opportunities that we have to explain to the wider communities that we work and operate in that Marie Curie hospices and palliative care are not just for cancer sufferers and that they are for anyone with a life-limiting condition. If we can do one thing to make that point clear—perhaps through our websites or our opportunities to speak to groups of individuals and communities in our constituencies—we would be helping not just Marie Curie but everyone who could benefit from its services.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I invite the minister, Maureen Watt, to close the debate on behalf of the Government.

17:39

**The Minister for Public Health (Maureen Watt):** I, too, thank Linda Fabiani for again leading a debate on Marie Curie's great daffodil appeal. As has been said, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the appeal. Marie Curie's staff and volunteers must be really proud of an appeal that started 30 years ago and is still going strong. I acknowledge and give special thanks to people across Scotland for their donations to the great daffodil appeal over the years and for helping to make it such a success.

I would also like to commend the many dedicated volunteers across Scotland—some of whom have made it to Parliament this evening—for their hard work in supporting the appeal and for the many other fundraising events that they organise each year.

Every March, around 80 groups around Scotland raise funds for the appeal. The success of Marie Curie's staff and volunteers in getting us to don ridiculous hats, tabards and the like is legendary. Their efforts are very worth while, and if somebody can get David Torrance to take part in a keep-fit session, I hope that they have a camera to hand.

The need for a clear vision of the future of palliative and end-of-life care in Scotland is widely shared by the Scottish Government, national

health service boards and everyone who is committed to the delivery of high-quality end-of-life and palliative care. That is why the Scottish Government published the "Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care" last December. The framework sets out a simple vision for the next five years, which is that, by 2021, everyone in Scotland who needs palliative care will have access to it. It aims to ensure that access to palliative care

"is available to all who can benefit from it, regardless of age, gender, diagnosis, social group or location."

It is important that a number of members highlighted that.

Within the framework are the Government's 10 commitments, which support improvement in the delivery of palliative and end-of-life care. They address issues such as our reluctance to talk about death, the commissioning of integrated services, and the capture and use of data that will tell us where we have got to and what we still need to do.

There are several challenges that need to be addressed if we are to make headway towards ensuring that access to palliative and end-of-life care is available to all who can benefit from it. If we are to understand the care needs of the people of Scotland, we must continue to listen to what they have to say. They have told us that they want to plan care that supports them in identifying their preferences at every stage of their care, including when time becomes shorter, whether that be in hospital, in a hospice or at home.

That is why collaborative care planning, including anticipatory care planning, is now central to health and care in Scotland. Linda Fabiani mentioned policy collaboration, which Marie Curie is involved in. It is vital that we learn from those organisations that carry out such vital work, which include Marie Curie and other third sector organisations.

Scotland needs a trained workforce to deliver palliative and end-of-life care so that informal carers, family members and volunteers can have the support, education and guidance that they need, and we know that Marie Curie is excellent at that.

Training and education will be key to the implementation of the framework. NHS Education for Scotland is recruiting three regional practice education co-ordinators to work across the NHS and social care services to support that work. A new short-life working group is being established to produce guidance to support health and social care partnerships with the development of their strategic commissioning plans for palliative and end-of-life services. By the summer of this year, the 10 commitments will have informed and been

reflected in implementation and improvement plans.

We need services that are co-ordinated so that the people of Scotland have access to the highest standards of care in the right place and at the right time. The legislative changes that are being introduced with the integration of health and social care will improve people's quality of life and improve the effectiveness of the whole NHS and social care system. We can achieve improvements only through working with all the people who matter and are committed to making such care a reality.

Marie Curie has a wealth of experience in palliative and end-of-life care, and we value the work that it does in providing person-centred, safe and effective care to people in the final stages of their lives and their families. It was important, too, that David Torrance and Patricia Ferguson mentioned the support for families, particularly the child bereavement programme that Patricia Ferguson mentioned.

Looking ahead, I have no doubt that this year's great daffodil appeal will be a great success and that Marie Curie will continue to work with us in partnership, delivering same high standards of palliative and end-of-life care to people all over Scotland. I encourage fellow MSPs to stop by the Marie Curie stall and speak to Richard Meade and his colleagues, if they have not already done so.

Everyone in the chamber today will agree that enabling people to die well, and supporting those who love them, is something that is worth doing—and worth doing well. Every day, Marie Curie is leading the way in that.

*Meeting closed at 17:45.*

## Correction

Keith Brown has identified an error in his contribution and provided the following correction.

### **The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Keith Brown):**

At col 13, paragraph 3—

*Original text—*

On 28 January, I announced the city deal, plus additional investment from the Scottish Government, which comes to a combined total of £554 million, which will improve infrastructure and housing, and support jobs in the north-east.

*Corrected text—*

On 28 January, I announced the city deal, plus additional investment from the Scottish Government, which comes to a combined total of £504 million, which will improve infrastructure and housing, and support jobs in the north-east.

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

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