

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 26 October 2000
(*Afternoon*)

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 26 October 2000

(Afternoon)

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 14:30*]

First Minister

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The only item of business before us today is the selection of the Parliament's nominee for First Minister.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): On a point of order. Is it in order for this Parliament to continue with a process that denies the very foundations that the people who brought the Parliament into being assumed: an accountability on the part of those who promote themselves or their party's policies? In other words, should we not be allowed to question the candidates?

The Presiding Officer: The procedure has been agreed by the Parliamentary Bureau. There is a change from the previous occasion, in that each candidate will be given seven minutes to speak; last time, they had only two minutes. You will therefore have longer to listen to what the candidates have to say.

Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

Members: Are you standing, Alex?

The Presiding Officer: Order. Let me hear the point of order.

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): Give him seven minutes, Sir David.

Alex Neil: So that there is no dubiety, let me say first that I have no vested interest other than making sure that Mr Swinney wins the vote.

My point of order is this: while the Parliament has agreed the procedures for the vote, the Parliament has not had the opportunity to debate, let alone agree, the procedures for the pre-vote hustings. Is it therefore in order for me to propose that, after each candidate's seven-minute oration, they should then have a 15-minute question-and-answer session, so that the rest of us can ask the candidates what they intend to do with the job of First Minister?

The Presiding Officer: No. With respect, every party is represented on the Parliamentary Bureau, which has discussed and agreed the procedure that we are about to follow.

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. [*Laughter.*]

The Presiding Officer: Order.

Tommy Sheridan: I will accept your apology in a moment, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: I know what you were going to say: I meant that every party with five or more members is represented on the bureau. That is what the standing orders say. The procedure has been agreed, and I suggest that we proceed with it.

I have received four valid nominations for appointment as First Minister. They are, in alphabetical order: Dennis Canavan, Henry McLeish, David McLetchie, John Swinney. A copy of the announcement in today's business bulletin, which explains the procedure that will be followed to select the Parliament's nominee, has been placed on every member's desk.

I will shortly ask each candidate to speak in support of his candidacy in turn, for up to seven minutes. After all four members have spoken, I will ask members to cast their vote for their preferred candidate. A separate vote will be called for each candidate. Once the voting has been completed, there will be a short delay while the result is verified. I shall then announce the number of votes cast—the votes for each candidate and the votes to abstain.

A candidate will be selected if a simple majority is obtained. If no majority is obtained, the candidate with the smallest number of votes will be eliminated, and we will proceed to a further round of voting.

I hope that that is clear. We will now begin the selection process.

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): On a point of order. Is the seven-minute period to be uninterrupted, or are members allowed to make interventions?

The Presiding Officer: I think that it would be fair for the speeches to be uninterrupted. That is what is intended.

14:34

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): I thank Robin Harper and Tommy Sheridan for nominating me. As far as I know, neither of them has placed a bet on me winning. [*Laughter.*] If they had, I am sure that they would have intended to declare their winnings in our register of interests or to donate their winnings to a good cause.

On a more sombre note, I deeply regret the circumstances that led to this election. It is no secret that the late Donald Dewar and I had our

differences, but no one can deny the leading role that Donald played in creating this Parliament, and we should all be indebted to him for that. However, the Scottish Parliament is not an end in itself but a means towards building a new and better Scotland. It is now important to look ahead and see how that can be achieved. It is also an appropriate time to take stock.

If we define our objectives in broad terms as a quest for social justice, it would be churlish of me not to acknowledge that there have been positive achievements by the Scottish Parliament and the Executive over the past year. They include the abolition of the feudal system, a bill of rights for adults with incapacity, the warm homes initiative for senior citizens and the plans for national standards for concessionary fares for the elderly and the disabled. Even I would have to admit that the system of student finance introduced by the Executive is at least better than that introduced at Westminster, although it falls far short of what Andrew Cubie's independent inquiry recommended.

Education is one of the Parliament's most important responsibilities. At one time Scottish education was the envy of the world; sadly, the Scottish Qualifications Authority fiasco has turned it into a joke. No one in the Executive seems to accept responsibility for what is now widely acknowledged as the greatest crisis in the history of Scottish education. Many young people feel that they have been cheated and betrayed and some of them are being denied the educational opportunities that should be their birthright.

That feeling of betrayal is not confined to our young people. Our senior citizens feel badly let down, not just by Westminster's insulting 75p increase in pensions but by the Scottish Executive's failure to implement in full the recommendations of the Sutherland report on long-term care for the elderly. People with haemophilia are bitterly disappointed with the Executive's refusal to compensate patients who were infected with hepatitis C during their NHS treatment. Understandably, people find it hard to see why more money cannot be found for our national health service or for education yet nearly £200 million can be found for a new Parliament building at Holyrood and spin doctors receive grossly inflated salaries to distort the truth.

It is not just a question of public expenditure. Even measures that would not cost the Executive a penny are being thwarted. For example, Tommy Sheridan's bill to abolish warrant sales is bogged down by the Executive's shenanigans, despite the fact that the bill had the overwhelming support of Parliament. That raises the whole question of the relationship between the Executive and the Parliament. The Executive should be accountable

to Parliament and the First Minister, as head of the Executive, must ensure that that is the case. Members of the Scottish Parliament should not have to wait months for replies to their letters or to parliamentary questions. Members of the Scottish Parliament are elected representatives of the people and should be treated as such by every minister and every civil servant in the Executive.

Finally, I would like to reiterate a point I made in May last year when I stood for the post of First Minister. I was interested to see that it was taken up by Jack McConnell during his campaign for the Labour party nomination for the post. Part of the job of the First Minister is to fight for the right of this Parliament and for the right of the Scottish Executive to come to its own decisions without being controlled from London. The First Minister must be the political leader of the people of Scotland rather than the puppet of the UK Prime Minister or of anybody else. If I am elected, I shall fight first and foremost for the people of Scotland and for more powers for the Scottish Parliament to deliver a new, a better and a more inclusive Scotland, with a better environment, better opportunities and better standards of justice for all our people.

14:40

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Henry McLeish): It is an honour to put my name forward as First Minister in Scotland. Let me begin by acknowledging the sadness that brought us here today. Much has been written and much has been said about Donald Dewar's contribution. The eloquence of the tributes, the heartfelt national regret, and the Scottishness of the mourning would have bemused Donald—we know that. He was irreplaceable, and he will go down in history as the father of this place. We have all agreed, in many forums, that that should be the case. But his mission will live on, and he would be the first to tell us that it is now time to go back to work.

I believe that, together, our task is to complete the unfinished business of building a fairer, more just Scotland. Dennis Canavan used the phrase "social justice" at the beginning of his contribution today, and I agree with what he said. We have made progress. We are now building more hospitals than ever before, rebuilding our secondary schools, tackling housing debt and lifting 100,000 children out of poverty. The Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency is tackling the anguish in our communities. We are expanding apprenticeships, providing central heating for all pensioners and introducing free bus travel. It is that programme that I now seek to lead and carry forward. Put simply, I want to change idealism into action.

The effects of that action can be seen in Donald Dewar's home city. The profile of Glasgow rose this week when one of its sons, Michael Martin, was elected Speaker of the House of Commons, and so joined one of the world's more prestigious halls of fame—one that has been running for over 600 years. We cannot deny what an achievement that is.

The continuing industrial clout of Glasgow has been demonstrated, because—as some colleagues will know, but some will not know—within the past hour there has been an announcement from the Ministry of Defence that Govan shipyard has been selected to build two new amphibious landing ships. That is a huge opportunity for the Govan yard and the men and women who work there. I hope that they will grasp the opportunity, which will provide high-skilled work from 2001 to 2004. The work that will follow on from the type 45 destroyers should provide a secure future for the yard, not just for next year or the year after that, but for the next 10 years. Is that not tremendous news for our country? [*Applause.*]

I get slightly angered when not everyone in the chamber is clapping and applauding that significant achievement. This is another example of Holyrood and Westminster working together for Scotland. However, on a poignant note, I believe that one of the last calls that Donald Dewar made, just before he died, was to the Secretary of State for Defence. We have talked about legacies. We now have Govan at work for the next decade, thanks to Donald Dewar, John Reid and a magnificent campaign by the work force itself and by everyone in this Parliament and at Westminster.

I make no apology for listing the achievements of our first 17 months of government. We already have much to be proud of. But I want Scotland to go further, faster and better. We are a small nation in population terms, but a small nation with big ambitions. To realise those ambitions, we must unlock the true potential of devolution.

I was fortunate, along with other colleagues, to be at Donald Dewar's side as our first Parliament in 300 years was delivered to the people of Scotland. I led the consultative steering group and was involved in building the new politics. I take one big message from those times: the battle of ideas in Scotland should be not about what sort of constitution we have, but about what sort of country we live in. That is the commitment that we have to make today to every part of Scotland and every group in Scotland. I do not want members on other benches to miss this point: our task is to take poverty out of Scotland, not to take Scotland out of Britain—as some people would like.

I am determined to lead an open and inclusive Government to form a bond of trust with the

people of Scotland. Changing the face of our nation will require courage. I will embrace change. However, we need imagination and innovation as we begin, together, the next stage of that journey.

I invite colleagues to examine my record: my determination to bring democracy to the heart of Scotland and let it flourish. I care about the Parliament and about its committee system. We need to use our committees better and celebrate our success in creating a Parliament that lets the voices of Scotland be heard at the heart of Government.

The Parliament is about politics and, of course, we will have our political differences. I have said that I hope to bring passion into our politics and I look forward to fighting for my party's beliefs and the coalition's policies in the Parliament. However, I hope that our ultimate aim is the same: the best interest of our fellow Scots who have put us here. Obviously, we would like to have the support of all members at times when big issues arise that will affect our country.

I am ambitious for Scotland. Politicians often talk about ordinary Scots. However, there are no ordinary Scots because everyone is an individual and together we are an extraordinary nation.

I grew up in a mining community. I went into politics to improve the lives of the people with whom I grew up. Like everyone here, I love Scotland for what it is and, more important, for what it can become. For me, this Parliament can be the force that allows Scotland to fulfil its potential.

Finally, I always acknowledge lectures about how Scottish we want to be. However, I can tell Dennis Canavan, that like a stalk o' rock, I am Scottish through to the core. Let no one be in any doubt that when I become the First Minister, I will speak up for Scotland on every occasion, for every part of Scotland and for every Scot.

14:47

David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): I thought long and hard about putting myself forward as a candidate for the post of First Minister, given the tragic circumstances that gave rise to the election. There is a valid argument that the nominee of the Executive parties, which won the election last year, should be accepted as Donald Dewar's successor, so that the business of government can proceed forthwith. Unlike John Swinney, I do not think that it is any of my business to tell the Labour party in Scotland how to run its business. The reason given for Mr Swinney's candidacy is somewhat spurious. The idea that he is compelled to stand because he disapproves of the internal mechanism by which Labour chose its candidate is pretty rich, even by SNP standards.

As far as the Conservative party is concerned, the method of election chosen by the Labour party is a matter for the Labour party. It is of no consequence to me that Henry McLeish seems to have failed to win the backing of the majority of his parliamentary colleagues, even if it is somewhat discomfiting for him that he had to rely on the ministerial payroll vote to secure his position. However, I am told that he should not be too alarmed by his margin of victory. Given the presence of Frank Roy on Mr McConnell's campaign team, we know that it was not so much a leadership challenge as an attempted betting coup.

If the Liberal Democrats are happy to stand back, to allow their Labour masters to get on with it and to have no say in the election of the First Minister of what is supposed to be a coalition Government, that is a matter for them. After all, it is nothing new—they have no say in anything else.

There were other important considerations in deciding whether to stand. The events of this week raised serious concerns as to whether—to put it bluntly—Mr McLeish was up to the job of being First Minister of Scotland. I decided that it was essential to contest the election, not in the expectation of victory, but in the hope that lessons will be learned for the future.

The document that was issued on Tuesday in Mr McLeish's name exemplifies some of my concerns. The lack of judgment that it displays defies belief. Mr McLeish is sadly mistaken if he thinks that the way to demonstrate leadership credentials is to curry favour with disaffected back benchers and subvert the constitution in the process. The most damning indictment of Mr McLeish is that he does not seem to understand the vital distinction between Government and party, nor does he understand that being First Minister of Scotland is not just about leading a political party, but about providing leadership to the country.

The document talked about Labour MSPs being given special access to civil servants—[MEMBERS: "No."] Yes it did. It talked about stronger links between the Executive's policy unit and the Labour party's parliamentary research unit. The impartiality and independence of the civil service is a fundamental pillar of our constitution, yet the would-be First Minister believes that it is a pawn at the beck and call of the dominant political party of the day. Could anyone in this chamber seriously imagine Donald Dewar putting his name to such a tawdry document?

I said in my tribute to Mr Dewar that one of the things that marked him out was his sense of propriety. He was a stickler for ensuring that everything was done properly, in the chamber and outside. He was a politician who understood the

proper relationship between Government and Parliament, and between Government and party. Frankly, Mr McLeish's ill-conceived plans call into question his suitability to succeed Mr Dewar, and do not augur well for the quality of government in Scotland under his stewardship.

I was interested to hear Mr McLeish praising the virtues of the Parliament's committee system in the week in which his business manager was doing his best to sabotage it. There seems to be a great deal of confusion about what Mr McLeish really stands for. In the election for party leader he stood as the continuity candidate, but what does continuity mean? It means a graduation tax of £2,000 on our students, which was dreamt up by Henry McLeish himself; new taxes and tolls on our motorists and businesses; bitter disappointment for our older people at the rejection of the main Sutherland commission recommendation; and falling police numbers and prison closures at a time of rising crime. That is continuity for you. But then, in a knee-jerk reaction to his narrow victory, he started to talk about ripping up the devolution settlement and starting again; that from the man who was one of the key architects of that settlement and steered the Scotland Act 1998 through the House of Commons.

What does that mean for the future of the union? To me, it shows the confusion that lies at the heart of government in Scotland. Tacking and trimming to every prevailing wind is not what Scotland expects in a leader. At a time when the Executive needs a fresh start to restore its battered reputation, that indecision will lead only to more of the failures in fundamentals that have marked its first 17 months.

The first step in ensuring a fresh start for the Executive will be to relegate some of the duds in the Cabinet to the back benches, because Scotland needs an Executive that listens to the Scottish people and is willing to tackle issues that matter to the Scottish people, rather than arrogantly assuming that it knows best. Scotland needs an Executive that will take the tough measures that are necessary to tackle crime. Scotland needs an Executive that will devolve power to individuals, families and communities, as the best way of improving the quality of our schools, hospitals and housing, and Scotland needs an Executive that will reduce the burdens of taxation and regulation on our people, which stop us fulfilling our potential. Above all, Scotland needs a First Minister who knows where he is going, rather than one who is simply buffeted by events, and by the desire to appease.

Sadly, Scotland will not get such a First Minister today, or such a reshuffled Scottish Executive tomorrow, but those are the priorities and the leadership that Scotland needs, and for which the

Scottish Conservatives will continue to argue in this chamber, right through to the next election, when Scotland will get them. It is therefore with great pride that I submit my candidacy for the office to the Parliament today.

14:55

Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP): This is an election that none of us would have wanted and that none of us could have expected prior to the death of Donald Dewar. However, the election represents a major parliamentary occasion, on which a vital power of the Parliament—the power to choose Scotland's First Minister—must be used, and used wisely. The power to elect a First Minister gives the Parliament the ability to test the democratic authority of each candidate. That power is deeply entrenched in the traditional values of Scotland: the values of democratic accountability and democratic choice. To exercise its democratic authority, the Parliament must be offered candidates who carry democratic authority from their own parties. That is the first reason why I am standing for election.

Over the summer—perhaps not the most relaxing summer of my life—I sought the mandate of my party through an open, thorough, democratic and participative leadership contest, as today's contest should be. Leadership elections take time, and I appreciate the difficulties faced by the Labour party, but the solution to the problem is not a rushed, limited and constrained leadership contest. The necessary period of time for a full election is required.

There are two parties in the coalition. The election should have involved nominating the acting First Minister, Mr Wallace, to carry on in office for a limited period. If the coalition parties had proposed that solution, my party and I would have given it our full backing, and I am sure that the rest of the chamber would have done likewise. That would have allowed us to meet our legal obligations under the Scotland Act 1998 and would have allowed the Labour party to have an open, thorough, democratic and persuasive leadership contest. Instead, we have had the short cut of Labour's farcical election, which allowed 48 hours to get just 44 votes and revealed a party split right down the middle. That was a fumbled coronation rather than a fair contest, and was unworthy of Scotland's new democracy.

Leaders must be tested, put through their paces by their party membership, assessed by the public and scrutinised by the media. They must be tested to determine whether they can hold office effectively. The shambles of the past few days shows why that process is necessary. Promises were made to Labour back benchers, most of whom did not support Mr McLeish. Promises were

made in a moment of weakness, were not thought through and could not be delivered. That is not good for our Parliament and, as the interim Labour leader has found to his cost, it is not good for him either.

The second reason why I am standing for election is to highlight the need for the Parliament to grow. Everyone knows that I stand for Scottish independence. *[Interruption.]* Oh yes. I am determined to deliver that independence by completing the powers of our Parliament, and—through a referendum—making this a normal, independent Parliament that can take all the decisions that matter to the people of Scotland.

On that point, there may be some common ground. I say common ground because I know that others in the Parliament seek more powers. For example, the strengthening of the Parliament appeared to be part of Mr McConnell's brief yet courageous campaign for the Labour leadership. After his narrow victory, even Mr McLeish was hinting at more powers. It was a far cry from the Scottish Parliament election, when Mr McLeish insisted that Labour in Scotland could not take a different line from that of Labour in London.

I welcome and will encourage all converts—even recent ones—who agree with the majority in Scotland that the Parliament must have more powers. There is much that we need to do. By completing the powers of the Scottish Parliament we can do more and do it better. We can begin to make a real difference to the lives of the people whom we are here to represent. We have debated in this chamber the plight of the tourist industry, the farming sector, the rural economy, hauliers and motorists. As First Minister, I would help those groups by winning the power to cut fuel taxes.

We have debated in this chamber the plight of our pensioners, insulted by London Labour's 75p increase in the state pension. As First Minister, I would demand the power to restore the link between pensions and earnings.

We have also debated the plight of businesses across Scotland. As First Minister, I would demand the power to give Scottish companies a competitive edge and a level playing field with our largest export markets in Europe.

We have debated the crippling poverty that affects so many communities in Scotland. As First Minister, I would set my Government on a course to eradicate poverty with an agenda of fairness and justice in all that we do. I want our Parliament to deliver for all of Scotland, rather than having its hands tied by Westminster control over key social and economic policy. I want our Parliament to deliver on fuel prices, pensions, jobs and social justice. We know that London and Labour have failed. We must now give Scotland's Parliament

the power to deliver—that is the way forward for Scotland.

Today, Parliament will make its choice, but in the days and months to come, the people will make theirs. We know that our Parliament will grow and take on the powers necessary to eradicate the poverty that blights too many lives in our country. We will win for Scotland the power to create jobs, to roll back fuel prices and to repay our pensioners. Those powers will give Parliament the chance to fulfil our democratic ambitions, to deliver the best future for Scotland, to deliver fairness and prosperity and to deliver what the people expect of us—what they demand from the Scottish Parliament. I look forward as First Minister to delivering that Parliament and that country.

The Presiding Officer: We move to the voting process. I ask all members to check that their cards have registered—in other words, that the red light in front of the card has gone out. One member had problems yesterday and we do not want mistakes to be made in today's vote.

I remind members that they must vote only once and use only the yes button. If a member casts more than one yes vote, their vote will be treated as spoiled and neither vote will be counted. Members who wish to record an abstention will have an opportunity to do so at the end of the voting for the four candidates.

As usual, each vote will last 30 seconds. There will be a pause of around one minute between the votes to allow the voting records to be printed, so that the clerks can check them.

The first vote is for those who wish to support Dennis Canavan. Members who wish to cast their votes for Mr Canavan should vote yes now.

Members voted.

Members: Margo?

Ms MacDonald: I did not vote for Dennis Canavan, although I thought about it.

The Presiding Officer: The next vote is for those who wish to support Henry McLeish. Members who wish to cast their votes for Mr McLeish should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: The next vote is for those who wish to support David McLetchie. Members who wish to cast their votes for Mr McLetchie should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: The next vote is for those who wish to support John Swinney. Members who wish to cast their votes for Mr

Swinney should vote yes now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: The next vote is for members who have not voted and who wish to record an abstention. Any members wishing to record an abstention should press their yes buttons now.

Members voted.

The Presiding Officer: There will now be a pause for a few minutes while all the voting records are checked. I shall then announce the result.

The total number of votes cast was 123. The votes were cast for the candidates as follows:

Dennis Canavan	3
Henry McLeish	68
David McLetchie	19
Mr John Swinney	33

VOTES FOR DENNIS CANAVAN

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

VOTES FOR HENRY MCLEISH

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)
Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)
Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)
MacKay, Angus (Edinburgh South) (Lab)
MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)

McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

VOTES FOR DAVID MCLETCHIE

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (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)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (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)

VOTES FOR MR JOHN SWINNEY

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Ewing, Mrs Margaret (Moray) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)

McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 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)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: There were no abstentions and there were no spoiled votes.

As the result is valid, and as Henry McLeish received more votes than the total number of votes cast for all the other candidates, I declare that he is selected as this Parliament's nominee for appointment as First Minister. As required by section 46(4) of the Scotland Act 1998, I shall now recommend to Her Majesty that she appoints Henry McLeish as the First Minister. *[Applause.]*

On behalf of the whole Parliament, I offer my warm congratulations to Henry McLeish and invite him to address us.

15:12

Henry McLeish: With my experience in the adversarial politics of Westminster, it would be tempting for me to take that approach in my speech. However, for me this is a day for excitement and elation. I feel emotional and have a deep sense of humility. I also accept the challenge that was laid down by the leaders of the other parties in their speeches.

All that I can say is that I want to provide the leadership that will unite the Parliament. I have done that before and I can do it again. I look forward to the chamber agreeing on many things and uniting to fight anything that damages the interests of Scotland.

I thank John Swinney and David McLetchie, and I look forward to working closely with Jim Wallace. I thank Dennis Canavan for his comments on social justice. I remember working with Donald Dewar in London. I have had three days as interim acting leader of the Labour party, and I can tell members that it is a very tough job, as we have already heard from colleagues.

I must finish on this note. There can be no prouder moment in anyone's life than when they are asked to lead a great party that they love and to take part in a ceremony like today's, which allows them to work with colleagues to lead a country that they love. That is a very great privilege. I thank colleagues for the honour. I will not let them down. *[Applause.]*

15:14

Mr Swinney: I wish Mr McCI—[*Laughter.*] I mean Mr McLeish. I wish Mr McLeish every success in trying to get me to speak clearly to Parliament. I wish him well when he assumes office as First Minister after the appointment is made tomorrow.

Mr McLeish and I have worked closely in this Parliament in the past, in my previous capacity as convener of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee and in his previous ministerial capacity. He knows that he will be able to bring to me, as leader of the Opposition, any sensitive issues that require the consideration in privacy of the Opposition party.

Mr McLeish will understand that I will fight very hard for my party. It is a party that I love very much. I am proud to lead it, and will lead it vigorously. He said that, in his brief term in office, life as First Minister had been tough; I am sure that it has been. I do not intend to make it any less tough than it has been in the past few days and will make it a good deal tougher in the years to come.

Mr McLeish and I were given, jointly, an award for new politics in the past parliamentary year. I will leave the chamber with the question whether we will be fit to earn such an award in the coming year.

15:16

David McLetchie: As the only candidate who increased his vote in the elections for First Minister, I have to say that that is a satisfactory trend, which I look forward to continuing the next time that we gather on such an occasion.

More seriously, I offer Henry McLeish the congratulations of the Scottish Conservatives on winning this election. We will cross swords in the next two and a half years until his retirement. There may occasionally be cross words, but that will not detract from the respect that we have for the high office that he now holds and our acknowledgement of the demanding responsibilities that go with it.

On a personal level, I wish Henry every success and fulfilment in the demanding role that he now takes on.

15:17

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): Personally, and on behalf of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, I congratulate Henry McLeish on his success in this election. I also welcome the announcement that he made in his speech about Govan shipyard. [*Applause.*]

As everyone in this Parliament, and outside it, knows, following in the footsteps of Donald Dewar will be a daunting challenge. I know that Henry McLeish will commit himself to that challenge, of ensuring that this Parliament is seen not as an end in itself and that we all do our job in delivering a more socially just and prosperous Scotland.

Let us remember that Henry McLeish was one of the craftsmen of the Parliament, as he had to attend many of the tedious—and at times not so tedious—sittings on the Scotland Bill. I, along with the Deputy Presiding Officer George Reid, sat on a committee chaired by Henry McLeish—the consultative steering group—that shaped much of how this Parliament operates: sharing power; accountability; accessibility; openness; participation; and the promotion of equal opportunities. I know, from that committee, that Henry McLeish is committed to those principles. He has helped in implementing them and will continue to do so.

I look forward to working in partnership with the new First Minister to achieve so much more. Henry McLeish indicated what we have already achieved, but we both agree that there is much more to be done. I am sure that he recognises, as he has said, that it is a great honour to have been elected. We wish him every success as he carries out his responsibilities.

15:18

Dennis Canavan: I also congratulate Henry McLeish on his election as First Minister. The fact that I stood against him does not indicate any ill will towards him. I have known Henry for many years, even before he was elected to the House of Commons. I know that he has done good work for the people of Fife and the people of Scotland in general.

Despite the misgivings that I expressed in my previous speech, if I had still been a member of the Labour party I might have ended up voting for Henry McLeish. I hope that that is not the kiss of death for his political career. Seriously, I hope that he will adopt an inclusive approach as leader of the Scottish Labour party and as First Minister of Scotland. I hope that he will not be complacent about the Executive's record and will take on board some of the points that I made in my previous speech, especially on the need for higher standards of social justice. In that spirit, I wish him well in his new post and hope that he will work hard for the people of Scotland in the important years ahead.

Meeting closed at 15:20.

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