

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

(GLASGOW)

Wednesday 17 May 2000

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Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 17 May 2000

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

Time for Reflection

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Good morning. For our time for reflection today, we welcome Mr S L Gajree, the president of the Hindu Mandir in Glasgow.

Mr S L Gajree (President of the Hindu Mandir, Glasgow): Sir David, I thank you and the Scottish Parliament for giving me the opportunity on behalf of the Hindu community in Glasgow to offer my thoughts at time for reflection.

Upanishad, a holy work of Hindus, urges the human race to be strong and not weak. It admits that there are human weaknesses but counters that admission with the idea that more weakness will not heal weakness. Nobody tries to wash dirt with dirt; sin cannot cure sin. It is only strength that can make us stand against weakness, and we must cultivate the quality of fearlessness.

This is the only book in the world that does not talk of salvation but of freedom, and it shows us that this freedom is already within us. By its nature, the soul is perfect—although evil deeds make it contract, good deeds and good thoughts make it expand and reveal its natural perfection.

Upanishads further tell us that the cause of all misery is ignorance, which is perfectly true when applied to every state of life, either social or spiritual. Ignorance makes us hate each other, and it is through ignorance that we do not know each other and do not love each other. As soon as we come to know each other, love follows, for are we not one?

Every day scientists are coming to the same broad view of matter. The whole universe is one mass of matter in which you and I, the sun and the moon and everything else are but the names of different little whirlpools; it is nothing more than one universal ocean of thought in which you and I are similar little whirlpools. As spirit, it does not move or change: it is one unchangeable, unbroken, homogeneous atom.

We must uphold the Upanishads and believe that I am the soul, me the sword cannot cut, nor weapons pierce, me the fire cannot burn, the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent, I am the Omniscient. Never say that we cannot do anything because we are weak; whatever you do sincerely is good for you. Even the least thing well done

brings marvellous results; therefore, let every one of us do what little good he can do.

Let us look upon every man and woman—everyone—as God. You cannot help anybody, you can only serve. By serving the children of God, you serve God. It is a privilege. If God grants that you can help any of his children, you are blessed. Do not think too much of yourselves. You are blessed that privilege was given to you when others do not have it. The poor and the miserable are for our salvation so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of the diseased, the lunatic, the leper and the sinner. We must give up the idea that, by ruling over others, we can do them any good. However, you can do just as much as you can for the plant; you can supply the growing seed with the materials for making the body, bringing it to the earth, the water and the air that it wants. It will take all that it wants by its own nature, and, by its own nature, it will assimilate and grow.

Thank you very much.

The Presiding Officer: Before we begin our proceedings, I would like, on behalf of the Parliament, to express our thanks to Glasgow City Council and its staff for its preparations and—[*Applause.*] You are a bit ahead of me, as I want in particular to welcome the lord provost of Glasgow, who is in the gallery. [*Applause.*]

Point of Order

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Will you advise the chamber whether you have received notice of a ministerial statement to explain the Executive's sudden, albeit welcome, change of policy on section 2A?

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): No, I have not received any such request.

The Minister for Parliament (Mr Tom McCabe): On the same point of order, Presiding Officer. There is perhaps good reason for a fuller explanation, Sir David. An amendment was lodged with all-party support. The committee asked the minister with responsibility to consider the matter and he has done so. I am pleased to say that the amendment received all-party support in the committee. The Executive's view is that there is a good case for people taking time now to consider the situation. It is very easy for people to misinterpret this situation. The committee has spoken and passed its view, and the entire chamber will have the opportunity to discuss this at stage 3. Therefore, the Executive does not think that a statement is necessary.

The Presiding Officer: The answer to the point of order is that I have not received a request to make a statement.

Glasgow Regeneration

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): We move now to the debate on motion S1M-858, in the name of Wendy Alexander, on Glasgow regeneration, and on two amendments to that motion. I remind members that the first part of the debate will end at 12 noon, and that the second part will commence after lunch. I invite members who wish to speak this morning to press their request-to-speak buttons now. They will not necessarily all be called—some will be held over until this afternoon—but it would help the chair to know who would like to speak this morning.

I call Wendy Alexander to speak to and move the motion.

10:06

The Minister for Communities (Ms Wendy Alexander): On the day on which the Parliament meets for the first time in Glasgow—many of us hope that it will not be the last—it is right to start with the future of this great city.

Not far from here, in the Briggait, which is at the far end of Clyde Street, on the site of the old fish market, there is a distinctive tower. The purpose of the old tower was to give a vantage point to see ships—*[Interruption.]* Members should not worry, as it was not to shoot people from; it was not for defensive purposes. The purpose of the tower was not to take pot shots from but to allow people to see ships coming up the river and spot the new trade in those days. Three hundred years ago, when trade was opening up with the new world, tobacco and textiles were the market leaders of the economy of their day.

In even earlier times, in Molendinar, where I am going later today to open new houses, the Moldendinar burn flowed into the River Clyde, at an intersection that was one of the best salmon fisheries in the land. The horizons of opportunity kept changing and Glasgow kept changing with it.

Those of us who come from Glasgow are, of course, hugely committed to it. For the first time in the chamber I declare my own interest: I am a Glaswegian. However, as a minister in Scotland's first Executive, I am totally convinced that what is good for Glasgow is also good for Scotland—it has always been so. Furthermore, as a Labour minister, I am determined to give new horizons to a city that has always been loyal to Labour, just as we have striven to be loyal to it.

Glasgow, second city of the empire in the 19th century, can, in the 21st century, once again spot the new horizons and become the standard bearer of the new Scotland. Many members know the city

well, with its heady mixture of an ancient, medieval university, a pre-reformation cathedral, the Victorian legacy of confident architecture as well as its despairing peripheral estates and poor health record. All too often, the headline writers have been hard on Glasgow, but Glasgow deserves better. The city deserves to be known not as the victim of some heroic yet cruel past, but as a place of vast potential for all her citizens. The "no mean city" of the 20th century is giving way to the cutting-edge city of the 21st century.

As we know, Scotland's headline writers have not only been hard on Glasgow, but in recent months have echoed with the cry: "What has this Parliament done for us?" Today, I want to answer that question for all Glaswegians, particularly for those loyal Labour voters who looked forward to home rule as a strategy for better homes, schools, hospitals and more jobs. I want to lay out our vision for the new Glasgow—the story of a renaissance that has just begun.

Big problems need big solutions. From the biggest housing project in Europe, to the biggest schools building programme in Britain, to Scotland's biggest industrial company bringing jobs to this city, we are turning it around.

In the struggle for justice and decency through the years, the city of Glasgow has been a battleground. The past battle honours of the Labour party would have had inscribed upon them the names of battles fought and won in the name of decency and fairness: Pollok, Castlemilk, Drumchapel, Easterhouse. Those were battles fought to escape the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions that went before. Yes, mistakes were made and things could have been done better, but that is all said with hindsight. At the time, those names pointed to great struggles won by the Labour party seeking to serve Glasgow. Today, we seek to serve Glasgow in new ways.

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): The minister must recognise that those were not mere housing mistakes. Her loyal Labour voters in Glasgow have suffered abject misery in wretched schemes for 40 or 50 years. Labour has had plenty of time to rectify that.

Ms Alexander: That is why we do not want the small solutions that come from small minds.

Our radical housing plans aspire to an ambition laid out nearly a century ago by John Wheatley, when he proclaimed

"the prime aim of Labour's Housing Policy is not to rescue people from the slums but to prevent them from ever getting there".

John Wheatley would have no truck with those people who place ideology and nostalgia before a new beginning. He sought housing fit for the 20th century and we seek housing fit for the 21st

century. We need a big project, worthy of the city's proud past and the key to its new future. This is redistribution on a large scale: the lifting of the debt, new investment of—on average—£16,000 per house, guaranteed security of tenure and the promise of new jobs. To those who say wait, I say the city has waited long enough.

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): Does the minister agree that her proposals, which have not been finalised, would release £1.6 billion over a period of 10 years? Is she aware that, between 1982 and 1997, this city had £2 billion invested in it? On that basis, what makes her great, grand project any different from the failed policies of the 1980s?

Ms Alexander: It is different because instead of acting for the people, we are going to let them act on their own behalf. Let me make this real for the critics: the inaugural meeting of the interim board of the Glasgow housing association took place last Friday. No minister was present for the main deliberations; six tenants were at the table, and one of them was elected to the chair.

Later today, we will go to Molendinar to open 61 new homes. That is the way of the future, and there is a chance to vote next year for 90,000 new and modernised homes. Today, we are announcing a further £12.5 million to make real that commitment. Together, we can create something that all Scotland can be proud of, and something that future generations will be proud to inherit. Where Glasgow leads, others will follow.

The new Glasgow is not just about hope for housing; it is also about excellence in education, in a city where, for so many years, brawn not brains paid the household bills. For Glasgow's children, their and their families' future depends on lifelong learning. Broken buildings, peeling paintwork or crumbling masonry disrupt and discourage learning.

Glasgow City Council has acted to deliver 11 brand-new secondary schools, 18 refurbished secondary schools and world-beating information and communications technology for all her pupils, to destroy the digital divide in this city before it destroys the life chances of its children.

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): Would the minister care to comment on the secret plans of Glasgow City Council that have supposedly been drawn up in consultation with the Scottish Executive to close 48 primary schools, a fifth of Glasgow's primary schools? Would she care to comment on the impact that that would have on class sizes across Glasgow?

Ms Alexander: Small minds, small solutions. This is from the woman who told us that the national grid for learning was not needed and that our secondary schools did not need rebuilt.

Let me turn to health. Glasgow's health challenges are well known. The city had the vision in the last century to pipe Loch Katrine's water to purge cholera from its closes. Today, we need the same vision to plan for tomorrow's hospitals. Too often, patients are left to trek around scattered departments in obsolete and shabby buildings, just to face delays and postponements. We can do better.

That is why Glasgow's health organisations have come together as never before to take a fresh look at health services in their city, to modernise NHS services to meet the changing needs of patients and the changing demands of medicine, to deliver more convenient, flexible and responsive services.

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): The minister mentioned modernising the health service. Does that include closing down the heart transplant unit at Glasgow royal infirmary? is that what she calls modernising?

Ms Alexander: It is not closed. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Ms Alexander: Let us not scare people, let us come to the nub: small solutions for small minds.

Let me explain the issue in reorganising Glasgow's health service. Under the proposals that are now before us, more than 85 per cent of visits that Glaswegians make to their hospitals will still be in facilities close to their homes. As well as that, the people of Glasgow have the right to access world-class care and treatment in centres of excellence for once-in-a-lifetime emergencies or vital operations, when only the best will do. We have a chance to work for patients in Glasgow.

I will now turn to jobs. My colleague Henry McLeish will say more about jobs this afternoon, but, after a generation of decline, we have jobs growth in this city once again. Glasgow's sickness has been worklessness. It has crippled lives and has brought depression, despair and isolation. However, we are turning Glasgow around by an economically led regeneration strategy—another big solution. Since Labour came to power, unemployment is down by 25 per cent across Scotland. However, in the Baillieston, Maryhill and Rutherglen constituencies, it is down by more than 30 per cent. Long-term youth unemployment has been halved in every single constituency in this city.

The Parliament is starting to deliver for Glasgow: homes, schools, hospitals and jobs. We are supporting Glasgow in renewing itself. Many people here will remember, in 1993, in this chamber, the founding of the Glasgow regeneration alliance. Working with Scottish Homes, Glasgow Development Agency, Greater

Glasgow Health Board, the private sector, the voluntary sector and the police, that has grown into Glasgow alliance, which is setting a new vision for the city. We intend to work with it. However, we also need to engage better the citizens of Glasgow in the regeneration of their city. Last year, the first citizens panel said that crime was the No 1 priority. Strathclyde police is now involved in the board of Glasgow alliance.

The next big issue was drugs. Tomorrow sees the start of the Glasgow's people's juries—three juries on tackling drugs, one of which is made up of young people. Each jury will make recommendations. However, it is not just about talk. In the autumn, the juries will reconvene, when the responsible agencies in this city and beyond will report back on the steps they have taken to act on the recommendations of the juries.

I can announce today that greater Easterhouse, the east end, north Glasgow, greater Pollok, Govan, Gorbals and Drumchapel will get almost £1 million over two years to put their communities at the heart of local plans for anti-drugs work. We want to see local family support groups, parental and community awareness events and school projects.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Ms Alexander: No, let me finish.

Glasgow's big problems deserve big solutions. Devolution is delivering for Glasgow: homes, with the biggest housing project in Europe; hospitals, with the largest ever sustained funding increase for the national health service and a new maternity hospital; schools, with the biggest school building programme in Britain; jobs, with youth unemployment halved and employment growing once again. A lot has been done but there is a lot still to do.

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): Will the member give way?

Ms Alexander: Labour—indeed, new Labour, if you like—is about that old, old story of how Glasgow finds new horizons; how Glasgow harnesses the new economy for the new century. It is a very human story. Glasgow will flourish with new growth and will blossom with new beginnings. We are delivering.

I commend the motion to the Parliament.

I move,

That the Parliament endorses the wide-ranging action being taken by the Executive to ensure that all of the key agencies work together with the citizens of Glasgow to tackle the deep-rooted challenges facing the city; recognises the excellent work being done by the key players who form the Glasgow Alliance and the role they have to play in tackling these challenges; and notes the

part the Executive has played in supporting the significant developments which will prepare Glasgow's economy, housing, education provision and hospitals for the 21st century.

10:22

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): I hope to cut out the clichés and to talk a wee bit more directly about the regeneration of this city. In doing so, perhaps I shall bring a bit of Zen into the debate, as is customary in my presentations. I take great pleasure in speaking to the amendment in my name, S1M-858.1, before the chamber today. Here, in the holy city of Glasgow, second city of the empire, and on behalf of the SNP, I would like to thank Glasgow City Council for generously allowing us the use of its facilities. I hope that we do the lord provost justice.

I start by thanking the Minister for Communities for her contribution this morning. She combined her by now customary mixture of sincerity and spin. Her sincerity of belief is not in question, but the spin applied would be enough to make a trapeze artist lose his or her bearings. Listening to the minister, I am left wondering whether the coalition parties truly understand the complexity of the problems facing this great city and whether they understand the size and nature of the task confronting us.

It is unfortunate to open on a negative note, but it is important that, if this debate is to mean anything to ordinary Glaswegians, we must not hide behind false consensus or manufactured agreement. Glaswegians are tired of being patronised. They may not all understand fully, or care for, terms such as social exclusion, but they understand what it means to be working class and poor, and what it will take for Glasgow's new-found prosperity to be shared by all its people.

Glasgow is a city divided: between those who enjoy the premier lifestyle of the city's more prosperous residents and those who are relegated to the peripheral estates; between an affluent west end that enjoys the highest quality of life and a devastated east end, in which quality of life is merely an aspiration, or an ambition for a future generation. What unites Glaswegians is belief—belief in themselves and in the city that they are proud to call home. The people of Glasgow know that, through their own efforts, they have dragged their city back from the brink. They know that Glasgow is still the greatest city in Scotland. They know that despite the complex issues that Glasgow faces, the city is still capable of achieving greatness in the future.

Sometimes, when we listen to commentators and pundits talk about Glasgow, it is as if the problems that beset the city are of its own making. It is as if the decisions that were taken by the

Scottish Office in the 1960s and 1970s to focus manufacturing investment outwith Glasgow and in our new towns were Glasgow's fault. It is as if the economic downturn and shift in policy, which has cost the city 75,000 manufacturing jobs since 1974, was somehow an act of God, visited upon a recalcitrant people.

There has been little or no debate on why Glasgow was allowed to slide throughout the 1970s and 1980s and on why Glasgow's reinvention as a service sector city was perceived as the only route open to it. Today, I will offer a critical analysis of why past, and indeed much of current, Government policy is failing the citizens of Glasgow. Through that, I hope to offer a positive vision of where Glasgow can be in the years ahead. Before that, I offer a helpful definition of terms. I make a distinction between city and citizens not out of pedantry, but because the difference is vital to understanding the problems and, as important, finding the solution.

The strategy for reinventing the city has, clearly, been a success. As mentioned earlier, the city centre, west end and parts of the south side are as prosperous and successful as any part of Scotland. Employment growth in tourism—albeit often in low-wage, low-skill and seasonal employment—and the booming media and creative sectors are all testimony to those who pioneered Glasgow as a city of arts and culture as well as a city of industry.

Glasgow has consistently recorded the highest economic output of any unitary authority in Scotland. The most accurate calculation available of gross domestic product estimated that Glasgow's economic output was £8.7 billion, which represents more than one sixth of Scottish GDP. Industries that show strong actual and potential growth in Glasgow include transaction processing, call centres, software and opto-electronics.

Employment in transaction processing activities increased by 26 per cent over three years. The number of software companies in Glasgow has increased from 80 in 1993 to 300 now; over that period, aggregate sales turnover of software companies increased by 60 per cent and employment by 250 per cent. The number of bioscience companies has also increased, from 10 to 38.

In the growth industries such as call centres, Glasgow has carved out a dominant niche position. Glasgow's 59 call centres represent half of all Scottish call centres and 45 per cent of all call centre employees in Scotland. Scottish Enterprise estimates that Glasgow will capture most of the 21,000 call centre jobs that are expected to be created in Scotland over the next two years.

Glasgow is now the media and culture capital of Scotland. The two big broadcasters, the BBC and Scottish Television, are based in Glasgow, while more than half of all jobs in radio and television are located in the city. Eight of Scotland's daily newspapers are printed here, an increase from three 10 years ago. Over 40 feature films have been produced in Glasgow in the past four years, contributing an estimated £10 million to the city's economy each year.

Glasgow has 46,500 students in higher education, including 8,500 postgraduate students. The city boasts 34 per cent of Scotland's higher education student population and 3.3 per cent of the UK's; for postgraduates, those figures are 39.5 per cent and 3.7 per cent respectively. The three Glasgow universities are a vital part of the city economy, with total annual revenue of around £370 million, and employ 10,000 people. However, I sound a note of caution: many service jobs are taken by students who are trying to survive without a grant and that has led to the displacement of those who would otherwise be in employment.

The successes are there to be seen and praise is due to the politicians, public servants, entrepreneurs and citizens who have made them happen. Equally, the failures of the strategy must be acknowledged if we are to move forward. The city and its image may have been transformed, but for tens of thousands of ordinary Glaswegians, that might as well have happened on the moon. The story of Glasgow is of a city enjoying its reinvention and celebrating its return from what was once seen as terminal decline, and a citizenry for many of whom life is increasingly unbearable.

That is why the debate today must focus on the people who live in this great city. It must focus on what we will do to bring a share of the future to all of Glasgow's citizens. It must reject right-wing socio-economic dogma and the attempt to create a false definition of a deserving and an undeserving poor. It should bury the lie that the people of this city are somehow responsible for the economic and social conditions that are assailing them.

We should concentrate today on moving forward, on learning from the mistakes of the past and on ensuring that those lessons are applied to public policy for Glasgow in the future. Today, I will concentrate on employment, infrastructure and housing. There is much more that I would like to say on health, education, transport, enterprise and so on, but I will leave that to my colleagues.

On researching today's debate, I came across evidence submitted to the House of Commons Employment Sub-Committee by David Webster, the chief housing officer at Glasgow City Council, on the jobs gap in Glasgow. As part of that substantial body of work, Mr Webster did a

comparative analysis of jobs lost and created in Glasgow from 1981 to 1991. The analysis concluded that not only was the number of jobs lost greater than the number created, but the new jobs were not comparable to those lost. The only sector to experience substantial growth in that period was the senior managerial and professional sector, while the greatest jobs losses occurred in the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled sector. The net figure of jobs lost and gained in the city masks a greater problem: the people losing jobs are highly unlikely to fill the jobs created.

According to Glasgow City Council's figures, 27 per cent of the resident work force in Glasgow have no qualifications and only 16 per cent gained three or more higher grades in 1997 and 1998. According to Glasgow's careers service, 22 per cent of Glasgow's school leavers are still unemployed four months after leaving school, compared with 4 per cent in Edinburgh. That gap between the qualifications and the experience of the citizens, combined with the type of job being created, has led to half of the jobs in Glasgow being filled by non-Glasgow residents. According to the "Glasgow Economic Monitor", that trend is set to continue. In 1981, 63 per cent of the city's work force lived in the city, but that figure had fallen to 51 per cent by 1991. By 2007, it will fall to 45 per cent. An additional 25,000 commuters are expected between now and 2006.

Mr Webster goes on in his evidence to demonstrate that, despite the fact that Glasgow has seen a significant upturn in its economic fortunes, real unemployment remains stubbornly high across the city. By measuring economic activity as well as unemployment levels, Webster comes up with a figure that he describes as real unemployment. Economic activity measures the percentage of the population within working age and economically active. The "Quarterly Labour Force Survey" moving average for 1999, which is the most accurate estimate available, gives the average economic activity for Great Britain as 79.6 per cent, 77.8 per cent for Scotland and 64.6 per cent for Glasgow. Glasgow's economic activity rate is 15 per cent below the British average and 13 per cent below the Scottish average. If that 15 per cent is presumed to be hidden unemployment and added to Independent Labour Organisation unemployment of 13 per cent, there is a real unemployment rate for Glasgow of 28 per cent. In 1997, Glasgow's unemployment rate was the eighth worst in Britain. It is now the worst.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Order. There is a lot of ambient noise, which makes it difficult for members to hear. Conversations should be kept fairly quiet.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Is it not the case that that clamour was coming from the

Labour benches? Perhaps the reason for that is that Mr Gibson is presenting too many hard-hitting facts for the Labour group. We should recognise that we had only platitudes from the minister. While I do not agree with everything that Mr Gibson has said, at least he is presenting the facts and the figures.

Mr Gibson: I thank Mr Gallie for that useful intervention. Perhaps I should slow down for the hard of thinking.

The figure for real unemployment of 28 per cent is down only 2 percentage points on the 1997 figure and only 1 point on the estimated figure for 1991. During the last 10 years, real unemployment in Glasgow has stuck firmly at around 28 per cent. That demonstrates that the jobs gap identified by Webster for 1981 to 1991 is still relevant and that the election of new Labour and the introduction of supply-side measures such as the new deal have not dented Glasgow's real unemployment level.

The problem for new Labour and the coalition is that supply-side measures such as the new deal and the working families tax credit can work only where there is employment demand. The reality for large parts of Glasgow is that there is no employment demand for those who live there, given the skills that they possess.

If the Government accepts that, it must also accept that training people for non-existent jobs is a con and that announcing tax incentives to go to work when there is no work available is even worse. The only alternative would seem to be to take the advice of Norman Tebbit—and now, presumably, of Gordon Brown—and do what 400,000 Glaswegians have done in the last quarter of a century: get on your bike.

That cannot be the solution, however. The devastating effect that outward migration has had on Glasgow has been well documented. Public policy towards Glasgow must recognise that programmes such as the new deal will not eliminate endemic unemployment in Glasgow. We need to channel resources into the infrastructure of Glasgow and change the nature of the argument.

As members will be aware, Glasgow has the highest rate of derelict and vacant land of any local authority in Scotland. According to Glasgow City Council, 9.1 per cent of land is vacant and half of that figure has been in that condition for 10 years or more.

The Deputy Minister for Local Government (Mr Frank McAveety): I would like to make a contribution to Kenny Gibson's speech, to suggest some of the solutions that he is trying to get to. He has listed a series of concerns. Will he say what the agencies in Glasgow are doing, led primarily by the Labour-dominated Glasgow City Council, in

addressing many of the issues that he is concerned about? They are trying to tailor their regeneration, education and housing strategies to the kinds of concerns that he has raised.

Mr Gibson: Thanks for that speech. If Frank McAveety had listened instead of talking to his colleagues during the first two thirds of my contribution, he would have realised that I am getting to the solutions.

Half of the derelict land has lain in that condition for 10 years or more. Bringing such land back into productive use is a key requirement for regenerating the city. Vacant and derelict land often correlates directly with the worst areas of unemployment in the city. Bringing it into productive use would create employment potential in the areas in which it is most required. Tyne and Wear, Sheffield and West Lothian are examples of striking success in doing that. Indeed most cities in England and Wales now place strong emphasis on promoting manufacturing and related service employment through site development. It is not accidental that most comparable English cities—Newcastle, Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester—have benefited more than Glasgow from the economic upswing of 1994 to 1999. Indeed, in Glasgow the Govan initiative has been very successful through land reclamation and the establishment of business parks and purpose-built accommodation. Why cannot the rest of Glasgow follow suit?

The experience of the new towns shows that provision of purpose-built units with good infrastructure is a powerful incentive to investment. Resources currently ploughed into the new deal in Glasgow would be better spent on developing the city's infrastructure. The completion of the M74 northern extension is central to that infrastructure. I know that Glasgow City Council supports that, as do Scottish Enterprise Glasgow and the Glasgow chamber of commerce, among others. All have expressed extreme disappointment that the M74 northern extension will not be completed as previously agreed. Planning permission was granted in 1995. At present the M74, the main corridor linking Scotland and England, runs 100 miles from the border and then stops in a field in Cambuslang. Extending the M74 into Glasgow is crucial for the economic development and continuing vitality of the city. Failure to extend the M74 is a lost opportunity to redevelop huge areas of vacant and derelict land in south-east Glasgow and Rutherglen.

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): I support the northern extension of the M74. Will Kenny Gibson tell us how the SNP would propose to fund that extension?

Mr Gibson: That is the same kind of pathetic intervention that we get from Labour backwoodsmen in every debate. Labour controls

Glasgow City Council, Labour controls the Scottish Parliament and Labour controls Westminster. Why does Janis Hughes not discuss with her colleagues down south how Scotland can get money—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Mr Gibson: —and the investment needed to turn around this city once and for all?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you begin to wind up, please? Order.

Mr Gibson: Who would believe that Janis Hughes and I are actually going out to dinner together next Tuesday?

The “Complete to Compete Report on the M74 Northern Extension” claims 6,000 jobs are directly dependent on the M74 extension.

There may be concerns about increased urban road investment but, as English urban development corporations have shown, substantial investment in roads and public transport infrastructure is required to open up sites for development. That can be done through an environmentally sustainable refocusing of development within existing built-up areas. A direct link between Glasgow airport and the Scottish rail network would act as a further spur to investment.

A concerted effort to bring structural investment into the city and develop its latent potential would reap benefits for all Scotland. By developing derelict land in Glasgow for housing and industry we relieve the pressure on the green belt. By ensuring Glasgow’s future as a viable economic entity we enhance and secure the prosperity of the 1.5 million people who live in the hinterland of the city.

Employment has to be at the top of the agenda in any vision for Glasgow. For real employment to be created we must tackle the infrastructure of Glasgow. To do both, we need to tackle Glasgow’s chronic housing crisis.

Much has been said about the stock transfer in Glasgow. Listening to the Minister for Communities it would seem a veritable panacea. The minister should be warned that Glasgow has been a test bed for many social experiments in the past, and that the catastrophic result of them can be seen in every corner of the city.

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab): Will Mr Gibson give way?

Mr Gibson: I am winding up.

My colleague Fiona Hyslop will concentrate on our principal objections to what the minister proposes. The Executive should be warned that, if the coalition does not intend to take tenants with it

in its proposal, it is doomed to failure. If the coalition does not attempt to gear up and fill the massive skills gap that exists in Glasgow in the building trades, the much-vaunted 3,000 new jobs will go to cowboy builders the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you close, please?

Mr Gibson: Indeed, I shall.

The minister should be aware that, in the past four years, only seven glaziers, five heating engineers and nine plasterers have qualified for apprenticeships in Glasgow. The reality of the Minister for Communities’ position is this: if the coalition’s eggs in Glasgow have all been put in one basket, and if this ballot fails, the city will be faced with an investment crisis of unparalleled proportions, having suffered a starvation diet up to the ballot stage.

Regardless of any arguments that we have over the validity or otherwise of the stock transfer proposal, we know one thing to be true: if there is no real growth in employment throughout the city, there can be no regeneration. Without comprehensive regeneration, Glasgow is destined to remain a city divided.

We, as a Parliament, have to make a decision on Glasgow. We must carry out a comprehensive review of regeneration policy, examine the successes and failures of the past and analyse thriving models of urban renewal that exist elsewhere. We must act now to halt Glasgow’s remorseless population decline. I hope that, through today’s debate, we will send a clear message to the citizens of Glasgow that the Parliament is resolved not to let that happen. Rather, we must “Let Glasgow flourish”.

I move amendment S1M-858.1, to leave out from “endorses” to end and insert:

“notes the activities being undertaken by the Executive with regard to regeneration in Glasgow; congratulates the key agencies, organisations and citizens involved in regenerating the city; recognises that despite these efforts levels of poverty, sickness and unemployment far exceed the Scottish and UK averages, and agrees that the Executive should undertake a comprehensive review of regeneration policy in Glasgow with specific regard to stimulation of employment demand, examination of the successes and failures of the past and analysis of thriving models of urban renewal elsewhere.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: While the Presiding Officer has no objection to rumbustious debate, the constant buzz of ambient conversation makes it rather difficult to hear.

10:41

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): In moving the amendment in my name, I associate the

Conservative group with the remarks that were made earlier, and thank Glasgow and the lord provost for the facilities and hospitalities that have been provided. As a Glaswegian, I would have expected nothing less.

It is entirely appropriate that this debate, the first that the Parliament is holding in Glasgow, should deal with the topic of Glasgow's regeneration. It is also significant and gratifying that the Executive recognises that there is a problem that must be addressed, and it is to be congratulated for lodging its motion.

For far too long, Glasgow's name has been synonymous with poor public sector housing, unemployment, industrial stagnation, poor educational attainment and a serious law-and-order problem. In the course of today, my colleagues and I will address those issues, sometimes with criticism but also with constructive solutions in mind. It is important for those constructive solutions to be advanced.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Will Bill Aitken give way?

Bill Aitken: I shall make one or two points before giving way.

It would have been a less unfortunate start to the debate if, instead of berating people for having simple, small minds and small solutions to the problem, a small lady had been a bit more generous and had accepted that any minds and solutions that could ease the problems that Glasgow faces are to be welcomed. It is on that basis that I intend to proceed.

Johann Lamont: I am interested to note that the Tories are going to address the problems of Glasgow in the next few hours. It might have helped if they had addressed them over the past 18 years, instead of compounding the problems of the people of Glasgow who, although they indicated over a long period what they thought of the Tory approach, unfortunately suffered it for all that time.

Bill Aitken: That is a bit rich, coming from a member of a party that has presided over Glasgow with almost non-stop failure over the past 50 years. If Johann Lamont listens to the remarks that I have to make, she may learn something. She may direct her mind towards some constructive solutions, although I do not hold out any great hope.

Clearly, Glasgow has many problems. The main problem is encapsulated in the fact that there has been such a significant population loss. That is the issue that must be addressed. If we can find out why Glasgow is losing its population, we will be in a position to determine what needs to be done to resolve matters. Glasgow was the second city of

the empire—most of us might still claim that it was the first—but its population has almost halved, from 1.2 million to the most recent estimate of 611,000. That has happened partly by design, through the overspill arrangements that were made in the 1950s and the creation of the new towns, but it has also been the result of a net migration from Scotland.

We acknowledge those facts, but all the agencies that are involved in the regeneration of Glasgow must surely be concerned by the fact that so many people who are Glaswegian by birth and by instinct choose not to live in the city. That must be addressed. Why have so many people voted with their feet?

There are economic aspects to consider. People ask why they should live in Glasgow when they can live outside the city for 65 per cent of the cost of living in it, because Glasgow's council tax is so much higher. That is one of the issues that must be addressed.

The city's reputation is not good, but it deserves to be good. We have suffered in the years since some idiot wrote a book called "No Mean City", which condemned Glaswegians to bad publicity that was totally undeserved. The book was totally fictitious and, indeed, defamatory to the people of Glasgow.

Why is Glasgow's council tax so high? There are a number of reasons. The council tax base is narrow and it is so because Glasgow needs to attract at least 50,000—dare I say it—middle-class citizens who are able to pay that council tax and to contribute to the economic well-being of the city. It is ironic that a city that has demonstrated time and again its entrepreneurial abilities should have been stymied so often by policies that have been promoted by the Labour party.

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): I am interested in Bill Aitken's point about the council tax base being narrow. Can Mr Aitken remind the chamber who it was that set the boundaries for Glasgow City Council?

Bill Aitken: Mr Swinney's point—which, no doubt, some of the members of his party will elaborate on—is that we should give Glasgow metropolitan status by extending the boundaries to which he referred. There is no point in forcing people in the suburbs to live in Glasgow when they do not want to, thereby incurring resentment. I want people to want to stay in Glasgow and to come to live in Glasgow. That is the relevant issue.

Let us deal with Glasgow's problems and let us acknowledge that the Executive's proposal for the transfer of Glasgow's housing stock is a potential solution. It is not a panacea—I am sure that Wendy Alexander would not claim that the transfer

will solve 100 per cent of Glasgow's problems. There has been progress, but I can hardly deny that because the minister has again stolen Conservative Government policy. The Conservatives have, however, some criticisms to make of the stock transfer. Wendy Alexander is aware of the concern that we have articulated that a one-off stock transfer will mean that we risk alienating the tenants, who will not see such a transfer as a local solution.

Two elements of Scottish housing have been an undoubted success story in the past 20 or 30 years. The first is the effect of the Tenants' Rights etc (Scotland) Act 1980, which enabled about 62 per cent of the population of Scotland to own their own homes. There was significant uptake of the right to buy in Glasgow. The other success has been housing associations. The answer is simple: when people are given ownership of their problems, they will accept responsibility and contribute constructively and positively.

Fiona Hyslop: Bill Aitken mentioned his concern about council tax payers in Glasgow. Is he aware that the Government's proposal is not to transfer the debt in Glasgow, but to give money to Glasgow to service the debt? Should any future leader or Administration decide that the housing budget will be cut and the money will not be provided, Glasgow council tax payers will have to pick up the tab.

Bill Aitken: With all due respect, if we are talking about political realities, I cannot see such a situation ever arising. The fact of the matter is that I do not want to anticipate what Fiona Hyslop will say in her contribution. Is she seriously trying to say that council housing has succeeded? Of course it has not. It has failed and it has condemned many of the people of Glasgow to live in third-world conditions. If she thinks that council housing has been a success, let her carry on with the proposals that she has articulated to date, which suggest that, merely by adjusting the public sector borrowing requirement rules, we could carry on as before. We cannot carry on as before, because the system has simply not worked.

Kenny Gibson was right to highlight the difficulties of educational attainment in Glasgow. We were horrified, but perhaps not surprised, to learn the other day of the problems with literacy and numeracy in Glasgow. Our schools are failing our children and the children leaving our schools now are not perfectly rounded academically. If more investment were coming in, we would not be able to provide skills locally to exploit it. We do not want Glasgow to become the site and studio for a future version of "Auf Wiedersehen Pet", but that is the way it could go.

Who is responsible for the failure of Glasgow's education system? The self-same people whom

Johann Lamont sought to defend have been in charge. Her party has been in charge of the education system in Glasgow and Strathclyde for many years and has failed.

Johann Lamont: For information, my name is pronounced Lamont—with the stress on the first syllable.

Bill Aitken: A rose by any other name.

The failure of the new deal has been manifest and we must recognise that it has simply not worked in Glasgow. We must examine how we may direct our minds to easing the problem. Henry McLeish is not here at the moment, but he must also be concerned at this morning's headlines, which say that the Confederation of British Industry is highlighting the failure of the Labour Administration in Westminster to co-operate and succeed with business. It is quite clear that employers face far too many restrictions at the moment. That must be addressed as a matter of urgency, as must the matter of the M74.

I ask the Administration to recognise that some vision is necessary and that clarity in vision is vital. Accordingly, we call on the Executive to recognise that need by appointing from within the present bloated ranks of ministers a minister with special responsibility for Glasgow. That minister would liaise with all agencies, with Glasgow City Council and with other Government departments to ensure that Glasgow gets a fair deal. The Parliament—not by intent—has let Glasgow down. Time and time again, matters are sucked into Edinburgh. I will not enter into a sterile argument about Glasgow v Edinburgh, but Glasgow supported the Parliament and demands its fair share.

Mr Andy Kerr (East Kilbride) (Lab): Will Mr Aitken give way?

Bill Aitken: I am winding up now.

Let that minister be responsible for the regeneration of Glasgow. Let him report to a committee of the Glasgow MSPs. Let it be a constructive, thoughtful and active way forward. Glasgow deserves nothing less.

I move amendment S1M-858.2, to leave out from "endorses" to end and insert:

"notes with grave concern the levels of unemployment, education failure, serious health problems and population loss affecting the city of Glasgow; recognises that these are testament to the failure of the Labour local authorities to address these problems over two generations; further notes that the response of the Labour Government and the Scottish Executive has to date been inadequate to deal with these problems; asks the Executive to address these problems in Glasgow as a matter of urgency; requests that the Executive specifically notes the failure of the existing local government system to cope adequately with Glasgow's problems; urges the Executive to institute appropriate steps to allow for a democratically and directly elected Lord Provost for the city with an executive role;

further urges the Executive to appoint a Minister, from within its Ministerial team, with specific responsibility for Glasgow whose remit would include liaison with departmental ministers, the newly elected Provost, the city council and all agencies connected with the regeneration of Glasgow, and believes that the Parliament should set up a Committee, comprising all Glasgow Members, to oversee the performance of that Minister, thus ensuring that Glasgow's problems receive the attention which they not only deserve but are necessary to ensure the city's future."

10:52

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): I, too, thank the city and the lord provost for hosting the Parliament's presence in Glasgow. I notice that, having heard me speak in the chamber before, the lord provost does not wish to stay any longer and has left the public gallery—perhaps that is understandable.

This is a welcome and overdue debate. As a Liberal Democrat MSP for Glasgow—the first of many, I trust—I must confess that I have tended, like others, to consider specific issues such as stock transfer, drugs, acute hospital proposals or Govan shipyards. This debate, however, is a chance to look at the bigger picture and discuss how it hangs together and how Glasgow relates to the rest of Scotland. As has been implied in a number of speeches so far, this is a tale of two cities right across the board.

Glasgow has the UK's second biggest student population outside London, with about 100,000 students, yet fewer pupils—about 18 per cent—go on to further or higher education here than elsewhere; the national average is 31 per cent. Glasgow has an enviable reputation in medicine, yet it has the oldest hospitals in Scotland and the worst health record in the UK by far.

Two million visitors come to the city each year. They are attracted by the vibrant hotels, restaurants, night life, museums and parks. There has been a one-year increase of 26 per cent in economic benefit from conferences alone. We are ranked the third best city in Europe for business environment, quality of life and labour quality. However, most of that does not touch the vast bulk of citizens in the housing estates and beyond. Two fifths of all our households and 82 per cent of our council tenants are on housing benefit. That is a significant measure of poverty and deprivation in the 21st century. Almost 10 per cent of our land is derelict or vacant; that is the equivalent of 7,000 full-sized football pitches.

Glasgow's problems are Scotland's problems, in a real sense. In 1974, Scotland had 9.3 per cent of the UK population. By 1998, the figure was 8.6 per cent. On present trends, it is projected to be 7.5 per cent by 2036. Most of the drop to 1998—218,187—was from greater Glasgow.

As David Webster, to whom Kenny Gibson referred, pointed out in a perceptive article in the recent Fraser of Allander Institute "Quarterly Economic Commentary", the fall does horrible things to the level of Scottish public resources available under the Barnett formula—he describes them as "unfavourable fiscal consequences"—at the very time excess spending is required on social security, social services and health to relieve the distress of Glasgow and the inner Clyde valley.

David Webster contends that the loss of population has been caused by a straightforward collapse in local demand for labour, which saw Glasgow lose a third of its manual jobs between 1981 and 1991. The consequence is not a move to other parts of Scotland, but that many economically active people leave Scotland altogether. The basic problem, which policy makers have known in their hearts for years, is that the only way to stem Scotland's loss of population is to improve employment performance in the greater Glasgow area.

As Kenny Gibson has rightly said, education and training are important—as is the demand side. From the Glasgow eastern area renewal project through new life for urban Scotland to the Glasgow alliance and social inclusion partnerships, it is difficult to fault any Government for lack of good will, but the achievements in housing, community regeneration and environmental improvement cannot disguise the signal failure to date on the economic front. The minister is right to stress the importance of this issue. It is a nut that is still to be effectively cracked.

A number of aspects are worth considering. First, there is a problem of structure and accountability. The social inclusion partnerships are a worthy attempt to bring direct resources to bear on the issues, but I remain to be convinced that local communities have been given ownership of their own futures in this way. The Glasgow alliance and its various agencies do not have clear lines of accountability—rather the whole thing goes round in a circle and the buck never seems to stop anywhere. There is at least a question about how much of the significant sums that are allocated get to the front line, and how much supports the bureaucracy. The minister was, again, right to stress the need to make progress on this front.

There is a different issue of accountability for the council. Glasgow's problems will not be solved—with great respect to Bill Aitken, who put his proposal in a modest way—by superficial gimmicks such as a minister for Glasgow or directly elected provosts. The prospect of Pat Lally in the role of Ken Livingstone, a bearded Frank McAveety in the role of Frank Dobson, and

Michael Fry as Steve Norris would not be redeemed even by the idea of Christopher Mason flying the Liberal Democrat flag of common sense. Nobody can seriously defend the obscenity of a so-called democratic system of election that gives the Labour party in Glasgow 74 out of 79 seats on 49.6 per cent of the vote, with five seats going to all the rest who together polled over 50 per cent of the vote.

Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP): I take it from the member's comments that he believes the coalition will stand or fall on the issue of PR in local government.

Robert Brown: That is a tempting one. However, the point I wanted to make is that it is a paradox that this Parliament—an achievement of the Labour party in association with the Liberal Democrats and others—should be meeting in this city, which has an electoral system that was swept away in the countries of eastern Europe during the velvet revolution. When Glasgow was the second city of the empire, it was represented by Liberal members.

Once we have sorted out the issue of accountability, we must deal with the issue of resources. There is a case for saying that Glasgow should be both a Scottish and a UK priority. It would be no bad thing if Gordon Brown could be persuaded to open his multi-million pound war chest a bit more for that purpose. This not just a begging-bowl issue. Under the uniform business rate, Glasgow contributes vastly more than it receives. A general ability to invest the results of its business success in dealing with the desperate needs of the city should be a key component of the review of local government finance that the Executive is edging towards.

It can be argued that national policy has, perhaps unconsciously, channelled investment away from the city. Researchers at Glasgow University found that despite the fact that it has 12 per cent of the Scottish population, Glasgow has only 5 per cent of manufacturing employment in overseas-owned plants. Glasgow Development Agency expenditure per claimant unemployed in 1998-99 was only 75 per cent that in Lothian. As Kenny Gibson said, it is indisputable that the new towns were favoured over older cities such as Glasgow when it came to investment. The Arbutnott report has identified that for years health services in Glasgow have also been significantly underfunded.

It is not just the amount of resources that is important, but the effectiveness of spend. The key component of the project 2002 for schools, the acute hospitals investment and, above all, the stock transfer, is the sheer level of extra investment in Glasgow—£1.6 billion in the case of housing. Those massive funds will achieve

regeneration objectives in themselves, but they will also give a major boost to the city's economy, creating 3,000 construction jobs alone. That is at least part of the answer to Kenny Gibson's point about employment demand.

Fiona Hyslop: Does Robert Brown recognise that in 1990-91, City of Glasgow District Council had £162 million available to invest in housing? That is now down to £46 million, which makes today's announcement of £12.5 million a drop in the ocean of what has been lost. If the previous level of investment had been sustained for the period that is proposed under the stock transfer scheme—until 2012—we would be getting the same amount of investment that is envisaged under that scheme now, rather than in 10 years' time.

Robert Brown: I get a little cheesed off with the SNP's constant bleating, because of its shilly-shallying over stock transfer. This is a major step forward that needs to be agreed in principle and proceeded with. There are many details that need to be sorted out—to do with tenant control, rent guarantees and the level of investment—but those who have set their face dramatically against stock transfer or who try to pretend that they are on the side of everyone except investment, do Glasgow an enormous disservice. For political reasons, they have stirred up an artificial debate that has obscured proper discussion of the real issues: how to get jobs to local areas; how to ensure that young tradesmen are trained and given experience; how to ensure that the breathing space and the leg up that stock transfer will give local economies in Easterhouse and Drumchapel will lead to a more widely based economic revival that is sustainable after the stock transfer is complete. Why, for example, are lecturers at South Lanarkshire College, which specialises in building and construction, being laid off at the very time when those skills are at a premium?

I will finish where I began. Glasgow is a city of unacceptable contrasts.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: Will the member give way?

Robert Brown: No, I am finishing.

Glasgow has unacceptable levels of poverty and deprivation, but it is a city with a future that is vital to itself and to Scotland. It needs to harness the talents and ideals of all its citizens—and the ideas of the opposition groups. It needs the united and effective endeavours of all the agencies of government and the ever-willing voluntary sector.

The Executive—the partnership between Labour and Liberal Democrats—recognised the issues and made a good beginning. Even the Opposition amendments somehow lack their usual spleen. Let us ensure that this Executive and this

Parliament—especially through its committees—play their part in the regeneration of Scotland's first city.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The debate is now open. Members should limit their speeches to four minutes, plus interventions.

11:04

Ms Margaret Curran (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab): I am delighted to be one of the first Glasgow MSPs to welcome the Parliament to Glasgow. I strongly welcome the decision to move here, albeit temporarily. I certainly belong to Glasgow and, today, so does this Parliament.

The location and focus of today's debate are fitting and deserved. Glasgow is a city of great people, effort and history. It has made a significant contribution to Scotland. However, it is also a city of great needs and challenges, as we have already heard.

One issue has not yet been raised. We have a tradition of strong and direct women. Rather than honour those who are perhaps better known, I would like to pay tribute to the women who have kept families, communities and organisations going in the face of insurmountable odds—especially during the blight of the Tory years.

Glasgow faces a terrible dilemma. We have to tackle the unfair stereotypes that fail to recognise the city's diversity, humour and achievements. Glaswegians rightly feel aggrieved when they see those stereotypes in the national media. However, we must also articulate the deep-seated needs of our city and its citizens.

The statistics speak for themselves. Of the 10 most deprived constituencies in the United Kingdom, seven are in Glasgow. In Glasgow, the figure for those staying on to S5 at school is 14 per cent lower than the overall Scottish figure. For participation in higher education, the Glasgow figure is 16 per cent lower than the Scottish average.

The fundamental issue that we in Glasgow must face is the concentration of problems. Progress in one area is often undermined by compounded difficulties in another. As we know, it is easy to talk about joined-up solutions but very difficult to deliver them.

Today's theme—properly—is regeneration. I could not believe my ears when I heard Bill Aitken speak; but at least now, after 20 years of denial, we have a programme of energetic intervention. We are not quite there yet; we have much work to do and many problems remain in Glasgow—I see them daily—but we must acknowledge that we are moving in the right direction.

I would like to raise a point that is often raised by commentators who are concerned with urban and city regeneration. Too often, economic and structural policies are emphasised at the expense of social policies. And vice versa. I have a very simple message today: we need a double-barrelled strategy that addresses people and place. We must bring people back from the margins and give them their stake in society; we must tackle underachievement and drug misuse; we must release the potential of individuals and of areas; we must tackle social and personal barriers; and we must tackle area regeneration in all its forms.

I appreciate that the Executive is grappling with those problems, as is the Glasgow alliance. Glasgow alliance is doing a good job. We welcome the drive to stem population decline and ensure that Glasgow's residents benefit from the programmes that are brought into Glasgow, especially in terms of jobs, but we must urge that the connection between the economic and the social is made more explicit. There must be more emphasis on delivering community engagement in, and ownership of, all aspects of the regeneration process. That has not been achieved to date.

Social inclusion demands that mainstream services address the poverty agenda. That is easily said, but I wonder whether it is wholly accepted. Many challenges for the professions whose services we demand lie further down the road, especially for professions that are not involved in front-line services. I want to emphasise that there are huge issues for general practitioners, for planners and for many others who have not yet been involved in the social inclusion debate. There must be more radical practice in future.

This issue concerns more than just the public sector. For people in the public sector, it is sometimes very frustrating that the public sector is always in the front line for criticisms such as we have heard from the Tories. We need to make clear the social responsibility of the private sector that we have heard so much about. I am deeply concerned about the level of service I get in my constituency—from the banks, for example. Much more must be done about that.

I know that some people will reject the Executive's strategy; many criticisms have been made by the Opposition. The Opposition often intrigues me. It is beyond me why the Tories have decided now that they want a minister for Glasgow. Bill Aitken said that Glasgow has become too much like a city of social workers. I understand that there are more social workers than Tories in Glasgow, but there are more lollipop ladies than Tories in Glasgow.

Miss Goldie: Will the member give way?

Margaret Curran: Yes, if that is okay with the Presiding Officer; I am running out of time.

Miss Goldie: I am grateful to Margaret Curran for giving way.

Could it be that, in proposing a minister for Glasgow, the Tories are giving a remarkable demonstration of adapting to devolution, which the Executive is failing lamentably to do?

Ms Curran: I do not know whether Annabel Goldie got clearance from David McLetchie for her comments, given that he has systematically criticised the Executive for creating ministries to respond to different problems. I am pleased with the Executive's creation of the post of Minister for Communities to address Glasgow's problems.

Some will reject my position, but Glasgow always provides space for the utopian and the cynic and those who just want to complain all the time. There is always space for them, but that space is never a substitute for delivering. This Executive is about doing the hard, hard work that needs to be done in Glasgow, which I am proud the Executive is tackling today.

11:10

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): As I listened to the minister's speech this morning, I was reminded of the motto of my old school: "Respice, Prospice" which means "Look backward, look forward". If I may say so, the minister was all respice and nae prospice.

The minister presented what for once is, I hope, an additional £12 million for Glasgow's housing. However, with all due respect to her, £12 million is a drop in the ocean compared with the needs and problems facing Glasgow. It would have been far more exciting if the minister had told us this morning that she has reached an agreement with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that Glasgow is to get its share of the £22 billion of mobile phone money. It would have been an announcement worth making if she had said that she had earmarked, say, £500 million for investment in Glasgow.

Phil Gallie: Does Alex Neil acknowledge that that £22 billion is a consequence of the privatisation programme of the Tories? Does he welcome that fact?

Alex Neil: The answer to Phil Gallie's question is no—I do not recognise that that £22 billion comes from privatisation.

I agreed with the minister when she said that the root cause of the problem in Glasgow is the level of unemployment and worklessness. The challenge that faces us all is how to tackle that

problem of deep-rooted unemployment, which is the source of poverty, deprivation, food poverty, malnutrition, low educational achievement, poor health and all the rest. In her discussions with the chancellor, I hope that, when she addresses the problems of Glasgow, she will turn his attention to the research published yesterday by Nuffield College at the University of Oxford that demonstrated that cities such as Glasgow, Newcastle and Liverpool suffer most from the fact that the pound is over-valued by 25 per cent. The problems of Glasgow require national as well as local solutions.

Worklessness and joblessness are at the core of the problem, as is depopulation. Where there is both unemployment and depopulation, the result is a vicious cycle of decline. As young people leave the city, they take with them purchasing power, which, in turn, results in more unemployment. More unemployment and fewer job opportunities then result in more depopulation. The problem of Glasgow's depopulation is not only the crude figure of a net loss of 200,000—[*Interruption.*]

Ms Alexander rose—

Mr McAveety rose—

Alex Neil: I will give way in a minute, but to which minister—the good-looking one or the other one?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wendy Alexander. [*Laughter.*]

Alex Neil: I know how to cause confusion on the Labour benches.

Ms Alexander: If Alex Neil shares our commitment to tackling unemployment, perhaps he can explain why he was against the windfall tax that delivered the new deal and the national minimum wage. Furthermore, can he explain why half of his party is against both the navy, which is the only chance to save the shipbuilding industry in this area, and the partnership financing that is building the new hospital at Glasgow royal infirmary? Indeed, we do not know whether the SNP is against the new apprenticeships in the housing industry.

Alex Neil: There is one thing about small minds—facts never confuse them.

The fact of life is that the SNP has been in the vanguard of the campaign not just for a minimum wage but for a far better minimum wage than we now have.

When we examine the problem of what to do about Glasgow, we should remember that the issue does not concern just Glasgow: what is good for Glasgow is also good for Scotland. Glasgow is the hub for the whole of the west of Scotland.

I want to make some suggestions, particularly

about the level of investment. Glasgow is neither the first nor the only city to face these problems and the Executive should consider what other cities in similar situations have done. For example, Austin in Texas faced similar problems and adopted a strategy to make itself the brains capital of America. However, making Glasgow the brains capital of Scotland might be a difficult task for Glasgow Labour councillors. *[Laughter.]*

If Barcelona and Boston can resolve such problems, Glasgow can do it too—but that will happen only when the Executive is prepared to invest real money and not a pittance of £12 million.

11:16

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): Like many members, I feel passionate about Glasgow's character and history. Features such as the Barras and Paddy's market at the Trongate illustrate for many of us what really lies behind Glasgow. I believe that a true Glaswegian knows where Paddy's market is; if any members want a bargain while they are in Glasgow, that is where to go. However, attractions such as the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre and its recent addition, the Clyde Auditorium—known as the armadillo—show the breadth of development in Glasgow.

It is interesting that many of the developments and features that members have mentioned are in Kelvin, which is my constituency. As I am the constituency MSP for Glasgow Kelvin, I want to take this opportunity to welcome everyone to this building, which is also in the Kelvin constituency.

I will address some of the issues that face many of my constituents not because I want to be parochial but because the diversity of the constituency's features, from Scotstoun to Saltmarket, illustrate the breadth of the regeneration project.

Alex Neil talked about how Glasgow has been blighted. Over the past few months, we have heard much about the city's deep-rooted problems. In this debate, we should not characterise Glasgow through its problems; instead, we must highlight the city's strengths and the features the regeneration project can build on.

The Scotstoun shipyard is at the top end of Kelvin. Although I am pleased by the all-party debate on the subject and the Executive's commitment to shipbuilding, the issue is not just about keeping shipbuilding alive. As Margaret Curran mentioned, a sense of community goes with the industry; every time a ship is launched from Scotstoun, 5,000 people turn up because they feel they have a share in the manufacturing process and want to experience the 20 seconds

when the ship goes into the water.

Not so far away from this chamber is Anderston—the red-light district of Glasgow. Women from all over the city are involved and we now know that the problem is not so much prostitution as drugs. I welcome the approach of Glasgow City Council, which has not turned its back on this very sensitive and difficult issue and has gone so far as to say that we must get these women into employment. We must consider the possibility of allowing them to apply for jobs at Glasgow City Council, which is one of our biggest employers, without having to declare that they have a conviction for prostitution. If we are not hard about these things, we will not get women out of prostitution. I welcome the council's radical approach.

There are many areas of hidden poverty, even in this constituency. I think it was Robert Brown who mentioned the number of students who live here. Other members have talked about student poverty. I welcome for this city the forthcoming legislation on houses in multiple occupation. I suppose I should declare an interest: the street on which I live has the largest number of HMOs in the whole of Scotland. It is time something was done about them—students have died because of the lack of decent laws. I welcome the Executive's commitment on the matter.

This city will benefit from innovative ideas. The city centre, which is also part of Kelvin, has the key institutions for economic change. I welcome the jobs that have come to Glasgow. Call centres are a feature of modern life; we must attract quality jobs and should not accept call centres providing bad conditions and treating our workers badly—I commend the Communications Workers Union.

Before I finish, I will mention a great success for Glasgow. We are one of the few cities in the country that has failed to utilise its waters. One of the most exciting projects over the next three or four years, which will be led by Glasgow City Council, is to build 3,500 new houses—I hope some of it will be social housing—and leisure complexes beside the Clyde. The Clyde may even be used as part of the integrated transport system. The utilisation of Glasgow's features will be one of the most fantastic things to happen in the city.

We need to work hand in hand with local government and the UK Government. If the Parliament does that, Glasgow can truly be the city it should be.

11:21

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): I am pleased that the Executive has chosen my member's motion for the first debate of the

Parliament in Glasgow. I thank it for that. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry that some members are mumbling, but it was a member's motion—I do not want to quarrel with members.

I will concentrate on an area that has been sorely neglected over the years. Pauline McNeill mentioned it; I will expand on it. I refer to the River Clyde, which is the main artery of this great city.

Alex Neil talked about employment and transport. Was it not the River Clyde that provided transport and employment for the people of Glasgow and those from outwith its boundaries? Without the Clyde, this great city would not survive, but over the years it has been sorely neglected. The blame for that must be laid, fairly and squarely, on successive Tory and Labour Governments. The Labour council in Glasgow cannot escape blame either, as for many years, through incompetence and sheer neglect, the waterfront was left to rot, and was not developed.

I know that we are now talking about development on the Clyde, but I want to expand on this point. Although there have been various developments and plans in recent years, they have been piecemeal and they have done little for local communities. Unfortunately, most of the regeneration in Glasgow has taken place in the city centre and has neglected deprived inner-city areas and the peripheral schemes. For example, the Gorbals regeneration scheme did little for local people; the benefits went to house builders and businesses.

Glasgow City Council carried out a plan review in 1998. It noted that the River Clyde corridor is a key development location and that a rejuvenated river is one of the top 10 physical challenges. However, the detail on how to achieve development is very scant in the review. Glasgow needs a clear and coherent plan for regeneration. One of the keys to regeneration must be redevelopment of the riverside. The Clyde waterfront must be opened up and developed for the benefit of all our citizens. It must become an amenity. I welcome the plans of Clyde Port Authority and others. The Clyde must become an amenity that will be treasured by our citizens for generations.

Planning must not be driven purely by market forces. Strategic planning in the interests of local communities and the entire city must drive the plans for regeneration. Local communities must be involved and consulted.

The key to regeneration is public investment. We need more public investment in this great city. We know that there is money for such investment—Gordon Brown has billions in his war chest, which was recently boosted by the mobile phone franchise windfall. Without a share of that

cash, Glasgow cannot flourish. I ask the Executive to ask Gordon Brown to open his war chest and release money to Glasgow. Glasgow has kept Scotland going for many years and we need and deserve some of that money.

To Glasgow City Council and Alex Mosson, the lord provost, I say that they should get it right this time. We must not make a mess of it again. The Clyde is our greatest asset. I ask the council to use it rather than to continue to abuse it.

11:24

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): I am the first non-Glasgow member to speak in today's debate. *[Interruption.]* I apologise, Alex Neil was the first.

I must register my appreciation of the fact that we are in Glasgow. There is a hint of regret that the Parliament was not permanently housed in Glasgow.

Discussing Glasgow's regeneration, Johann Lamont referred to the years of Tory Governments. That must be considered. It was during the time of Mrs Thatcher's Government that the regeneration of Glasgow really began. It started in the buildings and fabric of the city, through the housing repair and maintenance programme that allowed private owners and landlords to improve the housing stock. Instead of using the failed policies of the 1960s and 1970s—the new build concrete jungles—

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): Will the member give way?

Nicola Sturgeon: Will the member give way?

Mr McAveety: Will the member give way?

Phil Gallie: What I say about Glasgow—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson): Order.

Phil Gallie: Instead of walking along the streets with our eyes on the pavements—although that is recommended, given the state of the pavements these days—we should keep our eyes upwards and look at the buildings and the fantastic architecture. They are evidence of the skills of the past of which we should be proud. Every Glaswegian should boast of those skills and it is to our shame that the city was partly demolished in previous years.

Mr Stone: Is it not the case that Glasgow's pride was founded on its manufacturing industry in the last century and the century before that? Was it not Maggie in particular who sent those industries down the tubes?

Phil Gallie: Not at all. Glasgow's structure, its

whole—[MEMBERS: “Being.”] Thank you. Being. [Laughter.] That came about because of the entrepreneurial skills of people who lived in Glasgow, dating back to the times Jamie Stone mentioned. However, Glasgow did not modernise. It was stuck in a rut. The old industries were still here and had to be moved on. That was the problem Mrs Thatcher addressed when she introduced massive amounts of inward investment to Scotland.

Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Ms Curran: Will the member give way?

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Phil Gallie: I do not have time to give way.

I want to address one or two of the points Wendy Alexander made. She talked about salmon fisheries. It is with great pride that I look on the Tory record of improving the quality of the River Clyde; the salmon are coming back to the Clyde.

The minister also commented on Glasgow being loyal to Labour and Labour being loyal to Glasgow. One of the real problems faced by Glasgow is the fact that Labour has controlled the local authority for so many years. I draw members' attention to the points made by Bill Aitken in his amendment, those raised by Kenny Gibson and even the comments of Government-supporter Robert Brown about the current difficulties faced by Glasgow.

I would also like to comment on law and order, which nobody seems to have picked up on. We should all be proud of the fact that Strathclyde police is about to celebrate 25 years of existence. It has been a very successful force. However, I look back to the “Chief Constable's Annual Report for 1998-99” with some concern. It shows the inheritance from the Tory Government: crime figures in 1997-98 were the lowest ever. In 1998-99, however, there was a 4.5 per cent increase in crime figures.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wind up now, please.

Phil Gallie: I suggest that it is no coincidence that with the incoming Labour Government, and now the Labour Executive, police numbers have fallen. As the chief constable of Strathclyde police says in his report, there has been

“a real cut in resources”.

Strathclyde Police has risen to that, however, and adopted a targeting approach. It is to be congratulated on that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Come to a close, please, Mr Gallie.

Phil Gallie: If we examine current Strathclyde police figures, we see that serious assault, knife carrying and assaults on police officers are on the increase. I ask ministers to address this serious point. There has been a pilot project on CS gas. Does the Minister for Justice have the results of that pilot? If so, will he have a chat with the chief constable of Strathclyde police and consider bringing it into use in Glasgow?

Can I make another point? Glasgow—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. Close please, Mr Gallie.

Phil Gallie: I am just winding up—I will finish. Glasgow now has three universities—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Close please.

Phil Gallie: There are three universities in Glasgow. I note that Brian Souter made a £1 million donation towards a magnetic resonance imaging unit for heart research in Glasgow. I have heard nobody commend him for that today. Perhaps others who speak in this debate could do so.

11:31

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab): Like my colleagues from Glasgow, I would like to say how proud I am as a Glasgow member of the Scottish Parliament to take part in this debate.

In this debate, we should bring forward constructive action points—which is what I want to do in this speech—and not talk down Glasgow with negative soundbites. There are key points to Glasgow's regeneration. Many positive points about Glasgow have appeared in the contributions of many agencies and authorities. In particular, Glasgow City Council has been the catalyst of much regeneration and improvement, which has arrested the downward trend of some time ago.

We must acknowledge that a mammoth task faces us. We must consider the fact that Glasgow has the infamous statistic of having five constituencies with the highest unemployment rates in Scotland. We must also take into account the positive stories about Glasgow, including the 70 per cent growth in the tourism industry since 1991, the 15,000 new jobs since 1995 and the fact that we provide work for 18 per cent of Scotland's population. We should reflect on that and ask why, then, our communities have been by-passed with regard to the distribution of jobs in Scotland.

I mentioned action points. My action point for tackling unemployment must be to follow the St Rollox initiative in my constituency. We are encouraging a major employer, Tesco, which is bringing 600 full-time jobs to the area. It is committed and contracted to bring those jobs to

the local community and to give local people an opportunity to take them up. We should encourage that—to ensure that Glasgow jobs go to Glasgow residents.

We should also consider our approach to tackling unemployment. We should streamline it to ensure that unemployed people do not feel excluded in any way. If we are to regenerate Glasgow's housing successfully, we have to consider genuinely how we might improve the city. As a former Glasgow councillor, and now as a Glasgow MSP, I am forever touched by the commitment of the many communities in my constituency that are committed to their local areas, such as Sighthill, Ruchazie, Springburn and Royston. People in those areas look to us for options for improving housing in their areas. That is why I welcome that, for the first time in 20 years, the council—in partnership with the Scottish Parliament—has introduced a proposal for improving housing in Glasgow.

Fiona Hyslop: I respect the sincerity of the member's argument, but does it not distress him that between new Labour coming to power in 1997 and 2002, which is the first opportunity to get investment in, Glasgow will have lost out on £150 million because the Executive, and the new Labour Government before it, has cut borrowing consent in Glasgow?

Paul Martin: Fiona Hyslop is talking about a small solution—capital borrowing. We are talking about major investment and new ways of dealing with the large problems in Glasgow. It is not for us to decide what is good for people. We will put the options to Glasgow tenants and let them decide whether that is the best way forward.

I am glad that the minister made her announcement today. We should ensure that this information is brought to tenants as a matter of urgency and that they are not left in limbo with the various pieces of information that have been provided to them. I will allow tenants to decide.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wind up, please.

Mr Gibson: Will the member give way?

Paul Martin: I am sorry, but I have been asked to wind up.

If we wish to regenerate communities, we must consider crime as a major issue. Phil Gallie touched on the issue of Strathclyde police. We must consider how we manage police authorities and the way in which police authorities manage local communities. I would call for a full review of Strathclyde police so that we can consider ways in which to regenerate areas such as Glasgow, bringing employment into Glasgow and improving the city's housing.

I commend the motion to the chamber.

11:36

Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): I feel like a bit of an interloper here, as if I am at one of those Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I should really stand up and say, "My name's Margaret and I'm from Edinburgh."

However, my remarks are heartfelt. Having heard the speeches that have been made this morning—no doubt this will apply to those that are still to come—I hope that anybody from Glasgow who is listening to this debate will see that the debate is of relevance not only to them but to the people of Scotland. Indeed, if Glasgow flourishes, Scotland flourishes. The converse is also true.

We have heard many of the different strands that make up the problems that Glasgow faces. Importantly, we have also heard—from Paul Martin, Pauline McNeill, Robert Brown and others—about some of the challenges and opportunities for Glasgow. The Parliament should do everything it can to make those opportunities a reality.

When I was doing some background reading for today's debate, I was struck by the following quotation from a Government white paper:

"The Secretary of State concluded over a year ago that extra effort was required in Glasgow in view of the exceptional scale and severity of problems in that city."

Members might think that that comes from a new Labour document, of a couple of years ago, when Donald Dewar was secretary of state. Other members have commented on reports from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the University of Bristol, showing the level of health deprivation in Scotland. However, the secretary of state was Bruce Millan and the year was 1977.

Many members have looked back today and blamed the Tories. That is very easy and it is very nice. We all enjoy it and it gives everybody—apart from the Tories—a good feeling inside.

Miss Goldie: I do not enjoy it because the charge is invariably unfounded, inaccurate and untrue. Mr Gallie has already alluded to what the Tories, in government, tried to achieve. I think we all recognise that, in many significant areas, it was Tory policies that started to address the problems we are discussing today.

Mrs Smith: It is clear to everybody—small mind or large—that the Tories presided over more devastation in terms of the gap between the rich and the poor than any Government before them. I am trying to move on and to say that it is easy for us to blame the Tories. It is easy for us—particularly for the Liberal Democrats—to blame lack of democracy in Glasgow City Council. It is

easy to look back; it is much more difficult to look forward.

Over the past few weeks, the Health and Community Care Committee has been examining the health budget. In our discussions about the public health aspects of the budget—or, rather, the lack of them in that document—we have heard about what the Finns have done. They have been radical and said, “We cannot accept ill health. We cannot tinker round the edges, putting a few million pounds here or there.” I agree with Alex Neil—£22 billion from mobile phone licences is the sort of money we could do something with. We should be putting such an amount into urban regeneration and tackling health inequalities in cities such as Glasgow.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: Why, therefore, does Margaret Smith not tell her beloved coalition partners to put that money into health?

Mrs Smith: I am in the lucky position of not having to be in coalition in two places. In the place where we are not in coalition, the Liberal Democrats urge the chancellor strongly, at all times, to put more money into public services. That is a Westminster issue and the money should have been used not to service debt, but on public services.

Phil Gallie: Will the member give way?

Mrs Smith: No. I have given way twice and I must move on.

Over the coming months, there will be much debate in Glasgow, quite rightly, about acute services reviews—the best pile of bricks and mortar, the best place to put beds and the best buildings in which to conduct health care. However, such matters are only part of the issue. We must also ensure that the diseases that affect Scots—cancer, coronary heart disease and stroke—are dealt with not at the end, by the acute services, but at the beginning. That means working in our schools and communities; putting together all the necessary cross-cutting measures; and taking on board and working with the agencies that Margaret Curran talked about, in communities and the voluntary sector.

I will not bore members with the statistics on Glasgow's and Scotland's health, but they are appalling. We have to be radical. Some radical solutions in the Parliament—such as stock transfer, or anything else—will be uncomfortable, but we cannot tackle the health problems that Glasgow and Scotland face unless we are prepared to be radical.

11:41

Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP): Transport is an integral part of the social and

economic regeneration of Glasgow. It should be acknowledged that Glasgow has many advantages. In the underground and the local rail network, it has a transport network that cities such as Edinburgh can only aspire to. However, there is one significant and growing problem: congestion on the M8—the Kingston bridge in particular—which will not go away and must be addressed. The only way to address that problem is to construct the M74 north extension.

Congestion is not simply a traffic problem; it is a social and economic problem. It jeopardises jobs and prevents jobs being brought to the area. Only a few months ago, the *Evening Times* highlighted what Glasgow City Council was pointing out in private: that it could not invest in areas such as Easterhouse to generate jobs because it could not cope with the resulting increased traffic on the M8. An area with one of the lowest rates of car ownership in the United Kingdom—yet one of the highest rates of male unemployment—losing out on jobs and investment as a result of congestion is a travesty and an injustice. That is a Labour double whammy.

Socially, jobs are integral to the regeneration of the city. It is not all down to work, but work plays a significant part. Unless we give people a sense of self-worth and take away the opportunities that the devil finds for idle hands, the city's problems will continue. That is why it is socially and economically necessary to improve the transport infrastructure by proceeding with the M74 north extension.

Whatever needs to be done, it will not be done by warm words or workplace charging. If we check the records, we find that in 1992 Strathclyde Regional Council—the former holders of the building that we are in today—published a proposal for the M74 north extension.

Eight years on, the Minister for Transport and the Environment gives us a further consultation document, to be carried out by the precursors and successors of Strathclyde Regional Council. That is not acceptable.

Janis Hughes asked how the scheme would be paid for. Allow me to give some facts in response. First, the motorway network south of the border has been completed. Secondly, the oil revenues from off our shores have bankrolled Governments—Tory and Labour—for a quarter of a century. Thirdly, fuel duty at 80p in the pound continues to fund the Chancellor of the Exchequer's burgeoning war chest. Yet Glasgow continues to wait. Not one metre has been laid.

I believe that the M74 north extension is critical and is a national responsibility, not a responsibility for the council tax payers of North Lanarkshire and the city of Glasgow. Scotland and the chancellor

must provide the funds. People ask where the money will come from. I remind Janis Hughes that a few months ago John Prescott said that he had more than £80 billion to spend over 10 years on transport infrastructure. If we had our share of that, not only could we complete the M74 north extension, we could probably pave it with gold.

Rightly or wrongly, people worry that they will get the problems associated with roads, not the benefits. People worry that they will have a motorway laid over the top of them while the jobs pass by them. We have to address those fears. One way to do so would be to create enterprise zones up to a mile or a half mile adjacent to the newly constructed road or, indeed, in areas not too far away. That would show people that the issue is one of bringing in not just goods and commuters, but jobs and employment.

Will anyone suggest that many of the areas that have been blighted by the flight of past industries would not benefit from an influx of new ones? That view would help avoid people seeing only the problems associated with the extension. The Executive and its cohorts in Westminster must provide the funds for this important piece of transport infrastructure for Glasgow and Scotland at the beginning of the 21st century. I say to the minister: get a grip, construct the road, create employment and get Glasgow going.

11:47

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): I am a representative of Clydebank and Milngavie and support the regeneration of Glasgow. I want also to make an important point about the conurbation of west central Scotland. The success of Glasgow is fundamental to the success of the areas around it. Clydebank shares many of Glasgow's problems. I hope that successful solutions to Glasgow's problems will be associated with successful solutions to the problems of Clydebank and the surrounding areas.

Economic growth in Glasgow and the economic prosperity of Glasgow are fundamental to the economic success of many of the areas surrounding the city. The point has been made that Glasgow's success is the success of Scotland. I support that, but would underline the fact that the success of Glasgow is crucial for the success of west central Scotland.

The regeneration of Glasgow is not a new issue. Much work has been done in the past 25 years. We are in the chamber of Strathclyde Regional Council, where that council's social strategy for the 1980s was proposed and put into effect. Here, people such as Geoff Shaw, Ronald Young, Dick Stewart, Charles Gray, Charles O'Halloran, Leonard Turpie, a Conservative, and Christopher

Mason, a Liberal Democrat—I do not think that there was a significant contributor to that debate from the SNP—tackled the problems of economic decline and need in west central Scotland. Many of the things that those people did have set the foundations for what we are engaged in now.

Continuity with past policies is needed—with the policies that Strathclyde Regional Council pioneered, aimed at tackling multiple deprivation, advancing educational opportunity, improving housing and dealing with social need through developing the social work service. We need those policies to be carried forward in the next 25 years with some of the success that Strathclyde had. It is important to recognise that for the past 25 years the public agencies have not been failing but have had relative success—although not success in overturning the indicators of deprivation as those are the result of deep-seated economic processes that worked to the disadvantage of the city.

In many ways, the work by the health service, by local government and by the economic development agencies in Glasgow has been heroic and has transformed a situation that could have been very much worse than it is. Many of the solutions devised by those agencies should be put into practice. For example—

Mr Gibson: Will the member give way?

Des McNulty: No.

Glasgow needs investment in brown-field sites—that has been known for a long time. We need to clear up some of the disused manufacturing sites, put resources into them and bring in new industries. We need and will now get sustained investment in housing. That was denied in the past; it required Government money. People in Glasgow knew what was needed but were not given the resources by central Government to provide solutions. It is the job of the Executive to provide that funding and to make sure that Glasgow gets sustained investment. I want us not to be reliant on challenge funding or small initiatives. We need sustained investment in education, housing, health and social care.

The future of Glasgow depends on the Parliament actually making a commitment—ending the empty rhetoric, the wee party political points. Glasgow needs real energy and a real commitment that unites the Parliament and is not subject to politicking.

11:51

Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP): In 1726, Daniel Defoe wrote:

"Glasgow is indeed a very fine city . . . 'tis the cleanest and beautifullest, and best-built city in Britain".

Mistakenly, he added, "London excepted", but we

can ignore that.

We should have aspirations to match those words. If the Parliament does its job properly, this will be the first of many times when we consider how we address Glasgow's needs. There is a danger that we see the city only as a problem; it is also a great opportunity.

I have heard it suggested that the potential of west central Scotland could be realised without tackling Glasgow's decline. I do not agree. Doing so would not be in the interest of the adjacent communities either. Glasgow should be the hub of west central Scotland. It is a major resource for employment, shopping and other services and provides up to a quarter of a million jobs, with earnings above the Scottish average. The city has a positive as well as negative international reputation. Its shopping, leisure and service sectors are developing apace. Officials and politicians wax lyrical about the remaking of the city.

A number of years ago I was involved in a housing campaign that many here will remember, with the slogan "Glasgow's Miles Better—Miles to go". That remains an apt summary of Glasgow today.

Part of the city's international reputation is based on its community-based housing associations' work in regenerating the inner city. It is ironic that, 25 years after they started that work, in many parts of Glasgow the Executive's commitment to social inclusion is being drowned out by the return of the bulldozer as an instrument of urban policy.

Even without the addition of further sites, the backlog of vacant and derelict land undermines the city's competitiveness. Glasgow contains almost a quarter of Scotland's vacant derelict urban land. Although it is worse in Glasgow, the problem of derelict land is Scotland-wide. Almost 40 per cent of Scotland's vacant and derelict land has lain unused for at least 20 years. The minister has identified that the present situation is a waste of resources; the question is, when will concerted action be taken to tackle the problem?

In its stock transfer plan, Glasgow City Council identified proposals to demolish up to 15,000 properties. If that programme is badly handled, that scale of demolition will represent a major risk to the city. The evidence from previous clearance programmes is that, when people are detached from their communities, it is difficult to determine where they will settle. Neither the city nor Scotland can afford the continuing draining away of Glasgow's population. Between 1981 and 1996, Glasgow suffered a net population loss of 95,000, which is clearly the principal component of Scotland's net loss of 52,000 people during the same period. Members will be aware that

Professor Arthur Midwinter has warned that, if that process continues, the city's finances will be unsustainable.

Despite the warnings, I remain optimistic about Glasgow, which has been called the city that refused to die. To date, central Government has failed to support Glasgow's efforts to reinvent itself. In the interests of Glasgow and Scotland, this Parliament must change that situation.

11:56

Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): I welcome my colleagues to Glasgow. It will not have escaped their attention that we have provided some traditional Glasgow weather, although that might come as a surprise to those from airts and pairs who do not set foot in the dear green place very often.

In his opening remarks, Kenny Gibson said one thing that I agreed with: it is true that Glasgow is a city divided. The inequalities in Glasgow are well known, and many more people will know of them by means of today's debate. We must tackle those inequalities, as the Glasgow Alliance has begun to do, by bringing together the various agencies. That is the proper approach to dealing with Glasgow's multiple problems, as problems of social deprivation cannot be viewed, addressed or resolved in isolation: there must be joint working on them. The opportunities of a good education and training, a job and an affordable house, and the ability to live a healthy life, should be the rights of every Scot and of every Glaswegian.

The strategy of the Glasgow Alliance is beginning to turn the situation round, not least through social inclusion partnerships and its multi-agency approach. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the Castlemilk Partnership, which continues much of the good work that was undertaken by the new life in urban Scotland partnerships. The Castlemilk Partnership is building on that work, through the Castlemilk Economic Development Agency and many local groups. Much remains to be done in Castlemilk, although improvements—visible and tangible—have been made, and no one underestimates that.

The statistics are revealing: 25 years ago, 40,000 people lived in Castlemilk, yet its population is now 18,000. That decline mirrors Glasgow's decline in population, which we have heard much about. I am concerned about the fact that less than half the people who work in Glasgow live in the city. That might not be unusual for large conurbations, but the proportion of people who live and work in Glasgow has plummeted over the years, which has had serious repercussions for the city's tax base.

I will not make myself popular with my

colleagues from some of the constituencies that about Glasgow by saying this but, sooner or later, the question of Glasgow's boundaries will have to be addressed. We will have to grasp that issue, and it will not be easy to deal with. I firmly believe that the people who work in Glasgow and contribute to Glasgow's economy should make a personal contribution as well, as they benefit from the amenities that the city has to offer outwith working hours.

My own solution—a crude one, perhaps—is that the boundaries of the Greater Glasgow Health Board, with one or two adjustments, should define the boundaries of Glasgow City Council, otherwise Glasgow will continue to lose out. About £200 million is remitted to the Scottish Executive through business rates, but less than half of that is reinvested in the city. That has a serious effect on Glasgow City Council's ability to act decisively to address some of the inequalities that I mentioned.

I am also concerned about Glasgow's skills base—that is one of the reasons why I welcome the alliance's multi-agency approach.

I have heard stories that worry me greatly. There is no shortage of investment in the city of Glasgow, but there is—which might come as a surprise—a shortage of people who are able to take up the jobs that result from that investment. The problem is serious if jobs in Glasgow can be filled only by people who live outside the city. We must examine that if we are to turn the situation round. If we are to give Glasgow a new future, it must be based on young people who have the skills to build a life in the city.

Although I am highlighting some of Glasgow's problems, I do not want to suggest that other parts of Scotland do not also have problems. I do not want to belittle the fact that there are severe problems elsewhere; highlighting what needs to be done in Glasgow does not detract from accepting that.

Other members have said that what is good for Glasgow is good for Scotland—I echo that. Parliament is here for three weeks and we will use those three weeks to highlight what must be done in Glasgow. However, the weeks, months and years ahead will be the acid test—Glasgow must be given the resources that will ensure that it can flourish again.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes this part of the debate; the debate will continue after lunch.

Agricultural Holdings

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson): The next item of business is a statement by Ross Finnie on the agricultural holdings white paper. The minister will take questions at the end of the statement. There should, therefore, be no interventions.

12:00

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Ross Finnie): One or two members might have attended the question time that was held in Glasgow with the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. Among the many and several questions that were asked were three on general agricultural matters, four on agrimonetary compensation and one on modulation. That surprised not only the members of the press who were present, but the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister. Given Glasgow's obvious interest in agriculture, it is highly appropriate that we should discuss agricultural holdings on the first morning that Parliament meets in Glasgow.

I am pleased to announce the publication today of the white paper on agricultural holdings, copies of which have been lodged with the Scottish Parliament information centre. The paper sets out my proposals for legislation to reform the present outdated agricultural holdings legislation.

The paper represents the first stage in the delivery of another major element of the Scottish Executive's land reform programme. In the long term, that element might be the part of our land reform agenda that has the greatest impact on rural land management. I expect that the measures that are outlined in the paper will command widespread support throughout the farming industry. The changes that are proposed will benefit landowners but will also particularly benefit farm tenants and, consequently, I hope that they will be welcomed by both sides.

The proposals have been developed from the work of the land reform policy group and take full account of the extensive consultations on land reform that have taken place. It is clear that there is a fair measure of consensus on the need for changes to the current agricultural holdings legislation. That legislation, which reflects the circumstances of the immediate post-war era, is badly in need of modernisation.

We consulted widely during the past year with the wide range of bodies and individuals who participated in the landlord and tenant consultation panel. That panel has proved an invaluable means of drawing on external expertise to explore the matter further.

The proposals also include the outcome of a special reference to the Scottish Law Commission on changes to disputes resolution. The recommendations are more radical than was envisaged, but the Executive is convinced that the commission has identified the right way forward.

I now refer to the white paper. There are three principal aspects of the proposed new legislation. First, there will be more scope for diversity of tenancy arrangements. The current legislation provides great security of tenure for existing tenants, but that has led to a situation in which landlords have been reluctant to let land. When they have let land, landlords have, increasingly, been prepared to do so only on the basis of a tenancy involving a limited partnership in which the landlord is a partner. That enables a landlord to terminate a tenancy at will, simply by dissolving the partnership—which gives no security to the tenant.

Before I outline the proposals, I stress that the new tenancy arrangements will not affect traditional tenancies. Where a tenancy exists, the tenant should be under no compulsion to change the tenancy arrangements. Undermining the tenure of existing tenants is not part of the Executive's plans for reform. We believe that traditional tenancies should continue to be an option in the future, and we do not want to remove that option.

We propose that a new limited-duration tenancy should be made available, but that legislation should not set a minimum term. The white paper suggests that the term should be agreed by the parties and the tenancy should be extendable beyond the originally agreed period if both parties agree. In all other respects, however, the provisions should reflect those that apply to existing agricultural tenancies. The objective is to encourage landlords to offer land for let in the knowledge that it will revert to them at the end of a fixed period agreed with the tenant.

Let me make it absolutely clear that the legislation must not merely encourage a more diverse range of tenancy; it must encourage a situation in which tenancy agreements actively promote investment in the land by tenants. If the evidence produced during the consultation period shows that landlords would want to use that section merely to offer year-on-year tenancies, I will have to look again at the proposals in the legislation about setting a minimum period. Just as importantly, if the discussions that have gone on for many years between the National Farmers Union of Scotland and the Scottish Landowners Federation reach a conclusion that meets the point that I have just made about obviating the question of annual tenancies that do not encourage good husbandry of the land, I will be minded to accept

their proposals at the conclusion of the consultation period.

With the creation of limited-duration tenancies, we also propose that limited partnerships should be debarred as new tenants. However, that proposal cannot be retrospective, as we do not wish to disrupt existing tenancies in which the tenant is a limited partnership. At present, a landowner cannot safely let agricultural land other than for grazing or mowing for a period of less than a year without the consent of Scottish ministers. If he does, there is a serious risk that the tenant will claim that the let constitutes a full agricultural tenancy.

That requirement was introduced in 1949 to close what was seen as a loophole in previous legislation. However, circumstances have changed and the need for approval is out of step with the unfettered freedom of short-term letting. We have consulted on the issue and we therefore propose that current restrictions on lettings for periods of less than a year should be abolished. Taken together, those measures ought to create wider tenure choices for both tenants and landlords.

The second important thrust of the proposed legislation is the range of new opportunities that it provides for diversification. Diversification is crucial if agriculture is to adapt successfully for the future. The present legislation is founded on a post-war need to maximise food production and it fails to allow tenants to diversify into other economic activities should they so wish. It also fails to take account of the increasing public interest in protecting and enhancing the environment, and in environmentally friendly farming activity.

Existing farm leases usually deal with agricultural use, rather narrowly defined so that diversification could constitute a breach of tenancy. In practice, there is usually some flexibility, but the statutory bar is nevertheless a real constraint for many tenants. New legislation would therefore introduce a provision into new and existing statutory leases to permit diversification, and should incorporate suitable constraints to ensure that the nature of the holding is not fundamentally changed. There must also be scope for appeals by the landlord on the ground that his interests would be materially prejudiced.

The legislation should also deal with compensation at waygo, by providing for that to be determined by the Scottish Land Court on application of either party if the landlord and tenant cannot reach agreement. It is intended that the change should apply to new and existing secure tenancies and to the proposed new limited-duration tenancies.

Planting trees should also become a permitted

development in new and existing statutory leases, subject to a similar caveat about changes that fundamentally alter the nature of the holding. Again, there must be scope for appeal by the landlord on the ground that his interests would be materially prejudiced and there must be provision for that appeal to go to the Scottish Land Court. New and existing leases should also allow conservation management, again with scope for appeal to the Scottish Land Court.

The third major element of the proposed legislation is simpler and cheaper disputes resolution. There is widespread dissatisfaction on all sides of the tenanted sector of agriculture with the existing systems of dispute resolution under the agricultural holdings legislation. We asked the Scottish Law Commission to suggest changes. As many members will be aware, its chairman, Lord Gill, is of course a noted expert in this field. The Scottish Law Commission's analysis, which is also available today, shows that the jurisdictions are needlessly complex and should be reformed; that there is a significant mismatch between what is provided and what is needed; that the system results in frustrating delay; and that it is needlessly expensive. Copies of the report are available from SPICe.

The Scottish Law Commission's solution, which I endorse, is to simplify the jurisdiction and to look in future to the Scottish Land Court as the single court of virtually universal jurisdiction on agricultural holdings cases. That means abolishing the existing system of compulsory arbitration. However, I stress that the parties would still be able, in all but those cases that are already excluded from it, to choose to have their disputes resolved by arbitration.

That solution would also mean abolition of the related jurisdictions of the sheriffs. In place of a multiplicity of appellate and supervisory jurisdictions, the system would be based in every case on a two-stage procedure, consisting of a first-instance decision and only one opportunity of appeal. I believe that that will result in justice that is better, quicker and cheaper.

There are also a number of minor measures. In some respects, the balance is unfairly tilted in favour of landlords, and we intend to redress that balance. The consent of the Scottish Land Court should be required for resumption of land by the landlord for a purpose that does not require planning permission. The present legislation specifies when the Scottish Land Court can consent to a notice to quit. It also provides that the court can nevertheless refuse that consent if it considers that a fair and reasonable landlord would not insist on possession. It is proposed that that test of the landlord's action should be modernised and widened to reflect the broader

public interest.

Time limits for tenant rights to compensation for game damage should be changed and tenants who have land taken from them for mineral development should have the right to regain that land after mineral extraction and land restoration are completed.

Taken as a whole, the changes will free up both landowners and tenants from constraints that now hold them back. Radical changes are included in the package. The limited-duration tenancy arrangements offer a realistic and fairer alternative to the practice of using limited partnerships as the basis for new tenancies. I have set out my serious caveats and the requirement for those to be met before we move to legislation.

The measures on diversification, tree planting and conservation management will allow tenants to take full advantage of recent changes in the way in which agricultural support is delivered. The proposals for dispute resolution should do much to eliminate the problems of high cost and long delay, which caused so much concern under the present system, and the measures to strengthen the position of tenants deal with real problems in the present legal framework.

The new legislation will modify the framework for farming, from one that might have been right for the mid-20th century to one that I believe will be right for the 21st century. In short, it will make a crucial difference to securing the developments that will benefit a modern rural Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): I remind members that a limited supply of copies of the white paper announced by the minister will, as he said, be available in the SPICe office, which is on the ground floor of house 3.

The minister will now take questions on the issues raised in the statement. I will allow 20 minutes for questions.

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): I thank the minister for giving us a copy of his statement in advance. The SNP would like to welcome it as far as it goes. I also welcome the minister's additional comments in relation to short-term tenancies and his willingness to review those proposals.

There are many useful proposals in the document, but the devil will be in the detail, not just of the document once we have read it, but of the legislation that flows from it. We are disappointed that there was not more exploration, throughout the process, of moves in the direction of the right to buy for tenants. I understand the argument that that would dry up the supply of land for rent, but it remains an issue in many parts of Scotland.

The minister said that many of the effects of the legislation would be long term, but many tenant farmers now face the problem that the value of their stock—which is virtually their only asset, apart from their equipment—is either low or zero. How will the minister address that? Will he revisit the option of an early retirement scheme?

Ross Finnie: I am grateful to Alasdair Morgan for his general welcome for the thrust of my remarks. I am glad that he picked up on the point that I added about short-term tenancies, which was missing from the original statement.

I think that the member has answered his own question about the tenant's right to buy. We are trying to move towards a situation of greater diversity, in which more leases will be offered. Neither the consultative group that existed before we took office nor that which was set up afterwards proved that instituting a tenant's right to buy would do anything other than dry up a limited supply. We were not persuaded that that was consistent with our aim of getting new tenants.

An early retirement scheme will not form part of the agricultural holdings legislation. Alasdair Morgan did well to work that in, notwithstanding the fact that there are some 400 pages of the Scottish Law Commission's report and 32 pages of the white paper for us to discuss. I am still consulting on such a scheme in relation to the rural development regulation. Although I can see its merits clearly, the costs of producing a scheme, given the present framework, are considerable. However, we will return to the matter when the consultation period on the rural development regulation is over, as it is one of the accompanying measures that are set out in that regulation.

Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con): I am a partner in two partnership tenancies and a landlord in a traditional tenancy, so I have a foot in both camps.

It might surprise some members, but the Conservatives broadly welcome the proposals. For some time, we have been calling for flexibility in letting land. However, we have one or two small reservations. We believe that a limited tenancy might discourage tenants and landlords from putting the necessary capital into the let land, which we would not want to happen. I also draw the minister's attention to a grey area that exists in relation to limited tenancy partnerships. After an initial period, those are often renewable on an annual basis. Would a renewal of that sort constitute a new lease, which would bring the partnership concerned under the terms of the proposed legislation?

We broadly welcome what was said about diversification. However, if tenants diversify too much, or are able to do so, that has the potential

to change the basic character of the land and to dry up the amount of land available for lease, which none of us would welcome.

The Conservative party welcomes any measure to simplify and cut the costs of the dispute resolution procedure, in the few instances that it is required. However, will the minister clarify his statement:

"It is proposed that that test of the landlord's action should be modernised and widened to reflect the broader public interest"?

What does that mean?

Ross Finnie: I welcome Alex Fergusson's broad agreement that the measures that I have announced are necessary. That might come easily for him, given that he has a foot in both camps.

I made it clear that any changes made by the legislation would not be retrospective. It is my intention that if a new lease is entered into after the legislation has come into force, it should not be possible for the landlord to be a partner—perhaps a limited, rather than a general partner—in that lease.

Alex Fergusson expressed concern that diversification might materially affect the nature of a holding. The white paper addresses that issue. There must be much greater scope for diversification than is provided, rather narrowly, in the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 1991. I am proposing that that should be extended, but that there ought also to be a right of appeal in circumstances where, on the basis of the facts, the conclusion would be drawn that a proposal materially altered the nature of the holding. The devil, as has been said, is in the detail, but provisions will be made when we come to the draft bill.

The extension would be simply to recognise the fact that there might be a wider public interest in the matter. We hope that all matters will be referred to the Scottish Land Court, and that that will eliminate any frivolous appeals. If someone goes to an appeal court where the chair has the status of a High Court judge, they might not want to exercise a public interest in a way that the legislation did not intend that they should.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We will now have questions—and shorter ones at that.

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): It is a pleasure to be back in Strathclyde House. During my time as a councillor, I was never allowed to speak in this chamber, so I am pleased to be speaking now.

I have not been provided with a copy of the minister's statement, and I have only just located the SPICe office, so I do not have a copy of the

report.

I would like to ask about a problem of a constituent of mine. The constituent and his family have been tenant farmers for some time. The terms of the agreement that they have with their landlord have left them in a position where they may be liable to pay for the removal of outbuildings with asbestos that were erected on the land by the landlord. I wondered whether the regulations that the minister has in mind will provide adequate protection for tenant farmers in such a situation.

Ross Finnie: I am grateful that Elaine Murray did not attempt to make up for her lifetime of silence in this chamber.

I am bound to say that Elaine Murray's question demonstrates that she did not read my statement and that she does not have the white paper in her possession. I can understand that her constituent is in difficulty, but the matter would be better dealt with by correspondence on what seems to be a special problem, but one that is not related to the reform of the legislation on agricultural holdings.

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): These radical reforms are very welcome; the Executive is delivering for rural Scotland. Will the minister confirm that getting rid of the limited partnership get-out clause will redress the balance between tenant farmer and landlord and that, taken together with the freeing up of tenancies, the new and flexible limited-duration tenancy will be welcomed by tenants and landlords in farming communities throughout Scotland?

Ross Finnie: I am grateful to Mike Rumbles for that question because it allows me to emphasise a particular point. The elimination of a practice that has been around for more than a quarter of a century—that of imposing a limited partnership on an agricultural lease for the purpose of removing the security that is available under the 1991 act—will be widely welcomed.

I go back to the point that I made in my statement. If all that the mechanism for a new limited-duration tenancy resulted in were year-to-year tenancies, that would not be satisfactory. That is why I am keen to hear the responses that result from the consultation process and, perhaps more important, to learn whether the Scottish Landowners Federation and the National Farmers Union of Scotland have reached any agreement on what a minimum-term duration might be.

Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): I will try to make my question a little more challenging than the one asked by Mike Rumbles.

I, too, welcome the minister's statement and some of the proposals therein. My question relates

to the input of tenant farmers to the consultation process. As the minister will be aware, tenant farmers are often reluctant to express their views, because they are concerned that their landowners might not take too kindly to them speaking out. The 1998 document of the land reform policy group at the then Scottish Office—"Identifying the Solutions"—says on page 6 that

"a notable proportion of tenant farmers asked for their views to remain confidential".

To what extent did the minister take that reluctance into account during the consultation process, to ensure that tenant farmers had full input? What mechanisms will he introduce to ensure that tenant farmers play a full role in the debate on the future of Scottish agriculture and rural Scotland?

Ross Finnie: I would not want to disappoint Richard Lochhead by judging whether he had been more challenging than Mike Rumbles, but it was a good question.

Tenant farmers were consulted, as is clear from the document that Richard Lochhead mentioned. In my visits to farms in Scotland, I have specifically asked to visit different types of tenancies. I have visited constituencies in the south-west. If only I had gone to Alex Fergusson's, I could have saved half my journeys by visiting both a limited partnership and a long-term tenancy.

People's views are taken into account. The move towards a shorter and shorter tenancy, and the use of the device of the limited partnership, have been of concern. Some tenancies run on for a long period, but the threat of the partnership being dissolved without notice hangs over people and means that they have no real security of tenure.

We have put our proposals in the white paper and those proposals will be consulted on until August. We will make every effort to ensure that, in the discussions that we have in the department and with farmers and farmers unions, the proposals are discussed and understood. If we can assist in increasing understanding of the proposals, I assure members that we will do so.

If the legislation is to be reformed radically, we must get it right. Richard Lochhead, as a member of the Rural Affairs Committee, will play a role in that work, as will I. We do not have a reforming or upper chamber, and the Parliament operates on the basis that we must get legislation right first time.

Lewis Macdonald (Aberdeen Central) (Lab): The reforms seem to me to strengthen the general position of tenant farmers, and I welcome them as part of the wider land reform programme.

What guidance does the minister intend to issue

on what the changes to the legislation will mean for tenant farmers with existing tenancies, which will be affected by the change in the law, who wish to take up farm forestry and European Union agri-environment schemes? Will the same rules apply to those who take up the new type of tenancy that he announced today?

Ross Finnie: I will take Lewis Macdonald's last point first. The white paper proposes to broaden the definition of agriculture under the 1991 act, to permit greater woodland and agri-environmental development. Those proposals should be retrospective and, by definition, they will affect all new tenancies.

On communicating that information, there will be an initial process of ensuring that we engage a wide group of tenant farmers in the consultation period on the white paper, as Richard Lochhead pointed out. Once the legislation is in place, we will discuss with the NFU how best to publicise the broader access to those schemes that will be available to tenant farmers. They will not have to be concerned that embarking on such schemes will take them outwith the definition of agriculture in the 1991 act, which would have put at risk the substance of their leases.

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): I declare an interest. I am a tenant farmer and, in my previous life, I led the negotiations on behalf of the NFU with the SLF on attempts to reach agreement on the minimum length of tenancy.

I welcome today's announcement, which represents a significant shift in power from the landlord to the tenant.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ask a question, please, Mr Lyon.

George Lyon: Will the minister confirm that he has definitely not ruled out the need for a minimum-term tenancy, which is fundamental to the review process and to the announcements made today? Without a minimum-term tenancy, the proposals could be flawed.

Ross Finnie: I am grateful to George Lyon for his support.

We are revolving round the crux of the issue. George Lyon will agree that there has been serious dispute and disagreement about a minimum-term tenancy over the years. I make it absolutely clear that in the white paper I am proposing a framework that offers the prospect of a minimum-duration tenancy.

In the absence of agreement between the NFU and the SLF—and indeed in the absence of anyone telling me what to do—the danger would have been to set such a duration at 20 years, which might have excluded the prospect of tenancies if disagreement remained, or even at

three or five years, which might disappoint everyone else because the term is too fixed.

My proposal is framed in order to engender a serious and genuine discussion. I want to make it absolutely clear that it would not be in the best interests of Scottish farming or good husbandry for landlords to be able to use this as an excuse for year-on-year tenancies. As a result, I want to consult on that point, which I hope will allow us to have a specified minimum term by consultation and through agreement with the respective parties.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Irene McGugan and then Robin Harper.

Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP): The initial document recommended that existing provision should be amended to permit part-time operation. However, I understand that the minister now believes that it is not necessary to amend the 1991 act and that part-time tenant farming is no longer an issue. Will he care to explain that change of heart and tell us how confident he is that the white paper's provisions adequately address issues of part-time tenant farming?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ross Harper. I am terribly sorry—I mean Ross Finnie. [*Laughter.*] Glasgow is clearly getting to me.

Ross Finnie: If I could address the green issue of part-time farming—[*Laughter.*] Seriously, the difficulty with the issue of part-time farming centred on whether the fact that a person was only in part-time occupation gave rise to the suggestion that, under the terms of their lease, that person was not conducting the good husbandry of that estate, which further gave rise to the question of at what point irritancy might be acted upon.

After further consultation, we have decided that a whole range of people engage in part-time farming, and by and large the majority look after their estate when they do so. If that is the case, do we need to do anything legally to protect those people? They are vulnerable to prosecution only if they do not look after their estate and therefore give rise to irritancy under the terms of their leases. Therefore, although the issue was raised in the initial consultation, a close examination of the facts showed that it was not necessary to enshrine in law any particular measure to deal with that situation.

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): First, I welcome the possible extensions to improvements in the farming environment in Scotland, and hope that such improvements will be extended to organic conversion.

As for the minister's statement, more members of young farmers clubs are currently not farming than are farming. Will the changes materially

assist young people to get into farming in Scotland, as that is the real crisis in farming just now?

Ross Finnie: Through the Presiding Officer, I thank Mr Harper for his question.

The answer is yes, because we have to change fundamentally the holdings legislation. That said, we must not give up the range of protections that have been available in Scottish law since 1883—we should not throw that baby out with the bath water. However, as Alex Fergusson and Alasdair Morgan pointed out, if we achieve greater flexibility, people will have greater motivation to seek such leases and come into farming.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes questions on the agricultural holdings white paper.

12:33

Meeting suspended until 14:30.

14:30

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Before we begin this afternoon's session, I am sure that members will wish to welcome the President and the Clerk of the Catalan Parliament, who have flown from Barcelona to be with us today. They are very welcome.

I ask members to be sympathetic to the acoustics in the chamber. The kind of conversation between members that is acceptable in our own chamber does not work here. The background noise makes it difficult to hear. I ask members to restrain conversations in the chamber.

Glasgow Regeneration

Resumed debate.

The Presiding Officer: We continue this morning's debate on motion S1M-858, in the name of Wendy Alexander, on Glasgow regeneration. Given the number of members who wish to speak, even on a four-minute time limit it will not be possible to include everybody. I appeal to the opening speakers to keep well below their time limits if they can. I call Henry McLeish.

14:31

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish): I thank Sir David for the opportunity to open the debate this afternoon. I am delighted that we are in Glasgow. It is a great place to debate the important issues that lie at the heart of the city's future.

I believe, as I am prone to do—with one exception, last week in debate with John Swinney—in trying to express the views of the Parliament. In a sense, we are talking about a huge issue today. This is a great modern city. So far, while there has been some heat and some passion, everyone seems committed to ensuring that the regeneration programme that we are embarking upon is supported. Of course, we can differ, substantially at times, on the margins of policy. Nevertheless, it is important that the Parliament speaks up loud and clear on all the issues affecting the people of Glasgow.

It is important that we take this opportunity not only to embrace the regeneration process, but to try to improve it. We acknowledge, as I hope does every other party, that there are always ways of improving what we are doing. We have embarked on a fairly formidable programme of regeneration, a process that has already been happening throughout the years. It is in the interests of

Glasgow that we continue that process and that we see the benefits.

I would like to use the theme of a city with two tales: not a tale of two cities, although I want to touch upon the complementarity of Glasgow and Edinburgh at a later stage, but rather two tales from this city. In the opening sentence of "A Tale of Two Cities", Charles Dickens wrote:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times".

Glasgow, as much as any other great European city, illustrates the challenging urban mix of some of the worst places and some of the best places—poverty and affluence cheek by jowl, the old set amidst the dynamic new.

This morning, Wendy Alexander told us the tale of Glasgow's poverty, the tragedy of 20 Tory years during which the social consequences of economic decline and the positive roles for enterprise and education in making new cities were ignored. Wendy Alexander has made it clear how the Executive's policies—across the range of mainstream programmes and not just special area regeneration measures—are beginning to reverse decay and to bring hope and community action to those places that need them.

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): What about the tragedy of 40 Labour years? Almost 300,000 people in Glasgow, and 62 per cent of children in Maryhill alone, live in poverty, so the £12.5 million announced by Ms Alexander this morning amounts to only about £40 each. That is hardly a generous gesture to this great city.

Henry McLeish: The people of Glasgow will not be saying that today, as another £12 million is invested in the future of the city. We should not get bogged down in downplaying £12 million of public funds. That announcement was made against a background of enormous investment in a wide variety of areas that affect the citizens of this great city.

Wendy Alexander also pointed out that better homes, better schools, stronger neighbourhoods and better infrastructure are critical to our aim of lasting neighbourhood regeneration. We also recognise that raising the city's economic performance, with more jobs and better income, is the only basis on which such changes can be sustained in the longer term. Some might regard the Holyrood and Westminster Parliaments' social and economic programmes for Glasgow as simple palliatives that are redistributed to Glasgow to ease the pain of a city in decline, but that is a fundamental misperception.

That view is utterly wrong, because there is a second critical tale to tell of Glasgow: the story of what Glasgow and its economy does for Scotland. Glasgow, a city with less than an eighth of the

nation's population, produces a sixth of its output. It performs key roles in a range of new, and older, activities. More to the point, there is growing awareness that cities have a particular role in shaping the relationships between economy and society. Cities are the creative places in the new global economy, and if we are to compete as a nation, our cities—especially Glasgow—will have to be internally effective and creative and externally well connected. We must value and shape Glasgow for its potential creativity and connectivity, not just for Glaswegians but for all of us. The city is not a victim, and our policies are not palliatives.

Glasgow's past experience could lead us to gloomy economic analysis; indeed, for many, it has done so. Successful global processes of decentralisation of jobs and homes to the suburbs, followed by the inevitable demise of old industries, along with current lower-cost bases in emerging economies, had an earlier and deeper effect on Glasgow than on any other British city. In 1953, the city had a population of 1.2 million and 325,000 manufacturing jobs were located within its boundaries. Now there are fewer than 35,000 manufacturing jobs and the population, of course, has almost halved. By the end of Mrs Thatcher's Government, a quarter of the wards in the city had unemployment rates in excess of 30 per cent and, in council housing, only one household in three had any connection at all to the labour market. Even worse, Glasgow's empire export markets were gone, and many craft and labour skills lay redundant.

I want to concentrate now on the positive aspects that I regard as the new tale. It is easy, as new problems emerge, to forget that the city was also gaining as far as its economic base was concerned. From 1955 to 1995, Glasgow was not just a city where transport was an issue; it was a city where people were beginning to develop services and where networks could be established. Of course, Glasgow has become—as incomes have increased and general living standards have improved—a place for household consumption as much as production.

All that is reflected in how Glasgow is changing as the millennium starts. Job figures are up in contrast with 1990, with new gains at least offsetting the old decline. Indeed, since 1993, the city has gained an additional 17,500 jobs and unemployment has fallen by 50 per cent. There has been a high level of inward investment in Glasgow in recent years. In the five years to March 1999, Locate in Scotland recorded 56 investment projects, involving planned investment of £202 million, with the expectation that we can create or safeguard 7,770 jobs.

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):

Does the minister recognise that the new jobs that have come to Glasgow have tended to be of a type that is not necessarily suitable for people who have lost employment in previous industries, where they had semi-skilled or unskilled roles? Does the Government's present strategy target adequately the skills disparity that affects those people who lost out through the decline in traditional industries?

Henry McLeish: John Swinney raises an important issue. Matching up skills from the declining industries, which may be less in demand, with newer industries can often be a problem. However, a lot of work has been done to make them match up. There is a great degree of carry-over between the skills in traditional industries and those that are required in the new industries, especially technology and engineering skills. We keep a keen eye on the issue that Mr Swinney raises.

It is also important to remember that almost £400 million has been invested in new technology companies and we have the second largest retailing centre in the UK, with robust and relatively stable property values. We also have a rapidly expanding tourist sector: there has been an increase in tourist trips of up to 40 per cent since the mid-1990s. That is encouraging, especially when we consider that this is supposed to be a city that only needs public resources. Glasgow is a vibrant city. It is winning new technology and it is winning its own future. Underpinning that is the fact that it is the second largest concentration of science and research outside London.

We could spend hours cataloguing the successes of the city, but the key issue is that Glasgow is moving forward; it is not a city in decline. Glasgow is looking for partnership to allow it to develop its potential. That reflects new drivers for change. Glasgow has a high standard of culture and good amenities. That attracts visitors and skilled labour. Glasgow has an educated work force and an innovative business and academic sector with a growing familiarity with multi-media ends and means. Cities such as Glasgow need not fear the knowledge economy: e-commerce and the internet are city-friendly. There is a new analysis and a new prospect for Glasgow and for all of our cities.

The most important part of this issue is the people of Glasgow. The policies of any party and the efficacy of any political system must be measured by their impact on the quality of life of the public. We must create a modern image for the city. People must drive forward an agenda for change. We should talk about the problems that face the city, but we should also talk up the world-class assets that the city has. We must get that

balance right.

Progress has been made but there is work to do in many areas. I talked about unemployment. It is true to say that unemployment has gone down remarkably in recent years. Since 1997, youth unemployment in the city has gone down by 70 per cent. Long-term unemployment has gone down by 52 per cent since 1997. In 1984—nearly at the peak of the Tories' assault on industry—unemployment in the city stood at 25 per cent. It is now at 9 per cent and, as members will be aware, the claimant count today fell to less than 9 per cent. Employment has risen by 17,500 since 1993.

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): Instead of singling out the Tories for his monopolistic attack on the causes of the demise of industry, will the minister accept that there were other reasons for the demise of industry, such as demarcation, overmanning, inefficiency, lack of competitiveness and the lack of productivity that still blights this country today?

Henry McLeish: Being a reasonable man, I am willing to acknowledge that, in addition to the decimation of manufacturing industry by the Tories, there were other factors that should be borne in mind.

While unemployment has fallen dramatically, we should not forget that we are in a city where the benefits of prosperity have not always fallen equally. In 1984, wards such as Belvidere, Drumry, Kingston, Keppochill and Cowlares had unemployment levels of more than 50 per cent. In one of those wards, the level was 67 per cent. Now, all those wards have unemployment levels of 15 per cent or 16 per cent. That is too high: it is a third higher than the Scottish average. I commit the Executive to ensuring that we have a working economy in every community.

We need to focus more intensely on linking the 15,000 to 20,000 job vacancies with the 25,000 people who are out of work. It is not easy to make a direct match, but we owe it to the unemployed to start to focus on the parts of the city that need financial investment to help people match up with available jobs. That is not talking glibly or ideologically about full employment, but giving a massive commitment to the city to do something about it—something that adds to the general reduction in unemployment over the past few years.

My second point is on tourism. John Swinney is right: the nature of Glasgow's economy is changing. The economy is changing globally; in Scotland it is changing in every city. Between 1991 and 1998 UK tourist visits to Glasgow increased by 88 per cent—that is a mean feat for a mean city, so described. The tourists seem to like it. That and the fact that international visits have

increased by 25 per cent prove that Glasgow is an enormous magnet for people in this country and abroad who want to see excellence, whether in architecture, culture or the other huge attractions of the city. We are investing in that and want to work with the city in moving forward.

My third point is that we talk about manufacturing in an over-gloomy way. Of course there are difficult trading conditions around, but there are still more than 30,000 manufacturing jobs in the city, 10 per cent of the employment base. We must not write that off. Our manufacturing statement says that manufacturing matters. It is the engine room of the economy, whether in Fife, the Lothians or Glasgow. We need to make sure that the shipbuilding sector is further developed. The Executive is in discussion with Scottish Enterprise and a study is being completed of the scope for a more strategic approach to marine industries in Scotland. Representations have been made to me about centres of excellence in Glasgow in marine industries—that is under active consideration.

The fourth area is one where Glasgow can take centre stage. It is fast becoming the learning capital of Europe. Right across the board, with its three universities and 10 colleges and 160,000 students it is truly a learning capital at the heart of what I want to see as a learning nation. Learning in the city is being looked at, from graduate and post-graduate levels to the much-neglected area of literacy—an area that will now get more resources. The Glasgow learning inquiry is a unique initiative bringing together the council, the enterprise company and the universities and colleges to show that learning must underpin the significant economic developments in Glasgow. Learning will be the key to the knowledge economy and to prosperity.

I congratulate the city on such initiatives and mention one in particular—the REAL learning centres in the 32 libraries. I officially opened the first centre—it is a magnificent facility. This initiative means that at the heart of every community there is a learning facility that everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, can access when they need to and to their benefit. The city should be applauded for that.

The fifth area is the science base. The three universities in the city are excellent in their very different ways. Between them they have 14 5-rated, and of those, three 5-star-rated departments. Those ratings represent international research achievement. There is also the science enterprise challenge moneys that have been invested; the university challenge; the joint infrastructure fund; and the £75 million Glasgow science centre south of the river. That will be a major asset but, more important, it is a message to

every part of the UK that this city means business for the future of the knowledge economy. Again I offer applause and congratulations to everyone involved. We have decided to put the headquarters of the Scottish university for industry in Glasgow, to complement the other things that are happening.

There are two final issues to which I will refer very quickly, Sir David, as I see you are looking at an imaginary clock on the wall behind me.

The Presiding Officer: It is a real clock.

Henry McLeish: It may be real, but I cannot see it, so I am happy. [*Laughter.*] There are a lot of people behind me in this chamber, which is quite nerve-wracking.

The Deputy Minister for Local Government (Mr Frank McAveety): We are with you.

Henry McLeish: Frank McAveety says that he is with me. I do not know whether that is a reassurance or a cause for further concern.

Glasgow has 164,000 students who attend college or university. However, there are people in our communities who cannot function because they lack basic numeracy and literacy skills. That is nothing new. The problem is crying out to be tackled, and we want to do that. Work is being undertaken in Glasgow, which the nation of Scotland can build on, and I want that to continue.

This city has many creative industries—architecture, broadcasting, media and video games—which are firmly rooted in future technology and the digital age. Glasgow is fast becoming one of the key centres of excellence for all that.

Yes, we need to modernise government and move on. Yes, we need to carry on with regeneration, to provide better homes, better schools and safer streets, and to renew the infrastructure. However, the sustainability of our efforts will be improved if there is a hard, heavy economic edge to what we do. No matter where people live—in whatever part of Glasgow or Scotland—they want to work, to have skills, to learn and to have a good quality of life. I would like to think that, today, we are celebrating all those opportunities in Glasgow.

Of course, there is much more work to be done. As an Executive we are up for it and as a Parliament we are up for it. There is a tremendous responsibility on every member to ensure that Glasgow wins through. It needs only some help. It is a great city with huge potential.

14:51

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): I know that the minister has received awards

recently. If any awards are made at the end of this debate, he will get the award for the best line—no mean feat for “a mean city”—on the issue of tourism.

In opening this afternoon’s debate for the Opposition, I shall reflect on a couple of comments that were made this morning. Some interesting remarks were made by the Conservative group, taking me rather by surprise. Bill Aitken started his contribution with an extensive demolition of the declining council tax base of the city, but struggled to explain who had been instrumental in designing that smaller council tax base—which happened to be the Conservatives, when they were in office. The guilt spread across the benches.

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con) rose—

Mr Swinney: We debated the issue well and truly this morning.

Phil Gallie then attacked the failed economic policies of the 1960s, which were replaced by the failed economic policies of the 1980s. He was clearly nostalgic for the great Lady Thatcher, whom he even called by her first name. He conjured up an image, which was not entirely welcomed by all of us, of the beloved Margaret travelling along the Clyde, no doubt by her preferred mode of transport—on foot.

The Conservative contributions were in marked contrast to some of the more substantial points that were made in the debate. My colleague Kenny Gibson characterised the problems in Glasgow, and the minister touched on similar ground in describing Glasgow as a divided city. There has been a broad understanding of that point, which was not demonstrated by the speech from the Minister for Communities, who started off on a rather complacent note when talking about the problems that Glasgow faces. The tone of realism that Margaret Curran brought to the debate was refreshing and she showed an understanding of Glasgow’s difficulties.

The SNP amendment acknowledges Glasgow’s many strengths, including the combined work of economic development agencies and the shared agenda that is pursued by the Glasgow Development Agency, now known as Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, and Glasgow City Council. The subject of economic development is particularly important. The far-reaching work that those agencies are involved in, especially in partnership with the higher and further education sector, is welcomed.

The work of the local development companies in Glasgow, a number of which are trying to tackle the issues of economic dislocation in some of the peripheral housing estates and other areas of severe urban decline, has been effective in tackling some serious root problems. The way in

which we tackle the deep-rooted economic problems in those communities is something that we cannot lose sight of in this debate, and I shall return to that issue in due course.

There has been a fundamental change in Glasgow’s business and economic bases. Some elements of Glasgow’s contribution to the Scottish economy have been robust. It is important to note that Glasgow produces more for the Scottish economy than its population might suggest. The transition of many of Glasgow’s industries to new technologies has been welcome, as has the influx of new employment.

In responding to my intervention during his speech, the minister did not deal adequately with the point that I made. We must not forget that from the fundamental changes that result in industries being able to create employment comes a feeling of dislocation in those who have lost their employment. Some of those people lost their employment, which was in declining industries, a long time ago. Some of my colleagues will comment on the industries—in particular the creative industries—that are creating employment.

The higher and further education sector is an anchor for the economy of Glasgow. I was interested to talk to representatives of the University of Glasgow and Strathclyde University at lunch time and to hear their perspectives on the commercialisation of Glasgow’s research base throughout various campuses. If I may be so bold, I would suggest that the amount of co-operation among higher education institutions in Glasgow is a novelty. We do not always see such co-operation. The success of Glasgow and Strathclyde universities in attracting challenge funding for a number of their projects contributes significantly to the development of commercial ideas in the research base.

We must ask ourselves whether enough is being done in all those areas. The representatives of higher and further education to whom I have talked welcome the Government’s initiatives. They feel, however, that the initiatives do not go nearly far enough to turn the ideas in our academic base into the commercial realities that could create long-term employment in the city.

There are deeply important issues that we must address in the debate and they have been tackled in a number of ways. I will illustrate some of those issues. I have not heard much mention of the UK economic activity indicator in the debate. That indicator suggests that 79.6 per cent of the UK population are economically active and that 77.8 per cent in Scotland are active, but that only 64.6 per cent are economically active in Glasgow. Let us examine particular areas of Glasgow. In Drumry, 40.3 per cent of the population are economically inactive, in Summerhill 34.6 per cent

are economically inactive and in North Kelvin the figure is 30.2 per cent. That must be tackled.

There are other illustrations of the problem when we examine unemployment statistics. Ministers have been intent on demonstrating how, by their measures, unemployment has declined. However, the measure that the Government used when it was in opposition indicates that unemployment is still rising. The International Labour Organisation's unemployment count shows that unemployment in Scotland rose by 10,000 in the last quarter, but that it fell in the UK as a whole by 20,000. Ministers cannot have it both ways. They give us glossy rhetoric about unemployment, but the information on which they based their campaigns when they were in opposition—and on which I am sure the leader of the Liberal party in London still bases his opposition—still indicates the true pattern of activity.

Henry McLeish: I would like to make two points. We publish the claimant count and the ILO figures—that is a step forward from the days of the previous Government. Does John Swinney accept that, if the claimant count was used as a consistent measure in the 16 years going back to 1984, we would see that, in that year, the claimant count was 25 per cent and that it is now 9 per cent? Surely that suggests to John Swinney that there has been a real improvement.

Mr Swinney: It depends what one includes in the equation. Economic inactivity is a key indicator in the assessment of the country's true position. Relative comparisons with 16 years ago are important, but what matters is what is happening now in relation to previous quarters. We are judging and debating the lives that people live today.

Kenny Gibson's important points about population decline show that Glasgow is wrestling with challenges about the deterioration of its population base. Some of the other issues that Mr McLeish raised, particularly his comments on adult literacy earlier in the week, cause deep concern about the ability of large groups of the population to gain access to the labour market because of their inherent lack of skills. If there was ever a case for lifelong learning, the literacy figures quoted so starkly by the *Daily Record* on Monday illustrate the depth of the problem that must be tackled.

Let us start the debate about the future of Glasgow and the regeneration of the city from an honest reflection on past performance. We do not need any spin on the past. What we need is honest reflection and real analysis of the issues that concern us all.

A couple of years ago, Glasgow City Council assessed the performance of its regeneration

policy. After £500 million had been invested in regeneration activity over a 10-year period, it found that the areas that were poorest in 1988 remained the poorest areas in 1998. That is why the SNP amendment calls for a reflection on the regeneration strategy, to guarantee that we get the strategy absolutely right for tackling the areas affected by those deep, endemic problems.

We all want to tackle and solve those problems speedily and in a sustained way, but we must have confidence in the mechanisms and measures by which we aim to achieve that transition. The analysis of expenditure of large sums of money over the past 10 years does not provide a good model for how expenditure should be sustained over the next 10 years.

I was struck by the written submission that the Glasgow Development Agency made to the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee. It said of social exclusion:

"Glasgow needs to create new jobs if it is to make lasting inroads into these issues. The evidence over the past five years shows that the city can create employment but Glasgow's residents, for various interrelated reasons, are not getting the full benefit. The evidence tends to show that less than half of new jobs go to Glaswegians and that on current trends the share is expected to decrease."

We all agree that getting people into employment is the way to solve many of those deep social problems, but the evidence does not show that we are succeeding in getting people into employment and enabling them to take part in sustained employment to solve those difficulties.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): Although Mr Swinney talks about getting people into employment, does he agree that it is important to stress that work in and of itself is not a route out of poverty unless it is well-paid employment? Does he agree that we cannot simply turn the unemployed poor into the employed poor?

Mr Swinney: I agree unreservedly with Tommy Sheridan. We must create a sustainable society that allows people to have a different lifestyle from the life that they have just now and to get out of the endemic poverty that many people have suffered. He and I have met constituents who have experienced only a marginal difference by going from unemployment to employment. Unless that gap is tackled, the problem will never be solved in full. There is evidence that prosperity in Glasgow is rising and that new opportunities exist. The issue is whether those opportunities truly touch the people who live here and whether they are involved in that process of renewal. We are not hearing much evidence that that is the case.

We must examine the way in which the labour market is stimulated in the city of Glasgow. To do that, we must look at the wider context. The minister mentioned the United Kingdom and the

global context. We cannot ignore the fact that we have serious competitive disadvantages because of the way in which the economy is currently structured and because of the way in which macro-economic decisions are taken. We cannot expect manufacturing employment to be sustained or to rise in Glasgow or in any other part of Scotland with the burden of interest rates that we currently carry.

I was intrigued that the issue of interest rates and their relationship to the currency markets and to the euro was given fresh life yesterday by the intervention of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who called for a swifter time scale on the euro. He came to the rescue of the Minister for Rural Affairs, who made bold and courageous comments in Brussels last week about the need for a stable and competitive climate. I am glad that that is going down so well on the Opposition Liberal Democrat benches. I am not sure that it is going down so well on the Government Liberal Democrat benches, but I suspect that subsequent contributions will prove me correct.

We have an understanding that issues such as interest rates and exchange rates have an impact on the ability to sustain a credible manufacturing base. Henry McLeish quite rightly says that manufacturing matters. I have read the strategies and manufacturing does matter, but we are an export-focused community. We have been put at a competitive disadvantage because of the level of interest rates and the inability of our key companies to compete. A number of my colleagues this morning made practical suggestions, and more will do so this afternoon, about how the regeneration strategy can be taken forward.

Ministers have confirmed remarks that have been made in the debate that 25 per cent of Scotland's derelict land is retained within Glasgow. Part of the Government's regeneration strategy must be to tackle that, to improve the location, to improve the environment and to improve the ability of companies to find locations and establish their bases in this community.

We must also effectively target those who are disfranchised from employment and from taking part in the labour market. Until we bridge the gap between the opportunities that exist and the people who live here who need to get those opportunities, the Government's regeneration strategy will be the talk that we have heard today and not enough of the action that the people of Glasgow require.

15:05

Mr Murray Tosh (South of Scotland) (Con): I listened with interest this morning to Des McNulty—not many of us have ever been able to say that—as he made a number of excellent points about the economic circumstances that Glasgow has faced in the past 30 or 40 years.

Des referred to the deep-seated economic and social difficulties of west central Scotland. He placed Glasgow firmly in its context as a conurbation, not as a community in isolation. He talked about the remarkable degree of continuity that has existed throughout those decades, in referring to what he called the remarkable achievements of the health board, the enterprise agencies—which were of course agents of central Government—and the local council in doing a considerable level of work and enjoying a considerable degree of success across the decades with which he was familiar as a Strathclyde regional councillor. That is a telling point.

Henry McLeish presented everything as novel; initiatives that began in 1997 and trends that started in 1997. However, that is not correct; the facets of Glasgow's success the minister has been anxious to build on go back far deeper in time. He talked about Glasgow's success in retailing and tourism. He talked about Glasgow's success in attracting technology and developing its universities.

Those developments, trends, innovations and investments long pre-date 1997. The minister, in making comparisons directly with the situation in 1993, gave the lie to much of the cheaper rhetoric of his speech.

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): I thank Murray Tosh for his positive comments. Will he comment on the £150 million that Glasgow lost immediately following reorganisation as a result of the financial settlement by the Conservative Government at that time, and the consequences of that for Glasgow in the past three or four years?

Mr Tosh: I am concerned at the evidence that was brought before Parliament recently by Professor Midwinter, which shows that local government in Scotland is losing around £100 million per year. That is a problem that faces every council. It is a real problem of this devolved Scotland. We debated the issue last week and I did not hear members of the Executive offer any counter-evidence. I have heard questions about the economics of this issue being put to Jack McConnell and I have heard Jack McConnell do nothing but evade those questions. The Executive is peddling a lie to the Scottish community about

the funding of local government.

I would like to make a significant comment on one of the areas of discontinuity in the way the Scottish economy is being handled. This morning, I looked at a briefing the Confederation of British Industry gave us recently. It picked out five factors that are central to Scotland's economic success. Right in the middle of the list was transport and logistics. I thought it most significant that the minister who opened this afternoon's debate did not mention transport and logistics—as if our manufacturing can flourish at the end of one of the longest transport corridors in western Europe without it.

The previous, maligned Tory Government spent a decade or more developing a long motorway from England, our principal market, and from the European mainland, our next most important market. Where has it been allowed to stop? It has been allowed to stop in the east of Glasgow. I know perfectly well that virtually every Labour member in this chamber is as concerned as we are about the implications of that. For modern manufacturing and service industries, reliability and quick delivery are increasingly important. We in Scotland are at the end of a very long communications chain. How are we to survive if we do not have the facility to move our goods to the market for which they are intended when that market wants those goods?

I pay tribute to the minister for the positive things he said. How can we translate those imperatives into reality unless we deal with infrastructure?

Mr Andy Kerr (East Kilbride) (Lab): How does that square with the fact that, when they were in power, the Tories sidelined and put into the backwoods all the roads for which a demand was building up? From what the member is saying, one would think that the Conservatives were never in power and never had the chance to build roads.

Mr Tosh: I was under the impression that in the past 20 years we developed very extensive motorway networks in Scotland. If anyone who has travelled the old A74 and the motorway does not notice the difference and does not realise the significance of it, they should talk to the chambers of commerce, the CBI and council leaders such as Charlie Gordon about the significance of the motorway network to this city and the wider region.

Scotland's most significant and successful exporting area is Renfrewshire. Scotland's second most significant exporting area is Ayrshire. Both are on the wrong side of the central Glasgow congestion bottleneck. The industries that are based there are concerned about their long-term development programmes and investment strategies because they see themselves as increasingly at the wrong end of Glasgow's

congestion. They want motorway connections and they want the M74 to progress.

What has the Executive done? It has stopped a long, unfolding process of investment and referred the matter to local councils. The Minister for Transport and the Environment has told the leaders of the three councils involved that they can progress the scheme under the legislation that allows local authorities to toll motorways. Local government leaders do not believe that that is practical. They do not think that the M74 can be tolled in isolation; they believe that they would have to toll the entire central Scotland motorway network, diverting stacks of traffic to side streets in the process.

Mr Kerr indicated disagreement.

Mr Tosh: The member should talk to the council leaders; I have.

Mr Kerr: So have I.

Mr Tosh: They are considering using the proposed powers to impose car parking charges, but they are not confident that they will be able to raise the necessary sums of money. They reckon that they may be able to realise half the money that might be needed to fund a PFI scheme to develop the motorway. Where will the other half come from? What level of charges will have to be imposed? Who knows—and who can know—what the impact of significant parking charges will be on the supply of parking? With such risk and uncertainty, what private financier will put the necessary level of investment into developing a motorway costing £200 million within that time scale? Without the Executive to underwrite it, it is an unrealistic, unfair and negative proposal.

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): I hope that Murray Tosh will not mislead the chamber—I am sure that that is not his intention. The Executive does not intend to have motorway tolling, because the Liberal Democrats have ensured that that will not occur.

Mr Tosh: I often think that Mr Rumbles has a peculiar view of the role the Liberal Democrats play in the coalition. If he wants to know how important their input is, he should read Wendy Alexander's speech from this morning to see how many references there were to the Liberal Democrats.

Mr Rumbles: Does Mr Tosh accept my point?

Mr Tosh: No, I do not. Mr Rumbles is wrong. There are two types of motorway tolling: there is the type that the Executive proposed last summer, and then abandoned; and there is the specific power that allows a local authority—or, indeed, any private sector operator with a licence—to develop a motorway and toll for it. The minister has put precisely that proposal to Glasgow City

Council, South Lanarkshire Council and Renfrewshire Council. If Mike Rumbles does not believe me, he should go and ask the council leaders and they will confirm what I am saying.

How long do I have left, Sir David?

The Presiding Officer: Two minutes.

Mr Rumbles: It is a pity about the content.

Mr Tosh: I am sorry Mr Rumbles feels that it is a pity about the content; I cannot think of anything that is much more important than transport infrastructure. Any member who has talked seriously to anybody in economic development, industry or commerce will have heard about the importance of the M74 both in connecting our manufacturers to their markets and, critically—I take John Swinney's point—in releasing derelict land and reclaiming brown-field sites.

Where is the merit in the Executive suggesting—as it has done to Glasgow City Council—that to save money and make the scheme more affordable, it should scale down the M74 and cut out the connections between Cambuslang and the Kingston bridge? If that happens, the brown-field land will still be sterilised and when the council goes to the European Community for the 25 per cent funding that will be an important part of the financial jigsaw, it will lose that grant assistance through not having proposed the connecting up of the brown-field land.

Much of this debate is about planning and joining up all the loose ends. It is about creating the physical connections and the policy connections. The Executive has ambitions to improve the education base and the skills base and to achieve better outputs—goals that all of us share—but if it does not have a commitment to the strategic infrastructure it will not achieve the ends it holds so dear.

Many Labour members have been part of the lobbying process for the motorway.

Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab) rose—

Mr Tosh: I am sorry, but I think I have to finish.

The Presiding Officer: He is on his last minute.

Mr Tosh: The Parliament and the Executive have let the matter drift. It has drifted since 1997. For the sake of the economy of Glasgow and the west of Scotland, it has to be put back on the agenda. The council has been asked to do something that it does not have the resources to achieve. The Executive and the Parliament must impose the strategic vision, provide the financial and logistical support and fill the gap in the strategy that the Executive has set out this afternoon.

15:17

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): I welcome the Scottish Executive's decision to have this debate today, to draw attention to the serious challenges that face the city of Glasgow. It is appropriate that, on our first day in Glasgow, we are discussing some of the real problems that face the city.

Members may accuse me of west coast bias, or it may be that I am weary from constant travelling between Bute and Edinburgh, but as we bring the Parliament to Glasgow for these few weeks I cannot help but think that a regenerative opportunity has been missed and that Glasgow would have provided an imaginative and successful permanent home for our Parliament. We must ensure that when civil service jobs are dispersed throughout the country, Glasgow attracts its fair share—that would go a long way towards helping the city.

As the MSP for Argyll and Bute, I am well aware that a prosperous and successful Glasgow brings prosperity and opportunities to all of the west coast of Scotland. The regeneration of the city brings a renaissance that provides life-blood to economies along the length of the Clyde. Ask any hotelier on Bute, any publican in Dunoon or any restaurateur in Oban, and we are left in no doubt that a vibrant Glasgow means a vibrant Scotland—and a vibrant Argyll and Bute, which is important.

We have heard many statistics about the economic and social problems that beset the city. Less than 10 per cent of Glasgow's employment remains in manufacturing, which is a sad indictment of the decades of neglect and lost opportunities that Murray Tosh has conveniently forgotten.

Glasgow lags well behind in new businesses, with a start-up rate that is half the Scottish average and barely a third of that of the south-east of England in the 1980s and 1990s. The city has lost 21 per cent of its jobs since 1971, unemployment is persistently higher than in the rest of the country and more people—some 74,000—are on incapacity benefits than in any other district in Britain. Social and economic problems are borne on our shoulders—the shoulders of the politicians who failed our greatest city during the past 20 years.

This morning, Margaret Smith referred to the 1977 white paper "Policy For The Inner Cities", which stated clearly that

"extra effort was required in Glasgow, in view of the exceptional scale and severity of the problems in that city".

What happened during the past 20 years? It is to our shame that so many years were wasted. Peter Lilley's grotesque view, that poverty no longer

existed because people no longer starved on the streets and children were no longer sent up chimneys, only served to highlight the paucity of vision and the absence of human charity that characterised the 18 wasted Tory years.

The people of Scotland voted to create this Parliament so that the evils of unfettered Tory rule would never again be foisted upon us. As Murray Tosh so ably demonstrated, the chaos and darkness before 1997 appears to have been obliterated from the memory of every Tory member.

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): If the Tories are so evil, why are the Liberal Democrats in coalition with them in East Dunbartonshire Council and Perth and Kinross Council?

George Lyon: I could ask the SNP the same question about Argyll and Bute Council.

Solutions require positive action and joined-up ideas. That is why the Executive's manufacturing strategy, "Created in Scotland", put our money where our priorities are. The strategy will ensure that the expertise and cutting edge of the research that is taking place in Glasgow's universities will mean jobs for the city through the commercial exploitation of our knowledge. Developing that strategy in Scotland means exploiting our knowledge base.

Mr Tosh: I realise that some of George Lyon's speech is knockabout, but a central part of it is about knocking the record of the Tory Government. Can he conceive of the possibility that the universities and the technological expansion that he talked about, the growth in tourism and initiatives such as the retailing conference that the minister talked about, date back some considerable time before 1997? Does he agree that so many of this afternoon's speeches are prejudicial hot air?

George Lyon: If we were to look back before 1997, we would remember the deepest recession the UK has experienced, which took place in 1992; we would remember that the Tory Government spent some £10 billion to £15 billion trying to defend the pound before it was ejected from the European exchange rate mechanism. Those are memories that linger in the minds of the Scottish people.

We welcome the work of the Glasgow alliance. We recognise that the problems of health, housing poverty and unemployment are different sides of the same coin. It is right to point to the positive achievements of and opportunities available to Glasgow. During the 1990s, 62 inward investors created 13,000 jobs. With 59 call centres, Glasgow is the call centre capital of the UK. There are more than 2 million visitors annually to the greater Glasgow area, sustaining 47,000 jobs.

Greater Glasgow produces 34 per cent of Scotland's gross domestic product, which is a remarkable figure for any city. Furthermore, the US journal *Fortune* has ranked Glasgow the third best city in Europe for business environment, quality of life and labour quality. Glasgow has many positive aspects and strengths on which we can reflect as it faces up to future challenges.

Robert Brown referred to Glasgow as a tale of two cities. There can be no clearer illustration of that than the poverty of hope and ambition among the city's young people. Glasgow is an academic city of international repute. Its three universities and 10 colleges are centres of excellence in teaching and learning and the University of Glasgow is in the top rank of UK research institutions. With a student population of almost 100,000, Glasgow is the second largest student city outside London, beating Edinburgh by a long, long way.

However, as we have already heard, the rate of entry to higher education among school leavers in Glasgow is 16 per cent lower than the Scottish average. That cannot continue. I am sure that the Executive's approach—through the expansion of further and higher education, the abolition of tuition fees and the reintroduction of the £2,000 annual maintenance grant—will go a long way towards tackling the problems of representation at our universities and colleges by students from the poorer parts of Glasgow.

When Glasgow was the second city of the empire, all Scotland and Britain shared in its wealth and was reflected in its success.

Mr Swinney: Will George Lyon give way?

George Lyon: No, I am just about to finish.

Today, one fact remains true: a successful Glasgow means a successful Scotland. If the Executive can make it for Glasgow, it will make it for the whole of Scotland. I support the motion.

The Presiding Officer: We now come to the open debate. Speeches will be limited to four minutes. I should remind members that the clocks on the side of the chamber are not stop-clocks, so they will have to pay attention to the time they start and add four minutes.

15:26

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): I feel that I have to comment on the structure of this debate. It is unfortunate that we have started this afternoon's session with yet more statements from front-bench spokespersons, which has limited the ability of back-bench MSPs to contribute to the debate. [Applause.]

As the old Tories are becoming as politically

extinct and irrelevant in Glasgow as the dodo, I intend to ignore their deplorable and pathetic record. Instead, I want to concentrate on the role of the new Tories. When Wendy Alexander spoke this morning—it is a pity she is not here this afternoon—she referred to the city of Glasgow's loyalty to Labour and that being why Labour is determined to deliver for the city. At that point I could see some uncomfortable fidgeting among the minor partners of the coalition, who were obviously not included in that statement.

I want to examine the loyalty Wendy Alexander mentioned. It applies not just to the first year of the Scottish Parliament, but to the past three years of the Westminster Parliament—which have been three years of betrayal of that same loyalty. Three years ago, we were told that Glasgow would be made a special case if the city returned Labour MPs. That pledge has resulted in the further deterioration of the city's housing stock and an increase in poverty among the city's children. In April 1997, 38 per cent of schoolchildren received free school meals, which was a disgraceful legacy from the old Tories; by the end of 1999, that figure had risen to 43 per cent, which means that there has been a 5 per cent increase in poverty.

Mr McAveety: If Mr Sheridan analyses the increase in the take-up of school meals, he will realise that it is nothing to do with an increase in poverty, which is the line that he has peddled in the past year, but because a Labour-controlled council identified that take-up was an issue and advertised it in such a way that children would not be stigmatised. Through improving the quality of the school meals service, the council encouraged youngsters to use a high-quality school meals service instead of going to private operators outside schools. Rather than peddling that line, Mr Sheridan should get the facts on the table and address that point.

Tommy Sheridan: By his own words, Mr McAveety condemns himself. He tells us that the increase is the result of a Labour council realising that take-up was a problem. The Labour party has run the council for 50 years; why did it not realise that take-up was a problem then? Why has it waited until the past two years to realise that?

Mr McAveety *rose*—

Tommy Sheridan: I have given way to Mr McAveety already. He will probably have longer to speak this afternoon, so I hope he will not mind sitting down and letting me get on. I know that it is uncomfortable for him to hear this.

Wendy Alexander tells us that she will give the city an extra £12.5 million. She could take this blue biro and give us another £20 million without costing the Executive a penny—if she would only change the capital receipt clawback rule, which is

what Labour in opposition before 1997 said it would do. Wendy Alexander's refusal to do that cost Glasgow £20 million last year, and Labour's refusal to do it in the past three years has cost us £60 million.

If Wendy Alexander had announced that, in line with what the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and this city have asked for, we would be allowed to keep our business rate rather than hand it back to be pooled throughout Scotland, this city would be £64 million better off.

It is important that we do not just make criticisms, but make suggestions. That is why I hope the Executive will consider scrapping what has become the most unfair piece of taxation since the poll tax—the council tax. It is completely unfair and forces the burden of paying for local government services and jobs on to the poor rather than those who have the ability to pay. That is why the Scottish service tax would offer a solution to some of Glasgow's major problems. It would increase the disposable income of everyone in this city with an income of less than £10,000 a year—our pensioners and our low-paid workers.

The Presiding Officer: You need to close now.

Tommy Sheridan: I ask members to remember that what Labour has announced is a pathetic amount in comparison with the problems that this city is confronting. Labour must defend a record of not one year, but three years—three years of letting down the people of Glasgow.

15:32

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Since I was elected last May, I have been proud to take every opportunity to make the case for Glasgow while I have been in Edinburgh. I am prouder still today to make the case for Glasgow in Glasgow.

I understand that some people think that this is old news—old hat and a rehashing of old debates. The case of Glasgow is worthy of repetition. It is essential that we find solutions to Glasgow's problems. Tommy Sheridan suggested that the debate be focused on new Tories, or on people who disregard the easy solutions that are offered to us. That is an insult to those of us who strive to represent our constituents and other people in this city who want to solve Glasgow's problems. We are not looking for easy headlines or for saviours in Glasgow; we are looking for solutions.

This visit is a symbolic shift of power from Edinburgh to Glasgow. We want that to be backed up by a shift of Government jobs to Glasgow so that Glasgow, which had the highest turnout and the highest yes vote in the referendum for the Scottish Parliament, should enjoy not only the

democratic dividend but the economic dividend of the creation of the Parliament.

As I have argued before, Scotland needs to take ownership of Glasgow's problems. After all, Scotland has benefited over centuries from the wealth that has been generated by Glasgow and by Glaswegians, by the sweat of their brow. We are claiming Glasgow's just reward.

Part of the willingness to take responsibility for Glasgow is encompassed in the proposals for housing, as a part of which Glasgow's debt will be lifted from the backs of the tenants and redistributed to taxpayers generally. That is a responsibility that we should welcome.

I want to underline the case for metropolitan status for Glasgow and the need for a fair deal for the city. We know that there is an issue about people from outwith the city boundaries coming into the city to work yet not contributing to the city's sustenance. We know that Glasgow plays a crucial role in the national and cultural life of Scotland, from international football matches to the women's 10k that some of us ran at the weekend. Glasgow supports and sustains Scotland, but it does not have national resources to do so.

We must acknowledge Glasgow's fair case. I welcome the opening of the debate on a proper definition of need. Several members have talked about joblessness and the importance of employment strategies. They are important, but we must also acknowledge the consequences of joblessness for communities in relation to the impact on families, the drugs problem and the increase in crime. Those consequences will not be addressed just by creating jobs, no matter how important that is. An essential part of our social inclusion strategy is that we recognise it as an economic and social process. We must acknowledge the density of problems in Glasgow as well as the level of need.

This morning, Phil Gallie said that 20 years of the Tories represented Tory regeneration of the city. That is Humpty-Dumpty world, where words mean what people want them to mean. If Tory regeneration means presiding over record levels of unemployment, the collapse of manufacturing industry and unimaginable levels of poverty, heaven preserve us from the Tories re-emerging from their dodo status—as described by Tommy Sheridan. However, it is significant that there are more people in Glasgow who support the Tories than support Mr Sheridan's party.

I want to acknowledge the role played by Glasgow City Council over the past 20 years. In the blame game, much has been said about Glasgow councillors and what they have done for Glasgow. We should acknowledge the role that

they played throughout the 1980s in protecting the citizens of Glasgow. They worked with local people to preserve their communities. We should congratulate the Scottish Executive on working to empower the local authority and activists in working together in partnership to deliver real change in Glasgow.

It is essential that the regeneration strategy does not have too narrow a focus. We have to create benefits for all the citizens of Glasgow. We must remember that those citizens include our black and ethnic minority communities; we must also meet the needs of women. I welcome a strategy that includes thematic social inclusion partnerships that acknowledge the needs of the most excluded. The Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance, the groundbreaking work on supporting care leavers and the routes out of prostitution initiative are all crucial to our community.

It is essential that we develop a realistic regeneration strategy that meets real needs. For example, Pollok has been excluded from the new assisted areas map because it does not fit a pre-defined pattern. Despite the significant industrial opportunities in the area and the creation of the M77, it has been excluded from the map—although prosperous parts of the city are included. I urge the minister to bring his influence to bear in changing that. If that is the result of a pre-defined process, it is clear that there is something wrong with the process.

I welcome the steps the Executive has taken. Glasgow MSPs in particular are holding the Executive to account. Through partnership we can make a real difference to the future of Glasgow.

15:37

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): I am pleased to be debating in Glasgow. As a Lothians MSP, I acknowledge that Glasgow's problems are Scotland's problems.

When I saw today's headlines announcing £12.5 million for Glasgow, I thought that it was a drop in the ocean, although it is needed and therefore welcome. However, I checked my records and discovered that on 25 February 1999, the very same £12.5 million was announced by the minister at the time, Calum Macdonald. What breathtaking arrogance it is for the minister, on the first day that the Scottish Parliament meets in Glasgow, to make an announcement that was already made last year by Calum Macdonald. The headlines in the *Evening Times* are an absolute scandal. I want the Minister for Communities to return to the chamber today and to admit it if that was a re-announcement.

Mr Swinney: Come on—answer. It is a very serious challenge.

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I seek your assistance. In the light of what Ms Hyslop has said, is there any way in which we can get the Minister for Communities to return to the chamber to explain why she appears to have misled the Parliament this morning?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): That is not a point of order, but I would expect the point to be addressed in the winding-up speeches. Please continue, Ms Hyslop.

Mr Swinney: It would help if the Minister for Communities was listening to the Presiding Officer.

Fiona Hyslop: Perhaps I might take an intervention from her deputy, who happened to be in Glasgow City Council when there was the first opportunity to announce the £12.5 million.

Will Mr McAveety take the opportunity to tell me that this is not a re-announcement?

Mr McAveety: I am delighted that we are now breaking new ground in parliamentary protocol, when the person speaking invites interventions.

Fiona Hyslop: Answer the question.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You have chosen to respond, minister.

Mr McAveety: I am just drawing attention to the unorthodox reason for my intervention. I would be happy to deal with the point in winding up. As SNP members are keen to hear a response, however, the facts should enlighten Ms Hyslop.

Today's announcement was the outcome of the new housing partnership steering group. The steering group has been dedicated to examining all applications that have been put forward. Because we want a correct, accurate and full assessment of how that money integrates with the long-term agenda, particularly the stock—*[Interruption.]* I would like to conclude my response, as SNP members requested one, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Yes, that is reasonable.

Mr McAveety: This is connected to the other issue that the SNP has been ignoring in most of its contributions today: the overall stock transfer proposal in Glasgow. It is about ensuring that any investment has at least some relationship with long-term development. That is called joined-up government, joined-up policy and good delivery.

Fiona Hyslop: There we have it—it is the same announcement. The same—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Hyslop, if you would allow me—

Mr Swinney: Same announcement.

Fiona Hyslop: Same announcement.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order. If you would allow me, Ms Hyslop. You asked for a response; you have received a response; and there is a promise that the point will be addressed later. I ask you to continue.

Mr Swinney: Here is the minister.

Fiona Hyslop: The minister arrives.

That was the same announcement, but it took 15 months to come up with the proposal for where the money should go.

I will take the opportunity of looking at the stock transfer proposals. We are now into the fourth year of a project which, having been dreamed up by Raymond Robertson, reinvented by Malcolm Chisholm, passed on to the said Calum Macdonald and taken over by Wendy Alexander, is in danger of surviving more ministers than Fidel Castro has survived American Presidents.

In the middle of all that drift and dither, there is no investment in Glasgow. In 1996-97, the last year of the Tory Administration, the city had borrowing consents of £78 million; that figure is now down to £46 million. That is more than £30 million less than what the Tories gave, and the Tories were never friends of Glasgow.

By my estimate, if the Minister for Communities can create a minor miracle and manages to get to a ballot in the spring or summer of 2001, and provided that the tenants vote in that ballot, investment will start in 2002-03, six years after Labour was elected to government. That is six years of stalled investment in Glasgow and six years when the tenants have not had the benefit—

Mr McAveety: Will Ms Hyslop give way?

Fiona Hyslop: I am sorry, but I took a lengthy intervention earlier. Some tenants in Glasgow—

The Minister for Communities (Ms Wendy Alexander) rose—

Fiona Hyslop: The minister should have been here.

Some tenants—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry, but I have already taken an intervention.

Some tenants in Glasgow will have to wait 15 years after the initial promise to renovate their homes. For those who are interested in mental arithmetic, had Glasgow City Council been allowed to maintain a borrowing consent of £78 million, it would have been able to complete a package of £1.2 billion of investment over the same period—to 2012.

Ms Alexander: Will Ms Hyslop give way?

Fiona Hyslop: I am very conscious of time, and I want to wind up.

Mr Swinney: Where was she?

Fiona Hyslop: Where was she? [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Fiona Hyslop: If the coalition is serious about empowering tenants, and if its proposals are so good, it should not shy away from giving them the choice to stay with the council. If the coalition is serious about the investment, it should start the investment programme now, not in two years' time.

Ms Alexander: I believe that Fiona Hyslop named me in her speech. Presiding Officer, I am anxious to clarify the point that she makes, but I am not clear about whether, if she has named me, I should have the opportunity to respond—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Mr Swinney rose—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Is this the same point of order?

Mr Swinney: While you are contemplating the point of order raised by Ms Alexander, perhaps you could consider whether it is appropriate for ministers to nip in and out of debates and not to listen to the legitimate points of view that are being expressed in the chamber.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That is not a point of order—[*Interruption.*] Order. It is up to the member to decide whether she takes an intervention. She invited comment from Mr McAveety—he was allowed to respond. A pledge was given that the point would be covered later. The chamber will make its judgment. Ms Hyslop has a minute to wind up.

Fiona Hyslop: I am conscious of time. I shall take an intervention from Ms Alexander, to see whether, like Frank McAveety, she says that it is the same announcement.

Ms Alexander: The key change that we are making to Glasgow housing is that, in future, decisions will be up to the tenants. As Fiona Hyslop knows, £330 million—receipts from council house sales in England—was given to Scotland by the Government. A sum was set aside for Glasgow and it was decided that, until the decision had been made that the tenants would lead on the way in which we invested in the city, no money would be released. Yesterday, the steering group said that the money should come to the city.

Fiona Hyslop says that we should spend the money in the same way in which the council did. Is she really saying that there were no difficulties

attached to the way in which the council spent the money and that we should not go for community ownership and tenant leadership?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: In view of the long interventions, you now have two minutes to wind up.

Fiona Hyslop: I think that the minister has admitted that it is the same money and that it is not new money.

We want Glasgow to flourish and we want investment in Glasgow, but there are a variety of ways in which that can be done. It does not have to be in one leap, one bound, one ballot, one mass stock transfer. There are other ways to get investment into Glasgow.

Mr McAveety: Will the member give way?

Fiona Hyslop: I am concluding.

The regeneration of Glasgow's crumbling public stock is a priority. Let us not repeat the mistakes of the past. Glasgow has many monuments to past, big-bang solutions. Before we add to that list, let us stand back and take a long, hard look at what is proposed. What we do not need is a housing minister who comes to this city with second-hand announcements and hollow promises.

15:47

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab): As a Glasgow MSP, I should be glad that we can generate this level of passion about a subject that is dear to my heart. However, I would like a bit more light and a lot less heat to be cast on the debate.

Glasgow, as others have said, is a city of contrast. On the one hand, it is a vibrant, exciting city to live in, but on the other hand, it is a city of great poverty and deprivation. That is the challenge that the Parliament and its members—whether or not we are Glaswegians—have to face.

I had been going to say that the gall of Bill Aitken never ceases to amaze me, but Bill was followed in quick succession by Phil Gallie and Murray Tosh. It is probably fairer just to say that the gall of the Tory group never fails to amaze me. It tries to claim credit for initiatives that happened in Glasgow during the troubled 1980s when Mrs Thatcher was in power, and at the same time tries to rubbish the city council in Glasgow.

I am proud of Glasgow's council during that period, because it was that council—and Strathclyde Regional Council—that protected the citizens of this city from many of the outrages perpetrated on it by Mrs Thatcher and her Government. The Tories might forget that, but I can assure them that members on the coalition

benches and the citizens of Glasgow will never forget it.

Bill Aitken was right about one thing: the number of Glaswegians who move out of the city and the number of jobs that are taken up by people who live outwith its boundaries.

I agree completely with my colleague, Johann Lamont, who called for consideration of metropolitan status for Glasgow.

Bill Aitken was quick to disregard the idea—

John Young (West of Scotland) (Con): On a point of order.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call John Young on a point of order.

John Young: It is a point of intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Oh. Briefly, then.

John Young: Does Patricia Ferguson agree that none of the Labour councillors, in Eastwood, East Kilbride, Bearsden, or anywhere else, wishes to come into Glasgow? Owen Taylor has said that he will fight to the death to block such a move. Does she accept that bringing in more council tax payers would not assist Glasgow's financial situation, because there would be expenditure in all those areas as well?

Patricia Ferguson: No, but John Young intervened at the right time—and I thought he would know that it is Ms Ferguson, not Mrs.

The point I was about to make, first, was that it is no good trying to gerrymander council boundaries to create Tory fiefdoms. People do not believe that any more. It did not work for the Tories in 1997, or in 1999, so perhaps the Tories will have to think again about what to do next time. Secondly, it is not about putting up a wall around Glasgow and asking for people's passports when they enter the city, but it is about ensuring that people who use Glasgow's services contribute towards providing those services. That is very different from gerrymandering the boundaries.

Bill Aitken's point about people moving out of Glasgow is genuine. That is why the Glasgow alliance has produced ambitious plans, in partnership with Glasgow City Council, to try to sustain our city's existing communities and halt the move to the suburbs. It is not just the peripheral estates, about which we have heard a lot today, that need to be bolstered. Many areas in my constituency are not peripheral estates, but are pre-war estates that have come to the end of their life, as far as housing is concerned. They need to be redeveloped and their people need to be given confidence and the ability to take up the employment that is now becoming available rapidly. We must remember that that can be

achieved only through partnership. It could not be achieved in the 1980s because we did not have partnership; we had the councils fighting for their people, working with the community groups, but we did not have the support of central Government to sustain many of those developments.

Many community groups function to support the communities in partnership with the councils and the development agencies. I recognise the good and hard work that is done by many of our community organisations, especially the social inclusion partnership work that is going on in many areas of the city.

Many members still want to speak, and I would like to hear a lot of them, but I want to mention one further point. Over the years—in fact, during the debate today—Glasgow has been called many things. It was called a mean city, but I like to remember Glasgow as the friendly city. I mention that specific title because, all through the years, Glasgow—in spite of its problems—and its people have put out a hand of welcome to those who have suffered oppression overseas and felt the need to escape from that oppression. Those people have always been welcome in Glasgow and have brought with them skills and diversity that have made the city what it is today. At a time when refugees are coming into our city, and some people are not recognising the contribution that those refugees make, it is important that the Parliament and the city recognise the achievement that the refugees will no doubt bring. We welcome them, and we hope that they, too, find Glasgow to be the friendly city that those of us who have lived here all our days know it to be.

15:52

Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland) (Con): I am delighted to be speaking in a debate at the place where the Parliament should have made its temporary home before its eventual relocation.

Glasgow is a name that conjures up a variety of associations. Perhaps members are fed up with hearing the references to Glasgow as the second city of the empire, but it was also the home of the Glasgow Empire, where many an entertainer made a fight-or-flight appearance—long before my time, of course. The garden festival was held in Glasgow, on the other side of the river. Glasgow has also been city of architecture, just last year, and city of culture. What a feast of entertainment to suit all tastes we had then—Pavarotti, Sinatra making a long-awaited return visit, and Michael Jackson. We have culture coming out of our ears.

Mr Lyon—the man who put the moan into sanctimonious—should note that those initiatives date from Conservative years. But there is more to

come, with football stadium events. Who knows? Mike Tyson could even be an attraction. In particular, I am looking forward to the Tina Turner concert.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: Will the member give way?

Mrs McIntosh: Certainly. I know what Dorothy-Grace Elder is going to say.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I am sorry, but many of us do not think that Mike Tyson is an attraction, we do not think that he should be allowed to perform in the new national stadium and we do not think that Jack Straw should have the right to admit this convicted rapist to Scotland. Jack Straw should keep his nose out of it. Such issues should be decided by this Parliament.

Mrs McIntosh: I am on the same wavelength as Dorothy-Grace Elder. I do not think that he should be allowed to perform in the national stadium either. I will return to a more entertaining aspect of the stadium events: Tina Turner is coming to town. Even she would have difficulty out-singing the home support, but I know little of such things either.

Why would people not want to come here? As Patricia Ferguson pointed out, Glasgow is the friendly city. However, there are other connotations with the name Glasgow. "No Mean City" was mentioned. Glasgow, where 8,500 heroin addicts cost the city £200 million in crime and loss to the economy. Glasgow, where the number of drug-related offences in 1998 stood at 8,224. Glasgow, with its estimated 1,000 prostitutes working street corners, alleyways and cars—and I note at this point that Johann Lamont and Margaret Curran commented on women. Glasgow's population is characterised by poor educational attainment, haphazard drug abuse, unemployment, poor physical health, poverty and social exclusion. That description is courtesy of Kate Donegan, the governor of HM establishment Cornton Vale.

Last Monday, I attended a conference of the Scottish Association for the Study of Delinquency. Appropriately enough, the conference took place in the headquarters of Strathclyde police, just across the road. I heard that, in 1995, 743 women were convicted of offences relating to prostitution. Of those, 96 were from Aberdeen, five were from Edinburgh and a massive 642 were from Glasgow. That provides an interesting comparison with our capital city. Ms Donegan went on to advise that, in 1997, 198 women who were working as prostitutes, principally to fund drug habits, were received for fine defaults. I make no comment on how those women earn a living, but I am curious about one of the details. How come men do not go to prison for their involvement in prostitution?

What kind of double standards are we operating here? Why do people do their utmost to protect men's identities when a prostitute has been murdered?

The motion recognises that Glasgow faces deep-rooted challenges. I want to hear what plans the Executive has to tackle the problems that those women face. I applaud Glasgow City Council's turnaround project, which attempts to divert prostitutes from prosecution. I have no doubt that a serious debate will take place on such issues when we get back to Edinburgh, which has a different attitude to prostitution. I hope that my contribution today will stimulate that debate and a response from the Executive.

15:57

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): As the only member of the Health and Community Care Committee who is from Glasgow, it is incumbent on me to refer to health in the city. I have only four minutes, so it will be impossible for me to go into the matter in any depth. There is some humour in the funding situation, which will appeal to Glasgow folk. We seem to have had a bit of a humour bypass today, but while this city may have lived in poverty and misery, it has always kept its sense of humour.

The Minister for Health and Community Care has promised £26 million extra to Scotland from tobacco tax. That means that the minister is dependent on smokers ignoring her anti-smoking propaganda and continuing to smoke at their current rate. Is she appealing to smokers to puff away in the public interest and lay down their lives for their country pro bono publico?

Johann Lamont: No one here wants to see people smoking, and no one welcomes the health statistics that blight Glasgow. It is inappropriate to suggest that the Minister for Health and Community Care has some kind of strategy to do what Dorothy-Grace Elder suggests. It would be better to have a debate on health that focuses on the problems rather than another cheap political point.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: The Minister for Health and Community Care is using the tobacco tax nevertheless—so I have a positive suggestion for her. She is claiming only £26 million of it for health, but Scottish smokers contribute £1 billion in tobacco tax. Why should it be hoarded by Gordon Brown as part of his £60 billion war chest? Gordon Brown could save lives in Glasgow by releasing all that tobacco tax to Scotland, but he chooses not to. Glasgow's health problems are too immense for peanut funding and tinkering round the edges.

Mr Kerr: Will the member give way?

Dorothy-Grace Elder: No, I do not have much time. Glasgow is top of the Scottish league for premature death. The Bristol university report, "The widening gap", showed that most of the bottom 15 UK constituencies where people are most likely to die under the age of 65 are in Glasgow. The worst was Shettleston, where people are 2.3 times more likely to die under the age of 65 than the UK average. That is a scandalous statistic.

That report would have shamed any Government but Gordon Brown shows no shame. He holds on to that £60 billion while Glasgow dies young—this city suffers most from his policies.

Mr Kerr: Will the member give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is not giving way.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: Glasgow children suffer—as I mentioned earlier, 62 per cent of children in Maryhill alone live in dire poverty, with associated ill health. An answer to that was proposed a few years ago by two people in an earlier report, "Scotland: The Real Divide", on the divide between wealth and poverty. They suggested a redistribution of this country's wealth. They stated:

"Rising levels of public expenditure are not only socially desirable but economically justifiable as a means of reducing unemployment".

Those people were Gordon Brown and Robin Cook, who have rather changed their minds since they became rich boys in London.

I will move on to some of the current crises in Glasgow health—just a few of them. A showpiece heart transplant unit at Glasgow royal infirmary has had to close. Desperately ill people are being sent to Newcastle, for possibly up to a year. That is scandalous and disgraceful in a country that has plenty of riches, if we could use them. Glasgow's public health department needs to do much more work investigating the toxic dumping that plagues the lives of people in the poor east end of Glasgow. At present patients at Glasgow dental hospital have to wait 71 weeks for a first appointment and children have to wait 24 weeks.

Yesterday Professor Gordon McVie, director of the Cancer Research Campaign, said:

"Thousands of Scottish lives could be saved from the disease if Scotland's poor were given the same chances as the rich".

He regretted that UK Government spending in Scotland went on nuclear missiles instead of on saving the poor. He said:

"People often describe cancer survival as a lottery, but I believe it is far worse. At least if you buy a lottery ticket you get an equal chance of winning".

In Scotland we win the lottery of life every year with the billions that we earn from oil and gas taxes, and much else, but those billions are wasted in London on the millennium dome and on Trident. Because of that our people in Glasgow suffer and their health problems are not tackled.

16:03

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): I am happy to follow Dorothy-Grace Elder, if only because I want to talk about health as well and I would like to put a more positive aspect on some of Dorothy-Grace's scaremongering. Glasgow is a city in need of a massive overhaul—there can be no doubt about that. In employment, health, housing and quality of life the city lags behind the rest of the United Kingdom and, in many cases, Europe.

The regeneration of Glasgow will not take place overnight, and the statistics that have been cited today indicate just how much has to be done. For example, in comparison with the rest of the country, unemployment is high and the level of job creation is low. Many factors will influence the regeneration of Glasgow, including health—a factor that is not always considered in that respect.

Glasgow is a city of considerable ill health: it has the worst heart disease rate in Europe, high mortality rates and a lung cancer rate that is more than 61 per cent higher than the national average. The link between ill health and poverty is extremely strong, and no one in this Parliament would deny that. Glasgow, unfortunately, has a high level of both.

We have also heard about a third factor: the quality of housing in the city. Poor housing is linked to poor health, which is linked to poverty, which is linked to poor housing, and so on. Only by breaking out of that vicious circle will Glasgow become a better place in which to live. The extra £12.5 million that has been announced by the minister today, to begin to address those housing problems, is very welcome.

The mortality rate for people aged between 45 and 64 is 37 per cent higher in Glasgow than the national average. Within the city, there are huge inequalities. Those who live in poor areas of Glasgow are far more likely to fall ill, have a heart attack or get cancer than those who live in more affluent areas. Recent reports have also shown that people who live in those deprived areas are much more likely to commit suicide, suffer from stress or schizophrenia, or have drug-related problems.

All those health issues have a bearing on people's employability, which means that those who live in Glasgow's deprived areas are much less likely to be able to contribute to the city's

regeneration. It might sound obvious, but it has to be borne in mind at all times that, without recognising the scale of the problem, we cannot hope to find a suitably radical solution to it. Therefore, how do we tackle those health problems?

We must ensure that we deal with people who are already suffering. The current review of the provision of health care in Glasgow is a step towards that. I am glad that the Executive has signalled that there will be more investment in the national health service: £400 million, compared with the £30 million that it would have received under the SNP's spending proposals before the election. If the money that the Government is investing is spent correctly, we can greatly improve the lives of the people of Glasgow.

The unemployment rate in Glasgow is unarguably high: only 56 per cent of males of employable age in the Glasgow city area are currently in employment. In my constituency, the level of unemployment runs at 4.7 per cent, which is the lowest in the city. However, we must work to ensure that the improvement that has been made in Rutherglen is reflected elsewhere in the city.

The subject of the M74 extension was mentioned by a few colleagues this morning. I agree with Murray Tosh that that link is vital to the regeneration not only of Glasgow, but of Lanarkshire and the surrounding areas. I am constantly urging the Executive to continue to work positively with the local authorities and to provide them with the assistance that they need to make that extension a reality.

I echo the sentiments that were put forward by the minister in today's motion, and I hope that Glasgow can look forward to a much brighter future.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Several of those who wished to speak have dropped out of the debate. Two are left. I shall call both of them, provided that they keep their speeches to less than three minutes.

16:08

John Young (West of Scotland) (Con): I am amazed at the hypocrisy of some of the Labour members. In 1988, I lodged a motion in Glasgow City Council, that the town clerk be instructed to investigate the possibility of Glasgow becoming the capital of Scotland in 2000 AD. The then lord provost, Susan Baird, tried to rule me out of order and not a single Labour member supported that motion. That is the sort of feeling that they had for Glasgow.

This morning, Kenny Gibson mentioned the

affluent west end and the poor east end. One could also mention the north and south sides of Glasgow in the context of a health division. Many people who are present today may not be aware that, apart from Rutherglen maternity hospital, which the health board closed after 20 years, no new hospitals have been built on Glasgow's south side since Queen Victoria was on the throne. The Victoria infirmary was built in 1890.

Wendy Alexander proposed a vast stock transfer, and I am not opposed to that. She is, however, less willing to say why such a transfer is necessary. That would mean that the Scottish Labour party would be waving the white flag and admitting that, despite being in power in Glasgow for 59 of the past 67 years, it has failed for decades to manage public housing. No British city is as dependent on social housing as Glasgow is. Forty-seven per cent of the council's income from tenants' rent is spent on servicing the existing debt.

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): Will the member give way?

John Young: I am sorry. I have only three minutes.

Glasgow's population peaked in 1951 at 1,089,000. Today the population is 619,000, the lowest since 1891. At that rate, Edinburgh's population will exceed that of Glasgow within a decade.

Glasgow was the third busiest port in the United Kingdom, but the invention of the container some 30 years ago ended that. Some people say that they see no long-term future for shipbuilding in Britain, in particular in merchant ship design and construction. Only continued naval contracts in a small number of yards keeps the industry going. If there is not massive public and private investment that will bring Scottish shipbuilding into line with the modern shipbuilders in Finland, Germany and France, shipbuilding is, to be blunt, doomed. The Govan shipbuilders know that and I support them in their desperate fight for survival. The countries that I mentioned get most of the contracts for large cruise ships, for which there is great demand. How can Clyde shipbuilding re-establish itself and compete with shipbuilders on the continent and in the far east?

Attempts were made to reinvent Glasgow as a city of culture, but it could not compete with Florence. An attempt was made later to reinvent it as a city of architecture. Henry McLeish mentioned the fact that Glasgow is a principal retail centre, but much of what is spent comes from wealthy suburbs that lie beyond the city's boundary.

Glasgow is a great city, but it needs political leadership. We need to look forward to the 21st century. Why not use Glasgow for a 21st-century

local government experiment, in which a mayor is elected by the people and there is a city committee that comprises prominent, non-elected individuals? The city should be given special zone status.

Henry McLeish and John Swinney mentioned tourism. Why not explore the possibility of a Glasgow Disneyland centre?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wind up, please.

John Young: This is the final bit of my speech.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Make it very brief.

John Young: There have been hints dropped about expanding Glasgow's city boundaries. That would not solve Glasgow's problems. Johann Lamont was totally inaccurate when she said that those who live outside Glasgow and work in the city do not contribute to the city, because 85 per cent of the city's income comes from national taxation. The people she mentioned shop and do lots of other things in Glasgow.

On that point I end—inside my three minutes, I think, Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You were, in fact, 52 seconds over it.

16:12

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): Earlier I proved publicly what my wife has said for a long time—that I am a little bit deaf. Perhaps I was too eager to speak before the debate ended.

When I was appointed head teacher of a school in Easterhouse in 1987, I went to the local inspector of schools to ask him what the school was like. Without giving members his full analysis, he said that my school had, unfortunately, one of the worst academic records in Glasgow. I am sorry to say to say that when I examine the league tables—which are fairly disreputable—I find that the successor school to my old school is in the same position. My school had that record despite the fact that staffing levels were reasonable, class sizes were small—partly because people dogged a lot—the staff were as good as one could find anywhere and the school was a technical and vocational education initiative pilot school for Glasgow. That scheme spread £500,000 over three schools in three years. That is a considerable amount of money, but it made little change.

One contributory factor was that children in the school came from homes where people had no work, or had very little work. They saw no need to go to school to learn because they knew that learning would lead them nowhere. The trouble

with that situation was that it produced apathy. That was best expressed by the local minister who said that the people were so apathetic that the gangs had stopped fighting. That is serious apathy.

Ms Margaret Curran (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab): I am delighted that Colin Campbell has accepted my intervention because I represent Easterhouse and I want to pay tribute to the parents of that area who, despite poverty and many other problems, are strongly committed to their children and want the best education for them. I do not recognise the Easterhouse that Colin Campbell describes.

Colin Campbell: I cannot, in the limited time that is available, encapsulate 12 years of experience in Easterhouse. On the whole, the parents of Easterhouse are magnificent in support of their children. The problem is that they live in an area in which there is little work. Much of the increased unemployment in the area at the time was caused by the Conservative Government. The number of free school meals in my school went up from 250 to 375 shortly after that Government came to power.

I worked closely with very caring parents, but many people were not going anywhere because of the area. There was little or no gang trouble in the area, for which I was grateful and pleased. I enjoyed a good working relationship with the people, but there was little visible hope and a lot of apathy. Turning round apathy is probably the most important single thing that we must try to do here.

The lack of jobs is the major problem. Whatever else we want to do in terms of good housing, good transport and good health care, if we do not give people an opportunity to work, to enjoy the self-esteem that work promotes and to have enough money to make personal economic choices, we will fail. Bits of the package will not do; the whole package is necessary.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Winding-up speeches will be trimmed by one minute in each case. I call Donald Gorrie to speak on behalf of the Liberal Democrats.

16:15

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I hope that the Parliament will take it as read that I have said at great length what a marvellous place Glasgow is, that I have trotted out an enormous stream of statistics and that I have gone through the ritual abuse of the other parties. If members will accept that, I can get on with my speech. I shall try not to duplicate the excellent points made by Robert Brown, Margaret Smith and George Lyon. Instead, I shall concentrate on a few other issues.

There are two ways in which the Executive could help Glasgow by creating more real jobs in the city. First, it could provide enough money to voluntary organisations and to the council so that they could employ people in real jobs to improve the community in a variety of ways, whether addressing environmental concerns or providing services for people. At the moment, too much money is spent on somewhat dubious training and economic development schemes. That money could be better spent if it was focused on helping organisations to create real jobs.

Secondly, we could transfer more civil servants and quangos—if we are to have quangos—to Glasgow and other places away from Edinburgh. Those jobs would be a real help to Glasgow. My colleague Jamie Stone suggests the Highlands, and I agree that all areas should benefit from such moves. We should spread those jobs around. I believe that Glasgow would benefit from that.

As a member for Central Scotland, I reinforce the points made by some other people. Mike Watson said that half the people who work in Glasgow do not live there. That is an important illustration of the fact that we should not look at Glasgow in isolation. The whole of central and west Scotland, together with Glasgow, are part of the same problem and the same opportunity. We should consider the area as a whole.

I support one point in the Conservative amendment—the call for a parliamentary committee dealing with Glasgow. In the past, I have advocated regional committees for all parts of Scotland based on the regional list areas. We could not do that in addition to all the work that we have at the moment. Effective regional committees that met occasionally on Mondays or perhaps had a whole week of activity might somewhat slow down the other work of the Parliament, but they would be an important way forward.

Constituency MSPs often feel restricted to matters affecting their constituency alone. In the case of Glasgow or other urban areas, one cannot revive one constituency without reviving the whole area. Regional committees would provide a valuable focus, for constituency members and list members alike, to co-operate with councils—without taking over their work—and, along with voluntary organisations, to help to deliver the social inclusion agenda and all the other things that we are keen on. I suggest that we consider the possibility of regional committees along those lines.

We should help councils by giving them powers of general competence, which they all want. They should be free to get on with it. Some of them would make mistakes and do things wrong, but it is better to have activity—good things and some mistakes—than inactivity. A lot of councils feel

inhibited from doing good things, for the benefit of their community, by the lack of this power of general competence, which many councils on the continent have. We should certainly consider that and let people get on with it locally and in smaller units. There is a tendency, in all well-intentioned Governments, to work from the top down. We think there is a great problem in Glasgow and we have a good idea, so we must help and go along like a colonial governor trying to give out nice uniforms to the natives and improve the world. That desire to help people is understandable, but we must work in a better way by helping people to help themselves and work through communities.

I am sure that there are a lot of good activities in Glasgow—there certainly are in central Scotland, Edinburgh and other areas that I know about. We could do a lot more by helping communities to help themselves. There could be schemes to train and fund small local businesses, either, as it were, capitalist businesses or co-operative businesses that were started by local people—especially local women, who often have great talents in that direction but lack self-confidence and need a bit of professional advice, training and help to start up small businesses.

Even if a lot of those businesses end up in the black economy, it is better to have activity—even if Gordon Brown does not get to hear about it—than no activity. We should stimulate, at the lowest possible level, community activity of all sorts. We should encourage that and not get too worried about bureaucracy. There is a huge amount of local energy in all our communities, but people are often blighted by lack of self-confidence and lack of self-esteem. We could help them much more than we do through providing services, advice, training and so on.

We, in this country, are not good at encouraging communities to do their own thing in a different way. We must accept more variety and not impose ideas from the top. In that way, we could all help to let Glasgow flourish, as it deserves to do and already does to some extent. I contributed, in a very small way, by being chairman of the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra, which gave an excellent concert in Glasgow that was very well attended by Glasgow people. There can be co-operation between Edinburgh and Glasgow and in many cases, such as specialist medical facilities, they should be regarded as one. If we could consider the whole of central Scotland and the west as one issue and help all communities to develop their own activity, that would be a better answer to the problem than imposed, national, rigid and bureaucratic ideas.

16:22

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland)

(Con): It is with pleasure that I find myself in this building, because I can remember when it contained objects of great interest—pupils of the High School of Glasgow for boys. The fact that I remember that indicates that I am getting on a bit and, because I am getting on a bit, it means that I have known Glasgow for many years, socially as a student and also as someone who has been in business in this city.

I have seen changes, many of which have been enumerated in this debate: low gross domestic product; high unemployment; drugs abuse; extensive poverty; pervasive ill health; manifest social exclusion; and business deaths that exceed business start-ups. The bustle is out of the heart of the city. Anyone who has been in business in this city over the past 30 years can see that. Glasgow has the lowest economic activity rate among those of a working age of any place in Britain. Its population is falling and there are extensive tracts of derelict and vacant land.

However, there have been other changes. There has been the regeneration of the Merchant City, and Glasgow is making headway in the tourism sector—the garden festival and Glasgow's year as the city of architecture and design are testament to that. We have hotel facilities that rank with the best in the United Kingdom. With the universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian, this city can hold up its head internationally as one of the premier providers of higher education. I declare an interest in that regard, as I sit in the court of Strathclyde University. We also have top-grade international airports in Glasgow and Glasgow Prestwick. Among the negative images are some very positive ones, many of which were created during 18 Tory years.

The most positive image—Glasgow's strongest feature—has never changed and never will. It is the beating pulse of Glaswegians, which shows itself, whether in Castlemilk, Easterhouse, Maryhill or Kelvinside, in warmth, humour and resilience. People in Kelvinside have their own way of demonstrating that, but it is still there. I want to use this opportunity to make a plea for Glasgow to the film makers, television drama writers and fiction authors. I ask them, when they create a character who is a villain, a wide boy or a chancer, to use a bit of literary imagination and give him a background other than Glasgow.

Although it is appropriate that in this place, on this day, we debate the regeneration of Glasgow, the words of the Executive's motion add up to little and the words of Ms Alexander's speech added up to even less. Braying repeatedly about small minds and small solutions was ill advised from the instigator of the repeal of section 28 and the

proclaimer of what everyone regards as an indecently modest £12 million to address the visible and profound difficulties confronting this city.

In the minister's speech the very factors that are impeding development, expansion and job creation in Glasgow were conspicuous by their absence. They include the road traffic tourniquet that the M8 and Kingston bridge become at morning and evening rush hour. Travelling by her ministerial car, Ms Alexander may not be familiar with that, but I faced it for years. Where is the M74 extension? Glasgow's jobs need it, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce regards it as its No 1 priority, and the business community is screaming for it.

Where in the minister's speech were business rates mentioned? I appreciate that she glides around in her ministerial car and seldom has to hoof it like the rest of us, but has she paused to glance at the "For sale" and "To let" signs in the city? Has she observed that the growth industry is charity shops, and does she know why that is? Does she have any understanding of what removal by the Government of uniform business rate means, and does she really think that the imposition of a higher rate poundage for Scotland than for England is the way to encourage the regeneration of Glasgow and the creation of jobs?

For existing employees, are the city entry charges and workplace charges proposed by the Government not active deterrents to regeneration? Glasgow City Council leader Charles Gordon certainly thinks so. He said:

"We're setting our face against urban road tolls",

and he is right to do that. Has the minister given any thought to the thousands of square feet of unoccupied property in the commercial heart of Glasgow? It will never again be occupied by commerce, so why does the Executive not enter into a dialogue with the council about pioneering redevelopment of that space for residential purposes? As regeneration of the Merchant City showed, there is a demand for that. Through such redevelopment, we could reduce commuter pressure on roads, start to reverse depopulation and bring much-needed resources back into the city.

The Conservative amendment indicates additional specific measures which, in our opinion, would assist in addressing the challenge of urban regeneration for Glasgow. We propose a minister for Glasgow. That is not a suggestion that we make lightly, but an attempt to ensure that there is co-ordination and focus on what must be a concerted and conjoined effort. We also propose a directly elected provost and a Glasgow parliamentary committee.

This is the biggest conurbation in Scotland. Its problems are more pervasive and, I suspect, more universal than the problems anywhere else in Scotland. Our amendment seems to me to be devolution in action. The words of the song are that "Glasgow belongs to me". However, to make regeneration work requires joint action and not joined-up words in a motion. The challenges that face Glasgow mean that Glasgow belongs to us. The Conservative amendment offers a meaningful and practical approach to that regeneration. I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

16:29

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): I was not expecting Annabel Goldie to sit down quite so quickly—that probably sums up the Tory contribution today.

This has, in the main, been a good debate. However, as is so often the case, there have been some honourable, or not so honourable, exceptions. Let me start with the Tories, who thoroughly deserve today's award for barefaced cheek. The Tory amendment

"asks the Executive to address these problems in Glasgow as a matter of urgency".

I would echo that sentiment—but let us ask ourselves why the problems in Glasgow are so urgent. I will tell members why the problems in Glasgow are so urgent: in the 18 long years that the Conservatives were in government, it slipped their minds to do anything at all about the problems in Glasgow.

Miss Goldie *rose—*

Nicola Sturgeon: Annabel Goldie has had an opportunity, but if she lets me continue, I will come back to her later.

Since 1974, Glasgow has lost 75,000 manufacturing jobs and 200,000 of its people. Who was in power for most of those years? Between 1981 and 1991, Glasgow lost more jobs than the rest of Scotland put together. Who was in power during those years?

Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab) *rose—*

Nicola Sturgeon: Not just now.

No one in Glasgow will take lessons from the Tories. They may look like a jury, sitting over there, but make no mistake, they are in the dock. When it comes to responsibility for Glasgow's problems, they are every bit as guilty as the members on the Labour benches.

Miss Goldie: Does Ms Sturgeon accept that the problems that she articulates would be very unlikely to be resolved in an independent Scotland with higher taxation? Does she accept that those

problems would be very unlikely to be resolved by her support for taxing workplace car parks and for city entry charges? Does she accept that, notwithstanding all her posturing and all her opprobrium for the Conservatives, her own party's policies do not address one iota of the current difficulties confronting Glasgow?

Nicola Sturgeon: Miss Goldie has already given her winding-up speech, but I detect that we have touched a raw nerve with the Conservative party.

Let me move on to the Liberal Democrats. Robert Brown, in his opening speech, rightly reflected on the need for the political regeneration of Glasgow through proportional representation. We heard some fine words. However, Robert Brown failed to answer the simple question that was posed by my colleague Shona Robison. She asked whether PR was a principle on which the Liberal Democrats were prepared to stand up and be counted. He failed to answer the question and failed to say that the Liberal Democrats would leave the coalition if PR were not implemented before the next local government elections. Is PR, like tuition fees, simply another principle that has been ditched in order to keep the coalition limping along?

Let me turn now to the Minister for Communities. I am glad to see that she has decided to rejoin us for the closing part of the debate. Wendy Alexander was obviously so concerned about the capacity of the small minds that surround her to absorb any new thinking that she decided against putting forward a single new idea from the Executive benches this morning. Her contribution was nothing more than a series of platitudes—fine words aplenty, but precious little in the way of firm proposals or new resources. Now we find out that the one announcement that she made—the £12 million for Glasgow—is nothing more than a recycled announcement. That is not a new trick by a Labour Government, but today the Minister for Communities and her Labour colleagues have been found out and found wanting.

Aside from some of the opening speeches, this has been a good debate, because it focused on Glasgow's successes as well as Glasgow's problems. Let us face it—Glasgow has plenty of both. It is a city of contrasts. It is a friendly city that is secretly proud of its no nonsense image. It is a city that houses some of Scotland's richest people, as well as some of its most deprived. It is a city that is as beautiful in its own way as any in the world, but that has some of the worst housing conditions in Europe. That is another of the contrasts that have run through today's debate.

In one sense, the story of Glasgow during the past 20 years is an economic success. Anyone who seeks to downplay that success does this city

a great disservice. Glasgow has proved its ability to adapt. Since the early 1980s, the Glasgow economy has been reinvented. Having moved away from its dying manufacturing base, it now has predominantly a service economy. While we should praise Glasgow's ability to adapt, we should also listen to the words of Jamie Webster of the Govan shipyard, when he warns that, welcome as service jobs and call centres are, Glasgow cannot sustain itself on them alone.

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): Will the member give way?

Nicola Sturgeon: No, not just now. [MEMBERS: "Go on."] We need manufacturing jobs—a subject to which I will return later.

I will give way to Ben Wallace now.

Ben Wallace: Does Ms Sturgeon agree that, if Scotland were to get its independence, all the yards at Yarrow and Govan and the defence establishment at Bishopton would simply disappear? Those jobs, and the people from Glasgow who work in them, would have no future because of the SNP's agenda of narrow nationalism.

Nicola Sturgeon: When Scotland is independent, there will be even less for Ben Wallace to do in his future career as a Westminster member of Parliament.

I will return to the subject of Glasgow's successes. Glasgow's economic output is the highest of any unitary authority in Scotland. It is the media and cultural capital of Scotland and has some of the best restaurants, bars and shops in Scotland. It is one of the principal higher education centres in Scotland, with 34 per cent of Scotland's university population. Those successes should be celebrated but, on the whole, they have been successes for the city of Glasgow, not for the citizens of Glasgow.

Glasgow alliance's five key action plans and vision of social inclusion and the work of the social inclusion partnerships are to be commended, but much more needs to be done.

Glasgow's health statistics are testimony to the city's crippling poverty. As Dorothy-Grace Elder said, more people die prematurely of cancer and heart disease than elsewhere in Scotland. Such statistics are a direct result of poverty, which, in turn, is related directly to levels of unemployment. By that, I mean real unemployment and not the fiddled figures that used to be criticised by the Labour party, which now peddles them day in, day out. For the past 10 years, real unemployment has been constant in Glasgow at 28 per cent. Three years of a Labour Government, one year of a Labour Executive in Scotland and more years than anyone cares to remember of a Labour council

have made no appreciable difference to those unemployment statistics. Labour should be ashamed of itself.

Kenny Gibson talked about the skills gap. It is not just that more jobs have been lost than have been created over the past 20 years; it is also the case that the new jobs are not compatible with those that have been lost. Only the senior managerial and professional sector has seen real growth in Glasgow. The greatest losses have been among skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Therefore, the people who were losing their jobs in the 1980s and into the 1990s are highly unlikely to get the new jobs that are being created. It is in that context that we can well understand the determination of people such as the Govan shipyard workers to keep their manufacturing jobs.

The result of that gap between the qualifications and experience of Glasgow people and the types of jobs that are being created is that 50 per cent of Glasgow's work force are not resident in the city. Of course, that means that they are not council tax payers in the city either, as other members have noted. Addressing that skills gap—that imbalance between the supply and demand of labour—must be a central plank of an effective regeneration strategy.

We must also address the educational under-attainment of young people in Glasgow, so that future generations are equipped to compete with the best for the best jobs. It should be a matter of shame for anyone, whether on the Tory side or the Labour side of the chamber, who has been involved in the governance of Glasgow during the past 20 years that only 16 per cent of school leavers in Glasgow get three or more highs, against a national average of 28 per cent. They should be ashamed that 14 per cent leave school with no qualifications at all, against a national average of only 6 per cent; that more people leave school at 16 than anywhere else in Scotland; and that Glasgow's schools occupy six of the eight bottom places in the league table for higher passes.

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): Will Nicola Sturgeon give way?

Nicola Sturgeon: Mr Brown has had his chance.

We must also create new, sustainable manufacturing jobs, but we can do that only if we stimulate local demand for labour. For the amount of money that has been spent on the new deal, the return has been modest. Only 2,300 sustainable jobs have been filled in Glasgow through the new deal—and by sustainable I mean more than 13 weeks. We can stimulate demand only by investing in our infrastructure.

It has been pointed out that 9 per cent of

Glasgow's land is derelict, and we must bring that land back into use. We should consider other examples such as the new towns, West Lothian and parts of Glasgow, where derelict land has been redeveloped to construct purpose-built office and factory units. Such projects stimulate demand for manufacturing jobs, provide real apprenticeships for young people and create a powerful incentive for inward investment. That kind of strategy has brought unemployment in West Lothian below the national average, and if it can work there, it can work in Glasgow.

Indeed, such strategies have already been successful in Glasgow. Govan Initiative, one of the most successful economic development agencies in Europe, is leading the way by bringing together different funders to develop gap sites and, by doing so, creating jobs and attracting investment. For example, the majority of the 3,000 new jobs that have been created at Braehead shopping centre have gone to local people—that is significantly more than the new deal has managed to provide in the whole of Glasgow.

Furthermore, we need to improve the city's competitiveness. We have already heard about the importance of completing the M74 extension. If Frank McAveety can get to his feet and announce that when he sums up, he will rightly get a pat on the back from people across Glasgow. However, if he cannot do so, he will be failing those people.

Glasgow needs a regeneration strategy that works and improves not only the city but the lives of Glasgow's citizens. The Tory party and the Labour party have had plenty of opportunities to do something about the city. Wendy Alexander was right about one thing: Glasgow needs big ideas. However, the only big ideas we have heard today have come from the SNP benches. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Order. I appeal for an end to conversations in the chamber. It is becoming difficult to hear the speakers.

16:42

The Deputy Minister for Local Government (Mr Frank McAveety): Thank you. *[Interruption.]* I see that my fame has gone before me. However, I should say that completing the M74 myself in the three minutes before I rose to my feet—as Nicola Sturgeon suggested—would have required a Herculean effort even by the product of Irish navvies.

As for today's debate, it is disingenuous for an SNP member to come to Glasgow and deliver such a summing-up speech. It is not enough for SNP members to talk Scotland down repeatedly when we are in Edinburgh; they have come to

Glasgow to talk Glasgow down as well.

No one has sole ownership of what matters to Glasgow: what matters to Glasgow is Glasgow itself and how we, as politicians and decision makers, can make a difference in the way in which we tackle Glasgow's long-term needs and concerns. I genuinely believe that many SNP members want to change the city for the better, even though we might have different political ideas about how to do that. However, their claim that we portray the city solely as a victim instead of as a city of opportunity, of change, and of dynamism undermines much of the hard work of organisations that make a real difference for the city of Glasgow, and often in unpropitious circumstances.

We are discussing how we change not just Scotland but Scotland's largest city. I care passionately about Glasgow, where I was born and brought up and where I want to spend the rest of my life. Sometimes change causes pain and transition is difficult, and sometimes hard choices have to be made. We are in a city of substantial contrast, which it is too easy to caricature as the allegedly affluent west end versus the poor east end. I think that that is as much an insult to the constituents of Pauline McNeill as it is to my constituents in Glasgow Shettleston.

There has been a population decline, but that has now slowed because of some of the measures that the citizens and leadership of Glasgow have introduced. The decline has to be arrested because we are facing up to some of the substantial changes that are required in the city. We have concentrations of poverty alongside thriving mixed neighbourhoods. If we want a real revolution in Glasgow—as some people claim we need—we must change that so that most, if not all, of our neighbourhoods are mixed and thriving.

Visitors to this city, whose number has risen by 40 per cent in the past 15 years, recognise a vibrant dynamic city, which is part of northern Europe, and part of a country that is, through partnership, a part of the wider UK. They also recognise that, as Henry McLeish identified, new technologies and opportunities for investment are starting to be a feature of Glasgow's inward investment strategy. That is contrary to the dated academic reports to which the SNP referred this morning.

Another issue is that there is a contrast in our education provision between an exceptionally high-quality further and higher education sector and an underperforming primary and secondary school sector. The way to change that is to get substantial, large-scale investment in schools.

We also recognise that there is dissatisfaction with aspects of the public sector housing stock.

The issue is not solely money. Last night, I was at a meeting in my constituency, because I take time to listen to Glasgow citizens on issues such as housing. People at that meeting grilled me for two hours on housing proposals. The outcome was that they wanted something that would make a difference to them in real time—rather than offering jam some time in the future.

Glasgow is a city of strengths and weaknesses.

Tommy Sheridan: Will the minister give way?

Mr McAveety: I will give way to Mr Sheridan in a moment.

How do we change a city? This is also about other great cities in Scotland, although we happen to be in Glasgow this afternoon. We should recognise that Glasgow and Edinburgh are only 45 miles apart and can share their experience.

Dorothy-Grace Elder *rose*—

Mr McAveety: I will be happy to take interventions in a moment, although first I will continue with some of the key points about the challenge of changing things.

The previous Labour Government introduced the GEAR project for the east end of Glasgow. That was stopped in its tracks by the change in social and economic policy under the Conservative Government after 1979. Regeneration in Glasgow is recognised by many other practitioners across Europe, so much so that the regeneration unit of the city council is regularly asked to take social organisations and individuals round Glasgow so that they can see how regeneration can be tackled. We have an international reputation in that area.

It is important to recognise how we can make a genuine difference to the people of Glasgow.

Dorothy-Grace Elder *rose*—

Mr McAveety: We must join in a combination of the UK Government, the Scottish Parliament and the Executive, led by Labour and Liberal Democrat colleagues, and we must recognise that the local authority has a key role to play. Most important, the people of Glasgow have an opportunity to make their point. I would like to hear the people of Glasgow, but sometimes I like to hear Dorothy-Grace Elder.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I am puzzled about who the malign force is that has been in charge of Glasgow all these years, while all these dreadful things were happening—nobody from the Labour side has named who it was.

When will the Executive ensure that Scottish Executive departments and other Government departments come to Glasgow and give us the jobs that we need?

Mr McAveety: I remind Dorothy-Grace Elder, in case she missed it in the snooze period in the afternoon for her own contribution, that Henry McLeish announced that his department is moving through to Glasgow. I can announce that it will be located at the new Europa building on Argyle Street from June. Therefore, we are even satisfying Dorothy-Grace Elder this afternoon.

Tommy Sheridan: The minister alleges that either we have to accept the stock transfer or we go for jam tomorrow. Does he agree that the stock transfer proposal involves a 10-year investment programme? According to the housing director, if the debt were transferred without conditions, the council would be able to invest the same amount over 10 years as is promised under the stock transfer proposal. I have a letter from the housing director that says that. Does the minister therefore agree that the stock transfer proposal amounts to political blackmail?

Mr McAveety: The unique feature of Mr Sheridan's debating style is that he always uses words of anger when he describes the positions of others. If we had chosen to adopt the old model of funding—what the local authority asked for in 1988—it would still take between 17 and 20 years to deliver the substantial change that people are currently crying out for. The vast majority of the core work will be undertaken in the six-year programme, which will be complemented by the additional four-year programme.

Last night I met 100 residents from the Sandyhills area, who have perhaps missed out on much of the investment, because it has not been spread across the housing stock in Glasgow. They recognise that, for the first time in generations, there is an opportunity for their area to get real investment on a time scale that matters to them. Unlike Mr Sheridan, I will leave the tenants to decide on the available options, rather than the politicians.

The Glasgow alliance, which has been mentioned by several members, has noble objectives. It has already flagged up many of the issues that we have discussed in today's debate. It so happens that I was the chairman of the alliance when it was first set up by Donald Dewar, when he was the Secretary of State for Scotland. My colleagues and I do not need the SNP to lecture us on the fact that land reclamation is an issue. We have made a commitment to reduce by 50 per cent the amount of land that is derelict in Glasgow. In particular, that will positively affect my constituents in the east end of Glasgow. We recognise that we need to change the supply side of the economy to ensure that there are genuine opportunities for citizens in Glasgow to benefit from economic prosperity.

However, land assembly is a complex issue.

This afternoon I was in the Gallowgate area for the announcement of the opening of new flats in the Molendinar Park Housing Association. There is a critical tension between the tenants who want the land for new housing and other agencies that want that land assembled for industrial use. We need local engagement in order to reach decisions on such matters.

Too many of our citizens have been excluded from the economic prosperity that has been experienced in Glasgow in the past few years. The question is how can we change that. Every academic report identifies the problems and concludes that we need better educational provision and better-quality housing; we need to ensure that people have an opportunity to access employment and training. Everything that has been said by the Glasgow alliance—pioneered by Glasgow City Council in partnership with the new Labour Government in 1997 and continued by the Labour-Liberal Democrat Executive—is about making progress on those issues. It is not just about agencies, the council or politicians; it is about the people of Glasgow.

Fiona Hyslop: The minister mentioned housing associations and tenants taking control in Glasgow. In today's debate, we have not talked about the important work that housing associations have already done in regenerating Glasgow. Such organisations—for example, Partick Housing Association—are very concerned about the impact of the extension of the right to buy to housing associations. Will the minister reassure those who have worked so hard to produce regeneration programmes for housing in the city that the Executive will either abandon the policy of the extension of the right to buy or make concessions to put them at ease?

Mr McAveety: We spent the past 10 months negotiating the framework agreement with the city council to ensure that the model of community ownership and participation praised by Fiona Hyslop will be the central feature of housing regeneration in Glasgow. I hope that, after we have dispensed with the rhetoric of today's debate, the SNP will have the bravery to get on the train and move forward with the rest of the people of Glasgow.

The reality is that, when it comes to real choices, SNP members run away. They quibble on the sidelines about the public-private partnership for the 29 secondary schools. They nigger on the sidelines about the issue of the stock transfer. I will take two examples that I heard in the past week, when waking from my slumbers. Two weeks ago, we were told that this city is desperate for employment, that we cannot afford to approve a stock transfer that might put 2,000 direct labour organisation jobs at risk and that we should stop

the transfer in its tracks.

We were told two mornings ago by Kenny Gibson—not a wonderful sight or experience to wake up to—[*Laughter.*] I am talking about Kenny Gibson on the radio. He said that we do not have the opportunity to fulfil that requirement for employment, because too many of the jobs that might be created might go to outsiders. In case it has escaped Mr Gibson's attention, we are in a city whose social development resulted from economic migration—people came here to build much of our infrastructure. There is a recognition that we have an opportunity to make a difference.

I assure members that we will work with the further education colleges. In fact, my colleagues in the Labour group met FE college principals this week to discuss the very issue of what we can do to make the connections to ensure that Glasgow residents make a difference. I also draw members' attention to the apprenticeship programme pioneered by Labour Glasgow City Council. It targets apprenticeship development for youngsters from disadvantaged areas. The examples are there, Mr Gibson—let us have the courage to take them forward.

Mr Gibson *rose—*

Miss Goldie *rose—*

Mr McAveety: I would love to let Miss Goldie in. I would love to let a Tory intervene, but the Tories had 18 years to intervene in Glasgow—so I will not let her in this afternoon.

As for our changes, I have listened to most of the speeches today, unless called away—

Miss Goldie: Will Mr McAveety give way?

Mr McAveety: I am sorry; I want to continue. For the Tories—

Miss Goldie: Will the minister give way? It is a benign point.

Mr McAveety: Never trust a Tory who says, "It is benign." I am concerned, so I shall give way.

Miss Goldie: Did Mr McAveety once wear a brown blazer, and was he at the school that used to be in this building?

I am interested in what Mr McAveety is saying about housing. Obviously, his arguments are concentrated on the current issue of housing stock transfer. However, does he accept that there is currently a practical problem with the unoccupied commercial square footage in the city centre? There are vast tracts of it. Does he concede that there is another opportunity there, by bringing people back into the city centre? That would not only help address a housing problem, but would address a social problem: for many people, the city centre is not the most attractive place to go at

night.

Mr McAveety: I can confirm that the local authority and many other agencies have, in the past year, established a city centre partnership to acknowledge that issue. If that connects with the area housing partnerships, many of the concerns that Annabel Goldie has just raised will be addressed through that integration.

I have listened carefully to the key issues raised today. I would like to caricature some of the arguments—that is a political right, sometimes. The Tories claimed that it was the council that was to blame for many of Glasgow's problems; the nationalists, predictably, blamed London; and the independent revolutionary Trotskyist blamed capitalism.

Let us try to respond to reality, and as Marx once said—[MEMBERS: "Ah."] I know that nationalists have a problem understanding class-based economic theories. However, as Marx once said, our job is not solely to interpret the world—[*Interruption.*—]if I can get to the end of my sentence, Presiding Officer, but to change the world—or to change the city. Unfortunately, we have heard a litany of what I would call political Micawberism from SNP members—waiting for something else to turn up.

But we can genuinely make a difference, and we can change people's experience and the places in which they live. This afternoon I was in the Gallowgate, in the area of Graham Square, site of the former meat market of Glasgow. There is a new-build housing development there, combining owner-occupation, substantial rented property and a recognition of a social mix. In fact, of the 62 residents, a substantial number are already working in the arts community in Glasgow. They want to make a real change for their area. They recognise that that opportunity for change was important. Pauline, one of the residents, said to me, "I've got a benefit here, minister, for myself and my family. I want everybody else to share in that prosperity." That is why we are here in Glasgow. We are here briefly, this afternoon, and for the next couple of weeks, but what we will learn in the next couple of weeks is what we will take back into our policy areas to make a real difference.

People out there recognise that change is coming to this city. I hope that we, as citizens of Glasgow and as people who represent Scotland, can work so that the largest city benefits. I commend the motion lodged by Labour and the Liberal Democrats.

The Presiding Officer: I call Mr Gallie on a point of order—[*Interruption.*] Order. I wish to listen to this.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): On a

point of order, Presiding Officer. Is it not the custom in the chamber that when someone is summing up a debate, they have the courtesy to have been present throughout that debate? Have we not heard the minister say, on several occasions, that he was elsewhere this afternoon? Is that courtesy to the chamber?

Mr McAveety: I remind Mr Gallie that I was engaged on a working lunch.

Decision Time

17:01

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): There are no Parliamentary Bureau motions today, so we come straight to decision time. The first question is, that amendment S1M-858.1, in the name of Kenneth Gibson, seeking to amend the motion in the name of Wendy Alexander on Glasgow regeneration, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 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)
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (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)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central 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)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 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)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (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)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (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)
 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)
 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, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (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, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The voting is concluded.

Before I announce the result, I wish to clear up a matter. There are no flashing lights in Glasgow; they exist only in Edinburgh. The system is working perfectly well.

The result of the division is: For 46, Against 59, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The second question is,

that amendment S1M-858.2, in the name of Bill Aitken, seeking to amend motion S1M-858, in the name of Wendy Alexander, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 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)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 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)
 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)
 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, 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)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central 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)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 16, Against 62, Abstentions 28.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The third question is, that motion S1M-858, in the name of Wendy Alexander, on Glasgow regeneration, be agreed to. Are we all agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 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)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (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)
 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)
 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, 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)
 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, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central 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)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 59, Against 17, Abstentions 29.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament endorses the wide-ranging action being taken by the Executive to ensure that all of the key agencies work together with the citizens of Glasgow to tackle the deep-rooted challenges facing the city; recognises the excellent work being done by the key players who form the Glasgow Alliance and the role they have to play in tackling these challenges; and notes the part the Executive has played in supporting the significant developments which will prepare Glasgow's economy, housing, education provision and hospitals for the 21st century.

Epilepsy

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Members' business tonight is a debate on motion S1M-599, in the name of Mike Watson, on epilepsy. I will allow a moment for the chamber to clear.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises the valuable work of the Glasgow based Epilepsy Association of Scotland, notes that approximately one in 130 of the population has epilepsy and agrees that an appropriate level of health care throughout Scotland for people with epilepsy is a matter of priority.

17:04

Mike Watson (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab): I am especially pleased to—

The Presiding Officer: Hold on a minute. *[Interruption.]* Order. In fairness to the member who has the debate, would those who are leaving please do so quietly, so that we can begin. That includes Mr Gallie and co.

Mike Watson: I am especially pleased, during national epilepsy week, to have this opportunity to initiate a debate on the important health provisions for people with epilepsy in Scotland. At the outset, I should declare an interest. I am joint convener of the Scottish Parliament's cross-party group on epilepsy, which receives valuable administrative support from the Epilepsy Association of Scotland to enable it to progress its activities. Members of the association are in the gallery this evening.

The new forum of the cross-party group has brought together 44 members who wish to promote the welfare and well-being of around 30,000 Scots who are affected by the most common serious neurological disorder in the world. Before I deal specifically with health care provision for people with epilepsy, it may be helpful if I give a brief outline of the prevalence of the disorder and touch upon its consequences for those people whose lives are directly affected.

As the motion states, more than one in 130 of the Scottish population has epilepsy. For example, in my constituency, around 300 people are coping with this brain disorder, which involves repeated seizures. At some time in their lives, one person in every 50 will develop the condition, and at least eight new cases are diagnosed each day in Scotland. Epilepsy can affect anyone at any time, regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, or ability. The condition does not discriminate.

Epilepsy is much more widespread than is commonly realised, but remains a hidden

condition, which is frequently misunderstood and feared. A legacy of stigma and poor public awareness means that epilepsy remains in the shadows. We are all likely to be aware when someone has a physical or sensory disability, but we may not even notice when an individual with epilepsy experiences one of more than 20 different kinds of seizure, unless it conforms to the stereotype attack in which someone falls to the ground and loses consciousness.

Even in the third millennium, public ignorance of epilepsy persists. Because of the reactions of others, those who have the condition often deny their epilepsy or try to hide it. Further, few public figures are willing to accept the responsibility of becoming the role models that could help to dispel some of the damaging myths that surround the condition.

Having epilepsy is more than simply having seizures, or controlling them with drugs. The social, educational and employment consequences are also hard to face for individuals, their families and friends. Common prejudices persist, which can lead to some children with epilepsy being excluded from mainstream education, especially if they require rectal diazepam. In addition, many school pupils with the condition have been advised not to take part in recreational activities because of unfounded fears for their safety. Family, friends and acquaintances may become overprotective at times and worried about the embarrassment of seizures happening in public places, so people with epilepsy are, misguidedly, being prevented from leading socially inclusive lives.

Studies have shown that people with epilepsy are twice as likely as average to be unemployed, and the reasons for that are not linked solely to qualifications or any sickness or absences caused by seizures. People with epilepsy know that their reduced employment prospects are attributable, in part, to discrimination in the workplace.

The good news is that eight in 10 people with epilepsy suffer only minor problems. Their epilepsy can be controlled by medication, and new drug treatments are being developed. Sometimes surgery is an option and Scotland has an excellent reputation for being able to undertake such surgery, where costs permit.

It is important to place health care provision in Scotland in the context of the difficulties that people with epilepsy face daily. Epilepsy is notoriously difficult to diagnose. There is no simple test as there is for, say, mumps or measles. That means that other conditions, especially in older people, can be mistaken for epilepsy.

Recent research reveals a shocking statistic: as many as three in 10 people who have been told

that they have epilepsy do not have it. That is a frightening level of misdiagnosis. One can only imagine what the public outcry would be if the same ratio of people who were told that they had cancer did not have the disease.

To assert that general practitioners are not specialists in epilepsy greatly understates the case. Incredibly, in six years of training, they receive only one afternoon's training in epilepsy. British medical schools and the British Medical Association should give urgent attention to that unacceptable situation. GPs can refer patients for tests and expert diagnosis but, in some parts of Scotland, the waiting time to see a neurologist is almost 12 months.

Given that it can take up to two years to help a patient become seizure-free with a variety of anti-epileptic drugs, access to specialist care is crucial when the seizures begin. Early medical intervention is vital to ensure that further damage to the brain is prevented, yet NHS accident and emergency staff are also given minimal epilepsy training, although they have to deal with four in 10 people who present to hospital following their first seizure.

That reflects the fact that epilepsy has always had a low priority for health care planners. For years, it has been a cinderella condition that has been given too little funding and service provision. Of Scotland's 15 health boards, only four have identified epilepsy in the current round of health improvement plans. Praise should go to Ayrshire and Arran, Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire and the Western Isles boards for their foresight. The others should face up to their responsibilities now and provide the level of care that those living in their areas have a right to expect. I urge the minister to encourage those health boards to allocate sufficient resources to epilepsy care.

It needs to be stressed that epilepsy is a serious condition that, sadly, claims lives. Each year, there are nearly 100 epilepsy-related deaths in Scotland. The Scottish Executive is to be congratulated on supporting a national sentinel audit that is being undertaken this year in conjunction with an audit in England and Wales. The audit will provide valuable information on sudden epilepsy-related deaths and indicate how improving the clinical management of epilepsy might prevent further deaths.

However, medical care is only one part of the matter. Information and support to help individuals and their carers cope with the consequences of being diagnosed with epilepsy is crucial. Regrettably, as I have shown, the seamless networking between medical, social and voluntary organisations that is necessary to assist people with epilepsy is not yet uniformly available.

The Joint Epilepsy Council, an umbrella organisation that represents the views of leading epilepsy organisations in the UK and Ireland, recently produced a charter entitled "Bringing Epilepsy Out of the Shadows", which made specific recommendations about how to provide an appropriate level of health care throughout Scotland. I will outline the major points.

Patients should be entitled to accurate diagnosis and treatment. Ideally, a patient should see a specialist within four weeks of their first seizure. Health boards should be encouraged to include epilepsy in their health improvement plans. Resources are rarely given to treatments not within those plans. I would like the minister to refer to that when following my invitation to encourage health boards to review their provision for epilepsy. Health boards should consider how they might integrate the various services involved in treating patients with epilepsy so that the resources are used to maximum effect.

Local examples illustrate that primary care will deliver better services for epilepsy patients. A pilot project in the west end of Glasgow, run by a local health care co-operative, uses practice nurses in a key support role. That is particularly valuable for women with epilepsy who need pre-conception, pre-natal and post-natal counselling. Epilepsy training should be provided for all health professionals. That would enhance professional practice and, needless to say, recruiting more neurologists and epilepsy nurses would also improve services.

Our parliamentary group has already formed a close working relationship with the epilepsy unit at Glasgow's Western infirmary. Recently, a number of members visited the unit for a briefing on the clinical and specialist services available and detailed discussion was possible around the questions of effective diagnosis and options for treatment. Further visits will take place and other members might want to elaborate further on the excellent work of the unit.

It is important that the Scottish Parliament assists, by whatever means it can, in raising awareness of epilepsy issues. This debate is part of that process. Health and education are cornerstones of our parliamentary responsibilities and offer opportunities to highlight epilepsy needs. Our initial targets should include more comprehensive training for teachers in hidden disabilities, including epilepsy. Already, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee is examining the issue of the administration of medication in classrooms involving asthma, diabetes and epilepsy.

The Parliament should encourage greater awareness of the problems facing those with hidden disabilities through a public awareness

campaign that includes basic first aid. The removal of medical information questions from employment application forms should be encouraged and all employers should be urged to follow the practice of the Parliament in respect of its staff of keeping health details separate until after a job offer is made.

People with epilepsy do not deserve to live their lives in the shadows. They want a new dawn in the new Scotland. Let us help them to achieve it.

17:14

Mrs Margaret Ewing (Moray) (SNP): There is too much to say in four minutes but I will try to be concise. Many people have stayed for the debate so it is important that they have an opportunity to speak. As joint convener of the cross-party group on epilepsy, I congratulate Mike Watson on bringing the motion before Parliament. I also thank the Epilepsy Association of Scotland for its tireless campaigning throughout Scotland and for the service it provides for the cross-party group.

Mention was made of the group's recent visit to the Western infirmary in Glasgow. I was on that visit, as was Robert Brown, who may want to mention it. I suggest to members who are not usually in Glasgow in the course of their duties that this may be a good opportunity to visit Professor Martin Brodie and his dedicated and committed team. I came away from the unit much better briefed and much more aware of the problems. Everyone will be warmly welcomed.

Mike Watson mentioned the provision of facilities. They include facilities for diagnosis at primary care level, which is particularly important, and assessment, involving specialists. We need to enhance the research and work done in many areas of treatment, now including the possibility of surgery in some cases. We need to help with children's education to ensure that they are no longer seen as failures, as is so often the case. We must remove the stigma of epilepsy in employment.

There is a need for parity of provision throughout Scotland. Having visited the specialist unit in Glasgow I wish that there was a similar unit to serve the Highlands and the Grampian area. In my constituency, Moray, 600 people are likely to have epilepsy. In the adjoining constituencies, Banff and Buchan will have 592, Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber 646, and Gordon 608. That is based on 1991 statistics. There is no specialist unit in the area. As Mike Watson rightly said, none of the recently published health policy white papers mentions specialist care for epilepsy. Health boards' health improvement plans largely ignored the issue; only four out of 15 health boards made any specific mention of epilepsy, yet it is the most

common serious neurological disorder.

Today, while we have been debating in this "dear green place", Glasgow, between eight and 11 more people will have been told they have epilepsy. As the lottery advert says, "It could be you". Epilepsy is not selective in terms of age, geography or race. The Epilepsy Association of Scotland and the joint council's requests are not large. All that is wanted is a co-ordinated strategy—simple actions to resolve real problems for people and their families.

The worldwide campaign is called Out of the Shadows, and I leave members with this thought. I recently watched again one of my favourite films, "Rob Roy". In that film, Mary says, speaking about her husband:

"My love of his honour is but a moon-cast shadow of my love for him."

Let this Parliament show our love for the people of this country by taking epileptics out of the shadow in which they have lived for far too long.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson): Many members want to speak in this debate. To allow as many as possible to do so, I ask members to keep their speeches to less than four minutes.

17:20

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): When I was asked to act as the secretary to the cross-party group, I was honoured to accept. As someone who knew little about epilepsy, I put my mind to it and learned a lot about the condition. I have a close friend who has been a sufferer of epilepsy for her entire life, and I now know what she has gone through.

I have learned of the problems that sufferers face, and of those that face the clinicians in the diagnosis of epilepsy. I have learned that epilepsy should not be a barrier and is not a handicap; unfortunately, however, it is regarded as such. Sufferers receive unequal medical treatment in the system that is set up for their care. I have also learned that many sufferers are denied work because of fears that are out there in the public perception of the condition.

Why is it that diabetes is accepted as an everyday condition in health boards but epilepsy is not? I welcome Lord Watson's motion, which expresses our desire to change the culture and people's perceptions. I commend the efforts of the voluntary agencies which carry out the work that many people think should be undertaken by the Government. I hope that the Executive will respond to our desire and require health boards to include epilepsy care strategies in their health improvement plans. I ask the minister to speak to

the Minister for Finance, to ensure that, when the next round of European social funding comes, the epilepsy groups that carry out so much work for social inclusion are allowed a fair hearing when it comes to the granting of those moneys.

Let us seek a more comprehensive training for teachers, so that we can begin to change the public mindset. The fear of epilepsy is a great handicap, and I hope that my children will not have to face such dilemmas. Epilepsy is not a handicap, nor is it something to be feared. I hope that the Conservative group, the Parliament and the minister can join in the task of helping epileptic sufferers to lead a better and more equal life.

17:22

Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD): One of the privileges of being an MSP is having access to information. Like most people, I had heard of epilepsy but knew very little about it. I now know a lot more about it than I did.

One of the disquieting things about epilepsy is that other people who do not know enough about it include many general practitioners and health professionals. According to recent research, misdiagnosis of the condition runs at between 22 and 26 per cent. That means not only that people have been diagnosed as epileptic—with all the impact that that has on their confidence, lifestyle, employability and ability to drive a car, not to mention the impact of inappropriate drug regimes with associated costs and possible side effects—but that an unrecognised disorder is not being treated. It is obvious that careful and thorough diagnosis should be carried out by a specialist or a GP who has specialist knowledge. It has been suggested that one GP in every local health care co-operative could be designated as a specialist in the condition, to try to bring down the worryingly high level of misdiagnosis of a condition that can be different in different individuals.

There are at least 20 different types of seizure, and possibly as many as 40. Increased levels of knowledge and awareness of the condition are desperately needed. Myth and superstition surround the condition, which makes it hard for individuals and their friends and families to cope—not with the condition itself, but with the way in which other people react to it.

The level of ignorance, fear and stigma is surprising when one realises that epilepsy—as has been mentioned—is the most common serious neurological condition in the world. Its prevalence is similar to that of diabetes, but awareness of it and the treatment and service that are devoted to it lag far behind.

It is long past the time when epilepsy should have been de-stigmatised, better recognised and

better treated. It is long past the time when those who suffer from epilepsy should have received informed acceptance from teachers and employers, friends and families, workmates and passers-by, medical and professional people and the general public. People should understand the condition and know how to deal with seizures. They should not react as if the sufferer is possessed by demons, which can still happen.

Knowledge and awareness are powerful tools that can dissipate ignorance and fear. I hope that this debate is the start of more vigorous deployment of those tools.

17:25

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): I congratulate Mike Watson on securing the debate and on the detailed and professional manner in which he presented the facts about epilepsy. I would like to add that no one cannot have a seizure. Seizures are a matter of thresholds and all of us could, in the right circumstances, have one.

I was a general practitioner for many years and epilepsy was an area on which my practice audited itself on a number of occasions, but the outcomes were not good. When we asked patients, we found that their knowledge of their condition was poor. Their knowledge of their rights and the limitations of their rights was also poor.

Management of epilepsy in Scotland makes it evident that it is a condition that requires a holistic approach. Sufferers must be treated as individuals, but that is not happening. As Margaret Ewing said, we need a strategy to manage the condition. The issue is not entirely about finding massive extra resources—it is about a co-ordinated response. The Scottish Executive's policy of restructuring health care and the introduction of local health care co-operatives provide—as Nora Radcliffe suggested—a massive opportunity to get co-ordinated care in place in primary care for the first time. The role of nurses in that could be enormous. Through appropriate training, working to the right protocols and following guidelines, it is possible for nurses to improve enormously the condition of epileptic patients.

We must, however, recognise that there is a substantial shortage of neurologists and that neurological supervision of the condition is lacking because of lack of time. The situation has become worse in the past few years because of the success of certain treatments that have become available, such as new drugs and operative treatments. Those treatments require proper assessment in specialist centres, which would require resources.

I am concerned about the way in which some of our specialist neurological units operate. I will write to the minister regarding a couple of cases that have come to my attention recently. It is possible for Parliament to develop a strategy that will bring epilepsy out of the shadows, which is what those who are promoting the campaign for awareness want. We owe that to sufferers of epilepsy in Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have only a short time remaining, but I am anxious to try to call the two members who still want to speak. They should both keep their speeches as short as they can.

17:29

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): We have heard a number of good members' business debates in the first year of the Parliament. They have become important in raising issues such as this. The quality of today's debate—particularly Mike Watson's introductory speech, which might be one of the best heard yet in Parliament—has been high.

Events such as the candlelit demonstration at lunch time—at least, it would have been candlelit but for the wind—and this evening's debate help to raise the profile of this issue. As Margaret Ewing said, she and I visited the Western infirmary unit a while ago. I was struck by the informality and non-bureaucratic approach, which is exactly what is wanted in a field where there are many hurdles to overcome. I suspect that such an approach does not altogether meet with the approval of the hierarchy as part of a pattern across Scotland, but it manages to achieve direct contact between the secondary health care specialists and the patients without intermediary red tape. Speed of response is important. We saw Professor Brodie's pink folders and the methods that are used to fund the regime. That regime is unique in Scotland and it may be a pattern for the rest of the country. We need to make best use of resources.

The situation in schools has been mentioned. There are some people in every school who suffer from epilepsy, asthma or diabetes. The conditions are not linked, but the need for a response and the way in which teachers can be trained to respond to them is a common feature. As was mentioned, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee is considering such response training. If there is one important step to be taken, that is it.

Let us bring epilepsy out of the shadows. This has been a superb debate and we have opportunities to make progress on the issue. If the minister can respond in a sensitive and progressive fashion, as I am sure he will, the coming weeks and months could see considerable

improvements and changes that will bring relief to many people who have long been in the shadows and deserve to come out of them.

17:31

Gordon Jackson (Glasgow Govan) (Lab): Like Ben Wallace and Nora Radcliffe, I share a background of ignorance on this subject. I had no idea how many people suffered from epilepsy. When I read that 30,000 people in Scotland suffer from epilepsy and many more are diagnosed with the condition every day, I was horrified. I had just never thought about it.

I had never thought about the stigma either. I had not been conscious of just how horrible it often is for children at school, who are denied certain facilities, or for people who experience difficulties with employment as a result of their condition. People are always admitting certain things, but hardly anyone ever says, "I have epilepsy" because a stigma has been attached to it. I was unaware of that.

I welcome the debate and I am glad that Mike Watson has been able to draw the matter to our attention. It will be a start in increasing public awareness; I am sure that I am not uncommon in my ignorance. There is also a need to increase awareness among teachers and to ensure that they are properly trained. That is happening, but it needs to happen more. We must encourage teachers to recognise often shadowy, hidden disabilities such as epilepsy.

There is also a need, which again surprised me, for greater training among health professionals. In my ignorance, I would have thought that general practitioners and other health professionals would know everything about epilepsy. Even there, however, there is a need for training. If this debate starts that process, I will be delighted.

I am also delighted that representatives from the Epilepsy Association of Scotland are in the public gallery. Their office is in the Govan constituency. I went to see them and, in my ignorance, I learnt a great deal. I became aware that many people are working under the cosh, if they will allow me to say that, and doing everything they can although they are constantly under the pressure of not being properly helped and funded. Other members have said that to both ministers, the man and the woman—I think that the man one is going to answer this time. They have been told what is needed and I shall not add to that. However, I hope that they will be able to respond positively and support the association and the people who need the condition to be recognised and properly dealt with.

17:33

The Deputy Minister for Community Care (Iain Gray): I am, as Gordon Jackson put it, the man minister. I am well aware of the contribution of the Epilepsy Association of Scotland and its partner organisations toward enhancing awareness of epilepsy in Scotland and improving services—as is Susan Deacon, who has met representatives of the organisation. In November last year, she addressed a Scottish Executive funded symposium on epilepsy organised by the EAS. I know that she joins me in endorsing all that has been said—most recently by Gordon Jackson—in praise of the work of the Epilepsy Association of Scotland and its partners in the Joint Epilepsy Council and of all that they are doing to improve the public perception of epilepsy.

As every member has said, epilepsy is not an uncommon condition. As Mr Watson correctly said, an estimated one in 130 of the population has the condition. The great majority of them—70 per cent or more—will lead full and productive lives once they have been assessed and started on appropriate treatment. Mr Watson made an interesting point when he said that that must mean that there are people around who could be role models for others but who, for whatever reason, feel unable to come forward. As Margaret Ewing said, it is possible to go into history to find role models. The three that I came up with are Julius Caesar, Peter the Great and Byron. I am not sure they are role models for a normal life, but the point is that it seems that only by reaching back into history do we find role models. There must be role models around now, which would help.

Epilepsy still seems to inspire fear and hostility in some people. It is difficult to imagine why. Epilepsy is not contagious and a person having a seizure is not likely to harm anyone else—the stigma attached to it is irrational and rooted in the ignorance and superstition of the past. There is no place for it in the Scotland that we want to see.

As members are well aware, the current clinical priority areas in Scotland for physical illnesses are coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer. They are the big three killers and they must be tackled first. We do not propose to add epilepsy to those clinical priorities, but that is not to say that we neglect the condition or consider it unimportant.

There has been a considerable drive in the NHS in Scotland to improve treatments for people with epilepsy. One of the initiatives that we can take pride in is the Scottish intercollegiate guidelines network, known as SIGN. SIGN guidelines bring together all the evidence about a particular condition and present a digest of best practice.

A SIGN guideline, the “Diagnosis and Management of Epilepsy In Adults”, was published

in 1997. It covers nine key topics, such as how to diagnose epilepsy, when to start treatment and choice of first drug. We are not complacent: the guidelines can be improved. Arrangements are now in hand for revising and updating the guidelines, which will be distributed throughout the NHS. I hope that that provides some of the momentum that Mr Watson called for to ensure wider adoption of good clinical practice throughout health boards and health trusts.

We are also ready to learn from work done elsewhere. One of the last publications of the English clinical standards advisory group was a report on epilepsy. We have made arrangements for the executive summary of the report, with the information that the whole document is available on the Department of Health website, to be distributed to the NHS in Scotland.

We expect both publications will be of interest to health boards and NHS trusts in reflecting and planning the provision of services for people with epilepsy in their areas.

Mrs Margaret Ewing: I am interested in what the minister is saying. Can he give us a schedule for when the new guidelines will be published and available throughout the health service?

Iain Gray: The revision of the SIGN guidelines is in hand; it should not take an undue length of time.

The English clinical standards advisory group report is available and arrangements for its distribution are under way. I am glad that Mrs Ewing intervened, because I wanted to say that the points she raised earlier—about patient-centredness and equality of access—run through the advisory group guidelines. I hope that those two publications will provide momentum in bringing about the improvements for which members have argued.

Good communications between primary and secondary care are essential, as Dr Simpson said. We are seeking to promote the concept of managed clinical networks, which will benefit people with many conditions, particularly epilepsy. I know that managed clinical networks do not sound as exciting as some advances in health care, but they are a powerful way of redesigning services so that all the points at which patient care is delivered are linked. They cross traditional boundaries between primary, secondary and tertiary care and bring together all the health care professionals involved in delivering the service, which is extremely important when dealing with a condition such as epilepsy. Not only are clinicians around the country exploring the idea; the Epilepsy Association of Scotland has signalled its willingness to play an active part in the development of services. Its engagement is both

crucial and welcome.

We should not forget those whose epilepsy is associated with serious disabilities or learning difficulties, or both. The Scottish Executive acknowledges that without the extensive care provided by informal carers, more people would need support from the statutory services to remain in their homes. The national carers strategy is one measure that will benefit the carers of people with epilepsy.

Least of all should we forget the small minority of people with epilepsy who die suddenly and unexpectedly—often very young, and sometimes without ever having had a seizure previously. That is why we are contributing to the national sentinel audit that is currently being carried out by Epilepsy Bereaved, to ensure that its work covers Scotland, too.

Our determination to advance our understanding of the condition is also demonstrated by the fact that the chief scientist office is currently funding two two-year research projects at a cost of some £277,000.

As always, we do not have time to give as much attention to this issue as everyone would like. I want to close by once again saluting the work of the Epilepsy Association of Scotland, by recognising that epilepsy is a condition that affects many Scottish people and by assuring members that we will continue to strive to improve care for those who live with epilepsy and to bring epilepsy out of the shadows. I hope that this evening represents a small step towards doing that and I congratulate Mr Watson and the cross-party group on ensuring that we have taken it.

Meeting closed at 17:44.

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