

# **RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Monday 25 October 1999  
(*Afternoon*)

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 1999.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Copyright Unit,  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ  
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate  
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by The  
Stationery Office Ltd.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office is independent of and separate from the company now  
trading as The Stationery Office Ltd, which is responsible for printing and publishing  
Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body publications.

---

**Monday 25 October 1999**

---

**RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**CONVENER :**

\*Alex Johnstone (North-East Scotland) (Con)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

\*Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con)

\*Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

\*Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

Lewis Macdonald (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)

\*Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)

Mr John Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)

\*Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab)

Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)

\*attended

**COMMITTEE CLERK:**

Richard Davies

**SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK:**

Richard Walsh

**ASSISTANT CLERK:**

Tracey Hawe



## Scottish Parliament

### Rural Affairs Committee

*Monday 25 October 1999*

*(Afternoon)*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 15:34*]

**The Convener (Alex Johnstone):** We will begin this meeting by discussing the draft report on amnesic shellfish poisoning, which has been written by the clerks. I suggest that consideration of the committee's draft report on the impact on the fisheries sector of amnesic shellfish poisoning should be in private—we are dealing with a draft and it is not appropriate for anything other than the committee's agreed wording to be quoted in public. Do members agree?

I am anxious that members understand why we should proceed in private. Are all members aware of the reasons why it is appropriate that we progress in private at this stage?

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I would not mind hearing why we should go ahead in private when we are not releasing the report. We are merely discussing what is in it and whether we agree to that.

**The Convener:** Would you, Richard, like to go over the explanation that you gave to me? It was much smoother than my version of it.

**Richard Davies (Committee Clerk):** Yes. To ensure sensible discussion in public of the report we would have to issue copies of that report to the press and to the public. As it stands, the report that has been written by the clerks suggests what might be the committee's view on the short inquiry into amnesic shellfish poisoning.

It would give that report undue status to issue it in its draft form as that would suggest that the committee has a particular view. We do not know what that view is until the committee has had a chance to discuss the report.

**Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con):** Is that procedurally correct, given the slight problems that there have been with private meetings in the recent past? If that has been checked and it is procedurally correct to do so, and if everybody else is happy, I am quite happy to continue in private.

**The Convener:** I am satisfied with the reason for proceeding in that way and am willing to accept it. It would therefore be appropriate for us to continue this discussion in private.

*Meeting closed at 15:37.*

Members who would like a printed copy of the Official Report to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

Members who would like a copy of the bound volume should also give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the bound volume should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, Parliamentary Headquarters, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

**Friday 12 November 1999**

Members who want reprints of their speeches (within one month of the date of publication) may obtain request forms and further details from the Central Distribution Office, the Document Supply Centre or the Official Report.

#### PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

##### DAILY EDITIONS

*Single copies: £5*

*Annual subscriptions: £640*

BOUND VOLUMES OF DEBATES are issued periodically during the session.

*Single copies: £70*

Standing orders will be accepted at the Document Supply Centre.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, compiled by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, contains details of past and forthcoming business and of the work of committees and gives general information on legislation and other parliamentary activity.

*Single copies: £2.50*

*Special issue price: £5*

*Annual subscriptions: £82.50*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

*Single copies: £2.50*

*Annual subscriptions: £80*

Published in Edinburgh by The Stationery Office Limited and available from:

**The Stationery Office Bookshop**  
**71 Lothian Road**  
**Edinburgh EH3 9AZ**  
**0131 228 4181 Fax 0131 622 7017**

**The Stationery Office Bookshops at:**  
123 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PQ  
Tel 0171 242 6393 Fax 0171 242 6394  
68-69 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AD  
Tel 0121 236 9696 Fax 0121 236 9699  
33 Wine Street, Bristol BS1 2BQ  
Tel 01179 264306 Fax 01179 294515  
9-21 Princess Street, Manchester M60 8AS  
Tel 0161 834 7201 Fax 0161 833 0634  
16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD  
Tel 01232 238451 Fax 01232 235401  
The Stationery Office Oriol Bookshop,  
18-19 High Street, Cardiff CF12BZ  
Tel 01222 395548 Fax 01222 384347

**The Stationery Office Scottish Parliament Documentation**  
**Helpline may be able to assist with additional information**  
**on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament,**  
**their availability and cost:**

**Telephone orders and inquiries**  
**0870 606 5566**

**Fax orders**  
**0870 606 5588**

**The Scottish Parliament Shop**  
**George IV Bridge**  
**EH99 1SP**  
**Telephone orders 0131 348 5412**

[sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk)

[www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

**Accredited Agents**  
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers