



OFFICIAL REPORT
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

Meeting of the Parliament

Wednesday 5 December 2018

Session 5



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.parliament.scot or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Wednesday 5 December 2018

CONTENTS

| | Col. |
|--|------|
| PORTFOLIO QUESTION TIME | 1 |
| EDUCATION AND SKILLS | 1 |
| Additional Support for Learning (Glasgow) | 1 |
| Mental Health (Schoolchildren) | 2 |
| Developing the Young Workforce | 4 |
| National Standardised Assessments (Primary 1 Pupils) | 5 |
| Probationer Teachers | 7 |
| Castlebrae High School | 7 |
| Young People with Autism (Educational Provision) | 8 |
| Teacher Recruitment | 9 |
| Funded Childcare (Nurseries) | 11 |
| Modern Apprenticeships (Stirling) | 12 |
| Primary Schools (Rebuilding) | 13 |
| Apprenticeship Levy (Additional Apprenticeships) | 13 |
| Brexit (Universities and Colleges) | 15 |
| School Finances (North East Fife) | 16 |
| Veterans (Skills Development Scotland) | 17 |
| EUROPEAN UNION WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT AND POLITICAL DECLARATION | 18 |
| <i>Motion moved—[Michael Russell].</i> | |
| The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell) | 18 |
| Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con) | 22 |
| Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab) | 25 |
| Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green) | 28 |
| Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD) | 31 |
| Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP) | 33 |
| Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con) | 36 |
| Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP) | 38 |
| Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab) | 40 |
| Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP) | 42 |
| Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con) | 44 |
| Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP) | 47 |
| Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab) | 49 |
| Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP) | 51 |
| Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con) | 54 |
| Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP) | 57 |
| Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP) | 59 |
| James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab) | 61 |
| Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con) | 62 |
| Michael Russel | 66 |
| BUSINESS MOTIONS | 70 |
| <i>Motions moved—[Graeme Dey]—and agreed to.</i> | |
| PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTION | 73 |
| <i>Motion moved—[Graeme Dey].</i> | |
| DECISION TIME | 74 |
| REMEMBERING CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS | 77 |
| <i>Motion debated—[Alison Johnstone].</i> | |
| Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green) | 77 |
| Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP) | 80 |
| Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con) | 82 |
| Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab) | 84 |
| Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green) | 85 |
| Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind) | 87 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP | 88 |
| Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab | 90 |
| The Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development (Ben Macpherson | 91 |

Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 5 December 2018

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

Portfolio Question Time

Education and Skills

Additional Support for Learning (Glasgow)

1. John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether children in Glasgow must demonstrate greater needs than those in other parts of Scotland in order to gain access to an additional support for learning school. (S5O-02639)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Children and young people should learn in the environment that best suits their needs. The legislation places a duty on local authorities to provide education in a mainstream school unless specific exceptions apply. In summary, those include: the education provided in a mainstream school would not be suitable for the aptitude and abilities of the child in question; mainstream education would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for other children; and placing the child in a mainstream school would incur unreasonable levels of public expenditure. That applies across the whole of Scotland.

John Mason: I thank the cabinet secretary for that reply. However, it appears to be easier for families in richer council areas, and for families who are perhaps better off and more self-confident, to argue their corner and to get their child into a special school.

John Swinney: The conditions and criteria that I set out in my original answer to Mr Mason apply across the country and are specified in statute. It is up to individual local authorities to make judgments, based on those conditions, on whether the educational needs of young people are being met. That should be the basis on which decision making is undertaken.

There are opportunities for parents, when they are dissatisfied with a local authority's decision making, to pursue those issues through the tribunal process. I would encourage local authorities and parents to try to resolve these issues, but I accept that in some cases it is necessary for them to be resolved at tribunal, when all sides of the debate on the appropriate

educational setting for a young person can be heard and resolved.

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I put on record my personal thanks for the efforts that the cabinet secretary is making to assist with the families involved in the recent closure of the New School Butterstone. In the light of that and the comments about additional support for learning across the country, will the cabinet secretary undertake to have a formal review of the resources that are available for specialist education?

John Swinney: I am grateful to Liz Smith for her comments about the New School Butterstone. About 23 young people, as well as staff, are affected by the closure of that school. I see reports daily from each affected local authority about the progress that is being made on finding appropriate educational settings for the young people. That review work goes on daily. Progress has been made in some cases, but not in all, and it will take time to find appropriate placements for the young people.

It is important that we keep under active review the options that are available for the placing of young people outside mainstream education. Fundamentally, the law is clear—we should encourage mainstreaming. However, there are exceptions, which are specified in the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000. In consultation with local authorities, I want to maintain an overview of the provision that is available, to make sure that there are options available to meet the needs of young people in such circumstances.

Mental Health (Schoolchildren)

2. Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on what action it is taking to support schoolchildren with mental health issues. (S5O-02640)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): The Scottish Government is working to strengthen child and adolescent mental health. We know that prevention and early intervention make a big difference in reducing the risk of developing mental health problems. We are working collaboratively to provide access to counsellors in schools. That will complement the spectrum of mental health services already being provided in schools, to ensure that every child and young person has access to emotional and mental wellbeing support in school.

We are also continuing to support local authorities to access mental health first aid training for key staff.

Gillian Martin: Will the cabinet secretary give an update on the commitment to having counsellors in every school and outline what impact that Government decision is designed to have on pupils and staff, particularly, as he has said, as a complement to existing pastoral care provision?

John Swinney: Work is actively under way to advance that commitment. We are working with key partners to identify the best use of resources, and we will publish a programme for delivery to ensure that the commitment is met. When we announced the programme for government, we said that we would set out a delivery plan for all the mental health commitments contained in it, and that work is under way.

One issue that we have to consider is how to ensure that that investment is compatible with arrangements that schools, using pupil equity funding, have already put in place as a consequence of their own decision making in seeing the necessity of strengthening the counselling services available to young people. That investment has been made in some parts of the country, and we must ensure that the Government's commitment dovetails with and supports that approach.

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): Between July and September, almost a third of children looking to access mental health treatment waited more than 18 weeks to do so, and fewer children were treated within the target time this year than in 2017. When will the Scottish Government take its responsibility to young people seriously and act to meet the needs of schoolchildren with poor mental health?

John Swinney: It should be pretty clear to Mary Fee from the commitments that were made in the programme for government that the Government takes those issues deadly seriously. The investment that was announced by the Government is in response to the very significant change in the pattern of presentation with regard to mental health issues. Mary Fee must be aware of that and recognise that as something that has changed dramatically in Scotland over the past few years.

Our focus is on early intervention and ensuring that we reduce the presentation of young people to child and adolescent mental health services, which I think that all of us would agree would be the best intervention. After all, the earlier that we intervene to support young people's mental and emotional wellbeing, the better it will be for them. That is the agenda that the Government is pursuing; it is worthy of support, and I invite Mary Fee to do exactly that.

Developing the Young Workforce

3. Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what its response is to the Education and Skills Committee report, "Young People's Pathways: a progress report on Developing the Young Workforce". (S5O-02641)

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (Jamie Hepburn): We welcome the committee's inquiry and will consider its findings and recommendations in detail. We are committed to increasing the number of pathways available to young people through the developing the young workforce programme, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for those who face additional barriers when moving from education to employment.

Lewis Macdonald: The minister will know that Aberdeen and Grampian have shown how much of a positive difference DYW can make through, for example, engaging with more than 400 employers and creating real opportunities for many young people in the region. However, he will also note the comment in the committee's report that that is not happening in other places. Does he agree with the committee that a greater sense of urgency is required in rolling that out?

Jamie Hepburn: I detect no sense of a lack of urgency in rolling out the developing the young workforce programme, starting from the top. This Government is utterly committed to rolling it out across Scotland.

It is inevitable, but it is the case that, looking at this on a regional basis, some areas of the country will be further ahead than others. Aberdeen and Grampian in the north-east are very good examples, and there are other great examples of progress the length and breadth of the country. However, some areas are further ahead than others, and our task is to support the regional groups to ensure that they are learning from one another, learning from best practice and rolling out the programme as consistently and as far and wide as possible across the country. The Government is committed to doing that.

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): What is Skills Development Scotland's role in contributing to the development of a skilled and productive workforce in Scotland?

Jamie Hepburn: It plays a critical role, in that one of the functions that it discharges is to contract for modern apprenticeships. We are, of course, committed to delivering 28,000 such opportunities this year as we move towards our target of 30,000 by 2020. Skills Development Scotland is also involved in the provision of new graduate apprenticeships as well as foundation apprenticeships in the school environment, and it

is responsible for careers information and guidance. It is therefore critical to our developing the young workforce agenda.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): Question 4 has not been lodged.

National Standardised Assessments (Primary 1 Pupils)

5. Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on its response to the vote in the Parliament on 19 September 2018 opposing national standardised assessments for primary 1 pupils. (S5O-02643)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): On 25 October 2018, I made a parliamentary statement announcing an independent review of P1 assessments. The review will consider all the evidence that is gathered and provide recommendations by May 2019.

Alex Cole-Hamilton: We voted in the chamber to end the national assessment of five-year-olds, yet still the Government persists, arguably in contempt of the Parliament. Will the Government halt the programme of national assessment of P1s immediately and for the duration of the review? Further, can the cabinet secretary give me a guarantee that the Government will attach no precondition to education funding based on delivery of the assessments, which is what it sometimes does in other policy areas, so that authorities that are considering abandoning the assessments unilaterally can do so without sanctions?

John Swinney: Where to start? I set out in great detail the views of the Government in relation to the decision that was taken by Parliament on 19 September. It is no secret that I did not think that the debate was driven by educational considerations and that I thought that it was driven by politics. It was clear to me in coming to that conclusion that, for a sustained amount of time, in local authorities that were led by the Labour Party, the Scottish National Party, the Conservatives and—I stress this—the Liberal Democrats, there were P1 standardised assessments at which people did not bat an eyelid.

We must be careful that we do not take decisions based on political considerations in Parliament that might damage the educational journey of young people through our education system, because that would not serve young people at all well.

I have invited other parties to give their input into the independent review. I am grateful to the

Conservatives, the Labour Party and the Greens for providing me with input that I am currently considering with the chief inspector of education to ensure that we can build some broad agreement about how we pursue the consideration of the issue. I recognise that the issue divides opinion in Parliament, but I am determined to come to a conclusion that is in the interests of children and young people in Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I have two requests for supplementary questions. I ask members to make them quick.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab): It does the cabinet secretary no good at all to impugn the motives of those people who believe that, in educational terms, the policy is inappropriate.

Given the current debate, the question of accepting the will of Parliament is important here and elsewhere. Will the cabinet secretary outline the basis of the advice on which he decided to push ahead with P1 testing while his group sets about seeking the evidence to justify it? Further, does he recognise that, to respect the decision of the Scottish Parliament and the views on the policy of many families and teachers, it would be more appropriate to suspend primary 1 testing, at least until his group reports?

John Swinney: I take entirely the opposite view. As we undertake this exercise, it is important that we build the evidence base for that to be the case. A further year of primary 1 standardised assessments will help us to inform that judgment.

On the first point that Johann Lamont raised, I reflected on the evidence that I have taken from, for example, directors of education around the country, and the views that I have heard from many teachers around the country who value the information—particularly the diagnostic information—that is available about the performance of primary 1 pupils, which then informs professional educational judgments about the next steps in the learning of young people. It is those judgments to which I attach a significant weight in my consideration of this issue.

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): How many Opposition MSPs have taken up the offer to consult on the details of the remit of the review of the primary 1 assessments?

John Swinney: As I indicated in my earlier answer, I have had information and feedback from the Conservatives, the Labour Party and the Greens on that issue. I am reflecting on that evidence to help to formulate a more broadly based assessment of the exercise, so that we can come to an evidenced conclusion. That is an orderly way for me to respond constructively to the decision of Parliament.

Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): Alex Cole-Hamilton had better get his submission in quick.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I would like to say two things. First, can we stop having private conversations across desks? Further, when I request quick supplementary questions, I mean it, because it disadvantages other people when folk go on.

Probationer Teachers

6. Gail Ross (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government when the last review of how probationer teachers are allocated was undertaken. (S5O-02644)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Probationary teachers are allocated to local authorities through the teacher induction scheme on the basis of student choice and availability of posts. The allocation process has been in place since the inception of the teacher induction scheme in 2004. The teacher induction scheme on-going review group has an on-going role in monitoring the process, which it will continue to play in the period ahead.

Gail Ross: The current practice of telling schools in May how many probationers they will get in the following year is severely restricting some rural schools in deciding their pupils' options forms and setting their timetables. Will the cabinet secretary consider changing the system so that schools can find out much earlier in the year how many probationers they are due to get, which will make it fairer and easier for pupils and teachers?

John Swinney: I recognise the significance of the point that Gail Ross raises, and I am happy to ask the review group to consider the issue.

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): Does the cabinet secretary understand why approximately 1,000 probationer teachers in Scotland have quit the profession in the past three years?

John Swinney: Obviously, individuals make judgments on whether they are comfortable in the employment choices that they have made. In the last census that is available, 88 per cent of probationers were in full-time employment after the completion of their probation period. That is a high level and it is much higher than it used to be. From that, I take it that many probationer teachers are motivated to make a constructive contribution to Scottish education. They are very welcome to do so.

Castlebrae High School

7. Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will make money

available for a new Castlebrae High School before the 2021 new school building cycle. (S5O-02645)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Through our schools for the future programme, the City of Edinburgh Council has been awarded more than £63 million towards the construction of four school projects. My officials met the local authority on 29 October to discuss its wave 4 investment programme. On 21 November, I announced the new £1 billion learning estate investment programme, and we will now work in collaboration with local authorities to identify priority projects for investment.

Kezia Dugdale: I am afraid that that does not address my question. Castlebrae high school hopes to start building next year, but it cannot do that if it has to wait until 2021 for additional resources. Will the cabinet secretary confirm whether it should go ahead with the scaled-back version of the school using capital receipts from the land and existing money from the council, or whether it should wait for him to turn up with some cash in two years' time?

John Swinney: Fundamentally, that is a question for the City of Edinburgh Council to decide. I point out to Kezia Dugdale that, when this Government came to office in 2007, only 61 per cent of schools in Scotland were in good or satisfactory condition. Today, that figure is 84 per cent.

I appreciate that Castlebrae high school wishes to invest in the school, and I quite understand that. However, the City of Edinburgh Council made some decisions, which had nothing to do with me and were the council's to make, on the use of its capital budgets, which are extensive resources that are made available to the council.

Kezia Dugdale has to accept that this Government has made significant progress in improving the school estate. Actually, I gave the wrong figure just then—it is not 84 per cent of schools that are now in good or satisfactory condition; it is 86 per cent—it is even better than I thought. The Government is significantly enhancing the capital estate of our school buildings and, obviously, we will engage with the City of Edinburgh Council about the aspirations at Castlebrae.

Young People with Autism (Educational Provision)

8. Oliver Mundell (Dumfriesshire) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to improve educational provision and experiences for young people with autism. (S5O-02646)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): We want all children and young people to receive the support that they need to reach their full learning potential. We are taking a range of actions, including updating the autism toolbox, to support those who work with children and young people with autism. I have considered the calls for action in the “Not included, not engaged, not involved” report and I am committed to ensuring that they are addressed in the action that is under way to improve educational experiences for children and young people with autism.

Oliver Mundell: The cabinet secretary talked about the calls for action. Will he spell out which of the nine calls he supports and which he will implement with immediate effect?

John Swinney: As I explained in last night’s parliamentary debate, a number of elements of the calls to action have raised issues that are incompatible with guidance on these questions. For example, call 1 is about stopping

“the use of unlawful exclusions and inappropriate use of part-time timetables”,

but existing guidance completely opposes the practice that is recounted in that call. I am determined to work with local authorities to ensure that there is a greater adherence to the existing arrangements. If there is a need for us to change practice as a consequence of the calls to action, that is exactly what the Government will consider.

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): Does the cabinet secretary agree that there is a clear need for initial teacher education to include additional support needs and, in particular, neurodevelopmental disorders—a point that was clear in last night’s debate?

John Swinney: It is essential that initial teacher education equips teachers to support young people in our classrooms. It is very evident to me that there is a greater presentation of additional support needs, so it is therefore a necessity for not only teachers who are going through initial teacher education but those who are going through continuing professional development to be cognisant of the issues that Mr Johnson has raised and to ensure that that is reflected in the professional development of those who are charged with education.

Teacher Recruitment

9. Liam Kerr (North East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to address the reported problems with teacher recruitment. (S5O-02647)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John

Swinney): We have taken substantive action to recruit and retain teachers through the teaching makes people campaign, and we have created new routes into the profession. There are now more primary and secondary teachers than at any time since 2014, and the ratio of pupils to teachers is at its lowest since 2013. We also provide funding of £88 million per year to support councils to maintain teacher numbers. That has resulted in 543 more teachers in 2017 than in the previous year, which was the second consecutive year in which teacher numbers increased.

Liam Kerr: When I lodged my question, I intended to ask about the hundreds of teaching posts in the north-east that had to be readvertised because of the Scottish National Party’s chaotic workforce planning. *The Press and Journal* revealed yesterday the unbelievable pressure on teaching assistants and the 21,000 teaching hours that are lost because of stress, depression and anxiety. Given those shocking figures, it is hardly surprising that schools in the north-east cannot recruit enough teachers to give children the education that they deserve. Does the cabinet secretary acknowledge that my local schools are at breaking point, and will he finally do something about it?

John Swinney: As I recounted in my earlier answer to Mr Kerr, the Government has taken action in that regard through the campaign to recruit more teachers into the profession. The campaign has been successful, because we have 543 more teachers in our schools in 2017 than in the previous year.

Mr Kerr refers to vacancies in schools. A vacancy survey will be published shortly, so we will see what progress—if any—has been made in tackling vacancies. We will also see shortly whether any further progress has been made on the employment of teachers. Mr Kerr can obviously come back and ask questions about those issues when the up-to-date information is to hand. I assure him that, by designing new routes into teaching, promoting the profession and setting out the strength of Scottish education, we are encouraging more individuals to join the profession, as the data that I have set out demonstrates.

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): Teachers are very clear that the only action that will address the teacher recruitment problem is a restorative pay increase for our teachers. Why, then, has the Deputy First Minister not ensured that an improved offer has been brought forward since the existing offer was overwhelmingly rejected?

John Swinney: We are in active negotiations with the teaching professional associations, and there was a meeting on Monday of the Scottish negotiating committee for teachers. We work

closely with our local authority colleagues in the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities who are discussing the offer that can be made to the teaching profession. When we are in a position to make an offer to the teaching profession, it will be undertaken as part of the SNCT process, in which the offer will be properly offered by the employers, who are COSLA, not me.

Funded Childcare (Nurseries)

10. Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what guidance it provides to local authorities regarding flexibility in the provision of funded childcare at nurseries. (S5O-02648)

The Minister for Children and Young People (Maree Todd): The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a duty on local authorities to consult parents and carers to inform how they make early learning and childcare available in their areas, to ensure that the provision of funded ELC in an authority area is flexible enough to allow families an appropriate degree of choice in deciding how to access the service. There is supporting statutory guidance to help local authorities to meet those duties.

Sandra White: I have met a number of nurseries in my constituency and lots of concerns have been expressed by providers and parents about the inflexibility of the hours that are provided by Glasgow City Council and the difficulties that that creates. Will the minister meet me to discuss the issues that have been raised by parents and providers in Glasgow City Council?

Maree Todd: Yes. I would absolutely welcome a meeting with Sandra White to discuss those issues. However, I reiterate that local authorities have a duty to consult families to inform the delivery of funded ELC in their areas. That should be reflected in the local authority's expansion plan, which is produced every couple of years. Flexibility should be driven by local demand from families with regard to the nature and type of provision that they require, which should lead to a range of delivery models across the authority.

As I have done several times in the chamber, I again make it clear that our new funding-follows-the-child approach will put the power into parental hands. Any funded provider that meets the national standard and has a place available will therefore be able to be chosen by parents who want their child to attend nursery or education.

Alison Harris (Central Scotland) (Con): Although private sector ELC providers offer the greatest flexibility, they have been ignored in capital funding decisions. In a meeting with the minister yesterday, private providers said that the directors of education in the various local

authorities have refused to open any dialogue with them. The minister insists that councils will eventually realise that the expansion cannot be done without private providers. With the deadline fast approaching, does the minister really think that that eureka moment will happen on its own? If not, when will she intervene to ensure that it does?

Maree Todd: As Alison Harris is aware from the meeting yesterday, I wrote to all councils in November to explain capital funding. I can report today—I have just seen it in the press today—that Moray Council has brought forward some—

Alison Harris: We knew that yesterday.

Maree Todd: Sorry?

Alison Harris: We did know that yesterday.

Maree Todd: No, we did not know that yesterday. Several local authorities are bringing forward packages and we will see progress on the matter

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I reiterate that I do not like private conversations to be going on in the middle of questions.

Modern Apprenticeships (Stirling)

11. Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the number of modern apprenticeship places in the Stirling area. (S5O-02649)

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (Jamie Hepburn): The published modern apprenticeship statistics for the second quarter of the year, which cover April to September 2018, report 225 new modern apprenticeship starts in the Stirling area, which is up from 212 at the same point in the previous year. Including those who are already undertaking an apprenticeship, there were 619 apprentices in training in Stirling as of 28 September.

Bruce Crawford: I thank the minister for that helpful answer. Can he confirm what the impact of the United Kingdom Government's apprenticeship levy has been on employers and apprentices in Scotland?

Jamie Hepburn: The most obvious impact on employers with a payroll of £3 million or more has been that they are subject to paying the levy. That happened without any prior consultation with them as to the likely impact. That includes the public sector in Scotland, which we estimate had to contribute £73 million in 2017-18.

Of course, the Scottish Government gets on with the job in Scotland and we are delivering more apprenticeship starts than ever, with a record 27,145 starts last year, which was up from 26,262. That is in contrast to the position in

England, where, according to Department for Education statistics, there was a 24.75 per cent drop in the number of apprenticeship starts between August 2017 and July 2018 compared to the equivalent period in the previous year.

Primary Schools (Rebuilding)

12. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the successful rebuilding of the Clyde and Broomhill primary schools in Glasgow Anniesland, what progress has been made with the rebuilding of Blairdardie primary school. (S5O-02650)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that they should read the questions as they are written in the *Business Bulletin*.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Through our Scotland's schools for the future programme, Glasgow City Council has been awarded over £5 million towards the construction of Blairdardie primary school. The new school will open to pupils in March 2019.

Bill Kidd: I welcome the Scottish Government's prioritisation of ensuring that the children of Scotland are educated in high-quality, state-of-the-art buildings. Will the cabinet secretary outline how the Scottish Government plans to continue to deliver the best-quality school buildings for children post-2020, when the current funding phase of the schools for the future programme ends?

John Swinney: So far, we have supported the rebuilding or refurbishment of 117 schools across Scotland, and we have the lowest number on record of schools that are in unacceptable condition. That is a strong performance, and it has led to the Government announcing a new £1 billion learning estate investment programme, which will fund new and refurbished schools across Scotland after 2020. Dialogue on taking forward that proposal is under way with local authorities and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Apprenticeship Levy (Additional Apprenticeships)

13. Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government how many additional apprenticeships have been funded by the apprenticeship levy. (S5O-02651)

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (Jamie Hepburn): In 2017-18, there were 27,145 modern apprenticeship new starts in Scotland, which was up from 26,262 the year before. The increase was achieved in the context of a reduction in available public spending leeway in Scotland as a result of the introduction of the

United Kingdom Government's apprenticeship levy in April 2017. Due to the public sector liability for the levy, public spending leeway was reduced by some £30 million in 2017-18. Despite that, the Scottish Government continues to utilise the notional sum allocated to the block grant that is related to the levy entirely for employability and training-related activity. This year, we will support 28,000 modern apprenticeship starts.

Rhoda Grant: That seems an incredibly small amount, given the levy that is being charged. I have been speaking to many organisations that have expressed disquiet about the levy. Some pay in and get very little out; others cannot access the scheme at all because the age profile of their staff and apprenticeships does not fit the criteria. It is not clear who is actually benefiting from the levy. Will the minister sit down with those organisations and speak to them about how they can best use the levy to upskill their workforce?

Jamie Hepburn: I will sit down any time with any organisation that wants to discuss those matters with me—that is what I do. It is unfortunate that Rhoda Grant seems to be susceptible to the idea that has been perpetuated by the UK Government that the levy somehow brought forth a bounty of new money for the Scottish Government to spend—it did not. The money that came forward largely replaced existing expenditure; in fact, it was a new mechanism by which to raise the funding.

We are delivering more apprenticeships than ever before. We delivered 27,145 last year and it will be 28,000 this year, and we will deliver 30,000 by 2020. I have already made the point about the significant reduction in the number of apprenticeship starts in England, which was down nearly 25 per cent between August 2017 and July 2018. Given that the levy was predicated on the assumption of an uplift in the number of apprentices in England and was nothing to do with our policy in Scotland, and given that there is clearly a failure to increase the number in England, one might ask where that money in England is going. A cynic could argue that it is nothing more than a UK Government Treasury tax ploy.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Jamie Halcro Johnston can ask a short supplementary.

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Following my letter to the First Minister about the hurdles that are faced by small businesses in accessing apprenticeships, the minister replied that he had met with the Federation of Small Businesses in July and that his officials would work with Skills Development Scotland to explore the scope to focus apprenticeship week on small business opportunities. Given that the next apprenticeship

week is only a few months away, will the minister update the Parliament on what proposals have been made for it?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: When I ask for short questions, that does not mean that members should just speak faster.

Jamie Hepburn: I will take that on board, Presiding Officer.

The dialogue continues. Apprenticeship week will come in due course. There is on-going dialogue between the Government, the FSB and SDS. I am clear that our small and medium-sized enterprises should benefit from apprenticeships, and they have that opportunity. I said that I am always willing to engage with the organisations that Rhoda Grant alluded to, and I will always be willing to discuss those matters with the FSB.

Brexit (Universities and Colleges)

14. Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to mitigate the impact on universities and colleges in Scotland of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union. (S5O-02652)

The Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (Richard Lochhead): We are doing everything in our power to mitigate the damage of Brexit and to protect Scotland's interests, not least by confirming that eligible EU students who start an undergraduate course at a university in Scotland in autumn 2019 will have their tuition fees paid for the whole of their course.

The simple truth, however, is that Brexit represents such a level of threat to our colleges and universities that we must be clear that no amount of mitigation will stop Brexit damaging our world-class institutions. We will, of course, continue to discuss those issues with staff and students in the sector, as we did most recently at a Brexit summit at the University of Glasgow. I will also lead a delegation to Brussels next week to strengthen relationships with European stakeholders and to ensure that Scotland's voice is being heard.

Richard Lyle: Mike Kirby, the Scottish secretary of Unison, has said:

"In the massive risk register associated with Brexit, the interests of EU nationals working across ... education, and delivering quality public services, require to be front and centre."

Does the minister agree that the senseless scrapping of important policies such as the post-study work visa will leave Scotland worse off?

Richard Lochhead: Richard Lyle highlights an important issue. In my previous answer, I said that the Government is committed to paying the tuition

fees of EU students who will start their studies in 2019 for the course of their degree. Were we to depart the EU or have a bad deal under which we could not give out post-study work visas, we would be in the ludicrous position of not being able to have EU students contributing to Scottish society. That is why the Scottish Government has been vociferous in calling for the reinstatement of such visas. The hard fact is that departing from the EU will have a disproportionate impact on Scottish further and higher education, which is why this afternoon's debate is crucial for Scotland's future.

School Finances (North East Fife)

15. Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the finances of schools in the North East Fife constituency. (S5O-02653)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Schools in North East Fife will be required to make the best use of the resources that are made available to them by Fife Council, which set an education budget of £337 million for 2018-19. That was an increase of more than £6 million on the previous year. Fife benefits from funding through the attainment Scotland fund, which is part of our £750 million commitment to help close the poverty-related attainment gap. In 2018-19, schools in the North East Fife constituency received £894,000 in pupil equity funding.

Willie Rennie: Can the cabinet secretary understand the anger among my constituents, given that not only are Fife secondary schools facing cuts of £1.2 million, when the Government says that education is a priority, but that almost half of those cuts are being imposed on three North East Fife schools: Waid academy, Bell Baxter high school and Madras college? Does he think that it is fair and reasonable for headteachers to face such dramatic cuts, given that education is meant to be a Government priority?

John Swinney: Willie Rennie raises with me an issue that is the responsibility of Fife Council. As I have indicated, Fife Council has increased its education budget by more than £6 million in 2018-19. The Government has no jurisdiction over distribution issues in Fife; that is a matter entirely for Fife Council.

The Government is making a direct investment in the education of young people, and it is closing the attainment gap in Willie Rennie's constituency with the help of £894,000 of funding. I know from my experience of assessing the work that is being undertaken by schools in his constituency that that funding is making a significant impact on the wellbeing and attainment of young people.

Veterans (Skills Development Scotland)

16. Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how Skills Development Scotland supports veterans. (S5O-02654)

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (Jamie Hepburn): Skills Development Scotland is a key member of the Scottish Government's veterans employability strategic group, which focuses on improving employment opportunities and support for veterans in Scotland. In addition to ensuring that all its services are veteran friendly and establishing a veterans web portal, SDS is working with the career transition partnership on a pilot on the A96 corridor, which offers a guidance interview to service leavers that enhances the service that they already receive from the career transition partnership. SDS will continue to work closely with the partnership and Ministry of Defence delivery staff to ensure that those who leave the armed forces are aware of all the services that are available to them.

Maurice Corry: Early last year, the Scottish Government set out its plans for developing veterans' skills in "The Veterans Community—Employability, Skills and Learning: Scottish Government response". Does the Scottish Government have any intention of updating or checking the progress of those proposals?

Jamie Hepburn: Yes. The Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans delivered his annual update to Parliament in September. The report is available for public consumption through the Government's website. There will be continuous updates on the Scottish veterans commissioner's work, including his recommendations on employability, and on the veterans employability strategic group.

European Union Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The next item of business—*[Interruption.]* Can we have a replacement card for the cabinet secretary, please? Is that it? We have lift off.

The next item of business is a debate on motion S5M-15032, in the name of Michael Russell, on protecting our interests: Scotland's response to the United Kingdom Government and European Union withdrawal agreement and political declaration.

14:41

The Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations (Michael Russell): I make it clear that, in keeping with the vote of the people of Scotland on 23 June 2016, the Scottish Government regards membership of the EU as the best outcome from the current chaos; moreover, it believes that that aim is still achievable. Nonetheless, when I addressed Parliament on 25 October, I committed to bring any EU withdrawal deal and political declaration, when agreed by the UK Government, to this Parliament before it was voted on in House of Commons. I am pleased to do so today with a motion that is the result of a unique collaboration between four of the five parties in this Parliament. If it is agreed to, Scotland will say that it rejects both the Prime Minister's deal and no deal and instead looks to its politicians to find a better way forward. It is important that those politicians—including ourselves—do not let the people down.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Will Mr Russell take an intervention?

Michael Russell: I will make some progress first.

Of course, there are various options that could provide a long-term solution to the problem of Brexit—a problem that is absorbing huge amounts of time and effort and is worrying and upsetting so many of our fellow citizens.

Staying in the EU might be achieved by providing the opportunity for a second vote, as strongly backed in this Parliament by the Liberal Democrats and supported by ourselves and the Greens. However, short of staying, the only acceptable compromise, which the Scottish Government has advocated for two years, is continued membership of the single market and the customs union. Others, primarily in the Labour Party, have argued for a general election as the best way to resolve the issue. The Scottish

National Party would also support that option in a vote at Westminster. In fact, the only option that does not provide a solution to the current chaos of Brexit is that proposed by the Prime Minister.

I will outline some of the many problems with the deal, and in doing so I will try to bring home the effects of the proposal to members sitting on the Tory benches.

Murdo Fraser: Will the member give way?

Michael Russell: No—I ask the member to allow me to make some progress.

I start with the Highlands and Islands, part of which I represent. It is also the region for which Mr Cameron is a list member; indeed, he was the Conservative candidate for my constituency of Argyll and Bute at the last election.

The population of Argyll and Bute and the Highlands is not growing naturally. To put it bluntly, we are not reproducing ourselves. We need migration even to remain static. A fifth of the working-age population of the area will retire in the next five to 10 years. We need to replace them. If we do not replace them, there will be continued depopulation and accelerating economic decline. The only way that we can do so is through migration, for which the best solution is freedom of movement, which allows easy passage and great flexibility. Business in my constituency tells me that all the time, but the Prime Minister has set her face against such a solution, with strident and deeply regrettable language.

Unless the deal is rejected, the area that I represent, and which Mr Cameron has sought to represent as a constituency member—and may again—will be severely and permanently damaged. Will he vote for that?

Murdo Fraser: Will the member give way?

Michael Russell: Of course.

Murdo Fraser: Mr Russell has just mentioned what business wants. Every leading business organisation in Scotland—the Confederation of British Industry, the chambers of commerce, NFU Scotland, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and the Scotch Whisky Association—and leading figures such as Sir Ian Wood are urging the Scottish Government and politicians at Westminster to back the Prime Minister's deal. Should he not listen to business?

Michael Russell: That is not entirely accurate. For example, the CBI's head of EU negotiations, Nicole Sykes, has argued that there is

"no need to give credit to negotiators ... because it's not a good deal."

That is the CBI's view of it. Of course, there are fishermen the length and breadth of Scotland,

including those in my own constituency. I declare an interest as the honorary president of the Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation, which says that it is not a deal that should be backed.

Let me continue, because I shall come to the issue of certainty—which is what business wants—in a moment.

Unless the deal is rejected, rural areas will be hit in other ways, too. The guarantees for agricultural funding run until only 2022, and the failure of the UK to agree on the Agriculture Bill makes it more urgent for us to legislate here.

For fisheries, the message is even starker. The Tories have sold out Scottish fishing yet again, linking it to trade and agreeing to build any new settlement on existing access and quotas. The deal says so, despite the increasingly desperate assertions from Mr Carlaw last week, egged on by the members who represent the north-east on either side of him. Are Mr Chapman and Mr Burnett going to vote for that?

Our cities also benefit greatly from EU funding. For example, money from the European social fund has, in part, helped unemployed people to gain qualifications and find jobs. Money from the European regional development fund has helped to accelerate the growth of Glasgow's small and medium-sized enterprises. EU green infrastructure funding has helped the environment. Not a single promise has yet been made about replacing all those much-needed sums of money in Glasgow. Is Mr Tomkins really going to vote to impoverish the city that he represents and for decline in the university sector, which he also knows well?

The EU is the largest single market for Scotland's international exports, which were worth £12.7 billion in 2016 and which, directly and indirectly, support hundreds of thousands of jobs across Scotland. In 2015, Scotland exported around £3.6 billion-worth of goods to countries with which the EU has free-trade agreements. Such exports mean the difference between success and failure for businesses large and small, such as those that employ many in constituencies such as Eastwood. Is Mr Carlaw going to vote against his own constituents' employment and prosperity?

To put it bluntly—but accurately—no free-trade agreement in the world provides anything close to the freedom of movement for services that presently exists for Scotland in the European single market. Services cover many sectors, but of course Edinburgh is particularly dependent on financial and legal services, which fuel the economy of the city. Members for Edinburgh know that well, including the leader of the Scottish Conservatives. Yet the Prime Minister's deal will make it considerably harder for Edinburgh

companies to trade in services with Europe. Why would the party led by Ruth Davidson vote in favour of that?

In every area of Scotland, businesses, organisations, communities and individuals will suffer directly, over a long period of time, if this deal is approved. Each and every person will suffer. The analysis that we have done indicates that if, after leaving the EU, we were to move to a free-trade agreement, by 2030 our gross domestic product would be cut by £9 billion, which is equivalent to £1,600 per person in Scotland. We can forget the promises of £350 million a week more for the national health service—the reality is £30 a week less for every man, woman and child, with no respite.

The deal is not even the end of uncertainty—that is just another false promise. In fact, the uncertainty flowing from the Prime Minister's deal would have to last until the end of the transition period, which will not be in December 2020—no one believes that—but is more likely to be in December 2022, or even later. That is at least another four years of uncertainty to add to the two and a half that we have already had—four more years of stagnation and lack of investment, with no guarantee that a free-trade deal will ever be struck. Those are the fruits of Conservative government. More of the same, and worse: more meaningless assertions, false claims, cliff-edge negotiations and lack of economic confidence and security.

It must not happen. Scotland needs and deserves better than the Prime Minister's blindfold Brexit. In truth, this deal is about saving the Prime Minister, and not about saving her country.

It is a matter of fact that there is no certainty in the Prime Minister's deal on the future trading arrangements for either goods or services. There is no possibility of much-needed flexible future mobility arrangements. There is no clarity on which—if any—of the existing justice and law enforcement tools and measures may remain available, and there is no guarantee of continued participation in the broad range of EU programmes and funds that support our universities, communities, non-governmental organisations and businesses.

The Scottish Government has recognised the inherent danger in that, but there is one silver lining: it does not have to be like that. I repeat the fact that the choice is not between May's deal and no deal. Yesterday's opinion from the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice demonstrated that, and the vote by MPs confirmed it.

Reasonable people are now moving to ensure that a better way is found. Last night, the Welsh

Assembly voted decisively to reject the Prime Minister's deal. It is revealing that the only votes against came from the Tories and the UK Independence Party, which is now so far to the right that even Nigel Farage has had to resign from it.

Members can contribute to and move that process on by voting for the motion in my name and in the names of Mr Findlay, Mr Greer and Mr Scott. I commend that action and the motion to the Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that both a no deal outcome and the outcomes arising from the withdrawal agreement and political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the UK, as presented to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, would be damaging for Scotland and the nations and regions of the UK as a whole, and therefore recommends that they be rejected and that a better alternative be taken forward.

14:50

Adam Tomkins (Glasgow) (Con): It is two and a half years since the British people voted to leave the European Union and, in all that time, only one credible proposal on how we will leave and the detailed terms on which we will leave has been tabled. That proposal is, of course, the 585-page withdrawal agreement, which the Prime Minister and her team have painstakingly negotiated over the past 20 months.

In analysing that deal, two simple legal facts must be borne in mind. First, under the terms of article 50, if no exit deal is agreed between the United Kingdom and the European Union, we will crash out of the European Union on a no-deal basis. Secondly, exit day is fixed in law as 29 March 2019. Therefore, the reality, whether we like it or not, is that the country is rapidly approaching the point at which it faces a clear binary choice: we either leave the European Union on the basis of the orderly withdrawal agreement that the Prime Minister and her team have negotiated—or something very close to it—or we crash out of it on a no-deal basis, which would be a disaster for the economy. That is the reality, and that is where we are heading. Those who would prefer to reject the deal must confront the plain legal fact that their actions serve only to make it more likely that we will end up crashing out of the European Union on a no-deal basis.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Will the member give way on that point?

Adam Tomkins: Mr Findlay is making my point for me. There continues to be a great deal of noise around that. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Mr Tomkins. Will members do Mr Tomkins the courtesy of listening without shouting at him, please?

Adam Tomkins: As I said, there continues to be a great deal of noise around that. There should be a people's vote. Article 50 should be delayed. We could stay in the single market and the customs union. We can be Norway. We can be Norway-plus. We should have another general election. However, much of that is just noise—as is the motion.

The motion says that we want “a better alternative” without giving any clue as to what that alternative might be or how it could possibly be delivered. We have had two and a half years since the referendum and, in all that time, no credible alternative to the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement has even got off the ground, never mind been successfully made to fly.

So let us face facts. As things stand, the only credible choice before us is whether we should leave on the basis of the Prime Minister's negotiated settlement—or something very close to it—or crash out without a deal at all.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Findlay, please sit down.

Adam Tomkins: We are leaving because that is what the British people told us that they want. They want to take back control of our laws, our borders and our money—and that is exactly what the Prime Minister's deal delivers.

Neil Findlay: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Will you confirm that there is plenty time in the debate for members to take interventions?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It is absolutely up to speakers whether they wish to take interventions. It is also the case that I would prefer less disruption so that we can listen to those who are speaking.

Adam Tomkins: If it turns out that we, the Scottish Conservatives, are alone in standing up for the 1 million Scots who voted for that outcome, so be it.

Ever since June 2016, Nicola Sturgeon's SNP has been trying to weaponise Brexit to suit its own nationalist agenda. The SNP is not interested in Brexit for its own sake; for the SNP, it is just another tool in its endless pursuit of independence. It seems today that the SNP has hoodwinked Labour and the Liberal Democrats into supporting it in that endeavour. If it therefore turns out that we, the Scottish Conservatives, are alone in standing up for the 2 million Scots who in

2014 voted no to breaking up the United Kingdom, so be it. Labour cannot be trusted on the union and would rather get into bed with the nationalists, as it does today. *[Interruption.]*

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP) rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Mr Tomkins—

Adam Tomkins: The Liberal Democrats cannot be trusted on the union and would rather get into bed with the nationalists, as they do today. *[Interruption.]*

Willie Rennie (North East Fife) (LD) rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please sit down, Mr Rennie. It is entirely up to the individual speaker whether to take interventions. If it is quite clear that the member is not taking interventions, please do not resort to shouting; please just sit down. Thank you.

Willie Rennie: Will Mr Tomkins give way?

Adam Tomkins: I say to Mr Rennie that the Scottish Conservatives will never cave in to the SNP—not today, not now, not ever—because, unlike the SNP, we believe that the results of referendums must be respected. We voted to remain in the United Kingdom in 2014 and two years later we voted as one United Kingdom to leave the European Union, and that is precisely what we will do.

Among other notable matters, the Prime Minister's deal withdraws the UK from the EU's hated common fisheries policy, which the SNP would drag Scotland back into in a heartbeat. Under the deal, we will become an independent coastal state with full control over our own waters. The Prime Minister has been clear that, under her leadership, that will never be traded away against other priorities. *[Interruption.]*

Much has been said about the unique position of Northern Ireland under the deal. We have just heard the cabinet secretary wrongly claim that the deal gives Northern Ireland a competitive advantage and that Scottish business will suffer as a result—that is wrong on both counts. Yes, the backstop means that Northern Ireland will be required to adhere to certain limited provisions of EU single market law as regards goods, but the Prime Minister's number two, David Lidington, told the Scottish Parliament last Thursday that if the backstop comes into force, that will be true for the whole UK and not only for Northern Ireland. There is therefore no competitive advantage for Northern Ireland and there is no disadvantage to Scottish business.

The SNP would have us believe that it is only the UK Government that is saying, “It's this deal or

no deal", but let us not be misled: the European Union itself is saying that. For the EU, Britain's withdrawal is now a done deal and there is no appetite in Brussels or in any major European capital for the deal to be unpicked or renegotiated. On the continent, they have moved on. The concern in France and Germany is not Brexit; it is whether the Italians are about to crash the economy of the entire eurozone. When the Europeans think about Brexit, they think about our future trading relationship and not the divorce agreement, which, as they see it, is done and dusted.

Business backs the deal. NFU Scotland backs the deal, as does the Scotch Whisky Association and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce. Nicola Sturgeon and Mike Russell decided to ignore all those voices and to condemn the Prime Minister's deal before they had even seen it. However, the time for nationalist game playing is over. As a country, we have a choice to make: do we back the Prime Minister's carefully negotiated withdrawal agreement or do we crash out of the European Union on a no-deal basis? *[Interruption.]* My answer is simple: we should reject today's SNP motion and we should support the Prime Minister's efforts to secure an orderly, negotiated and agreed withdrawal from the European Union.

14:59

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): So much for the great constitutional lawyer—afraid to take an intervention from a bricklayer, a used car salesman and a Liberal Democrat. *[Laughter.]* How timid is he?

I will tell members why Adam Tomkins is so timid, because this gets to the crux of the hypocrisy of the Tory party. Look at the legal advice from the Attorney General, which has just been released. It states that

"GB is essentially treated as a third country by NI for goods passing from GB into NI",

and later it explains the terms that will be in place between GB and Northern Ireland.

Who wrote this:

"We could not support any deal that creates a border of any kind in the Irish Sea and undermines the Union or leads to Northern Ireland having a different relationship with the EU than the rest of the UK, beyond what currently exists"?

Gil Paterson: On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have a point of order from Gil Paterson.

Neil Findlay: Let me tell you—it was Ruth Davidson and David Mundell.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You can repeat that line when you get back on your feet, Mr Findlay, but we have a point of order.

Gil Paterson: Just to correct the record, I say that I do not sell cars. *[Laughter.]*

Neil Findlay: Okay.

Those were the words of David Mundell and Ruth Davidson, and that is why the Tories are so embarrassed and will not take an intervention.

The UK is poised to leave the EU in just a few months' time, and a 40-year economic and political relationship will come to end. For businesses and consumers, workers, students and all our citizens, the overwhelming feeling is one of uncertainty.

Businesses want to know how to plan ahead. Workers want to know that their hard-won rights will not be sold down the river. The people on the island of Ireland want to know that they will not now see a hard border, and manufacturers want to know whether they will be able to access European markets. All those groups are being left hanging by a Government that is paralysed by a 40-year civil war over Europe. David Cameron—remember him?—called the referendum to bring to a head the historic divisions in his party and, in doing so, made a political miscalculation that was unprecedented in modern politics. It risks a 9 per cent decline in the UK economy and threatens our jobs, security and future international relationships with our near neighbours.

Of course, it will not be Cameron whose livelihood is threatened. He will no doubt continue to relax in sunny climes with his trotters up as chaos reigns. It will not be Cameron whose rights at work will be lost. It will not be Jacob Rees-Mogg who is unable to afford his children's schools fees, or Boris de Pfeffel Johnson, who will still rake it in from gullible newspaper editors paying him for writing his ill-informed drivel. For the establishment clique, life will go on almost untainted by the impact of their own ineptness, but for working people and the companies that employ them, these are uncertain times. On Tuesday, the future of our country will be determined, and one thing is clear: with 100 Tory back benchers opposed to it, the Prime Minister's deal is doomed.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I agree with Mr Findlay's analysis and his predictions about what will happen if Brexit goes ahead. What the people he is talking about genuinely need is the transformation of domestic economic policy. Does Mr Findlay agree that any Brexit will make that much-needed transformation harder, not easier, and that we should be standing up against Brexit in all its forms?

Neil Findlay: I agree with Patrick Harvie that what those people need is the transformation of the economy. The biggest transformation that the economy will have is the election of a Labour Government led by Jeremy Corbyn.

The Prime Minister's deal is doomed. Labour will not support it, because it will not protect jobs or ensure frictionless trade, it provides no certainty about our future relationship with the EU, it fails to deliver close co-operation, it rules out a permanent customs union, it fails to deliver a good deal on services and it limits access for British businesses to markets. It weakens our international security and co-operation and it undermines devolution and fails to deliver for all the nations and regions of the UK.

It is not just Labour that opposes the deal; the Liberal Democrats oppose it, the Green Party opposes it, the SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Democratic Unionist Party oppose it, and around 10 Tory MSPs, if they were honest with themselves—all those who voted leave—oppose it, too.

The PM has united leavers and remainers in opposition to the deal. It is doomed and it will be rejected out of hand by the House of Commons. Let me be clear: when it is rejected, that does not mean that we will revert to no deal. That is the false choice that is being presented by the Prime Minister, who is trying to bail herself out—

Adam Tomkins: What is the alternative?

Neil Findlay: If you want to intervene, by all means do. I will take an intervention from you, Mr Tomkins.

Adam Tomkins: Will the member tell us what his alternative is?

Neil Findlay: Absolutely. We will set out our alternative, Mr Tomkins.

Adam Tomkins: When? You have had two and a half years.

Neil Findlay: You have some cheek to criticise anyone given the utter chaos that you have brought in. We have set out our alternative clearly. The six tests that we set have been failed and we do not accept what has happened.

Two weeks ago, the Prime Minister came to Scotland on her fantasy campaign tour and, with all the vim and vigour of her actual election campaign, she characteristically hid from the people she fears most—the voting public. She is the only candidate in an imaginary election and is heading for a landslide defeat, and when that happens, all bets will be off. Such a rejection will be an unprecedented failure of Government and a personal humiliation for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister's Government has been found guilty of contempt of Parliament and it has lost two Brexit secretaries and a series of ministers. The Tory party is revolting—in many ways. The DUP has deserted it, and yesterday in Parliament the Government was defeated not once but on three occasions. A rejection in such a key area of Government policy will leave the Government unable to govern or to deliver its programme. In such circumstances, my view is that the Government will have lost the confidence of Parliament and the country and a general election should be called.

If the past few years have shown us anything, it is that the world is an interconnected place where businesses and people work together, relationships grow and develop across borders and we communicate and trade at the click of a mouse. Unravelling 40 years of economic and political relationship building is self-evidently a monumental and complicated task. I hope that this painful and paralysing experience also provides much food for thought for the cabinet secretary, his Government and his party.

The Prime Minister's days are numbered. For the sake of the country, our economy and jobs, our children, our environment and the rights that we enjoy, the Prime Minister should admit that the game is up and let democracy prevail in a general election.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members that, even during interventions, they should always speak through the chair.

15:07

Ross Greer (West Scotland) (Green): It is a sorry situation that we have been put in today, and one that the chaotic, dying Conservative Government is responsible for—not Michel Barnier, the EU27 or those of us who campaigned for remain. This is a crisis of the Tory party that it has turned into a profound national crisis.

Scotland's decisive vote to remain has been completely disregarded. No attempt has been made to accommodate it or even to recognise it. The withdrawal agreement and the declaration on future partnership put Scotland and the wider UK in a worse place than we are currently in. It is not the sunny uplands that the liars of the leave campaign promised. Free movement will be ended. The social, cultural and economic benefits that European citizens have brought to Scotland will be restricted. The rights of our citizens to move, live and work across the EU will be lost. This is a process of reducing our rights and our opportunities.

Scotland's aspirations to be an open and outward-looking society will be undermined. Our

universities and our world-class research centres will be unable to attract the best talent. The Tories intend to take us out of the single market, particularly for services, which for a service-based economy such as the UK is simply self-sabotage. Labour standards and environmental standards are certainly not protected by the agreement.

There is some positive language and a bit of rhetoric with a commitment to maintain a so-called level playing field, but when we look at the detail, it completely falls apart. The provisions are exempt from arbitration rules and apply only temporarily under the protocol on the island of Ireland in the withdrawal agreement. Instead, there is reliance on the UK creating its own domestic enforcement procedures. Given that Britain routinely breaches legal limits on air pollution and has the weakest employment protections in Europe, the loss of EU-level enforcement should be a concern to us all.

For all of that—the loss of free movement, single market membership, protections for the environment and labour standards—we are going to pay almost £40 billion. Even if Brexit does happen, the UK of course has an obligation to a number of European funding streams, not least the pensions of those who have served us as a member state, for example, but even the Tory negotiators must concede that paying to lose out on rights, privileges and advantages—paying to be poorer—is a ridiculous place to be.

So many issues have been kicked into the long grass. Permanent provisions on labour and environmental standards, on our level of access to the single market and on whether the Irish backstop will have to be implemented in the long term remain to be negotiated. One thing that the Brexiteers have accurately grasped is just how likely it is that the Irish backstop will become a long-term or permanent arrangement. That is because, over the past two years, they have been unable to come up with the magical solution that they promised us, and no one seriously believes that they will come up with a solution over the next couple of years.

The deal is so chronically unappealing that the two Brexit secretaries who were allegedly responsible for it have resigned to vote against it. I cannot see how it will be agreed to in the UK Parliament. It is a bad deal for Scotland—bad for our democracy, our economy, our environment, our society, our culture and so much more—and it is a bad deal for every part of the UK.

The deal was dead on arrival in the Commons yesterday. It was delivered by a Government that is collapsing before our eyes, a Government that has been found in contempt of Parliament, a Government that has lost its confidence-and-supply partners, and a Government that has suffered more ministerial resignations than any

other in modern history. This is not a Government that is fit to take us out of the crisis. This Government is the crisis. It is the cause of the crisis.

Today, this Parliament, by rejecting the UK Government's deal—as it seems that about half the Conservative Party's MPs might do—and by rejecting the disaster of a no-deal exit will say clearly, on behalf of the people of Scotland, that there is a better way.

There are a number of better ways. Indeed, yesterday, a better way became clearer than ever. The Greens have been clear that Brexit is not inevitable, and, yesterday, the EU's Advocate General agreed. I was proud to be one of the people who brought a case through the Court of Session to the European Court of Justice to seek clarity on whether and how article 50 could be revoked, should the UK Parliament or public so choose. I was proud to do that alongside Green, SNP and Labour colleagues, joined by the Good Law Project. While we sought to maximise the options available to the UK Parliament, the Conservative Government sought to prevent us at every step of the way and to limit its own options. Responsible Governments do not limit their options; they maximise them.

The Advocate General of the European Court of Justice has been absolutely clear: in his opinion, article 50 can be unilaterally revoked by the UK. The Scottish Greens are absolutely clear, too. This deal should be rejected by Parliament and article 50 should be revoked. That will respect Scotland's vote to remain, and it will be not just in our best interests but in the best interests of every nation and region of the UK.

Ultimately, the Greens' ambition is to have an independent Scotland as a full member state of the EU, with a seat at the table. We want to work towards a people's Europe, alongside our friends and neighbours. However, that is not for today. Today, we stand alongside those who agree with our constitutional position and those who believe that Scotland is stronger as part of the UK. We stand together to prevent something that none of us is in any doubt will damage Scotland.

The Greens hope that the final say on this deal can be put back into the hands of the people and that the deal can be put on the ballot paper against the option of revoking article 50 and clearly stating that the benefits of staying in the EU remain available to us—as the Prime Minister herself said. During his speech at the start of this debate, Mr Tomkins failed to mention that the Prime Minister laid out three options: her deal, which is dead on arrival; no deal, which is clearly no longer an option; and no Brexit. The option of no Brexit is on the table.

We are holding this debate today because we are all in no doubt that it is in the best interests of the people of Scotland to reject the deal and to reject no deal. I am therefore proud to support the motion that is before us.

15:13

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): We should thank the Conservatives for a couple of things. First, they have brought Alex Neil back to the front bench. Secondly, they caused Neil Findlay to describe Willie Rennie accurately, which cannot be said to have happened in the past.

We have a UK Government that is in contempt of Parliament, for the first time in history. We have a UK Government that has published legal advice—again something without precedent.

We also have—oh, the greatest of ironies, I suggest to Mr Tomkins—a UK Parliament that has taken back control, inflicting three Government defeats in one day. Last night, 26 Tory MPs backed Dominic Grieve's amendment, including former Cabinet ministers and May loyalists such as Damian Green and Michael Fallon. The end cannot be far away. All that is the result of the ructions in the Conservative Party over the UK's relationship with Europe.

So why are the Scottish Tories following the last-man-standing approach to politics? Their unapologetic support for the Prime Minister and her withdrawal agreement is ludicrous, not because of opposition to Theresa May's deal, and not because the UK Government's own analysis shows that our economy will be made weaker by the deal, but because the Prime Minister will be defeated by her own side. The Prime Minister is going to lose the vote next Tuesday, and yet her last defenders, and those of her deal, are the Scottish Tories. What do they not understand about what is going on? I can only observe that Adam Tomkins took no interventions today because he does not believe a word of what he said in this debate.

Next Tuesday at 7 pm, what will be happening at the House of Commons will not be about socialists, nationalists, Liberal Democrats or even the Democratic Unionist Party. What will be happening at Westminster will be about the fissure in the Tory Party: a party that never could agree on Europe. From Churchill to Theresa May, every Tory leader has been ripped asunder by their own party over Europe. Following yesterday's farce, few are convinced that Theresa May will still be Prime Minister by Tuesday night. It is her deal. It will lose and she will go.

The rejection of the Prime Minister's deal next week—a rejection triggered by the revolt in her own party—will expose the profoundly flawed

nature of the June 2016 referendum, which was called not to end the corrosiveness of the European question across the UK, but to end the corrosiveness of the European question within the Tory party. It has not done so.

Britons voted to leave, narrowly, but no specific version of Brexit was put to the people. Whatever the grievance—and there were plenty—voting leave encapsulated every reason to rebel. One recent poll suggested that 75 per cent of the electorate say the Prime Minister's deal is

"nothing like that which was promised two years ago".

That is why so many take exception to the Prime Minister's assertion that her deal delivers on the referendum—so many Tories. The Prime Minister's deal means that the UK would be transformed from rule maker to rule taker. It enshrines a democratic deficit and a further loss of sovereignty that her party will never accept.

There is to be a backstop on the border in the island of Ireland. As we know from today's published legal advice, there is no obvious way out of that backstop. It means protracted and potentially never-ending negotiations with the EU27. It is, as the Brexiteer Dominic Raab stated this morning, a trap.

One certainty about next week's meaningful vote is that the majority of the House of Commons does not want a hard Brexit in which the UK crashes out of the EU next March with no transition period, no trading arrangements in place and monumental economic chaos. The UK Government's own financial assessment says that every citizen will be worse off.

Here at Holyrood last Thursday, David Lidington accepted that slower economic growth means less revenue. That means less money for public services. To coin the current language of cuts, Brexit means extending austerity, not reducing it. So much for the £350 million a week for the NHS.

All that was neatly summed up by Sam Gyimah, who resigned as a Tory minister last Friday—the seventh minister to go since the deal was published. He left saying that voting for the Prime Minister's deal would mean that Britain would be surrendering

"our voice, our vote and our veto".

What is the alternative to the UK failing to agree? Crashing out on 29 March next year does not need to happen. That will not happen if the UK Parliament passes a new law erasing that deadline. It is now a question of how MPs will act to stop a hard Brexit, not if or when they will do so. However, as the UK Parliament cannot agree anything, other than opposition to a hard Brexit, it is the people who must determine the future. Many sensible Tories are making exactly that case.

Jo Johnson, the brother of Boris, but a pro-European, resigned, saying that the deal represents

“a failure of British statecraft on a scale unseen since the Suez crisis”.

For the avoidance of doubt, that is not a compliment on Mrs May's negotiating skills. Mr Johnson is now calling for the deal to be put to the general public in a people's vote. It is to be hoped that the other Johnson once again campaigns for leave. Boris is no longer box office. Last night in the House of Commons, he was taken apart—by his own side.

John McDonnell, Labour's shadow chancellor, rather than dissing a peoples vote, describes it as increasingly inevitable.

Justine Greening, the PM's former education secretary, said this morning on the “Today” programme that trusting the people may, in the end, be the only way to break the gridlock in Parliament.

Such a vote must test those real alternatives. There may be some consensus in Westminster for a customs-union single-market Norway option. Influential Tories, led by Oliver Letwin and a dozen more, support that. The Norway option is perhaps best described as moving house but staying in the neighbourhood, although that also includes losing one's seat on the neighbourhood watch committee. Yet Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, says that there will be implications for the financial industry, including here in Scotland.

On Tuesday, the UK Parliament will fail to agree, and then the only real alternative is for the people of the nations and regions of this United Kingdom to determine our future. That is the only way forward. With six days to go, there is one certainty: the Prime Minister's deal is dead at the hands of her own party, but among its few defenders remain those in the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party. They look like lemmings rushing headlong for the cliff edge, demanding leadership, and I remain staggered at sensible and intelligent Scottish Tories such as Adam Tomkins joining them as they plunge into the abyss.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Christine Grahame): We move to the open debate. I ask for speeches of six minutes, but there is time in hand for interventions.

15:20

Bruce Crawford (Stirling) (SNP): Like many in this chamber and the majority of the people of Scotland, including the 67.7 per cent of my Stirling constituents, I voted with my head, my heart and

my soul to remain in the European Union. After what was, frankly, a divisive, dishonest and xenophobic campaign, I was pleased that Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain and rejected the case to leave.

Of course, many good people voted to leave and did so in good faith that it would deliver a better future for themselves and their families. I know from canvassing in my own constituency that many of those people are still committed to the leave cause, and I respect their position 100 per cent. However, it is also true that many of them feel badly betrayed by the leave campaign—and after two and a half years of revelation after revelation about its promises not standing up to scrutiny, who can really blame them?

The result is that many of our citizens, for very understandable reasons, just want to see the end of this sorry mess. They are sick to the back teeth of politicians such as the bickering hard Brexiteers, who have no credible plan and care more about the future of their party than about their country. All our citizens are asking for is for politicians to get together and agree a way forward that will hurt them neither economically nor, just as important, socially.

That is why I am pleased that, this afternoon at Holyrood, we are debating a motion that has been agreed by the SNP Government, Labour, the Greens and the Lib Dems. Today, the Conservatives stand alone and isolated. However, I am not angry with them, because I know that many on the Tory benches do not believe that the current deal represents the best possible outcome for Scotland. That much is clear from previous statements made from those benches, particularly on the importance of Scotland remaining in the single market. I am not angry with them; frankly, the time for anger and emotion is over, and it is now time for hard-headed, clear thinking and a focused determination to work together to secure an outcome that will not damage our country.

Patrick Harvie: Mr Crawford is right about a lot of this, but does he, like me, find it quite baffling that the UK Conservative MPs, who are nominally under the same whip, are splitting in every direction while, for the MSPs in this Parliament, it is just party line, party line, party line? Does the member agree that they need to be willing to say what they really think if we are going to get the progress that he is calling for?

Bruce Crawford: I say again to Patrick Harvie that I am not angry with them—I am just sad that they are not yet in a position to work with others here at Holyrood to achieve such an outcome. That might come after the defeat of Theresa May next Tuesday.

It is perhaps understandable that much of the debate over the past two and a half years has been about the damaging impact of leaving the European Union. In their economic analyses, the UK Government, the Scottish Government, the banks and respected economic institutions all agree on one thing: leaving the EU will make us poorer. Before we have even left the EU, the Brexit vote alone has, according to the governor of the Bank of England, cost households £900 a year when the collapse in the value of the pound is taken into account. As for the current deal on the table, the Scottish Government's analysis has shown that that will cost each person in Scotland an additional £1,600 a year. We are talking about real people's lives, people's real incomes and people's ability to afford to live. We can be sure of one thing: the very people who can afford it least will end up paying the biggest price for this folly. Businesses small and large across the country are already feeling the strain from the reduced spending power of their customers. I would not be fulfilling my duties as the MSP for Stirling if I did not speak out against the absolute madness of the UK Government, which, for the first time in history, is actually planning to make people poorer.

In the time that I have left, I would like to turn to the important issue of citizens across the EU. For generations, people from the UK have moved freely about the EU, where they have lived, where they have worked and where they have loved. However, the coming generation risks having that freedom stolen away from them by politicians obsessed with reducing the number of people coming from EU, who simply seek to do the same here. People who are our friends are being used as bargaining chips to gain some perceived advantage either politically or as part of negotiations. That approach has led EU citizens living in our country to have real fears and anxieties about their future. Alenka, a Slovenian national and a lecturer in Stirling, said:

"Many of our friends are already leaving. It's like they are jumping ship before they are pushed."

Those are heartbreaking words, and the sentiments are shared by many others. Those are the fears and anxieties of real people. To treat those people in the way that they are being treated is an absolute disgrace.

If we have learned anything in the past two and a half years, it is that Brexit flies in the face of those of us who believe in an open, inclusive, compassionate, caring, welcoming and competitive nation. With cool heads and reasoned arguments, made in the interests of the all the people who call Scotland their home, we can get ourselves out of the mess of this deal. I call on all colleagues of all parties in this chamber and in the House of Commons to stand up and be heard, for

goodness' sake. The price of silence is simply far too high to pay for too many.

15:26

Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con): It is always a pleasure to follow Bruce Crawford, not least given the measured approach that he took in his speech, which I hope to emulate.

We are now less than four months away from the point at which the UK will formally leave the European Union, and, as we near the end, it is worth remembering the beginning.

On 23 June 2016, a question about our membership of the EU was posed to the United Kingdom and was answered by the United Kingdom. We know the resulting decision. The Prime Minister's deal seeks to implement the decision of the electorate for the UK to end its membership. Therefore, for me, the central reason to support this deal is that it respects that decision and delivers an outcome that is consistent with that decision.

Michael Russell: I respect the member, and I know that he believes that. However, would he reflect on the fact that, for example, today's YouGov poll shows that, now, fewer than four in 10 people in the UK think that the UK was right to vote for Brexit, whereas almost half—49 per cent—think that it was the wrong decision? Surely, times change.

Donald Cameron: I respect the one poll that matters here, which is the decision of the referendum on 23 June 2016. Not to respect that vote renders us guilty of forgetting that we serve those who elected us, and that service includes respecting their decisions, which were freely expressed in a democratic vote.

The withdrawal agreement is, of course, a complex legal document—a treaty, in fact. Like most legal agreements, it is open to interpretation. It has to make provision for a variety of possible outcomes, some of which might never come to pass. It is not perfect. As with any legal settlement that is reached at the end of a lengthy negotiation, neither side emerges with all that it demanded at the outset. Concessions have been made and circles have been squared—on all sides. That is the reality of any compromise. The stark purity of ideological positions makes way for something that is less glamorous but, ultimately, more practical.

We have heard a lot about choices this week. For me, the choice is this: do we pursue ideology or pragmatism? This deal is pragmatic. It acknowledges the profound divisions that were inherent in the vote.

Dr Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP): This is a less hypothetical question today than it was yesterday. If there were another referendum, would the member do what Ruth Davidson said she would do and vote to remain?

Donald Cameron: There will not be another referendum; we have to play the ball as it lies. This is where we are at.

The deal is pragmatic. It recognises the closeness of the vote. Beyond that, it faces up to the anxieties of the vast majority of people who want the deal to be supported for the reason that it protects their jobs and livelihoods. It provides for an orderly withdrawal from the EU, which is why Scottish business has backed it.

Scotch whisky is one of the most important industries in my region, and it is vital to the Scottish economy. The Scotch Whisky Association has said:

"If the deal is rejected, this will create considerable uncertainty for the industry".

Diageo, which owns many whisky brands around Scotland, has said:

"It is now vital for business confidence that Parliament votes in favour of this deal."

Last Friday, I met a livestock farmer in Lochaber—I refer members to my entry in the register of members' interests. That farmer simply wants to get on with his work. He will have lambs to sell in the spring, and he urged me to support the deal. Farming is hugely important to the Scottish economy, so it is no wonder that the NFUS has said that the deal

"will ensure that there are no hard barriers on the day we leave the European Union, and will allow trade in agricultural goods and UK food & drink to continue throughout the transition period largely as before. This opportunity needs to be taken".

I repeat:

"This opportunity needs to be taken".

Taking the withdrawal agreement and the political declaration together, we have a deal that provides clarity on our status as an independent coastal nation by 2020; ensures that the environment remains protected; aims to protect trade in goods, which is crucial for our many exporters—

Neil Findlay: Will Donald Cameron take an intervention?

Donald Cameron: I am sorry, but I will carry on. I have taken a few interventions already.

The deal aims to protect trade in goods, which is crucial for Scotland's exporters, who require to deliver their goods to European markets. Above all, in answer to Michael Russell's question on

migration, we have a deal that ensures that EU citizens who live and work in the UK can continue to do so.

Despite the clear progress, there are people who still want the process to fail. The SNP has never wanted Brexit to work, and, whatever deal Theresa May negotiated with Brussels, the SNP would have opposed it. An orderly withdrawal is not in its interests, which is why it is rejecting this deal. It hopes to salvage independence from our plunge into uncertainty—that is the SNP's ambition and it always has been. It is extraordinary, because the deal meets many of the SNP's demands, including a transition period, no hard border, a guarantee for EU citizens' rights and the likelihood of a customs partnership.

Better alternatives are not on the table. Jean-Claude Juncker has said that this is the "only deal possible" and that those who think that they will get a better deal by rejecting this deal will be disappointed. That is from the President of the European Commission.

This is it, and we have to play the ball as it lies. Given the uncertainty that would result if the deal fell, I am content that, when I look my constituents in the eye and explain why I support it, I can do so in the firm knowledge that I have acted in their best interests.

15:33

Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): The Prime Minister has claimed for two years that no deal is better than a bad deal. Now, she is attempting to intimidate the country into backing her bad deal by threatening a cliff-edge Brexit. Therefore, I am delighted that the motion unites all the parties of this Parliament, with the dishonourable exception of the Scottish Conservatives, to oppose a no-deal Brexit. The House of Commons expressed the same view by backing Dominic Grieve's amendment yesterday, and I am confident that Hilary Benn's amendment, which is backed by the SNP and others, will also be successful. The opinion of the European advocate general that article 50 can be rescinded eliminates the risk of no deal, so there is an alternative.

The Scottish Conservatives continue to claim that Mrs May's bad deal is our only option, even saying that that is the view from Europe. However, there is a crucial omission in that narrative. This is the only deal that the EU could offer, given Mrs May's red lines. That was the strong message from the influential people whom the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee met during its recent trip to Brussels and the European Parliament. The withdrawal agreement is what it is because Mrs May boxed herself in with

those rigid red lines, which were her obsessive determination to end freedom of movement, her foolhardy commitment to take the UK out of a single market of 500 million people and her obstinate insistence on leaving a customs union that gives the UK preferential trading agreements with 60 third countries as well as frictionless trade with the EU27. If Mrs May dropped the red lines, we could reach a far better agreement with the EU, and it is vital that that happens.

Other members have outlined the evidence that has been provided by the UK Government on the economic damage that will ensue from leaving the single market and the customs union. I will therefore concentrate on another of this deal's red lines: the determination to end freedom of movement and, specifically, how that will damage Scotland.

Figures from the National Records of Scotland show that all of Scotland's projected population increase over the next 10 years will be due to migration. Furthermore, an end to EU migration would result in a 3 per cent decline in the working-age population over the next 25 years, when the pensionable-age population is projected to increase by a quarter. We need the taxes of working people to pay for public services in the future, so those statistics should be of concern to every person in the chamber. However, when my colleague Angela Constance MSP put that point to David Lidington last week at the joint meeting of the Finance and the Constitution Committee and the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, he was completely unaware of that. He cited the Migration Advisory Committee, whose report for the Government is supposed to inform the upcoming Immigration Bill at Westminster, but the MAC has no Scottish representation and it did no Scottish modelling.

The MAC's chairman, Professor Manning, gave evidence to the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee in November, and what he said shocked us so much that the committee has written to the Home Secretary to share our concerns. The MAC wants to end nearly all immigration in what it calls low-skilled occupations and has set a £30,000 salary threshold for migrants who are considered high skilled. When he came before the committee, Professor Manning dismissed the concerns of businesses who said that that would make it impossible for them to recruit. He shocked the committee when he said that the UK should not focus on the needs of the hospitality or agricultural sectors—in response to his comments, the NFUS used the words “disappointed” and “shocked” when it came before our committee last week.

Professor Manning also dismissed the advice from Oxford Economics, which advises the

committee and which said that tax rises may be needed to compensate for the fall in revenue if immigration is restricted. The MAC suggested that the pension age may need to rise—again—to fill the black hole in tax revenues that those policies will result in. There is a reason why the Immigration Bill remains unpublished: to publish it before the withdrawal agreement vote would terrify business further and increase opposition to this deeply damaging deal.

I have outlined how just one of Mrs May's red lines will damage our country, and it is those red lines that have shaped this deal. Yesterday, she described her deal as a “compromise”. It is nothing of the kind, but it has brought us together in opposition to her deal and in opposition, critically, to having no deal. That is why I am delighted to support the motion today.

15:38

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I will concentrate my remarks on rural Scotland.

For generations, we have been fighting depopulation—which means that communities are disappearing and, with them, the rural economy—and subsequent damage to the environment. That is not just an issue for rural communities. Urban dwellers enjoy our rural areas for holidays and days out. However, more important, rural areas provide an environmental benefit to all of us. Our urban areas are big polluters, and our rural areas redress the balance by providing carbon stores. Therefore, vibrant rural communities are important to us all, and we need to protect them. The withdrawal agreement, or, indeed, a hard Brexit, risks further damaging those communities and puts their existence in jeopardy.

I will speak about the fishing and agriculture industries, which underpin rural economies; if I have time, I will address the wider EU understanding of peripherality and the needs of rural communities—an understanding that successive Governments have sadly lacked.

It is a strange phenomenon that the sectors of Scottish society that wanted out of the EU are the ones that are likely to come off worst in relation to the withdrawal agreement. That is the case with fishing. Those who believed that they had the most to gain may end up with the most to lose. They will be last to leave, they will lose all their influence and, in the case of the backstop, they will face separate trade arrangements for fish, which could include trade levies or increased bureaucracy. The withdrawal agreement is the worst of both worlds for them.

The EU will negotiate on behalf of the UK with countries external to the EU, such as Norway, and during the Council of Ministers negotiations on the

common fisheries policy. The EU will consult the UK, but there is no requirement to reach a consensus. Quotas that are detrimental to our industry could therefore be imposed on the UK. That will go on until we reach agreement with the European Union on access and quota arrangements. The European Union is clear that such an agreement will build on the common fisheries policy, although that is unacceptable to our fishing communities.

Listening to the debate about the wider transitional arrangements and the backstop, it appears to me that the situation could carry on indefinitely. There is a real chance that it will become the new reality, because it is difficult to see what arrangements for a barrier-free Ireland could be agreed, especially given the parties currently at the table. Failure to agree a solution for Ireland will mean that the backstop comes into play. Frankly, if we do not get a general election, the fishing community will be rule takers for the foreseeable future.

It is hard to believe that it can get any worse, but for fishing it can. Under the backstop arrangements, access to EU markets for fish, including farmed fish, is dependent on agreement being reached on quotas and access to UK waters. The deal therefore does not meet the aspirations of our fishing communities.

Delays and import charges will have a disproportionate impact on smaller fishing operations, which have tighter margins. Any delay in getting a catch to market can mean that the whole lot is destroyed, and few boats can withstand that for any length of time. The charging of an import levy would also eat into the already tight margins of smaller operations. Those boats are enjoying greater profits because of the level of the pound, but if that were to change and if import levies were imposed, they could face a steep drop in income. It could be argued that those boats play a great role in sustaining fragile communities, and any reduction in their number would have a great impact on population levels. Even a hard Brexit would not make the situation better: negotiations would be carried out on the same basis, with the European Union demanding access to our waters and quotas in return for barrier-free access to their markets.

While agriculture has been better served, the situation there is not straightforward either. Any extension to the transitional arrangements would leave us outside the common agricultural policy and subject to World Trade Organization terms. There is also a stipulation in the agreement that any support given to agriculture during an extended transition period cannot be higher than the level of common agriculture policy support given in the previous year. An extended transition

could therefore mean that support levels drop in real terms. If so, we cannot rebalance support payments—something that we must do to ensure that the areas that are dependant on those payments enjoy a greater share of support. It is wrong that those farming in the most difficult areas receive less, despite their greater disadvantage and higher operational costs.

The withdrawal agreement also states that a joint committee will be set up between the EU and the UK to set the minimum amount of payments made to schemes such as agri-environmental support and basic payments. We will therefore not have control over our agricultural support payments, which will be subject to agreement with the EU—again, taking the rules with none of the benefits.

I mention fishing and agriculture specifically as the rural economy is dependent on those industries. They are fragile industries in many parts of rural Scotland and any detriment to them will have an impact on communities that are already under pressure.

I am not sure whether I have time to touch on peripherality. The Presiding Officer says no.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will give you another little bit, but please begin to wind up.

Rhoda Grant: The Labour Party's six tests say that we should protect the benefits that we enjoy as part of the EU and have a close and collaborative relationship, but neither the deal nor the transition agreement do that, and a hard Brexit would be even worse for every sector. We need a deal that we can coalesce around. Until the Conservative Government starts listening, that will be impossible.

15:44

Alex Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): The one good thing that I can say about Theresa May's draft withdrawal agreement is that it has brought about a level of unity between remainers and Brexiteers—even in the SNP—that I never thought I would see for a long time. As someone who voted for Brexit, I am totally opposed to the proposed deal because, in my view, it is the worst of all possible worlds and the best of none. It is neither fish nor fowl.

One of the main issues for me is the impact of the backstop proposal, which I will explain in some detail. I accept that the proposal is well intentioned, but the way that it is drafted is utterly foolhardy. Lord Mervyn King, the former governor of the Bank of England, in today's *Daily Telegraph*—I must get him to write for a better paper—said:

"Leaving the EU is not the end of the world, any more than it will deliver the promised land. Nonetheless the country is entitled to expect something better than a muddled commitment to perpetual subordination from which the UK cannot withdraw without the agreement of the EU."

The purpose of the backstop, which is to avoid a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, is absolutely the right thing to try to do; it is an objective with which everybody in the chamber will agree. Many members might not realise that, in fact, it is already the law of the United Kingdom. As a result of an amendment made by Lord Patten to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, it is illegal for us to do anything to create a hard border in Ireland. That is already the law of our land, as it should be.

However, as the Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, confirmed two days ago, the current draft of the backstop proposal could tie us permanently into a particular type of customs deal that would be detrimental to our economy, with no prospect of a get-out option. We could exit the backstop only with the permission of the EU. As I am sitting next to the housing minister, I point out that that would be like a tenant needing the permission of their landlord to give up their lease, while the landlord retains the right to increase the rent annually and impose ridiculous new conditions on the tenant.

Similarly, to exit the backstop would need the permission of 27 other nation states, any one of which could use its veto to keep the UK in the backstop against our wishes, unless and until we agreed to all their individual demands. Thus, the EU would have the UK over a barrel, not just in relation to the backstop but—this is extremely important—in relation to all aspects of the future trading relationship between the UK and the EU, which is still to be negotiated.

Neil Findlay: Will the member give way?

Alex Neil: Hold on a minute.

That is not a "calculated risk", as the Attorney General claimed; it is utter folly, which no self-respecting legislator could ever vote for.

Talking of self-respecting legislators, I will let in Mr Findlay.

Neil Findlay: I agree with a great deal of what Mr Neil has said, and I want to invite him to lay into the Scottish Tories. To continue his housing analogy, under the provisions of the backstop, Northern Ireland would have much cheaper rents than Scotland would have.

Alex Neil: I agree, although I do not know whether it was worth while taking the intervention.

Let us look at the implications of the backstop for our fishing industry in particular. Already, President Macron is on record as saying that he

could refuse to end the backstop unless the EU retains control of 60 per cent of the UK's fishing waters, as is already the case under the common fisheries policy. In that circumstance, we would be out of the CFP in name only. In reality, our fishermen would be no better off than they are today.

If I may say so, I am amazed that the leadership of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation is recommending approval of the withdrawal agreement. It is high time that the federation woke up and smelled the coffee. By recommending approval of the withdrawal deal, it is endangering the future of the whole Scottish fishing industry. The federation needs to rethink its position, and it must so quickly.

It is not just France; Spain could say that it will not let us out of the backstop unless there is another deal on Gibraltar. Other countries could say that we are not getting out unless they can dip into our financial services sector in Edinburgh and London. The EU can demand anything that it likes, and it will keep demanding and demanding, at great economic and social cost to us. If we sign the deal, the EU will have us over the proverbial barrel. It would be an economic disaster to sign the deal with the backstop provision in it.

I return to Lord Mervyn King. He said that having this deal is the result of

"incompetence on a monumental scale".

He has said that, but people in London tell us that we cannot run our own country. Looking at the deal, I know that not only could we run our country better than they can; we could run England better than they can.

15:51

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): When I made my decision to vote remain, I did not need much persuasion, because I did so mainly for economic reasons. I felt that both British and Scottish trade would fare much better in a European market in which there was free movement of goods and services and in which the scope for economies of scale was strengthened. I felt that key sectors such as energy and oil, technology, medical science and our universities would flourish better, and that our new, emerging markets would also fare better with the opportunities that the EU presented.

I still believe those things today, but I had to recognise that, despite all the economic advantages, 52 per cent of UK voters, including many Scots—including the *Daily Telegraph*-reading Alex Neil—felt otherwise. They were convinced that the economic advantages were outweighed by the political problems that were

presented by an EU that was increasingly seen as bureaucratic and insufficiently democratic, because it was increasingly unresponsive to the needs of sovereign states and profligate with—not sufficiently accountable for—taxpayers' money. As with all political debates, there was truth on both sides.

I found it very hard to conceal my disappointment in June 2016, and I have found it very hard ever since, particularly when I see the rancour, division and bitterness that have swept aside decency and tolerance in many quarters of political life.

The Brexit debate has raised questions for the whole country about the meaning of democracy, and I want to dwell on that for a moment. We have heard much in recent days about the overriding need of the sovereign Parliament at Westminster to reflect the views of the country, just as we heard at the time of the Scottish independence referendum about how well this Parliament—in which we all sit now—reflects the will of the people in Scotland. There is a common thread. Before 2014, we were rightly told that the will of the people is paramount and that, whatever decision is made, we should abide by it. That is exactly what we were told prior to the EU referendum. I, for one, believe strongly that we should accept that democracy is the important point, even if we happen to be on the wrong side of the outcome.

Kezia Dugdale (Lothian) (Lab): I am interested in the member's view. Does she think that democracy is just an act of putting one cross in a box every four years, or does she believe that, when the facts change, people should be entitled to change their minds?

Liz Smith: I believe strongly that, if we continue to reject the decisions of voters and tell them that they were wrong, by seeking to have more referendums until we get the vote that we want, we will enter very dangerous territory. It undermines the whole concept of democracy as we know it when the political classes become dislocated from the public who elect them.

I respect the views of all members in the chamber, even if I cannot agree with them all the time. I respect the decision by other parties to have the debate this afternoon, but I ask them to consider that the motion that they lodged cannot give us what they actually want. It is very clear what the other parties do not want, but it is not clear what they want. Given the situation in which the other four parties have found themselves, how could it be? They are adamant that the Prime Minister's deal is a bad one, but they will not spell out what would be a good one. All that they will tell us is that they want to stay in the EU. So do I, but that is not what the people decided and, as

democrats, we must live with that whether we like it or not.

Mike Rumbles (North East Scotland) (LD): I am sure that the member is familiar with the philosopher Edmund Burke, who said that parliamentarians need to use their judgment and not be reliant on the power of public opinion. *[Interruption.]* Oh! I see that the Tories do not like that. Tories often promote Edmund Burke. Do parliamentarians not owe the people a duty to use their own judgment?

Liz Smith: I remind Mr Rumbles that we are here at the behest of the public, who elect us to any Parliament—

Mike Rumbles: That is the point that I am making.

Liz Smith: And that is the point about this issue. If we keep telling the public that they are wrong in their decision making—

Mike Rumbles: We are not telling them that.

Liz Smith: I think that we are telling them that they are wrong, because that is exactly what—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me a minute. I understand why you are responding to the member, Ms Smith, but I do not want discussions taking place across the floor. They have to be through the chair.

Liz Smith: I like to respond, because it is an important part of the debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: With respect, Mr Rumbles must get to his feet if he wants to intervene, so that we can all hear what he says and it is on the record. I ask that you just deal with your speech, Ms Smith. Thank you.

Liz Smith: Okay, Presiding Officer.

Dr Allan: Will the member take an intervention?

Liz Smith: I will make some progress if you do not mind, Dr Allan.

The other parties are adamant that the Prime Minister's deal is a bad one, but I believe strongly that they must spell out what they want. We have seen this afternoon that it is not clear what they want.

I return to the point that the deal is not perfect—we know that. Given the extent of the complexities and the lengthy negotiations that have had to be undertaken that is not surprising, but its central tenets deliver on what the people of the UK voted for. I might not like that, but that is what they voted for. The deal would end Britain's membership of the CAP and the CFP, both of which have failed to deliver what the farming and fishing sectors want.

We should listen to what those sectors are saying. As Adam Tomkins said, there has been a joint statement from the heads of the UK's four national farmers unions backing the deal; Bertie Armstrong of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation backs the deal, Mr Neil; the Scottish Chambers of Commerce backs the deal; Sir Ian Wood backs the deal; and the Scotch Whisky Association backs the deal. Those people are not arguing about the abstract and finer points of the constitution; they are talking about what is best for their sectors in terms of stability and securing future jobs and investment. We should listen to them.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members to intervene if they wish to take part in the debate—do not shout out across the floor of the chamber.

15:57

Tom Arthur (Renfrewshire South) (SNP): It is a matter of profound regret that this debate is required. Along with the overwhelming majority of my Renfrewshire South constituents and the people of Scotland, I voted for the UK to remain a member of the European Union.

Following the referendum in September 2016, I stated in this chamber that, although I regretted the result, I accepted it. However, I made clear that I did not accept that a vote to leave the European Union was a vote to leave the single market, and I maintain that membership of the single market and the customs union is the only workable alternative to remaining a full member of the European Union. Unless economic vandalism and social dislocation are the objective, that is the genuine choice. It is the only choice—and any politician or pundit who suggests otherwise is little more than a con artist.

The case put forward by the UK Government is shamelessly—and sadly—supported by Tory MSPs in this place. I respect many of them, but by doing that they debase themselves to the status of underlings and shills. The case put forward is a packet full of falsehoods; it is a fraud. It is perhaps symptomatic of where we have got to with the Tories. Having witnessed their previous arguments collapse under the weight of their inherent falsehoods, the Tories have been reduced to advocating for the Prime Minister's deal as a means to end the ordeal that they have inflicted on the country. They say:

"Back the deal, and it will all be over by Christmas."

Presiding Officer, no self-respecting politician should countenance such a feeble and fraudulent argument.

I know that many people are scunnered by Brexit, and I resent the way in which, over the past two years, this dismal debate has sucked the oxygen out of so much of our wider public and political conversation. I genuinely empathise with those who just want the whole sorry saga to be over with

Patrick Harvie: I, too, understand the desire of many people for Brexit to be over. However, there is no such thing as just getting on with it. To those who ask, "Can't we just get it done?", I say that there is only a specific path ahead; there is not a general path. Whether we have Theresa May's deal or a no-deal scenario, what will come afterwards will be year after year—possibly even decades—of constant revisionist approach to debates on, for example, environmental protections. What does the UK Government want to do on the European emissions trading scheme? It says that it wants to have a separate UK scheme—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, Mr Harvie. You are intervening, not making a speech.

Patrick Harvie: —but it is unable to answer any questions on such matters.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No—please sit down. Thank you.

I remind members that interventions should be short, sharp and interesting. [*Laughter.*] Before you look piqued, Mr Harvie, I was not referring to your intervention in particular; it was a general comment.

Mr Arthur, please continue.

Tom Arthur: Patrick Harvie's points are very well made and important; they get to the heart of what is occurring here.

The UK Government's argument is based on three fundamental deceptions: first, that the Prime Minister's deal is a good one; secondly, that it is the only deal; and, thirdly, that it will end uncertainty. At the heart of the withdrawal agreement is a trio of key flaws: ending freedom of movement, leaving the single market, and leaving the customs union.

The arguments for why each of those objectives would represent a mistake of historic proportions have been well rehearsed, and the evidence is overwhelming. No public service and no sector of the Scottish economy or area of our civil society will be enhanced by such an isolationist approach. The xenophobic undertones, coupled with a jingoistic British exceptionalism, that have been a dark presence throughout the whole Brexit process have already led to settled EU citizens packing their bags and others choosing not to come to the UK in the first place. That such an abhorrent approach is celebrated by the UK

Government as ending freedom of movement once and for all ensures that, whatever the outcome of the ensuing weeks, this period will be seen by current and future generations as one of the most shameful episodes in recent UK history.

However, as Patrick Harvie said, the most cynical deception that the Tories seek to perpetrate is that the withdrawal agreement would bring an end to uncertainty. I wish that it would. I wish that I could tell my constituents that, after 29 March next year, they would never hear another mention of the word “Brexit”. However, if I were to do so, I would be a liar. This deal does not represent the end—or even the beginning of the end. Given the arithmetic of the House of Commons, it is unlikely even to be the end of the beginning. Were this deal to be ratified, it would represent only the conclusion of the easiest phase of Brexit: years of detailed negotiations on a future agreement would await. Those would be between the EU—a trading and regulatory superpower—and the UK, which is a politically fractured state that has not conducted negotiations on this scale in almost half a century.

This evening, we in our national Parliament will make our voice heard. We will overwhelmingly support the joint motion, reject the withdrawal agreement and put the interests of Scotland and the UK first. If the Tories genuinely care about the national interest—Scottish or British—and care more about their country than they do about their party, they will join us.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Arthur, I was a wee bit uncomfortable with a couple of the terms that you used at the beginning of your speech. They were colourful, but they verged on being unparliamentary. That is just a little note of caution to all members, who should ensure that they speak to others with respect.

16:04

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow) (Lab): I will support the motion tonight, as it is an important signal from the Scottish Parliament that the deal is not acceptable to these parties, does not protect Scotland’s interests, and will damage the UK economy. The road out of Europe must be based on what is best for our country, not what is best for saving political face. We are being asked to leave without a credible plan after 40 years.

I respect Liz Smith’s contribution to the debate, but I say to her that democracy does not mean accepting any deal, ignoring 48 per cent of the people who voted, or flouting the views of our Parliament. That is not democracy.

The UK has never been as divided as it currently is in the wake of the Brexit vote, and our future has never been so uncertain. The

magnitude of Brexit is the largest shock to our economy in our lifetime. David Cameron made among the poorest judgment calls of any Prime Minister in history and has risked the future of the United Kingdom and all that it contains and the economy. It is up to us as elected members and those who are taking part in the debate to manage the deep divisions and find a way through that does not make families poorer.

We are always hearing that we have to respect the outcome of the vote, which I have done, and that we do not want to be rule takers, which I do not want to be, and about the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. However, I have seldom heard the Prime Minister addressing the prospect of a deal that makes people poorer and addressing the question of the poverty that might ensue if families do not get a deal. Families have spent the past 10 years struggling through austerity.

The MPs who laid down their careers for Brexit did not care much about the economy and were prepared to sacrifice the living standards of their country to get the outcome that they wanted. We can be sure—I think that Neil Findlay said this earlier—that Jacob Rees-Mogg, Andrea Leadsom and Liam Fox will not be the ones at the sharp edge of the hit to the economy if we do not get a deal that suits everyone. At least one good thing has come out of what has happened: I do not think that there is any prospect that Boris Johnson will ever be Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Let us remember that the 500-odd pages of the withdrawal agreement do not provide any clarity on the future arrangements. That alone makes it a deal that I cannot support.

I want to deal with something that Alex Neil ably spoke about. Paragraph 20 of the legal advice, which was published today, clearly states that the protocol affords Northern Ireland

“access to the single market ... without the corresponding obligations of membership, thus splitting the ‘four freedoms’ ... it introduces uncertainty as to the extent of the EU customs territory for trade negotiation purposes”.

It is obvious that that legal advice needed to be in the public domain, given the magnitude of Brexit. We have never faced this scenario before. At a time when the Government is asking to be trusted, it withheld that important information and had to be held in contempt of Parliament before it would publish that advice.

The deal seems to have some support, but would we not expect a deal of such importance to command much wider support if it is the deal on which we are expected to withdraw from the European Union? The Tories are now calling on us to support a deal that will be voted down. I would have expected the list of supporters to be much longer than the list that has been outlined.

The deal rules out a permanent customs union with Britain having a say. It does not deliver a good deal on services; it would limit access for British businesses to vital EU markets; and it would weaken workers' rights, consumer protection and environmental standards. As has been said—and as I have said in many debates—Scotland needs greater immigration to support our economy. We need new arrangements, but there has been no concession to that, either. We need a deal that keeps us in the customs union and gives us a relationship with the single market that allows us to have access to key markets. The only way I can see through this is with the election of a Labour Government that is committed to that approach.

The backstop arrangement has become controversial on all political sides, and no one can say whether it will be implemented.

It was Theresa May who said that no deal is better than any deal, but she is now asking us to accept the disastrous deal that is on the table. The Scottish Government analysis indicates that, under a free-trade arrangement, business investments could fall up to 7.7 per cent, affecting our overall GDP. It is the equivalent of losing £1,000 per year per person.

I have not supported the people's vote campaign, because it is not where I would start from. I would not start from a position of trying to reverse a referendum result. I have argued in every debate on Brexit that we should protect the outcome of the referendum. However, my patience is wearing thin trying to respect the outcome of a referendum that I never asked for. Ordinary people are fed up with Brexit and are switching off because of a lack of clarity and constant in-fighting in the Tory party. It concerns me that, at a critical stage when people need to be switched on to what is going to happen in their country, they are, sadly, fed up with it all.

I want to see a deal that protects ordinary people's lives, but the Prime Minister's deal does not do that. We need to argue and fight for a deal for our country. That is what I will be doing in the coming months.

16:11

Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP): After the Scottish Parliament election on 5 May 2016, a third of our parliamentary intake was brand new. We were all—I think—optimistic about the propensity of this institution to be a force for good. Then, 49 days after the Scottish Parliament election, the Brexit referendum took place. For 40 per cent of today's members of the Scottish Parliament, our entire parliamentary lives thus far have been defined, in large part, by the subject of

this debate. In our committee meetings, at our surgeries and on the streets in our constituencies, we are the class of Brexit. What a depressing thought!

We can choose to make Brexit about Scotland's constitution, and it clearly suits the agenda of some to do that. However, for the Scottish Labour Party to join forces with the SNP and for us, in turn, to do so with the Liberals and the Greens has to tell us something. It is more than cross-party working; it is solidarity with Scotland and our people who voted to remain. We need a better deal for Scotland but, as the motion makes clear, we also need it for the regions and nations of the United Kingdom. How dare Adam Tomkins come to the chamber and say that this debate is just noise? The debate is about the people whom we represent.

Last year, Fife Centre for Equalities conducted research on the concerns of EU nationals resident across the kingdom of Fife. The report identified common themes, including education and the lessening of the number of educational and career outcomes for future generations. The report found that roughly 20 per cent of the University of St Andrews's research funding comes from EU sources; just under one third of staff are EU nationals; the university contributes just under £500 million to the Fife and wider Scottish economy; and about 13 per cent of St Andrews students are EU nationals.

Secondly, the report highlighted the negative impacts on the economy that are associated with losing EU workers. For example, Balbirnie House in Markinch, which is a 12-time winner of Scotland's wedding hotel of the year award and was recently voted number 1 in Europe in the Haute Grandeur global hotel awards, has always employed EU workers; around 20 per cent of its workforce came from EU countries. Who will take those jobs now?

Thirdly, the FCE report flagged up concerns about hate or racist speech content becoming more prevalent since the Brexit vote. Channel 4 recently documented the fears of children of EU nationals. Kitty, who was nine when she came to Scotland, reminded me of a former pupil—bright, chatty, smiley and full of optimism. She said:

"I was on the phone. And this woman started shouting at me, saying 'You're in an English-speaking country. Why don't you just learn the language?' I just felt really angry—like, why would you say stuff like that? You don't know me. And I can speak English. I speak English perfectly fine. But just because I'm on the phone to my mother—who speaks Hungarian and speaks English as well—and I'm talking in my mother tongue which I don't want to lose because that is part of who I am—what gives you the right?"

I say to Kitty from the Scottish Parliament chamber: no one has the right to speak to you like

that. You can speak Hungarian or any other language that you want to. You will always be welcome in Scotland.

The University of Strathclyde recently conducted research into the experiences of living in the United Kingdom of more than 1,000 eastern European children. It found that more than three quarters had encountered some form of racist abuse. It is a painful irony that 2018 is our year of young people but those voices have been so absent from any meaningful debate on Brexit.

In standard grade modern studies, the European Union topic featured in the international relations unit. In a classroom just 5 miles from this building, I used to teach about the benefits of the European Union and EU membership. That was part of our curriculum: teaching about human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights—the values of the European Union.

Willie Rennie: Jenny Gilruth is right. Part of why we are in this situation is that we failed to make the case for the European Union over many decades. We should learn that lesson and value the institutions that we have. Jenny Gilruth is probably right that it is a desperate situation if she and I are on the same side of the argument, but she will know that the Liberal Democrats support a people's vote, as it is clear that we cannot trust the Prime Minister—or, indeed, the members on the Conservative benches here—to make the right decision about what is right for our country. Does Jenny Gilruth support that proposal, as well?

Jenny Gilruth: I do, and I marched in London in support of it.

Spare a thought for the poor modern studies teachers who are still out there, because I do not know how I would even begin to teach the next generation about our current political predicament. It is a complete and utter guddle. From removing educational opportunities, to losing valuable people with skills and expertise, to increasing hate speech, Brexit is bad news for Fife, bad news for Scotland and bad news for Britain, and the Prime Minister knows it.

I remember marching in London in 2002 against the war in Iraq. That war politicised a generation of people like me. My schoolfriends and I jumped on a bus from St Andrews to London to march and show our opposition to the Government of the day. Fast forward 16 years, it is 2018 and the masses are again stacking the streets around Hyde Park. For miles and miles, people from all over the UK were mobilised again, and I marched with them.

The Prime Minister's plan is not fit for purpose. Yesterday, the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice provided the opinion that the UK can revoke article 50; last night, the House of

Commons found the Government to be in contempt; and, four hours ago, the UK Government was forced to release the Attorney General's legal advice, which tells us that Northern Ireland would be in the EU single market for goods and in the EU customs regime.

If it is good enough for Northern Ireland, it is good enough for Scotland. This Parliament should not accept a deal that puts Scotland at a competitive disadvantage. The UK Government, in its desperate, dying days, is attempting to grasp on to power. As members of this Parliament, we all have a duty to represent the best interests of our constituents. From business owners and universities to the voices of EU nationals and their children, none of us should accept a deal that applies a detriment to Scotland. Sixty-two per cent of our population voted to remain. It is about time that their voices were heard. It is about time that they took back control.

16:17

Jamie Greene (West Scotland) (Con): Today's debate has already been played out in the national media, to be honest, and some people are seeing it as an opportunity to rerun the debate on whether or not we should leave the EU. We have already had that debate, and what a sorry one it has been at times.

However, opposing this deal is not the same as opposing Brexit, and opposing Brexit is not the same as dealing with the reality that is happening. The pre-emptive and automatic denouncing of the deal that we have heard from so many corners pays a huge disservice to those on both sides of the channel who worked tirelessly on what was, I think, a difficult compromise on both sides.

I was not over the moon with the deal, if I am honest, but I accept that it was a compromise, in some cases trying to deliver the undeliverable. Perhaps some people in this chamber believe that they would get a better deal, but I ask: which of them has met the European Council and agreed an alternative? Thinking that you can get a better deal and realistically achieving one are two entirely different things.

Alex Cole-Hamilton (Edinburgh Western) (LD): Is Jamie Greene aware that civil servants are currently collecting emails involved in the negotiation process in the full expectation of a Chilcot-style inquiry into the Brexit negotiations? Is he absolutely satisfied that that is the best culmination of two years of work by Her Majesty's civil servants?

Jamie Greene: I met some of those civil servants on a recent trip to Brussels, and I was impressed by their dedication and service to what

they are trying to achieve. In no way do I want to undermine that today.

I want to make some progress, as I have quite a lot to get through. I will look at some of the confusing motivations behind the motion. Let me start with the Labour Party. As far as I can tell, its view on what should happen next is as follows. Labour members say, "Let's have a general election. If we can't have that, let's have another referendum. If we can't have another referendum, let's vote down the Prime Minister. If we can't vote down the Prime Minister, let's vote down the Government." *[Interruption.]* Members can call me cynical, but that reeks of nothing but opportunism at every stage, and Labour members are participating in it. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): Order, please. I want to hear the member.

Jamie Greene: All of that comes with no alternative. Mr Findlay was given an opportunity when he was asked, "What is your alternative?" Nothing was offered.

Jeremy Corbyn is the only person on Twitter who never posts about Brexit. Why is that? Nobody knows whether he really wants to leave the EU.

Let us look at the SNP's position. I respect the fact that SNP members believe that Scotland should stay in Europe or, if we cannot do that, stay in the single market. That has consistently been their position throughout the process. The problem is that it was a UK-wide referendum, and by its nature every vote was as valid as the next. That included the votes of the 1 million Scots who voted to leave, too. It included the 43 per cent of voters in North Ayrshire who voted to leave. Every vote counted. That is how we fought the independence referendum, and the referendum on EU membership was no different. The ramifications of not respecting the outcome of that vote would set a very difficult precedent, not least for the SNP. That is why I do not support another vote and why I am surprised that members on the centre benches do.

The SNP's second option is for Scotland to stay in the single market. We have all heard that we cannot have the perks of club membership without accepting the rules of the club, and that means accepting the four freedoms that the EU holds dear. However, if it is a viable option, no one who wants to remain in the single market has yet explained to this Parliament how they could achieve that while ensuring that we could still come out of the common fisheries and agricultural policies. No one has provided a credible solution to the conundrum of how a Scotland—

Michael Russell: Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Greene: I ask the cabinet secretary to let me make my point.

No one has provided a solution to the conundrum of how a Scotland that was in a single market and an England that was out of it could avoid having to deal with the same difficult issues that the island of Ireland faces. The option is implausible, in my view.

Michael Russell: I can now give the member two answers. First, the situation with Ireland is precisely as he described it. Secondly, on membership of the single market, that situation applies to Norway. The member has outlined the Norway option, which would work very effectively, as the Scottish Government put forward in December 2016.

Jamie Greene: If the Scottish Government put it forward, what did the EU say in response? What was its view on that option?

I sit on the Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee, on which every party in the Parliament is represented. We recently went to Brussels, and, at meeting after meeting, expert after expert—including civil servants, diplomats, lawyers and politicians—all had the same frank message for us: they said, "Time is running out. The deal that we negotiated is as good as it gets." Those are their words, not mine.

Does that disappoint me? It does, but that is what we heard. That is the reality of the message that we were given. Members who have spoken previously have said that we are blindly supporting the deal. Far from it—and let me tell members why. I was intent on being suspicious of things such as the backstop, and I hear what Alex Neil is saying, but anyone who understands the uniqueness of Northern Ireland will understand why it exists and why it should never be used. Neither party in this game has anything to gain from endless transition.

I went to Europe and I listened to Europe. The EU has enough on its plate. France has much more on its mind, as does Italy. We are fooling ourselves if we think that Europe is willing to renegotiate.

The reason why I will vote against the motion is not that I think that Theresa May's deal is unconditionally perfect. I am happy to put that on the record. However, in the real world, we face the reality of crashing out of Europe with no deal at all. The cabinet secretary might win the vote, but what will he have achieved? If any politician succeeds in thwarting the democratic will of the UK, I wish them good luck with that. They will have won their political battle but undermined democracy for a very long time to come, and that is something we should all reflect on.

16:24

Stuart McMillan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP): I am delighted to speak in the debate. When I speak in debates, I usually try to be reasonable, but today is not a day for being reasonable. The Tory Government is on the ropes and on the brink of collapse. Why should anyone show civility to a Tory Government that has no sense of what it means to be reasonable? Why should any MSP show consideration for a Tory UK Government that has treated this Parliament and its politicians with contempt for the past two years?

It is clear that the Tories want to deliver the Theresa May Brexit deal at any cost. We have been told that it is this deal or no deal. This is not a game show; it is real life, and, however we look at it, the deal on the table will bring only more pain, more suffering and more tragedy. Yesterday, we learned that there is the potential for another way, which would stop Brexit in its tracks. On Monday, the First Minister said:

“we will continue to work with others to build consensus around alternative proposals that would deliver on the vote of the people of Scotland to remain.”

We have heard about the economic disaster that there will be if Brexit happens. Let me give some of the figures that have been published over the past couple of weeks. If there is no deal, there will be a 7.3 per cent hit to gross domestic product. If there is a free-trade agreement, there will be a 4.9 per cent hit. If we go with the European Economic Area model, there will be a 1.4 per cent hit to GDP. Those forecasts are about the hit to the economy, but, in real terms, my constituents and many other people will suffer.

Only last week, the chancellor said, on Radio 4:

“If you look at this purely from an economic point of view there will be a cost to leaving the European Union because there will be impediments to our trade.”

Earlier today, the Attorney General’s advice was published. In it, the Attorney General said:

“in international law the Protocol would endure indefinitely”.

That would make Northern Ireland competitively superior to Scotland. Last week, the Scottish Government published a paper that indicates that our GDP will be £9 billion lower than it would be if we stayed in the EU. That is the equivalent of £1,600 per person in Scotland.

Joan McAlpine: The member accompanied Jamie Greene and me on the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee’s visit to Brussels two weeks ago. Will he confirm that, earlier in the debate, Jamie Greene was incorrect when he said that the people to whom we spoke said that this is the only deal possible and that

what those people said was—as Mr Barnier said the other day—that it is the only deal possible given the red lines that Theresa May set?

Stuart McMillan: What Joan McAlpine says is absolutely correct. That is on the record now.

Earlier, Murdo Fraser and Liz Smith talked about and quoted business interests. I am going to talk about people. Many of my constituents cannot take a £1,600 cut to their income—they just would not survive.

Let me give just some of the effects of the Tories while they have been in power, at a time when the UK has been in the EU. These are the results of the policies not of the European Commission and unelected bureaucrats in Brussels but of elected Tory MPs at Westminster. Some 200,000 children will be pulled into poverty by the two-child policy, with 71,000 families having lost their entitlement to child allowances in tax credits or universal credit in the first year of the policy’s operation. One hundred and ninety women have been forced to disclose that their child was born as a result of non-consensual conception. Couples with children will be £960 per year worse off. One-parent families will be £2,380 per year worse off. Families with two children will be £1,100 per year worse off. Families with three children will be £2,540 per year worse off.

There was also the introduction of the bedroom tax—which, thankfully, the SNP Government managed to mitigate—and the education maintenance allowance was cut in England, but that did not happen in Scotland, because the SNP Government kept the EMA. Then we come to the roll-out of universal credit—a policy that is nothing short of contemptuous of human life. People are forced to wait five weeks—it used to be six weeks—to get money on which to live. It is all right for members of the House of Lords, who can turn up, clock in and get their £300 tax free.

Universal credit has been the largest welfare reform in a generation, and it is driving people into poverty at an alarming rate. When universal credit is introduced in an area, food banks experience an increase in demand. Some 42 per cent of people have needed emergency food supplies as a result of benefit delays and changes, while, on average, 12 months after its roll-out, food banks have experienced a 52 per cent increase in demand.

The reason that I am highlighting these figures is very simple. When Brexit happens, whether by means of Theresa May’s deal or through any other deal, it will have an adverse effect on the lives of my constituents and the constituents of every member in this chamber. It is an utter disgrace, and Brexit will only make the situation worse.

When I see Tory MPs smiling for the camera as they hand over their food bank donations, I am

nearly sick with disgust. It is political patronising of the worst kind, and shows utter contempt for those who need to go to a food bank. How dare they be so patronising about the less well off? I have much respect for the people who run the food banks, as well as every volunteer, but it is a perverted political class that thinks poverty porn is something to smile at.

Britain is broken and Brexit will shatter it forever. I welcome independence, but I do not welcome the shattered and destroyed lives that will continue to increase in number with the roll-out of universal credit. That is the result of a heartless, uncaring and, frankly, out-of-touch and arrogant Prime Minister and her party. The handling of Brexit has been a disaster from the start, and I have absolutely no sympathy for the Prime Minister. She has brought this chaos on herself, and woe betide any Tory MP or MSP who, at the next election, defends the indefensible to the electorate.

The Presiding Officer: Time, Mr McMillan.

Stuart McMillan: I appreciate that there is a better alternative, and that is why I support the motion.

16:31

Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP): There was nothing unreasonable about fishermen who voted to leave the common fisheries policy in 2016. When I came here in 2001, the EU was halving the number of Scottish fishing boats, while simultaneously funding Spaniards to expand their fleet with our money.

We now see a rise in the amount of foreign vessels' catches in our water. They make up a huge proportion—more than half. It is one of many reasons to be outwith the common fisheries policy, an arrangement that the SNP has opposed from the very outset to the present day.

On 17 January 2017, Theresa May spoke about her plan for Britain, addressing what she thought should happen after the referendum. It had a single mention of fishing—a mention of Spanish fishermen. There was no mention of English fishermen, Irish fishermen, Welsh fishermen or Scottish fishermen. There was only a mention of Spanish fishermen, tucked away right at the end, immediately before the conclusion of her speech.

That continues a line that stretches from the Tory sell-out of fishermen on entry to the European Economic Community to today, and to section 75 in the political declaration, which reads:

“Within the context of the overall economic partnership the Parties should establish a new fisheries agreement on, inter alia, access to waters and quota shares.”

We know from that that a fisheries agreement is contingent on an economic partnership. A trade-off is going to be made against fishing rights. Optimists believe—against all the evidence so far—that UK Tories will abandon an economic partnership in favour of fishing, or will show some miraculous adoption of a negotiating strategy that is far superior to anything that we have seen to date. They simply do not encourage me, and if members track what has been happening on social media, they will know that many fishermen are not buying it either.

History also gives us much to say about what has happened. Mike Rumbles quoted Edmund Burke, and he did so appropriately. The Gettysburg address, given by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, made clear what happens when a country fights itself. The same is true when a political party fights itself, as the Conservatives are now doing. It is not a war that can be won without casualties; indeed, it is probably not a war that can be won at all.

Ross Greer talked about the dying days of a Tory Government, but I think that he was wrong. We are actually facing something more serious for democracy and my many friends on the Conservative benches here and elsewhere: we are potentially witnessing the death of the Conservative Party. It went through huge trauma in 1846, when Robert Peel addressed the issues of the corn laws. The Tory party fissured, and it took many decades—and lives—before it came together again. This time, one cannot be certain in any way, shape or form that the Tory party will survive at all. Politics is diminished if we do not have a diversity of voices, and one of the losers in this whole sorry farrago is the democratic system itself.

Why do I think that the Tories are dying as a party? I have before me advice for people who work in a hospice on how to recognise death. It says:

“Someone who is dying usually begins to withdraw more and more into his ... own world.”

That sounds like the Tories.

“She/he is still conscious and able to communicate but various behaviours may appear—restlessness, disinterest in people or activities previously enjoyed ... There is a decreased ability to grasp ideas.”

Again, that sounds like the Tories.

“All the senses decline, even hearing.”

If there is one sense that the Tories are losing, it is the ability to hear what is being said in the public and political domain. Ultimately, we hear the death rattle of a party that is on its last legs and heading for the grave.

Willie Rennie: Will the member give way?

Stewart Stevenson: If I am allowed, I will.

The Presiding Officer: Okay. I call Mr Rennie.

Willie Rennie: Before the member gets any more morose, I want to bring him back to the present day. How does he think that we are going to get out of this situation? Is a people's vote gaining traction? Does he think that it could happen, and will he really get behind that proposal so that we can win it?

The Presiding Officer: Very briefly, Mr Stevenson.

Stewart Stevenson: We have heard about that subject already. For my part, I would prefer to have the same relationship with the EU as Norway has. It would be economically valuable, and it would get us out of the CFP.

I am very obliged for the opportunity to speak. Fishing will remain a dominant issue for me and many of my constituents, and we will continue to hold the Tories to account. You cannae trust them on fishing.

16:37

James Kelly (Glasgow) (Lab): As Mike Russell said at the beginning of the debate, it is unique to have Labour, the SNP, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens uniting around one motion. It sends a powerful signal that the Parliament rejects both the deal being put forward by Theresa May and the prospect of no deal.

Adam Tomkins told us that Theresa May's deal had been carefully negotiated. If that is the case, it has been carefully negotiated without anyone being mindful of the communities of Scotland or the United Kingdom. Last week, Philip Hammond, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told us that the deal would make the economy smaller. A smaller economy means fewer businesses, less money generated by taxation and a reduction in budgets, including future Scottish budgets. That will do nothing for the 230,000 kids in poverty in Scotland or for the 470,000 people who are not being paid a real living wage, and for that reason alone, the deal should be rejected out of hand not just by this Parliament but by the UK Parliament in next Tuesday's vote.

Some Tory MPs are also talking about the prospect of no deal, but they really are living in a fantasy land if they believe that, on 29 March, we can leave the European Union and that the subsequent collapse of all the trading arrangements and the rules supporting that infrastructure will have no economic impact. As the Bank of England told us, that could result in an 8 per cent reduction in economic growth and the loss of 100,000 jobs. That will be an absolute catastrophe. Neither of the options that are being

put across by the different wings of the Tory party would have any prospect of helping the people of this country.

Ross Greer was right when he pointed out that the crisis that we face is one that has been created by the Tory party itself. It has been a long afternoon for members on the Conservative benches. A lot of work has been done on their laptops, phones and tablets as people look down for distractions from the real criticisms that have been made in relation to the crisis that they have created. There is no doubt that the crisis has been driven by an attempt to deal with the internal problems of the Tory party. Before 2016, David Cameron brought the referendum forward in order to try to placate those on the right wing of his party. We are living with the outcome of that disastrous referendum now.

During the past two and a half years, Theresa May has been focused purely on trying to get a deal that brings the Tory party together. Last night, we saw how that completely failed in the House of Commons, when, in the space of 63 minutes, the Government lost three votes, with the Opposition parties uniting against the deal.

Murdo Fraser: Mr Kelly has talked a lot about what the Conservatives are doing. When is he or somebody else on the Labour benches going to tell us what exactly the Labour position is on Brexit?

James Kelly: What the Labour Party and the people of this country want is the Tory party and Theresa May out of Downing Street. We will stand against a Government that has piled agony on to the communities of Scotland and the United Kingdom. We want a Government that will stop the cuts, lift people out of poverty and grow the economy. We will not get that from the Tory party.

We heard much from the Tory party about its red lines. David Mundell and Ruth Davidson told us that they would resign if there was any threat to the union. However, when we see the backstop and read the legal advice that has been published by the Advocate General, we can see that the impact is that those Tory red lines have disappeared—they have melted like chocolate Santas in front of a Christmas fire. Totally ineffectual—that is the impact of the Tory party.

The reality is that Theresa May's deal is dead in the water. It is time up for the Tories. It is time for a general election and it is time for a different approach that will lift the United Kingdom and Scotland out of this crisis.

16:43

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): This debate was called by the Scottish

Government in an attempt to demonstrate that there is a view across this Parliament on the EU withdrawal agreement. It has managed to form an unholy alliance with the Greens, the Liberal Democrats and Labour in opposition to the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement. However, the debate has revealed that those parties have absolutely nothing in common when it comes to proposing an alternative to what the Prime Minister is suggesting. They might not like what is on offer, but we are utterly unclear about what they think should be done instead. Mr Russell's motion calls for "a better alternative" to be taken forward. However, we have no idea what that better alternative is, because there is no consensus among those parties on that issue.

Neil Findlay: Will the member take an intervention?

Murdo Fraser: Not at the moment.

Let me try to understand what we have learned in the debate about the parties' different positions on the withdrawal agreement. As I am feeling generous, I will start with the Liberal Democrats.

Tavish Scott told us that they support a people's vote. They are taking the view that if a referendum is held and they do not like the result, we should just rerun it until they get the result that they want. That does not sound either liberal or democratic. In her speech, Liz Smith made the important point that it would be dangerous for democracy if the political establishment decided that the people made the wrong decision in a referendum and reran it until we got the right result. It would undermine democracy.

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): Will Murdo Fraser give way?

Murdo Fraser: Not just now.

We are absolutely no clearer on what the people's vote would involve. There are at least four options on the table now: the Prime Minister's withdrawal agreement, a no-deal Brexit, some other deal or cancelling Brexit altogether.

Mike Rumbles: Hear, hear.

Murdo Fraser: "Hear, hear," says Mr Rumbles, but how we could run a referendum with four options on the ballot paper and get a clear result is utterly beyond me. Rather than answer those serious questions, the pseudo-unionists in the Liberal Democrats would rather ally themselves with the SNP in an exercise in constitutional grandstanding. Shame on them.

Ross Greer: Will Murdo Fraser take an intervention?

Murdo Fraser: No, thank you.

Willie Rennie: Will Murdo Fraser give way?

Murdo Fraser: Of course.

Willie Rennie: Is it not the case that when it comes to constitutional chaos, the Conservatives do not need help from anybody? Did the member see—

Murdo Fraser: Enough.

Willie Rennie: Enough?

Murdo Fraser: That will do, Mr Rennie. *[Interruption.]*

Willie Rennie: Ah—see? Go on.

Murdo Fraser: Mr Rennie can ally himself with the SNP if he wants to. We will take no lessons from him on supporting the United Kingdom.

I turn to the Labour Party, which is equally happy to act as Nicola Sturgeon's little helper, yet we have absolutely no clarity on what the Labour position is. I listened to Neil Findlay, Rhoda Grant, Pauline McNeill and James Kelly, and not one of them could tell us what the Labour stance is on Brexit.

Neil Findlay: Will Murdo Fraser give way?

Murdo Fraser: I will give way to Mr Findlay if he will tell us what the Labour Party stance is on Brexit, because neither he nor any of his colleagues could tell us during the course of the debate.

Neil Findlay: We would renegotiate on the basis of a permanent customs union, single market access and rights being respected. We would have equivalent EU programmes and agencies, maintain security and co-operation, have no hard border in Ireland and have a fair immigration system. Is that enough for Mr Fraser?

Murdo Fraser: The EU27 have made it clear that they would have no truck with a deal such as that. Why can Labour not listen to what the EU27 are saying? No, Labour would rather stir up grievance politics against the Conservative Government than do anything positive for the future of the United Kingdom.

I turn to the SNP, whose entire approach to Brexit has been driven by political opportunism, personified in the constitution secretary. In terms of the SNP position, he has been all over the place in the past two weeks. He denounced the Prime Minister's deal before he had even had a chance to read it. Within 23 minutes of the withdrawal agreement's publication, Michael Russell was telling us what a bad deal it was.

Twelve days ago, he was tweeting that the withdrawal bill was a betrayal of Scotland's fishermen. Yet, at that very point, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation was making it clear that fishermen had a different view. It tweeted:

"The facts are these: under the Brexit deal as it stands we WILL be out of CFP, we WILL become independent Coastal State".

Mr Russell thinks that he knows more about Scottish fishing than the fishermen themselves.

Ross Greer: Will Murdo Fraser give way?

Murdo Fraser: No, I need to make some progress.

It does not stop there. He also denounced the withdrawal agreement as a betrayal of the people of Gibraltar, which he tweeted at exactly the same point as the First Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, put out a statement welcoming the Prime Minister's defence of that territory. However, the constitution secretary thinks that he knows better about the interests of the people of Gibraltar than Gibraltar's elected First Minister.

The stance of the SNP is all about stirring up constitutional grievance and trying to shift public opinion towards a second independence referendum. Shame on the Liberal Democrats and Labour for standing with the SNP.

After the debate, if the vote goes as is expected, we will no doubt hear from those on the SNP and other benches about how the UK Government should respect the result of the vote in this Parliament. That is a bit rich coming from a party in Government that does not respect the votes of this Parliament on primary 1 testing and a whole range of other issues.

When it comes to the vote, there is a clear choice to be made both here tonight and in the House of Commons next week. We can listen to all those who are calling for support for the withdrawal agreement—the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, the CBI in Scotland, leading business figures such as Sir Ian Wood, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, NFU Scotland and the Scotch Whisky Association—and back the Prime Minister, or we can take our lead from the SNP and vote it down, leading us towards a no-deal Brexit with the catastrophe that that might well turn out to be.

Let us be clear that that will be the consequence of voting down this deal. That is why industry and business are so concerned about what will happen if this deal is lost. That is what the SNP is leading us to, backed up by other parties in the chamber. If we end up with a no-deal Brexit, it will be entirely clear to the people of Scotland who is to blame. It will not be those who tried to find a solution, in our Conservative Party; those on the Labour, Liberal Democrat and SNP benches will be the ones who will have voted us down the route of a no-deal Brexit, and we will take every opportunity between now and 2021 to remind the voters of Scotland who delivered that to them.

16:51

Michael Russell: I saw during the debate that the BBC's Phillip Sim noted that this is a unique event, not just because there is a motion supported by four parties, but because four Parliaments are considering the matter: three simultaneously today, in the House of Commons, the House of Lords and here, and the Welsh Assembly last night.

We could take that point a little further and reflect upon it. We know what the outcome was in Wales; it was to refuse both the Prime Minister's deal and a no deal. I do not want to count chickens, but I suspect that the same will happen here tonight. We know that the House of Lords will reject the deal, and it is likely that the House of Commons will. Apparently, according to Murdo Fraser, we do not respect the results of this Parliament. I say to the Tories that they should respect the results of four Parliaments and think very carefully again.

I will indicate what desperate times these are. I noticed that Willie Rennie, in agreeing with Jenny Gilruth, made the point that it must be exceptionally desperate to bring two people together across the kingdom of Fife. Times are even more desperate than that, because I am about to quote, with enormous approval and at some length, Mike Rumbles—something that I have never, ever done here before and expect never to do again. I am almost as embarrassed about that as Mike Rumbles appears to be.

Mike Rumbles referred to Edmund Burke's address to the electors of Bristol in 1774. I happen to always carry around with me a quotation from it. *[Interruption.]* As Mr Swinney knows, it is the type of thing that I would do. Edmund Burke was, of course, the founder of modern Conservatism and he greatly influenced the development of political parties. In recent times, the primary work on him has been done by a Tory minister and I commend Jesse Norman's book on him to the Tories.

I commend in particular the quotation that Mr Rumbles used, and I will use it in its entirety, because it gives the complete lie to the argument that the Tories have used this afternoon. In particular, it utterly contradicts the points that Donald Cameron and Liz Smith made. I admire them both, but the quotation completely contradicts them. It says:

"... it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. ... It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures ... to theirs; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure; ... nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from

Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable.”

This is the key line:

“Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.”

Liz Smith rose—

Michael Russell: One moment, please. That is the key issue. We cannot argue in this chamber that we were told what to do by the electorate and that our judgment has nothing to do with it. Members are elected to bring that judgment to bear. Mr Cameron and Liz Smith should know that; it is regrettable that they do not.

Liz Smith: Does the cabinet secretary accept that when parliamentarians—in Westminster, Holyrood or any other chamber—take a decision to have a referendum, we have to listen to the people? Is he really arguing that we should not be doing that?

Michael Russell: I am arguing, in the words of Edmund Burke, that the judgment of politicians also counts. Donald Cameron and Liz Smith indicated that their judgment was that Brexit was wrong. That was their judgment, but they have subordinated their judgment on that issue. That strikes me, at best, as an excuse.

I will turn to some of the other contributions to the debate.

Patrick Harvie: It seems that the Conservative contributions have been more interested in the politics than in even trying to persuade us that the contents of the agreement and political declaration have any merit. Given that so many of them found it hilarious that anyone would raise an issue so trivial as climate change, can the cabinet secretary tell us whether the UK Government has given him any indication of how its supposed UK emissions trading scheme will work, when it will be set up or how it will be connected to the EU scheme? Why should we trust a Government that has already pulled the rug from under the renewables industry to make those decisions in the first place?

Michael Russell: The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform advises me that the best that we can hope for is that there might be a meeting in the new year, so the answer is that we have not been given that indication.

Although I do not have time to go through all the contributions, in the light of what Patrick Harvie has just said, it is important to remember that the primary contribution of the Tory benches today was to say that we must just make the best of a bad job: “There’s not much we can do about this, we might as well just get on with it, so let’s make the best of a bad job.” There are people sitting on

the Tory benches who were in favour of leaving; they are in an honourable position. However, it is now all reduced to the fact that this is a complete bûrach—it is, to use a word coined by my friend Hugh Dan MacLennan, a clusterbûrach. What has happened is that they are just going to abandon their principles, hold their noses and vote for it. That is no recommendation for any action to be taken, and for a party of Government to make that recommendation shows that it is unfit for Government.

I will conclude with two contributions that I want to disagree with. As I said, I have some time for Donald Cameron, but he was wrong in his definition of what freedom of movement is. He defended the citizens’ rights provisions in the deal and compared them to freedom of movement. I made the point in my opening speech that the removal of freedom of movement will cause absolute economic mayhem in Argyll and Bute and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. There is no doubt about that. Almost all sectors will suffer huge dislocation because there are simply no replacement workers available—that is a fact. The Prime Minister, in Argentina, said that it was the job of companies to train up the home-grown workforce, but there is no home-grown workforce available. If Donald Cameron is seriously supporting the end of freedom of movement, he is inevitably condemning the area that he represents—the area that he has contested against me to represent—to economic decline. There is no if and no but about that.

Finally, I will turn to the contribution of Adam Tomkins. I agree with Tavish Scott that the discomfort shown by Mr Tomkins betrayed the fact that he does not believe a word of this, not a single word. He knows how harmful this is and that this is a disaster for Scotland. To come to this chamber and argue for it is regrettable and I hope that, in time, he will have the opportunity to regret it. We have to look at his contribution and ask what his track record is of involvement in the issue of the EU and Scotland and of the advice that he has given people about that issue. We could then judge the veracity and strength of his recommendations based on that track record. I can do no better than quote from a blog, “Would an independent Scotland remain in the EU?” that he wrote on 29 August 2014. These are his words at the end of that blog:

“But there is little real danger of the UK leaving the EU. Any Yes campaigner arguing in 2014 that the only way of securing Scotland’s membership of the EU is to vote Yes is scaremongering, plain and simple.”

There is the track record of his contribution. There is a man who said that it would not happen and then said that those who said that it would happen knew that it was a false argument and

were simply to be dismissed. How could we trust that?

We have in front of us a motion from four parties, and it is one that I think speaks for Scotland. I ask every member to support it.

Business Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S5M-15045, in the name of Graeme Dey, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Tuesday 11 December 2018

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Sea Fisheries and End of Year Negotiations

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 12 December 2018

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Health and Sport

followed by Ministerial Statement: Protecting Scotland's Interests: Response to the Outcome of the Meaningful Vote in Westminster

followed by Ministerial Statement: Scottish Government's Draft Spending and Tax Plans for 2019-20

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 13 December 2018

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

followed by Members' Business

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Scottish Government Debate:
Demonstrating Leadership in Human Rights

followed by Final Stage: Pow of Inchaffray Drainage Commission (Scotland) Bill

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 18 December 2018

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Stage 1 Debate: Damages (Investment Returns and Periodical Payments) (Scotland) Bill

followed by Committee Announcements

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 19 December 2018

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions:
Communities and Local Government;
Social Security and Older People

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 20 December 2018

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.45 pm Decision Time

(b) that, in relation to any debate on a business motion setting out a business programme taken on Wednesday 12 December 2018, the second sentence of rule 8.11.3 is suspended and replaced with "Any Member may speak on the motion at the discretion of the Presiding Officer"

and

(c) that, in relation to First Minister's Questions on Thursday 13 December 2018, in rule 13.6.2, insert at end "and may provide an opportunity for Party Leaders or their representatives to question the First Minister".—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next item of business is consideration of business motions S5M-15406 and S5M-15407, on stage 1 timetables for two bills.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Transport (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be extended to 1 March 2019.

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the South of Scotland Enterprise Bill at stage 1 be completed by 29 March 2019.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Motions agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S5M-15048, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument. I ask Graeme Dey to move the motion.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991 (Variation of Schedule 5) Order 2019 [draft] be approved.—[*Graeme Dey*]

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Ken Macintosh): There are two questions to be put. The first question is, that motion S5M-15032, in the name of Michael Russell, on protecting our interests: Scotland's response to the United Kingdom Government and European Union withdrawal agreement and political declaration, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Denham, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Freeman, Jeane (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Gougeon, Mairi (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Greer, Ross (West Scotland) (Green)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Lennon, Monica (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)

MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Ross, Gail (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Rumbles, Mike (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Somerville, Shirley-Anne (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Todd, Maree (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wightman, Andy (Lothian) (Green)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Ballantyne, Michelle (South Scotland) (Con)
 Bowman, Bill (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Cameron, Donald (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Chapman, Peter (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Corry, Maurice (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Halcro Johnston, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Harris, Alison (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lindhurst, Gordon (Lothian) (Con)
 Lockhart, Dean (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mason, Tom (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Tomkins, Adam (Glasgow) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 92, Against 29, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that both a no deal outcome and the outcomes arising from the withdrawal agreement and political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the UK, as presented to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, would be damaging for Scotland and the nations and regions of the UK as a whole, and therefore recommends that they be rejected and that a better alternative be taken forward.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S5M-15048, in the name of Graeme Dey, on the approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991 (Variation of Schedule 5) Order 2019 [draft] be approved.

Remembering Conscientious Objectors

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Linda Fabiani): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S5M-14915, in the name of Alison Johnstone, on remembering conscientious objectors. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes the proposal by the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre for a memorial to conscientious objectors and all who oppose war; further notes that the Transport and Environment Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council has approved the proposal for this memorial, which would be located in Princes St Gardens; believes that such a memorial would provide an important opportunity for people to reflect on the value of peacemakers around the world, as well as on the bravery of conscientious objectors during the First World War and what it considers their inhumane treatment by the government; congratulates the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre on its work on this project, and wishes it well with its crowdfunder to raise money to create the memorial.

17:04

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): Just over 100 years on from the end of the first world war, there have been many events to mark what was then known as the war to end all wars. In communities across Scotland and far beyond, people have been reflecting on the first industrialised war, in which as many as 19 million people died. It is important that we remember, each in our own way and perhaps for different reasons, the millions of people who have died in conflicts in the past and that we recognise the devastating loss caused by the conflicts that continue to rage across the globe today.

It is also important that we pay our respects to those who object to war on moral, political or religious grounds, because they have made—and are still making—their own sacrifice.

When it became apparent, by the end of 1915, that the first world war would be prolonged and that more soldiers were needed, the Military Service Act 1916, which came into force in March of that year, introduced conscription to the United Kingdom. For those whose views, beliefs and conscience demanded that they did not fight, the conflict with the expectations of Government and society was extremely challenging. Those who appealed against military service faced military tribunals, which decided between conscience and cowardice. Within the first six months of the act, more than 750,000 cases were heard by tribunals, of which only a small number were recognised as legitimate. From March 1916 until the end of the war, only 16,000 men were registered as

conscientious objectors and given alternative service of national importance.

Conscientious objectors endured ostracism and risked their livelihoods and reputations. In 1914, the order of the white feather tried to shame men who were not in uniform into signing up by branding them as cowards and presenting them with a white feather. In some cases, their own families could not understand their stance and shunned them, too. Conscientious objectors were forced into highly dangerous jobs. They were used as forced labour and broke rocks for months on end. They endured brutal conditions in prison, where they suffered terrible treatment from wardens and other prisoners. Seventy-three first world war objectors died in prison.

There were also many tens of thousands of people, including women, who were not eligible for military service at the time but who objected to war and campaigned for peace. The women's peace crusade was founded in Glasgow in 1916, and it campaigned for an end to war and for a just peace. In particular, it campaigned against a punitive peace settlement. Chrystal Macmillan—a great Edinburgh figure and a pioneer in many fields—travelled to the Hague in 1915 to participate in a conference of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which called on the warring countries of Europe to stop fighting. She went on to become a delegate to the Paris peace conference in 1919.

The principled struggle against war, and for peace, continues today. Britain was one of the first countries to scrap military conscription, but more than 40 countries around the world still conscript their citizens into military service. Some countries that had previously scrapped the practice have reintroduced it. It remains the case today that many people are forced to make a decision between performing a role to which they object on sincerely held religious, political or moral grounds and being punished, sometimes with imprisonment.

With 50 wars going on around the world right now, tens of millions of people remain active in peace movements. That is why I whole-heartedly welcome the work of the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre and others to place in Princes Street gardens a memorial to conscientious objectors and to all those who oppose war. There are 37 war memorials in Edinburgh—eight of them are in the gardens, from the Royal Scots Greys monument to the stone that commemorates the volunteers from Lothian and Fife who fought in the Spanish civil war.

We rightly remember those who have died in war, but there is no memorial to those who have objected to war and struggled for peace. Several such memorials exist in London and there is one

in Cardiff, but there is none in Edinburgh or, indeed, in Scotland. From conscientious objection in the first and second world wars, through protests against the Vietnam war to Scotland's resistance to the Iraq war, our country has a long and proud history of principled objection to war. It is long past time that that is recognised in Scotland's capital city.

The Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre has been working very hard to find the right design for the memorial, to win permission for it to be built and to fundraise to meet the cost of design and construction. I am particularly pleased that a design by award-winning Edinburgh artist Kate Ive has been chosen. Kate has designed a beautiful bronze tree sculpture, which will become the first piece of art by a woman to be on permanent display in Princes Street gardens. The tree's bronze flowers are based on those of the dove tree, and the dove tree's flowers are said to look like handkerchiefs.

Kate was inspired by the story of a No-Conscription Fellowship meeting in support of conscientious objectors and war resisters in London in 1916. An aggressive crowd was gathered outside, threatening to break in, and the chair asked the 2,000 attendees to wave their handkerchiefs instead of clapping, to avoid further angering the crowd. Handkerchiefs were also a common item sent by families to their loved ones who were fighting on the front lines during the two world wars.

A small granite stone will be at the heart of each flower. The bench that will be built alongside the memorial will also be made from Aberdeen granite, to commemorate the death of Walter Roberts, a 20-year-old Scottish conscientious objector who died at the Dyce work camp, where inmates were forced to quarry granite in dangerous conditions.

The sculpture is intended to be in place by August 2019, which is the centenary of the end of the imprisonment of first world war objectors. I thank City of Edinburgh Council for its willingness to place the memorial at the heart of our world heritage site, in the heart of our capital city. It is right that local people and visitors alike are afforded an opportunity to reflect on the possibilities of peace building and conflict resolution, and on the traditions of individual liberty and internationalism.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): We obviously hope to get the widest possible support for the proposal, but it is important say that it is not just pacifists who support the erection of a memorial. Many people who, in certain circumstances, agree with the taking up of arms and conflict should be welcome to support it, too.

Alison Johnstone: I agree whole-heartedly with Mr Findlay's point. Indeed, I would welcome that support.

I thank City of Edinburgh Council for its willingness to adopt the proposal, because it is right that this opportunity to reflect is available in the city.

I want to live in a Scotland that is globally recognised as a beacon of peace and inclusion. I wrote to the council last year, in support of the proposal. I warmly welcome the progress that has been made, but there is more to do.

I thank the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre for leading the effort, and I thank the many other groups that have been involved, including the Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh, Edinburgh stop the war coalition, Edinburgh Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, St Thomas of Aquin's secondary school and the Quakers. Representatives of some of those organisations are with us in the public gallery.

We rightly remember those who have died in conflicts; so, too, must we remember those who have worked for peace and those who continue to work for peace. Sometimes, they sacrifice their own lives in doing so, too. They all deserve to be remembered, and we all deserve a space in which to reflect on their contribution.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Findlay, some of your fellow members found it difficult to hear you, which is fairly unusual. Could you pull your microphone a wee bit closer, please? Thank you very much.

We move to the open debate and speeches of four minutes, please. We are quite tight for time.

17:12

Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): I thank Alison Johnstone for bringing forward the topic of conscientious objectors for debate. I also thank the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre and others for their proposals for the memorial.

Since the early 20th century, we have seen the contribution of conscientious objectors take many forms during periods of conscription. The Military Service Act of 1916, which brought in conscription for 18 to 41-year-old unmarried men, stipulated that individuals could appeal to civil courts on the ground of conscientious objection. Before that act, pacifists—many of whom would become conscientious objectors—protested against the escalating arms race and then against the outbreak of war. According to the opposing war memorial project, many thousands marched on Glasgow green in opposition to the outbreak of what some called the great war. That instinct—to

stand up for what a person believes to be right—is essential for our democracy.

In the context of remembering the first world war, how do we recognise conscientious objectors? How do we recognise those individuals who faced shame and many difficulties in the pursuit of peace?

Through the tribunal courts, as Alison Johnstone has mentioned, around 16,000 men appealed as conscientious objectors from 1916 to 1918. Many of those men joined the Army in non-combatant roles and many others went to prison and labour camps.

The opposing war memorial project's goal of creating a memorial in Princes Street gardens is an excellent way of recognising such a wide-ranging group of people. It brings to our attention another side of history from the first world war that is not taught widely or in the public eye. For example, it echoes the feeling of the 200,000 people who demonstrated in Trafalgar Square following the extension of conscription to married men.

Aside from the opposing war memorial, collections of primary sources and personal testimonies of conscientious objectors are important in helping us to understand a person's decision to object to the objectionable. In October, the BBC ran an illuminating article that detailed the plight of conscientious objectors, and it highlighted a letter that had recently been gifted to Glasgow Caledonian University. Its author, Robert Climie from Kilmarnock, wrote to his baby daughter, Cathy, in November 1917. He was originally granted exemption from service on the ground of conscientious objection. However, that ruling was overturned at a later point. Robert was arrested, court-martialled and sent to prison. In the spring of 1917, he was sent to a labour camp at Cruachan, near Loch Awe in Argyll, to work in forestry. In his moving letter, he tried to explain to his daughter why he had been imprisoned, and that caught the attention of many Scots who were otherwise unaware of stories such as his.

Other primary sources tell the stories of those who contributed to the first world war in non-combatant military service, including running stretchers to wounded soldiers on the front in an effort to save lives—many lost their own lives in doing so. Others volunteered to help civilians who were caught in the conflict on the continent. Websites such as that of the white feather diaries project and other online sources provide examples of doctors who travelled to France and remote parts of Russia to help civilians, with scant medical resources and no trained medics, in the throes of war.

The telling of history through sources, stories and memorials can recognise those whose hearts were turned towards peace. That noble end is the common denominator among the wide-ranging testimonies of conscientious objectors, who deserve to be remembered.

17:17

Maurice Corry (West Scotland) (Con): I thank Alison Johnstone for lodging the motion for this members' business debate.

I am pleased to speak on the subject of remembering conscientious objectors. Even though we may have our differences of opinion on the need for war, I entirely believe that the memory of conscientious objectors should be honoured and respected. Accordingly, I welcome the forthcoming memorial in Princes Street gardens, which has been proposed by the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre. It will create a space in which conscientious objectors and the value of international peacemakers should be remembered and reflected on.

Let me be clear: conscientious objectors have—and should always have—the right not to participate in war. Conscientious objection is now a human right that is recognised by the United Nations and the European Court of Human Rights, and it is supported by many countries.

In the first world war, as in any war, conscientious objectors acted from conviction, which might have been founded on religious belief or political activism. Some disagreed with Government intervention, while others believed that it was wrong to kill in any instance. They should always have had the freedom to do so and to follow their consciences regarding peace. Their resistance was not harmful or cowardly; it was principled. That is what the proposed memorial in Princes Street gardens seeks to represent. Every person should have the right to offer alternatives to war, such as conflict resolution or peace building, although sometimes that may be incredibly difficult.

In Scotland as well as internationally, conscription placed heavy burdens on conscientious objectors. In the first world war, there were nearly 20,000 conscientious objectors, with 235 men from Edinburgh refusing conscription. That figure tripled in the second world war. As has been referred to by previous speakers, the unfair treatment of objectors by authorities, and indeed by their own communities, should never have happened. Tribunals were often unfair in their decision making and failed to take conscientious objectors' personal stances seriously. In many cases, conscientious objectors were still forced into a war of which they did not

want to be part. Some were wrongly treated as deserters, which resulted in prison sentences. In total, 6,000 were sent to prison during the first world war. There they faced harsh and degrading treatment, with a minimal diet, and some endured solitary confinement. Those who went on hunger strike risked the possibility of being force fed. However, psychological damage seems to have had the most impact on conscientious objectors. They risked a backlash of social isolation and accusations of betrayal from their own communities.

That could foster feelings of shame and doubt in the face of suspicion and pressure. Conscientious objectors should have been treated not as lesser individuals but as valued members of society who served the nation in other ways, based on their principles.

It is a relief to know that conscientious objection is treated more respectfully now, as it should be. I am glad that it is no longer the case that there is that ill feeling in our nation. I know that conscientious objectors here are now treated with the thought and care that they deserved years ago. The fact that armed forces recruitment is entirely voluntary, for example, ensures that every individual in them is not forced to be there and is free to make that choice.

We should be respectful of the motivations and beliefs of those who choose to join our armed forces and those who do not. As I said, conscientious objectors should have been treated not as lesser individuals but as valued members of society who could serve the nation in other ways. Rather than ignoring the stance of conscientious objection, the memorial will publicly represent their commitment and principles for peace. It is definitely fitting that the memorial will, I hope, be installed by August 2019, which is the centenary of the end of imprisonment for conscientious objectors during the first world war. I hope that the fundraising efforts will help the project to raise awareness of those individuals. Amid the multiple memorials across the capital that remember those who fought in the war, it is right that a space should be created to remember international peacemakers as well as conscientious objectors, who faced risks based on their principles.

To conclude, it is just as important to remember those who died in war as it is to remember those who suffered for opposing war. I say as a veteran that, despite their differences, the two should go hand in hand. Both were sacrifices that point towards the hope for peace. That is what I believe the memorial will represent.

17:21

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): When a country goes to war, it is often on the back of a great deal of propaganda, pressure, media coverage and state influencing of public opinion. That is the nature of the build-up to any war. The might of the Government machine and persuasive forces that are allied to it are rolled out to bang the drum and build public support for conflict.

The first world war, which Alison Johnstone referred to, is a prime example of that. Conscientious objectors came to the public's consciousness then. Against a backdrop of impending war, those people took a brave and principled stance opposing the conflict on the ground of their moral, religious or political views. They were not cowards, deserters or unpatriotic; they were people of great integrity, humanity and deeply held conviction. As a result of their stance, many of them lost their liberty. Some were driven by strongly held Christian, Jewish or Islamic faith. For groups such as the Quakers, the literal interpretation of "Thou shalt not kill" informed their stance.

Others were driven by deeply held political principles. The Independent Labour Party, which was one of the founding organisations of the modern Labour Party, was at their forefront. Keir Hardie was, of course, one of the greatest critics of the march to war, and he played a prominent role in the anti-war movement. The general secretary of the ILP at that time, Albert Inkpin, said:

"As a socialist and internationalist I am strongly opposed to the war, which I regard as arising from the conflict of capitalist interests and as inimical to the welfare of the working class."

Given the deaths of so many young working-class men and women, those words were indeed prophetic. The ILP newspaper, the *Labour Leader*, led opposition to the war and promoted the No-Conscription Fellowship. A number of leading Labour movement activists ended up in prison as a result of their anti-war activity. Some—Fenner Brockway, Emrys Hughes and James Maxton, for example—went on to become ILP MPs. They were driven by a class analysis of the conflict: a belief that the war was about economics, resources and power, and that it was always the wealth-owning capitalist class that declared wars, but the working class was sent to fight them.

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): Does Neil Findlay recognise that Roland Muirhead, who was one of the founder members of the Scottish National Party, was involved in that effort along with the people whom he mentioned?

Neil Findlay: I am delighted to have been informed of that by Gillian Martin. Every day is a school day.

The actions of those people were supported by the likes of Mary Barbour in leading the rent strikes in Glasgow, and John Maclean and Willie Gallacher, who were leading opponents of the war. Indeed, this week is the 100th anniversary of Maclean's release from Peterhead prison. He was initially arrested under the Defence of the Realm Act 1914. His oration from the dock is now famous or infamous—however we look at it. He stated:

"No human being on the face of the earth, no government is going to take from me my right to speak, my right to protest against wrong, my right to do everything that is for the benefit of mankind. I am not here, then, as the accused; I am here as the accuser of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot."

The role of conscientious objectors is a very important part of our social, economic and political history. They should be remembered and acknowledged. The memorial in Princes Street gardens would join many others there, as Alison Johnstone mentioned, including the international brigades memorial. That is why I made the point that it is not just pacifists who support the memorial. It is right that we acknowledge our history and the people who have gone before us. Having a memorial to those who stood by their principles and honourably opposed the war that was supposed to end all wars is the right thing to do.

17:25

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I am grateful to have the chance to participate in this debate that my colleague Alison Johnstone has brought to the chamber. The debate gives us the opportunity, as I hope the memorial will, to reflect on some difficult and complicated issues. I have felt conflicted in recent months as we have marked the 100th anniversary of the armistice. It is important to reflect on some of the complexities around that rather than have a simplistic commemoration that almost becomes an unthinking ritual.

It is always problematic to judge historical events in today's moral context, because that context changes. However, when we remember those historical events, it is important that we discuss how the context has changed. The first world war took place in a time before the development of human rights law and before the development of much international law. It was a time in which racist, imperialist Governments were the norm throughout Europe and whose racism and imperialism were almost unchallengeable. They felt entitled to perpetrate state violence on their own citizens and others around the world.

Governments felt that they had, and were regarded as having, the right to round up their own citizens, march them to war and see them sent to their deaths. I accept that we are judging those historical events from a modern perspective, but we have to reflect, especially in moments of shared remembrance, on what has changed as well.

One of the big political events just before I was elected to the Scottish Parliament was the protest against the Iraq war. I had the opportunity to speak in front of a crowd of 100,000 people who took to the streets in Glasgow to march against that war. It was a generation that felt that it had an inalienable right to express its opposition to war and weapons of mass destruction, which many of us still campaign against. People have a right to regard the Government, as we did, as their servant and not their master on those issues.

I know that it was easy for me to do that, and it felt safe and easy. However, if I had been born and raised in the years before the first world war, I do not know whether I would have had the courage of what I regard as my convictions. I do not know whether I would have had the insight to recognise that the first world war was not a war between countries but a war that was being perpetrated by Governments against their citizens; a war perpetrated by Governments on both sides against the citizens of both sides. I hope that I would have had that insight and that courage, but I cannot know. I can only empathise with those around the world now who still face being subject to war and state violence perpetrated by those who are being armed by our country and others.

Those issues are always in my mind when we think about the roles of the red poppy and the white poppy. I will continue to argue that there has to be a place for both in our acts of shared remembrance. Remembrance has to include a recognition of, and a reflection on, the value of the lives of those who fought and who lost their lives, whether they regarded themselves as making a sacrifice or whether we regard them as having had their lives sacrificed by their own Governments.

I regret to say that Neil Findlay is probably right. We see the rise of fascism in north and south America and parts of Europe at the moment, and there may again be times when people are forced into feeling that they have no other option but to take up arms against that kind of Government. However, recognising the bravery, courage, conviction, sacrifice and principle of those who oppose war is an essential part of our shared acts of remembrance, just recognising those who participated in war is.

I commend the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre and all their colleagues, including the University of Edinburgh, the Iona Community, the

Muslim Women's Association of Edinburgh and many others, for their work. When it is in place, the memorial will offer everyone in Scotland the space to do what we are doing here now: reflecting on difficult and contested issues in relation to our attitudes to war and to the value of those people around the world who work for peace.

17:30

Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (Ind): I congratulate Alison Johnstone on securing the debate. I signed her motion and fully support the campaign.

On 18 November this year, a play entitled "This evil thing" was performed at Dyce parish church in my constituency. It was a solo play, written and performed by the award-winning actor Michael Mears, telling the story of Britain's first world war conscientious objectors. The play includes a scene that is set at the work camp that was established in Dyce by the Government in 1916. Alison Johnstone alluded to it in her speech, and I want to focus my contribution on the Dyce work camp.

The camp was established on 23 August 1916 and involved 250 men who were transported to Dyce to be put to work in the quarries, breaking up granite stones to be used in road-building endeavours. The local authority was not informed about what was happening and the press did not find out about the camp's existence until 9 September.

Alison Johnstone mentioned Walter Roberts, who died at the Dyce camp. Like most of the workers, he developed a cold upon arrival, and on 6 September he dictated a letter to his mother from the camp. I quote from that letter.

"As I anticipated, it has only been a matter of time for the camp conditions to get the better of me. Bartle Wild is now writing to my dictation because I am now too weak to handle a pen myself. I don't want you to worry yourself because the doctor says I have only got a severe chill but it has reduced me very much. All these fellows here are exceedingly kind and are looking after me like bricks so there is no reason why I should not be strong in a day of two when I will write more personally and more fully."

He died on the Friday of pneumonia. During his illness, he had fallen from his bed and spent two hours on the cold floor of his tent. He was not seen by a medical professional and was not given medical attention that could have saved his life.

The *Aberdeen Daily Journal* reported his death on 12 September 1916, but it also published an editorial on the next page about the conscientious objectors. Its headline was "Dyce humbugs" and it contained the following passage:

"The conscientious objector in war-time is a degenerate, or worse, who is out of harmony with the people of the nation which protects him in peace-time, and safeguards

him in war-time, and the No-Conscription Fellowship which champions these shirkers of their duty is under so deep a cloud of suspicion that no fewer than twenty-seven raids by the police have been made within the past week or so on the houses of secretaries and members in the London area."

It is interesting to note that, rather than focusing on the conditions that those men were being forced to endure at the camp, it focused on why those men were deserving of the conditions in which they found themselves. That was the focus that the press chose to take.

The future Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald visited the camp and he reported in Parliament on 19 October 1916 on what he had seen. He said:

"Then take the men at work. You go up to the end, and you see twenty or thirty men—the most extraordinary creatures you ever saw. First of all, they looked as if every one of them had been twenty years on the road, and yet behind it all you saw the intellectual class of the men. It is a strange sort of combination of the intellectual life and the tramp. The men felt it very keenly. One man I talked to about it almost broke down when I tried to joke about his personal appearance."

He later said:

"There were these men, about a hundred, doing work they were not trained to do, doing work they could not do, doing work they could not be trained to do, going on under the impression that this is national service."—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 19 October 1916; Vol 86, c 807, 808.]

The point is that it was dressed as national service but in reality it was punishment of conscientious objectors. The camp closed on 25 October 1916. It had been open for only two months.

I raise that in the chamber tonight alongside Alison Johnstone's motion because I grew up in Dyce but, until I was an adult, I knew nothing of that part of our community's history. It was not talked about and it was not something that we learned about. We learned about the Royal Air Force being stationed in Dyce during the second world war, but it was almost as if we could talk only about the aspects of war that were considered to be glorious parts of our history, and not about those that ought to give us pause for thought, reflection and—rightly, I think—a sense of shame about what those men had to endure.

I support the campaign that Alison Johnstone has discussed and I hope that it will encourage greater awareness of what happened at the work camp at Dyce and in the conscientious objectors movement more widely.

17:35

Gillian Martin (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP): I thank Alison Johnstone for bringing this important debate to the chamber and giving us an

opportunity to recognise some of the people who were conscientious objectors.

Pacifist movements can change the course of political action. The conscientious objectors of the great war were the genesis of the peace movement as we know it today—a peace movement that is the bulwark against overzealous Governments and is the national conscience when ill-advised decisions are taken on aggressive interventions in wars that we have no business being involved in. Alison Johnstone outlined some examples of the types of war that I allude to.

It is only right that there is a memorial to those who stood up for peace at a time when that meant being attacked and ridiculed by members of the public, being taken away from family, being imprisoned, being put in labour camps, in some cases being tortured and abused, and in some cases—where people were forced into conscription—being shot and killed by their own Government for refusing to follow orders or for suffering trauma.

When we talk of bravery, we must not ignore the bravery of the conscientious objectors of the so-called great war. They were brave too. They stood up for what they believed in: peace. Heroism takes many forms, and alongside the heroes who fought in the trenches must stand the heroes who fought to stop the senseless war in which so many young men died in the name of something that we still cannot really put our finger on. To see that, we just have to look at the propaganda images and letters to the newspapers of the day that portray these men. The characterisation of them is appalling and offensive. How brave to stand up for one's beliefs and face being punished and ostracised from society and having one's family ridiculed as a result. A lot of people forget about the impact on the whole family.

Mark McDonald mentioned the Dyce camp, which was just a mile beyond the border of my constituency. Hundreds of English conscientious objectors were sent there from prisons to live in horrific conditions. They spent their days breaking granite in a nearby quarry and slept on cold, wet ground in ragged, damaged tents that had been used in the Boer war. We have already heard about the 20-year-old Walter Roberts. Whenever I read about the first world war, the ages of the men really get to me, because my son is 20 years old; that is the thing that really sticks in my craw. The letter that Walter wrote to his mother nearly had me in tears, because I imagined her opening it and then finding out that her son had died days later.

Walter died because of his religious beliefs. He was a Christian, and that is why he objected to war. He should have been exempted from conscription for that reason, but he was not.

I will close by quoting from a letter from Robert Climie, whom Bill Kidd mentioned. He had long-held pacifist beliefs and he was exempted initially, but an ex-Army officer took against the decision so badly that he campaigned to have the exemption overturned. Robert Climie was sent to Wormwood Scrubs. He wrote to his baby daughter as she turned one. He had missed the first year of his life because of his imprisonment. In his letter to his daughter, which he assumed she would read later in her life, he wrote:

“The first year of your life ... will in later years be known as one of the worst years in the History of the World ... A most fearful war is raging ... The World is just now divided into nations and the people of each nation believe themselves to be fighting on behalf of their own particular country ... However, there are men and women who believe that all men and women are brothers and sisters. These people are known as Pacifists.”

I urge everyone to listen to Robert Climie's full letter as read by the actor Gary Lewis, which can be found online. It is heartbreaking, but it is heroic.

I thank the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre for all its hard work and campaigning to give those heroes for peace the recognition that they deserve, and for enabling us to go some small way towards making amends for the heartbreak that they and their families endured, along with the people who went to war.

17:40

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab):

I thank Alison Johnstone for securing the debate, which is important for all the reasons that members have given. It is important to remember not just those who died bearing arms for our country but those who fought for the principle of peace.

I am very conscious that I am of a generation that has had no immediate or even indirect contact with the mass mobilisation that 20th century wars brought. No one in my immediate family—not my parents or my grandparents—fought.

As we reflect on the 100th anniversary of the end of the first world war, many of the comments and memorials have focused on the truly unimaginable experience of that war. Patrick Harvie described very well the industrial nature of the conflict, which was horrifying.

Equally confounding is the rationale for that war. It is not just because I was a bad history student that I do not understand how the war came about. The idea that it hinges on the assassination of an aristocrat in a far-off place, and that that somehow explains how the complicated and interwoven interests of imperial powers and treaties brought about the horrifying slaughter of millions of people,

is something that I do not understand. Such a situation should never justify war.

That is why we must remember. The first world war did not end all wars, but it certainly brought into being a different world order, under which we live today. We have not had to experience mass mobilisation. Conflict might not have ended, but I hope that that sort of global conflict is unthinkable.

That is why we must thank conscientious objectors. My politics are based on the fundamental principle of internationalism. I fundamentally believe in a global system of institutions, which I hope makes war on the scale that we saw in the 20th century far less likely, if not impossible. It is thanks to the individuals who had the courage to stand up for principles of peace that we have such institutions.

Like Neil Findlay, I want to reflect on the contribution that was made by a member of my party. Arthur Woodburn, who became Secretary of State for Scotland from 1947 to 1950, in the Clement Attlee Government, and who stood in Edinburgh South in 1929, was exempt from serving. He had a kidney condition, and his occupation meant that he did not need to serve. Nonetheless, he registered with the authorities as a conscientious objector. He was imprisoned from 1916, and in the latter months of the war he went on hunger strike. To put oneself in such a position is to show true courage and conviction.

That demonstrates the importance of the memorial that we have been hearing about. There are twin objectives to having such a memorial: to remember the people who showed such courage and who suffered for their convictions; and to honour the ideal of world peace, which is something for which we must all strive. I thank the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre for its work, and I hope that the memorial takes its place in Princes Street gardens before long, because it is important.

17:44

The Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development (Ben Macpherson): I thank Alison Johnstone for lodging the motion and enabling us to have this important debate. The debate has been interesting and illuminating and I appreciated the quality, sensitivity and depth of members' speeches, as well as members' personal reflections.

It is fitting that we have this debate a week after St Andrew's day, given that, as Alastair McIntosh said in the St Andrew's day lecture on Friday, our patron saint was an advocate of non-violence.

I will respond to the debate in a moment, but first I will reflect on some of the contributions from

a personal perspective. I was there when Patrick Harvie addressed the protests against the Iraq war in 2003, and remember how powerful that was. I also think of my own family's journey within the peace-building and peace-making movements and some of my relatives' engagement in the Quaker movement. Also, my great-great-grandfather, Dr Walter Walsh, was an anti-war campaigner who campaigned against the Boer war with a certain James Keir Hardie in the nineteenth century. Like others, I am feeling very connected to this debate from a personal perspective.

I am also heartened that there is consensus around the chamber, with a shared appreciation for the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre and others involved in this project. I would like to pay my respects and express my appreciation for the work that it has done, not just on this project, but also on what it does more generally. I have often been inspired at St John's, and when walking past the very powerful messages that are portrayed on the outside of the building.

The last four years have seen a nationwide programme of commemorations to mark the centenary of world war one, with hundreds of community groups and organisations involved in events over the length and breadth of Scotland to pay tribute to all those who were involved in the conflict.

The Scottish Government commemorations panel, chaired by Professor Norman Drummond, has recommended and produced commemorations to mark events and battles of world war one with a particular significance for Scotland. Through the commemorations programme, the people of Scotland have learned about the effects of the war and its lasting impact on life in Scotland today. It is right that we recognise the impact that this and other wars had on the whole of Scottish society and the great sacrifices made by hundreds of thousands of military personnel and their families.

However, there were also many other individuals and groups in society who were deeply affected by the great war and other wars, as we are appreciating today. The sheer scale of those impacted is very hard for us to comprehend. Many of those injured suffered psychologically in a time which often did not fully recognise or support those with mental health needs. Some, who suffered from shell shock and other mental health issues, were subjected to inhumane treatment and were condemned by society on their return.

We also recognise, as we are doing today, the deeply held views of those who chose not to fight for a range of reasons—on religious, political and humanist grounds. Indeed, they also faced similar, unfair condemnation by society. Although records are reportedly incomplete, it is estimated that

around 16,000 people in the UK were conscientious objectors in world war one, and many thousands more in world war two and until national service ended in the 1960s.

The Scottish Government's world war one commemorative programme is remembering the broad impact that the great war had on all parts of Scotland and beyond. Indeed, the Scottish commemorations panel has run several education days, each focusing on a different aspect of war. To accompany the events, the panel produced booklets on the subject being covered. The first of those, in November 2015, covered recruitment, conscription, tribunals and conscientious objectors. For example, it told the story of John McTaggart from Dundee, who claimed exemption from military service because he was politically opposed to the war. He ended up being sentenced to prison and went on to serve two years and seven months in prison before being released in April 1919.

Many different events or groups of people may be commemorated on a memorial. Memorials can commemorate war, conflict, victory, peace, groups and individuals.

Alison Johnstone: It is clear that this memorial would aid reflection on many issues. An engagement programme is envisaged for local schools and so on. I would be interested to learn how the Government might assist with the realisation of the memorial. Crowdfunding is going well, but more could be done. I would be grateful if the minister could respond to that.

Ben Macpherson: With regard to support for the opposing war memorial that is planned for Princes Street gardens, I am pleased to hear that, as has been said, there is already widespread support for the initiative at local government level, in Edinburgh society and beyond. However, it is a long-standing policy of the UK and Scottish Governments that the cost of maintaining memorials and associated projects cannot be met from public funds, so I am reassured that measures are already in place to raise funds for its creation. If Alison Johnstone wants to make any suggestions to me and the Government after the debate, I will be very happy to receive them in writing and consider them in due course.

Neil Findlay: Will the minister take an intervention to clarify that point?

Ben Macpherson: Okay.

Neil Findlay: I listened carefully to the minister, and he said that there was no finance for maintaining memorials. Does that include erecting them?

Ben Macpherson: The point is well made, but as I said, the UK and Scottish Governments have

a long-standing policy with regard to such costs. I cannot commit today to the Scottish Government providing funding for such a memorial, but if, after the debate, Alison Johnstone wants to write to me in detail on these matters, those points can be considered in due course and I will be happy to respond to her.

In closing, I thank all members for their contribution. The Scottish Government believes that people of all faiths and none must be supported to follow their way of life without fear of discrimination or mistreatment.

Maurice Corry: For many years now, mobilisation has applied to reservists, who, technically, still live in our communities. Do not get me wrong, regular service personnel come from our communities, too, but reservists who get called up are very close to them. We now have a fairly permanent call-up programme in support of various armed forces operations overseas, a lot of which are for peacekeeping purposes. Does the minister agree that it is very good that, nowadays, reservists are actually asked to volunteer before they allow their names to go forward for the call-up, as it gives them an opportunity to express any reservations that they might have?

Ben Macpherson: I acknowledge those well-made points, and I am sure that, now that they are on the record, they will be relayed to the relevant minister, Graeme Dey, for consideration. I want to stick with the issue of the memorial and the contents of Alison Johnstone's motion.

At this point, I should clarify my earlier point by saying that the policy that I mentioned covers both the erection and maintenance of memorials. In other words, the UK and Scottish Governments have a long-held policy of not meeting the costs of erecting such memorials from public funds.

That said, it is important that, as members have pointed out, people of all faiths and none are supported to follow their way of life without fear of discrimination and that we value and respect people's freedoms in important matters of conscience, including peace. I am going to try to get there as quickly as I can to join many others at St John's for a multilingual European Christmas carol service in solidarity with European friends and partners and in remembrance of, amongst other things, the European Union as a very positive force for peace.

This evening, I will reflect, as we have in this debate, on the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre and all that it does—and has done over many years—to encourage peace and promote social justice in Scotland and around the world. In that spirit, I pay tribute to all involved in the centre and wish those involved in this campaign—Alison Johnstone, other members and people in wider

society—well in raising money for a memorial to all those who were peacemakers and who stood up so bravely and strongly in their endeavours to promote non-violence. I look forward to hearing more about the progress of this very important cause.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate.

Meeting closed at 17:54.

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

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

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.parliament.scot

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers
is available here:

www.parliament.scot/documents

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: sp.info@parliament.scot



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba