

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 17 June 1999

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 17 June 1999

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 10:30*]

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): I remind members to place their cards in the electronic slot. A number of members did not do so yesterday, which caused added difficulties for our sound engineers.

The first item of business this morning is the debate on motion S1M-52 on the proposals for the development of the new Parliament building at Holyrood, and an amendment to the motion. I will invite the First Minister to move the motion with a time limit of 10 minutes. I will then call Donald Gorrie to move his amendment with a time limit of seven minutes. I propose to put a time limit on all speeches, initially at four minutes, for the simple reason that the corporate body is anxious to hear as many views as possible on the project.

At the end of the debate, I will ask Margo MacDonald to sum up for the amendment in seven minutes, followed by Des McNulty, who will give a wind-up speech on behalf of the corporate body for seven minutes. He will be followed by Henry McLeish, who will give the concluding speech for the Executive.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Presiding Officer. Yesterday, in reply to my intervention on a Labour member regarding the Executive's proposals for Gaelic education, I was advised that those proposals were clearly outlined in the *Inverness Courier*. While I recognise the importance of the *Inverness Courier* in the Highlands, I ask that a precedent be established that proposals and commitments are announced through this chamber, as the *Inverness Courier* is not yet available to all 129 MSPs.

The Presiding Officer: I have to rule that I am not responsible for the *Inverness Courier*, but no doubt the members of the Executive will have heard what the member has said.

Holyrood Project

10:33

The First Minister (Donald Dewar): I welcome this debate. It is right that the Parliament should take stock and consider how we should proceed. However, I hope that it will take a decision today, as I believe that that is important. The Parliament inherits plans—it inherits a scheme that I commend to this chamber—but it is entitled to consider the instructions that it should give to the corporate body. On that basis, I welcome what is happening today.

There has been a great deal of difficulty and uncertainty about discussing this matter rationally, and there has been much excitement in the public prints. I want to underline the fact that it has been difficult for those working on the project to do so in a conducive atmosphere. One member of the design team said to me recently that the whole period had been demoralising. We should bear in mind the impact of today's decision on those who have worked hard over a lengthy period to get us to where we are.

I have heard many fine words in this chamber about parliamentary business, about Parliament speaking and about Parliament being in charge of a particular project. I can think of no project that belongs more to the Parliament than the construction of the Parliament building. That is why the project will be the responsibility of the corporate body—an impartial body in which all parties are represented.

I say to the nationalists that I am astonished, in view of all that they have said about the business of Parliament, to discover that they are whipping on today's motion. I make it clear that, on my side, there will be a free vote. I am confident that I will carry most of my colleagues, although I cannot say whether I will carry them all. As the Scottish nationalists are whipping, I suspect that the result will be very close. I hope that even during this debate they will recall and consider some of the things that they have said about how we should run the Parliament.

I would never, in any public place, mention names but, from discussions at the presentations and from numerous private conversations, we know that the SNP is split on this matter. Almost all my colleagues would confirm that and I have no doubt that we would carry this vote comfortably on a free vote. Given the subject matter, it is absolutely disgraceful that the chamber will not get that chance. If I sound angry, it is because I am angry.

We have not at any time tried to hide what is happening about the parliamentary building. We

thought that we had to get the project under way and so we started in June 1997. The lead times on such major international projects are very long and it was essential that we started to prepare the ground. We had consulted: I will not try to pretend that we reached consensus on the site, for example, but we consulted the other parties and the public. As members know, there were exhibitions, which moved from Inverness to Selkirk to consult the public, and there were videos and models. There was also much discussion in the press and publicly.

We had to take a decision on the site and I recognise that that may have been controversial. I ought to make it clear that in the 10 minutes that Sir David has imposed on me, I cannot go into points of information; I have a lot of things to say. I accept that there was a presumption in many people's minds that the Royal High School would be the site; in fact, we went there first, with our group of advisers and experts—people whose opinions had to be respected. There was a unanimity of view that the Royal High School was not—and could not satisfactorily be made into—a practical proposition, even if we built the debating chamber in the middle of Regent Road like some extended traffic island. That was not a possibility and we moved on from it.

We looked closely at St Andrew's House, which was a runner. An ingenious, fine and imaginative adaptation was produced for the interior, behind the traditional Tait façade of 1939. We were tempted by that, but decided against it, largely because of difficulties over space and over expansion on the site and because the construction costs were going to be £15 million higher than for the scheme that we ultimately accepted. Mr Salmond may laugh at me—he can go and discuss the matter with the architects, the quantity surveyors and the costing people—but I repeat: we were advised that the cost would be £15 million more.

Mr Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): Will Mr Dewar give way?

The First Minister: No, I will not take interventions.

Mr Salmond: Oh, come on.

The First Minister: All right, I will take just one. I have only 10 minutes.

Mr Salmond: When Mr Dewar says that the cost was £15 million higher, is he talking about the estimates at that time or about the new costs that we now know have arisen?

The First Minister: The cost was £15 million more at that point. In other words, the best estimate that could be given was £65 million, whereas the projected construction costs for a

new building were £50 million. The whole point of the St Andrew's House scheme was that one would have seen no external difference to the building; we would have added nothing to Edinburgh's architectural heritage and the Parliament would have been hidden behind a pre-war façade. It seemed to us—and I put it to the chamber—that to build a Parliament incognito was not an attractive proposition. Expense was also a consideration.

We wanted a site that presented the right challenge. That challenge came with Holyrood, which was a late entrant because the owners and occupiers of the site were prepared to adjust their timetable in order to make the site available. The site is beside Holyrood Palace, on the Canongate, in the centre of one of the great medieval cities of Europe, beside and under the looming bulk of Salisbury crags and Arthur's Seat. The site gave us the challenge of creating, with empathy, a 21st century building that would be a gift from our time to succeeding generations and an appropriate and fitting home for our Parliament. Holyrood gave us the opportunities and we thought that it was right to go ahead.

We then decided to have a competition for a design team. I will go over that very quickly, but I will pay tribute to the independent members of the panel, Kirsty Wark, Joan O'Connor and Andy McMillan, who brought expertise and vision to the choice and worked extremely effectively in—I make no secret of it—what was one of the most exciting and satisfying processes of my 25 years in politics. I am a veteran of politics and have come out of many meetings telling the press that the decisions of those meetings were unanimous. On this occasion, the decision was unanimous. Every member of the team considered the distinguished architects who had submitted entries, looked at the designs, which had very different characters, and concluded that the design that was put forward by Enric Miralles best fitted the remit.

I again pay tribute to Enric Miralles, Benedetta Tagliabue and all others involved. I pay particular tribute to their partners RMJM (Scotland) Ltd for the way in which it has evolved the design and treated the site with sympathy and for its vision of a group of buildings rising from the site to mirror and merge with the sweep of the Canongate and the surrounding hills and buildings. The way in which the project grows out of the landscape is attractive.

I remember that when Mr Miralles first appeared before the judges, he produced splendid, large panels that were full of sweeping colour and vision and occasional pieces of script. I was much taken by the piece of script on the first panel, which said that Parliament was a mental place. That is an

interesting thought for those of us who are familiar with the patter of Glasgow, but I know what he means. His whole approach was particularly sympathetic. We consulted the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland, Historic Scotland and many other interested bodies.

I am already running out of time, but I will say a word or two about costs. We always said that £50 million was an initial construction cost and that there would be additional costs of VAT, fees and extras. It will be clear to those who bothered to read answers to parliamentary questions—I am sure that Mr Swinney did, as some of the figures that he adduced in parliamentary questions revealed this—that the final total would be around £80 million or £90 million. Mr Gorrie—indefatigable as always—extracted a lot of that information through parliamentary questions. The information was available and was never hidden.

I make it clear that the £109 million that we now hold to—to the best of our ability—includes VAT, fees, site acquisition and preparation, information technology and fit-out. I must make it clear that landscaping into the park and the traffic calming measures, which are a matter for the Executive and City of Edinburgh Council, are not included.

The reasons why the original construction costs went up from £50 million to £62 millions are well known, so I will skim over them. One was that there was a general view that a formal entrance at the bottom of the Canongate was a requirement. An increase in the circulation space—the passage and plant spaces—was largely dictated by the integration of Queensberry House. If members consider comparable buildings they will see that we are still doing well on price. As a result of the consultative steering group's work, the size of staff accommodation also had to be increased; the floor area in the original proposal increased by 44 per cent to 23,000 sq m and the cost rose by 24 per cent, which is perhaps not surprising. The increase was not caused by overspend on the original building. It was caused by the evolution of the building to meet the needs of this Parliament. The increase was fair and proper.

There have been a lot of rumours, based on an article in a technical journal, that the building will be shoddy and inadequate and that the materials will not be fit for the purpose—I think that the phrase was that we would be given a Dinky and not a Porsche. I found it a little puzzling—if I may be allowed a small snipe—that the source of that phrase had complained about the cost of the building only a few weeks before. I was caught in the crossfire, although I do not necessarily object to that too violently.

If we had adopted such options we would not have unveiled the figure of £62 million. We did not take up those options because we want a quality

building that will deliver the standards of service that this Parliament requires. The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body can consider them again, if this Parliament believes that it should. That would be a matter for synergy between the corporate body and the design team.

Hurrying on—I have to use that phrase constantly now—I say that the motion asks us to consider a few options. One is to cancel the project. I hope that that does not happen. If it does, there will be substantial implications in terms of the immediate cancellation costs and the claims for damages that inevitably arise when a disaster of that kind strikes a project. It would be a very expensive and—to use the phrase again—totally demoralising event.

The circumstances would also be serious if we were to call a moratorium or decide to stay in our present accommodation. We are, to an extent, camping in these buildings. Anyone who has worked here during the past few weeks will understand that. The building is inadequate in scope; the floor area of the group of seven buildings that we occupy is too small, probably by a third. Although the chamber is splendid—and I congratulate the architects, Simpson & Brown, on the work that they have done—it has few facilities.

I know that there is a suggestion, which Mr Gorrie will no doubt support, that we could take over the university premises and acquire a large number of properties in mixed ownership around this site. However, as anyone with experience of such matters will know, that is an expensive, time-consuming and difficult business, even if it were desirable, which I do not think it is. Yesterday, the rain came down as I left the chamber at about 5 o'clock and I was fair drookit by the time I got back to my office. When the winter comes, the difficulties of working in seven separate buildings will become apparent to all members.

I do not believe that it is any better to take the easy way out and ask for a substantial pause so that we can consider the other options. That will cost money, a factor about which the Conservatives are particularly worried. I am told by civil servants, my advisers and people who are involved in the design process that the immediate costs of a two-month delay would be around £2 million to £3 million and that there might well be other claims and costs.

We started on this trail in June 1997. We cannot, in two months, consider a range of new sites, get in the quantity surveyors and the statements from the architects and organise a new judging panel—it is unlikely that the same design team would go on to another site. There would be a major delay and—to put it bluntly; it is time to be blunt—this Parliament would be a laughing stock.

The problem that opponents of the Holyrood project have is not even that we are somehow junking Leith—although the proposed committee would consider Leith, apparently, along with other sites, such as Donaldson's school, which has suddenly appeared in the business bulletin thanks to Brian Monteith. That site was considered at the time; we were told that the proposal was unacceptable and that we should not waste money investigating it. However, if Parliament votes in that way, we will be committed to doing so. It would be a mistake to put ourselves in that position and, on any reasonable reckoning, we would not have a new home until 2004 or 2005.

The chamber is important and there has been a great deal of controversy about it. The plans for Holyrood show a slightly flattened semi-circle, which is similar to the seating arrangements in this hall. However, such plans can and will evolve. The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body might argue for change and arrive at a consensus with the design team. No one should think that the seating arrangement that we have in this chamber can be transferred to the new Parliament. I am advised that, if we stay here long enough, the seating will have to change as it does not conform to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

We have employed the international access consultants, Buro Happold, who tell me that, in the not-too-distant future, there will have to be a revamp of the signing and physical access arrangements in order to comply with the law. That is a matter that will have to evolve along with other matters. It is not caught in concrete—to use a happy metaphor. That we should stop the building contract on the basis of an argument about seating would be unwise and unfair, not only to the Parliament, but to the many other people who have worked so hard to make a success of the project.

I apologise for slightly overrunning, Sir David. I finish by saying to my colleagues that this has never been an arbitrary process or a one-man show. All the important decisions were taken on specialist and skilled advice, matured by the cross-referencing of opinion. The design team was put in place by an independent body of good reputation. It is important that we press on with the project. We are trying to put in place a building of which we can be proud and we are putting in place a client and design team relationship that makes sense.

If we say that we will not allow the corporate body to move on and to try to work out any difficulties that emerge, I believe that we are almost sending it a vote of no confidence. We cannot design by committee, certainly not by a committee of 129. The corporate body will be able to influence, guide and work with the immensely

creative team that we have. I believe in my heart of hearts—I may be wrong, but I repeat the point—that, if there were a free vote in the Parliament, it would be clear that MSPs shared that view. I deeply regret that it is not a free vote; I hope that whoever speaks for the nationalists will explain why this is not Parliament business as distinct from party business. If the Parliament building is not the Parliament's business, I cannot think of anything that is.

Yesterday, I was accused of having a lack of ambition and of not having the courage to stand by a radical vision. Today, the Parliament has the chance to stand by a radical vision; I hope that it will take that chance. *[Applause.]*

I move,

That the Parliament endorses the decision to provide its permanent home on the Holyrood site and authorises the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to take forward the project in accordance with the plans developed by the EMBT/RMJM design team and within the time scale and cost estimates described in the Presiding Officer's note to members of 9 June 1999.

The Presiding Officer: I allowed the First Minister some latitude on timing because of the importance of the topic and I must allow Mr Gorrie similar latitude when he speaks in a moment. Members should register whether they want to speak now so that we can assess the timings of speeches.

The other point, which I should have made earlier, is that the corporate body has arranged for members of the design team to be seated at the back of the chamber. During the debate, members may go over to them to ask questions on the project.

10:53

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I agree with Donald Dewar on one issue: the site is a parliamentary issue. Why, therefore, is he making us vote on an Executive motion? That is an outrage and has caused what may be a disproportionate response from another party.

I have not lobbied my own colleagues, I have sent material to the whole Parliament—the same stuff to every member. How members respond to that material is up to them. As far as I am concerned, this is an individual, personal issue and Mr Dewar has as much right as I have, but no more, to make a decision.

In all my time in politics, I do not remember anything that has caused me greater offence than the idea that one man should decide the site of a democratic Parliament. That is what has happened and it is absolutely unacceptable. There was no consultation on the Holyrood site. There

was consultation on other sites and then, somehow, the Holyrood site was invented. The decision was widely condemned at the time. The timetable under which we are operating has no logical basis; it is driven by the former Secretary of State for Scotland who is now the First Minister. We have been told that we have to decide now, but there is no reason for that timetable.

There is no reason for the Scottish Office to have pursued the issue of the Parliament site at all. It had to produce a temporary site, which it has done very well, and I give credit where it is due. All the other Parliaments that I have heard of started in a temporary site and then chose, in a mature fashion, where they wanted to be. There is no reason whatever why the Scottish Office had to be involved.

If members vote for Mr Dewar's motion, they are committed to one thing for centuries. It is not like the standing orders, which we can change in the autumn—members will be committed for a long time. They will make that decision with no information on the alternatives. It would be ridiculous for a householder, deciding on a new house, to say, "Well, there are three options, but we will look at only one of them."

We are on a timetable that has been condemned by every professional who has spoken to me, whether or not they favoured Holyrood. Moreover, we have all received documents from professional bodies that favour Holyrood but have asked for a pause.

If members vote for this motion, they will limit themselves to the present costs, and improvements, which will doubtless emerge, will not be possible. I am sure that conversation will produce suggestions for improvements, but those improvements will cost money, and either we will not get those improvements or cuts will have to be made elsewhere.

The motion limits us to the present budget and to the present plans. Therefore, we are stuck with the proposed debating chamber. Mr Dewar said that that would be virtually no different from this debating chamber. From where I am standing I can see the faces of a great many members without craning my neck, whereas if I were to sit in an equivalent place in the proposed debating chamber, I would see only the back of members' necks. Personal contact is critical to any democratic debate, but the proposals will destroy that. Instead, they will produce a sort of Stalinist gathering, where people listen to a speech from the great leader. I am not into that sort of politics.

Our amendment is not anti-Miralles or against the design team, whose proposal contains many good things. It is not anti-Holyrood. It suggests that we examine the options, but it does not

commit people either to the Assembly Hall or to the Calton hill-Regent Road site. It is against rushing in without proper information.

The Scottish Office involved various clever people, but they are all totally committed to the Holyrood project. With all due respect, they do not give unbiased advice, and the document from your office, Sir David, is tendentious in the extreme. We must get independent advice if the Holyrood scheme is to go ahead with proper, genuine support from the public and from members. Such advice would enable us to improve the chamber and other aspects of the design. Moreover, we could consider the other options that Mr Dewar has tried to rubbish.

As I understand it, there were a number of different proposals for Calton hill, one of which was a very elegant scheme to add the chamber on to the outside of St Andrew's House. It is not true to say that the chamber would be hidden away, although there was one proposal to that effect. Part of the attraction of that site is not that it would be a traffic island in the middle of Regent Road, but that Waterloo Place and Regent Road would make a splendid boulevard. The site would involve the use of the Royal High School for meetings—not for full meetings of the Parliament, but for public consultation, committees and so on.

Calton hill has been seen as the great icon of the Parliament movement. We could use the existing, improved facilities of St Andrew's House. We could have a fine, new debating chamber—with new architecture and any other new buildings that were necessary—up on a hill, where people could see it, and not in down in a hole.

The Assembly Hall has great potential, as Mr James Simpson has shown, having dug out old plans from the University of Edinburgh on how to develop the area. That option needs to be considered, and it is extraordinarily foolish to rush ahead without considering it.

The Calton hill site has fine buildings and space for expansion, which Holyrood does not. It is a fine site, as is the Assembly Hall. When I walk up from the bus stop in the morning, my heart lifts on seeing this building on the hill. It is something that one can be proud of.

The designs for Holyrood are ingenious in many ways, but the site is in a hole. It has no presence—one has to climb Arthur's Seat to see it at all. It is a small site, with no room for expansion. It is hard to get to. People will drive to it, as the right bus routes do not exist. Even if people take the bus, they will have to make more bus trips, as they will have to change buses.

Will our transport policy deal with such problems? There will be disruption to traffic, which will be sent through Holyrood park. Is that what we

expect from the sort of Parliament that we are interested in? Furthermore, in the eyes of many people, the debating chamber is a complete no-no.

Although the timetable for this project has been universally condemned, we are being hooked on to it today. Why is there such a rush? We can stay here for a bit longer to consider the options of staying here permanently, of going ahead more slowly with Holyrood if some improvements are made or of going to another site. There is no rush. We want to get things right, because, although no Parliament lasts for eternity, this one may last for a very long time.

The downside is that there might be a delay, which will cost £500,000 a month, if we believe your office, Sir David, or £1 million a month, if we believe the First Minister. I would not like to choose between those two estimates. Although there will be some cost, it will be quite small. On the other hand, the cost of voting for the motion will be that we will never know whether we got things right or what the real options were that we turned down; we will be stuck with a proposal that has no room for major improvement and that will bring about major changes in cost.

It would be extraordinarily foolish to vote for Mr Dewar's motion. We have a choice today. We can live with a benevolent despotism—it is benevolent, because Mr Dewar is a decent sort of bloke, but it is a despotism nevertheless. One man says what happens and we all obediently follow him. Alternatively, we can have a mature, parliamentary democracy. The question is: are we men and women or are we sheep?

I move amendment S1M-52.1, to leave out all after "Parliament" and insert—

"(a) sets up a special committee consisting of the members of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) and six other members chosen by the SPCB to work during the summer recess on the matters set out in (b) and (c) below;

(b) instructs the special committee to commission a study by an independent organisation recommended by RIBA of the existing plans, realistic possibilities, costs and arguments for and against the potential sites for the Parliament at Holyrood, Calton Hill/Regent Road and the Mound, to be presented to the special committee before the end of the summer recess;

(c) empowers the special committee, if it is convinced that the Holyrood scheme clearly offers the best option, to instruct work on the scheme to proceed with any modifications agreed by the committee, and, if it believes that another site is preferable or that there is no clear preferred site, or that the Holyrood site scheme should be pursued at high quality and increased costs over those set out in the Presiding Officer's note to members of 9 June 1999, to present all the relevant information to the Parliament for a decision as early as possible after the summer recess;

(d) instructs the Holyrood Project Team to continue with any work, such as archaeological or site preparation works, which will be of value whatever the future of the site, but not to let any construction related contracts proceed until the special committee or the Parliament authorises it to do so;

(e) instructs the SPCB to negotiate an appropriate timetable with the Holyrood Project Team if the Holyrood site is chosen by the special committee."

The Presiding Officer: I said at the beginning that I wear two hats—as Presiding Officer and as chairman of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. As chairman of that body, I am anxious to hear from everybody. Many members wish to speak and so I propose to curtail speeches to three minutes. Indeed, as we proceed, if a member decides to move a motion to extend the debate by half an hour, I will be willing to accept that. However, we will see how we get on.

Kate MacLean (Dundee West) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Presiding Officer. I accept what you say about the length of speeches, because it is important that as many people as possible get a chance to speak. However, yesterday, some members were using their interventions to make quite long comments and other members like me, who had been waiting to speak all afternoon, were not able to do so. Will you make a comment about that kind of electronic queue-jumping?

The Presiding Officer: I said yesterday that interventions have to be short and I did curtail one intervention. However, given that I have asked for very short speeches, I suggest that members limit interventions to give everyone the chance to say what they want about this important project.

11:04

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): I commend the First Minister on the passion of his speech. I have seldom, if ever, seen him so passionate. It is admirable that he has such passion for architecture, if indeed that is the cause. However, I suspect that the cause is a passion for getting his own way.

It is obviously necessary to pause at this stage in the project. I will reply immediately to the First Minister's question about why we need a whip on this matter. Had this debate taken place last week, there might not have been a need for it; but the majority of SNP members went to the presentation given by the design team and others and when they came back, they were utterly convinced that the terms of this amendment were right. There had to be a pause on this project.

We are not talking about cancelling this project, but pausing on it. There are three very strong reasons for doing that. The first reason is that the project has financial flaws. A Scottish Parliament

that works and works well is almost beyond price, but this project contains no guarantees about what that final price will be. With every passing day, we hear different figures. Mr Gorrie was right to say that the price of a pause started off at £1 million. At the meeting on Tuesday, we were told that it would be £2 million. The First Minister now says that it is £3 million. If the cost of drawing a breath is rising by £500,000 a day, who knows what will happen to this building. We must look at the figures and the cost again because, in terms of cost efficiency and cost control, this building is out of control.

A second reason to pause is the concept of the building in almost every regard. I hope that Mr Harper will speak on the environmental issues, which are important and have been neglected. The question of traffic access has not been answered. We were confidently told at the briefing meetings that with 2 million visitors the increase in traffic would make no difference to that end of the High Street. That is nonsense and we must consider that matter again.

The issue of the chamber is essential. I will briefly quote from the report by Mr Miralles. Mr Miralles talks about the chamber as being somewhere where MSPs could embrace each other. I see little sign of that happening here. He complains about the tendency for Parliaments to seat members of the assembly facing a wall. Presiding Officer, you are not a wall and we sit like this so that you may control the debate. Mr Miralles also calls members in the chamber performers. Clearly, he has seen Mr Raffan at work, but most people here are not performers.

We should oppose this on the simple grounds of error in thinking. The building that we are talking about will not make us a Parliament. All the comments that we have heard so far suggest that we will miraculously become a Parliament in two years' time and that the problems we have with the new politics and the style of debate will change because we have a new building. That is not true. We must think about what we should be doing and how we, as men and women, should make ourselves a Parliament and not imagine that a building can do that for us. We must pause, consider the future and the costs, then come back in the autumn and decide where we go. We must not be rushed into this decision, because it could be the wrong decision.

The Minister for Parliament (Mr Tom McCabe): Is it appropriate for me to move the motion now that we extend the debate to 1 o'clock?

The Presiding Officer: Yes.

Mr McCabe: I move, that the debate on the Holyrood project be extended for up to 30 minutes.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that the debate on the Holyrood project be extended for up to 30 minutes.

Motion agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The time limit is still three minutes so that I can get everybody who wants to speak into the debate.

11:07

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab): I chose to make my first speech in this debate because, although I am proud to represent Coatbridge and Chryston here in this Parliament, I also want to be proud of the Parliament that we are shaping for the future. I support the First Minister's motion to move forward with the construction and completion of the building at Holyrood.

Scots are not fooled by the folly of a small number of people who would have us remain with the status quo—a status quo which excludes the people of my constituency from accessing me in a parliamentary environment; a status quo which goes no way towards providing the family-friendly environment that the people of Scotland want; a status quo which strengthens the notions of ivory towers and closed doors in our political processes.

I believe that the people of Scotland do wish to access their representatives in a parliamentary environment and do wish to see family-friendly policies emanate from Parliament and be embodied within it. They do want to see real openness and transparency in government first-hand.

We have the opportunity to achieve progress and establish the people's Parliament, not solely in our policy decisions on the people's priorities, but in the physical environment in which those decisions are made. We should establish a Parliament that provides access to all, regardless of differing abilities, and embraces the Government's priority of inclusion. We should establish a Parliament that seeks to attain environmental excellence that will be hailed as a beacon to others.

In the Parliament we have an unrivalled opportunity to display to the world the excellence that exists in Scottish business, for example, through an arena for Scottish trade and industry exhibits. We could utilise the Parliament building during recess for innovative schemes to encourage young people to take part in the political process and we could use it as a resource for community groups. The Parliament building should make provision for working mothers and fathers. If Safeway can provide creche facilities for parents while they shop, surely we can provide

them for parents while they lobby Government.

These ideals are not possible in our temporary accommodation and a new search for a permanent home will not deliver any increase in quality or value for money. As we have heard, delaying or abandoning the process will have cost implications. Although I have sympathy with people who feel that we should use an old historic building, such buildings exist because of the vision and courage of someone in the past. We are making history with our Parliament: the building should be a sign of our times for future generations.

The Parliament building should accommodate our wishes, should make provision for inclusion, and should reflect the sentiments and views of the Scottish people. We have to accept that the measures that will be required to do that—if we are to build on solid foundations—do not come cheap. Clearly, the original construction cost estimates of 1997 have been exceeded to meet the demands for increased floor space and additional requirements. Is that really the main issue to consider when deciding where the permanent home of our new-found democracy should be based? It has taken 300 years for the Scottish people to have their Parliament returned to them. Their desire is for a Parliament that will reflect and address their needs and aspirations, and that will do so not on a temporary basis or with a make-do mentality.

The people of my constituency of Coatbridge and Chryston, and all the people of Scotland, want a Parliament that will encourage positive and progressive debates and decisions on the issues that affect their daily lives. I believe that they want that process to take place in a building that is fit to reflect the importance of those issues, a Parliament building that will bear the symbols of Scotland's heritage and the aspirations for Scotland's future.

We have a duty to Scotland and its people today, tomorrow and in the next century. That duty involves ensuring that Scotland's Parliament and the Scottish Parliament buildings are a permanent fixture of Scottish life for many generations and many centuries to come.

11:12

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): I speak in support of Mr Gorrie's amendment. I do so because I feel that today MSPs are on a test of trust with the Scottish people—the people in these galleries and the people out beyond. Those people will look keenly at our judgment on where our new Parliament should be and on how much it will cost. The hallmark of what we are discussing should be

prudence and good husbandry, because the Scottish people are entitled to expect no less from this chamber. The question is not what we should have, but why we should have it. If we can answer that second question, MSPs can be at ease with themselves and with the Scottish people, not only today but for future generations.

A Parliament such as the one we seek must have a location, with ancillary facilities, that is suitable for a modern forum of government. That is essential and indisputable. However, the question that cannot be answered—because there is neither sufficient information to do so nor acceptable information about other options—is simply this: does the current proposal for a Parliament building at Holyrood represent the best option?

As Mr Gorrie has indicated, the Scottish people were certainly denied full information about the costs at the time of the devolution referendum. At that time, the figure in the public mind was between £40 million and £50 million. Today, the final estimate is running at approximately £109 million. With a capital cost running at that level, it is unacceptable that MSPs—without any investigation of other options—should endorse such expenditure. If we do, many doctors, nurses, schoolteachers and policemen throughout Scotland will question the wisdom of that decision.

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): On a point of order. I simply cannot hear the lady. I do not know if she is speaking in front of the microphone, but she is almost inaudible. I apologise for interrupting.

The Presiding Officer: That is all right; it was a fair point of order. Can the sound engineers do something?

Miss Goldie: It may be Dr Simpson's loss, I do not know. [*Laughter.*] Is that better, can I be heard now?

Dr Simpson: Yes, thank you.

Miss Goldie: Mr Gorrie's amendment suggests a sensible and practical way forward. It does not seek to halt all progress, nor does it seek to rule out the current Holyrood proposal; but it rightly calls for the brakes to be put on, pending proper investigation of other options. I offer no comment on those options other than to say that they seem worthy of investigation. Until that investigation happens, I cannot see how MSPs can responsibly mandate the expenditure of significant sums of public money when they cannot justify why their decision is the best one.

By instinct, I am a protective soul, and while I shall draw short of accepting Mr Miralles's invitation to embrace the First Minister, I feel an obligation at least to look after him. Unless the

investigation of the other options is made, there is a grave risk that the new Parliament will be identified as a product of self-interested, self-indulgent and profligate MSPs, and Dewar's folly will become a reality. In all seriousness, I think that that would be fair neither to him nor to the people of Scotland. His name should be associated with a Parliament that all of us can be proud of and can defend because we made the best decision based on all the information available, rather than a poor decision based on inadequate information.

11:15

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): The result of today's debate will echo down throughout the history of building and architecture in Scotland for a century—a century that will look to the new building as an example of all that should be aimed for in public building. The building will have seen a century of use by parliamentarians. We have a public and a private responsibility to get it right.

I am speaking to that portion of the motion that calls for delay on one set of very important and compelling grounds. There is every possibility that the principal new building of the century will not live up to what should be expected of it due to imprecise specification, lack of clear direction and the recently whispered willingness to relax the building's energy standards to save money.

That would be the biggest imaginable waste of public money. Embodied energy, or lifetime energy use, is part of the cost of a building. Every pound spent now on energy conservation will be an investment that will pay back a significant proportion of the total cost of the building during its lifetime. We have a duty to make time for a thorough assessment of the energy use of this building and to improve the specifications. We must demand a building that will be an icon for the future and a yardstick of sustainability. In the present climate of opinion and Government's public commitments, which I shall come to, it would be bizarre to settle for anything less.

What has worried me so far about the planning of the project is the apparent secrecy that still surrounds it. The fact that it is a Crown project means that building warrant drawings that would allow us to calculate the lifetime costs of the building need not be produced. This building will be used by the public as well as by members. They have an interest. Public accessibility should mean public accountability. Where are the drawings?

No wind tunnel tests have been done yet despite the well-known windiness of Edinburgh, particularly round Arthur's Seat. Essentially we do not yet know whether the design is viable, although I confess that I like the exterior. If a

child's view of the building is anything to go by, this is the kind of building that a child would love to dash into and explore.

There seems to be no willingness to do everything possible to use Scottish hardwoods, despite the stored elm, sycamore and other hardwoods that would become available from several specialist sources in Scotland, given careful planning now. There is no commitment to the use of recycled materials such as warmcell, which is made from recycled newspaper. There is no excitement, no innovation and no creativity in this building so far.

I have consulted experts such as the Scottish Environmental Design Association, which group has written to Mr McLeish and is not satisfied with his replies. I am reliably informed by them that a confession was made at the inquiry this week that the design team is aiming for only good to excellent in the energy specifications.

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish) rose—

Robin Harper: I will not take any interventions. This building cannot be only good to excellent; it must be beyond excellent. It must be the best building that we can possibly produce. Time spent on improving energy efficiency will repay itself amply. It will almost certainly cost millions of pounds more in the long run to go ahead with the plan as it is. If we can spend £500 million on a block of offices for Westminster MPs and a couple of hundred million pounds on a supermarket, surely the Government will listen to a plea that more time be spent on considering the building, and even that more money be spent on it so that we can fulfil our international obligations, inspire the generation of architects to come, and give Scotland a building that it deserves.

11:19

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): The first Scottish Parliament for 300 years is an historic and memorable event. As befits such an event, we need a new, appropriate home.

The white paper on devolution stated:

"The building the Scottish Parliament occupies must be of such a quality, durability and civic importance as to reflect the Parliament's status and operational needs."

In Enric Miralles we have found an architect who can make those dreams a reality. Anyone who can sit here and say, hand on heart, that the facilities that we have now are satisfactory must surely be of questionable sanity.

I am the first to admit that our office accommodation is very acceptable in the short term, but I am only in that office for a few hours a week. What about the staff who work there all day,

every day? What about disabled visitors? It may be pleasant now to use three buildings and mingle with the tourists in the summer sun, but what about in December, January and February when the snow is six inches deep? Will it be such a nice little stroll then?

One of the great opportunities when creating a great building is the chance to rectify all the things that are wrong with existing buildings. Is our current home environmentally friendly? I think not. Environmental issues will be a major consideration in the new building. Energy efficiency and environmentally conscious design principles will result in more economic construction costs, which is of prime importance, not least because it can also lead to reduced maintenance and energy consumption costs. Water will be used more economically and waste will be minimised and recycled. Natural lighting and ventilation via windows and a passive cooling system will ensure that everyone who uses the building is comfortable and will reduce the incidence of ailments such as sick building syndrome.

For me, however, of prime importance is the need to provide a building that is accessible to everyone. The design for the new Parliament is compliant with Disability Scotland's guidelines. Compliance covers not only access facilities, but signage, interior design, pedestrian and vehicular access and assistance for people who are hard of hearing, the visually impaired and the infirm.

As a brand-new Parliament whose members seek to formulate a new type of government, the new building must be an exemplary model of access for all, irrespective of disability. The Scottish Parliament last sat 300 years ago. How long do we want this one to last? To use my mother's cliché, "You only get what you pay for." If we do not invest now, how many years will it be until we are examining designs for another new Parliament? What would the cost be then?

All members know how frustrating it is to be here and not to be able to pass legislation because we have not yet taken on our full powers. What about the frustration of the staff who work here in cramped conditions, and of the public who are being disfranchised because we are not allowing them access? Let us waste no more time. Let us get down to this project now and get into our new building as quickly as possible.

11:22

Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP): My concern is not so much about the materials or cost of the building, but that we ensure that we have a Parliament that is open and accessible to all members of our society, no matter that they have a disability. It seems, however, that some

members think that if we say that the Parliament is accessible, it is. I am afraid that there are a number of concerns about access for the disabled and to the Holyrood site.

At Tuesday's meeting with the architect and Scottish Office officials, I raised the issue not of access within the Parliament, but of access to the Parliament site. The transport problems that will undoubtedly occur will have a disproportionate effect on people with a disability. We know from comments made by one of the Scottish Office officials that one of the ideas that is being considered to ensure that disabled people can get to the Parliament is a shuttle bus service. I am sorry, but that is an unacceptable standard to set for a new Parliament from the start.

The Parliament will have a secure area for dropping off VIPs, but there are no plans for an area near the Parliament to drop off disabled people or the elderly. I am sure that many members of this Parliament will agree that it is more important that disabled people can be dropped off at the Parliament than that the odd dignitary who may choose to visit us can be.

There are also concerns about the interior of the building. It will be a cambered chamber, like this one. The same access problems will exist as here. How does someone with a wheelchair go from this end of the Parliament to the other end of the Parliament, without having to go down to the front or round the back? On Tuesday, that question could not be answered.

The Presiding Officer's area will be elevated and will be accessed by stairs. At the heart of our Parliament, there will be an area that someone with a disability will be unable to access. When that point was raised, Scottish Office officials stated that they were aware of the problem and were looking into the possibility of an elevating platform. When I heard that suggestion, I must confess that the vision of the Blackpool organist coming up through the stage floor went through my mind.

Already we are considering adapting a building that should be built to the standard that anyone with a disability, whether they be the Presiding Officer, a member or a member of the public, can access any part of. The Parliament should be built to ensure that, during the next 200 years, every member of our society, no matter that they have a disability, can access the building and every part of the building. We are talking about a Parliament that may last for 200 years. What is two months if we ensure that we provide a Parliament that includes all members of our society?

11:26

Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland)

(Con): I will be brief, as I know that many people wish to contribute to this debate. I support Mr Gorrie's amendment with the benefit of the experience of having builders in my home.

The eventual home of the Scottish Parliament is a decision for which we as parliamentarians will be held to account, not just from an architectural standpoint, but by those who will visit and watch what we do. I am willing to bet that this is the only time that most of us will ever make a decision on where this Parliament will be situated. Certainly, I do not have experience in the matter, but I would welcome the time to look at the situation anew.

I will leave aside the arguments about whether we were duped by the announcement of the initial cost price; whether it was £40 million or £50 million and whether it included things such as VAT, fees or demolition costs. I intend no slight to the then Secretary of State for Scotland who is now First Minister. He is not by nature a devious man. I felt for him when he said that he was drookit last night, but he could easily have taken a remedy—an umbrella.

Yesterday, I noticed the obvious addition to the chamber. Gone were the two box files for Mr Henry McLeish, from which it was easier to read his notes, and instead we had a solid wooden lectern, in like wood to the desks we occupy. The amount of fiddling to the microphones showed that it was clearly an unforeseen addition. That is the shape of things to come. There will be constant additions, amendments, little extras and forward planning for advances in technology in whichever building the Parliament makes its home. That all costs money—money which, as constituents will tell us, would be better spent on things other than a monument to anyone's ego. My own particular bid would be for the upgrade of the A77 between Mallettsheugh and Fenwick, a notorious black spot that is rightly known as the killer road.

However, our present office accommodation is far from ideal. Is the road building outside our building a coincidence, or is it to hasten our departure? I have not had the delights of visiting the ministerial floor with its red carpet. This chamber, as has been said, would benefit from some alterations to improve access for the disabled and the cost of those alterations would be considerably less than the proposals for Holyrood. I am concerned about the financial aspects of this proposal. In this day and age who would not be?

11:29

Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): I would like to be able to support the Holyrood project going ahead immediately. I probably have less concern about the Holyrood project than some other members, but enough to say that

delay is prudent.

We are not constructing a building that will stand for 10, 20 or 50 years; potentially, we are constructing a building that will stand for hundreds of years. We must make sure that we get it right.

In a previous existence not too far from here as a local councillor in the City of Edinburgh, I served on the transportation and planning committees. From the beginning, there was much concern among the people who serve Edinburgh about the Holyrood site. There was a definite feeling that we were bounced into accepting Holyrood. The vast majority of City of Edinburgh councillors thought that Calton hill was a better situation. As Donald Gorrie said, having a boulevard with a Parliament on Calton hill that is accessible in terms of transport and for people with disabilities is very attractive. It is unfortunate that that site is not the one that we accepted.

However, I am not totally against the idea of Holyrood. We are at an historic point in our nation's history. It is a time for us to be bold and adventurous, but also to get it right. I am not saying that Holyrood is the wrong site; I am saying that members of this Parliament have enough questions about the project for us to take stock. We should examine the costs and the materials, as well as accessibility and transport, to which I shall refer.

I am concerned about the inadequate transport impact assessment studies that we have seen. Like Mr Russell, I am concerned that the project team said that a Parliament could be built at Holyrood, which is next to a palace, the Dynamic Earth exhibition, the new offices of *The Scotsman*, new flats and other developments, which will attract 2 million people a year, but that that would not mean more cars at any of the junctions. I am sorry, but I sat on a transport committee for four years and in that time I managed to work out that if 2 million people were put into an area of half a square mile, there would be congestion at some junctions.

We do not have the full transport picture. I say to the First Minister and to the project team that this is an ideal opportunity for us to build a Parliament that befits what we do. We—the men and women of this chamber—are the Parliament. We could meet in a hut, if we did it in the right spirit and with the right soul, the right briefing, the right intelligence and the right passion in our bellies for our country—that is what is important. It is right that we construct a splendid building, wherever that happens to be, but it is also right that we use it to show symbolically that we are moving into a new century. One of the things about that new century is that we must put in place transport systems that work for the people of this city and for the people of Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: Margaret, you must finish.

Mrs Smith: One other point that I must make on behalf of the taxpayers of Edinburgh is that all members would give their eye-teeth to have the Parliament sited in their constituency. We should listen to Andrew Wilson and take the Parliament round the cities and towns of Scotland. We must not leave it to the taxpayers and the councillors of Edinburgh to find the funding to put in place the transport to get people to the Parliament, otherwise the Parliament will suffer.

11:34

Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab): I took the opportunity on Tuesday to be briefed by the architectural and client teams involved with the Holyrood project. I went to that briefing with an open mind and came away determined that the way forward would be to vote for the continuation of the project. That view is supported by a constituent of mine in this week's issue of the *Kilmarnock Standard*.

The briefing enlightened the attending MSPs about the reasons for the cost increase, which were identified as an increase in circulation space for the movement of people; the provision of appropriate accommodation and facilities for all those working in, or visiting, the Parliament; the cost of meeting fully the requirements of disability legislation; taking account of the best currently available building standards; and anticipating future improvements.

The amendment in the name of Donald Gorrie makes no reference to those important matters, nor does it address the financial penalties that may be incurred if it is approved. The accommodation that is currently available to Parliament is not wholly suitable. It is not barrier-free and has high security costs, because of the number of sites. The heating of separate buildings is not cost-efficient. The adaptations to date are short term and would require further expenditure to meet regulations, and the accommodation does not meet the needs of staff in the Parliament's employ.

The deliberations of a special committee would further delay the provision of a suitable Parliament building for Scotland for the next century and beyond. It is my view—and I hope that all members will agree—that if the Parliament is to meet the needs of the Scottish people, its facilities must be barrier-free. I accept that everything must be done to ensure that costs are controlled, but that should not exclude any group or individual from participating in Scotland's democracy.

Today we have the opportunity to move closer to delivering a barrier-free, family-friendly, inclusive

building, in which we as parliamentarians will serve the people of Scotland.

11:36

Fergus Ewing (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP): As the representative of the people of Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber, I would naturally prefer the Parliament to be situated in Inverness. However, I am prepared to concede that that will not be possible without adequate transport links to Heathrow and the rest of the world.

I am sure that all members will join me in thanking the Church of Scotland for negotiating with the Scottish Office, which is also to be commended, to make this chamber available to the people of Scotland.

Two sets of issues are becoming confused in this debate: issues relating to the choice of site, and issues relating to the building and, in particular, the chamber. I want to speak out in defence of this chamber, because it is an excellent forum. Last week my colleague Mary Scanlon arranged a visit by a group of people from Inverness. Almost to a person, they expressed their approval for this chamber, because of the sense of history, the ambience, the atmosphere, the tradition and the sense of occasion that inform and—perhaps—raise the quality of our contributions to debates.

Three factors must be considered when we contemplate a move to another chamber: the needs of the press, the needs of the public and the needs of members. I understand that the press in this chamber can see virtually every member except, perhaps, one or two Conservative members; I make no comment as to whether that is an advantage or a disadvantage. I understand that they can see members' reactions and expressions during debates, and even members passing sweeties to one another. That is part of the democratic process.

The arguments about the lack of facilities are unrealistically exaggerated. The First Minister was not here to accept Mrs McIntosh's kind offer of an umbrella to prevent him from becoming drookit the next time that it rains, but I am sure that, if pushed, we can have a whip-round among SNP members to arrange one—in the spirit of non-partisan co-operation. I have never seen the High Street covered with 6 in of snow; sadly, we have not seen 6 in of snow on Cairn Gorm, where, I hope, the Cairn Gorm funicular railway will shortly be situated.

In its report on possible sites, Halcrow Fox and Associates Ltd said that of the four options, it favoured Calton hill. We know that the attitude of the First Minister was ABC—anywhere but Calton

hill. He has disclaimed ownership of the phrase "nationalist shibboleth", and we now believe that the unwanted authorship of that phrase belongs to Brian Wilson, who is not here—I express no opinion as to whether that is an advantage or a disadvantage.

I want to voice one thought that might be unwelcome to members of the Labour party who sit in this Parliament. I believe that any new Parliament building will hasten progress towards full independence for Scotland. Naturally, I welcome that. Perhaps, therefore, the intelligent Labour members—I am sure that they form the vast majority—will reflect that if we were to stay here, which is one of the options under Donald Gorrie's amendment, it might help slow down the separatist march, as Labour members would see it, towards independence.

In conclusion, I wish to echo your words, Sir David, about this Parliament being a kitten, which we want, without any genetic modification, to see transformed into a proud Scottish lion, independent and free.

11:40

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): Lyndsay McIntosh was perfectly correct in trying to focus our minds on the basic issue: cost. The Holyrood option clearly has to be considered, but it is worth bandying about a few of the figures, a term which I use advisedly. When the project was first mooted in 1997, various figures between £10 million and £40 million were quoted. I fully accept that those figures were never likely to be realistic. The figure of £50 million—plus VAT and fees, of course—was later quoted. I do not think that I am alone in thinking that the question of fees and VAT was mentioned sotto voce.

The product that we are likely to receive in the end has many pleasing aspects. Like many members, I would take issue with the design and style of the chamber—clearly something that will require to be examined again. I am sure that, in the end, a serious compromise can be reached.

I must return to the question of cost. Why, when the figure of £50 million plus fees plus VAT was mooted, was it considered that 16,000 sq m would have been adequate? Clearly, that would not have been adequate to achieve what we wanted—a Parliament that could house members and staff adequately. The appropriate space is now considered to be 23,000 sq m. Why was consideration not given to the essential corridor space? There are far too many unanswered questions, and the inescapable conclusion to which one is drawn is that the First Minister, whose enthusiasm for the project is entirely praiseworthy, acted in a somewhat impetuous

manner. Regrettably, I would say—and I seek not to be agist—it was a case of a not-quite-so-young man in a hurry. That was unfortunate.

If we had looked at the matter in a more measured, leisurely manner, we would have found a more acceptable conclusion for the people of Scotland. They are wary of the question of costs, and are well aware, as are many of us, of the way in which capital projects can overrun. We do not want the existing figure of £109 million to be exceeded. Regrettably, we have to draw breath and examine the matter in a cogent and reasoned manner. What Mr Gorrie is suggesting should be commended. We are not saying that we will not go to Holyrood. We are saying that we should examine in detail the options and the costs—there would, of course, be costs were we not to go to Holyrood—and then make a clear, reasoned decision, going where we go, knowing what the costs are likely to be and assuring the people of Scotland that they will get value for money.

11:44

Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): Today's speeches in support of Mr Gorrie's amendment have been disappointing. It is appropriate that we have the opportunity to discuss these matters, and I welcome it. However, Mr Gorrie was a bit disingenuous in some of his arguments, not least when he said that his proposal was "not anti-Holyrood". He went on to justify his position in two ways; it was clear that it was an anti-Holyrood proposal. First, he spoke in favour of the Calton hill proposal, which could have legitimacy only at the expense of Holyrood. Secondly, he justified his position by citing a paper from Mr James Simpson, which he circulated to all members this morning—Mr Simpson advocated New College as a potential site for the Parliament.

It is quite clear that Mr Gorrie's position is anti-Holyrood. I am happy to put my cards on the table and say that I am pro-Holyrood. It is a good proposal. It may not be the best site in Edinburgh, but there are very few sites in central Edinburgh, either new or old, which will not cause the traffic congestion that Mr Gorrie mentioned. We could site the Parliament at the Gyle, which would be handy because of the train station there, but it would not be appropriate. The setting of the Parliament is important.

I accept that cost is an issue, but it should not be the overriding issue. I listened to Bill Aitken's remarks. We are building a Parliament that we hope will be there for hundreds of years. I am not into the national virility symbol argument, but the new Parliament does have symbolic importance. Whether we get new politics remains to be seen, so I shall not use the term—but a new millennium and a new democracy in Scotland merit a new

building.

I might horrify the First Minister by saying that I was very disappointed when, as Secretary of State for Scotland, he announced that we would move away from Calton hill. For me it had been the focus of years of campaigning for a Scottish Parliament. We prepared Calton hill in 1979 and campaigning was based around that building. So I was disappointed, but I have now come to the conclusion that wherever we talk about—Calton hill, New College or remaining here—we do not need an old building. For new politics, for the new democracy, we need a new building.

Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): Does the member accept that many of us who will be voting for the amendment are not wholly opposed to the Holyrood site, subject to amendments, and are in favour of a new building?

Mike Watson: If Richard Lochhead suggests that, I accept it; so much the better. I am sure that there is no uniformity of view within the parties that will vote for the amendment and against the substantive motion. There is a large element of political opportunism—it is an opportunity to have a go at the First Minister and the Executive, which is unfortunate.

I believe that we will ultimately take the decision to settle at Holyrood, because it will be shown to be the best site in the circumstances, and there is no benefit in delaying that decision. I listened to Michael Matheson's speech; again, he spoke passionately about the needs of people with disabilities. That is a very important issue. It is one of the reasons why this building and the others that we are currently using are not suitable and why we should clear out of them at the first opportunity. I am therefore opposed to any delay that would cause us to remain here longer than necessary.

I fear that adopting the amendment would put us into a spiral, so that it would be not just a two-month delay but considerably longer than that. Although everyone has done well in preparing this building for us, it is not suitable in the long term; neither is the office accommodation. We need to move ahead today on the basis of the motion.

11:49

Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP): The issue is being discussed on party political lines today, which is sad. Any rejection of the Holyrood site appears as an attack on the Miralles design—that is not the case. I was born and brought up in Edinburgh; I remember well when the Scottish and Newcastle building was built and the chaos that that caused in that area of the High Street. I should be fascinated to know how many members have taken a walk down the High Street

to the site and back up Holyrood Road and have taken into account the feelings of the people of Dumbiedykes, for instance. I remember when the extension to Moray House College was built on the far side of Holyrood Road and the traffic chaos that that caused.

The traffic impact study that has been made available to us appears to say nothing about Dynamic Earth—to which Margaret Smith referred—and nothing about the 2 million people who are expected to visit the Parliament. It claims that there will be no traffic problems. Anyone who comes down Abbey hill at half-past 8 in the morning, as I did today—under the bridge and to the bottom of the High Street—will see that there are major congestion problems. We should support the amendment to allow us to make proper decisions and to take into account what is necessary before we proceed with a new building.

The other day, I went with an open mind to see Mr Miralles and the project team. I asked them two questions, neither of which they could answer satisfactorily, although I thought that they were fairly simple questions at this stage, with work about to move into the construction phase. I asked how long the roof would last and when the first major refurbishment of the exterior walls was expected. I received no reply. They had no answers. Labour members who were there know that that was the case. I worry deeply because we are investing in a building that is supposed to last for many years, perhaps 100 years.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): Will Mr Quinan give way?

Mr Quinan: No, I will not give way.

That historic building should last and be a focus for the country, as the Sydney Opera House is a focus for the people of Australia and as the new Reichstag is a focus for the people of a united Germany. That is what we are aiming for.

It concerns me that we are taking this decision in impatience. If we get it wrong, the mistake will be there in bricks, mortar, sheet steel and plastic for us and for those who come after us to walk by or walk into each year for the next four years. It will be an indictment of our impatience if we proceed with the proposal without proper consideration. I urge all members who are not supporting the amendment to take a walk down St Mary's Street, or through the Cowgate and down Holyrood Road, to the bottom of the Royal Mile and back again, and then tell me whether the development will have a major impact on traffic.

11:52

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): I have great difficulty with this subject. As a Glasgow member, I

come to it with no preconceived notions and had no detailed knowledge of the locations in Edinburgh before my arrival here, bar my occasional visits to the High Court, the Court of Session and associated buildings. I have considerable qualms about the way in which the issue has arisen and is being debated today.

The First Minister told us that there would be a free vote among Labour members, but I think that we all anticipate that, at the end of the debate, the Labour members who vote against the motion—if any—will be fewer than can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The SNP, which is apparently to have a whipped vote on the issue, tells us that it is considering the matter from various perspectives, that there is nothing at all political about it, and that it is acting in the best interests of Scotland.

Those are the wrong ways in which to approach the matter. It is wrong that it should be presented to us as an Executive motion; we should have had a vote on a motion by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. I speak as a member of that body, and regard my role as being something of a trustee for the Parliament, subject to taking a steer from the Parliament on a matter such as this.

I have considerable qualms about our present position. Whatever the rights and wrongs of Donald Dewar's original decision—and I have immense respect for Donald's artistic knowledge and feeling for this kind of thing, which go far beyond anything that I can offer the Parliament—we are faced with a *fait accompli* in a situation in which there is no stark decision to be made. I do not know the reason for the hurry. A letter from the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland has been circulated to members. It concludes:

"It would be prudent . . . when end-user (MSP) adjustments are rightly being sought to refine this design, to ensure that a realistic time scale and budget are established which recognise the high quality specification demanded of the project, and the inevitable adjustments which will be required during its realisation. Members of the architectural profession have felt for some time that both budget and time scale would need to be reviewed for a variety of reasons if these aims were to be met."

I take that letter quite seriously because the advice that it contains comes from an independent source. At the same time, I thought that Mike Watson made a valid point when he said that a two-month delay would not be enough to resolve the problems. We are faced with on-going costs and difficulties in proceeding with the project.

At the end of the day, the decision is one for Parliament, not for the Executive. I am trying to come to a view on a matter about which information is growing by the day. I do not have architectural knowledge, nor do I have a detailed method of assessing the financial issues, although

the financial issues are not, I think, key things that ultimately have to be decided here.

I do not like one or two aspects of the project. I am not satisfied with the 135 parking spaces and the justification that has been given for them—we are now supposed to be in a rather greener environment. I am not happy with the public access that is proposed for the new building. Here, there are 350 seats, which have been pretty much filled day after day since the commencement of the Parliament, and that is a good thing. I like this site, I like being in the heart of the city and it is appropriate that Parliament should be in the heart of the city. I am not convinced that, if we move down to Holyrood, the public will have the same feel for it. There are difficulties with the walking route and, as Margaret Smith observed, there are still unresolved accessibility difficulties. The traffic report that we received this morning effectively said that things are yet to be done, and an intensive and on-going study to ensure that accessibility measures are in place is not yet being carried out. We are not in a position to make decisions on the matter.

I will listen to the rest of the debate. I am not giving members my opinion at the moment, but I have considerable qualms about the way in which things are being done and the direction in which the project is going. It is important that we get things right. This is a major decision, with which we will have to live for a long time to come.

11:56

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak on the issue of the permanent home for the new, and first democratically elected, Scottish Parliament. Much debate has taken place during the past few years about the Parliament's location, and after that debate it has been decided that it will be located in Holyrood.

Fergus Ewing said that he would like the Parliament to be situated in his constituency, and indeed there were bids from people in various areas—one of them not too far from me—who lost out. The decision has been taken, and the First Minister outlined this morning just how he arrived at that decision. We will locate in Edinburgh and we will—I hope—locate in Holyrood.

I am proud and honoured to have been elected by the people of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth to represent them in this new Parliament. In the speeches that I made during my election campaign, I made it clear to the electorate that I supported the building of a new Parliament complex, not for the benefit of its members, but for the benefit of the people of Scotland.

We offered the voters a new beginning. In my

area and elsewhere, we promised change. The proposals for the new building have been endorsed by the people of Scotland. When they voted, they voted by a majority for parties that were offering a new Parliament complex.

The people of Scotland did not vote for a "mak a fool aw" Parliament. That is how people in Kilsyth would describe the way in which we are going about things today and some of the suggestions for a solution that we can mak do with. They voted for a Parliament that was new because they wanted something better. They deserve, and we should provide, a Parliament suitable for the new millennium.

Enric Miralles and his team have designed a complex that we should all be proud of. Costs are important, and we should be aware that the public want value for money. However, they have been misled into believing that the costs are rocketing out of control. That is not the case, and I was pleased to hear Brian Taylor confirm to the listeners of Radio Scotland this morning that the figure of £90 million had been in the public domain since last year.

If members accepted the answer given by the Holyrood project team that the increased costs can be attributed, in the main, to changes and improvements in design specification, I believe that they would be accepting the facts.

The shape of the chamber has excited the minds of members, some positively and some negatively. The parliamentary complex has been designed with access at its heart, not as an afterthought and not as something that can be adapted at a later date, but as a building that will hold no barriers. I did not recognise the comments that Michael Matheson made about access in the new building. Nor did I recognise Lloyd Quinan's comments about answers that he allegedly did not receive about the costs of the building and the lifespan of the roofing and exterior walls.

The proposals before us would have Scotland leading the world, with a Parliament building that had open access for all people. It is not unthinkable to suggest that that building should be used for other functions, as one of my colleagues suggested earlier.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): May I ask for a point of information?

Cathie Craigie: I have no intention of giving way. I am sure that Ms MacDonald will want to speak later; she can make her point of information in her own time.

The building will be constructed with taxpayers' money, and Scottish taxpayers should be able to use it. The new chamber is an exemplar. It caters for everyone: whether we have physical or

sensory difficulties, it will hold no barriers. I hope that the corporate body does not make any changes to that design.

The points made by some members about the shape of the chamber show that those members are driven by self-interest. Their concern is not about what the building can do for the people of Scotland, but about what it can do for them, for their inflated egos, for their desire to display their debating skills and to be seen by the press.

The people of Scotland voted for something new; not for a talking shop, but for a Parliament of and for the people. Members must get their heads out of the sand, or down from the dizzy heights of publicity, and stop wasting taxpayers' money. The meter is running for every week and month of delay, and it is costing us money. Let us get the new building up and running. Let us get to work for the people who depend on us to improve the quality of their lives. Let us get down to the business that we were sent here to do. We must agree to the proposals and give Scotland a cluster of buildings—as the architect described them—of quality and dignity that will serve us well into the new millennium and beyond.

12:02

Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP): It is sad that, yet again, we are debating what should be a cross-party matter but has been reduced to either backing or opposing the Executive.

I instinctively agree with the case that Scotland's new Parliament should be in a new building that reflects modern Scotland. I like Señor Miralles's design—in fact, I adore Señor Miralles's design. *[Laughter.]* We will not pursue that.

I have no problem about drawing on the lessons of other countries, but I worry about the Executive's haste to proceed and its unwillingness properly to share decision-making on this matter. I have spent a large part of my professional career assisting communities to initiate and control construction projects. Voluntary groups in communities expect—and rightly demand—full information on which to base their decisions. The members of this Parliament have not been afforded the courtesy of that opportunity.

A press report this morning quoted an unnamed member of the Executive as saying that if the Parliament agreed to delay construction, it would cost £1 million. I have learned this morning that the costs under the penalty clauses might amount to £2 million. The more important question is what it will cost us to allow this project to go ahead ill-prepared. We are being asked to approve a project that will probably cost in excess of £100 million with less information than would be available to a local authority building a community

centre.

The information that we have been given is long on timetable but short on cost analysis. That suggests that more weight is being given to bringing the project in on time—and to prestige—than to getting it right in facility at appropriate cost. The papers circulated to us raised many questions, and I will submit them to the corporate body, whatever the outcome of this debate.

I will support the amendment. If it is passed, and Holyrood emerges from the process as the preferred option, it will be a better project, a better building and—more important—the decision will have been made by this Parliament.

12:05

Bristow Muldoon (Livingston) (Lab): I want to comment on Fergus Ewing's speech, which was one of the most interesting made today. Fergus advised us that the new Parliament would hasten Scottish independence, yet today he is advocating delay. What are the Scottish National party these days? Are they fainthearts rather than bravehearts?

The Conservatives' approach does not surprise me. What does surprise me about today's debate is the lack of ambition that we are hearing from the nationalists. The SNP wants Scotland to take a leap into the economic dark, but is not prepared to put its money where its mouth is and help establish a Parliament that is fit for the next millennium and the people of Scotland. Instead, it is prepared to support a proposal from Donald Gorrie for the sake of a couple of cheap headlines.

The Parliament has a clear choice between the vision of an exciting new building for Scotland that can take us forward into the next century, and the penny-pinching parochialism of Donald Gorrie. As Mike Watson commented earlier, Donald Gorrie's position is anti-Holyrood. To delay today is to delay forever, and the Parliament will never move forward.

Mike Russell advises us that the SNP is employing a party whip today because it is united in its position. If it is united, why is it bothering with a whip? MSPs from that party would vote automatically for its position. The reality, as Richard Lochhead and, I think, Linda Fabiani have told us, is that many of its members support the proposal and that the whip is needed to whip them into line.

The vision that has been put before us by Enric Miralles, which Donald Dewar's motion asks us to support, is a vision of a Parliament for Scotland—a Parliament that will be accessible to all of our people, to all of our communities and will allow them to engage with us. It will act as a focus for

schools throughout Scotland and for visitors to Edinburgh who want to see the new Scottish Parliament and the vision of a new Scottish democracy for the next millennium.

As Mike Watson said, if we delay today, we will delay forever, and it will be the first of many delays. I appeal to the SNP members who support the Holyrood project to unite with us behind an inspired design that will give Scotland a Parliament building fit for the new democracy that we are taking forward to the next millennium.

12:07

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): The Scottish Conservatives accepted the verdict of the Scottish people when they voted for the Scottish Parliament—and a new building—in the 1997 referendum. However, at that time we were told that the cost of the building would be between £10 million and £40 million. The Scottish Conservatives argued that there would not be much change out of £100 million. We were ridiculed for making those statements, and told that we were scaremongering. Well, today it can be seen that we were right.

We also raised the possibility that other costs might be added on to the Parliament. We said that the cost of the ministerial team would be three times that of the Scottish ministers in 1997. The First Minister has excelled himself and has gone to four times that figure. We believed that the revenue costs could rise to £100 million—we were told that that was not possible. Donald Gorrie's comments today suggest that the Presiding Officer's department could cost £12 million. That must put us well on the way to reaching the £100 million revenue costs that we were forecasting back in 1997.

Some in this chamber might say, "That is typical of you Conservatives. You are obsessed with costs." We are obsessed with costs, but it is not our money that the Parliament is spending—it is taxpayers' money. We have got to get every bit of value out of the money that the Parliament spends. Like Lyndsay McIntosh, I would rather that some of the money was spent on upgrading the A77.

Tommy Sheridan made a passionate plea for Glasgow's housing yesterday. Perhaps some of the money could be spent on upgrading housing. That would be good value for money, but spending this amount of money on a building because someone has decided on the Holyrood site and that the new building is necessary for Scotland's image is questionable.

We will support a new Parliament building, but we must consider every aspect of it. Donald Gorrie's motion gives us the opportunity to do that.

I cannot see why the target date of 2001 has to be held to so firmly. I hope that the building will last us for 100 or 150 years—perhaps 200 years—so let us get it right and give Scotland something to be proud of. We must ensure that every MSP can take pride in the decision that we make today.

12:11

Ms Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill (Lab)): I am very sympathetic to Mr Gorrie's concerns about members' visibility when they are speaking in debates. Mr Gorrie may like to know that, during his speech, I counted at least eight people in the segment of the chamber that he inhabits who had to turn round in their chairs and crane their necks to see him. The problem of visibility is not unique to any future chamber; we might like to consider it today.

Fergus Ewing *rose—*

Ms Ferguson: No Mr Ewing, I am not taking interventions; I have just started.

Given the fact that the SNP has decided that its members cannot have independence of thought today, I thought that it was a bit rich for Mr Ewing to lecture us this morning on independence. SNP members should consider that.

I am delighted that we are having this debate, because it gives us the opportunity to show our confidence in the success of this Parliament and in the new Scotland that we will help to shape. When we consider the proposed design, we must take into account the needs of MSPs and their staff and the needs of the Parliament staff.

The Parliament also needs to be open and accessible to all. At the moment, visitors have to walk up and down the High Street to find the seven buildings that make up the Parliament and, while adaptations have been made to those buildings to provide disabled access, the distance that has to be travelled between the buildings makes accessibility very difficult. I am sure that that problem is being addressed in the proposals for the new building.

I have been impressed by the efforts of the Parliament staff who have adapted the buildings that we are using to provide us with a temporary home, but by no yardstick or criterion can this arrangement be anything other than temporary. We may have just about enough committee rooms for all our new committees, but the committees will be open to the public—presumably if there is any space left. There is nowhere for members to meet their constituents; nor is there a crèche in our family-friendly Parliament.

The design for the new building is bold, innovative and modern; the building will be both functional and a symbol of all that we want the

Scottish Parliament to be. The historic site that has been chosen presents us with an historic opportunity to leave for future generations an inheritance of which they can be proud. The Parliament at Holyrood will reinvigorate the Canongate and give new life to Holyrood park.

Members have stated, rightly, our duty to ensure that funds from the public purse are used wisely. I am sure that our colleagues on the corporate body—the people whom we have made responsible for the new building—will carry out that task diligently. Remaining here on the Mound would be a folly that future generations would not understand. As a Glaswegian, I am very fond of the tenement—that peculiarly Scottish form of housing—but do we really want to go down in history as the new Parliament that decided to hold its meetings, for the rest of its life, up a close? I do not think so.

12:14

Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife (SNP)): At the beginning of the debate on where the Parliament should be sited, I, like many others, favoured the Calton hill site. However, things have moved on, decisions have been made and important milestones have been reached.

Perhaps the most important milestone is the perception, widely held in Scotland, that we are already located at Holyrood; that name, in wider Scotland, is already deeply rooted in the mindset as synonymous with the Scottish Parliament. Much of Scotland has accepted, rightly or wrongly, that Holyrood should be the site of the Parliament.

If the amendment wins today—and, rightly, it should—it will need to be explained carefully to the Scottish people. If the First Minister's motion is defeated, the position should be accepted as one of pragmatism, common sense, and, hopefully, in the end, consensus. Scotland deserves no less. Nobody can doubt that incorrect decisions have been hurriedly taken at crucial moments. Frankly, the whole process has been handled extremely badly in terms of public relations, design consultation, and finance. There is a perception that it has been a complete boorach.

There can be no doubt that serious and difficult questions remain to be answered about the way in which this project has been managed from the outset. The key decision takers must answer those questions. I dread to think what derision might have been visited on councillors if this had happened in a local authority. In my former life as a Scottish Office employee and as leader of Perth and Kinross Council, I was required to make proper account for my actions. The key decision-takers here should be no different.

I have considered this issue long and hard,

followed the media coverage, attended the briefing events, read all the briefing material that I could find, and listened to the speeches today. None of it has made a decision any easier.

On balance, I am still for Holyrood, but I have to be certain that the outstanding concerns have been properly addressed. Scotland deserves no less. Donald Gorrie's amendment gives us the opportunity to secure the greatest level of support possible for Holyrood. Those who are committed to Holyrood should have nothing to fear from a further delay to ensure that others can be convinced. If it is the best site, its merits will shine through. Scotland needs a new Parliament building that is not hindered by the baggage of the past, is truly significant, and allows us to recognise ourselves for what we are.

12.17

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston)

(Lab): I hope to create a debate that will rise to the eloquence and value of the words of Mike Russell and the young pretender, Duncan Hamilton. We need to create a Parliament that is fit for the language that they will deploy in future years—hopefully over at least one session

This debate is about the kind of vision that we have for Scotland. It is about the kind of symbols we want our buildings to be. I have left a city where any debate on the creation of the unique building, the City Chambers, would have been as narrow and short-sighted as this debate has been in parts. The one unifying symbol of Glasgow is the City Chambers—whether one is inside it, or like my old adversary on many occasions, Tommy Sheridan, outside it. It strikes me that that debate about symbols is worth promoting.

I cannot imagine our European counterparts having such a narrow debate. I cannot imagine that the people of Barcelona, who have aspirations for their city and a concept of nationhood and identity, would have such a narrow debate. I cannot imagine the Parisians having this kind of narrow debate.

Unfortunately, the Scottish cringe has emerged once more in this chamber. People have claimed that they are interested only in small matters; honourable as such matters are, they could just as well be determined by the corporate body. The points of detail that members of other parties have raised are legitimate concerns, but members could easily have raised them through the proper process, rather than questioning the overall project.

We developed the new Hampden because we wanted the national stadium to stand for the whole of Scotland, rather than for two football clubs in Glasgow, that perhaps represented other—

religious and historical—traditions. This chamber represents some of those traditions. Let us try to create something new.

Personally, I want to have the opportunity to recreate in the Sunday newspapers a column called Frankie goes to Holyrood—if we do not go there I will not be able to fill any column space.

As that column seemed to be inspired by my record collection, I will conclude with a point from the Waterboys, who had a great song that, unfortunately, seemed to be evident in today's debate. I say this to Mike Russell, as he believes in words of eloquence, and I hope that Duncan Hamilton aspires to reach the standard of speech that I have made today. You saw the crescent, Mike. We saw the whole of the moon.

The Presiding Officer: If all members make speeches of such brevity, many more will have a chance to speak.

12:20

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife)

(Con): Although I am a supporter of the second best site that is Holyrood, I am keen to give my support to Donald Gorrie's motion. I say that the site is second best because I feel that, although the First Minister commented on Donaldson's school, that site has been too easily dismissed.

It is important that, when we consider Holyrood, we take account of the impact on traffic. I was born and bred in Meadowbank and played most of my youth football—badly—in Holyrood park, so I am well acquainted with the environs. I also spent some time as a marketing consultant to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which might explain why, within the choices that are available, I favour the Parliament being located in Holyrood.

I also favour some prudence in how the project is carried out. I am not convinced of the merits of the design. When I first saw that it featured upturned boats, I felt that it had been designed, mistakenly, for a location in Leith. However, I might be converted. It is important that we bring transparency to the process and give the Parliament some say in how things progress, particularly as regards the important matter of the chamber.

I mentioned Donaldson's school. Were we to pass the amendment, I hope that it might be possible to investigate that site which, I should explain for the benefit of members who are not familiar with it, is a fine example of Jacobean-style architecture in Edinburgh's west end. It has many advantages, not least of which is its West Lothian sandstone, which might be important to members from that area. It is close to Haymarket station, which makes it the only proposed site that is near

a main railway station. It is on the road to Glasgow—some members would say that that is the best road in Edinburgh—which means that traffic could be more easily handled. The school is surrounded by fine grasslands that could be developed with buildings beneath the turf.

The school is a majestic building and features a quadrangle in which the chamber could be located in a way that would bring the old together with the new, similar to what Germany has recently done with the Reichstag—although that was rather more expensive. Donaldson's has a connection with the Reichstag, of course: the Kaiser's zeppelin blew out the windows of the school in 1916. To that extent, there is a European link.

Not only the architecture, but the surroundings, are important. In the environs are curry houses, public houses and offies—where we could buy champagne to celebrate by-election victories. There is even a kilt hire shop just down the road for special occasions.

Donaldson's school has everything going for it and I recommend that we support Donald Gorrie's amendment so that we can reassess the location of the new Parliament building.

12:24

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): I agree with many Labour members who have said that cost is not the only factor. It most certainly is not.

In London, the Government has lavished taxpayers' money on Portcullis House, which is said to be the most expensive office building in Britain. It cost more than £200 million and was built for Westminster MPs—whatever they do nowadays.

Mr Blair has also achieved the extension to the Jubilee line, which is said to be the world's most expensive railway extension, costing more than £620 million. When we consider those figures, we realise that London is still getting it all. The Jubilee line extension leads to the world's most stupid project: the dome of doom at Greenwich. Taxpayers can stagger off the Jubilee line and face something else that will fleece them: the dome that is costing £720 million.

Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): Will Dorothy-Grace Elder allow an intervention?

Dorothy-Grace Elder: A tiny one.

Mr McNeil: Does she agree that we are getting a real bargain when we compare Holyrood to the costs that she has just given?

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I have not finished my speech. I was just pointing out the sums that are

being lavished on London.

We have heard from Labour members about the seven different buildings and about the malignancy of the Edinburgh rain, which raineth upon the First Minister—and all the rest of us. Who forced us into having seven different buildings? The hurried original decision has cost us £7.5 million for just two years in the building, although the Government was offered the Strathclyde Regional Council building for two years for only £3 million. I see that Frank McAveety is leaving—do not go away, Frankie, you know about that one. Labour members are not quite the innocent people they seem.

Hurry and rapidity has been the problem all along. The Holyrood building—said to be the most important in Scotland's recent history—was ordered with the rapidity with which one might order a wee greenhouse from B&Q. I know people who have put far more thought into the preparation of a site for a wee greenhouse. The Holyrood site is wrong, it is far too small, but let us all give it a chance by supporting the amendment and by considering what, on balance, comes out best. The design of the roofs is wrong. They are far too flat and they are not tilted enough to bear the weight of a really heavy snow in the Scottish winter. The debating chamber is a disaster. It is suitable only for a ferocious debate on flower arranging.

Sometimes, in a democracy, we need confrontation. We are all here to fight our own corner. My corner is Glasgow and I appeal to other Glasgow MSPs to fight this plan, too.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Please wind up your speech.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I make no apology for returning to the tragedy that I mentioned yesterday.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Very quickly, please.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I am sorry, but I am finishing, George.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order, order. You will not challenge the chair.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I do beg your pardon.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please conclude your remarks now.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: A four-year-old girl died because Glasgow is being starved of cash.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, I do not think that that is germane to this debate. Please sit down.

Keith Raffan may speak for two minutes only.

12:28

Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): Thank you, Mr Deputy Presiding Officer. I rise to support Donald Gorrie's reasonable and sensible amendment. There have been some passionate performances today, not least from my friend Mr Russell, but I do not want to compete with him on this occasion.

We must consider the issue of the Parliament building rationally. The First Minister's speech raised more questions than it answered. He said that a decision on the site had to be taken. Why? He decided that a decision had to be taken. He is the one who initiated the project and it was he who has rushed it. He was right when he said that the Parliament should make a decision on the building. We should reach that decision in a considered and methodical way.

We must wait to see how the Parliament evolves over at least four or five years. That makes sense. We have only just set up and named the members of committees; those are the initial 16 committees, but there may be more sub-committees. That kind of thing dictates the type of facilities that we will need. We should see how the Parliament evolves over at least four or five years before we make a final decision on a permanent building. The Australians were in provisional accommodation for 60 years. I do not recommend that we take that long, but that we can reasonably make do with this excellent chamber for eight years.

I share Mr Gorrie's concern about the location of the Parliament. I would not describe it as being "in a hole", but it is certainly down in a hollow, or dip. One of the remarkable things about the cluster of buildings that we occupy at the moment is that we are right in the life of the city. Mr Salmond and others might agree that it is much better than Westminster in that respect. That is another argument for Calton hill, which is also more accessible than the other end of the Royal Mile.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Will Mr Raffan give way?

Mr Raffan: No, I do not have time.

The First Minister made a crucial point about the design when he said that the floor space had increased by 44 per cent since Mr Miralles's original design. Any architect who has followed the development of the design will say that Miralles's original design has changed radically. That, too, raises concerns.

On the quality of the building, Mr Quinan mentioned its lifespan. I understood that the project team said that the lifespan was 100 years. That does not seem very long to me when one considers that some of the buildings that will surround it have lasted for more than 500 years.

I am concerned about the quality of the materials that will be used, and about the apparent lack of natural stone. The cost is escalating. Parliamentarians are notorious for the cost of their buildings. The new members' building at Westminster is a case in point—the bronze cladding alone will cost £50 million—and the Sam Rayburn building on Capitol hill in Washington DC came in at something like 500 per cent over budget. We are not exactly good at keeping buildings within budget.

We are sending out the wrong signal today. Our priority should be not ourselves, but the people of Scotland. A lot of passionate speeches were made from the Labour benches during the debate on the legislative programme yesterday, and I agreed with them. Surely we should be housing Scotland's pupils first—before we house Scotland's politicians. Our priority should be to catch up with the enormous backlog of school building maintenance. Politicians can make do with a flat desk and a phone. It is not the building that counts, but the people in it.

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): I now call Margo MacDonald to begin the winding-up speeches. I apologise to the eight members who were still hoping to speak, but I think that we have done well. You have seven minutes, Ms MacDonald.

12:31

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): Can I confirm that I have seven minutes?

The Presiding Officer: That is correct.

Ms MacDonald: I will attempt to summarise the debate and I will try hard to disregard John McAllion's friendly advice that we should all just keep quiet in our opposition. I do not mean to keep quiet, not because—I say this to Mr Watson—I am being opportunist, but because I was elected by people in this area.

Just like Cathie Craigie, the member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth, I feel a sense of civic responsibility and public responsibility. I have direct contact with the people who meet me going down the High Street—I do not mind meeting Edinburgh folk going down the High Street—and who say, "I hope you're going to do something about this. What are we spending all this money for?" Then they detail all the things that they would choose to spend money on before spending it on a Parliament.

So far, whether we like it or not, we have not necessarily made the best case for making the Parliament the priority for public spending. I make no apology for asking for a delay, as I think that we would use that delay constructively. We need

to argue that we should have the very best building that Scotland can afford, as we have yet to convince all the people who elected us—and that goes for all of us.

I see Cathie Craigie shaking her head. She said that people in her constituency voted for the Parliament. The question that I wanted to ask her was whether her constituents voted for a £90 million Parliament or for a £50 million Parliament. The people who voted for me did not vote for a Parliament where the costs appear to be escalating outwith control.

Cathie Craigie rose—

Ms MacDonald: I will certainly give way; I have better manners.

Cathie Craigie: Does Ms MacDonald agree that the figure of £90 million was in the public domain more than a year ago?

Ms MacDonald: I think that that is true, but it is also true that neither her constituents nor mine make a habit of reading *Hansard*. [Laughter.] However, I will move on.

Several factors influenced this amendment. There is the concern that the Holyrood site is not the most suitable. I know that we are past the time when the then Scottish secretary was advised against choosing other than Calton hill. I accept that time has moved on, that the General Post Office building is not available and that other considerations will have to be taken into account. The amendment asks for those other considerations to be taken into account.

In the time that has elapsed, we have also found that the four-acre site at Holyrood, which was judged to be adequate, is probably not adequate. When any of the local authority people in this chamber were building big, they would usually have a wee bit of land for contingency expansion, but no contingency expansion has been built into this grand design.

However, there is a site that has not yet been built on; I think that it has been procured by Teague Homes (Scotland) Ltd. If we use the time that the amendment asks for productively, perhaps we could revisit that decision. Do the builders need all that land? Could we do a bit of business with them? We need some land for expansion purposes, as the site has already expanded from 16,000 sq m to 23,000 sq m. I am not arguing about that—we may well need the extra support staff to cope with the expansion. However, before the people—who pay for everything—see how the Parliament benefits the quality of decision making in Scotland, they will ask “What do you need all those staff for?”

I appeal directly to the First Minister for time to sell our idea to the people who elected us. There

is no doubt about the site's shortcomings. I am not talking about the design of the building, but about how the site is hemmed in and cannot expand without going into Holyrood park. I think that Patricia Ferguson said that such an expansion might enhance and bring life to the park. However, we do not want too much life in the park; we like it as it is. Furthermore, we do not want the kind of office-block accommodation that we have at the moment.

There is another important point that members did not raise, perhaps because Robin Harper has a specialist interest in these matters. When I first expressed an interest in this issue, I was contacted—before the election—by many architects, two or three of whom advised me that no wind-tunnel test had been done. At least, we have not seen any results of a wind-tunnel test. Perhaps when Mr McLeish sums up, he can tell us whether such a test has been carried out and, if not, whether there are plans to have one. We also have to ask what would happen if the plans were to fail that test.

Frank MacAveety suggested that the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body could do everything that I am asking for. However, if the site is not big enough and if an independent assessor's estimate shows that extra land is needed, will the SPCB be entitled to go ahead with its plans? We have been told that the Executive has full responsibility for the configuration of roads around the site. Who will be responsible for the recalibration—which is referred to in documents that I have—that the site will probably need? The amendment seeks time for us to find answers to such questions.

Traffic is the big concern in Edinburgh. Too many people are trying to get to work from Newington or by using London Road. Most members may not be familiar with Edinburgh's traffic problems, which are becoming intolerable. Those problems are operating against the city's best interests and the question is too serious to leave to the SPCB to decide in our interest. The interests are much wider than that.

When members come to vote, they should remember that we are not saying that Holyrood should not go ahead, but that too many questions remain unanswered. We plead for time to find adequate answers to those questions and to find a building for this Parliament of which we can be proud.

The Presiding Officer: I call Des McNulty to respond to the debate on behalf of the SPCB.

12:39

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): I welcome this debate on Holyrood and I recognise the fact that members have articulated

different points of view on the subject. However, the debate has been conducted in such a way that Holyrood has become the whipping-boy for different points of view and different motivations. I am not sure that the debate has been about the case for or against the building's merits, which should be the basis for any decision as important and as significant as this.

There are a number of very good reasons why the Parliament's present accommodation is unsuitable and why we need to make a decision and proceed with the new plan relatively quickly. Members have mentioned the quality of this debating chamber. I think that this debating chamber is good for members; people are pleased with it. It has an atmosphere of its own.

This building is unsatisfactory in terms of access for disabled people, however. It would be difficult for any member who was disabled to use this chamber and building. If we want to be inclusive and build a Parliament for Scotland that everybody can participate in, we should move the accessibility agenda forward as quickly as possible.

The Parliament is not a matter only for parliamentarians. As a member of the corporate body, I am aware of the unsatisfactory working conditions of many of the people who work for the Parliament. In the switchboard area, in the kitchens and in rooms in the office building, people are working in unsatisfactory circumstances that prevent them from doing their jobs as effectively as I—and they—would wish. Their circumstances should be addressed as well as ours. That is one reason why we should consider the project rather than the political furore that surrounds it. If we want an efficient and effective Parliament, which the people working for it can be proud of, we must proceed to a new building and new arrangements as soon as possible.

I was interested in a number of points that were made in the debate. Some members said that they were in favour of Holyrood but wanted a delay to get more information. In the past week, the corporate body has, since it took over responsibility for the Holyrood project, made a great deal of information available about the proposals for the Parliament building; it will continue to do so if the motion is agreed to.

There will be a clear, interactive process of deliberation and debate about the design of the building. That process will involve all members of the Parliament and, I hope, a lot of other people, including Parliament employees. Many details and arrangements within the footprint of the building have yet to be finalised. Even if the decision is made today, which I hope it will be, there will be many opportunities for people to participate in and contribute to the decision-making process.

Mr Salmond: On a point of order. It was said that Mr McNulty was speaking on behalf of the corporate body. Has the corporate body taken a view on the matter? It seems from Mr McNulty's speech that he has. Is he speaking on behalf of himself or the corporate body?

The Presiding Officer: The corporate body will respond to whatever the decision of this Parliament is at the end of the debate. Mr McNulty is responding to the points raised in the debate.

Des McNulty: I make it clear that whatever the Parliament decides today—whether it decides to go ahead with the project or to support Mr Gorrie's amendment—the corporate body will, within the terms and remit of its responsibility, carry out the broad wishes of the Parliament. However, the corporate body has responsibilities to Parliament; it has responsibilities to the staff and to members. Strong arguments have emerged in the debate and why we should make a decision as quickly as possible about the future circumstances of the Parliament.

If we proceed with the proposal, the corporate body will attempt to consult as broadly as possible. There are problems associated with our staying in the present circumstances. The office building has a series of internal problems—for example, there are problems with asbestos—which will cause difficulties if we are there for any length of time.

Providing accommodation for committees is a particular problem in the office building. We intend to make a series of commitments today to establish 16 committees: it is difficult to see how those committees could be accommodated effectively, given the range of public access commitments—contained in all the parties' manifestos—that the Parliament has made.

The corporate body will seek to operate within the terms of the decisions of the Parliament, but a series of issues indicate that we have to make a decision on the Parliament building as quickly as possible. Those issues have arisen as a result of the considerations that have been presented by the design team, the Executive and others. If we are obliged to delay, that will cost the corporate body and the Parliament a significant amount of money. That should not be ignored. The corporate body is required to look at the financial circumstances and implications of any delay.

The Presiding Officer: I call Henry McLeish to wind up for the Executive.

12:46

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish): This has been a good debate, and I echo Des McNulty's comments that it is important for the Parliament to discuss

important issues. However, the importance is not for us as parliamentarians, because, as was pointed out, we are only the custodians for the Scottish people. We have been asked to make a decision about what will probably be one of the most important buildings to be constructed in Scotland for 300 years. There is enormous responsibility on our shoulders to get it right.

Before I wind up, I would like to respond to Margo MacDonald's question on wind-tunnel tests, as I am sure that the whole of Scotland is waiting for an answer. I am informed that those tests are in hand but, with my usual courtesy, I will send Margo a note with more details.

Ms MacDonald: I am delighted to hear that the wind-tunnel tests are in hand, although I am surprised that they were not in hand a bit earlier. What happens if the tests fail?

Henry McLeish: I think that Margo is just being greedy now—I have been generous in outlining the fact that there will be wind-tunnel tests. Let us hang on for the outcome of those and a host of other technical tests that are taking place.

This debate has been characterised by a lot of passion. People complain about the lack of passion among politicians, but we are passionate. Today, the First Minister gave not only a political commitment, but a passionate commitment to advance this project. That commitment was not for Donald Dewar, but for the people of Scotland.

I said that we had a big decision to make today. A lot of sound practical questions have been raised about the Parliament, to which I will return. However, there has been a slight element of politics as well. I am sure that people in all parties—some of whom are now being whipped—will be approaching Mr Gorrie's amendment in one of two ways. Some people will be attracted to the notion that by having a delay we will be able to examine some of the practical issues. However, others will support the amendment because they want us to remove ourselves from Holyrood. Those people want to return to old shibboleths such as the old Royal High School.

I am being constructive: let us cut through the issues and be crystal clear on what the amendment is about. If this debate is to be practical, I think that I have some of the answers to the problems. However, if the exercise—and let us be honest about this—is about removing ourselves from Holyrood and looking at alternative sites, we are talking about delaying discussions not for a short time, but for a prolonged period. At the end of the delay, we will not know whether that delay was on the grounds of costs and other practicalities or on the grounds of politics.

Fergus Ewing *rose—*

Henry McLeish: If Fergus does not mind, I would rather move on. I always give way, but there are two or three practical issues about which I want to speak.

A number of important practical points have been made about transport, the environment and special needs. I believe that the details in the material on all those issues will go some way towards allaying members' fears.

It is obviously critical that there is wheelchair access on the floor of the new chamber. There are no members in wheelchairs now, but if we are, as we say, an inclusive Parliament, we must build for every contingency. That will be done.

Robin Harper is massively wrong about the environment issues. I will send him all the material that I have. The new Parliament will rightly be one of the most environmentally sensitive buildings that we have ever produced in this country. The details will be forthcoming.

Robin Harper *rose—*

Henry McLeish: I cannot give way, Robin; I want to proceed. On transport, we have used the expertise of consultants; we have been the repository of much expert opinion.

Members may want to discuss such issues and that is the point of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. It is an all-party body. We will consult the SNP, the Conservatives and, of course, the Liberals and the other parties. Surely we do not need a committee. Members are genuinely concerned about the issues, but do they imagine for a minute that the technicians, the Scottish Office staff and Mr Miralles's team are sitting twiddling their thumbs day in and day out? From wind-tunnel tests through to the rest, this is on-going work.

Why do we not use the existing machinery that this Parliament has set up? We vested our interests as a parliamentary body in a group that is chaired by the Presiding Officer and that includes Des McNulty and other colleagues. Do not members trust them? Are we really saying that we want a two-month delay so that we can bypass the existing procedure? I do not think that we are. Let us have faith in our colleagues, whom we have charged with looking after matters that are responsibility of this proud Parliament.

I have heard comments about finance. From day one, I have been a value-for-money politician. I do not want to spend a penny more than is necessary to ensure a quality environment at Holyrood that the Scottish people, not parliamentarians, can be proud of. The SPCB has given us an opportunity to discuss the financial details and to ensure that we have an extensive overview of what is happening. I suggest to some Conservatives that

they should embrace that.

Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)
rose—

The Presiding Officer: We are in the summing up. Do not give way.

Henry McLeish: The building is scheduled for completion in 2001. The timetable is another area in which the SPCB and this Parliament will want to have a role. We have an excellent chamber here, but should we not have an excellent chamber in the new Holyrood Parliament? Do members think that we will go to all this expense just to downgrade the quality of our chamber when we move to Holyrood? Of course we will not. The SPCB is the custodian of our collective interest in this area. Why should not we—from wheelchair access on—ensure that we have the kind of debating chamber that we 129 members want? We are not talking about what Mr Miralles wants—he is doing an excellent job but, as the people who will work in that Parliament, we can have an influence.

My simple plea to all members is that they do not think about their party. This is not a party issue. This is about a working Parliament for the people of Scotland—something that they and we can be proud of. A Parliament is a working environment. We are not being paid money to come and look at architecture. We want the best, but I suggest that we should not set up any other machinery.

Members want to address these real, practical issues—we can easily let the SPCB look at them. We have access through those members of our parties who are in the SPCB, but we also have direct access to the issues. There has been a lot of distortion about the practical issues. We have the machinery to translate issues of finance, design of the chamber, transport, environment and access into the Parliament that we want. The Scottish people elected us to take that decision, and if we agree to the motion today, we can get on with the job.

This is also an opportunity for us to raise our horizons. I came into politics with aspirations for myself—as we all have—but also with aspirations for Scotland. That is why I came back to sit in this Parliament along with colleagues on the nationalist benches and with people such as Donald Dewar.

This is about pride. We are right to say that we want this Parliament to be a shop window for the world. Colleagues have said that it is more than a Parliament. It is a place where we can exhibit Scotland. It is a place where people can come. Let us be proud of what we are doing and let us get on with it.

We are also talking about place. Donald Gorrie

spoke about the hole at the bottom of the Royal Mile—he may live to regret that. The site is a United Nations heritage site on probably the most historic mile in the world, with a castle at the top, a palace at the bottom and other attractions being developed. Is that a hole? Of course not. It is one of the most prestigious sites in the world and we should be proud that we are moving to it.

There is also the question of permanence. This is not, as someone said, a Parliament for next week or for the week after, but a Parliament for the next millennium.

Continuing with the Ps, this Parliament is about prosperity. We have a great capital city and a great country. The Parliament will be not only a place where parliamentarians or constituents can come and see us, but a shop window for the world.

I know that many members are whipped—I regret that—but I ask people such as Andrew Wilson, who has gone public about Holyrood, to say, “Yes, let’s invest in the SPCB and it can look at the practical issues.” We will be able to march forward with the Scottish people and have pride in what we are doing. I have that pride and so should we all.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on the Holyrood project. The decision on the motion and the amendment will be taken at 5 o’clock.

Business Motion

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):

Before we adjourn for lunch, we will take business motion S1M-55 in the name of Mr Tom McCabe on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau. I will take one speech against the motion if anyone indicates that they want to speak.

12:56

The Minister for Parliament (Mr Tom McCabe): Before moving the business motion, I want to inform members about the proposals to improve the way in which information appears and is recorded in the business bulletin.

It will have been no surprise to anyone that, during the transition period, there have been a number of occasions on which it has been necessary to introduce business motions that amend the previously agreed business programme. Although that has happened more often than we would have liked, on each occasion it has been done in an attempt to reflect the views and requirements of other members and to ensure that discussions on particular subjects could take place. The debate that we have just had on the Holyrood project is a classic example of that.

However, the Parliamentary Bureau is conscious that the way in which changes have been set out in the business bulletin has not always been as clear or as readily understood as members would have liked.

It is equally important that members of the public who want to plan visits to the Parliament to watch specific debates can do so. The business bulletin must, therefore, provide information in a manner in which it can be readily understood by the public and which allows them to engage properly in the business of the Parliament. With that in mind, the Parliamentary Bureau is reviewing the format of the business bulletin with a view to making it as clear and as informative as possible. We hope that that process will go some way to addressing members' concerns about the changes to the business programme that have been recorded in the business bulletin.

This business motion sets out a programme of business for the Parliament up to and including Friday 2 July. The motion proposes that on Wednesday 23 June there should be a statement by the Deputy First Minister on freedom of information. That will be followed by a statement by the Minister for Children and Education on the consultation methods that will be adopted for the proposed education bill that the First Minister announced in yesterday's statement to Parliament.

That will be followed by an Executive debate on

devolved legislation to be considered by the United Kingdom Parliament. There will then be consideration of Parliamentary Bureau business, including a motion that the Scotland Act 1998 (Agency Arrangements) (Specification) Order 1999 be considered by the Parliament. An explanatory note on the agency agreements has been published in today's business bulletin. There will also be a motion on the opening days of the office of the clerk during the summer recess. Those last two items will be taken without debate.

The last item of business proposed for Wednesday 23 June is a members' business debate on motion SM1-47 in the name of Mr Brian Adam on the peripheral route around Aberdeen.

On the morning of Thursday 24 June, provision has been made for discussion of the first non-Executive business on a motion from the Scottish National party. The debate is expected to be about the privatisation of public services, although that is subject to confirmation. Details of the motion will be published in advance in the business bulletin.

On the afternoon of 24 June, it is intended that there will be a further question time and open question time, which will be followed by a ministerial statement on financial issues and, thereafter, a debate on the economy of Scotland.

It is proposed that the last meeting of Parliament before the summer recess should be held on the morning of Friday 2 July. It is intended that the business that day will comprise question time and open question time, followed by a debate on Executive business.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business:

Wednesday 23 June 1999

2.30 pm Statement by the Deputy First Minister on Freedom of Information

followed by, no later than 3.00 pm Ministerial Statement on Consultation on the Education Bill

followed by Executive Debate on Devolved Legislation to be considered by the UK Parliament

followed by Parliamentary Bureau business to include:

Motion that the Scotland Act 1998 (Agency Arrangements) (Specification) Order 1999 be considered by the Parliament (to be taken without debate)

Motion on days when the Office of the Clerk is open (to be taken without debate)

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Debate on the subject of motion S1M-47 in the name of Brian Adam

To be concluded no later than 30 minutes after the commencement of the debate without any question being put.

Thursday 24 June 1999

9.30 am Non-Executive Business (on a motion from the SNP)

followed by Business Motion

2.30 pm Question Time

3.00 pm Open Question Time

followed by, no later than 3.15 pm Ministerial Statement on Financial Issues

followed by Executive Debate on the Economy of Scotland

5.00 pm Decision Time

Friday 2 July

9.30 am Question Time

10.00 am Open Question Time

followed by, no later than 10.15 am Executive Business

The Presiding Officer: There are no requests from any member to speak against the motion, so I will put the question. The question is, that motion S1M-55, in the name of Mr Tom McCabe, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Question, That the meeting be now adjourned until 2.30 pm today, *put and agreed to.*—[Iain Smith.]

Meeting adjourned at 13:02.

14:30

On resuming—

Question Time

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The first item of business this afternoon is question time. As this is our first question time, I shall take a couple of minutes to explain the procedure, particularly for those members who have come from somewhere else, because the procedure is different.

I will take questions in the order in which they are printed in the business bulletin. The member who lodged the question will ask the question without departing from the terms as published in the bulletin. The relevant minister will then provide an answer. The member who asked the question may ask a supplementary and may, at my discretion, ask a further supplementary, but no other member may ask a supplementary question during question time until we come to open question time in half an hour. I will explain the procedure of open question time then.

I call George Lyon to ask the first question.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Caledonian MacBrayne

1. George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): It is an honour to have the first question in this Parliament and it is on a subject that is important to the constituency—

The Presiding Officer: I did say without deviation from the printed version.

George Lyon: I thought that you would allow me an exception, as this is the first question.

To ask the Scottish Executive what its long-term investment strategy will be for Caledonian MacBrayne. (S1O-44)

The Minister for Transport and the Environment (Sarah Boyack): Our strategy is to ensure that CalMac has a forward capital investment programme in vessels and shore infrastructure that is both affordable and sufficient to secure the future of lifeline ferry services off the west coast of Scotland.

George Lyon: I would also like to ask where the Deloitte & Touche report that has existed in draft form since March 1998 is. The report examined CalMac service provision on the Clyde and took into consideration the future of Dunoon pier. When can we expect the report's recommendations to be made public? More important, when can the local communities have some consultation on that report and have full knowledge of what the future

of the Clyde services is likely to be?

Sarah Boyack: The Deloitte & Touche report was commissioned by the previous Conservative Administration. When the Labour Government came to power, it examined the recommendations in the report and requested that further work be carried out. I understand that that work has recently been received. The Scottish Executive intends shortly to make the reports available for consultation. I hope that all those with an interest will comment at that stage.

Farming

2. Alex Johnstone (North-East Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what its immediate priorities will be to stimulate recovery in the Scottish farming industry. (S10-14)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Ross Finnie): The Executive is committed to supporting and enhancing the rural economy, and agriculture is an important and integral part of that strategy. My firm objective is to develop an approach to the agriculture sector in Scotland that results in its long-term sustainability.

Alex Johnstone: The Scottish agriculture industry is in a bad condition at the moment. We have heard proposals from a number of parties, and they are contained within the partnership agreement, for the introduction of an appeals procedure through which any disputes concerning European support can be dealt with. Does the minister have any plans to bring forward early proposals to deal with that matter?

Ross Finnie: We are looking hard at that matter. We have examined a number of schemes. The aim of the Executive is, if we can, to bring forward proposals that are as simple as possible. However, I advise Alex Johnstone that we have to ensure that we comply with the European convention on human rights provisions. I can assure him that this matter is receiving my urgent attention.

Further and Higher Education

3. Marilyn Livingstone (Kirkcaldy) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive if it will inform the Parliament of the provision it intends to make as a result of the comprehensive spending review for an increase in grant to further and higher education over the next three years. (S10-47)

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish): Further and higher education in Scotland is to receive a massive boost over the period covered by the comprehensive spending review. In total, the FE and HE budgets will receive an additional £493 million over the period to support further increases in student numbers, promote wider access,

modernise and improve quality and improve standards.

Marilyn Livingstone: On the question of widening access, has any provision been made to give priority to the needs of the most vulnerable and those in our communities who feel excluded?

Henry McLeish: Yes, because as part of the expansion of funding in higher and further education we want to widen access. In particular, we want to focus on those groups that need special assistance. The disabled students allowance, for example, is paid to eligible students in higher education who, as a result of their disability, face extra costs in attending their course. We are also using access funds to tackle particular problems that students face. The total provided for access in 1998-99 was £8.76 million. As part of the partnership agreement between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, that will be increased to £14 million in 2001-02. This is a priority area to which the Executive is giving its full attention.

Football Development

4. Allan Wilson (Cunninghame North) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will make a statement on the development of the Scottish football partnership to encourage the development of talented young footballers in Scotland. (S10-27)

The Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport (Rhona Brankin): I chaired the inaugural meeting of the football partnership on Monday 14 June. The partnership set up a task force to draw up detailed proposals and report back by the end of October. Our aim is to help Scotland's national teams and top clubs to compete successfully on the international stage, through the development of our native talent.

Allan Wilson: I am sure that everyone in this chamber shares the Scottish football partnership's objectives and wishes it well in its deliberations. Can we be assured that as well as developing coaching expertise, important as that is, the task force will consider proposals to develop indoor and other all-weather facilities for our football academies, on the Scandinavian model? Such facilities would provide year-round opportunities for Scottish kids to improve their skills and end the game's expensive reliance on foreign players, many of them of Scandinavian origin.

Rhona Brankin: I am aware that Norway has invested heavily in indoor and all-weather facilities, and that it has had some recent success. This is a key area that the football partnership and the football task force will examine.

Pre-school Education

5. Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab): To

ask the Scottish Executive whether it intends to implement a range of pre-school initiatives relating to nurseries, day nurseries and playgroups. (S10-56)

The Deputy Minister for Children and Education (Peter Peacock): We expect that universal provision of pre-school education for three-year-olds, from a range of providers and supported by a range of measures to guarantee quality, will be achieved in 2002.

Scott Barrie: I welcome my party's commitment to nursery provision for all three-year-olds whose parents want it, but some concern has been expressed that that will mean the end of playgroup provision. Will the minister join me in hoping that local authorities and voluntary sector providers will work in partnership to provide services to all pre-school children?

Peter Peacock: I recognise the close interest that Scott Barrie takes in this matter. I know that from his experience in social work he will be well aware of the different attributes that different providers can bring to nursery education. We are very clear about wanting to have the voluntary and independent sectors actively involved, alongside local authority provision. As Scott Barrie is aware, that is a matter for local authorities, which are responsible for the detailed prior provision that we fully expect. I am confident that they, too, will want an appropriate mix of provision.

Schools (Books and Equipment)

6. Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how much it intends will be spent in total on new books and equipment for schools in Scotland over the next three years. (S10-30)

The Minister for Children and Education (Mr Sam Galbraith): Over the next two years an additional £21 million will be allocated for investment in books and equipment, including new technology, in schools. That is on top of the existing spending by local authorities on books and equipment in schools, which in recent years has been around £50 million per year.

Karen Gillon: Is the minister aware that I visited Forth primary school in my constituency on Monday this week to see at first hand new books and equipment that the school has received? Both staff and pupils expressed their great desire to see more of the money to which the minister refers. Can he give an indication of how much the extra money will amount to per pupil, and when it is likely to come through to schools?

Mr Galbraith: I am delighted that Karen has already visited some of the schools in her constituency. I hope that that will be the pattern for all members, so that they can see the commitment

of teachers and the high quality of our schools. On average, the additional money will come to about £8,000 per school and £24 per pupil. That is a large sum and one that will, I know, be welcomed not only by this chamber but by all the teachers, pupils and parents involved.

Drug Treatment Programmes

7. Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to increase the provision of drug treatment programmes in Scotland in the next year. (S10-8)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): The provision of drug treatment will be at the heart of the Executive's strategy for dealing with drugs. Spending on drug treatment will be boosted by £6 million over the next three years, bringing annual spending to £11.3 million.

Mr Raffan: Does the minister share my serious concern—and that of members from all parties—about the shortage of treatment programmes in Scotland, particularly in certain health board areas such as Fife and Forth Valley, in my constituency of Mid Scotland and Fife? Does she share my concern about the shortage of residential rehabilitation beds? There are only 10 residential treatment centres in Scotland, with 120 beds. What will she do to increase the number of treatment programmes and centres as well as to learn from the best drug treatment practice in the United States?

Susan Deacon: Most members would share Mr Raffan's concern about the need to tackle drugs effectively. We are provided with a great opportunity to do that in this Parliament. There is growing evidence that effective treatment and rehabilitation can have a real impact. We are also committed to building on best practice where it exists, and to dealing with drugs as part of a much wider strategy that includes enforcement and, crucially, prevention: how to avoid people becoming addicted in the first place. We will work together across different departments of the Scottish Executive to ensure that we develop a comprehensive strategy to tackle the issue.

Mr Raffan: The minister's reply causes me slight concern. There is a need for the reallocation of resources in the total budget to tackle drug misuse.

The Presiding Officer: Mr Raffan, you must ask a supplementary.

Mr Raffan: Is Susan Deacon committed to a reallocation of resources from prevention, detection and the courts to treatment and rehabilitation, which has by far the smaller share of the budget at the moment?

Susan Deacon: As I indicated in my first

answer, there is a real commitment by this Executive to treatment. I indicated that significant additional resources are going towards that. It would, however, be wrong to suggest that treatment should be at the expense of investment and action to tackle prevention. By definition, if we reduce the level of addiction, we will be required to devote fewer resources to treatment and rehabilitation. We could probably reach agreement in this chamber on tackling some of the root causes which lead people to drug addiction in the first place.

Representative Office (Brussels)

8. Hugh Henry (Paisley South) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive when it believes that the Scottish representative office will open in Brussels. (S1O-32)

The Minister for Finance (Mr Jack McConnell): The Scottish representative office will open for business on 1 July and will be officially opened in the autumn, when the EU institutions return from their summer break.

Hugh Henry: Will the Scottish representative office advance Scotland's case in Europe? The minister may know that there has been much excitement among many European institutions at the formation of this Parliament, and that a very strong Scottish partnership is already in evidence in Brussels. Scotland Europa represents the private, local government, voluntary, academic and other sectors. Will the Scottish Representative Office be available to support that strong, effective partnership?

Mr McConnell: Scotland Europa has done a tremendous job representing Scotland's interests in Europe since it began in 1992. We hope that a strong partnership will develop in the years ahead between Scotland House and Scotland Europa. To assist that partnership, I have written to Scotland's new MEPs, to congratulate them and to invite them to meet me to discuss how they can help us promote Scotland's interests in Europe.

Pre-school Education

9. Bristow Muldoon (Livingston) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it intends to increase the number of nursery places available for three-year-olds. (S1O-57)

The Deputy Minister for Children and Education (Peter Peacock): We expect 60 per cent of all three-year-olds who wish a pre-school place to have one by next session. By 2002, every three-year-old who wishes a place will have one available.

Bristow Muldoon: As a representative of a West Lothian constituency, where nursery provision for four-year-olds is already highly

developed, I welcome the minister's statement. Can he comment on the impact that he expects the increase in the number of places for three-year-olds to have on educational attainment levels and on social justice?

Peter Peacock: I acknowledge, from conversations that I have had with him, Mr Muldoon's close interest in pre-school education. It is very much part of the Executive's strategy, not just for children but for families and whole communities. It contributes to building an innovative, compassionate, confident and inclusive society. Getting the foundations for education correct and improving attainment from the earliest years is a vital part of our programme. That is one of the reasons why we are seeking this dramatic expansion of provision for three-year-olds.

Gaelic-medium Education

10. Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to develop Gaelic-medium education. (S1O-33)

The Deputy Minister for Highlands and Islands and Gaelic (Mr Alasdair Morrison): We will be supporting Gaelic-medium education at all levels. We have ring-fenced £300,000 this year for the expansion of Gaelic pre-school education and next year we will be increasing grants for Gaelic education to £2.6 million.

Maureen Macmillan: Will the minister examine the funding for local development officers working for Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich to see if the method of funding can be improved?

Mr Morrison: I acknowledge Ms Macmillan's commitment to the Gaelic language and its further development. We regularly discuss with Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich their programme and achievements and I am due to meet them in the next few weeks. Most of the development officers are funded by government grant and local authorities contribute in some cases. I am aware of the difficulty in Highland and I hope that it will be resolved by the usual means of constructive discussion.

Long-term Care

11. Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it intends to implement the recommendations of the royal commission on long-term care which fall under its competence. (S1O-51)

The Deputy Minister for Community Care (Iain Gray): We are considering our response to the recommendations of the royal commission on long-term care relating to social work, health and housing.

Kay Ullrich: I am particularly concerned about support for Scotland's half a million carers. Their caring services save the public purse over £3.5 billion a year. The minister will be aware that in February this year a ring-fenced sum of £140 million of new money was given to local authorities in England specifically to provide respite care. Will the minister give a commitment to an equivalent ring-fenced package of new money for carers in Scotland?

Iain Gray: I am grateful to Mrs Ullrich for raising this matter. The position of carers is something to which we give great importance, and she will know that I launched Carers Week last week and that I undertook a number of engagements during that week. Over the next three years, £5 million is earmarked in Scotland for increasing respite care to help carers in the task that they undertake. It is important that respite services are provided in ways that meet local needs. I am working with officials in the local authorities so that we can ascertain at the end of the year that the money has been used to increase the respite care available.

Kay Ullrich: I hope for the sake of Scotland's elderly and their carers that I am not hearing the sound of dragging feet. I am asking about the equivalent to the £140 million of ring-fenced new money that was given in England. The £5 million the minister talks about is not ring-fenced and it is not new money. Will he address my question?

Iain Gray: I have explained to Mrs Ullrich that it is a prime concern that the £5 million over each of the next three years is used to increase respite services to help carers. I have already begun the process of ensuring that we will be able to ascertain that with the local authorities.

Victims of Crime

12. Mrs Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it intends to bring forward plans to support, and keep informed, victims of crime who are required to appear in court in Scotland. (S10-41)

The Lord Advocate (Lord Hardie): While much support is already available for victims of crime, the Executive will consider how services to meet victims' needs for information and support can be further developed.

Mrs Mulligan: Given that many victims go to branches of Victim Support Scotland, which is staffed mainly by volunteers, will there be additional resources for the umbrella organisation to ensure that it can develop support groups throughout the whole of Scotland?

The Lord Advocate: Funding for Victim Support Scotland has increased from £1.5 million last year to £1.7 million this year; the average grant in

Scotland per victim is three times higher than that in England and Wales. Bids for next year will be assessed on their merits and in the light of the Executive's spending priorities.

Bed Blocking

13. Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it has any plans to ensure that the division of responsibilities between local authorities and the national health service for the delivery of health-related social services does not result in bed blocking in the future. (S10-38)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): The Executive is committed to more efficient and effective joint working, based on partnership between local authorities, the national health service and the voluntary sector. The Executive will now take forward the plans that are set out in "Modernising community care: an action plan", which was published in October.

Mary Scanlon: I am pleased to hear that there will be greater integration. It has been flagged up to me that there is likely to be a serious crisis over the millennium, with an expected increase in accident and emergency cases at a time when the number of NHS admissions is higher. Compounded with bed blocking, those are serious concerns. Will they be addressed by the end of the year?

Susan Deacon: Mrs Scanlon raises a number of important issues, and I will try to address a few of them briefly. Additional winter funding has already been channelled in to ensure that winter crises do not arise. There is, however, no quick fix to the problem of bed blocking. Some imaginative and effective work has recently been done locally, which has started to resolve the problems, regarding both the people who are concerned and the effective use of resources. I am keen for us to use the opportunity that this Parliament has to build on those examples and ensure that that success spreads throughout the country.

Roads (Aberdeen)

14. Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it intends to act to expedite the building of the western peripheral route round Aberdeen. (S10-12)

The Minister for Transport and the Environment (Sarah Boyack): The western peripheral route around Aberdeen is a proposal that is being promoted by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. They will have the opportunity, in submitting their local transport strategies to the Scottish Executive next month, to explain how that route would contribute to an integrated transport strategy for the area.

Brian Adam: I note that the minister believes that the primary responsibility belongs to the two local authorities. Will she confirm whether the Executive has plans for extensive de-trunking of the network, whether any such plans might have implications for the funding of the proposed route, and whether the Executive has plans to help with the funding of that route?

Sarah Boyack: We have no plans for the trunk road programme that would directly affect the western peripheral route around Aberdeen. The transport bill will provide the opportunity for local authorities, with the approval of the Scottish Executive, to bring forward road-user charging schemes where appropriate and where they would fit in with their local transport strategies.

Lockerbie

15. Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to discuss with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs the administration of the trial of those accused in the Lockerbie air disaster. (S1O-63)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): The administration of the trial is a matter for the High Court of Justiciary. Security and facilities at the site are being provided by the Scottish Court Service, the Scottish Prison Service, and Dumfries and Galloway constabulary with the assistance of other forces.

Roseanna Cunningham: The minister will recall that, when the issue was raised in the other place, we were frequently assured that the matter of a third-country trial was not just a devolved issue but one that concerned the Foreign Office. Has he considered approaching the Foreign Office for a contribution towards the enormous cost of the trial—which I am sure he would not want to be funded entirely from the public purse—if indeed the Foreign Office has responsibility in the matter?

Mr Wallace: I am pleased to be able to give Ms Cunningham an answer that I hope she will find satisfactory. It has been agreed that the agreed capital costs will be met fully by the reserve and not by the Scottish block. Eighty per cent of current costs will be met by the reserve and 20 per cent by the Scottish block. That reflects the fact that, had the trial been held in Scotland, its costs would have been met by the Scottish block.

Homelessness

16. Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what measures it intends to propose to deal with the record and climbing levels of homelessness in Scotland. (S1O-58)

The Minister for Communities (Ms Wendy

Alexander): The green paper on housing, published earlier this year, proposed a review of homelessness in Scotland. I am pleased to be able to announce today that we will establish a review through a steering group led by Jackie Baillie, the Deputy Minister for Social Inclusion, Equality and the Voluntary Sector.

Fiona Hyslop: Although I welcome the homelessness review, it is no excuse for the lack of a housing bill in the legislative programme proposed by the Executive. Will the task force for the review report to the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee and be accountable to it?

Ms Alexander: On the homelessness review, I can certainly give an undertaking that there will be wide consultation in Scotland. On Fiona Hyslop's wider point, I am happy to say that this Administration is wholly committed to legislation on housing. As she knows, the consultation period for the green paper closed only a matter of days ago. When I met housing organisations in Scotland this morning, they were delighted that there would be a period to consider the responses and then the opportunity to use the innovative procedures that this Parliament has introduced, to consider how to take forward legislation.

Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): On a point of order, Mr Presiding Officer. I asked the clerks whether I could lodge a question in today's meeting about the housing green paper. I was prevented from doing so, because that is still a matter for the Scottish Office. Can you tell me why the minister is referring to a housing green paper about which I was not allowed to ask a question?

The Presiding Officer: We are in a grey area between the old regime and the new, and we must be tolerant. Members cannot ask about, and ministers should not answer on, subjects for which the Executive is not yet responsible.

Fire Service

17. Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what measures it intends to implement to protect fire service pensions in the light of the proposed review of the fire service in Scotland. (S1O-65)

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Angus Mackay): The review of the service in Scotland is examining the structure of the fire service. It therefore has no implications for the fire service pension scheme.

Mr Quinan: Why, then, has the Fire Brigades Union sent to all councillors in Scotland a document that refers to the fact that the Government wants to make changes to the grey book, which has been in force since the end of the

second world war as the basis of negotiations with the fire brigades? The union believes, on the basis of a Home Office document, "Fire Service Pensions Review: a Consultation Document", that the Government intends to make changes for new members of the fire service.

Can Mr Mackay assure me that new members of the fire service will not have reduced pension availability, unlike their colleagues who are currently serving? More important, I draw the minister's attention to the decision made at the Fire Brigades Union's conference on 11 May 1999:

"That this conference rejects the national employers' proposals as contained in their letters of 17 July 1998 and 22 March 1999 to alter the present conditions as contained within the national scheme of conditions of service. Conference therefore agrees"—

The Presiding Officer: Order. You must ask a question, Mr Quinan. You cannot read out a long quotation in the middle of a question.

Mr Quinan: I simply want to know whether the minister will apply what Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, intends to apply: the withdrawal of the right to strike for members of the Fire Brigades Union if it implements the decision made at its conference.

Angus Mackay: If I remember rightly the first supplementary question that was asked, no, I cannot explain why the Fire Brigades Union has issued the document to which Lloyd Quinan referred. However, I know how the confusion has arisen. The initial question was about the review of the structure of the fire service. The pension scheme is a separate matter, which is currently the subject of a consultation that is being carried out by UK ministers. It is an on-going consultation. When the report is published, the Scottish Executive will take a view of its own on fire pension schemes. If any changes were made to the fire pension scheme, current members would retain their existing rights and the new scheme would apply only to staff joining the fire service after the introduction of any new scheme.

Health Care

18. Mr Michael McMahon (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how it intends to promote patient-centred health care in Scotland. (S10-60)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): Patient-centred health care is central to the vision of the Scottish Executive. We intend to continue to develop the recommendations set out in the white paper, "Designed to Care", published in December 1997, as part of our broad agenda to ensure that wherever patients make use of the NHS, they

receive the highest quality of care.

Mr McMahon: I thank the minister for her answer and I welcome the Executive's commitment to patient-centred health care. Will she give me a specific illustration of how that care can be implemented?

Susan Deacon: There are many different ways in which we can put the patient at the heart of the NHS. Some of them are highlighted in the partnership agreement, and they demonstrate how we can give patients the treatment that they need, when they need it and where they want it. They include our commitment to develop the number of one-stop clinics, the 24-hour telephone helpline, NHS Direct, and walk-in walk-out treatment centres. In addition to those services and facilities, we are committed to improving the information that patients get at all stages of their care, and the communication between the patient and the NHS. I am already in discussion with people in the service on how to take forward that agenda, and I will continue that over the next few months.

Open Question Time

The Presiding Officer: We now move to open question time. The format is slightly different, in that once a question has been answered by a minister, any member may ask a supplementary question, indicating a wish to do so by pressing the request button. Supplementary questions must be brief. We have only 15 minutes for this item, which means five minutes per question.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Partnership Agreement

1. Mr Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): Will the First Minister answer this in a phrase or two?

To ask the Scottish Executive to explain how the partnership agreement lives up to the desire for radical change in Scottish society which is symbolised by the advent of Scotland's first Parliament for 300 years. (S10-54)

The First Minister (Donald Dewar): I like the phrase or two.

As a partnership, we are committed to introducing a programme of initiatives that is in the interests of Scotland. That will be done in a number of ways: in the legislative programme that we announced yesterday, in the spending priorities that we will advance and reflect, and in administrative action. We are committed to changing and improving the standard of life in Scotland across a whole range of issues, including

education, health, housing, jobs and the environment.

Mr Salmond: Can the First Minister tell us what the environmental reasons are for imposing a toll tax on the M8?

The First Minister: I would not describe it as a toll tax. It is very important that we try to reduce the gridlock and congestion on motorways and in urban centres. In debate earlier today, there were some impassioned speeches from Alex Salmond's benches on the need to do something about urban congestion. Although people make those statements, when imaginative and difficult ideas are brought forward—difficult because we know that they will be controversial but believe that they must be examined—there is a barrage of criticism and complaint. There is a good deal of courage in the legislative programme that we announced, and the measures are an example of that.

Mr Salmond: There has been a barrage of criticism and complaint from Graeme Maurice, the Labour leader of West Lothian Council. Does he not have a point when he argues that a toll tax on the M8 will divert traffic to less suitable roads, making things worse for the environment and raising safety concerns?

The First Minister: It is perfectly legitimate for the Scottish National party—or any outside party—to draw attention to diversion. It is one of the factors that must be examined carefully. There are other possibilities for congestion charging which may have a part to play. It is important that, if there is to be a move in the direction of charging, it must be clear that any money raised will be used to improve transport services and infrastructure. When people sit down and think about that, it might be more popular than Mr Salmond would like.

Mr Salmond: The First Minister says, "if" there is a move in that direction—does that indicate some doubt? Let me try a simple question. When the ministerial car takes the First Minister back to Glasgow, who will pay the toll tax? Will he pay, or will the taxpayer, and how much will it be?

The First Minister: I imagine—and I suppose that this is a dolefully inadequate answer to that penetrating general matter of principle—that the Scottish Office will probably follow exactly the same procedure that it follows when we cross the Forth road bridge.

Mr Salmond: The taxpayer.

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): Will the First Minister indicate what the Executive will do to help young people? The word youth, or young people, does not figure in the lists of ministerial duties. Who will be in charge, and what can he offer young people in this dynamic new

Scotland?

The First Minister: I know that Donald Gorrie takes a great interest in those things, and I suspect that he rather fancies himself as a representative of youth. It shows a confidence in that matter that I find implausible. I have never taken the view that young people had totally different interests from those of the rest of the population. Young people are interested in educational opportunity and—essentially—in job opportunity. Mr Gorrie might want to consider the impressive statistic that, since the Government came to power at Westminster, the new deal has halved the number of 18 to 24-year-olds claiming unemployment benefit.

It is the same with housing, the health service and a range of social services. If we get those matters right, and bring about the kind of improvements that we want, we will appeal to people of 18 as much as we will appeal to people of Mr Gorrie's age.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): In relation to the question about toll tax, will the First Minister introduce immediate legislation to bring us into line with England and Wales, and announce an amnesty for poll tax non-payers, in order to alleviate poverty in Scotland?

The First Minister: Mr Sheridan is indulging in wishful thinking, because there is no such amnesty in England and Wales. I take the view that when people owe money, and when money is due, that debt should be met. I have no intention of introducing an amnesty. There are difficulties about collecting, and other principles of law apply, but local government is right to recover due debt. If it does not do so, there will be an additional burden on others in society—I do not include Mr Sheridan—who have been meeting their dues.

Tax

2. David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to increase the tax burden on people resident in Scotland during this session of the Parliament. (S1O-24)

The First Minister (Donald Dewar): As Mr McLetchie knows, "Partnership for Scotland" makes it clear that we will not use the tax-varying powers in the course of the first Parliament. After April 2000, people in Scotland will enjoy the benefits of the 1p reduction in the United Kingdom basic rate of income tax.

David McLetchie: I thank the First Minister for his courtesy in answering the question and for the surprising brevity of his answer. If Mr Dewar does not intend to increase the tax burden during the lifetime of the Parliament, will he advise us which taxes he plans to reduce to compensate the residents of Scotland for the tolls, taxes and city

entry charges that we will all have to bear as a result of the legislative programme announced yesterday?

The First Minister: I know that Mr McLetchie finds the concept difficult to grasp, but the Parliament has no powers to raise charges or taxes that were not previously available to the Scottish Office. Apart from the 1p variation in income tax, there is nothing in the Scotland Act 1998 to give the Parliament powers that were not already available.

If we do go down that road, it will be for a direct return, both in terms of the better management of our road system and our cities, and through the use of any funds that are raised in that way to address concerns about gridlock, greenhouse emissions and motorway queuing.

I am not interested in raising taxation for the sake of it, but I am interested in seeing tax reform—such as that which is being implemented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—in order to address opportunity in society. The new 10p band, the working families tax credit, the important and generous tax credits for nursery and pre-school care—which will come into effect later this year—are examples of how, without victimising people who earn more, we can use the tax system to unlock opportunity for those who have been denied it in the past.

David McLetchie: The First Minister seems to be following the lead given by the Prime Minister, by—contrary to election pledges—increasing the tax burden on people resident in Scotland, and the United Kingdom as a whole. He seems to be confirming that the legislation is designed to ensure that local authorities in Scotland are turned into the Parliament's tax gatherers.

On the subject of local authorities, given the First Minister's desire to be a friend to the business community, will he categorically rule out that during the lifetime of the Parliament, local authorities will be given sole or partial discretion to set business rates—a measure to which the Scottish business community is wholly and rightly opposed?

The First Minister: I trust that I will not try Mr McLetchie's patience if I repeat what I have often said: the McIntosh commission report is due soon and a whole series of important consultations that we promised on the issue will also take place soon. I have made it clear repeatedly on behalf of my party, and I believe that it will be the view of the Administration, that we would not want in any way to put Scotland's commerce, industry and business at a competitive disadvantage against other parts of the United Kingdom. On that at least we can make common ground.

Scottish business will be very pleased, for

example, to note that the unemployment claimant count fell again this week and, at 5.5 per cent, is still the lowest that it has been since 1977. The International Labour Organisation unemployment figure fell by 11,000 and the numbers in employment went up by 7,000 in the quarter to the end of April. As a result of the management of the economy over the past two years, Scotland has a good, strong economic position, which, I assure Mr McLetchie, the Administration has no intention whatever of putting at risk.

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): Given his desire to keep taxes down, what representations has the First Minister made, or will he make, to his friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the successive increases in road fuel tax? Those increases have had a dire effect on Scotland, particularly in the rural areas that I represent, where people on very low incomes often have no alternative but to own a car and pay the high taxes imposed by the Government.

The First Minister: That is why we are spending more—£13.5 million over three years—on urban transport. It is why we are helping some—not a lot, but some—rural petrol stations. And it is why we have asked the Office of Fair Trading to consider again the alleged profiteering among the petrol companies.

One of the difficulties is that only about 0.25 per cent of petrol sales in this country are made in the Highlands and Islands, which unfortunately has a large land mass. Therefore, there are problems with petrol stations, which have a small throughput and have to push up margins in order to survive. That is the sort of issue that we will look at.

We are introducing a whole range of initiatives, such as the substantial increase on remission of vehicle excise duties for lorries that have cleaner engines and the £55 annual reduction in vehicle excise duty for cars under 1,100 cc.

As I am sure Alasdair Morgan accepts, we have a duty under the Kyoto accord to meet the CO₂ emissions targets, which represent a substantial reduction of 12.5 per cent on the 1990 totals, by the period 2008 to 2010. People will recognise that that might mean some quite uncomfortable and difficult decisions, but we have to get the balance right. We cannot simply ignore the threat of greenhouse gases and global warming.

Children and Young People

3. Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what measures it proposes to ensure that the interests and views of children and young people are taken into account in future legislation. (S10-17)

The Minister for Children and Education (Mr Sam Galbraith): The new legislative process will reflect the arrangements that were proposed in the consultative steering group report. We will ensure that children and young people's groups have an opportunity to comment on the issues that affect them. I will announce shortly how we intend to consult on the education bill and how young people can be involved in that process.

Cathy Jamieson: Thank you for that helpful answer. Is the minister aware of the recent case in south Ayrshire, in which a sheriff felt that the provisions of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 did not give him powers to stop a convicted sex offender, on his release from prison, returning to live in close proximity to his young victim? If he is aware of that case, will he comment on how legislation could be improved to ensure that children in such cases are afforded the protection that they need, to allow them to live safely and without fear in their homes and communities?

Mr Galbraith: First, I want to recognise the work that Cathy has done with young people and children. She worked for a number of years with Who Cares? Scotland, an organisation that looks after a particularly vulnerable group. Her work has been a credit to her and an example to us all. The fact that she did that work for less than she is earning here is also to her credit and should not be sneered at by other individuals in newspaper articles. People who do real jobs with real people in the real world do not need lessons from people who do not possess such qualities.

Looking after vulnerable kids is important, as are their views. A number of legislative measures have been taken recently and guidelines have been produced—dealing with the social justice system, the criminal justice system, local authorities and the social work services—on how their views can be taken into account. There are still some problems. If Cathy Jamieson wishes, we can discuss the matter to see how we can take it forward.

Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP): Services and legislation will be affected by concordats. When will the Executive make those concordats available to this Parliament, so that they can be properly and publicly scrutinised?

Mr Galbraith: When young children's issues are addressed, it is important to ensure that views are taken on board, that there is a concordat and that there is consensus, as none of us has complete knowledge of those issues; few of us are in our youth, although we may think that we are.

When they are ready, concordats will be presented here, and this chamber will make decisions on them.

The Presiding Officer: That brings our first

question time to an end.

Tuition Fees

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The next item of business is the motion on tuition fees in the name of Jim Wallace. I have selected amendment S1M-2.4 in the name of John Swinney. Mr Wallace will open the debate, and then the amendment will be moved. The debate will end shortly before 5 o'clock to allow time for the bureau motion on the setting up of committees.

At the moment, I do not propose to put any time limit on speeches. I will wait to see how many members want to speak.

15:16

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): I welcome the fact that it has been possible to debate tuition fees and student finance so soon in the lifetime of this Parliament, given the importance that was attached to those issues in the election campaign.

My party and the Executive place lifelong learning and the development of high quality further and higher education at centre stage and regard them as key factors in securing Scotland's future economic prosperity. Investment in higher and further education is also a necessity if we are to ensure that, as a nation, we provide each individual with the opportunity to develop his or her talents to the full.

Scotland is rightly renowned for its university tradition. Many of our higher education establishments are acknowledged to be world class. We can boast the highest level of participation in the UK; almost 50 per cent of young Scots are in higher education, compared with 33 per cent of young people elsewhere in the UK.

The transformation of the number of people gaining access to further and higher education, which has happened under Labour and Conservative Governments, has been a remarkable achievement. It has also thrown up deep concerns about the adequacy of funding for our universities.

Across the UK, the record of the Tory party in power was a 40 per cent reduction in spending per student in higher education. Against that background, there was agreement among the parties that the crisis in higher education funding had to be addressed. However, it was clear that the parties approached the issue in different ways.

Following the reports of the Dearing and Garrick committees, while my Liberal Democrat colleagues in the House of Commons and I were opposing the imposition of tuition fees, the

Conservatives were arguing for the introduction of £1,000 tuition fees that would be payable by every student, regardless of income. To be fair—I always like to be fair—the Conservatives failed to support the second reading of the bill because of the Government's failure to provide for

"an independent review body to advise on any future changes in tuition fees."—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 16 March 1998; Vol 308, c 970.]

The Labour Government at Westminster opted for means-tested student loans and means-tested tuition fees. My party accepted that maintenance grants should be turned into loans, but the Liberal Democrats opposed the introduction of tuition fees—means tested or flat rate. That remains our position.

We believe that the tradition of full-time higher education students paying no fees is important. We remain concerned that the imposition of tuition fees might be a barrier to increasing access. We have expressed concern about the 6 per cent reduction in applications to Scottish universities and the significantly higher fall in the number of mature students applying for a university place. We have expressed fears that, after the introduction of tuition fees, the amount payable by students will increase, or different fees will be introduced for different courses.

It is clear that we disagree with the Labour party on those issues. That disagreement was apparent throughout the parliamentary debates on the establishment of tuition fees and throughout the election campaign for the Scottish Parliament. Those different points of view are acknowledged in the partnership agreement.

Mr Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan) (SNP): It is true that those concerns were apparent in the election campaign. Jim and I took part in many debates and, in each one, he said that if the Labour party did not have a majority in the chamber, tuition fees would be abolished. Does he not think it was wrong to say that during the campaign if he did not intend to carry it through?

Mr Wallace: I believe that what we are proposing today is the most effective and immediate way of carrying forward the issue of tuition fees—and that of student poverty, which we also debated during the campaign.

Let me make it clear: we remain committed to the abolition of tuition fees for all Scottish students at UK universities. That is what our manifesto said. We will have confidence in putting that case to the committee of inquiry.

David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): The Conservative party made its case to the biggest committee of inquiry that was possible: the electorate, who made their decision when casting their votes for us.

Having made such great play of the £80 million for education that was extracted in the coalition negotiations, will the minister tell us why half of that sum was not deployed to fulfil his promise to abolish tuition fees, but was instead spent on areas that he did not describe as non-negotiable?

Mr Wallace: Anyone who heard what we said in the campaign knew that investment in education was our most important priority. I am proud that we have managed to secure £80 million of extra investment in education that will help to tackle student poverty in a number of ways: the £9 million three-year pilot scheme to encourage students from low-income families to stay on at school with a view to going on to higher education; the loan funding for mature part-time students who are on low incomes; and the increase in access funds to £14 million a year, which will relieve the hardships that are suffered by the most disadvantaged students.

We said that education was our main priority and we have helped to deliver more resources to education.

I welcome the amendment's supporters' recent conversion to the proposal of a committee of inquiry into student funding and student hardship. No doubt the representations that they have received from people who are genuinely concerned about the financial position of students have had an effect on them, albeit belatedly. They may be willing to recognise that the commitment to a committee of inquiry, which was expressed in the partnership agreement document, was a significant step forward.

The committee of inquiry that will examine the issues of tuition fees and student hardship will be very different from its Westminster counterparts. If this motion is carried, the committee will proceed with the approval and authority of this Parliament and it will report to this Parliament. The role and importance of the Parliament in progressing this issue is vital. It is also important when we look at the terms of the opposition amendment.

We must remember that this is not a debating society; it is a Parliament. Therefore, when the amendment in the name of Mr Swinney says that we must

"bring forward to the Parliament proposals for the abolition of tuition fees",

we are entitled to note that motions and amendments must be clear and unambiguous.

Our position, as I have stated, is that we want all Scottish students to have their fees paid by the Government, without interfering with the funding of the universities.

The amendment gives the Executive a bald instruction to abolish tuition fees—not to restore

the previous system, in which students were funded by the state. It would remove tens of millions of pounds from Scottish higher education at a stroke. Where would that leave efforts to improve quality and extend access?

The amendment would also mean that this Parliament should abolish tuition fees for all students who study in Scotland, including those from England and Wales. Scottish students studying in other parts of the United Kingdom would still have to pay tuition fees. That, expressly, was not part of the Liberal Democrat manifesto.

The Opposition amendment is deeply flawed. It bears the hallmark of a political tactic, rather than a substantial parliamentary motion addressing an important issue that we must get right. If I may use the language of Mr McLetchie, which so embellished our election campaign, it smacks more of Mr McLetchie snuggling up to Salmond on a sofa than to the serious politics that the issue requires.

In contrast, we have indicated that we want to work with the organisations that care most about higher and further education in Scotland on the issue of tuition fees and student support. We want to work with organisations such as the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals, the Association of Scottish Colleges, the Association of University Teachers and the National Union of Students in Scotland, all of which support the setting up of the independent inquiry. Indeed, the National Union of Students in Scotland also supports the abolition of tuition fees.

Unlike the Dearing inquiry, which focused on the purpose, shape and funding of higher education, the focus of this inquiry is the position of part-time and full-time students in both higher and further education. Many people in our universities and further education colleges believe that the Dearing and Garrick reports neglected that area. The entire system, including the payment of tuition fees, requires an overhaul.

Much of the system goes back to the 1960s, when social conditions and the number of people who went into universities were quite different from what they are today. We need to take account of the fact that patterns of study have changed since many of us were students. Today, about half of the people entering further and higher education are mature students, a fact that—with respect—the saltire awards proposed by the Conservative party do not reflect.

Mature students have different needs from school leavers. Many people choose to combine work with study. The support mechanism—in terms of help with fees, books and exam charges—has never been properly addressed in

relation to mature students. That is why I commend the committee of inquiry.

If the motion is passed, the Executive is anxious to consult the other parties fully, and as a matter of urgency, on the details of the committee. My view is that the committee should be asked to work intensively and to report by the end of the year. Clearly, we will need to find a suitably independent chair, without any party allegiance. We are keen that the membership of the committee should be wide enough to bring a wide range of experience to bear.

Parties will be asked for their views and suggestions and I hope that we will all agree that people should be chosen to serve on the committee on account of their expertise, rather than on account of partisan loyalty. The committee's terms of reference will also be a matter for discussion although, as the motion makes clear, it should encompass tuition fees and all student finance, for part-time and full-time students, in both further and higher education.

I also hope that we can reach agreement that the committee should take account of the fact that we need to maintain both quality and standards in our higher and further education institutions. We also need to recognise the fact that many students in Scotland, particularly in our universities, come from outside Scotland. Finally, we do not propose to constrain the committee, but the Parliament would expect to be made aware of the costs of the options and recommendations.

No person or party is being asked to make any concession on their position regarding tuition fees in agreeing to establish the committee. This proposal represents the most effective and immediate way of taking forward these crucial issues. Moreover, by consulting and by involving people with an interest, people with a knowledge, people with a commitment to students and people with a commitment to further and higher education, we will give real substance to what all the parties have proclaimed. The Parliament must consult and listen. As the former president of the AUT, Mr David Jago, said:

"Seeking a quick fix on this issue would be a betrayal of Scotland's aspirations for a new politics, in which everyone can have a say."

I hope that all parties will support the establishment of the committee of inquiry and state their case to it. That is what the Liberal Democrats will do. Although we intend the process to provide a sound basis for an agreed way forward, the partnership agreement expressly acknowledges that we are not bound in advance and, as Liberal Democrats, we are free to come to our own view on the committee's conclusions.

I may be wrong, but I rather suspect that some

speeches in this debate may refer to the election manifesto.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con) rose—

Mr Wallace: I am just winding up, Mr Gallie.

I have already referred to our manifesto position on tuition fees. It is worth reminding the Parliament that our manifesto also emphasised the importance of widening access to further and higher education and of attacking student poverty. The measures that I have referred to in this speech show that we have made a start. The committee of inquiry will give us an opportunity to give further immediate consideration to these important issues. I commend the motion to the Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the widespread opposition to tuition fees, the growing importance of lifelong learning to Scotland's society and economy and the wide range of circumstances of those engaged in lifelong learning; and calls upon the Scottish Executive once established to appoint urgently a committee of inquiry on the issue of tuition fees and financial support for those participating, part-time or full-time, in further and higher education; the terms of reference, time scale and membership of that committee to be approved by and its report laid before the Parliament.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Ms Patricia Ferguson): I call John Swinney to speak on amendment S1M-2.4, and then to move it formally.

15:30

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): I have listened carefully to Mr Wallace on many occasions. I have heard him speak on the issue of tuition fees many times. Having listened carefully to him today, I wonder what has happened to him over the past six weeks.

If the measures outlined in Mr Wallace's speech are the best way to address the crisis on tuition fees, I am left to ask myself why he did not fight the election on them. He fought the election, as my party did, on a commitment to abolish tuition fees. In the 14 minutes of his speech, history was rewritten by his articulation of what his party now represents.

Today, we all know what we are being asked to vote for. The amendment in my name is a real and genuine opportunity to vote for the abolition of tuition fees. It is also an opportunity to start to solve the problem of student hardship. We all know what our duty is—73 members in this chamber were elected on a ticket of abolishing tuition fees. That commitment was centre stage in the election—it was not hidden in the small print. We have a mandate and we must act on it.

This is the first major test of the politics of this

Parliament and, critically, of whether the will of the people of Scotland can prevail. We are debating a matter of principle that affects real people outside this chamber and is close to the heart of Scotland.

In moving this amendment, I want to concentrate on two points. First, I want to make the case for this Parliament instructing the Executive to abolish tuition fees. Secondly, I want to challenge the notion, advanced by Mr Wallace and by his colleagues—in endless interviews that Mr Lyon gave this morning—that the quickest way to abolish tuition fees is to have the inquiry that is proposed in Mr Wallace's motion.

The case for abolishing tuition fees was well rehearsed during the election campaign. It comes before us as a simple question of principle: it is a question of free education, not fee education. It is a very Scottish principle. More young Scots go into higher education per head of the population than do young people in any other part of the UK—and that pays off. Scotland is the third most prolific country in the world for research published per head of the population.

However, there are worrying signs of a decline in applications to higher education and in applications to Scottish higher education institutions. There are worrying signs about applications from mature students and there is unease about our ability to encourage postgraduate study on top of heavy undergraduate debt. Our country has a strong commitment to education and we must not undermine it.

To move away from a discussion on principle with which it will be uncomfortable, the Executive will try to distract us by claiming that the abolition of tuition fees will benefit only the well-off. The SNP has always advanced the case for abolishing tuition fees and tackling the issue of student hardship, and our amendment reflects that position. There is abundant evidence that proves that the ending of the grant and the increase in the loan and debt culture for students is a real deterrent to people from low and middle-income households. During the past few weeks, many students have represented to me a growing perception that higher education costs a great deal of money, and tuition fees are the clearest illustration of that perception.

Not only the children of managing directors and Cabinet ministers are being charged tuition fees. The child of a postman and a midwife pays the full whack and the child of a phone salesperson and a bricklayer pays half of the fee. Abolition of tuition fees is hardly a perk for the rich and famous. Even for people who pay no fees at all, there is no guarantee that fees will not creep down towards them in the future. The inflation index used to update the liability threshold will mean that more and more people will be liable to pay fees.

When the case for abolition was made during the election, the electorate spoke. The decision to abolish tuition fees in principle should be taken today and we should agree steps now to tackle student hardship.

The SNP is the first to recognise that its proposals have to be paid for. Before the election, I outlined a proposal—called, interestingly, the Holyrood project—that was designed to free new resources in the Scottish block to afford this Parliament's priorities. It was based on the concept of extending value in the public finances and of seeking the best practice within the Government community to obtain the best value for public resources.

We estimated that more than £120 million could be freed up for the abolition of tuition fees and the Parliament's other priorities but, during the election campaign, our targets were described as "modest". Fundamental to our case was the opportunity to direct resources to meet the genuine funding requirements of the higher education sector, which we would not detract from and which we recognised required to be supported fully by the state.

The central issue is whether a committee of inquiry is the quickest route to abolishing fees. At 12.54 this afternoon, I was listening to Mr McLeish's impassioned speech during the earlier debate. He came out with a ringing request that there should not be another committee of inquiry. I could not agree more. I think he is absolutely right. He was talking about a different subject, but he made the point.

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): Does Mr Swinney not want another committee of inquiry?

Mr Swinney: The people of Scotland were asked about tuition fees during the election and that is the only committee of inquiry that we need.

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): On a point of order, Deputy Presiding Officer. Is it in order for Mr Swinney to speak about the non-necessity of committees when his amendment proposes one?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is not a point of order, Mr Brown.

Mr Swinney: Mr McLeish has made it clear in the press that the committee proposed by the Executive will have a wide remit, and that was confirmed by Mr Wallace in his presentation today. The committee will be able to investigate every possible solution to this problem; it will have no financial constraints other than identifying where the money is coming from; and it will be chaired by an independent person of substance.

Mr Wallace: To clear up any dispute, I said that the committee would have to identify what the

options would cost, not where the money was coming from.

Mr Swinney: I take Mr Wallace's point and he can put it on the record.

Mr McLeish has also made it clear that the committee members will have no baggage to bring to the issue. That is all very laudable and it is consistent with Mr McLeish's approach to policy making, but it does not sound like a quick way to abolish tuition fees. If a committee is required, we must assume that it has a substantial job to do.

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish): I want to correct a fundamental misconception. It should be made clear that the committee that we want to establish—I hope with all-party support—will look at tuition fees and student funding, with an independent committee investigating costed options. It will not be a review committee that is set up with abolishing tuition fees as its terms of reference.

Mr Swinney: I am grateful for Mr McLeish's intervention, although I am not sure whom it was designed to help. It was certainly more helpful to me than to anyone else in the chamber agonising about what they are doing here this afternoon. His point is well made.

What I want the Parliament to do this afternoon is to vote for the abolition of tuition fees in principle. We should have a committee of inquiry on the issue of student hardship. I am the first to recognise that although the majority of members were elected to this Parliament to abolish tuition fees, that majority does not have a solution to the problem of student hardship. That has to be addressed along with the serious points made by the student organisations. Today, I want this Parliament to enforce the mandate that it was given.

If the committee of inquiry goes ahead and we do not take a decision in principle on tuition fees today, the assumption must be that there is a substantial job to be done in relation to the debate on tuition fees. The committee must therefore take evidence. The minimum information that it will need for comparative purposes is admission figures in October and application figures in December of this year, so it cannot report until next year at the earliest. By the time its recommendations are examined, debated and voted on—free vote or not—any abolition will be too late for next year's students.

No member of this Parliament has ever obtained an assurance from Mr McLeish and his colleagues in the Labour part of the Executive that they will be bound by the terms of that inquiry when it comes to the Parliament. We have no guarantee that that inquiry will recommend the abolition of tuition fees.

The time to take the decision to abolish tuition fees is today.

There is no reason why any member elected on a commitment to abolish tuition fees should find the wording of this amendment impossible to support. It calls for the abolition of tuition fees that the electorate demanded. It calls for a stable solution to student hardship. The vote is about the principle of free education and access to education. Mr McLeish admitted at the weekend that if this amendment were passed, tuition fees would have to be abolished. Mr McLeish has also stated that the Government's response to the committee of inquiry will be driven through the Parliament by the party whips for Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

There is an opportunity today to abolish tuition fees. If Liberal Democrat members pass up this opportunity, they will do so with no guarantee that abolition will be delivered at the end of the inquiry. Mr Wallace said during the election campaign that tuition fees would be dead by Friday. We all thought that he was talking about Friday 7 May, but the timetable has slipped. Mr McLeish conceded at the weekend that tuition fees could be dead by this Friday, if this amendment is passed. Tuition fees could be dead by tomorrow—Friday 18 June—so we must vote for abolition today.

I move, to leave out all after "Scottish Executive" and insert

"to bring forward to the Parliament proposals for the abolition of tuition fees and to appoint urgently a Committee of inquiry on the issue of financial support for those participating, part-time or full-time, in further and higher education; the terms of reference, time scale and membership of that Committee to be approved by and its report laid before the Parliament".

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will now open the debate to members. As a number of members have expressed a wish to speak, the time limit for speeches will be four minutes. That may be reviewed later, but I ask members to stick to their time.

15:42

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): During the past couple of weeks, we have heard many complaints that the Parliament has avoided discussion about real issues that affect real people. Today, we have the chance to change that perception and to have a discussion and vote that make a difference to people's lives. We can go beyond the rhetoric and make a difference.

I appeal to Liberal Democrat members to make the difference by putting their principles first. This amendment is all about giving them the opportunity to vote on the principle of abolishing

fees while still having the benefit of an inquiry on student hardship.

The principle is about free higher education, not the hardship that tuition fees might cause. If there is an inquiry into student financial hardship, no doubt tuition fees can be part of that equation, but today we are talking about the principle that higher education should be free.

During the election campaign, the Scottish Liberal Democrats, the Scottish nationalist party—[MEMBERS: "The Scottish National party."]—the Scottish National party, the Scottish Conservative party, the Greens, the Scottish Socialist party and Dennis Canavan all campaigned against tuition fees. We went round the houses, round the campuses—some of us even wore the tee-shirt—to campaign for the abolition of tuition fees.

Unfortunately, after the electorate spoke and voted a majority of members for the abolition of tuition fees, the Liberal Democrats agreed to an inquiry in their willingness to cook up a deal. It can certainly be argued that an inquiry into student hardship is necessary, but the Liberal Democrats created a fudge by bringing tuition fees into the remit of that inquiry.

Student hardship is undoubtedly a problem, and it will undoubtedly get worse.

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): Mr Monteith talks about the creation of student hardship and the principle of free higher education. Has he conveniently forgotten that it was a Tory Government that introduced 13 different measures to abolish free higher education, and that it was a Tory Government that created student hardship by abandoning the principle of free higher education during the 18 years the Tories were in power?

Mr Monteith: Can Mr Lyon give one of those 13 examples?

George Lyon: Certainly—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: This is not a debate across the chamber, Mr Monteith.

Mr Monteith: Mr Lyon should be reminded that it was under the Conservative Government that access to higher education expanded from 17 per cent to 43 per cent. If any Government had a commitment to expanding access to higher education it was the Conservative Government.

Even with scant research, it is easy to find student financial hardship. In four Scottish universities that we have investigated, student debt to their institutions has risen. At the University of Dundee, for example, debt has risen by £100,000 since tuition fees were introduced.

In the four institutions, debt currently stands at £1.9 million. There is absolutely no doubt of the

need to alleviate student poverty. That is what Mr Swinney's amendment proposes. It also gives everyone—and the Liberal Democrats in particular—the opportunity to end the ill of tuition fees by voting today to abolish them. We could then come up with proposals as to how that could best be done—there will undoubtedly be different views on that.

The Conservative party has already published a bill in the House of Lords and we have lodged motions on how tuition fees can be abolished. There is no doubt that there are ways of abolishing tuition fees to people's satisfaction. This amendment makes it clear that student hardship requires an inquiry, but that free higher education is a principle that this party—and many other parties here—should not give up on. We can end tuition fees.

The Deputy Minister for Parliament (Iain Smith): Mr Monteith keeps referring to his party's commitment to the principle of free higher education. I wonder whether he recognises this quotation of a certain Mr Stephen Dorrell:

"The student goes through higher education and receives enhanced earning potential as a result and so should be expected to contribute towards the cost of that education"—[*Official Report, House of Commons, 16 March 1998; Vol 308, c 976.*]

Does that sound like the principle of free higher education?

Mr Monteith: No, it sounds like Stephen Dorrell. Our party has embraced devolution and is quite at home with the concept of creating policy for our party and our electorate in Scotland. We are free to make our own decisions. I hope that members of Mr Smith's party will be free to make their own decisions and to vote for the abolition of tuition fees. It is worth reminding the Liberal Democrats that in the past month their share of the vote has fallen from 13 to 9 per cent.

The abolition of tuition fees is non-negotiable. We should not be discussing whether tuition fees should be abolished in the future, once they have been shown to cause hardship. We should be discussing abolishing tuition fees today.

Where do all these fees stop? Will fees be introduced for hospital care—possibly means-tested to make the Government feel better about introducing them? Let us make sure that we end the concept of fees. Let us vote against the motion and for the amendment. The Liberals should seize the day.

15:49

Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab): One of the key themes surrounding the establishment of the Scottish Parliament was the emergence of a new kind of politics: where we would put aside party

political posturing and look rationally at the arguments before us; where we would recognise genuine policy differences where they existed; but where we would seek to develop consensus around the priorities of the people of Scotland. Today's debate is one of the first tests of that new kind of politics.

Will we address the financial support that should be offered to students on the basis of party political slogans, and on the basis of policies developed hastily during an election campaign in order to provide a media soundbite, or will we rationally examine the issues that are involved? Let us be in no doubt that those who work and study in higher education want us to take the latter road.

That is clear from the briefings of the Association of University Teachers and the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals. I quote from the AUT briefing:

"It will be all too easy to get it wrong—to rush into a quick fix that creates new anomalies or leaves a massive hole in the Parliament's budget. Getting it wrong will discredit the Parliament and disrupt higher education. Getting it right will take a bit longer but in the process we can prove that the new Parliament offers a new, more robust approach to resolving difficult issues and building a real consensus."

The AUT, COSHEP and—as we have mentioned—the National Union of Students in Scotland all recognise the complexities of the issues. They have argued consistently for an informed debate that takes into account all the available evidence and recognises that what seems like a simple and straightforward solution is rarely that. If this Parliament genuinely believes in the new politics, it must put aside short-term party political expediency and support the establishment of a committee of inquiry.

In setting up a committee of inquiry, we must be clear about the objectives that we want it to address. Let me suggest two objectives that I believe should be paramount. First, nothing must be done that threatens the world-class reputation of Scottish higher education. That reputation has already been mentioned by Mr Wallace and is well deserved. Scotland's academics rank third in the world for the number of research publications per head of the population. Scottish universities attract students from more than 100 countries. That means that if the committee of inquiry recommends additional financial support, it must do so as part of a package of additional resources for higher education. To do otherwise would be a disaster.

The Labour Government has started to repair the underfunding that resulted from 18 years of Tory rule, yet much remains to be done. One of the consequences of the historical underfunding is that salaries have fallen well below those of

comparable professions. The AUT reports that there is a 36 per cent slippage in pay. Next week the Bett commission on pay in higher education will report. It is already clear that it will recommend significant increases, but universities and colleges will not be able to meet those recommendations without increased financial support.

What is critical is that greater financial support for students cannot be bought by reducing support for institutions. In helping students to pay the bill, we must not reduce the value of what they buy.

Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): Did Dr Jackson benefit from a free higher education? If she did, why does she wish to deny that same privilege to future generations?

Dr Jackson: If Mr Lochhead will allow me to finish, I am just coming on to that point.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Could you do so quickly, please?

Dr Jackson: The second objective is to broaden participation. It cannot be acceptable that 80 per cent of children from social class 1 go to university, but only 14 per cent of social class 5 do. It is not a new problem. It is as old as higher education. One of the great disappointments of the expansion of higher education in the 1990s is that the proportion of students from the lower socio-economic classes has changed little.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I must ask you to wind up now.

Dr Jackson: The abolition of this form of educational apartheid is a social and an economic priority.

Finally, for me grants and loans are a much more important issue than tuition fees, but I am happy for that argument to be tested by a committee of inquiry. That is why I support the unamended motion and why I urge other members to do the same.

15:55

Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP): I agree that we must maintain the world-class reputation of our higher education institutions and universities, but that should be funded responsibly by central Government from general taxation and not at the expense of and by placing extra debt on individual students and their families. That is what the Westminster Government has done and it is entirely the wrong way to go about it.

The tradition in Scottish education is of a system that is open to all and which allows each individual to develop to the fullest of their abilities, irrespective of economic, social or other circumstances. That traditional view has served Scotland well over the centuries and we abandon

it at our peril.

In a rapidly changing information age, Scotland needs to maximise the intellectual skills and potential of all its people if it is to survive and prosper in the 21st century. Scotland's education system has fundamental strengths that are well suited to such a rapidly changing future if—and only if—we build on them and provide an education service not only for Scotland, but for the world.

The greater the financial or other barriers placed before our people, the greater our failure as legislators will be. It is to the shame of the Westminster Government that it has imposed tuition fees on the Scottish higher education system at a time when other countries, such as Ireland, have abolished tuition fees to encourage expansion of and access to education for their citizens. It is all the more ironic, as the Westminster Cabinet ministers who abolished student grants and imposed tuition fees and student loans were the people who benefited from the grants system. I am thoroughly ashamed that we have now imposed on a generation debt burdens and barriers that were not in place when many of us went to university.

Today's decision on tuition fees has important consequences for the Scottish economy. The McNicoll report published by the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals two years ago identified that students from the rest of the United Kingdom contribute more than £110 million annually to our higher education system. In addition, each year they contribute more than £100 million in off-campus expenditure on Scottish goods and services. Therefore, any fall in applications to Scottish higher education establishments from students from other parts of the United Kingdom will have a considerable impact on the wider Scottish economy, as well as striking at the heart of our traditional system of four-year honours degrees and endangering the breadth of courses on offer to Scottish students at our universities.

It is patently unfair that English, Welsh and Northern Irish applicants to Scottish universities are expected to pay up to £1,000 more than Scottish or European Union students from the same background for exactly the same course. That means that a student at a Scottish university, from St Ives or St Albans, will have to pay £1,000 more than a student from St Etienne or St Andrews. Such discrimination against English, Welsh and Northern Irish students has to go—and now.

Tuition fees simply add to the financial barriers imposed by the student loans system. Once in place, they will not stay at present levels.

George Lyon: When tuition fees were introduced by the Westminster Government, Mr Welsh asked it to wait and to allow the Scottish Parliament to look at the proposals in detail before their introduction.

Mr Welsh: Now that we have a Scottish Parliament, we should take action on that. That is the whole point and that is why we have a Scottish system. To put Mr Lyon's comments in context, the measure was put through by English ministers and there was hardly a Scot at the debates. I attended them all and opposed tuition fees at every opportunity—on my own. That was the problem.

The matter should be left to the Scottish Parliament, where we can take sensible decisions with Scottish needs and aspirations in mind.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you wind up now, Mr Welsh?

Mr Welsh: I want to point out that this is a moving feast. Once tuition fees are established, they will not stand still. When the Australian Government introduced tuition fees, students paid an average of only 23 per cent of the total fee. That figure has now risen to 45 per cent. Top-up fees were also ruled out, but will now be permitted in Australia. Now that the door has been opened on tuition fees, all that is possible.

The reassurances that the United Kingdom Government has given to students here are similar to those that were given to Australian students.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wind up, please.

Mr Welsh: Student organisations and educational institutions are right to be wary about the future as long as this system of tuition fees remains in place. I never want to see an education system in Scotland where credit ratings count more than grade averages, where bank balances count more than qualifications or where pay-as-you-learn is in a two-tier system that is based on ability to pay rather than ability to learn. We must trust our traditional Scottish education system.

For those reasons and many others, I opposed tuition fees at every opportunity in the Westminster Parliament, and I oppose them again here. The difference is that here we can do something about it. This Parliament should not just recognise the

"widespread opposition to tuition fees",

as stated in the motion; it should take action to abolish tuition fees, and our education system should expect nothing less.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Members have been exceeding the four-minute speaking time quite considerably. I ask them to bear that in mind as they proceed. If members cannot keep to the

time limit, I will have to reduce it, which I am sure no one wants. Similarly, I ask members to make interventions as brief as possible.

16:01

Marilyn Livingstone (Kirkcaldy) (Lab): I will try to be brief. I welcome the opportunity to speak in this important debate and welcome the independent committee of inquiry proposed by the Deputy First Minister.

I cannot understand the opposition to the motion. Now that the fervour of the election is over, I had hoped that all members would accept that it is inappropriate to debate student fees in isolation. We need a much wider and comprehensive debate on the funding of and access to post-16 education and training.

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): Did the member also hope that once the election was over, this new Scottish Parliament could ignore the wishes and the votes of the Scottish people?

Marilyn Livingstone: Setting up an independent inquiry is taking on board the views of the Scottish people.

For the past 16 years, I have worked in further and higher education in Fife College of Further and Higher Education in Kirkcaldy. I have first-hand experience of the issues that affect the sector and the students it serves.

Underfunding has been inherent in further and higher education during 18 years of Conservative government; there has been capping at all levels of education. We are redressing and will continue to redress underfunding. In response to a question that I asked at question time, the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning intimated that there would be £493 million additional funding for further and higher education. We must also address qualitative as well as quantitative issues. We need to address support and funding for full-time and part-time students and for students with special learning needs.

I am interested in the issue of widening access. Our goal must be to raise skills levels and to assist young people and those who are not so young to achieve the highest and, most important, the most appropriate qualifications. For many members, lifelong learning is now an accepted principle. We must develop that principle with nothing less than a radical and lasting change in the attitude to learning and education among all the Scottish people.

If we achieve our vision, we will be able to prevent the creation of the trap of social exclusion through low attainment, unemployment or low-skilled, low-paid employment, and the subsequent disaffection that can ensue. Most important—and

this is why I support the committee of inquiry—the challenge for us is that there will be no single solution to overcoming the problems of barriers to access, underachievement, non-participation and student hardship. Our goal must be to ensure that our further and higher education training provision meets the differing needs of the Scottish people. I agree with Dr Jackson that student funding is of paramount importance.

In our debate and in the inquiry, I ask people not to forget further education. Further education is crucial and is often the step to higher education and higher skills as well as a route out of poverty. I am pleased that it features in the inquiry and look forward to the results.

We need a comprehensive and holistic approach if we are to provide everyone with the opportunity to reach their potential. I ask members to support the comprehensive and wide-ranging review proposed by Jim Wallace.

16:05

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): Throughout my working life of the past 20 years I have been involved in adult education, the last four or five years of which were at Aberdeen College of Further Education. I do not need anyone to tell me of the importance of abolishing student tuition fees. I am committed to their abolition, and when I have the first practical chance to do so, I will. I am interested in practical politics.

The hypocrisy and cant that I have heard today from the Conservative National party about its amendment is unbelievable. The Conservatives started off the process of attacking students in our further and higher education colleges. I am afraid that, by introducing tuition fees, the Labour Government at Westminster has also failed students miserably.

As Jim Wallace rightly pointed out, nothing can be done until 2000-01. We cannot abolish tuition fees now because that would cause utter chaos in our further and higher education colleges—I can tell members that because of my experience. The amendment will not help students. It is impractical in every way and I will not be voting for it. However, I repeat that at the first practical opportunity I will be voting—

Phil Gallie rose—

Mr Rumbles: No, Mr Gallie. I am finishing because many members want to contribute to the debate. I will not dominate even four minutes.

I will finish by warning the coalition Government. I have heard mention of abolishing tuition fees in 2001-02. That is not on. It is my clear understanding, and I was delighted to hear Jim

Wallace confirm it today, that the committee of inquiry will report to this Parliament by the end of this year—that is practical politics. We will have an opportunity to vote on the issue in the new year, and we will abolish fees for the next academic year at the first practical opportunity.

16:07

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): When the issue of tuition fees was debated in the House of Commons, I voted against them; I voted in favour of the restoration of student grants, especially for students from low-income families. Perhaps that is part of the reason why I am sitting in this part of the chamber rather than with Labour members.

During the recent election campaign, I gave commitments on how I would vote on tuition fees and I also expressed the hope that this Parliament would take a far more enlightened view than did the House of Commons. However, that remains to be seen. In recent years, the House of Commons has, in many respects, been trying to turn the clock back with regard to opportunities in higher education.

People who try to defend tuition fees tell us that about half the students in Scotland are exempt from paying them. I am not sure about that. I am told that the Scottish Office expects that figure to drop, so that in all probability in the next academic session the majority of students will face tuition fees. The current threshold shows that parents with a residual income of approximately £17,000 must pay fees for their sons or daughters at college or university. Parents with a residual income of £17,000 are not rich in this day and age. Nevertheless, we must admit that if we were to abolish tuition fees full stop, the main beneficiaries would be parents with high incomes.

That is why we cannot examine tuition fees in isolation. The abolition of tuition fees must be accompanied by the restoration of grants—for students from low-income families in particular.

The Executive's response is to set up some kind of inquiry into tuition fees. I admit that there might be a case for an inquiry into the level of maintenance grants, relative to income, but we must bear it in mind that the majority of members of this Parliament were elected on clear-cut commitments to abolish tuition fees—no ifs or buts or maybes; we were elected to this place to abolish tuition fees, and people outside want us, as members of this Parliament, to do that at the earliest opportunity.

Sadly, the only party that did not have a commitment in its manifesto to abolish tuition fees was the Labour party. That is rather ironic, because the Labour party used to be the party of free education. However, new Labour has become

the party of fee-paying education. It is now in coalition with the Liberal Democrats, although I, perhaps along with many other people, suspect that when the partnership agreement was being negotiated, people down in London were attempting to pull the strings. I am not opposed in principle to coalition, and I accept that the Liberal Democrats could not seriously expect every aspect of their manifesto to be included in the partnership agreement. However, I think that they sold themselves short—and sold the people of Scotland short—by not sticking to their principles, given that in the recent election those principles were supported by the majority of the people of Scotland.

I see the demand for an inquiry as a fudge. We have had inquiries—we have had Dearing, we have had Garrick—and we can see the results. The latest figures show that applications are down by 8.4 per cent at Stirling, 7.4 per cent at St Andrews, 8.4 per cent at Napier, 6.5 per cent at Glasgow, 5 per cent at Edinburgh and 5.9 per cent at Dundee. The students are voting with their feet. Unless we change the policy, that trend will continue, meaning that fewer of our people, particularly our young people, will have the opportunity to benefit from higher education, as many—probably most—members of this Parliament have.

Today we have a chance to examine the Scottish dimension of the problem and, by supporting the amendment, to find, in the First Minister's words, a distinctly Scottish solution to a Scottish problem.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: To try to accommodate as many members as I can who have indicated that they wish to speak, I must reduce the time limit for speeches to three minutes.

16:13

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): As I represent a constituency with three universities and five colleges of further education, I intend to take a strong interest in education. As Glasgow Kelvin contains a high concentration of the student population, I want to take this opportunity to address the important issue of student hardship and get on record some of the figures for the problem.

We do not generally think of students as being on the poverty line, and when discussing low pay we seldom associate that with students. However, student hardship has been a feature of the system since the 1980s. Although I give credit to the Conservative Government for expanding education in the 1980s, I say to Mr Monteith that it is wrong for the Conservatives not to take

responsibility for the mounting debt that they created by successive measures to reduce the levels of grant: abolishing the special grant for art students, abolishing the repeat-year grant, and freezing student grants for two years running. It is dishonest of them not to take responsibility for the debt that students now face.

Mr Monteith: As a former art student who applied for the art grant, I can testify that the art grant was used for materials, not living expenses. Its abolition is not, therefore, a contributory factor in student hardship.

Pauline McNeill: I have to correct Mr Monteith on that. He is correct in saying that the special grant was for materials, but I made representations to Mr John MacKay, the Scottish Office minister responsible at the time. I pleaded with him not to abolish the grant because it was such a minute amount of public expenditure. Mr Monteith's Government still said no.

This September, the student maintenance level for those living away from home is £3,635 a year, a weekly expenditure of £69.90. Given that the average student rent in Scotland is £45 a week, that leaves £24.90 for living costs or £3.56 a day. That is more or less what most of us spend on a cup of coffee and a newspaper at the Scottish Parliament. That is the average amount that students are left with to buy books, clothes and stationery. It is no wonder that the drop-out rate is quite high.

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): Will Pauline McNeill give way?

Pauline McNeill: In just a minute. It is important to note that there has not been a review of the level of student maintenance in modern times. No body or Government department has considered what students need to survive on. Whether we support a grant or a loan system, we cannot continue to pluck figures from the air. For students to survive, the figures must be based on real costs. Mr Wallace mentioned particular concern over mature students.

Fiona Hyslop: Pauline McNeill, like many here, has the experience of having been a student leader. Is she speaking for the motion or for the amendment? I entirely agree with the content of her speech. Students are suffering, and does she not agree that we should be examining hardship, which the amendment would allow us to do? Does she agree that the fees element adds very much to hardship and contributes to the figures that she has mentioned in her speech?

Pauline McNeill: To make it clear, I am supporting the motion, but I will say why fees must be included in the review, because of my beliefs about access—which I will get to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Could you begin to wind up, please.

Pauline McNeill: It seems I will not get to talk about it. The reason why I think student tuition fees should be included in our review is that we have all failed to address the issue of access to those from working-class families. We cannot put our hands on our hearts and say that this country has found the fundamental reasons why we do not have higher participation rates. I support the motion and, within that, I support the inclusion of tuition fees. I do not think that we can afford to exclude £40 million of public expenditure before we even begin to address the question of access. That is why the second review, as contained in the motion, is the most important.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I ask members to limit interventions to the bare minimum so that we can include as many speeches as possible.

16:18

Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP): The issue concerns the principle of free education. Today, we are seeking to make a start on re-establishing free education, first, by abolishing tuition fees. Every member—Mike Rumbles—has the opportunity to do that today. We all know that tuition fees are a deeply unpopular measure introduced by the Labour Government. It was Pauline's Government that abolished the remnants of the maintenance grant, in case she has forgotten. Tuition fees are unpopular not just with those who have to pay them, but with 65 per cent of people who have expressed, in recent polls, their opposition to them.

Support for their abolition has come from various quarters. Only this morning, we received a deputation from Dundee City Council, which, last Monday, passed a motion in support of the widespread campaign of opposition to tuition fees. It is clearly the will of the people to abolish tuition fees. They elected 73 of us to do just that. We are supposed to be here to represent their wishes: we can do that today by supporting the amendment. Many members benefited from free education. Perhaps they would not be here today if they had not done so, yet they wish to deny that opportunity to others.

The impact of the attacks on free education can already be seen with the 6 per cent drop in university applications. To argue, as Labour members often do, that abolition of tuition fees benefits the well-off is utter nonsense. Over the past few weeks we have heard a number of speeches claiming "I'm more working class than thou". I do not intend to make one myself, but I was the first person in my family to have a university degree and I know that if the education

system of today had been in operation then, I would not have gone to university and I would not be here today.

It sounds crass to talk about abolishing tuition fees as benefiting the better-off when we are earning a minimum of £40,000 a year and many ministers are earning £70,000 to £80,000. Jack McConnell's household income is probably more than all of ours collectively. We talk nevertheless about better-off people. Are they the clerical worker and the joiner with a joint income of £17,000, who have to pay tuition fees? Is it the spouse who earns £14,000 and who has to contribute to their partner's tuition fees? Or is it the postman and the nurse, who pay full tuition fees? Are these the better-off people that we are talking about? I do not think so.

The amendment allows us to go further than abolishing tuition fees because it gives us the opportunity to re-establish a free education system—and we have to look at student maintenance to do that. The First Minister talked yesterday of the need to achieve a Scottish education system of excellent quality. The state of an education system says a lot about a society. I would have thought that the message that we want to send out is that Scotland has an education system that is free at the point of delivery, not one based on ability to pay. The quickest way to abolish tuition fees is not to have an inquiry but to vote for the amendment today, which I urge members to do so that we can begin to return Scotland to a system of free education.

Phil Gallie: On a point of order. There have been many good contributions to this debate. Pauline McNeill's was one—she participated in a debating way and allowed interventions and so lost time. Perhaps the Deputy Presiding Officer would consider extending the debate, given the number of people who want to speak and that the shortness of speeches is spoiling the debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: This afternoon I indicated that a time limit would be imposed. Members are not keeping to it. I am being flexible and giving additional time to those who take interventions, but there is a limit to how far I can go. We have to come to decision time at 5 pm and there is other business, so we must adhere to the programme that was outlined earlier.

16:23

David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): Whether or not students should pay tuition fees in Scotland or elsewhere should be decided on principle and not on the allocation of budgets or taxation. That is not only my view but that of the Liberal Democrats. I was told so many times during the election campaign in Dumfries by no

less a person than Mr Jim Wallace's brother, Neil. Mr Neil Wallace was no less uncompromising than his brother in his commitment to abolishing tuition fees. He saw the new politics of Scotland as the coming together of the Liberal Democrats with the SNP and the Tories and as leading to their abolition.

I particularly remember an all-candidates debate in my old school, Lockerbie Academy, where Mr Neil Wallace expressed that prediction with passion, to the obvious pleasure of most of the audience and the equally obvious displeasure of the local Labour MP, who was present.

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab) rose—

David Mundell: That same night, my SNP opponent and I pledged ourselves to that same objective. Today, that opportunity is before the Parliament and I still hope that Liberal Democrat members will be prepared—I am sorry, Elaine, I did not see you.

Dr Murray: Would Mr Mundell remind us who actually won the election in Dumfries?

David Mundell: Indeed I am happy to, as I am about to come to the election result.

Today, we have that opportunity before this Parliament, and I hope that Liberal Democrat members will be prepared to follow Neil Wallace's brave words and join us in lifting the iniquitous burden of tuition fees from Scottish students. Liberal Democrat members have given us many quotes. I have a quote from Mike Rumbles, from *The Leader (Mearns)*, in which he says that he will vote for the abolition of tuition fees, and that Thursday is the start of the process.

Mr Rumbles rose—

David Mundell: I shall continue, as we have heard Mr Rumbles's quote.

Mr Rumbles: I said that here in this chamber earlier.

David Mundell: In his explanation he is misguided as to what he is going to vote for—it is the amendment that will achieve that objective.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you wind up now, please, Mr Mundell.

David Mundell: Mr Neil Wallace made another brave statement, following the declaration of the Scottish parliamentary election result. He declared that, on the basis of the rise in the Liberal Democrat vote, the Dumfries constituency had become a four-way marginal seat. Mr Wallace was not present on Sunday night when the European election count in Dumfries was declared. That demonstrated something quite different: a complete collapse in the Liberal Democrat vote, which was not unique to Dumfries. The Liberal

Democrats lost in 10 of their constituencies, and came fourth in Aberdeen South—hardly a vote of confidence in our new deputy minister for lifelong learning.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Mundell, will you wind up, please.

David Mundell: I am spending plenty of time speaking to Liberal Democrat supporters, as should Liberal Democrat members. Those supporters are now much more favourably inclined to vote for the Conservatives because they know that we at least will stick to our commitments.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Mr Duncan McNeil, who will be the last speaker unless he is brief.

16:27

Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): There has been a lot of discussion about the university aspect of the debate. I have not been to a university, and would like to remind people of the importance of further education colleges, which provide around 50,000 student places in Scotland. James Watt College, in my constituency, provides 1,400 of those places.

As members will know, further education colleges are an important gateway to second-chance and lifelong learning. As someone who benefited from that second chance, I can testify that it was never given free. People who went to night school paid to go there to get themselves out of the shipyards. People who went on plumbing, welding, car maintenance and other courses paid or got their employers to pay. Principles may be the experience of some members, but they are not the experience of many people I know, nor are they my own experience.

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): Mr McNeil has just said that he benefited from free education. Why does he then seek to deny it to others?

Mr McNeil: I think Colin Campbell must have misheard; I must have been talking too fast for him. I said that the experience of many people in further education colleges is that they must always pay; they either pay their own fees or employers pay them. That was my experience.

To get an angle on the issue and to get a feel for the debate, I tried to exclude myself from the accusations, bluster and confusion of the political debate. I visited my local college, not only to better inform myself about the debate, but to establish a link between this Parliament and the college, including those at the sharp end of the debate. I found out that 76 per cent of students who attend that college pay no fees, and that only 4 per cent pay the full fees—53 out of 1,444 students.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP) rose—

Mr McNeil: Wait a minute, Tommy, I am in full flow here. Ninety-six per cent of students at that college received either full or partial support for their fees.

Tommy Sheridan: I intervened because Duncan McNeil was in full flow; I hope that he does not mind. Does he agree that, along with the abolition of tuition fees, part of this debate has to be about the earliest possible reintroduction of student grants to support working-class kids and help them to get an education?

Mr McNeil: I fully support a wide-ranging review and all the—[*Laughter.*] Well, I do, and I think that it is very important to have a review and an independent inquiry to discuss all the issues. Dennis Canavan alluded earlier to the fact that there is more than one thing at issue here, and that is what I am trying to get at.

As I said, I found the college in a period of investment and expansion. It is employing 12 new lecturers on a permanent basis. All those things are happening and we must take them into consideration.

To vote against the inquiry and support the amendment would not automatically create fairness. I do not see how it could; it defies my logic. It would exclude the students, management and unions from the opportunity to participate in influencing the decision-making process. I thought that was what we were supposed to be about.

Every action has a consequence. If we do not spend a bit of money on examining the issues, it could lead to poorer quality courses, fewer teachers and an end to the investment environment that we have now. We must, therefore, think hard and support the wide-ranging inquiry.

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): I call Nicola Sturgeon to sum up for the amendment.

16:31

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): I have listened very carefully, and sometimes angrily, to contributions from members on all sides of this debate. We should all remember that this is the first decision of substance that this Parliament is being asked to take. That is why it is vital that we get it right this afternoon and do what the people of Scotland instructed us to do on 6 May.

The debate can essentially be boiled down to the consideration of two fundamental principles. The first is the principle of free access to further and higher education. The cry from students for free education for all has been a consistent one down the years, but we should stop and consider

just what that principle means for the people of Scotland, not least for those in our own ranks who have benefited from a free education.

In this country, we have a great tradition of learning. We send more young people into higher education than any other part of the UK. We believe that access to education should be based on the ability to learn and not on the ability to pay.

Tuition fees and the abolition of the student maintenance grant—two issues that are of equal importance—have ripped the heart out of that principle. The effects are already there for all to see. Applications are down by nearly 6 per cent since last year. I have heard it said that, because the biggest drop is among low-income students who are exempt from tuition fees, that makes it all right. It does not make it all right. It strengthens the argument for a review of student funding and financial support, but it is not an argument for tuition fees. In any event, the figures show an above-average drop among those at the lower end of the scale, the people who have to pay a proportion of the tuition fees.

In short, Mr Presiding Officer, but in truth, we are pricing our students out of education. The Government's manifesto commitment to create extra places in higher education should be considered in the light of that fact. Based on present evidence, all that the Government will be doing is creating a lot of empty seats in lecture theatres across Scotland.

The second principle that is at stake in this debate is the principle of democratic accountability. In the long years and varied arguments that have preceded the establishment of this Parliament, the one theme that kept emerging again and again was accountability. This Parliament was to be about bringing politics closer to the people and making politicians more accountable for their actions and decisions, forcing them to keep their promises. That theme emerged earlier this week, albeit in a different context, when Charles Kennedy entered the Liberal Democrat leadership race. He said that politicians must reconnect with the people. He was absolutely right and, in this Parliament, we in Scotland have the opportunity to do just that. However, if Liberal Democrat members—and I make no apology for singling them out—do not vote for John Swinney's amendment this afternoon, they will blow that opportunity.

Seventy-three of us were sent here on a clear pledge to abolish tuition fees. That was not a peripheral campaign issue, but the central, defining one. It was the Liberals who made their commitment to abolition non-negotiable. It was Jim Wallace who said that tuition fees would be dead by Friday. In his opening remarks, he rather astonishingly criticised what he called the bald

statement in the amendment which calls for the Executive to bring forward proposals for the abolition of tuition fees. I checked the Liberal manifesto, and it says that the Liberal Democrats would "abolish tuition fees"—remarkably similar wording.

Mr Jim Wallace: Ms Sturgeon is being very selective. The manifesto says:

"Abolish tuition fees for all Scottish students at UK universities."

The amendment would not do that. Under the proposal that she is asking us to vote for, Scottish students at English universities would still have to pay fees.

Nicola Sturgeon: Mr Wallace's playing with words will not wash with the Scottish people. I have not been involved in politics for as long as many members of this Parliament, but even in my time I have witnessed more than a few U-turns by governing parties. They would be as nothing, however, compared to the betrayal that will occur in this chamber today if Liberal members do not vote for John Swinney's amendment.

It has been said, before and during this debate, that the establishment of a committee is the quickest way to secure abolition. As Mr Swinney has already pointed out, that begs the question why that was not the manifesto commitment; it is utter nonsense. Putting aside the fact that this morning Mr McLeish would not commit the Executive to carrying out the committee's recommendations, if we had a committee and it decided to abolish fees, that would bring us back to the point we are at today: that is, the point of calling on the Executive to bring forward proposals.

This afternoon, we have a choice. We can honour the 6 May verdict of the Scottish people, or we can choose to ignore it. I put it to the Liberal Democrat members of this Parliament that they will ignore the wishes of the Scottish people at their peril. I support the amendment.

16:37

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish): I would like to build some harmony and unity out of what seems to have been a fairly disparate debate. We have election campaigns and politics is about seeing through commitments. It is also about looking at issues in their wider context.

The remarkable thing about Jim Wallace's motion is that it does not ask any party to concede its position. The Liberal Democrats forcibly pointed out that they are sticking with the issue—they want abolition. A very important point of practical politics was also raised by a Liberal member—there must

be a practical way of making decisions. The motion asks that no one shifts position, and there might be some agreement on that.

If every party—every member—in this chamber is confident of the wisdom of their position, why not put it to the examination of a review committee? That committee's composition, terms of reference and time scale will be agreed by this Parliament. Without shifting positions, we can then look at the issue in context.

Mr Swinney: Mr McLeish has set out the position that he represents. If the committee of inquiry recommends the abolition of tuition fees, will he guarantee that the Labour party will support and implement those recommendations?

Henry McLeish: I commented on the radio this morning that it would be absurd for anyone to make a commitment to a hypothetical situation. That is why we are having a review inquiry. [MEMBERS: "Oh."] The SNP simply does not like being challenged on the wisdom of its position. It may want to get hooked on that hypothetical question, but let us go further to explore what Scotland wants. The SNP talks much about being in the vanguard of the people, but the National Union of Students, which is committed to the abolition of tuition fees, says:

"NUS Scotland has supported the establishment of a review committee to examine student financial support in Scotland. Indeed NUS Scotland publicly called for a review prior to the Scottish General Election."

Tommy Sheridan *rose*—

Henry McLeish: The Association of Scottish Colleges says:

"The proposal to abolish contributions to tuition fees for full-time undergraduates needs careful consideration in a wider context."

Professor John Arbuthnott, in a letter to Donald Dewar, says:

"It is in the national interest to institute a comprehensive review immediately . . . to establish a coherent *long-term* framework for student support and the provision of higher education in Scotland."

In a letter to Alex Salmond, Dr Ian Graham-Bryce of the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals says:

"Without prejudice . . . to their commitment to the solution they believe to be right, we hope all parties will support our call for a swift and independent review of student support in general."

Jane Denholm, deputy secretary of COSHEP, says:

"This should be the time for parties to work from their shared principles to achieve the grown-up, joined-up and evidence based policy solutions which Scottish students need and deserve"

and which taxpayers should expect from us.

Mr Swinney: Will Mr McLeish give way?

Henry McLeish: No, I am not giving way at the moment. I want to give way to Tommy Sheridan in a second.

Robert Kay, chair of the Association of Scottish Colleges, says:

"The Scottish Parliament should take a broad and balanced view, not just of tuition fees but all aspects of student support and all types of student."

Finally, David Jago, past president of the Association of University Teachers, says:

"Seeking a quick fix on this issue would be a betrayal of Scotland's aspirations for a new politics in which everyone can have a say, not just party leaders meeting behind closed doors."

The emphasis is that it would be arrogant for us simply to say, without looking at the consequences of the action, "Let us take an issue. Let us spend £40 million to £60 million of taxpayers' money." Today, I am saying, "Do not concede your position." Let us agree on that. Let us listen to the rest of Scotland, which wants to be involved in the debate. Are the SNP and the Tories going to say, "No, we do not want to listen to COSHEP, the NUS or anyone else. We want to go our way without due consideration"?

Tommy Sheridan: In the spirit of listening, will Mr McLeish join me on 1 July and meet the student march against poverty, which is leaving Glasgow on 28 June and is supported by Glasgow Caledonian University Students Association and seven other university students associations?

Henry McLeish: I have signed up to meet the AUT, which has grave concerns about higher education. I am willing to consider Mr Sheridan's invitation, diaries permitting.

What an amazing degree of consensus there is in the chamber this afternoon. I have heard people talk about widening access and about student hardship and maintenance grants. We have also heard about part-time students, mature students, colleges, bursaries, fees and fee waivers. As we are involved in the totality of funding, is it not prudent—without conceding our positions—for us not only to look at the matter in the context of student funding, but to ask, as the AUT does, "What about the teaching infrastructure? What about the quality of higher and further education? What about the fact that £493 million is being injected into Scotland's higher and further education over the next three years?" I tell my colleagues in this chamber that this issue is too serious for us to allow ourselves to get bogged down; we should not ignore the education community and the wishes of many members and just state that we will go forward with our plans.

Mr Swinney: Will Mr McLeish give way?

Henry McLeish: No, I want to press on. Pauline McNeill made a point in which, historically, Scotland has had a big interest. Remember the Robbins committee of the 1960s? We wanted access to be widened and we have made tremendous progress. Pauline McNeill's point concerned skilled manual workers, partly skilled workers and unskilled workers—socio-economic groups 3, 4 and 5.

Socio-economic group 3—manual workers—represents 21 per cent of the population but only 17 per cent of people in higher and further education. Those figures are not too bad, but the partly skilled group represents 16 per cent of the population but only 9 per cent of people in higher and further education. The unskilled group represents 6 per cent of the population but only 2 per cent of those in higher and further education. If we want to use the cloak of poverty and social injustice, let us remember those figures.

The mythical days of free higher education probably never existed in post-war Britain. They certainly did not exist in pre-war Britain. I would rather take a principled position on the review committee and say that Scotland believes in social justice and in widening access—Scotland wants to examine how the abolition of tuition fees would impact on the objectives that we all share. It is a great aspiration to be able to say that not only can we stick to our position on tuition fees, but—for the better interest of higher and further education—we can look at the big picture, which I have tried, briefly, to pinpoint.

There has been a lot of to-ing and fro-ing in the chamber about betrayals and principles. I like to think that we all have principles. Are there any charlatans here who do not believe in what they are doing? I do not think so. We must try to keep a moderate tone.

If we are clear, if we feel principled and we have knowledge of a particular matter, we should put that matter to an expert group to examine. I emphasise a point that Jim Wallace made: this is not a fix and there are no constraints on the committee. I agree with Dennis Canavan: if the committee wants to consider maintenance grants, we should let it.

The chamber has serious difficulties and differences on a point of principle. That is fine, but we should not disguise the fact that, if we have a review committee, we can explore every avenue. The time for decision making will be when the report is presented to the chamber and to the Executive. If we agree to the motion, I will speak to all the Opposition parties over the next two or three days. We must have an inquiry that we can be proud of and that the chamber can support. We must ensure that widening access is the kernel of our approach to higher and further education in

Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: The division on this matter will be taken in decision time at 5 pm.

Committees

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The final item of business for today is the motion from the Parliamentary Bureau on the establishment of parliamentary committees. I remind members that the motion has to be taken without debate, so I ask the mover of the motion and the movers of the amendments to take a couple of minutes each—

Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): We cannot hear you at the back, Sir David.

The Presiding Officer: I am very sorry about that. I repeat: this motion is taken without debate and therefore the movers of the motion—

Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con): We cannot hear either.

The Presiding Officer: I am willing to shout if necessary. I said that Parliament had already agreed that the motion would be passed without debate and therefore the mover and the movers of amendments must be extremely brief.

16:48

The Minister for Parliament (Mr Tom McCabe): I am delighted to move this motion. Since the opening day, there has been much talk in the Parliament of a new politics. People have placed different interpretations on that, but there is a wide desire to achieve a new way of going about our business.

I move the motion with a sense of contentment; it reflects consensus and cross-party support. However, I also move it with a sense of outrage caused by the front-page article that appeared in *The Herald* today, which totally misrepresents and distorts the work of the four parties involved in the Parliamentary Bureau.

The Parliamentary Bureau asked the four party business managers if they could reach agreement on this potentially difficult issue and they undertook to discuss the matter. In the background of those discussions was the desire that Messrs Harper, Sheridan and Canavan could be accommodated on a committee within the Parliament. Clearly, in determining the size of the committees, we had to strike a balance between the need to manage MSPs' time for their chamber and constituency commitments and the time that they would spend in committee.

We agreed to use the d'Hondt formula for the allocation of committee places. That formula would not provide any places for Messrs Canavan, Harper or Sheridan, but the parties were determined to resist that. In a spirit of fairness, they were determined to find some formula that would allocate a place to each of those three

members.

The d'Hondt formula would have allocated six places on an 11-member committee to the Labour party. To Labour's credit, it immediately recognised that, as it does not have a majority in this chamber, it would not be fair for it to have six places. We therefore agreed to reduce our representation on committees to five places. To their credit, other parties responded by reducing their representation. That ensured that places would be available for Messrs Canavan, Sheridan and Harper.

The allocation of places on committees has been difficult for all parties. Of Labour members, 22 indicated an interest in the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee, 21 in the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 15 in the European Committee, 16 in the Equal Opportunities Committee and 13 in the Transport and the Environment Committee. Similar figures apply to the other parties, so some members will clearly be disappointed that they did not get on the committee of their first choice.

The proposed allocation is based on a consensual approach and—more important—on the best principles of the consultative steering group report. The front-page article to which I referred earlier not only contained a headline that was offensive to my party, but badly misrepresented the commendable work that all the parties have done over the past few weeks to find an acceptable solution. Far more important in my view, that article misrepresents how politics and this Parliament can work if we all have the will.

The principle that Robin Harper, Tommy Sheridan and Dennis Canavan should each secure a committee place is sound; it is supported by all parties on the Parliamentary Bureau. If the places are not on the committees of their first choice, that applies equally—as I have demonstrated—to members of every other party in the Parliament.

I stress that the rules for committees in this Parliament are somewhat different from those in other places. MSPs can attend meetings of committees of which they are not members; they can speak at the discretion of the chair and can move amendments. They cannot vote, but they have considerable powers, even though they are not formally members of the committee. I stress on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau that, although a number of amendments have been lodged today, there is no intention to support or agree to any amendment that seeks to replace the names in the motion.

I appeal to Messrs Canavan and Sheridan to realise that, if they do not accept the need for compromise to achieve consensus, they will find

that, through their own action, they do not have committee places. It is not the wish of the Parliamentary Bureau or of any party that is represented on the bureau for Messrs Canavan, Harper or Sheridan not to have committee places, but the amendments would have the practical effect of leaving those members without committee places.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): Will the minister confirm that every party offered to give up a place and that the Scottish Conservatives offered to give up a place on the Equal Opportunities Committee?

Mr McCabe: I thought that I had confirmed that, but I am more than happy to do so again. I stress as strongly as I can that the level of co-operation from all the parties on the bureau was commendable.

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): Will the minister confirm an important additional point? Now that the principle has been established that individual members or members of parties that have only one member should have committee places, we hope that it will last not just for this session, but for all time.

Mr McCabe: I am more than happy to confirm what Mr Russell has said. This is an important debate on an important motion. That is why I have stressed to Messrs Canavan and Sheridan that their amendments are very serious and go against the fine principles that the Parliamentary Bureau wants to establish. As I said, we sincerely want people to be represented on the committees and I therefore urgently request Messrs Canavan and Sheridan to reconsider their position.

I believe that the commendable work of the four parties on the Parliamentary Bureau is an indication of the good way in which this Parliament can operate. I sincerely hope that the authors of the article in *The Herald* today take note of my words and have the good grace to correct the misinformation that appeared.

I move,

That the Parliament approves the membership and party from which the convener should be appointed for its committees set out as follows:-

European

Bruce Crawford, Winnie Ewing, Hugh Henry, Sylvia Jackson, Cathy Jamieson, Margo MacDonald, Maureen Macmillan, David Mundell, Irene Oldfather, Tavish Scott, Ben Wallace and Allan Wilson be members of the European Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Equal Opportunities

Malcolm Chisholm, Johann Lamont, Marilyn Livingstone, Jamie McGrigor, Irene McGugan, Kate MacLean, Michael McMahon, Michael Matheson, John Munro, Nora Radcliffe, Shona Robison and Elaine Smith be members of the Equal

Opportunities Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Finance

David Davidson, Rhoda Grant, Adam Ingram, George Lyon, Kenneth Macintosh, Keith Raffan, Richard Simpson, John Swinney, Elaine Thomson, Mike Watson and Andrew Wilson be members of the Finance Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Audit

Brian Adam, Scott Barrie, Cathie Craigie, Annabel Goldie, Margaret Jamieson, Nick Johnston, Lewis Macdonald, Paul Martin, Euan Robson, Andrew Welsh and Andrew Wilson be members of the Audit Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Procedures

Donald Gorrie, Janis Hughes, Gordon Jackson, Andy Kerr, Gil Paterson, Michael Russell and Murray Tosh be members of the Procedures Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Conservative Party;

Standards

Patricia Ferguson, Karen Gillon, James Douglas-Hamilton, Adam Ingram, Des McNulty, Tricia Marwick and Mike Rumbles be members of the Standards Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Liberal Democrat Party;

Public Petitions

Helen Eadie, Phil Gallie, Christine Grahame, John McAllion, Pauline McNeill, Margaret Smith and Sandra White be members of the Public Petitions Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Subordinate Legislation

Fergus Ewing, Trish Godman, Ian Jenkins, Kenny MacAskill, Bristow Muldoon, David Mundell and Ian Welsh be members of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Justice and Home Affairs

Scott Barrie, Roseanna Cunningham, Phil Gallie, Christine Grahame, Gordon Jackson, Lyndsay McIntosh, Kate MacLean, Maureen Macmillan, Pauline McNeill, Tricia Marwick and Euan Robson be members of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Education, Culture and Sport

Karen Gillon, Ian Jenkins, Kenneth Macintosh, Fiona McLeod, Brian Monteith, Mary Mulligan, Cathy Peattie, Michael Russell, Jamie Stone, Nicola Sturgeon and Ian Welsh be members of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector

Bill Aitken, Robert Brown, Cathie Craigie, Margaret Curran, Fiona Hyslop, John McAllion, Alex Neil, Lloyd Quinan, Keith Raffan, Mike Watson and Karen Whitefield be members of the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Enterprise and Lifelong Learning

Fergus Ewing, Annabel Goldie, Nick Johnston, Marilyn Livingstone, George Lyon, Margo MacDonald, Duncan McNeil, Elaine Murray, John Swinney, Elaine Thomson and

Allan Wilson be members of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Health and Community Care

Malcolm Chisholm, Dorothy-Grace Elder, Duncan Hamilton, Hugh Henry, Margaret Jamieson, Irene Oldfather, Mary Scanlon, Richard Simpson, Margaret Smith, Kay Ullrich and Ben Wallace be members of the Health and Community Care Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Liberal Democrat Party;

Transport and the Environment

Helen Eadie, Linda Fabiani, Janis Hughes, Cathy Jamieson, Andy Kerr, Kenny MacAskill, Des McNulty, Nora Radcliffe, Tavish Scott and Murray Tosh be members of the Transport and the Environment Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Rural Affairs

Alex Fergusson, Rhoda Grant, Alex Johnstone, Richard Lochhead, Lewis Macdonald, Irene McGugan, Alasdair Morgan, John Munro, Elaine Murray, Cathy Peattie and Mike Rumbles be members of the Rural Affairs Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Conservative Party;

Local Government

Colin Campbell, Kenneth Gibson, Trish Godman, Donald Gorrie, Keith Harding, Sylvia Jackson, Johann Lamont, Michael McMahon, Bristow Muldoon, Gil Paterson and Jamie Stone be members of the Local Government Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party.

16:56

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): We have heard of new politics, but I see that we now have new podium and a new member: it seems that d'Hondt is to blame. I didnae know that he was here, right enough.

Although Tom talks about consensual politics, he consistently mentioned what the four parties' business managers were doing. The problem is that he has not spoken to me, Robin Harper or Dennis Canavan. Consensus means involving other people.

Mr McCabe: I received a number of communications from Robin Harper: one indicated that he would like a place on the Equal Opportunities Committee; another told me that he would like to be considered for the European Committee; and a third informed me that he had an interest in the Transport and the Environment Committee.

The point is that, under the rules of this Parliament, the three members to whom I have referred do not have representation on the Parliamentary Bureau. I believe that I referred to the fact that the other four parties took that into account in their sincere desire to involve those three parties in the workings of the Parliament.

Tommy Sheridan: There is an old adage that if you provide enough rope, people sometimes hang

themselves. It seems that there has been no consensual discussion with two out of the three members who are not represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. The member who Mr McCabe has had discussions with had to ask to be on three or four committees before getting the one that he wanted, whereas the two members who did not ask for anything did not get the ones that they wanted. That seems to be very arcane.

The problem is that the two members requested places on the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee and the Education, Culture and Sport Committee. The problem that Mr McCabe mentioned about the great number of members seeking places on the committees should surely be addressed by increasing the size of the committees, rather than by refusing membership to people who want to serve on a particular committee.

In respect of the idea that we are creating a consensual atmosphere in this Parliament, the difficulty is that we would not have had any places under the d'Hondt system. To that I would say that if the formula disnae work, do not use it. We are all grown-ups in this chamber—surely we can decide to speak to one another, even if we do not agree. I do not think that it is too much to ask that two members who have requested a place on only one committee each are given those places—it is not as if we have requested a place on many committees or sought any special service. Under my amendments, the members whom we are asking to be deleted from the membership lists of the committees would still be members of two other committees.

I move amendments S1M-53.1 and S1M-53.2.

Mr McCabe: To clarify Tommy Sheridan's point, I inform the chamber that there are five members of the Labour party who sit on only one committee.

16:59

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): There were great hopes and expectations that the Scottish Parliament would herald a new era of inclusive democracy. It would be a great pity if members were excluded from membership of committees simply because they are members of minority parties. After all, we are all members of minority parties or, like me, a member of no party at all.

There is no mention of Robin Harper, Tommy Sheridan or me in any of the committees listed in Mr McCabe's motion. If he is offering us a place on a committee, this is the first official word that I have heard of it. The Parliamentary Bureau is behaving like some secretive politburo instead of being accountable to the Parliament as a whole and attempting to communicate with all members. I accept that we have no right to sit on the

business bureau, but surely we have a right to regular communication from the people who are on the bureau.

That is why we wrote to you, Mr Presiding Officer. We understand that you chair the business bureau. The three of us wrote a joint letter to you, stating our preferences for the committees of which we would like to be members. What did we get in response? We have had no response at all from Mr McCabe; all we have had is the motion in which none of us is mentioned as a member of any committee.

I have nothing personal against Keith Raffan; I remember when he was a Tory MP in another place, although he has changed his colours a bit since then—or has he? If my two amendments were passed, Keith would still be a member of two committees, the Finance Committee and the Equal Opportunities Committee, and Tommy Sheridan would have membership of only one, the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee.

In support of my amendments, I must remind members that Tommy represents Glasgow, which has a high incidence of social inclusion—[*Laughter*] rather, social exclusion as well as social inclusion—and housing problems. The role of the voluntary sector in the city of Glasgow is very important indeed. Therefore, it would be appropriate for Tommy Sheridan to be a member of that committee.

I move amendments S1M-53.3 and S1M-53.4.

17:03

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): I have been put in a rather embarrassing position. I must confess that I have not read the newspaper article that Mr McCabe alluded to in case it embarrassed me. However, I am delighted to move my amendment.

Michael Russell: I was surprised to hear that there was no knowledge of individuals going on to committees, because discussions about that have been taking place for some time. I am sure that Mr Harper will acknowledge that I told him 10 days ago what the proposal was in terms of individual committees. It was suggested that the proposal should be discussed amongst the three members. That does not seem to have been done and I regret that.

It is rather arcane, perhaps, but if members count the number of places on each committee they will find that there is one vacancy on the European Committee, one vacancy on the Equal Opportunities Committee and one vacancy on the Transport and the Environment Committee. In the absence of other members rushing forward to fill

those places, the obvious intention is that the three members should sit on the committees in which the other parties have vacated places.

Robin Harper: I was very pleased when Mike came and told me that the Parliamentary Bureau was making those places available. However, there is an important point to be made about the way in which it had to be done: by people coming along and negotiating. It is important for the future of the Parliament and for the future of other people from small parties—after the next election I hope to have a few more of my colleagues with me—that we revisit the size of committees and the way in which their membership is chosen. That is a calm plea for us to reconsider those issues, when the dust has settled, particularly for the benefit of Tommy Sheridan and Dennis Canavan.

I move amendment S1M-53.5.

Decision Time

17:05

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): We now move to decision time. I hope that everyone can hear me, as I will be putting important questions on the three motions.

The first question is, that amendment S1M-52.1, in the name of Donald Gorrie, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: In that case, there will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree to the amendment, no to disagree to the amendment or abstain to record an abstention. Members should vote now.

For

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)

Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Ms Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)

Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 61, Against 64, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S1M-52, in the name of Donald Dewar, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: In that case, there will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree to the motion, no to disagree to the motion or abstain to record an abstention. Members should vote now.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Ms Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)

McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine)
 (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 66, Against 57, Abstentions 2.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament endorses the decision to provide its permanent home on the Holyrood site and authorises the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to take forward the project in accordance with the plans developed by the EMBT/RMJM design team and within the time scale and cost estimates described in the Presiding Officer's note to members of 9 June 1999.

The Presiding Officer: In my capacity as chairman of the corporate body, I wish to say that we will take forward the Parliament's decision and that we shall do so openly, with maximum consultation and listening to constructive criticism as we go. I hope that, in that spirit, the Parliament will unite behind the decision that has just been reached and the efforts of the corporate body to implement it.

Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): On a point of order. May I ask the Presiding Officer and chairman of the corporate body whether the corporate body will have access to commercially confidential material relating to the Holyrood project?

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry, I could not hear your question, Mr Wilson.

Andrew Wilson: I beg your pardon, Presiding Officer. Will the corporate body, as the client, have access to commercially confidential material, and will it report that to the Parliament?

The Presiding Officer: We shall certainly have access to confidential material but, as we will be the clients, we have to be very careful about such material being passed around. Members will have to rely on us and on our judgment in these matters and, as I implied in my statement, members should bring any criticism of the project direct to me or to any of the five members of the corporate body. We will be as open as we can be, within the limits of normal commercial practice.

The next question before the chamber is, that amendment SM1-2.4, in the name of John Swinney, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: In that case there will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree to the amendment, no to disagree to the amendment or abstain to record an abstention. Members should vote now.

FOR

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross)
 (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Ms Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 56, Against 69, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that motion S1M-2, in the name of Jim Wallace, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree with the motion, no to disagree with the motion, and abstain to record an abstention. Members should vote now.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Ms Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 70, Against 52, Abstentions 2.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament recognises the widespread opposition to tuition fees, the growing importance of lifelong learning to Scotland's society and economy and the wide range of circumstances of those engaged in lifelong learning; and calls upon the Scottish Executive once established to appoint urgently a committee of inquiry on the issue of tuition fees and financial support for those participating, part-time or full-time, in further and higher education; the terms of reference, time scale and membership of that committee to be approved by and its report laid before the Parliament.

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S1M-53.1, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree with the amendment, no to disagree with the amendment and abstain to record an abstention.

FOR

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Ms Patricia Ferguson): The result of the division is as follows:
 For 3, Against 121, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S1M-53.2, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree with the amendment, no to disagree with the amendment and abstain to record an abstention.

FOR

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)

Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)

Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 3, Against 121, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S1M-53.3, in the name of Dennis Canavan, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree with the amendment, no to disagree with the amendment and abstain to record an abstention.

FOR

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)

Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)

Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 3, Against 121, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S1M-53.4, in the name of Dennis Canavan, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division. Members should vote yes to agree with the amendment, no to disagree with the amendment and abstain to record an abstention.

FOR

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)

Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the division is as follows: For 4, Against 120, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is, that amendment S1M-53.5, in the name of Robin Harper, be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The question is that motion—

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): On a point of order, is the motion in Tom McCabe's name in order? As I understand it after previous explanation, the Parliament decided on a previous occasion that the European Committee and the Equal Opportunities Committee should have 13 members. Only 12 members are listed, so is the motion technically in order?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The motion is in order, Mr Canavan. The committees will have 13 members. There are vacancies at the moment.

The question is, that motion S1M-53, in the name of Mr Tom McCabe, as amended, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There will be a division. This has been a test of our voting system, which has held up well. Members should vote yes to agree with the amendment, no to disagree with

the amendment and abstain to record an abstention.

For

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce JP (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Dewar, Donald (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)

McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Ms Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Raffan, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Welsh, Ian (Ayr) (Lab)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The result of the vote is: For 119, Against 2, Abstentions 2.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

That the Parliament approves the membership and party from which the convener should be appointed for its committees set out as follows:-

European

Bruce Crawford, Winnie Ewing, Hugh Henry, Sylvia

Jackson, Cathy Jamieson, Margo MacDonald, Maureen Macmillan, David Mundell, Irene Oldfather, Tavish Scott, Ben Wallace and Allan Wilson be members of the European Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Equal Opportunities

Malcolm Chisholm, Johann Lamont, Marilyn Livingstone, Jamie McGrigor, Irene McGugan, Kate MacLean, Michael McMahon, Michael Matheson, John Munro, Nora Radcliffe, Shona Robison and Elaine Smith be members of the Equal Opportunities Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Finance

David Davidson, Rhoda Grant, Adam Ingram, George Lyon, Kenneth Macintosh, Keith Raffan, Richard Simpson, John Swinney, Elaine Thomson, Mike Watson and Andrew Wilson be members of the Finance Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Audit

Brian Adam, Scott Barrie, Cathie Craigie, Annabel Goldie, Margaret Jamieson, Nick Johnston, Lewis Macdonald, Paul Martin, Euan Robson, Andrew Welsh and Andrew Wilson be members of the Audit Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Procedures

Donald Gorrie, Janis Hughes, Gordon Jackson, Andy Kerr, Gil Paterson, Michael Russell and Murray Tosh be members of the Procedures Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Conservative Party;

Standards

Patricia Ferguson, Karen Gillon, James Douglas-Hamilton, Adam Ingram, Des McNulty, Tricia Marwick and Mike Rumbles be members of the Standards Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Liberal Democrat Party;

Public Petitions

Helen Eadie, Phil Gallie, Christine Grahame, John McAllion, Pauline McNeill, Margaret Smith and Sandra White be members of the Public Petitions Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Subordinate Legislation

Fergus Ewing, Trish Godman, Ian Jenkins, Kenny MacAskill, Bristow Muldoon, David Mundell and Ian Welsh be members of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Justice and Home Affairs

Scott Barrie, Roseanna Cunningham, Phil Gallie, Christine Grahame, Gordon Jackson, Lyndsay McIntosh, Kate MacLean, Maureen Macmillan, Pauline McNeill, Tricia Marwick and Euan Robson be members of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Education, Culture and Sport

Karen Gillon, Ian Jenkins, Kenneth Macintosh, Fiona McLeod, Brian Monteith, Mary Mulligan, Cathy Peattie, Michael Russell, Jamie Stone, Nicola Sturgeon and Ian Welsh be members of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector

Bill Aitken, Robert Brown, Cathie Craigie, Margaret Curran, Fiona Hyslop, John McAllion, Alex Neil, Lloyd Quinan, Keith Raffan, Mike Watson and Karen Whitefield be members of the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Enterprise and Lifelong Learning

Fergus Ewing, Annabel Goldie, Nick Johnston, Marilyn Livingstone, George Lyon, Margo MacDonald, Duncan McNeil, Elaine Murray, John Swinney, Elaine Thomson and Allan Wilson be members of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Scottish National Party;

Health and Community Care

Malcolm Chisholm, Dorothy-Grace Elder, Duncan Hamilton, Hugh Henry, Margaret Jamieson, Irene Oldfather, Mary Scanlon, Richard Simpson, Margaret Smith, Kay Ullrich and Ben Wallace be members of the Health and Community Care Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Liberal Democrat Party;

Transport and the Environment

Helen Eadie, Linda Fabiani, Robin Harper, Janis Hughes, Cathy Jamieson, Andy Kerr, Kenny MacAskill, Des McNulty, Nora Radcliffe, Tavish Scott and Murray Tosh be members of the Transport and the Environment Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party;

Rural Affairs

Alex Fergusson, Rhoda Grant, Alex Johnstone, Richard Lochhead, Lewis Macdonald, Irene McGugan, Alasdair Morgan, John Munro, Elaine Murray, Cathy Peattie and Mike Rumbles be members of the Rural Affairs Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Conservative Party;

Local Government

Colin Campbell, Kenneth Gibson, Trish Godman, Donald Gorrie, Keith Harding, Sylvia Jackson, Johann Lamont, Michael McMahon, Bristow Muldoon, Gil Paterson and Jamie Stone be members of the Local Government Committee, the Convener to be appointed from the Labour Party.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time for today.

Meeting closed at 17:21.

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