

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Thursday 30 November 2000

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## Scottish Parliament

*Thursday 30 November 2000*

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 09:30*]

### District Courts

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** Our first item of business is a Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party debate on motion S1M-1404, in the name of Phil Gallie, on district courts, and two amendments to the motion.

I invite members who wish to speak to press their request-to-speak buttons, and I call Phil Gallie to speak to and move the motion.

09:30

**Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con):** Thank you, Presiding Officer.

This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and Scotland has its own Parliament with clear responsibility for administering and managing its own justice affairs, but where are we? Perhaps we are where we would expect to be: we have a Liberal-Labour governing body in Edinburgh and a Labour Government at Westminster whose commitment and track record on law and order issues can be described only as abysmal. Events over the past two or three years bear true witness to the charge of their being the criminal's friend, which has been reborn.

Today we face an unprecedented situation. Convicted criminals escape sentence, walking free from the court in Glasgow, escaping justice, creating anger and resentment among their victims and disillusioning those who had faith in our once-renowned justice system.

Those who are charged with relatively serious offences arrive at court, as summoned, find the doors locked and, at that point, are considered to have paid their debt to society. Many have gained from their alleged misdeeds, but many have lost. The losers are the victims who have been robbed, burgled, assaulted and intimidated and who have lost their claims for criminal injury compensation. Minister, what action will the Executive take to compensate those who have been the victims of crime when their alleged attackers or those who have breached their security have not been challenged in the courts? I have no great expectation of a positive response, given the total offloading of responsibility that we have witnessed to date. For many victims, it may be more important that the disruption and their pain and

anxiety have been disregarded.

The losers are everyone in society who believes that the justice system exists to protect them, to maintain acceptable standards and to secure the interests of those who respect their neighbours and want to live in peace in their communities.

The losers are the police. Strathclyde police has built up successes over recent years, by securing a reduction in crime and an increase in detection rates, despite a swingeing decrease in numbers since Labour came to power. Just a few months ago, there were 350 fewer officers.

The level of morale among those who work hard to maintain public control and interest in, at times, extremely unpleasant and dangerous circumstances must be blown apart by the current situation in Glasgow. It must make many officers wonder why they bother, given the political ineptitude that has allowed convicted and alleged criminals, whom the police have worked so hard to bring to justice, to be put back on the streets. The present situation further overstretchers the police, resulting in a poorer service, increased anxiety for the public and comfort for the criminal.

Labour, which is in control of Glasgow City Council, and the Lib-Lab Executive in Edinburgh have allowed hundreds—no, I am wrong, thousands—of villains to walk away from their misdeeds. At my last count, more than 4,500 cases have been abandoned to date.

**Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab):** I have a quick question for you. You mention thousands of villains, but how do we know that they are villains if they have not been tried in court?

**Phil Gallie:** Many of them have been tried and convicted, but because the court doors are shut when they come along to face up to their convictions, they are turned away. Those people are villains and they have got away with it. There are others who are alleged villains—I use the word “alleged” carefully—but I make no apology for referring to villains walking free, because that is precisely what is happening. I would like to think, Pauline, that you will chastise your minister and those in Glasgow City Council for a situation that you must feel threatens the people whom you represent.

Unofficially, the Scottish Police Federation condemns the strike and the Executive's inability to resolve it. It considers that court workers should be under the same constraints as the police and, therefore, unable to strike. It is frustrating enough when alleged criminals walk free due to lack of evidence, clever manipulation of the system or the failure, for no explained reason, of the procurator fiscal service to press charges. We noted the latter yesterday, when we discussed the sad events that

surrounded the Chhokar trial. However, it is a slap in the face for the police when those whom they consider to be criminals walk out of the court due to industrial action that is beyond the control of the police.

Life for the police has been made more difficult already, thanks to the over-hasty incorporation of the European convention on human rights. Time and time again, the ECHR interferes with Scotland's long-standing justice system. The Executive, in the guise of those who were Labour ministers and MPs in the Westminster Parliament, was well warned about the effects of the ECHR, but chose to ignore the advice of senior members of the judiciary. People in Scotland are paying the price for that.

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** My point about the ECHR has been made many times before. I suppose Mr Gallie is aware that the United Kingdom has been signed up to the ECHR for many years. The question is whether you can make ECHR rights effective in Scots law. That is why we made its provisions enforceable under our own law. Does Mr Gallie recognise that?

**Phil Gallie:** I recognise that my party was committed to the principles of the ECHR, but it was careful not to incorporate the convention into our law. The Conservative Government followed the guidelines of the ECHR, but it did not take on board its stringent requirements. The Westminster Parliament imposed incorporation of the ECHR on this Parliament and on Scotland, making compliance mandatory. In my view, and in that of many who serve in the judiciary, that was brought about far too hastily.

The ECHR has also made life more difficult for the Crown Office and the procurator fiscal service. Given such problems, the judicial system and Scottish society need the present situation like sound government needs a Lib-Lab pact.

The Conservative motion offers a way forward for the longer term that would ensure that this diabolical situation never recurs. I ask the minister to drop his amendment, as it provides no solutions but offers a flattering and less than honest assessment of the circumstances. The only short-term solution proposed by the Executive is a pious appeal to call off the industrial action. We add our voice to that call, but where are the other options?

The SNP amendment deserves only brief comment as it is a wishy-washy call for speedy resolution and for more reports and discussions. It offers no suggestions on how to achieve a resolution.

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)**  
rose—

**Phil Gallie:** We have enough reports in the Scottish Parliament to paper the entire road system in Scotland. We need action, not discussion. I would have expected any party that considers itself to be a serious Opposition to put up useful recommendations for a way out of this mess.

**Christine Grahame:** Will the member give way?

**Phil Gallie:** Perhaps Christine Grahame will give us some ideas.

**Christine Grahame:** You know very well, Phil, that a report is in hand, as we were told about the on-going review of district courts at the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee on 22 May. I believe that that report is in its interim stage and will be available in the spring, which is why the SNP addresses that matter in its amendment.

**Phil Gallie:** We do not need reports at the present time. We are in a desperate situation; something has got to be done. You may be prepared to wait till the spring, but I can tell you that the Conservatives are not. We want action and we want action now. That is a ministerial responsibility.

**Christine Grahame:** Will you—

**Phil Gallie:** No. I am running out of time and cannot take another intervention.

The national Government was quick to respond to the petrol fiasco. It was able to identify means of overcoming any further action. The Scottish Executive has got to come up with something to deal with the current situation, the circumstances of which are similar. What steps is the Executive taking to divert cases and put them into a state of suspension for the time being? What thought has been given to that? If some form of emergency legislation is required, the Conservatives would certainly give their total co-operation to any attempts to overcome the present difficulty.

**Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab):** Will Mr Gallie give way?

**Phil Gallie:** I do not think that the Presiding Officer will allow me to give way, as I have already exceeded the time allowed for my speech.

**The Presiding Officer:** That is right, Mr Gallie.

**Phil Gallie:** I apologise for that, Presiding Officer.

I sympathise with Iain Gray, who has inherited this situation with his new ministerial post. However, his boss, Jim Wallace, has had plenty of notice about the looming chaos. The Scottish Executive was given two months' warning before the strike, but it chose to do absolutely nothing. The result of total inaction is that by 24 November this year, 4,581 cases that had been due to be

heard in Glasgow district court had been dropped or shelved, and further disruption has been guaranteed.

There has been plenty of warning to the Executive, but ministers have sat on their hands and buried their heads in the sand. I look forward to hearing what the minister has to say. I suggest that he forgets about his amendment and addresses the real issues.

I move,

That the Parliament expresses its concern over the detrimental effects of the current strike being undertaken by UNISON members in Glasgow District Court on the administration of justice and calls upon the Scottish Executive to do everything in its power to resolve the current situation and in the longer term to transfer the responsibility for administration of district courts to the Scottish Courts Administration and to seek to negotiate a no strike agreement with court staff to put them on a par with police and prison officers.

**The Presiding Officer:** Before I call the minister to speak, I want to remind members of something. I did not want to interrupt you, Mr Gallie, but there were rather too many yous running round the chamber again this morning. All remarks must be addressed through the chair. You just have to remember that, in this chamber, you is me.

09:42

**The Deputy Minister for Justice (Iain Gray):** I welcome the chance to clear up some of the misleading comments about the situation in Glasgow district court that have been flying around in the press and, I regret to say, in Phil Gallie's speech this morning. We need some clarity. I want to say something about the current industrial action, about how the courts are meant to work and about our review of the district courts.

I will begin with the Unison strike. Unison has deliberately targeted the busiest of our district courts. That is unfortunate and disruptive and is a matter for profound regret. We do not condone it. However, it is a dispute about pay between Unison members and their local authority employers. The Executive has provided local authorities with significant resources, providing a real increase in grant support this year and an additional £1.2 billion over the next three years. That amounts to a 10.5 per cent increase over those three years.

It is for local authorities to decide how much to offer their employees and it is for the unions to negotiate on their members' behalf. It is not for the Executive to interfere or intervene. However, I note that two trade unions, the Transport and General Workers Union and the GMB, which have a long and proud history of successful representation of local government workers, have accepted the deal offered by local authorities.

**Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP):**

Does the minister recognise that negotiations have been concluded in Aberdeen on behalf of all staff and that the local authority has reached a separate settlement with Unison. Will he comment on that?

**Iain Gray:** I recognise that that has happened, but I would not care to comment on it for the reason that I have just given. I note that negotiations continued yesterday and I sincerely hope that progress is being made.

I want to make four points about the strike. First, it is localised. The focus has been on Glasgow, and it is in Glasgow that business is being disrupted seriously. I agree with Mr Gallie's estimate that around 4,500 cases have been affected so far. Secondly, most of the crimes of the greatest concern to the public and to victims of crime, such as assault and theft, are common law crimes. They are not time barred and will not automatically fall.

Thirdly, if business is lost as a result of time bars, it will mostly relate to statutory offences, such as non-payment of television licences, carrying on activities without an appropriate permit, or vehicle excise duty offences. Those are usually regulatory matters and those offences have no victim, in the sense of a person who has been physically hurt or has suffered loss to property.

Fourthly, it is, by definition, the less serious cases that are being disrupted. More serious business goes to the sheriff courts or the High Court. I am not saying for a moment that the cases that are being disrupted are not serious. The disruption of justice is always a serious matter, but we must place it in context.

**Phil Gallie:** If someone is taken in by the police on a Friday or Saturday night after creating a breach that involves violence and is due to appear in court on the following Monday, will the case against that individual be heard again if the doors are locked when they turn up at court?

**Iain Gray:** If the case is a common law case, it is not time barred and will not fall automatically because the court is closed on the day that has been arranged.

I would like to reply to a point that Mr Gallie made in his opening speech. Around 1 per cent of district court convictions lead to custody. For Mr Gallie to talk in the media, as he did some weeks ago, of hundreds of villains walking free or, as he did this morning, of thousands of villains walking free, is disingenuous hyperbole at best.

I will now consider the Executive's role. What have we done and what can we do? First, the Crown has done everything in its power to prevent

cases from being abandoned or lost as a result of the industrial action. Although only Glasgow district court has been singled out for indefinite strike action, Unison's days of all-out strike have had an impact elsewhere. In Edinburgh, it has been possible to double up the courts and keep them open. Not one case has been dropped. I am afraid that similar efforts in Glasgow were deliberately frustrated.

Secondly, Scottish ministers have a power under the District Courts (Scotland) Act 1975 to intervene in the interests of efficiency by appointing stipendiary magistrates. However, that would be of no help while key supporting staff are still on strike.

Thirdly, we could introduce emergency legislation, but to what effect? Such legislation was introduced in 1979, but that was to deal with a national strike involving the High Court and sheriff courts—a more serious matter than this local dispute and one that involved civil business. Such a course of action would be unprecedented and, I would argue, disproportionate when only one local court is affected. In any case, we could not outlaw industrial action in the courts and we could not necessarily prevent cases from falling if a protracted strike were to produce excessive delay and associated ECHR challenges. Any objective and clear-sighted examination of the matter suggests that the likeliest solution lies in the swift resolution of the dispute or, failing that, an agreement that justice be exempted from the impact of the dispute.

Looking beyond the current situation, the Conservative motion calls on us to transfer administration of the district courts out of local authority hands. I would like to say something about current arrangements and about our review of the district courts.

The District Courts (Scotland) Act 1975 replaced a variety of local courts with the new district courts. The district courts are intentionally distinctive and reflect a careful and deliberate balancing of roles and responsibilities between central and local government. The role of Scottish ministers is essentially to do with judicial appointments. Under the 1975 act, local authorities are responsible for providing

"suitable and sufficient premises and facilities for the purposes of the District Court".

The 1975 act also established local justice committees. One of their independent statutory duties is to assist or advise local authorities on the administration of the district courts.

Local justice, delivered by partnership between central and local government, is no accident, but a deliberately conceived part of our system of justice. It is therefore not something to be

abolished lightly, on a whim or for reasons of political expediency, but it bears full and proper examination rather more extensive than can be given in a one-hour debate. That is why we announced a review of the district courts during debates on the Bail, Judicial Appointments, etc (Scotland) Act 2000. Since then, there have been a number of meetings and we hope to issue a consultation paper in the new year.

The review will address a full range of issues: the powers of the court, the handling of business and the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. It will consider afresh the respective responsibilities and roles of central and local government. We have undertaken that the review will be objective, will not take a position and will be a catalyst for discussion of the issues.

In short, we will consider all the options, including those that have been raised today. Our eventual proposals will be a serious attempt to secure the long-term interests of local justice rather than a short-term, opportunistic response to an industrial dispute.

I move amendment S1M-1404.2, to leave out from "and calls" to end and insert

“; recognises that the Crown has worked to protect business in District Courts and that this has proved successful except in the case of Glasgow, and urges the suspension of further action affecting the courts.”

09:50

**Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I am sure that all members present recognise that district courts perform an important function in our justice system. The present situation at Glasgow district court, with cases being delayed, dropped or shelved, is unacceptable.

This is the fourth week that Glasgow district court has been subject to industrial action. In that time, it has become apparent that no one seems to be willing to take responsibility for the shambles that that industrial action has caused. At the very top, we have Jim Wallace stating in the press:

“The disruption itself is due to a dispute between local authority employers and a union over pay.”

A spokesperson for the Scottish Executive stated:

“it is a matter for the Crown Office to decide how cases are brought before the courts. The dispute is a matter for local government and the employees.”

However, the Crown Office says:

“The council is responsible for the running of the court. We are a customer of the court.”

Everybody says that it is the local authority's responsibility, but it says:

“This is a national dispute . . . Any decisions on cases in the courts are taken by the Procurator Fiscal”.



However, the office of the procurator fiscal in Glasgow says:

"We are referring all media calls to the Crown Office".

Nobody seems to be willing to take responsibility.

**Iain Gray:** Does Mr Matheson accept that he has just illustrated perfectly the point that I made: that this is a shared responsibility?

**Michael Matheson:** I accept that it is a shared responsibility. Every one of the bodies to which I referred has a role in the running of the district courts. However, ultimate responsibility for the justice system lies with the Executive. The minister cannot ignore that.

I take on board the minister's comments about cases being moved up to the sheriff court. On Monday, I was at Glasgow sheriff court as a guest of the Glasgow Bar Association, as was Pauline McNeill. The custody court started 40 minutes late and was likely to go on until 7 o'clock at night because of a lack of resources. Papers did not arrive in time and solicitors were left waiting to find out what their clients had been charged with. Some solicitors did not know what their clients had been charged with until they turned up in the dock. It is okay to say that we should move cases up, but if we do that we must ensure that there are adequate resources to deal with them.

This is a localised problem that has resulted from a national dispute. As I have said, ultimately the buck stops with the Executive.

I am sure that it comes as no surprise to anybody that the Conservative party has sought yet again to attack local government employees' entitlement to take industrial action. There may be members present who have taken industrial action since anti-trade union legislation was introduced under the previous Conservative Government. They will know that local government employees do not take industrial action lightly. Given the Tories' track record on the rights of workers to take industrial action, it comes as no surprise that today they have chosen to attack those rights once again.

**Phil Gallie:** Will the member give way?

**Michael Matheson:** My time is limited, but I will take a quick intervention from Phil Gallie.

**Phil Gallie:** Does the member agree that it is right that the police should not take industrial action? Does he recognise that court staff are also important to the justice system?

**Michael Matheson:** The people who are taking industrial action at Glasgow district court are local government employees who provide an administrative function to the court. On that basis, they are entitled to take industrial action if they regard that as appropriate.

We find ourselves in this position because of the gradual erosion of the rights of local government employees and, in particular, because of the gradual erosion of their wages when compared with those of similar workers in the private sector. Over the past five years the wages of local government employees have been eroded, so they have a lot of ground to make up. It is all very well for the minister to say that additional money is available this year, but it does not address the on-going problem of low levels of pay. The dispute illustrates the invaluable role that the workers involved play in the courts. They deserve an increase in their pay.

Given that a review is currently under way, it would be inappropriate to start making decisions about how we should change the district court system. However, an interim report should be published so that we can see what point the review has reached and what recommendations it may already have arrived at. That might allow us to address some of the problems that exist in the present system.

I say to Mr Gallie that that is a genuine attempt to deal with this problem. I am afraid that, although he has called for action now, he has failed to come up with ideas for steps that should be taken. We have become used to that from the Conservative party.

This is a national dispute. Our focus should be not on the rights of local government employees to take industrial action, but on ensuring that we find a national solution to this problem. The buck passing must stop now, and ministers and the other authorities involved must address the issue urgently. Public confidence in our justice system is being eroded. It is for the Executive to ensure that that stops and that this national dispute is resolved speedily.

I move amendment S1M-1404.1, to leave out from "detrimental" to end and insert

"effect of the current industrial action on the operation of the Glasgow District Court; calls upon the Scottish Executive to ensure a speedy resolution of the dispute and, in the light of the current situation, further calls upon the Scottish Executive to publish an interim report from the current review of district courts in order that public confidence in the administration and operation of our judicial system is restored and to ensure that this report is made available to the Parliament."

09:57

**Euan Robson (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD):** Despite the somewhat tabloid nature of the motion and the worse than tabloid nature of Mr Gallie's opening speech, the motion raises important issues that ought to be addressed and aired in Parliament.

It is important to record that the District Courts (Scotland) Act 1975 provides for each local authority to have a district court. Since reorganisation in 1996, many local authorities have had several district courts, but it appears that there is just one within the boundaries of City of Glasgow Council.

The Scottish courts website says unequivocally:

"There is no provision for a central organisation to co-ordinate the District Courts".

The only umbrella organisation appears to be the District Courts Association, which was founded in 1980. It has provided a valuable focal point, particularly for the discussion of common problems that district courts encounter. It also acts as a consultative body.

It is clear that, in law, the buck does not stop with the Scottish Executive. It is not entirely clear where the buck stops; that is the key point that we need to clarify in the review that Jim Wallace has initiated. I trust that, when the review is concluded, we will have a much clearer and more acceptable position than exists at present.

Quite rightly, the motion refers to Glasgow, because only Glasgow district court has experienced difficulties over the past four weeks. As was said earlier, it is the busiest court in Scotland. However, I took exception to Phil Gallie saying that every member would have encountered the problem of trials not proceeding. That is not the case. The difficulties are confined to Glasgow. It is not right to give the misleading impression that the whole of Scotland is affected by this problem.

As the minister said, common law crimes are not time barred. I would like to provide members with an anecdote from my experience at the Anniesland by-election.

**Phil Gallie:** I made it quite clear that our focus is on Glasgow district court. However, we are concerned that the wrong message is being put out throughout Scotland—that the judicial system can fall apart. This issue affects everyone in Scotland, but it affects people in Glasgow directly.

**Euan Robson:** The dispute is localised to Glasgow; it does not affect the whole of Scotland. There is a potential for it to do so, but it is not doing so at present.

I will come back to the point about common law crimes not being time barred. While canvassing during the Anniesland by-election, I met two elderly spinsters who had been attacked and robbed in their own home. They said, "The individual responsible will never come to trial because Glasgow district court is letting all sorts of people off." I said, "No. It is more than likely that that individual will come to trial because common

law crimes are not time barred." "No," said the elderly couple, "We have read it in the newspapers. We know that the individual concerned is never going to come to trial." If what we say about the law is misleading and if the way we report crime is misleading, we will spread fear of crime in the community. That fear should not exist, because it is based on false assumptions.

I agree that the Unison action in Glasgow is unfortunate. Unison will lose public sympathy if the problems continue. I need no lectures on the problems of low pay, as my part of Scotland has endemic low pay. For many years there was non-funding of pay rises in local government by central Government. The Executive is addressing that this year. The serious problems of low pay should be dealt with, but the negotiation is between the local authority and the union concerned. It does not involve the Executive.

It would be helpful if Iain Gray published some of the figures he read out. A description of what the 4,581 cases involve would be especially helpful. That would help to restore public confidence, which I am afraid Mr Gallie's rhetoric undermines.

10:02

**Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con):** I will devote some of my time to setting out some facts, because there is an astonishing lack of knowledge about how Glasgow district court functions. That has been manifest this morning.

Glasgow district court may have only one courthouse, but it operates eight courts—four stipendiary courts and four lay courts. The stipendiary magistrates have the same sentencing powers as sheriffs under summary jurisdiction. Custodial sentences are not 1 per cent. That is the Scottish average, but in Glasgow district court the sentences are in many cases custodial, especially for those appearing from custody. At Glasgow district court it is possible, under summary jurisdiction, to get 11 months' imprisonment—nine months' imprisonment under the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 for police assault, with add-ons for the Bail, Judicial Appointments etc (Scotland) Act 2000. That has happened.

Glasgow district court deals with much more complex and serious cases than do other district courts. The minister has dealt with the volume of cases. That outlines the extent of the problem. It is not a normal district court. Many of the cases that go through Glasgow district court would, in other jurisdictions, go before a sheriff. It has been defined in the past as justice on the cheap, but it is not; it is a highly professional operation and it must be acknowledged as being highly professional. That is why we suggest—I hope that this will be the case at the end of the review—that it be dealt

with by the Scottish Courts Administration rather than be left in the hands of the local authority.

Iain Gray made several points about the cases that are going to be lost. He is correct about there being no time bar on common law cases. It would be no great loss to mankind if the vehicle excise cases fell, but because of the strike many drivers who would have been disqualified for motoring offences under the totting-up procedure will not be disqualified.

What will happen because of the court's failure to operate means inquiries? People who are not paying fines are called before a means inquiry board. The instalments might be reduced or a custodial alternative stipulated in the event of subsequent failure to pay. What will happen to those cases? What is happening with fines that are not being paid? People who offend are not usually well organised. They may have the money to pay a weekly instalment that week; they are not likely to have it at the end of the strike. Will they end up going to prison because of the city council's failure to operate a court? That must be decided.

Major aspects of this matter have clearly not been thought through because there is a basic misunderstanding of what goes on in Glasgow district court. As I have said before, it is not a typical jurisdiction so it requires special consideration.

Phil Gallie dealt with the matter of police morale in relation to the cases that are being lost. That is disturbing, but I am more concerned about the morale of the criminal classes. They exhibit a sensitivity and street wisdom that is lacking in the deliberations that I have heard this morning. They know that if there is no court they can carry on shoplifting—and that is what they are doing. There is clear evidence—it is not just apocryphal—that that is going on at the moment. The word has got out; they know exactly what is happening. That is why this matter must be addressed.

It may well be, as Iain Gray said, an employer-employee dispute. Would he be sitting on his hands if this was a health service dispute—or would he be taking action? He would be taking action.

Many issues arise out of the strike, but there is clearly a major misunderstanding about the nature of Glasgow district court. Until that is resolved in the minds of those who are speaking, I fear that there will be no early resolution of this problem.

10:06

**Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab):** If nothing else, the dispute between Unison and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities has

reminded us all of the existence of the district courts and the need for their reform. We know from previous discussions in this Parliament that there is to be a review of district courts. That is much needed and is welcome.

It is a shame that our discussions on the lower courts have centred on an industrial dispute. I want to be clear about what Mr Gallie is saying. He seems to be saying that it is a ministerial responsibility to resolve industrial disputes. If Phil Gallie thinks that that is the role of the Executive, where does that leave us when we come to other industrial disputes that will inevitably take place in Scotland?

**Phil Gallie:** It is a ministerial responsibility to uphold the law; that is not happening at present.

**Pauline McNeill:** Phil Gallie is saying that now, but it is not what he said earlier.

Two of the unions are satisfied with the pay offer that COSLA has made. Unison, the union concerned, has stated on the record that it recognises the need to cause minimal disruption to the public. As Michael Matheson said, no union takes strike action lightly.

Unison has, in all fairness, abided by the very stringent laws that the Tories introduced in the 1980s, which require the union to notify the employer in advance of strike action and to specify the date and how long it will last. The law also requires that the majority of the workers show their support for such action in a ballot. Given that heavy legal burden on the union, questions need to be asked about why there was no preparation by the employer. To that extent, I share the concerns that have been expressed about what is happening in our justice system. It cannot continue.

That is where my common ground with Mr Gallie ends. I believe that the ability to withdraw labour in a collective dispute with an employer on pay and conditions is a fundamental right. We have removed that right, but only for very good reasons. We must be careful. Although we do not have strike agreements for the police, it must be recognised that there are other mechanisms. The workers we are talking about today suffer from low pay. That distinction must be recognised.

Is Phil Gallie saying that he wants to extend the no-strike agreement to nurses in the health service because it is an essential service? He should clarify the Conservatives' position on the issue. I worry that if he had his way he would not allow any trade union to have a strike agreement. It is ironic that the Conservatives supported people's right to bring the roads to a standstill in the fuel dispute. They were not concerned about the chaos that it caused.

Contingency arrangements should be in place for all industrial disputes so that there is minimal disruption to the public. The employer that must address that, not the Executive or Parliament.

We need a serious debate on the reform of the district courts that is not marred by the atmosphere of an industrial dispute. People have serious concerns about the justice system and the people who operate in it. For example, decisions are taken behind closed doors in the district courts and are not published; there are concerns about the ECHR; and there is an issue about whether it is right for local authorities both to collect fines and to administer the district courts. I look forward to that debate when we have the results of the review, so that we can make our district courts as efficient as possible.

10:10

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** It is one of the Parliament's strengths that debates which have a spurious basis—such as this one, as Mr Gallie's motion demonstrates—manage to achieve some balance by the end. Some speeches, such as Bill Aitken's account of his experience of the courts, were fairly knowledgeable. They made it reasonably clear that we are dealing with a significant, if localised, issue against a background of the need to review the longer-term future of the district courts. The district courts structure was laid down in 1975, retained by the Conservatives during their 18 years in power and has continued under this Parliament's jurisdiction.

It is also clear that responsibility for the present situation in the district courts lies with the local authorities, not with ministers. Ministerial responsibility is limited merely to the responsibilities of the procurator fiscal to direct where court cases go and to make the immediate arrangements for those cases.

The minister mentioned one of the main issues raised in the debate: that 1 per cent of district court convictions lead to custody. The Tories have presented us with a vision of a panoply of villains released from custody and rampaging all over Glasgow as a result of the dispute—with all the Dixon of Dock Green implications of that. However, the only ones rampaging are people who have not paid their TV licence fee or parking fines. That said, I acknowledge Bill Aitken's point that Glasgow district court is in the unique position of having stipendiary magistrates. In my time as a lawyer I appeared at Glasgow district court and formed the view that the people who come before that court are largely society's driftwood—and I use that word advisedly. Those people, who might be called society's inadequates, are different in kind from the people who come before the sheriff courts.

We must put in place long-term arrangements that will stand us in good stead. We do not have a major crisis on our hands; simply a localised and immediate problem to sort out. As a result, we should wait for the outcome of the review and deal with the matter then. As Pauline McNeill pointed out, perhaps we should consider whether we need more adequate arrangements for dealing with the consequences of industrial disputes involving the courts. However, that does not mean extending the right to prosecute people beyond the statutory time bar; that would raise all kinds of ECHR issues.

There is an ECHR element to this situation. Phil Gallie's attitude that ECHR is fine in principle but is no use when we come to the practicalities of incorporating it and acting upon it is very unsatisfactory. Indeed, we have seen that attitude several times in these debates. Glasgow district court is a local problem that should be locally resolved. After that situation is sorted out we must deal with the long-term future of the district courts.

10:14

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP):** As I have only three minutes, I will have to take my speech at breakneck speed.

As usual, Phil Gallie generated more heat than light. Although this is an industrial dispute, that does not exonerate the Executive. As Michael Matheson pointed out, the ultimate responsibility for justice in Scotland lies with the Executive and the minister. In saying that, I am not underestimating the consequences of the dispute for some of the victims.

I will touch briefly on some funding issues; in fact, I will simply refer the minister to particular columns in the *Official Report*. For example, he should take a look at the evidence of Helen Murray from the District Courts Association at columns 1306 and 1307 of the *Official Report* of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee meeting of 22 May. She made it clear that the district courts are underfunded, which can only impinge on the current situation.

Phil Gallie did not address the transfer of administration; instead he lingered on more sensational issues. I respectfully suggest that that matter must be seriously addressed in the review. I reiterate Michael Matheson's point that there is merit in the Justice and Home Affairs Committee's having a copy of an interim report to hand.

As for the point raised by the minister, Phil Gallie and Bill Aitken about what is happening to cases, it would be useful if the minister could write to the Justice and Home Affairs Committee giving us the facts about cases that have been affected by the dispute. If such a letter is not forthcoming,

members can lodge written questions and get the answers that way. In fact, I think that it was Euan Robson who quite rightly raised the issue of getting those figures.

Bill Aitken made very fair points about automatic disqualification; indeed, I had not considered the totting-up procedure. Perhaps the minister should touch on that issue in his summing up. There might be some difficulty, however, as the procedure would apply to untried cases.

**Bill Aitken:** I was referring to cases for which a diet had been fixed but which had not been called. In such circumstances, the diet would fall and there would not necessarily be a trial.

**Christine Grahame:** I understand that and am again grateful for Bill Aitken's specific knowledge. Perhaps the minister might address that serious matter.

On continued offending, I had not actually considered the lack of a trial as a licence to proceed. If Mr Aitken has real evidence of that, he should give it to the minister and the Justice and Home Affairs Committee.

As I have said, it would be useful for the Justice and Home Affairs Committee to see an interim report of the review. Furthermore, I want to know whether the District Courts Association—which said that it would monitor the situation—has been in touch about the number of cases in progress. It has been suggested that there has been a reduction in the amount of district court work, which was not the association's position.

10:17

**Iain Gray:** The debate has been interesting and has raised many points, a frightening proportion of which were mentioned in Christine Grahame's three minutes. I will attempt to address those points at a later date.

I said that I hoped that the debate would provide some clarity. Our view is indeed clear. Where responsibilities are shared, we cannot simply talk and act as though they were not. It is for the local authorities and Unison to resolve the dispute. We have created conditions which make that possible; the budgetary plans that we announced in September are generous. We are clear that district courts are a shared responsibility of local government to provide a local, lay component to our justice system. If that is to be changed, we will change it for sound reasons of improved justice.

We await clarity on the Tories' position. Do they advance arguments of justice for their proposed changes, or is this simply one more manifestation of their unrelenting and vindictive antipathy to local government and trade unionism? The Tories propose new restrictions to prevent court staff

from taking industrial action, but they must know that that is a reserved matter. Are they proposing such a move at Westminster, where it matters? Are sweeping constraints on the right to industrial action to be a manifesto commitment for the general election? Have they forgotten that similar plans in the previous Government's green paper were roundly condemned by employers' organisations as unnecessary?

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** Does the Labour Government intend to introduce sweeping plans to change the legislation that the minister and Pauline McNeill have said is so bad?

**Iain Gray:** I confess that I fail to understand John Scott's point. The Conservatives' motion suggests that there should be a restriction on the right of court workers to take industrial action. We do not intend to introduce such a measure. My question to the Tories is whether they seriously propose that; or whether the proposal is an ill-thought-out, knee-jerk reaction to the issue du jour?

I do not belittle the cases that may be abandoned. Although I cannot give an immediate breakdown of the 4,000 cases that have been lost, I can say that in the past year, where figures are available, 44 per cent of district court cases were motoring offences; 33 per cent were miscellaneous offences; 12 per cent were crimes of dishonesty; 5 per cent were criminal damage offences; and 3 per cent were minor drugs offences. Those 4,000 cases are likely to show a similar breakdown.

To Bill Aitken, I say that although I am new to my portfolio, I know the difference between Glasgow district court and the other district courts. The available facts from past years show that, none the less, the results of proceedings in Glasgow district court—including stipendiary magistrates courts—are comparable with the old Scotland figures, with the exception that one is rather more likely to be admonished in Glasgow district court than elsewhere.

**Bill Aitken:** That was always the case when I was on the bench. [*Laughter.*]

**Iain Gray:** I turn now to the consequences of the dispute for victims—the victims of crime, that is, not the victims of Bill Aitken's version of justice.

I deplore the consequences of the dispute for victims. It is small comfort that they are victims of less serious crimes. Misinformation prevails. If people have suffered personal injury—and Mr Gallie made reference to this—the criminal injuries compensation scheme is still available to them. It does not depend on prosecutions or convictions: it is a victim-led scheme. Criminal compensation orders are few in the district court.

It is simply fatuous to suggest that the Executive does not care about the victims of crime. One of my first engagements as the Deputy Minister for Justice was to speak at a victim support conference, at which founder members who have been active in the field for 15 years acknowledged that support for victims is now given priority and funding that they could never have dreamed of when they started. When Lyndsay McIntosh winds up, perhaps she can confirm that, as she was at that conference.

We will discharge our responsibilities to improve our system of justice through the forthcoming review of the district courts, and we will do that in good time. We will not allow the industrial action to result in ill-considered legislation. I hope that those who are responsible for the industrial action will recognise the trust that is vested in them to deliver effective local justice in Scotland. I also hope that, in closing, Lyndsay McIntosh will demonstrate how the Tories' proposals would genuinely contribute to tomorrow's justice, not just to today's headlines.

10:22

**Mrs Lyndsay McIntosh (Central Scotland) (Con):** Although I have sheaves of notes, I shall try to gallop through the points that were raised in the debate. I regret that the debate has been short, as more members may have wanted to speak. Perhaps the Executive will return to the subject in future.

**Iain Gray:** That seems a curious point to make, given that this is a Tory debate and that the length of the debate was entirely that party's choice.

**Mrs McIntosh:** We have a limited amount of time and we wanted to highlight the issue. Other issues are important too, but this one had to be raised today. Perhaps the Executive will return to the matter in a debate of its own.

Phil Gallie commented that, because of the dispute, the Executive and COSLA—not COSLA as such, but Unison—have ended up appearing to be the criminal's friends. We must all address that. The alleged criminals—admittedly not murderers, but people who should have been sentenced by the courts—are walking away because the court doors are closed. The people for whom we should have a real concern are the victims of crime. Phil also mentioned police morale. The police are doing a very difficult job and it is a kick in the teeth for them that their work does not result in appropriate court decisions.

Pauline McNeill asked why people are—in perhaps emotive language—termed villains. What about sentence deferrals and people who should have returned to the court after their deferred sentence? They are waiting for the sentence that was going to be handed down, but the door is

shut. Where are they? What is going to happen?

In his opening remarks, the minister regretted the dispute. I accept that. He highlighted the fact that Glasgow district court is the busiest district court in Scotland and that it is not the same as the others—and I shall return to Bill Aitken's contribution on that in a minute. Glasgow's is the busiest district court in Europe; it goes like a fair. It goes so fast, people's heads spin. Michael Matheson commented on the fact that papers are missing and that people do not know what they are appearing for. It is chaotic.

**Michael Matheson:** I was talking about Glasgow sheriff court.

**Mrs McIntosh:** I appreciate that, and you made it clear in your speech that you were there at the invitation of the Glasgow Bar Association. However, the district court is no different: it still goes like a fair. I know—I have worked in a district court.

The other part of that point is that the district courts are in the power of the Scottish courts administration. Christine Grahame and Michael Matheson commented on the upcoming review. I have taken part in it in my own district court area. I attended a meeting at which we were asked for our tuppence worth on it. We are interested in what is likely to happen. Michael, you highlighted the issue of buck passing and were entirely right to do so. We will have no disagreement on that. Whoever is responsible—and we may disagree on who that is—it must stop. We welcome the review.

Euan, you commented on the District Courts (Scotland) Act 1975. Phyllis Hands, the secretary of the District Courts Association, says that it issues good practice guidelines for the running of the district courts, but that they are not mandatory. The association is generally of the opinion that Glasgow district court should not have been shut. Phyllis Hands is well known to me. She used to clerk for me.

The other item that you lifted, Euan, was the no time bar. I suppose that that is a welcome relief for some people. We are not talking about people who are going to be found guilty of serious crime, but it is not strictly true to say that only minor offences come before the district court. In my day, I sat on a case that went to trial, in which a lady had been kicked severely by two women while she was four months pregnant. I do not think that anyone would call a serious beating such as that a minor offence.

Bill, I come to your points. Yes, indeed—Glasgow district court operates eight courts. You highlighted the issues of the drivers and the totting up—something that those of us who have sat on the district courts will know only too well. There are also the means inquiry board cases. What is

going to happen to those people? They come—some of them almost ready to pay their money—but the door is shut. As you highlighted, what chance do we have of collecting the uncollected fines? I have already commented on the morale of the police.

Pauline, you mentioned the review. We all look forward to the report. I agree that an interim paper on the review would be much welcomed.

**Christine Grahame:** Does that mean that Lyndsay McIntosh will support our amendment?

**Mrs McIntosh:** No. We do not support the SNP amendment, but an interim paper is a welcome suggestion that the minister might take further.

Pauline, you also highlighted the fact that notice is necessary before strike action can be taken. That is precisely the point: notification of the action was received. Why did not you do something?

**The Presiding Officer:** You are using too many yous again.

**Mrs McIntosh:** I apologise, Presiding Officer. I am time barred—I can see it now.

On the idea of our antipathy to trade unions, I say to Mr Gray that I was a shop steward. Our original motion talked about negotiating a no strike deal. I know that some people do not like that idea, but that negotiation would also take account of the low pay situation.

## Europe

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** The second debate of the morning is a Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party debate on motion S1M-1406, in the name of David McLetchie, on Europe.

10:29

**David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con):** As we look ahead to next week's intergovernmental conference in Nice, it is important that we debate the issues that are likely to arise, as decisions taken at that conference will have a profound impact on the development of the European Union and on many areas of policy that are devolved to this Parliament. If that were not the case, why would the First Minister have allowed Mr McConnell to retain the grandiose title of Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs, unless it is because he is eager for him to be out of the country on as many occasions as possible?

It is vital that we promote a greater understanding of the effect on Scotland of the decisions to be taken at Nice. That is why our motion calls on the Executive to commission and publish a study of the impact of the Nice proposals on devolved functions and the Scottish economy. I hope that the Executive will respond positively to at least that aspect of our motion, which will help to inform the debate about the development of our relationship with the European Union.

The Nice intergovernmental meeting is largely concerned with the enlargement of the European Union from 15 to 28 member states. An enlarged union would cover the new democracies of central and eastern Europe—which have waited a decade since the fall of the Berlin wall to join the EU—Cyprus, Malta and, possibly, Turkey.

We whole-heartedly support enlargement, as it offers the European Union an historic opportunity to bring within our community of nations that are committed to the principles of a free and open society those countries whose peoples were subjugated and impoverished by the failed and discredited doctrines of tyrannical socialism. Given that the European Union now has a waiting list longer than Susan Deacon's, it is frankly outrageous that there are no plans to set a firm timetable at the Nice conference for the admission of any new member state.

Enlargement presents clear choices about the future direction of the union, as the European Commission has recognised. In its submission to this year's intergovernmental conference, the Commission stated:

"Decision-making in a Union of 28 members is clearly not the same thing as decision-making in a Union of 15. The Union will inevitably become less homogenous; the economic, cultural and political differences between the Member States will be more pronounced than ever before in the history of European integration."

I agree with that statement—most of us would, as it is self-evident. That is why, having reached this important crossroads in European history, we must ask ourselves what sort of European Union we want to develop and what sort of European Union will happily and best accommodate our expanded family of nations.

The European Union can follow one of two paths: the path to an open, flexible, free-enterprise Europe, which celebrates diversity; or the path to uniform integration. Essentially, the choice is between a European superstate—or superpower, as the Prime Minister would have it, with typical dialectic sleight of tongue—or a Europe of nation states, acting together in pursuit of common interests towards common goals.

**Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** Does the member recognise that Scotland might join such a body as an independent nation state? Would he welcome that?

**David McLetchie:** No. It is a self-evident proposition that I would not welcome independence for Scotland, but I will have something to say about the nationalist perspective on Europe later, which might spark further discussion between us.

A European superstate would mean a Europe with its own taxes, foreign policy, criminal justice system and constitution, as well as its own currency. That is not the route down which most people in Scotland want to go. That route is also out of date in a world of increasing globalisation. A European superstate may have been practicable, if not desirable, when there were only six nations in the European Economic Community, but it is simply not an option for a community of more than 30 nations.

**Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD):** I am a bit confused by Mr McLetchie's speech. He talks about a superstate as if there are people who advocate such an entity. I am not aware of anybody in the chamber, in the United Kingdom or in Europe who argues for the type of European superstate that he talks about. Except for the Conservatives, we are all talking about the other type of Europe.

**David McLetchie:** It is obvious that Iain Smith has not listened to the comments made by the foreign minister of the Federal Republic of Germany or followed the debate on the issue. Nor has he paid much attention to the comments of the President of the European Commission about how

he wants things to develop. It is clear that there is a powerful lobby that believes that an integrated, federal Europe with the features that I have described is a desirable outcome. That is part of the debate. Part of the purpose of this debate is to discuss the choices and different visions of what Europe and the European Union are all about.

Instead of submerging our differences within an integrationist Europe, we should celebrate our diversity, because it is a source of strength. The decisions taken at Nice will influence the route that we go down. Far too many of Europe's leaders are stuck in the past, clinging to the vision of an integrationist and interventionist future for the European Union. Sadly, instead of offering an alternative, Labour tries to deny that such an agenda exists. Mr Cook says that the concept of a European superstate is deeply unfashionable, yet that is not the view of the rest of Europe. The items on the agenda at Nice disprove Mr Cook's assertion conclusively.

The Government has tried to play down the agenda of the intergovernmental conference, which is clearly intended to produce an integrationist treaty. Labour's policy is one of integration by stealth, which is not only wrong, but cowardly. The Nice conference will extend qualified majority voting, ending the legislative veto in yet more policy areas. Labour has already conceded the principle by saying that it will consider each case on its merits, but the case-by-case approach is the inexorable road to further integration. By contrast, we have said categorically that there should be no further extension of QMV on European legislation.

**Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** Does Mr McLetchie accept that the Single European Act, in which Mrs Thatcher was involved, derogated more decision making to qualified majority voting than is being suggested in the Nice treaty?

**David McLetchie:** I am well aware that QMV played a part in creating the single European market, but we must distinguish between functions that go to the heart of what the European Union and the Common Market is and was all about—of which the single market was an integral part—and the add-ons and bolt-ons that are being developed now, taking Europe down the road to the creation of a federal state, which was never the original intention of people in this country when they voted to remain members of the Common Market.

We know that Labour and Liberal Democrat members and others are happy to see the weakening of our national sovereignty, particularly the Liberal Democrats, who regard national sovereignty with about as much enthusiasm as Geoffrey Robinson can muster for Peter Mandelson. We know that the SNP leadership is



happy to abolish our currency and to adopt the euro, even though its former deputy leader, Mr Sillars, has described joining the euro as a major stepping stone to a federal superstate, as it removes one of the core aspects of national sovereignty. I would be interested to know the SNP's view on the extension of qualified majority voting in an enlarged Europe. In particular, how would an independent Scotland—with three votes out of a total of more than 130—be able to exercise any significant influence? The fact is that independence in Europe is not so much a policy as a contradiction in terms. I find it astonishing that the party that proclaims independence for Scotland wants to turn us into an insignificant region of a country called Europe.

**Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP):** Does the member recall the independence displayed by the brave people of Denmark when they said "Nej" to the euro?

**The Presiding Officer:** I am not sure that the member pronounced that correctly, but never mind.

**David McLetchie:** I am delighted to pay tribute to the independent-minded people of Denmark, who stood up against the iniquitous consensus that tried to drive them down the integrationist road and submerge their culture, history and traditions in a European federal state. I only wish that our Government would have more courage and would stand up for our country in the way that the Danes stood up for theirs.

**Dr Winnie Ewing (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**David McLetchie:** I should move on, as I have only three minutes left. However, as it is Dr Ewing, I will give way briefly.

**Dr Ewing:** The reason why I am not speaking in this debate will be obvious from my voice, which I am losing. Does the Conservative party agree that, when Scotland's interests are at stake, ministers from the Scottish Parliament should attend meetings of the European Council of Ministers?

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** That is a trick question.

**David McLetchie:** I agree that it is a trick question. It would be desirable for ministers from the Scottish Parliament to attend in certain circumstances. When the Conservative party was in government, ministers from the Scottish Office led delegations to Europe on occasion. I hope that, in areas in which significant devolved issues are at stake, ministers in our Executive will be invited to take part in delegations. That is a sensible example of working together. I am happy to give the member that assurance.

Other moves towards a federal superstate are planned for Nice, such as the charter of fundamental rights, which Labour seems happy to support at the conference. It is intended to be the basis for a European constitution, although the Labour Government has been desperate to play down its significance. Keith Vaz memorably claimed that the charter would have no greater legal significance before EU judges than a copy of the *Beano*. Of course, we in Scotland are experts on the *Beano* and the *Dandy* and can tell the difference between a cow pie and a porky pie. The fact of the matter is that the foreword of the official EU document on the charter, which was recently circulated to all MSPs, refers to a provision in the Maastricht treaty relating to fundamental rights. It claims that

"this provision is insufficient in that it does not provide a clear and comprehensive list of those rights and does not refer to economic and social rights. There is therefore very limited scope for individual citizens to invoke the provisions and, where necessary, to use them as a basis for court action."

It is precisely the desire to establish such a basis for court action that explains why there is such strong pressure to incorporate the charter into the treaty, as the foreword to the official document goes on to say. When the President of the European Commission, Mr Prodi, was asked on BBC radio whether the charter should be made legally binding, he said that he thought that it would be.

The adoption of the charter by the Nice council will be another major step along the road to integration. It also poses a threat to jobs in Scotland. Both the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Directors believe that the extension of so-called social rights will damage employment prospects, particularly in small firms.

In which direction should the Nice treaty take the European Union? The Conservative vision for the European Union is based on a desire for it to be a successful union. The council meeting should send out a clear signal about the shape of the EU as a flexible network of nation states. It would be greatly to Scotland's advantage as a nation with a strong exporting tradition if the EU concentrated on its core functions.

The Nice conference should start to reverse the process of European integration. For example, the common agricultural policy is the biggest impediment to European Union enlargement. As we know, the CAP started out as a worthy attempt to prevent the threat of food shortages. However, the world has moved on and the original aims of the CAP can be much better achieved today by giving greater flexibility and responsibility to the member states of the European Union. There is a consensus on the need for reform, although how it is to be achieved is a problem. The imperative for

reform is greater than ever as we contemplate expansion from 15 to 28 members. A centralised CAP, which is under constant strain in a union of 15 members, will be unsustainable in a union of almost 30 members.

The same can be said—although more so—of the common fisheries policy. That is why the Conservatives want to re-establish control of our waters through zonal management, coastal management or some other way. Those are the sort of reforms that should be on the negotiating table at Nice if enlargement is to be taken seriously and the way in which the European Union should develop is to be mapped out properly.

I can put the case for flexibility no better than does the admirable article by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt in a recent edition of the *International Herald Tribune*. It said:

"It is obvious that full integration is not a realistic goal for 30 countries that are very different in their political traditions, culture and economic development. To attempt integration with that many countries can only lead to complete failure."

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt—who are no Euro-sceptics—are right when they say that. That is why the Conservative approach to European Union development is the sensible and practicable basis on which to move forward.

Flexibility should be the centrepiece of any Nice treaty. It will not be, of course, because Nice is all about taking us further down the integrationist road. The other three main parties in Scotland want Scotland to be ever more deeply submerged in a European Union, either within the UK or on our own. However, they know that that view is unpopular and are engaged in a conspiracy of silence. Where is the much-vaunted Scotland in Europe (part of the Britain in Europe campaign), which was launched in October last year in a blaze of publicity but which has now sunk and disappeared without trace? Perhaps Mr McConnell, Mr Andrew Wilson or Mr Stone will tell us whether that grand alliance is to be relaunched this year, so that we can have an open and honest debate about the way in which decisions that are made about the European Union will affect the lives of people in Scotland in the years to come. The Conservative party is ready for that debate but the other parties shrink from it. We believe that Scotland's future is as part of a new European Union, which is founded on far greater flexibility and freedom and in which our national sovereignty is preserved and our distinctiveness is enhanced. That is what our motion is about and I commend it to the chamber.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the forthcoming Nice intergovernmental conference meeting which is intended to

pave the way for enlargement of the European Union and, which will have significant consequences for Scotland and, whilst welcoming enlargement, opposes moves towards a European superstate which will undermine our national sovereignty; calls upon the Scottish Executive to urge Her Majesty's Government to support the development of a European Union which is based on flexibility, consensus and co-operation, believing that this is in the best interests of Scotland and Europe as a whole and further calls upon the Scottish Executive to commission and publish a study into the impact of the Nice proposals on devolved functions and the Scottish economy.

10:47

**The Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Mr Jack McConnell):** I agree with Mr McLetchie that this is an important debate for the Scottish Parliament and for Scotland. It is more than a year since we debated European issues in general and the questions that he outlines today are the questions that we should address in the run-up to the Nice summit and as the debate about the future of Europe progresses. However, we find ourselves in the usual mire of innuendo, scare stories and ludicrous misinterpretation of what is going on, when we should be thinking about the big picture for Scotland and the UK. If anyone is stuck in the past, it is Mr McLetchie and his colleagues in a party that, although it is called the Scottish Conservative party, sounds today more like a Conservative party from somewhere else.

The Scottish Executive, like the vast majority of members of the Scottish Parliament and the vast majority of Scots, is committed to the European Union. We believe that the European Union is a force for progress and good. It is a force for economic stability and prosperity for Scotland.

We believe that the Scottish Parliament should represent the way in which Scotland, by our nature and as a result of economic necessity, has always been an outward-looking nation. Over the past 18 months, we have been developing the economic and political links that have always existed between Scotland and other parts of Europe. We are working to develop the already strong links with the Nordic countries. We are working closely with the Belgian regional Governments of Flanders and Wallonia, with Catalonia, and with Bavaria, Nord Rhein-Westphalia and other German Länder. We are working with the Czech Republic. We are even starting to develop links with the emerging Polish regions. All those links are important for Scotland. They are important for our political position, but they are also important for our economic success, as links at Government level pave the way for trade links and for Scottish businesses to maximise their trade opportunities. That makes them important for Scottish jobs.

We have been working hard to raise Scotland's profile. We have established Scotland House,

which is based on the best practice of other European regions and is now being used as a model by others. We are involved in at least one European body and will be considering joining others in the months to come. We have been attending the Council of Ministers meetings that it has been appropriate for Scotland to attend.

**Andrew Wilson:** Will the minister give way?

**Mr McConnell:** Certainly. I thought that those words might tempt Mr Wilson.

**Andrew Wilson:** As the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs, how many Council of Ministers meetings has Jack McConnell attended?

**Mr McConnell:** As Mr Wilson knows, those meetings are to discuss specific subject areas. The ministers who attend are the ministers with the appropriate portfolio. For Dr Ewing to suggest that Scotland is not represented at the Council of Ministers is factually wrong. Scotland is represented at every meeting of the Council of Ministers—Scotland is represented by the UK, and it so happens that devolution has given us the added benefit of also having direct representation from this Parliament and this Executive. That can only be a good thing for Scotland and for the UK as a whole.

**Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** Will the minister give way?

**Mr McConnell:** No.

That positive engagement and the development of links to better Scotland's profile in the European Union compares well with the position of the English nationalists and the Scottish nationalists, who are both represented in this chamber. I believe that, in order to do the best for Scotland in Europe, we have to embrace Europe and exploit the opportunities that arise, not just those offered by the European Union, but those offered by the United Kingdom.

I believe that the EU continues to have the appetite that it has always had for Scotland's products and services. Almost two thirds of our manufacturing exports go to countries inside the European Union, as do more than 40 per cent of our service exports. I am not sure whether Mr Andy Kerr is in the chamber, but I believe that it is a firm from his constituency of East Kilbride—Stewart Wales, Somerville—that is providing the paint for the Eiffel tower. Scottish firms are doing well throughout Europe, even on that scale.

A third of foreign-owned companies based in Scotland are from the EU. They bring investment into our country. The investment projects that emanated from continental Europe between 1994 and 1999 were worth about £740 million to the Scottish economy. Recent surveys have shown that more than 250,000 jobs in Scotland are

dependent on trade between Scotland and the rest of the European Union.

**Ms MacDonald:** Will the minister give way?

**Mr McConnell:** Let me finish this point. Those jobs would be directly affected by the anti-Europeanism demonstrated by the Conservative party at a British level, and now, unfortunately, at a Scottish level. If Britain, and Scotland, were to disengage from the European Union, those jobs would be at risk. The Tory party should be more honest about that.

**David McLetchie:** We are being perfectly honest. The debate is not about being pro-Europe or anti-Europe; it is about the development of the European Union. I remind the minister that people in the Conservative party were in favour of membership of the European Community when his party and the Scottish National Party were campaigning against it. He is in no position to lecture us.

**Mr McConnell:** I am afraid that that is not where the debate has gone in recent years. We have moved away from the debate about the future of Europe that was taking place in the late 1980s and early 1990s—that debate involved all the parties that are represented in this chamber. The current debate in Britain is about being for Europe or against Europe. It is quite clear that the way in which the Conservative party is now trying to whip up hysteria at the British level about a European superstate is designed to encourage people to be against the European Union. The long-term impact of that—and of leaving the EU—would be that Scottish jobs would go or that we would become more antagonistic, thereby losing influence across the EU.

We can see that both parts of the Opposition—we saw it in the debate last year and I am sure that we will see it again this morning—hold positions that are not about securing Scotland's best interests. Scotland's best interests are secured by this Parliament and Scotland acting within the UK and by Scotland and the UK acting with strength inside the European Union.

**Ms MacDonald:** Will the minister take my intervention now, please?

**Mr McConnell:** No.

Conservative policy would threaten Scottish jobs. The Tories try to portray the countries of the European Union as aggressive foreigners. In the debate last week on the establishment of small co-ordinated European defence effort, which is supported by NATO and endorsed by the United States, the Tories tried to claim that some sort of crazy European army was being created. Such a portrayal is dishonest and threatens the co-ordination and stability of a Europe that has now

had peace for 50 years.

We have already heard from Dr Ewing this morning. She somehow sees our engagement with Europe in terms of counting the number of committee meetings that we attend.

**Dr Winnie Ewing:** It is important.

**Mr McConnell:** Dr Ewing's suggestion is complete nonsense. The nationalists' position on membership of the euro and on European interest rates jumped over the past 18 months. At one point, they wanted immediate entry; at another point, they wanted to peg to sterling; more recently, Mr Swinney said that he would think again and might apply the same tests that Gordon Brown has been talking about for five years. Their position has changed month after month, swaying with public opinion. For the European Union, for Scotland and for the rest of the UK, we need now to rise above that debate and look to the future. We should consider what the benefits of enlargement will be for Scotland and how we should engage in the European Union in years to come.

**Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con):** Is the minister aware that the Labour party has changed its mind more than seven times since the mid-1960s on membership of the European Community?

**Mr McConnell:** We could all go back to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and see what people were saying then, but let us look at what people are saying today. The British Conservative party is apparently supported by the Scottish Conservatives in this, but I do not believe that every Conservative MSP supports the position adopted by Francis Maude. He used to believe strongly in European co-operation. He volunteered to sign the Maastricht treaty, which gave away more power to Europe than any other UK treaty or act had ever done. Francis Maude is now trying to whip up the racism and xenophobia that the Conservative party is encouraging at a UK level. Conservative members of this Parliament might toe the party line, but I do not believe that they take that position seriously. We in Scotland have a duty to try to raise the level of this debate in the years to come.

Enlargement is a high priority for Scotland. It will create Europe as a superpower, not a superstate; it will reinforce peace, democracy and freedom throughout Europe; it will help to continue to heal the unnatural division that was created by the cold war; it will increase prosperity by increasing the UK's gross domestic product; it will give businesses in Scotland a series of new customers to trade with; and it will enhance security by helping to tackle crime and the drugs trade. Enlargement will also extend qualified majority

voting in those areas where it is in Scotland's and Britain's interest to extend it. To say that that should never happen is to say that there should never be any reform of the European institutions. The way to get meaningful reform is to extend qualified majority voting in the appropriate areas.

We need to act for positive change in Europe. We need to support the trend towards a positive social and economic Europe that works through e-commerce, promotes small businesses, tackles crime and drugs, and extends the European markets into those countries of eastern and central Europe whose applications are on the agenda of next month's conference and that will be entering the European Union in the years to come.

I believe strongly that Scotland gets the best of both worlds from devolution and from the UK's membership of the European Union. This is a vital debate about the kind of country in which we want to live. I do not want to live in a Scotland that is a small country on the periphery of Europe, sulking off from the rest of the United Kingdom. I also do not want to live in a Britain that sulks off from Europe. I want to ensure that we are a part of a modern, dynamic country with a positive identity and a role in Europe; I want to ensure that we are part of a strong member state that exerts its increasing influence. After the Nice conference, there will be studies about the impact on Scotland of any decisions that are taken—that is not in question.

Today's debate is about the future of Scotland in Europe, and I am happy to move amendment S1M-1406.2, to leave out from "notes" to end and insert:

"recognises the vital importance of the European Union to the current prosperity of Scotland; welcomes Scotland's positive engagement in the European Union directly and through the UK; believes appropriate decisions in different areas of policy can be taken at Scottish, UK and European levels to ensure democracy and effective government; and supports the work of the Executive and the Parliament to raise the profile of a newly devolved Scotland as a modern, dynamic country with a clear sense of identity within a strong member state."

10:58

**Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I support the principles of the Conservatives' motion as well as the amendment in my name. It is always a great pleasure to debate Scotland's position in the world and in the developing European Union. The Nice intergovernmental conference is critically important to that.

In the SNP, we take the view that it is a great shame that we are unable to represent our position in the EU in the same way as normal countries such as Ireland, Denmark and Finland do. If that is an unfair or ridiculous ambition for Mr

McConnell, I do not apologise for that. It is already the case that, as a regional appendage of a reluctant partner state, we are out of the proverbial loop and are very much disengaged from the central debate in the European Union. As I said, we cannot disagree with the words of the Tory motion itself. Few of us, except perhaps the Liberals—when they are awake—would want a European superstate. As Mr McConnell said, that is not what is currently on offer from the European Union, nor is it the current position of any EU member state.

Where we part company from the Tories is on their use of this debate to appeal to the worst angels in the souls of people in the other debate that is going on in the south of England, in order to stoke up, as Jack McConnell said, an emotionally driven narrow nationalism founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rather than considering how we can best punch our weight as a country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Anchored in an unworldly sense of Britain's place, this narrow nationalism of the old state would have us debating the symbols of national virility rather than the substance of what government can and should do to improve the lives of the citizen.

While the rest of the world adjusts to the realities of globalisation, the Conservatives are looking backwards. We in Scotland need to get a firm sense of where and how government can best look after the interests of the people. Often that means sharing sovereignty in Europe, which is what the SNP is in favour of. The Conservatives' approach does not do their party any favours. Many Conservatives agree with that view. John Major thought that the Conservative policy was dangerous, absurd and crazy, and Malcolm Rifkind said that it was

"little more than a euphemism for us to quit Europe".

That is their attitude to William Hague's approach to Europe. I wonder what has changed Malcolm Rifkind's views.

We know where the Tories stand in this debate. The great pity for Mr McConnell's side is that Mr Blair, who is worried about the marginal constituencies in the south of England, is chasing after Mr Hague's coat tails rather than pushing the case for Europe more positively.

**Mr McConnell:** Does Mr Wilson agree that, in effect, by supporting the wording of the motion of the English nationalists in the chamber, the Scottish nationalists are adopting the Conservatives' political position? He cannot say that he supports the wording but objects to the context in which that wording is used. The attempt to portray the Nice negotiations as a step towards creating a European superstate, as the wording of the motion implies that they are, is wrong, and Mr Wilson should dissociate himself from it.

**Andrew Wilson:** We could call it basic honesty, but I take the view that, if one agrees with the wording of a motion, one should say that, and then combat the wrong-headed politics that is being articulated. I cannot disagree with the statement that we oppose the development of a European superstate or that Europe and European expansion are a good thing. We say that we do not disagree with it, and then we argue about the contents of the Conservative approach. That is honest politics. It is a shame to dismiss one side or another with narrow titles rather than accepting that Jack McConnell shares with the Conservatives an outdated idea of British nationalism.

Jack McConnell mentioned the attendance at the Council of Ministers as if it were a committee meeting of no importance. The council is the key decision-making body of the European Union. As Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs—minister to get out of my face, as Mr McLeish probably intended—Mr McConnell has not attended a single Council of Ministers meeting, yet Keith Vaz, his equivalent in the UK Government, has been at every meeting of that council. What does Mr McConnell do to deserve his title? Why is he not at any meetings?

Why is it the case that on justice matters, which are much more important following the Treaty of Amsterdam, there has not been a single attendance by the Minister for Justice?

**Mr McConnell:** On a point of information, the Minister for Justice is attending the Council of Ministers in Brussels today.

**Andrew Wilson:** I am delighted that he is breaking his duck—that is terrific. On health matters, the Minister for Health and Community Care has not attended once, unless she is on a flight as we speak. On social affairs, there has not been one attendance. We are delighted if, under our pressure, the Executive has decided to start attending the occasional meeting.

Let us focus on what the enlargement process will mean for the decision-making bodies and on how Scotland's position can best be served by having normal status within Europe. Mr McConnell and his Labour colleagues, and the Conservatives, have to provide an example of an occasion on which the Scottish interest, when it has not converged with that of the rest of the UK, has been pushed by a UK delegation. To the extent that that has never been the case, their argument falls down.

Following enlargement, if we were normal and independent, we would have one vote in the Council of Ministers for every 1.3 million citizens, compared with one vote for every 5 million as is the case for the UK at present. The rest of the UK

would gain if Scotland became a normal member. If that were the case, where our interests converged with those of the rest of the UK, we would increase the joint voting of the peoples of these islands from 10 to 13 at present or, after the intergovernmental conference, to 17 or 18. Where our interests converge, the collective power of Scotland and England as independent states would be enhanced by Scottish independence. Where those interests do not converge, how can it be held that Scotland is best served by a country that does not argue for Scotland's interests?

**Ben Wallace:** If England and Scotland had more votes as separate countries, would Andrew Wilson think that it was fair that Britain, with a population of 58 million, should have more votes than had Germany, with a population of 65 million? Is that a balanced position to take?

**Andrew Wilson:** In any confederal position, which I believe is what Ben Wallace still argues for, there has to be recognition of the distinctiveness of states as well as of the proportionality of population. Arguing for direct proportionality is hotfooting it towards federalism. From my reading of the Conservative manifesto, that is not something with which the Conservatives agree. We have to analyse how we best recognise within the council the confederal nature of Europe as well as some form of fair voting. Some of the proposals that will be discussed at Nice at least attempt to do that.

We have no representation on the European Commission. We argue—and would do so at Nice, if we were allowed to—that there should be at least one commissioner for each member state. If we were independent, that would mean that there would be one commissioner for 5 million people, compared with one for 60 million. If we remain within the UK, our number of members of the European Parliament will drop from eight to six or seven. With normalisation, we would be guaranteed 10 or 11—one MEP for every 500,000 citizens, compared with one for nearly 750,000 people if we remain in the UK. There is no substitute for normal status in the European Union.

We want Scotland to be part of the main stream. We understand that old-fashioned, 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism is not relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Ireland, Austria, Belgium and other members of the European Union share that understanding. It is about arguing what Government can do in practice for its citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, rather than anchoring ourselves in an old vision of what Britain used to be—that is an old nationalism that does not fit the modern world.

We support the process of enlargement, which will enhance the ability of the European Union to

deliver for its citizens. We see no substitute for a Scotland that argues its case, punches its weight and does its best to represent the views of its citizens. Nothing that we have heard from Mr McConnell does anything to answer the points that we have raised, and nothing that we hear from the Conservatives would drag us out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup>. Let us leave behind the emotionally driven arguments of Mr Hague and look forward to a modern role for Scotland in a new century, in which we can punch our weight in Europe and look on ourselves as partners with normal countries such as Ireland and Austria.

I move amendment S1M-1406.1, to insert at end:

"and encourages any moves towards the normalisation of Scotland's status as a nation within a confederal European Union with full rights and obligations as a member state."

11:06

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** I think that some members were surprised by Mr McLetchie's choice of subject for debate today as it seems to be the wrong battleground. All those in the real world know that it is nothing but a vote loser for the Conservative ladies and gentlemen in the chamber. They think that it is a good issue for them, but it is not.

At first, the motion appears very tempting, and we think that we can all sign up to it, as Andrew Wilson just did, until we see the weasel words "flexibility" and "European superstate". Those words are code for Europhobia—straightforward, undiluted, tabloid-headline Europhobia. Mr McConnell hinted at this and I wonder about Mr McLetchie's independence from Mr William Hague and his cohorts down in England. They think Europe is a vote winner for them, but we know that it is not, as we proved in Romsey and will do so again in the next general election. Mr McLetchie is flogging a dead horse. However, it is a dangerous argument as there is too much at stake. We have to demolish the Tory argument once and for all.

On occasion, I am given to quoting my younger brother. I do not do so today on the usual subject. My younger brother is an unreconstructed Tory of the old style. He is also a fruit merchant. He is the first person to say that the Tories are wrong on the single currency. As a businessman who buys in fruit and vegetables from abroad, he says that a fluctuating currency is a disgrace which does him no favours.

If members go to the Highlands, they will find that the old farmers, who used to vote Conservative, are shouting for a single currency. I can quote them chapter and verse on that.

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

I have had considerable correspondence with the leadership of the National Farmers Union of Scotland on the question whether it supports early entry to the single currency, and have received several guarantees from Jim Walker that he takes no position on the matter.

**Mr Stone:** The Liberal Democrat position—that we should enter the single currency as soon as we can at the right exchange rate—is correct. When my good friend Mr Johnstone is next in the Highlands I will invite him to lunch with some of my farmer neighbours, who can put him right.

It is worth remembering that the UK exports more today to Belgium and the Netherlands than to the whole of Latin America, Africa, India, Australia, China and Russia combined. That shows us just how important that trade is to us.

**Ms MacDonald:** The debate refers primarily to Scotland. What percentage of Scottish exports is hidden in that UK total? That is the sort of question that I would have put to the minister if he had just looked kindly on me during his speech, as I am trying to establish the Scottish dimension in this debate on Europe.

**Mr Stone:** Whenever Margo MacDonald rises to her feet I feel like breaking into Danish. I say to her, jeg elsker dig. That is Danish for I love you. I love her because her single-handed destruction of the SNP position on Europe cheers up all of us on the other benches.

**Mr McConnell:** Perhaps we should remind Ms MacDonald that Scotland's biggest market is England and that her obsession with separating Scotland from England politically and economically would affect that market, so that even more Scottish jobs would be at risk than would be through leaving the European Union.

**Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP):** Will Mr Stone take an intervention?

**Mr Stone:** No. I will take an intervention in a moment.

I thank the minister for his intervention. By going into a unified currency we will achieve lower interest rates for this country, which industry is crying out for. I see that Mr Ben Wallace has the lectern in front of him—I bet he will talk about the military, so I will touch on the European rapid reaction force. There has been utter tosh—forgive me, Murray—in the press on that subject. It is worth remembering that the battle of Waterloo was a cross-country operation. All our families lost forebears in the great war and the second world war. Europe was engulfed in war twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of European division. Peace and stability in Europe is one of the key and most sacred aims of European union. As the

Conservative party postures and goes for tabloid headlines on the RRF, we must not forget that.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con)**  
*rose—*

**Mr Stone:** Before I give way to Mary Scanlon, I congratulate her on her superb demolition of Mr John Swinney last Thursday night on television, in the round-up after the Anniesland by-election.

**Mary Scanlon:** It was a great pleasure. I thank Jamie Stone. Now I have almost forgotten what I was going to say.

**Mr Stone:** That was deliberate.

**Mary Scanlon:** If the lower interest rates throughout euroland are appropriate for the UK at this time, do the Liberal Democrats think that the monetary policy committee of the Bank of England is setting an inappropriately high interest rate in order to control the rate of inflation?

**Mr Stone:** Yes, the interest rate is too high. We all know that and we should try to get it lowered.

In winding up, I want to say to the Conservative party that it should be careful in what it is doing. Like Dr Faustus, it is summoning up the devil—the devil of xenophobia, which is a great evil. If the Conservatives embrace that devil, he will take them with him, as they will discover at the next general election.

11:13

**Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con):** There was some predictability about the subject of today's debate. We could expect the other parties, especially the Labour party, to try to tar us with an anti-Europe brush. To give the Liberal Democrats credit, their party's position is clear: to enter the single currency immediately, no matter the implications for inflation. Next stop, probably, is a federal Europe.

**Mr Stone** *rose—*

**Iain Smith** *rose—*

**Ben Wallace:** Not yet. The real confusion is over the other two parties. The Labour party is in principle in favour of the euro, but only when the economic criteria have been satisfied. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the criteria have been satisfied. It forgot the secret sixth criterion—Tony Blair's popularity. He will not shift. The SNP seems to be cooling on the idea. At the launch of Scotland in Europe the SNP was fierce in its attempts to drag the First Minister straight on to the euro bandwagon, but now SNP members are not so vocal about it, except perhaps for Andrew Wilson. Perhaps Jim Sillars has more of an effect than we think.

Before members of the other parties start pointing fingers, they should reflect on the current ICM poll that shows that six out of 10 Liberal Democrat voters—I know that is not very many people—and 58 per cent of Labour voters oppose the single currency.

Nice was to be hailed as the great enlargement conference, with the French presidency leading the way. As Conservatives we embrace enlargement. It will be good for Scotland. The expansion east will mean that the axis of Europe will move from Paris to Berlin. I know that some people in my own party, such as Bill Walker, may inhale at the very thought of that, but it will mean that Scotland will be able to look east to the hub of the Baltic to access EU markets, not just south.

The process of enlargement is a soul-searching exercise. To enlighten some members, the EU acts as a referee between member states and applicant countries to ensure that the mass weight of EU legislation is implemented by new countries before they accede. That means that we must look at ourselves before we force rules on others. In Scotland, we have one of the highest rates of implementation, which can only be good news. For France, with over 200 cases outstanding in the EU court, it is not good news.

That is perhaps why the Nice agenda has changed and the French presidency is seeking more of a twin-track Europe. That is not what Scotland needs. The motive for some countries is that if two Europes develop, the few who are now members can hold on to their privileges while new members can find their own way. That would mean, for example, that the French could keep the unreformed common agricultural policy, and Poland's 8 million farmers can do without it. Conservatives want a fairer Europe, not a divided one. We want a larger, looser and freer EU and not an over-integrated and centralised federation.

**Andrew Wilson:** Why does Mr Ben Wallace not want a larger, looser and freer United Kingdom with more devolution within Europe and within the UK?

**Ben Wallace:** I am just coming on to that. How will Scotland be involved? As a result of devolution our concerns are disappearing into a grey area. How many Scottish Executive ministers or officials will be in Nice next week? I bet that representatives of the German Länder will be there. I doubt that we will be. I do not seek that because of some nationalist wish to drive a wedge between Scotland and Westminster but because, as a unionist, I recognise that liaison between the different power bases is vital to ensuring the bounds of the union.

**Mr McConnell:** I am having some difficulty in differentiating the party positions. Could Mr

Wallace clarify Conservative policy? Is he saying that Conservative policy is that if the Conservatives were to form the UK Government after the general election, which may well take place next year, there would be a Scottish representative on the delegations to all intergovernmental conferences and Councils of Ministers?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson):** Please begin to wind up, Mr Wallace.

**Ben Wallace:** The Scottish Conservative position is that we want to ensure the union. The best way to do that is to work well with the different power bases—in Europe, at Westminster and in Scotland—to ensure that we have a good representation of all regions of Europe.

**Mr McConnell:** What is the answer?

**Ben Wallace:** We will make approaches to our colleagues at Westminster to try to ensure that Scotland has a good voice—certainly a better voice than it has when a minister does not turn up for a meeting.

The Executive would no doubt say that UK ministers and the Foreign Office protect our interests. Some members may know that, as a reporter to the European Committee, I am doing a report on EU enlargement. I will not wander on to that, as we have not yet discussed it in the committee. Applicant countries provide negotiation positions, which have important knock-on effects on markets and have implications for legislation in Scotland.

Will the Foreign Office let us know what those positions are? It will not even show us the documents. The other countries will give them to us. The Länder have free access to that information. Poland sent me the Foreign Office document after I rang up. We are not allowed to know in this country what is going on behind the scenes.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Wallace, please wind up.

**Ben Wallace:** If you will give me a bit of leeway—I have taken interventions.

I am not going to go on to defence, as Jamie Stone suggested.

**Mr Stone:** Aw.

**Ben Wallace:** Mr Stone obviously has no idea who is going to provide the lift capacity for the Europe defence force. America does it under the NATO umbrella. By being outside that umbrella we will not have access to that. If he could understand that, we might perhaps have a serious conversation.

I noticed that the SNP's defence adviser,



Lieutenant-Colonel Crawford, was spouting off on defence in *Scotland on Sunday*. We should remember that he suggested biological and chemical weapons as an alternative to Trident. I think that that adviser should be dropped.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Wallace, you must come to a close.

**Ben Wallace:** The Treaty of Nice may or may not be signed next week. The UK must resist closer integration. We should be concentrating on enlargement. In Scotland we should remember that in a federation size does matter. The big dominate the small; the economic policy will fit the large economies and not the small—just ask Ireland.

I will finish with a quotation.

“Above all the EEC takes away Britain’s freedom to follow the sort of economic policies we need. These are two reasons for coming out. Only a Labour Government will do it.”

That was our friend Tony Blair, spouting off when he stood in Beaconsfield.

In its present form, the EU gives us choice and the ability to change our mind. Under the euro form, there would be no changing our mind. We would be stuck in it for ever.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** If time allows, I am quite prepared to make allowances for members who take interventions, but I cannot allow speeches to go on for quite as long as that one did.

11:20

**Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab):** Yes—that must have been a record for a four-minute speech.

The Conservative motion deals with the type of relationship that we, as part of the UK, should have with Europe. I would argue that the type of relationship that can develop depends on the vision of a member state of the role of the European Union. Of course, that will vary depending on political perspectives. That has been clearly shown this morning. Labour sees the EU as having an important role in delivering a social agenda to improve the life chances of citizens. The Conservatives see such developments as unnecessary interference. They argued that changes to the minimum wage would adversely affect jobs. That claim has not come true.

There is no doubt that much needs to be done to regain confidence in the machinery of governance at the EU level. When the European Committee visited Brussels, personnel were at great pains to point out how internal reform would take place in financial management and, more important, in creating more transparency, dialogue and

openness. The latter reform seems to me to be at the heart of a more productive interchange of views between the EU and its member states. That dialogue must connect all sectors: citizens and the business communities. That is essential to deal with the policy priorities for 2000 and beyond, which include, as already mentioned, enlargement, the continuing social agenda, and environmental and sustainable development issues.

If Europe is to continue to develop its ideas for a sustainable future around the sixth environmental action plan, it cannot do so in isolation from economic policies. A central plank of that environmental action plan will be to ensure that every Council of Ministers area—be it agriculture, transport, energy or industry—takes the environmental issue on board. That process has begun, but it is widely recognised that there is a long way to go in raising public awareness and in changing attitudes in industry so that people see the positive side of the environmental agenda.

However, Europe is taking a lead on this issue—as with many other important issues—and is providing a benchmark for member states. Then, of course, we hit the troublesome question of how much flexibility should be allowed for member states, for instance, in applying EU directives. An example of that is the issue that Maureen Macmillan and I raised at Brussels during the European Committee’s visit. We asked about the implications of the water directive for the whisky industry. We have spoken to various interest groups on that issue, and it is clear that much more discussion is needed before the issue is resolved. I am sure that the European Committee, and possibly others, will be actively involved in that important debate.

I return to my initial point: how effective we are in providing real flexibility within a framework of agreed principles will depend very much on the quality of the dialogue between the various institutions. Although many observers argue that the powers of the European Parliament are too little, its influence is growing. I firmly believe that MEPs have a valuable part to play in enhancing the quality of dialogue within and between member states.

Although the Conservative motion uses many of the right words, they do not ring true. I suspect that the Conservatives do not want to take on board many of the points about effective dialogue and the importance of Europe in decision making that I have made.

11:24

**Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP):** It is disappointing that members of the Scottish National Party feel somewhat distanced from this

debate, which seems to be taking place in the context of the continuing debate in British nationalism about our integration further into the European Union. That debate is typified by many of the headlines that we have seen and by the continuing battle between the British unionist parties, Labour and Conservative.

Europe is changing fast. Both Labour and the Conservatives talk about the euro, tax harmonisation, expansion and the spectre of federalism. The hopes and fears that they express are the hopes and fears of the multinational unitary states. The fears are the fears of Spain, France, the UK and, to a somewhat lesser degree, Germany and Italy, the so-called big players in the EU. The message from the big five is that sovereignty as we know it is a thing of the past.

That is not exactly news to members of the Scottish National Party, to the people of Galicia, the Basque country or Catalunya. Those people lost their sovereignty many years ago. I may have to remind some members that independence, the restoration of sovereignty and the right to self-determination are the common goals of nationalist movements across Europe. Nationalist mobilisation has forced the Spanish state and the British state to concede autonomy and devolution respectively. Even France, a bastion of centralist dogma, has made concessions to the Corsicans, giving them legislative powers.

**Mr McConnell:** Will Mr Quinan comment on the fact that the Catalan nationalists no longer support independence for Catalonia and are quite happy to be part of a Spanish state that gives them influence as a powerful region or nation inside the state, and gives them the opportunity to have the influence that Spain has? Would Mr Quinan prefer—and he may want to comment on this because his colleague Mr Wilson does so regularly—Scotland to be more “normal”, like Austria, where the fascists participate in the Government?

**Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP):** That was a cheap, dirty shot.

**Mr McConnell:** That is what was said.

**Mr Quinan:** It is deeply disturbing that the minister with responsibility for external affairs should suggest that the Government of Austria, which was freely elected by the people of Austria, is a fascist Government.

**Mr McConnell:** I said that the fascists participated.

**Mr Quinan:** That may well be the case, but what Mr McConnell said was an insult to the electors of Austria who chose, in a democratic fashion, a particular party. I certainly do not agree with that party's programme, but I respect the right of the

Austrian people to choose the political leadership that they want.

**Ben Wallace:** Will the member give way?

**Mr Quinan:** No I will not, Mr Wallace. I will return to the point that I was making.

A good deal is going on in Europe, but we seldom get the real story in the British press. What we get has just been typified by Mr McConnell's statement that Catalan nationalists no longer support independence. If he is referring to the *Convergència i Unió*, which is the Government in the Generalitat, what he said is true. However, if he looked at the broad spectrum of the other nine nationalist parties in Catalunya, he would find—and this may be deeply disturbing for him—that the parties on the left, especially the Catalan Socialist Party, fully support independence for Catalunya. *Esquerra Republicana* supports it too. Across the devolved and autonomous communities of Spain, the nationalist parties in the centre that do not support independence are losing heavily to the nationalist parties on the left that support independence. That is the reality, but—and this is typical of the Europe debate in the UK—we seldom hear about the reality of day-to-day politics.

This country and this Parliament should develop proper links with the autonomous Parliaments across Europe. In that way, we could develop a proper policy of co-operation. Euskadi—the Basque country—has a dynamic economy, much as Scotland does. It has suffered from industrial decline for many years; its principal industries were based on steel, manufacturing and large-scale engineering, as were ours. Were we to engage directly with parliaments such as the Basque Parliament, we might well be able to influence UK ministers from the correct level—the level of the devolved parliaments. It is vital that Scotland engage with the emerging nations—not the nations that are joining the EU from outside, but the nations that will rise from within, principally Catalunya, Wales and the Basque country.

11:30

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

As my friends in all parties will acknowledge, I am not quick to anger. However, today I felt my temperature rise during certain speeches, in particular those of Jack McConnell and Jamie Stone. I see that Mr Stone has returned to the chamber.

**Mr Stone:** Just for you, Mr Johnstone.

**Alex Johnstone:** The suggestion that the Conservative party is somehow in favour of withdrawal from the European Union is at best naive and in some cases deliberately misleading.

**Mr Stone:** Will the member give way?

**Alex Johnstone:** No, I will not. Mr Stone has had his four minutes and I am damned sure that I will have mine. [MEMBERS: "Ooh."] Excuse me, Presiding Officer.

The fact is that for the vast majority of our membership of the European Union, the United Kingdom has been under a Conservative Government. Conservatives have a proud record: they took us into the European Union and have been involved in every stage of the renegotiation of treaties and our progress to today's position. Margaret Thatcher was the Prime Minister for the vast majority of that time and many of those achievements were hers. It is completely misleading to suggest that the Conservative party has no European record to defend. We have a proud record.

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

**Alex Johnstone:** No. I must move on quickly.

I would like to address the issue of the common agricultural policy. It is a measure of Labour's desperation about the ruins of its short-term agriculture policy that it would rather discuss the long-term agriculture policy. However, the CAP is as much a fact of present-day farming life as it will be in future farming life. The Government wants to talk about strategies for long-term survival, but that is just so much hot air if we cannot ensure the short-term survival of British agriculture. That applies to the CAP as much as to any other aspect of agriculture policy. Our farmers need a Government that is capable of standing up for their interests in Brussels. However, Labour at Westminster and Labour with its Liberal Democrat allies in Scotland are more interested in standing up for the interests of our competitors.

**Mr McConnell:** I will be brief. Will the member confirm that it was the actions of the Conservative Government that led to the beef ban and that it was the Labour Government that got it lifted?

**Alex Johnstone:** It is a fact that the beef ban was introduced during a Conservative Government. However, that was because of legitimate concerns about health issues that were related to several other policies. Labour's claim to have succeeded in lifting the beef ban is not borne out by the evidence of Scotland's beef production and processing industry. If Jack McConnell wants to claim that Labour has lifted the beef ban, he should go and organise some exports for us—if he possibly can.

My final point relates to an issue raised by Sylvia Jackson on the implementation of European directives, specifically the waste water directive. There is a current issue in Dundee, where the

Christian Salvesen vegetable processing plant looks likely to close, with the loss of many jobs in the area. That is due entirely to the way in which the waste water directive has been implemented. That will have massive knock-on effects, particularly on pea and bean production, which is a common activity in Angus and south Kincardine. It is likely that businesses producing up to £3 million for the local economy will be lost. That is due to the fact that, at a time when investment is required to conform to European standards, the industry has no spare capacity for investment.

If there is to be any progress on that issue, we must have a policy that would allow companies such as Christian Salvesen to have adequate opportunity to make changes to their waste water processing. Their competitors in other countries have had that opportunity. Those countries include Holland, Belgium and—surprisingly—England. In Grimsby, the main competitors in the production of vegetables are able to access the necessary equipment and processing capacity for their waste at a much more competitive rate than can be offered by the North of Scotland Water Authority in Scotland.

In considering the requirement to implement European policy, we should bear in mind the way in which we implement it in Scotland and the serious problems that that may cause our companies.

11:35

**Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD):** I am finding this morning's debate rather sad, because it ought to be an opportunity for the Parliament to debate positively what we would like Scotland's role in Europe to be, but instead we are having a debate based on the Europhobia that comes from William Hague and his Conservatives south of the border—sadly, Andrew Wilson appears to be supporting that in principle. It appears that the little Scotlanders are joining the little Englanders.

Andrew Wilson said that he supported the principle of the Conservative motion. The Conservative motion is about Europhobia. As Jamie Stone pointed out, the words

"opposes moves towards a European superstate"

are intended to build up fears about something that is not happening. There are no moves at Nice to build a European superstate. Therefore, the title of the debate is a misnomer—it is about promoting the anti-Europe credentials of the Conservatives, which they believe will win them votes in the election. It has to be said that in last year's European elections, the Conservatives got their lowest ever share of the Scottish electorate's vote—4.92 per cent.

In Scotland, we are not against Europe; we are in favour of Europe. Like many other countries in the European Union, we see Europe as a means to promote and enhance our culture, rather than to absorb it, as the Conservatives suggest.

David McLetchie talked about the nonsense of integration.

**Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Will the member give way?

**Iain Smith:** Not at the moment. I want to make some progress.

Mr McLetchie's watchwords are flexibility and freedom. What sort of flexibility and freedom does he mean? Is it the flexibility of France to flout European regulations and not be taken to the European Court to have them enforced? The flexibility and freedom proposed by the Conservatives in their pre-manifesto suggestion that Britain should opt out of the European Union would unravel the single market.

Lord Howe has said that it would be a

"deeply disturbing proposal. Europe's single market—one of the major achievements of the Thatcher government"—

believe it or not—

"could not survive if every member state claimed the right to interpret or limit its EU obligations to suit its own wishes."

We cannot have a single market as well as the type of flexibility and freedom that David McLetchie seeks.

The history of the Conservatives on Europe can be summed up in the phrase, "It's oor ba and we're no playin." Historically, UK involvement in Europe was about sitting on the sidelines and sitting on our ba while the other countries found another one, made up the rules and got on with playing the game. By the time we came in, the rules had already been made. In many ways, that is why Britain has suffered in Europe. We were not in there at the start, shaping Europe; we came in at the end when Europe had already been shaped. It is sad that we are doing the same thing with regard to the euro.

**Mr McGrigor:** Will the member give way?

**Iain Smith:** I am sorry, but I have no time for interventions.

The Conservatives want Britain to be in Europe, but apart from Europe. The Liberal Democrats want a Britain that is a part of Europe and in the heart of Europe. That is where we differ greatly from the Conservatives.

I would like to say a few words about the European rapid reaction force. The Conservatives have talked a lot of nonsense about that force. The European rapid reaction force is not about setting up a European army for a European

superstate, but is about responding to problems on our doorstep—as we failed to respond in relation to Bosnia. It is an intergovernmental body, rather than a European body. It is for individual Governments in Europe to decide whether they participate in a particular action of the European rapid reaction force. The decision will not rest with the European institutions.

I have two quotations on European policy for members to consider. John Major has called the Conservative policy "absurd and crazy". Douglas Hurd has said that

"Conservative policy on Europe is increasingly based on caricature and not on reality."

Today's debate has been based on the Conservatives' belief in a caricature of Europe, rather than its reality. I urge members to support the Executive amendment.

11:39

**Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab):** I must begin by saying that there is much in the Conservative motion with which we can agree. However, I regret that those elements have been devalued, as Jamie Stone said, by the inclusion of Euro-sceptic phrases about superstates undermining national sovereignty.

Having worked in Europe in 1996 during the last days of the Conservative Administration as a journalist covering European affairs—which Dr Winnie Ewing will remember, because I interviewed her in the European Parliament on many occasions—I could spend a lot of time reflecting on the past, but it is better to look forward constructively at how we can embrace Europe. In particular, I will speak about European enlargement and what it means for Scotland.

I have been privileged to visit east Germany, and my local authority, North Ayrshire Council, is involved in partnership projects with Sachsen-Anhalt. There are real opportunities for Scotland in public sector partnerships. In considering enlargement, it is worth noting that the German economy stands to increase its gross domestic product by up to 0.5 per cent as a result of proximity to markets, good networks to the east and freight transportation corridors. What does Scotland have to do to compete?

One of the challenges that enlargement poses for Scotland concerns structural funds. The next round of structural fund negotiations will almost certainly be the last for Scotland, at least in their current form. Money is moving east, in the direction of the candidate countries. We have to ensure that in Scotland we are geared up to rise to the challenges and opportunities that enlargement presents. Our markets will expand by 100 million consumers. I am pleased to note that the Minister

for Education, Europe and External Affairs said in his speech that we will undertake an economic and social impact assessment of the challenges and opportunities that face the Scottish economy. That is excellent progress.

**Brian Adam:** If Irene Oldfather recognises that there are a potential 100 million new consumers in an expanded market, will she distance herself from the comment made by the minister, who suggested that if Scotland became independent, we would somehow lose access to the market south of the border?

**Irene Oldfather:** As the member knows, independence is a complicated matter. The SNP has not adequately answered this morning how it would renegotiate entry into Europe. There is much that the SNP has to tell us.

**Mr Quinan:** Will the member give way?

**Irene Oldfather:** I will continue. The economic and social impact assessment should be done on a sector-by-sector basis, and encompass the service sector, e-commerce and manufacturing. Scotland's advantage could lie in the new economy industries, such as biotechnology, creative media software and other areas. Developing positive relations with the candidate countries could assist in opening up trade and other opportunities.

Our primary focus must be jobs. We need to encourage strict adherence to the principle that jobs should not be displaced from one part of the European Union to another on the basis of low skills and low wages. That has affected many of us.

While there are clear market opportunities, enlargement should not simply be about that, which is where I disagree with the Conservatives. Enlargement should also be about social progress and the social agenda. Too often, we neglect them. They were certainly neglected during the 18 years of Conservative rule, given the Conservatives' preoccupation with the single market.

The changes in Scotland's political structures and our commitment to a modern and dynamic Scotland within a stronger Britain and a wider Europe are to be welcomed. I am pleased to support Jack McConnell's amendment.

11:44

**Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** I will begin by paying tribute to the European Union, given that no one has mentioned that one of the founding motives for setting up the European Economic Community, as it was at the time, was to avoid war in Europe. Here we are, many generations later, and no generations since

1945 have had to participate in the carnage of war. That is a tribute to the success of the European Union.

Today, we have to make the most of Scotland's new devolved status in the interests of our people. Devolution offers an opportunity not only to raise our profile in Europe, but to try our utmost to influence European events and policy, which have a huge impact in so many areas of this country. We must not remain cocooned in our offices in the Parliament in Edinburgh, simply responding to decisions that are taken elsewhere in Europe in our absence, with no one to speak up for Scotland's interests. The fate of many communities in this country depends upon the outcome of deliberations in the European Union.

Consider rural affairs. Of the Scottish Executive rural affairs department's budget, three quarters comes from Europe. Our Minister for Rural Development is nothing more than a postman for the European Union, so it is imperative that we have the utmost say over decisions that are taken and the rules that are laid down on the spending of rural affairs budgets.

Time and again, Opposition members in the chamber have asked the Minister for Rural Development at question time about a scheme to help the pig industry. We have said to the minister, "Why can't you do something about this? The decision is taken in Europe. Why can't you go to Europe and speak to the agriculture and fisheries commissioner or whoever?"

The fishing industry is a prime example of how no one is speaking up for our interests in the European Union. Surely, when 70 per cent of the UK's fishing industry and 90 per cent of its aquaculture industry are based in Scotland, as of right the UK's representative at European negotiations on fisheries matters should be a Scottish minister. That makes absolute sense. In that way, this Parliament would have real clout in Europe.

**Mr McConnell** rose—

**Richard Lochhead:** I have a feeling that the minister wants to intervene.

**Mr McConnell:** It would be more honest if Mr Lochhead admitted that time and again the Scottish Minister for Rural Development leads the delegation to the fisheries council, that time and again the Scottish input to the fisheries council is clear, and that the UK's weight and power in that council give us the clout to influence the decisions that are made. It is time that he admitted those points, rather than make up the same kind of scare stories that we get from the Conservatives.

**Richard Lochhead:** The minister simply refuses to accept the fact that the official representative of

the UK at fisheries negotiations is the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who is responsible for the English and Welsh fishing industry. That is unacceptable post-devolution.

Members should consider the example of how we are trying to get tier-testing for the scallop industry. We are told by Europe that it will be well into next year before we get a new scheme to help our scallop industry to get its markets back, and we are told, "Sorry. That's the way things are. We can't do anything about it." If Scotland had its own representatives in Europe and the clout of an independent member state, Europe would sit up and listen to us. We should not just sit here in Edinburgh and say, "That's the way things are. We can't change them." We should not be saying that to our fishermen.

There is a tendency for the Government to blame all the unpopular regulations on Europe, and take all the credit for the good regulations that come out of Europe. That is unacceptable. I could list such regulations endlessly, but I see that I am running out of time.

We need our own representation in the formal and informal structures of the European Union. We know that many decisions are taken behind the scenes, and that the fine details are worked out before we get to the Council of Ministers, yet Scotland has no formal representation in any of the structures behind the Council of Ministers. We have to stop playing catch-up.

Let us consider the situation when crops in Scotland were contaminated with genetically modified seeds. The UK minister in London did not tell the Scottish minister that that had happened. GM technology is a very important issue. Had we had our own representation in Europe, we would have found out immediately about the contamination. We should not have to rely on UK ministers remembering to tell the Scottish Government. Indeed, decisions on GM crop trials are taken in Europe. Despite the fact that there are protests in Scotland about proceeding with GM crop trials, the Minister for Rural Development can turn round and say, "Sorry. That is a regulation decided in Europe." Of course, that was a regulation into which Scotland had no input, although it is a massive issue.

Finally, there is a poster all over Parliament today announcing that there will be a presentation by the Swedish ambassador to the UK, called "Sweden's Presidency of the European Union: Proposals and Priorities". Surely whatever is good enough for Sweden is good enough for Scotland. Would not it make sense for the Swedish Parliament to have a poster saying that the Scottish ambassador to Sweden will discuss the Scottish presidency of the European Union? Surely we have as much status in Europe as other

small countries such as Sweden, and we should have equal rights.

11:49

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** In supporting the motion, I would like to refer to enlargement. Put simply, size matters. Size matters because we do not want a superstate. We do not want what Jamie Stone and the other Liberal Democrats argue for—a federal Europe. We do not want a one-size-fits-all currency, which the Liberal Democrats support. I will explain why.

As long as the politicians of the left dominate Europe, we will have high tax, high unemployment and a weak currency—the euro. The right-wing model—the American model, if you like—delivers low tax, low unemployment and a strong currency. Britain's, and therefore Scotland's, position lies between the two models at the moment, enjoying the best of both worlds.

However, the recent announcements by Gordon Brown will start to move us much further towards the European model of tax and spend. That is not only my observation. That is the conclusion of the worldwide stock markets and currency markets. That is why the pound is at a 15-year low against the dollar, and why it is now tracking the euro.

Little by little—by stealth, if you like—we are being moved towards an increasing burden of taxation and nearer to the European style of economy. However, we ain't seen nothing yet. I refer to enlargement.

**Mr McConnell:** Mr Scott's colleague, Mr Johnstone, constantly complains in the chamber that the pound is too highly valued. Mr Scott now complains that the pound is too low. Which statement represents Conservative policy?

**John Scott:** I am making an observation that we do not want to be part of the euro. My colleague Alex Johnstone agrees.

**Iain Smith** *rose*—

**Mr Stone** *rose*—

**John Scott:** Not just now.

We welcome the potential trading benefits that enlargement may bring and the increased security that we all agree that it will bring, but that is as far as it should go. We must be realistic. In the short and medium term, enlargement will have several effects of which we need to be aware.

First, enlargement will affect countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Ireland, which have been the net recipients of huge amounts of objective 1 funding up to now—Irene Oldfather referred to that.

**Mr Quinan:** Does the member agree that the

Basque autonomous community and the autonomous Foral community of Navarra gained their applications for European funding by dint of the fact that they raise their own taxes? That allows them to choose which of the structural funds or which of any of the LEADER or INTERREG programmes for Europe they wish to be involved in. The decisions are made directly at the autonomous community level. That right should be extended to us.

**John Scott:** The point that I am about to make is that there will no longer be any choice in the matter. Members will hear why.

**Mr Quinan:** Will Mr Scott take an intervention further to that point?

**John Scott:** No, thank you.

The objective 1 countries that have been the net recipients of huge amounts of funding will, as we are discovering in Scotland, start to receive less structural aid. Enlargement will mean that those precious resources, raised from our taxes, will move east—rightly, perhaps—to the poorer countries.

That will not happen quickly, because the countries that have been the net beneficiaries and will now become the donors will not give up easily the privileges that they have enjoyed. Feet dragging will occur on a massive scale but, ultimately, enlargement will take place. Put simply, western Europe's taxes will fund the redevelopment of eastern Europe.

I think that most members agree that that task is worth while and a price that is worth paying for the security of Europe. However, we do not want to be sucked any further into an integrated Europe than we have been. Let us be under no illusion—the cost of enlargement will be the export of British jobs, Scottish jobs and Ayrshire jobs—as Cathy Jamieson knows—to eastern Europe. That is already happening, as brave business people are starting to relocate there.

Enlargement is a double-edged sword. It may lead to more export markets for business, 20 or 30 years hence, but until then, in purely financial terms, the cost-benefit analysis will not favour Scotland or Britain. That is why we should not move hastily towards a superstate. That is why we should not give the EU more control of our economy.

**Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)** *rose—*

**John Scott:** No, thank you.

That is why qualified majority voting is such a bad idea. Any further loss of our sovereign power is to be resisted.

11:55

**Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP):** I meant to start by asking Mr Mundell whether he would make clear what his leader, Mr McLetchie, did not—the Conservative party's attitude to the euro. However, Mr Scott has done that for him, so Mr Mundell need not bother too much about the euro. I will repeat what Mr Scott said, as I was so glad to hear it. He said that we do not want to be part of the euro. I am not a Europhobe, but I think that a healthy touch of scepticism on the euro is well placed.

As we are all putting records straight about where we were in the 1970s and 1980s, I will add that I did not inhale, so I remember the 1970s and campaigning strongly under the slogan, "No voice, no entry". That is where I stand today. If Scotland has a voice in Europe, I do not see why it should be submerged by Europe. David McLetchie suggested that that was what the SNP wanted. He is so wrong. The SNP wants Scotland to be up-front, visible and equal in Europe, not submerged. That is why we cannot support any of the rubbish in the Labour party's amendment.

I want to take Mr McConnell to task. I understood that he could not give way during his speech because of the time limit, but he gave the impression that he wanted the chamber to do the job of the Confederation of British Industry and pave the way for business in Poland and similar places. I have no doubt that, with his background, Mr McConnell would be a great addition to the general effort in building up economic and trade links throughout Europe. However, I do not think that that is the Parliament's main function. Our main function is to contribute to the growth of Europe and the context in which the continent will develop in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is not enough for Labour to suggest, as it does in its amendment, that there are different levels of participation, and that it is suitable for the Scottish ministers to take part at some levels. I attended a conference in Maastricht recently—unfortunately it was not an intergovernmental conference—that the eminent Professor Guenther Schaefer addressed. I see Ben Wallace smiling at the memory of that. The professor said that we were headed for a federal Europe and that we—including members in the chamber—should not kid ourselves that the European Committee of the Regions had any power. He said that it was the least effective of all the European institutions. I wonder whether that is why that committee is not mentioned in Labour's amendment. It was the fig leaf that Labour used in the European Committee, when the Parliament started, to suggest that Scotland was represented in Europe. We will have no such thing without proper independence.

Jamie Stone discussed peace and stability.

**Mr McConnell:** Will the member give way?

**Ms MacDonald:** I am terribly sorry. I will see whether I have time at the end of my speech.

The one way of creating havoc in Europe is by trying to make everyone fit the same shoe, which is what is happening now. That has been responsible for the rise of the far-right parties in Austria and Germany. Even the applicant countries are experiencing a rise in the sort of politics that we do not want to exist in Europe. I maintain that if we try to impose cosmopolitanism, we undermine not nationalist fascists but internationalism.

**Mr Stone:** Will the member give way?

**Ms MacDonald:** I am terribly sorry.

Sylvia Jackson and Irene Oldfather contributed most to the debate from Labour because they observed the practicalities. Sylvia talked about how the environment would be pan-European—all of us would say that that was an admirable objective. However, we cannot have that without a cohesive economic strategy, and we cannot have that in this world without a cohesive energy strategy. How many members are willing to allow a British Government to do in the context of renewable energy what was done to Scottish oil? Whether Labour or Tory Governments, they squandered that resource.

I am unwilling to give up sovereignty over those natural resources. I want the Parliament to represent Scotland and Scots, and the resources of Scotland, which should contribute to the resources of Europe. Those resources should not be taken over by Europeans, or by British Governments, which have such a poor track record, not only on energy but on fishing.

I am sorry that I have been unable to allow the minister to intervene, but he has more of a chance to speak than me.

11:59

**Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab):** I was sorry that Alex Johnstone was unable to take my intervention. It is fascinating to hear the new Tory soundbite—size matters. It is obvious that all the male Tory MSPs have been given that as this morning's line. It is not size, but what you do with it, that matters. I want to talk about what we do in Europe. I apologise to Jamie Stone for that line—I know that he would die to come up with it.

On a serious note, we heard from Tory members what Margaret Thatcher was able to get from the European Union. I want to remind the chamber what the Tories did not do. They did not sign up to the social chapter; they did not want to implement

the working time directive; they did not want the minimum wage; they did not want to improve maternity rights for women; they did not want—

**Ben Wallace:** Does Cathy Jamieson recognise that the Scottish or Westminster Parliaments could, if they so desired, legislate on all those matters without having legislation imposed by Europe?

**Cathy Jamieson:** I remind Ben Wallace that although the Westminster Parliament had the opportunity to legislate on those matters during the Tory Government, a decision had to come from the European Court of Justice to ensure that the Equal Pay Act 1970 was amended to ensure that women were paid the same rate for the job as men. Occasionally, Europe has given us the opportunity to create a fairer and more just society.

Sylvia Jackson, Irene Oldfather, Iain Smith and Margo MacDonald touched on the fact that the debate is not just about what we can get out of Europe for Scotland or Britain, but about taking our place in the wider European and global contexts. I, and my party, want a fairer society across Europe, which sometimes means that countries that are entering the European Union and do not have our resources, human rights record or principles will have the opportunity to use some of our resources. I say to John Scott that redistribution of wealth is a fundamental principle and, if we are to seek a fairer and more just society, I for one have no problem with it.

**John Scott:** I apologise for not taking Cathy Jamieson's intervention—I did not see her. If she had listened to my speech, she would have heard me say that using western European taxes to redevelop eastern Europe would be a price worth paying. I would like her to note that as a point of information.

**Cathy Jamieson:** I thank John Scott for his intervention. I am delighted to learn of his conversion to the socialist cause and I look forward to working with him on job creation in Ayrshire, given that he did me the courtesy of mentioning such schemes.

I want to remind members what the IGC in Nice is about. It is clear from the items on the agenda that the conference is not about creating a European superstate. Rather, it is about making practical arrangements to deal with the process of enlargement.

The conference will consider

"Changing the voting arrangements in the Council of Ministers, so that a country's voting weight more accurately reflects its size"

and



"Extending the qualified majority voting in the Council, so that decisions can be taken effectively in an enlarged Union".

The conference will also continue the reforms of the Commission, which have been started, to prevent it "becoming top heavy".

At some points during the debate, one could have been forgiven for thinking that there is no such institution as the European Parliament, as so few members mentioned it or the moves that have been made towards both co-decision making and ensuring that the European Union operates more democratically. That is the position on which my party wants to move forward.

On whether we should join the euro, I want to put on record the fact that while the SNP wants to jump in right now and the Conservative party wants nothing to do with it, my party makes it clear that we will join the euro only if it is in our interests to do so. The people will have the final say in a referendum. That is real democracy and I have no difficulty defending that position.

12:04

**Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP):** I am delighted to speak on the topic of Europe, which is dear and close to all our hearts.

Historically, we have always been closely associated with Europe. As Jamie Stone said, we have fought for and with different European peoples many times over the past couple of hundred years. Our association with Europe has never been broken, apart from when we were very closely—perhaps too closely—linked to British imperialism.

It is a little naive of Jack McConnell to suggest that there is no agenda for a united states of Europe. That does not mean that I want a united states of Europe—I do not think that anyone in the chamber wants that—but some of the people who suffered so much in the two or three wars fought by the French and Germans believe that a united states of Europe is the only solution. We must guard against that solution and, if he has not done so already, Jack McConnell should take that on board.

All members know that the SNP wants independence in Europe—that is, normality. We accept that some formalisation of international relations is necessary. We have common interests in trade and in international issues such as the environment, which cannot be kept within national frontiers. That, along with keeping the peace, is the justification for Europe as it exists today.

We all share a suspicion about why the Tories lodged this motion. With all due respect to the Scottish Tories, Mr Hague has a Euro-sceptic view

and we wonder to what extent that view drives the Conservative party. When Tories talk about a superstate, they are using Tory propaganda. When Mary Scanlon talked about euroland, she was using Tory propaganda. We wonder whether there is an underlying and total scepticism about—

**Mary Scanlon:** Will the member give way?

**Colin Campbell:** Certainly.

**Mary Scanlon:** I want to confirm that the economic terms for the countries that have entered the single currency are euro zone or euroland. Those terms are used in all the economic journals.

**Colin Campbell:** I am prepared to accept that explanation, although I find the term euroland a little offensive.

David McLetchie wanted Scotland to celebrate diversity as a region of the United Kingdom. What better way to celebrate diversity than for Scotland to become an independent nation within Europe? I say to those who are a little sceptical about qualified majority voting that at least Scotland would be able to exercise three votes of its own, rather than a small share of British influence.

**Ben Wallace:** Will the member give way?

**Colin Campbell:** No, not just now.

It is interesting to note that the Tories have lifted the Scottish National Party's policy on zonal control of fishing. I am delighted that they are beginning to pick up some of our policies, much as the Labour party does constantly.

Jack McConnell talked about the underlying innuendo in the Tory motion, but then said that after independence we would be cut off from our markets in England. What absurd, total nonsense. Scotland is in the European Union, as is the rest of the United Kingdom, and the law of the successor state—and anything else one could think of—would guarantee that Scotland would remain in the European Union. The talk of an independent Scotland having no markets in England is low, cheap propaganda. In addition, as the largest oil and energy producer in the European Union, Scotland could probably negotiate a marginally better deal than the deal that we have as part of the UK.

Jack McConnell also made a comment that was a slur on Austria. Austria has a bad inter-war past and a bad history of fascism. However, the people of Austria held a democratic election and voted for what they wanted. Some of what they wanted was repellent to all of us, but casting aspersions on the entire population of Austria on the strength of that election, particularly when many took to the streets and demonstrated against the result, is impolitic to say the least. It is interesting to note that the first

party to rush to form a coalition with the fascists was the Austrian social democratic party.

Much is made of the representation that we get through the UK, but in Scotland we get what we need from the United Kingdom only when what we need happens to converge with English interests. I am a politician and a realist, and I believe that we all understand that when they are abroad and there is no such convergence, British Government ministers look to the 50 million people in the rest of the United Kingdom more than they do to the 5 million people in Scotland.

I have here an interesting note that shows the number of ministerial visits to the EU: there have been nine out of a possible 103 since devolution. I see that Jack McConnell is shaking his head, but I have the figures here and I will give him the note after the debate.

The areas from which we are excluded are the reserved areas that are vital to Scotland. Much has been said about Scotland House and what it can do for us. I am sure that Scotland House does a good job and that the people who work there are highly motivated and are doing their best, but nobody can convince me that having a real Prime Minister of a real independent Scotland at an intergovernmental conference and ministers of an independent Scotland at ministerial conferences would not have a lot more clout than an office in Brussels.

**Ben Wallace:** Why would a Prime Minister of Scotland, with three votes, be listened to by the Prime Minister of Spain, with more than 10 votes, when it comes to fishing policy?

**Colin Campbell:** I am quite sure that there is common interest among the small states in Europe which, when put together, could probably take care of some of the larger states in Europe. Negotiating on our own behalf is always going to be a better thing than having our negotiations carried out by a majority whose interests are not always necessarily ours.

Have I come to the end of my time, Presiding Officer?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Some time ago, Mr Campbell.

**Colin Campbell:** Well, as long as you enjoyed my speech, and while you are still smiling at me, I will sit down.

12:11

**The Deputy Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Nicol Stephen):** I am pleased to sum up the debate on behalf of a positive, pro-European Scottish Executive in response to a motion from an increasingly anti-

European, Europhobic and Euro-bashing Tory party.

We recognise the importance of Europe to Scottish interests and we want Scotland and the UK to be positive and constructive in dealings with Europe. We want Scotland to be more international and more outward looking, to engage with the nations and regions of Europe, to get involved with EU councils and to support the enlargement process that is being discussed at Nice. Not only is that important to our economy, it will help us to protect the Scottish environment, to assist the development of less fortunate regions and to promote increasing peace in Europe. After the events of the past few years, surely that must still be a high priority.

We have heard the rhetoric of the past few weeks on defence issues. Margaret Thatcher has slammed the proposed European defence force, saying that those matters should be left to the English-speaking nations. That is why the attacks from the Tory party fill me with horror. It is the language of prejudice and parochialism. Chris Patten himself said that, on this issue, William Hague has made a considerable mistake.

I believe that many Conservatives, in their heart of hearts, are deeply uncomfortable with the real intention that underlies this debate. They are being asked to toe the William Hague line—anti-European, anti-asylum seeker, little Englander, nationalistic. Hague's style is to promote the rabble-rousing rant against Europe. David McLetchie, thankfully and appropriately, was more muted today, but let us be in no doubt that the little Englander attitude is still alive and well and kicking in the Conservative party of 2000.

One of the most pathetic sights that I have witnessed in politics—and I mean pathetic in the true sense of pathos—was John Major in the Maastricht debate, trying to parade his pro-European credentials for the benefit of Heseltine, Clarke, Heath and Howe, while also posturing to the Euro-sceptics, who would eventually destroy him, with an ostentatious parade of UK opt-outs. The Tories face two ways on Europe.

David McLetchie suggested that all that is in the past. Well, let us bring him up to date. On 5 October 2000, Michael Heseltine said:

"Every Conservative Prime Minister since Harold Macmillan has recognised Britain's self-interest could be pursued only if our political leaders took their place in the councils of Europe and fought there for that self-interest . . . Increasingly, the language of today implies the psychology of the empty chair. There is a growing band of party members who would like to remove the chair from the table altogether."

On 3 October 2000, Ken Clarke, after listening to a Michael Portillo speech, said:

"When he got to the obligatory euro bit . . . It was what I sadly regard as blithering economic nonsense."

Again in early October 2000, Geoffrey Howe said of the proposed Tory draft manifesto:

"Legislation along the lines proposed would be quite incompatible with any aspiration for Britain to remain an influential and effective member of the European Union."

Last, and perhaps most alarming of all, *The Independent* reported on 21 November 2000:

"Baroness Thatcher believes that a future Tory government might have to pull Britain out of the European Union, her close ally Lord Tebbit said yesterday. In an interview to mark Lady Thatcher's resignation as Prime Minister 10 years ago tomorrow, Lord Tebbit suggested that William Hague's policy of being 'in Europe, not run by Europe' could lead to Britain's withdrawal."

In the midst of all that Tory infighting, let us remind ourselves of an important set of facts. Who signed up to the Single European Act of 1986? Who introduced the most extensive expansion of qualified majority voting since the creation of the EU? The Conservative party. No wonder the word flexibility appears in the Conservatives' motion; it is needed to understand their wide range of views and cope with their wide range of policies on this issue.

**Ben Wallace:** On wide-ranging views, will the minister comment on Lord Owen, himself a prominent past member of the Social Democratic Party, who is very much against Europe and the euro?

**Nicol Stephen:** I disagree strongly with Lord Owen.

How can "consensus and co-operation" appear in the Conservative motion? Mr McLetchie is still in a party that is split from the very top to the very bottom on Europe. However, my real incredulity today is reserved for the SNP's support for the Conservative motion. The SNP is supporting a Tory motion on Europe that seeks to whip up fear of a European superstate. What we are talking about and what the Nice summit is all about is sensible enlargement of the EU, which every major party in this Parliament supports.

Let us get away from the dark xenophobic rhetoric and focus on the facts. Being pro-European means being pro-Scotland. Europe gives Scotland its largest trading partner. It gives Scotland the opportunity for a stronger economy and the opportunity to create new investment and new jobs. It also gives Scotland the prospect of a better, cleaner environment, increased security, an extension to democracy, a fairer society and a safer Europe free of war. Those are the prizes that are too often ignored, and they are the prizes that enlargement will help us to secure.

We have to be single-minded in achieving those aims. We must stand up for Scottish interests and

be constructive in our support for and criticisms of Europe. We must never be half-hearted, grudging or destructive, which is the Conservative position. The Conservatives must learn again what they learned before—that they are playing with fire on Europe. The flames will not only burn their party; they will leave Scottish and British interests in ashes if Conservative policies are pursued.

If Britain or Scotland are marginalised in Europe—and that is what the Conservatives want—we will be able neither to share in its successes nor to tackle its failings. That is why we must not only embrace enlargement, but continue to develop, not downgrade or destroy, our links with and our commitment to Europe. That is what the Scottish Executive supports.

12:19

**David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con):** Well, that was an end, was it not? I do not think that I will be able to take any direct quotations from the minister's speech because it was just one cliché after another borrowed from somewhere else.

I had intended to start by congratulating Mr McConnell on the focus that his department is putting on Europe and external affairs. I had also intended to mention the work of Scotland House, which I think is most valuable. Had Mr McConnell's amendment begun with the word "and", I do not think that many members, apart from SNP members, could not have supported it.

For me, this has been a disappointing debate because, rather than discuss the Conservative motion, members from other parties have merely attempted to characterise the Scottish Conservative position as extreme and out of touch. There can be no doubt that our overriding principle of being in Europe but not run by Europe strikes a chord with people in Scotland.

I want to make it quite clear to Nicol Stephen that I do not believe that any person who has the economic, social and cultural interests of Scotland or the United Kingdom at heart could reach the conclusion that Scotland or the United Kingdom should withdraw from the European Union. There is no support in Scotland for such views, as was evidenced by last year's European parliamentary elections, in which the UK Independence Party polled even fewer votes than the so-called Pro Euro Conservatives. The Pro Euro Conservatives polled so few votes in Scotland because people understood that the Scottish Conservatives are a mainstream party with a view on Europe that accords with that of the people of Scotland.

There are, however, many legitimate concerns about the future of Europe, particularly at this time of enlargement. There are real arguments to be

had on the euro, on governance and on the common agricultural policy, all of which have been debated this morning. Expressing those concerns is not anti-European. Unlike other parties, we are not afraid to raise them.

Jamie Stone's speech on behalf of the Liberal Democrats was truly in the mode of the buffoon's buffoon. He said precisely nothing about his party's policies on Europe and how it should move forward. Although Iain Smith may have been sad about the tone of the debate, he did nothing to raise it and fell into the stereotypical position of "let's slag off the Conservatives". Andrew Wilson, who has left the chamber, today left the flag-waving for which he is famous to Margo MacDonald. Other than Margo's speech, which some would describe as brave, we have heard the same old record from the SNP.

As was evidenced by the speeches of Sylvia Jackson and Irene Oldfather—whom I encounter regularly on the European Committee—there are members of this Parliament who want to debate and discuss Europe in a constructive way. All members of the European Committee would recognise that Ben Wallace and I have also attempted to do that. We have not used the European Committee for a political purpose or as a wrecking mechanism on EU issues. We have sought to have the concerns of Scotland discussed in an appropriate way.

**Mr McConnell** rose—

**Mr Stone** rose—

**David Mundell:** On this occasion, I would prefer to take an intervention from Jack McConnell rather than from Mr Stone.

**Mr McConnell:** From my limited experience of the European Committee, I am happy to endorse what David Mundell has said about the approach that he and Mr Wallace take. I would like to ask him two questions. First, does he endorse the wholehearted opposition to the euro that his front-bench colleague expressed earlier, or does he believe that at some stage in the future Britain might become part of the euro zone? Secondly, Mr McLetchie said that he opposes any extension of qualified majority voting in an enlarged Europe. Would David Mundell oppose the extension of qualified majority voting if it were in the interests of Britain and Scotland and would reform the EU?

**Mr Stone:** I bet he wishes he had taken an intervention from me.

**David Mundell:** Yes—I know something about cheese.

I agree with Mr McConnell, because our interests are the interests of Britain and Scotland. Those must be the overriding factor. We have never said anything to contradict that. We have

made our policy clear and we are happy to discuss it. If the Conservatives form a Government at UK level, Britain will not join the euro during the next Parliament. However, we have never said that under a Conservative Government Britain would never join the euro.

**Mr Stone:** Mr Mundell is the reasonable face of Scottish Conservatism. On 19 October *The Guardian* published a survey that showed that 46 per cent of Tory candidates in target seats are opposed in principle to the euro and would defy the leadership if asked to support Britain's joining the single currency. What does the member have to say about that?

**David Mundell:** I say that 60 per cent of Liberal Democrat voters are against Britain joining the euro.

**Colin Campbell:** David Mundell says that, in the event of there being another Tory Government—which is unlikely—it would not enter the euro.

**Ben Wallace:** Unlikely?

**Colin Campbell:** I am sorry, but there are realities in this world.

**Ben Wallace:** Like independence.

**Colin Campbell:** That is the ultimate reality. It is closer than it was five years ago. I have had enough of Ben Wallace's cheek.

In the event of all the convergence criteria for entry to the euro being met perfectly, in the minds of the experts, in the middle of the next—unlikely—Tory Government's term, would not the Tories look a bit foolish if they did not take the opportunity to join the euro?

**David Mundell:** I do not think that it is useful to speculate on hypotheticals of hypotheticals. We have made our position clear, and it is principled. As is becoming increasingly clear, the position of the Labour party is based on the way some focus group in Milton Keynes is swaying.

**Iain Smith:** Will the member give way?

**David Mundell:** I will accept an intervention from the member if he has something positive to say that is not clichéd.

**Iain Smith:** I would like some clarification of the Conservative party's position on the euro. On the one hand David Mundell is saying that a Conservative Government would enter the euro if that was in Britain's interests, but on the other he is saying that a Conservative Government would rule that out for all of the next Parliament—although he is not prepared to speculate on the future. The Conservative party's position on the euro is unclear to me. Would a Conservative Government enter the euro if that was in Britain's and Scotland's interests—yes or no?

**David Mundell:** I have made our position clear.

**Ms MacDonald:** Will the member clarify it further? Is the Conservative party's position the same as that of the Labour party, to the extent that if, during the Parliament after next, the Conservative party is the Government at Westminster and Westminster is still governing Scotland, it will ask the audience?

**David Mundell:** After Margo MacDonald's speech today, she will not have many friends in her party to phone.

**Cathy Jamieson:** Will the member give way?

**David Mundell:** I will not, but not because I am prejudiced against Cathy Jamieson. In her speech she made some useful points about the changing role of the European Parliament, which up to that point had not been mentioned in the debate.

At one stage, although with a misguided focus, Mr McConnell hit on everyone's main concern about the EU: jobs and employment. There have been positive developments in the EU's approach to that issue. The Lisbon summit was quite different from previous summits, as it focused on making Europe the most competitive and dynamic economy in the world. We have no difficulty in signing up to that proposition. We believe that the European Union should concentrate on facilitation, rather than on bureaucratic intervention and over-regulation. We want to encourage it to take as its primary purpose innovation and enterprise among businesses.

Although enlargement brings with it many threats—the entry of Poland into the EU, in particular, raises issues relating to agriculture—our continued membership of the EU offers our businesses the opportunity to be part of a market that not even the United States can replicate.

I will make a final observation in relation to mobile technology and e-business. In the US it is unregulated, so someone who travels about 60 miles has to take three or four phones. In Europe, we have been able to co-ordinate it and in some areas we are ahead in the e-revolution, which will have an enormous impact on globalisation.

Europe can offer positive features such as that, but there are legitimate concerns, including those about Scotland, which can be raised in this Parliament. The Conservatives want an enlarged Europe that is flexible enough to deal with the host of economic, social and governmental issues that arise from the huge differences in its member states. We are ready to do that.

It is important that we have that debate in Scotland. It is a pity that, on the evidence of today, other parties are not prepared to engage in it.

## Business Motion

12:30

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson):** The next item of business is motion S1M-1403, in the name of Mr Tom McCabe, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, which sets out the business programme.

**The Deputy Minister for Parliament (Tavish Scott):** Before I move the business motion, I would like to intimate that it is the intention to take Parliamentary Bureau motions on Wednesday 6 December at 2:30—immediately after time for reflection.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 6 December 2000

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Stage 3 Debate on the Abolition of Poindings and Warrant Sales Bill
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business - debate on the subject of S1M-1286 Tommy Sheridan: Glasgow Light Rail Scheme

Thursday 7 December 2000

9.30 am	Ministerial Statement on Local Government Settlement
<i>followed by</i>	Executive Debate on Sea Fisheries
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motion
2.30 pm	Question Time
3.10 pm	First Minister's Question Time
3.30 pm	Executive Debate on Development of a National Alcohol Misuse Strategy
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business - debate on the subject of S1M-1363 Scott Barrie: Let's Keep It Safe

Wednesday 13 December 2000

9.30 am	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Education, Culture and Sport Committee and Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee Debate on SQA Inquiries
2.30 pm	Finance Committee Debate on 2001-02 Budget Process Stage 2
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business - debate on the  
 subject of S1M-1206 Lord James  
 Douglas-Hamilton: Abercorn Primary  
 School West Lothian

Thursday 14 December 2000

9.30 am Scottish National Party Business  
*followed by* Ministerial Statement  
*followed by* Business Motion  
 2.30 pm Question Time  
 3.10 pm First Minister's Question Time  
 3.30 pm Executive Business  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** No member has asked to speak against the motion. I will therefore put the question to the chamber. The question is, that motion S1M-1403, in the name of Mr Tom McCabe, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

12:31

*Meeting suspended until 14:30.*

14:30

*On resuming—*

## Question Time

### SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

#### Manufacturing

**1. Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive how it will address the expected loss of between 3,000 and 10,000—

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** Order. I have told Mr Gibson before that he must read the question accurately.

**Mr Gibson:** That was exactly what is in the business bulletin.

**The Presiding Officer:** No it was not. Read the question again.

**Mr Gibson:** We get told to be more spontaneous and look what happens. [*Laughter.*]

To ask the Scottish Executive how it will address the possible loss of between 3,000 and 10,000 manufacturing jobs in Glasgow by 2005, highlighted in "Glasgow's Renewed Prosperity" by Glasgow City Council and Scottish Enterprise Glasgow. (S1O-2599)

**The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander):** I am delighted to announce that the Scottish Executive will allocate a further £2 million to Scottish Enterprise Glasgow to develop an industrial site in the city.

**Mr Gibson:** I welcome the minister's reply, but she will be aware that, although manufacturing employment is expected to fall by 13 per cent throughout Scotland in the next five years, it is expected to fall by 27 per cent in Glasgow. Given that Glasgow has the highest level of resident unemployment of any city in Britain, what additional steps will the Executive take on infrastructure development to secure increased investment and employment in Glasgow's hard-pressed manufacturing sector and to reverse the continued haemorrhage of full-time manual jobs? I am sure that the minister will agree that an additional £2 million is not enough.

**Ms Alexander:** I thank the member for welcoming the additional resources that we have made available.

Regional selective assistance has been successful in protecting 10,000 jobs in the city in the past five years. I am sure that, if further jobs are put under threat, we will want to act appropriately. I draw Mr Gibson's attention to the

fact that the unemployment figure in the city of Glasgow has fallen by 2,800 in the past year as a result of the efforts of the partnership and the Government.

**Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con):** I, too, welcome the minister's reply and note the reduction in Glasgow's unemployment figures, which is welcome. However, does the minister agree that the situation might be improved if she advised the other members of the Executive that more jobs could be attracted to Glasgow by proper devolution of Scottish Executive departments?

**Ms Alexander:** I speak only for myself, but I spend every moment that I can in the west. As Mr Gibson knows, a relocation programme is under way. In addition, the Executive is committed to assisting Glasgow to rebuild every secondary school in the city and clear Glasgow's housing debt. That will make possible substantial reinvestment in housing and it will support the Glasgow science centre and assist the city in a wide variety of other areas, including extending the Glasgow royal maternity hospital. Glasgow is a significant priority—as is appropriate—for the Executive.

#### Children's Diet (Milk)

**2. Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what steps it is taking to ensure that milk is part of children's diets. (S10-2621)

**The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm):** The Scottish diet action plan provides the framework for improving children's diets, to which milk makes an important contribution.

**Margaret Jamieson:** Does the minister agree that further encouragement should be given to local authorities, health trusts and health boards to work in partnership to provide a balanced approach to meeting children's dietary requirements, as do East Ayrshire Council and its health partners?

**Malcolm Chisholm:** The diet action plan provides an excellent statement of policy, but the task is to drive forward implementation. I am delighted to hear that progress is being made in Ayrshire through partnership. Extra resources have been put in from the health improvement fund and from the milk subsidy scheme to drive forward this important aspect of health policy. A range of initiatives is on the go. We want to encourage in particular the development of initiatives such as the excellent community food initiatives that exist in so many parts of Scotland.

**Fergus Ewing (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP):** Is the minister aware that, in the past few days, the Cabinet in the National

Assembly for Wales promised that by summer next year, every child in every nursery and primary school in Wales will enjoy free milk every day? If that can be done in Wales, can it be done in Scotland?

**Malcolm Chisholm:** Last week, the Executive announced £380,000 to provide milk to a large number of people in nursery and primary schools in Scotland. I am sure that that has been welcomed throughout Scotland, but I am disappointed that it has not been welcomed by Fergus Ewing.

#### Central Heating

**3. Fiona Hyslop (SNP) Lothians:** To ask the Scottish Executive what allocations have been made to date of the resources for central heating installation announced on 19 September 2000. (S10-2637)

**The Minister for Social Justice (Jackie Baillie):** No resources have yet been allocated, as the programme starts in April 2001. We are in discussion with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and Scottish Homes about the allocations to local authorities and housing associations. We are also considering the resources that will be made available in the first year of the scheme for the private sector. An announcement will be made in due course.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Does the minister acknowledge that it has been a long two and a half months since the original announcement? What reassurances can she give to local authorities, manufacturers and gas contractors that the proposal will be carried out to time? Can she give reassurances about where the £350 million is coming from? Some of the concerns of the groups that I mentioned relate to the fact that only £120 million of the money has been allocated. There are concerns that the announcement was premature and has not been thought through. It is vital that it be delivered and—more important—delivered safely.

**Jackie Baillie:** I hope that Fiona Hyslop welcomes the £350 million initiative. She will recognise that it is a five-year initiative. We have indicated publicly the resources that are available in the first three years, which will be £204 million. I have already indicated that the private sector utilities are considering what their contribution to the overall programme will be. Because of the nature of our budget arrangements, the figures for the fourth and fifth years have not been announced yet.

**Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West):** Many pensioners and others will welcome the central heating scheme. However, why will it not begin until April next year and why will it take as long as

five years to complete? Will the minister please reconsider the timetable, bearing in mind the fact that many pensioners who are suffering from the effects of fuel poverty might not be around when the scheme is completed in 2006?

**Jackie Baillie:** We will install central heating in 141,000 homes throughout Scotland—homes which, prior to the announcement, would not have had the benefit of that central heating. I acknowledge that we want to do that as quickly as possible but, as Mr Canavan will recognise, these things take time. We are committing resources and we will have a rolling programme that will assist pensioners immediately. They are the first priority in the scheme.

### Drug Misuse

**4. Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what action on drug misuse awareness is being taken in rural communities. (S10-2611)

**The Deputy Minister for Justice (Iain Gray):** There is, in rural communities throughout Scotland, a wide range of initiatives that are designed to raise awareness of drug misuse. Drug action teams and their constituent agencies plan and co-ordinate drug awareness work in each area in line with the national drug misuse strategy and taking account of local circumstances.

The additional £100 million that was announced recently to tackle drug misuse includes funding for drug education and prevention, including national awareness work, which will benefit all areas of Scotland, including rural communities.

**Maureen Macmillan:** Will the minister join me in congratulating Media Education on its Scotland Against Drugs project, which has been working with schools in the Highlands? I attended a presentation by pupils from Alness Academy and Invergordon Academy recently and was impressed by the pupils' responses. Will the Executive continue to support the initiative?

**Iain Gray:** I am happy to join Maureen Macmillan in drawing attention to that media project, which is an excellent example of how the business sector—in this case, Moray Firth Radio, I think—and the contributors to the Scottish challenge fund can engage in action against drug misuse. We need more of that throughout Scotland. A couple of weeks ago, I attended a Scotland Against Drugs business breakfast in Elgin, which pulled together 60 businesses from Moray to get them engaged in such activity.

We must mobilise all sectors throughout Scotland to defeat drugs.

**Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con):** The minister will be aware that in Dumfries and

Galloway, as throughout rural Scotland, one of the most abused drugs is alcohol. Is he aware of the considerable lack of funding for training alcohol abuse counsellors? If he is, what does he intend to do about it?

**Iain Gray:** We recognise, as was made clear in previous debates on our drug misuse strategy, the significant problem of alcohol abuse, which must be addressed. For that reason, we have taken steps towards an alcohol strategy. My colleague, Malcolm Chisholm, is chairing the Scottish advisory committee on alcohol misuse. Parliament will, I think next week, debate our approach to alcohol. Although we believe that we must take a separate national strategic approach, many local drug action teams are actually drug and alcohol action teams. That helps to ensure that services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible.

**Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** Is the minister aware that many organisations in rural areas of north-east Scotland are looking forward to the establishment of drugs courts, which will help tackle drug misuse in rural areas? When will the first drugs court in Scotland be established? Will the north-east be one of the first areas to enjoy the benefits of these new courts?

**Iain Gray:** In the debate that we had on drugs courts recently, I made it clear that the next stage of introducing this measure as effectively as possible is the development—with the Scottish Court Service and the Crown Office—of a Scottish model of drugs courts. Work has begun on that. In that debate, Richard Lochhead made clear his belief that there is a particular interest in developing that initiative in the north-east. I am happy to note that point again.

### BCG Vaccination

**5. Hugh Henry (Paisley South) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive when it will resume the BCG vaccination programme in schools. (S10-2595)

**The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon):** The routine schools programme was restarted in schools in the London area on 19 July, following some limited improvement in the supply of BCG vaccine. The programme will recommence in schools elsewhere in the UK when a secure, sufficient supply of vaccine is assured.

**Hugh Henry:** I am sure that the minister will share my concern that there has been an interruption to that successful programme. What steps is the Executive taking to monitor the incidence of tuberculosis in Scotland, to detail any special plans to tackle identified problems and to ensure that steps will be taken throughout the



United Kingdom to avoid shortages in future?

**Susan Deacon:** I share Hugh Henry's concern about the interruption to vaccine supply. I can assure him that the Scottish Executive is working closely with the Department of Health, which has the lead on the matter, and with other UK health departments, to do what can be done to ensure that full supplies of the vaccine are restored as soon as possible. The vaccine has been effective in greatly reducing the incidence of TB over a number of years. That is something that we wish to maintain.

As far as monitoring the incidence of TB is concerned, I am pleased to see that the Executive is funding the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health in its enhanced surveillance of TB in Scotland. That new scheme was introduced in January this year.

**Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP):** In relation to another important vaccine—for measles, mumps and rubella—can the minister comment on the growing demands from many parents, who are seeking individual administration of the vaccines instead of the triple vaccination—

**The Presiding Officer:** I am sorry, Mr Sheridan, but that is out of order. You must follow the question that is on the business list.

#### Youth Parliament

**6. Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what mechanisms exist for the discussions of the youth parliament to inform the Executive's deliberations. (S10-2603)

**The Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Mr Jack McConnell):** Although Ministers are keen to support the youth parliament and to hear its views, there are currently no formal mechanisms for such dialogue. I recently met the chair, Steven Jack, and I hope to bring forward proposals to develop and support the youth parliament's plans soon.

**Dr Murray:** I thank the minister for replying to a question that was put to me by a school student from Lockerbie Academy, when I was on a series of school visits around my constituency. Does the minister share my concern that young people often feel disfranchised from the democratic process, to the extent that only one in four voters under the age of 25 cast their vote at the last general election? I am pleased to hear what the minister said, but does the Executive have any other plans to encourage citizenship and the participation of young people?

**Mr McConnell:** The work of the youth parliament would be enhanced by work at a local level. We should encourage such work, perhaps in conjunction with local authorities. It is important

that we do not see that as an end in itself, but that we encourage citizenship education in schools and a range of other forms of participation so that, before they reach voting age, young people want to take part in society's deliberations.

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** In our former incarnations as councillors, both the minister and I were involved in the establishment of bodies such as the youth parliament. Does he agree that it is important to involve health boards in different parts of Scotland in this type of activity? In the Highlands, they certainly provide very useful input.

**Mr McConnell:** I encourage any local youth forums, councils or meetings of the youth parliament to comment on a wide range of public services and legislative issues—the wider, the better. I am sure that ministers could find areas in their portfolios in which young people could be given a voice, have their concerns taken on board and be shown that their influence could make a difference.

#### Fishing

**7. Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what action is being taken to improve monitoring of fishing in international waters. (S10-2619)

**The Deputy Minister for Rural Development (Rhona Brankin):** This year, Scottish ministers received new powers to appoint Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency inspectors to enforce international regulations. In relation to the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the Fisheries Council recently agreed to roll over the current ad hoc arrangements for enforcement for the next two years on the understanding that it will agree a longer-term control plan by June 2001. The Scottish Executive will continue to be involved in those discussions.

**Rhoda Grant:** Is the minister aware of the importance of the Rockall fishery to the Highlands and Islands? Is she aware that that fishery is threatened by significant overfishing by unregulated Russian vessels? What steps are being taken to address that serious situation?

**Rhona Brankin:** We are well aware of the reported fishing for haddock off Rockall by Russian vessels. Scottish Executive officials were in discussion with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission at its annual meeting last week. We have achieved a commitment by the NEAFC to establish regulation of the Rockall haddock fishery for the first time. Proposals for that will be introduced in March.

**Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con):** Does the minister share my concern about the level of cod stocks in our traditional fishing grounds? Is

she also concerned about the current rate of extraction of sand eels? Does she think that that affects the level of cod stocks? What monitoring of that is taking place?

**The Presiding Officer:** I may be ignorant about this, but I do not think that the fish that were being discussed were sand eels in international waters. Does Rhona Brankin wish to answer that question?

**Rhona Brankin:** We are well aware of the problem with cod stocks and are working closely on that with fishery organisations. Clearly, important discussions will take place at the EU Fisheries Council in December, when I will be fighting for the interests of the Scottish fishing industry.

**Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab):** What assessment has the rural affairs department made of the need for fishery protection vessels to patrol these waters in the event of agreement being reached in the NEAFC? Given that we will certainly need to replace the older fishery protection vessels in the Scottish agency's fleet, will she use all possible endeavours to ensure that the replacement vessels are built in Scottish yards?

**Rhona Brankin:** As the member knows, there is a commitment to replace one of the vessels. At the moment, there is an ad hoc arrangement to patrol NEAFC areas, which has been rolled over for the next two years on the understanding that the commission will produce a longer-term plan. We think that the regulation of the areas is sufficiently important that the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency should be involved in policing them.

**Mr John Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD):** I am glad that so much attention is being paid to fishing in international waters. When might we expect the sea area off the south-east coast of Scotland to return to Scottish jurisdiction and control?

**The Presiding Officer:** I saw that question coming.

**Rhona Brankin:** That is a hoary old chestnut. We are happy with the current boundary.

**Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** Does the minister accept that the problem of the Rockall fishery is a consequence of the Westminster Government signing up to that fishery's transfer from EU to international control? Does she believe that the Scottish Executive has the power to ensure that any future treaty changes that relate to fishing will be in its hands?

**Rhona Brankin:** International fisheries issues are discussed fully with Westminster colleagues and within the EU. That will continue to be the case.

## Slate Industry

**8. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Executive what future discussions are planned within the Executive regarding the creation of a slate industry in Scotland. (S1O-2615)

**The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander):** The Scottish stone liaison group, which is supported by the Executive, is proposing a pilot study to quarry an amount of Scottish slate. The Executive will await the outcome of the feasibility project before further discussions are held.

**Lord James Douglas-Hamilton:** Is the minister aware that some of the very finest slate in the world came from Ballachulish and that several hundred thousand houses in Scotland that are roofed with slate will need re-roofing? Does she accept that it would be seen as an enlightened policy for her to give maximum support to any initiative to quarry slate in Scotland again?

**Ms Alexander:** We are well aware that there has been no Scottish slate in production since the 1950s. Therefore we very much welcome the proposed pilot study to look at the possibility of reopening a Scottish slate quarry on an economic basis.

## Opencast Developments

**9. Mr Gil Paterson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it has any plans to introduce a moratorium on new opencast developments while new planning enforcement regimes are developed. (S1O-2629)

**The Minister for Environment, Sport and Culture (Mr Sam Galbraith):** There are no plans to do so.

**Mr Paterson:** Why? [*Laughter.*]

**Mr Galbraith:** The one thing that the nationalists are good at is not thinking up anything for themselves. That was Tam Dalyell's question. I was present the first time he asked it—it was funny at the time, but the second time it is merely boring.

We have a very strict regime in Scotland to deal with opencast mining in relation to environmental impacts and benefits to the community. Because it is very strictly regulated, we have no plans to change it.

**Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab):** I am glad to hear the minister say that the existing planning regime is robust. Will he take note of the fact that many local communities depend on the opencast mining industry for a significant part of their economic development, but does he recognise the need to

balance that with environmental concerns? Will he assure me that he feels that the existing planning regime is strong enough to do that and that the existing consultation process through local authorities is adequate?

**Mr Galbraith:** I think that it is. As Cathy Jamieson knows, we tightened all that up recently in national planning policy guideline 16. Two factors must be taken into consideration: the environmental effects and the benefits to the community. Those benefits must be so great that they outweigh the environmental concerns. It is a very tough regime and gets the balance right.

#### **E coli 0157**

**10. Mr Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive what initiatives it is currently taking forward to combat E coli 0157. (S1O-2604)

**The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon):** I appointed a task force in September to review our knowledge and existing controls in the light of recent research findings. The joint Food Standards Agency and Scottish Executive team is to report to me with an action plan by the end of May 2001.

**Mr Salmond:** As the minister knows, E coli is a vicious bacterium that preys on the very old and the very young, including—in my constituency—taking the life of two-year-old Amy Jones this year. Is the minister concerned that there has been a 36 per cent increase in cases of E coli 0157 in Scotland over 1999 figures, but an £85,000 decrease in research funding? Is not there a danger that the momentum behind the research initiatives is being lost? Will she give an undertaking that all the recommendations of Professor Reilly's task force will be implemented and that the Executive will not sit on the recommendations as it did with those of the Sutherland, Kerley and McIntosh committees?

**Susan Deacon:** It is interesting that Alex Salmond did not mention the Pennington report, which was the major inquiry into the issue and which was taken forward fully by the Labour Government before 1999 and has been taken forward by the Executive since devolution. Only this year, we implemented its final recommendation—a butchers licensing scheme for Scotland—because we are concerned about the incidence of E coli 0157 and about its effect and the effect of food poisoning more generally on those who are frail and vulnerable. We will continue to invest resources and to take action in this area to ensure that lives are saved.

**Mr Salmond:** The comment about the danger of a loss of momentum on the research effort came directly from Hugh Pennington. Now that the

minister knows that, will she answer the question? Will the Executive undertake to implement fully the task force's recommendations when they are published next year?

**Susan Deacon:** At the time when Hugh Pennington produced his report, no minister would have made an unquestioning commitment to implement all its recommendations—no Government would do that. We know, of course, that the Scottish National Party has never been in government and therefore does not know the realities within which Governments must operate. This Executive has established a Food Standards Agency, it has taken forward the recommendations of the Pennington report and it has established a task force. We will consider carefully the recommendations of that task force when they arrive.

#### **Scottish Charity Law Review Commission**

**11. Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive when it last met the independent charities law commission. (S1O-2630)

**The Deputy Minister for Justice (Iain Gray):** The Scottish Charity Law Review Commission took formal evidence from Scottish Executive officials on 13 July and from the director of the Scottish charities office on 14 September.

**Mr Quinan:** Will the minister tell us what progress has been made in developing a proper charity law structure for Scotland? As I am sure he is aware, many charitable organisations throughout Scotland are deeply concerned about a situation that gives them great budgeting problems. They are also concerned about the likely financial impact of Scottish Criminal Record Office charges. It is essential that we reform our charity law immediately, before the imposition of SCRO charges.

**Iain Gray:** I have worked in the charity sector and I understand the concerns that Mr Quinan has described. The Scottish Charity Law Review Commission is working to a time scale. Its membership was announced in March 2000 and April 2001 is its deadline for reporting to ministers. It is on schedule. Considerable progress has been made. Two hundred consultation papers have been sent out and 1,000 responses have been received. There have been six road shows. We expect to receive the report on time in April 2001.

**Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD):** Will the minister assure members that any changes in the charity laws will take account of the huge difference between the really big charities—which are multinational corporations in all but name and which do good work on a very large scale throughout the world—and the very small local

organisations that Mr Quinan and many others are concerned about? If the law is too standardised, it causes great problems for the smaller organisations.

**Iain Gray:** The commission will be well aware of that point. It has been asked to look into the whole charity sector in Scotland, which—as Mr Gorrie suggests—is extremely diverse. I am sure that, in its recommendations, the commission will take account of the great differences between small local charities and the much larger organisations. We look forward to hearing those recommendations.

### University Access (Funding)

**12. Bristow Muldoon (Livingston) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what extra funding is being made available for projects aimed at encouraging young people to go to university. (S1O-2632)

**The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander):** We are determined that every young Scot who tries hard should have their best ever chance to go to university. We are making available an additional £18 million, which is earmarked for access-related initiatives. That will support an additional 800 places at Scottish higher education institutions and will support schools and colleges in providing taster programmes, summer schools and a plethora of initiatives to encourage people to go on to take up their chances.

**Bristow Muldoon:** Will the minister confirm that a reduction in educational inequalities in relation to making progress towards university is a major plank of the Executive's social justice programme? Will she expand on the ways in which the Executive is working in partnership with universities and local authorities to that end?

**Ms Alexander:** We are determined to change the situation in which fewer than one in 10 of those who go to university come from semi-skilled or unskilled backgrounds and in which more than half of those who go on to higher education come from families with professional or technical backgrounds. That sort of inequality must end. We need to create a level playing field. There has been much unhelpful talk that has suggested that this is about special treatment. It is not about special treatment, but about creating a level playing field and about recognising the fact that people come from different backgrounds and that there is a need for things such as summer schools, taster programmes and study support, all of which cost money. It is right that we should recognise that in the funding regime.

**Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con):** I declare an interest as a member of the

court of the University of Strathclyde. Will the minister assure us that in allocating the sum to which she referred, fairness will be exercised in respect of the institutions, some of which already operate highly successful summer schools? Those institutions should not suffer prejudice. The minister's second point made it clear that she is very sensitive to the fact that certain people regard her announcement as favouritism towards some institutions. Can she explain why her colleague, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has seen fit to favour only certain institutions in Scotland with his recently advertised scheme?

**Ms Alexander:** I respond as a former member of the court of the University of Glasgow. It is important that a variety of access schemes are introduced, and we want to encourage charitable, corporate and other giving to support access. All schemes that support access are to be encouraged; we regard them as preferable to the sponsoring of graduation ceremonies, which is one way in which corporate Scotland seeks to support our higher education institutions. Through the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, we are supporting access through different schemes for different institutions. The important thing is to maximise support for access initiatives.

**Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP):** Can the minister tell us why, since Labour came to power, student awards have fallen from 112,595 to 106,215—a drop of 5 or 6 per cent? Despite the minister's rhetoric, the fact of the matter is that the number of students in receipt of awards is down.

**Ms Alexander:** I will deal with that directly. There were problems surrounding student financial support and the regime to which those figures relate no longer pertains. We are incredibly proud of the package of student financial support that we have put in place. Some people scream that we should have gone with Cubie, but I am very proud that, as of the autumn, the coalition is implementing a scheme that means that the poorest 10 per cent of students experience a regime of financial support that is more generous even than that proposed by Cubie.

### Caledonian MacBrayne

**13. Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will delay competitive tendering of current CalMac ferry routes on the west coast to enable a regulatory agency for Scotland's ferry network to be set up. (S1O-2616)

**The Minister for Transport (Sarah Boyack):** No. We already have a strong UK-wide statutory framework for regulating safety standards for all ferry operators. Safety standards on ferries are the responsibility of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

**Bruce Crawford:** It is depressing that the minister sounds very like the Tories trying to defend rail privatisation—and we are all aware of the safety record that has resulted from that. Many people in the industry disagree with the minister. Will she carry out an inquiry involving people from the private sector and the ferry safety sector to ensure that we do not put people on our ferries in jeopardy? Does she recognise that, before proceeding further with competitive tendering, there should be an inquiry—involving marine experts and privatisation and regulation experts—into how best to address safety and consumer interests?

**Sarah Boyack:** No. Bruce Crawford should do his homework. We already have a statutory process. Every year, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency must issue a passenger certificate of safety for every ferry; it also carries out periodic checks. That regime applies not only to CalMac ferries, but to every ferry that carries passengers in the UK. That is a long-established process which also applies to P&O, which has been operating routes to the northern isles for more than 30 years. We must ensure that the statutory regulatory framework works and we must never be complacent, but the UK has a very good ferry safety record.

**Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** Will the minister assure us that she will not be deflected from her major task by the continued scaremongering of the nationalists? Will she reaffirm her commitment to the continuation of services such as the Gourock-Dunoon ferry and will she ensure that CalMac remains within the public sector?

**Sarah Boyack:** I am happy to assure members that we have no plans to privatise CalMac. In the tendering process we will listen to local communities, trade unions and local authorities to ensure that we get the specifications absolutely correct. That is the process that we have followed for the northern isles. It is important that we listen to people to make sure that lifeline services meet their needs.

If I may, I will pay tribute to the people who, following our consultation exercise on CalMac, have helped the Executive over the past few months to put the message to the European Union that the services on the west coast of Scotland and in the Highlands are vital lifelines. On particular issues, such as mainland-to-mainland routes, their support has been invaluable. I look forward to submitting our proposals to the EU at the end of this year or in the new year.

#### **European Year of Languages**

**14. Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what

progress it is making in preparing for the European year of languages in 2001. (S1O-2605)

**The Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Mr Jack McConnell):** We are making a lot of progress. A Scottish committee has been established to promote Scottish involvement in the year through education, business and cultural networks, and a series of events is already planned in school and community facilities throughout Scotland. A report of plans will be placed in the Scottish Parliament information centre in January when the year is formally launched.

**Irene Oldfather:** The minister will be aware that the Nuffield inquiry into modern language teaching called for the creation of specialist teachers and the introduction of languages to pupils in primary schools at the age of seven. Does the minister have any plans to introduce immersion teaching of modern languages in primary schools in 2001? Further, I invite the minister to my area to see how schools there are taking forward language teaching in our primaries.

**Mr McConnell:** I am happy to accept Irene Oldfather's invitation, and to inform members that there are now more than 5,000 new primary teachers trained to deliver foreign language teaching in primary 6 and primary 7. A report from the working group that was established on modern languages is due out either before Christmas or shortly after the new year. I encourage members to ensure that during the European year of languages we promote the taking and teaching of modern languages. I hope that members may even take the opportunity next year to learn a language, so that we can be truly European.

**Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** Does the minister agree that the most appropriate way to mark the European year of languages would be for the Executive to persuade the UK Government to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of Scots, under article 3, and develop the policy initiatives that are necessary to meet such an obligation?

**Mr McConnell:** Gaelic and Scots organisations are represented on the committee that I mentioned, which is planning activities for next year. The views of those organisations will be taken into account in respect of those events.

**Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab):** Given that for many Scots, British Sign Language is their first language, and that the inability of many of the people they meet in their daily lives to converse with them in their own language is a significant problem which leads to their social exclusion, will the minister consider proposals to include British Sign Language in the curriculum of

Scotland's schools next year?

**Mr McConnell:** Making announcements about the curriculum on the hoof in the chamber is not the best way to help morale in the Scottish education system. However, the British Deaf Association is also on the committee and I will certainly look closely with the committee at how we can use the European year of languages to promote British Sign Language in the chamber, in schools, and elsewhere.

### Rockall Fisheries

**15. Lewis Macdonald (Aberdeen Central) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Executive what discussions it has had with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission regarding the future of the Rockall fisheries. (S10-2641)

**The Deputy Minister for Rural Development (Rhona Brankin):** As I said in answer to Rhoda Grant's earlier supplementary question, last week we had discussions with the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission at its annual meeting, and we have obtained a commitment from the NEAFC to establish regulation of the Rockall haddock fishery in March next year.

**Lewis Macdonald:** Will the minister confirm that progress in those talks would not have been possible without the active support for Scottish fisheries interests of both the British Government and the European Union? Does she accept that the Rockall fisheries are of vital interest to the fish processing, as well as fish catching, sectors? Will she indicate the steps that she will take to secure future supply and job security in fish processing factories in my constituency and elsewhere?

**Rhona Brankin:** Of course. We work closely with our Westminster colleagues and colleagues in Europe. I assure Lewis Macdonald that we view seriously the situation that has arisen off Rockall. There are knock-on effects for the fish processing sector in Scotland and last week I announced that a working group led by Scottish Enterprise Grampian would be set up to study the future of the Scottish fish processing sector. I will report to the Parliament on its progress.

## First Minister's Question Time

### SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

#### Prime Minister (Meetings)

**1. Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister and what issues he plans to raise. (S1F-697)

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** I do not think that that is the right question.

**The First Minister (Henry McLeish):** It is the right question for me, Sir David, if that is okay.

**The Presiding Officer:** I apologise—the question has been mistyped on my sheet, and I have a different question. That was my fault.

**The First Minister:** I last met the Prime Minister on 23 October and I have no immediate plans to meet him in the near future.

**Mr Swinney:** I thank the First Minister for his answer. He may care to raise with the Prime Minister the issue that I am about to raise when they next have discussions. In reflecting on the Lord Advocate's statement to Parliament yesterday, has the First Minister given any further consideration to the Chhokar family's call that the inquiries that the Lord Advocate plans should be undertaken as public inquiries?

**The First Minister:** The Lord Advocate dealt fairly with the matter yesterday. I think that all members of the Parliament share the concerns relating to the case, the family and the tragic circumstances of the death. The Lord Advocate has put in place an unprecedented set of responses, including two independent inquiries. In addition, for some time the Minister for Justice has been involved in developments to address issues concerning race in Scotland. That process will continue.

What we must do now is allow the inquiries to proceed. We have confirmed that we want the family to be involved. We want to ensure that their confidence is reinforced during what is a difficult period for them. I met the family yesterday, along with the Minister for Justice. I know that they met some members of the Scottish National Party. I hope that the chamber accepts my assurance that the inquiries will be thorough. I do not intend to set up inquiries and then let their recommendations lie on the shelf.

**Mr Swinney:** On the First Minister's last point, there is a concern that the two inquiries may not confront the allegations of institutionalised racism in the system as directly as a single public inquiry.

On St Andrew's day, when we reflect on the composition of our country, is the First Minister in a position to say to Parliament that the remits of both inquiries will include explicit reference to tackling allegations of institutionalised racism and to acting in response to any recommendations that fall under that part of the remit?

**The First Minister:** I share John Swinney's thoughts about St Andrew's day. It is a day on which we like to celebrate and acknowledge the civilised country that is Scotland. However, John Swinney is also right to say that there are blemishes on our so-called civilised society, and he has highlighted one. All that I can do today, with the support of the chamber, is say to the leader of the SNP that I will take his points to the Lord Advocate.

The Executive has nothing to hide. Scotland should be fully exposed to the two inquiries. I say to the judiciary, to the Crown Office, to the police and to every political party that the inquiries must be thorough and that no holds should be barred. The process should take Scotland further towards ensuring that we have the civilised society that is celebrated throughout the world on this day.

**Mr Swinney:** I thank the First Minister for his reply. I want to press him on one further point. Like me, he will have dealt with a number of constituents who have been the victims of crime and have ended up rather bewildered at the sometimes insensitive treatment that they have received from the Crown Office. At a time when our democracy is being subjected to greater scrutiny, should not that climate reach the Crown Office? Can the First Minister guarantee that, unlike the Chhokar case, in future the victims of crime will not become the victims of the criminal justice system?

**The First Minister:** This is clearly a day for consensus on some serious issues. I have two points. First, victims are often aggrieved about the way in which they are treated within the system, which varies enormously in different parts of Scotland. We must ensure that in the Scotland of the future—and the future always starts today—they are properly and effectively dealt with and that the pure sensitivities involved will be acknowledged by all concerned. I give John Swinney the guarantee that we will do that.

Secondly, it may be useful for the chamber to get further information on what has been done in the past two years. We were not good with victims, but progress has been made. There is no complacency on our part and a lot more must be done.

**Mr John McAllion (Dundee East) (Lab):** I commend the cross-party consensus on rooting out racism. I am sure that that consensus spreads

right round the chamber

When the First Minister next meets the Prime Minister, will he raise the continuing chaos on our railway network? Will he seek to persuade the Prime Minister that the likes of Railtrack, ScotRail and Virgin Trains make the case for a publicly owned and accountable railway far better than old, dogmatic socialists, such as him or me, ever could?

**The First Minister:** I will respond briefly to John McAllion's point about racism. I agree that racism is an important issue. I cannot think of anything more abhorrent in any society than that the colour of one's skin should determine a special form of violence or treatment. If we believe in social inclusion, racism must not be part of Scotland's future.

On the second issue raised by John McAllion, there is widespread concern in Scotland about the state of the railways. Passengers are angry and anxious and I would like to think that, over the next few months, we will get to a point where we can regain public confidence in the railways. While that will not be easy, Sarah Boyack, the Executive and, I hope, the whole Parliament will work together, not towards the political end that John McAllion suggests but towards another end—satisfaction for consumers, who have been badly treated in recent weeks and months.

### Cabinet (Meetings)

**2. David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con):** To ask the First Minister when the Scottish Executive's Cabinet will next meet and what issues will be discussed. (S1F-690)

**The First Minister (Henry McLeish):** The Cabinet will next meet on Tuesday 5 December when we will discuss matters of significance to the Executive and to the people of Scotland.

**David McLetchie:** I thank the First Minister for his answer.

I am sure that at the next Cabinet meeting ministers will be champing at the bit to implement the First Minister's so-called new international vision for Scotland, which he trumpeted in the press this morning. Can he advise us whether that is the same international vision that led Jack McConnell to admit that, under Labour, our education system has third-world status?

Rather than giving us his much-beloved vague waffle, will the First Minister kindly explain the practical steps that he intends to take to improve the education system in Scotland and to restore its battered reputation?

**The First Minister:** I am pleased with and proud of the record of the new Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs over recent weeks.

We talk about progress in sharp contrast to the situation that we endured under 19 years of government by the party to which David McLetchie still belongs. He does not like to be known as a Conservative or a Tory, but he is the Tory leader in Scotland. He belongs to a party that is in opposition at Westminster and that wants to make £16 billion-worth of cuts, which amounts to cuts of £24 million in every constituency in Scotland. I ask the so-called caring, compassionate Conservatives to justify those cuts.

It is always good to look back at previous comments, and we have reached that point with the Conservatives. I read the following with interest:

"82 year old McQuarrie has been brought in to machine by Bill Walker: 'we are a redundant party led by a bunch of has-beens.'"

That is what an unnamed Tory candidate told *The Scotsman* on 29 November. I have often criticised the SNP, but the Conservatives are the real Opposition to Labour everywhere in the country. The Conservatives are failing Scotland and, come the general election, we want to ensure that we expose the shallowness and emptiness shown by David McLetchie at his lectern, week in, week out.

**David McLetchie:** That was a nice outbreak of consensus from the First Minister. I remind him that, under Tory Scotland, children got their exam results correctly and on time, unlike under Labour.

The First Minister does not have to send Mr McConnell to Nigeria to find out what makes a successful school, however much he might want to get Mr McConnell out of the country. Instead, he could send him to a parents' night at Jordanhill School, along with Mr Galbraith. It is no coincidence that Jordanhill is the most successful secondary school in Scotland and that St Mary's Episcopal Primary School in Dunblane is one of the best primaries. If the First Minister is the progressive pragmatist that he tells us he is, will he acknowledge that the freedom from local authority control that those schools enjoy is a crucial factor in their success? Will he extend that freedom to other schools in Scotland?

**The First Minister:** That view may be shared by a few members on the Conservative benches, but it is not shared by anyone else in Scotland. We are moving on McCrone, reducing class sizes and modernising school buildings and information and communications technology. We are talking about modern languages in primary schools, as Jack McConnell said. We are also talking about a youth crime review, early intervention, qualification for headship, continuing professional development and a children's challenge fund. Those are positive measures by a coalition Government in Scotland that cares about our children's welfare.

I remind David McLetchie to look back a week to Anniesland. If we are talking about the public listening, they ain't listening to the Conservatives because they simply have nothing to offer Scotland. That is why I am delighted that Bill Butler is sitting here as an example of how Labour won because we are listening to the population of Scotland.

**Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP):** When the Cabinet next meets, will the First Minister ensure that it discusses the potential job losses at the ALPS Electric factory in Arbroath, where 238 jobs are threatened in an area of already high unemployment? Given that he was personally responsible for excluding Arbroath from European assistance funding, in spite of its having the third strongest case in the whole of Scotland, what specific alternative assistance will be made available to allow the community to fight back against that major economic problem? Is the Government listening?

**The First Minister:** The Government is listening. I shall preface my remarks by saying that we have the highest employment figures in Scotland for 40 years and the lowest unemployment for 24 years. That record speaks for itself.

Every local community is hit by redundancies and unemployment. When Andrew Welsh came to see me about assisted area status, I also said that I would be delighted to have a follow-up meeting with him, officials from the council and other people from the area. That offer still holds. I empathise with every redundancy. The last thing that we want is to see people out of work for any reason. Let us not forget, however, that we have a good record just now of job creation, employment creation and people winning their own prosperity.

## Railways

**3. Mr Andy Kerr (East Kilbride) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister what steps are being taken to consult over the future of Scotland's passenger railway services. (S1F-695)

**The First Minister (Henry McLeish):** On Tuesday we published a consultation paper setting out our vision for the future of Scotland's passenger railways and inviting views on our proposals. We will use the outcome of the exercise next spring to inform our directions and guidance to the strategic rail authority on letting the next Scottish passenger rail franchise.

**Mr Kerr:** Will the First Minister assure me that the relevant trade unions will be part of that consultation process? I recently met representatives of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, which, with the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport



Workers and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association, will bring a fresh perspective to that franchise process, particularly on the question of safety. What kind of rail improvements will we see as a result of the direction and guidance that he referred to?

**The First Minister:** Everyone in the chamber and in the country values the future of our railways. It will be a full and public consultation and I can give my colleague a guarantee that the trade unions and trade associations will be consulted on those important matters. There should be consensus in Scotland on the sort of railways we want, because we want more people to use the railways. That makes sense commercially, financially and environmentally. We want railways to play a full part in an integrated transport system. That is what Sarah Boyack is attempting to do throughout Scotland. Of course, we also want to secure more investment in the railway system. It is quite clear that the recent problems are a result of 19 years' neglect of investment. We are now trying to put that right. It may take some time, but I think that that is the kind of future that people in Scotland want for the railways.

**Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP):** If the consultation shows that the consensus of opinion in Scotland backs Mr McAllion and me in believing that public ownership of Railtrack is the best step that we can take towards ensuring the highest safety standards, will the First Minister attempt to ensure that Her Majesty's Government undertakes a similar consultation exercise in England, because I am quite sure that people there will be as sensible as us?

**The First Minister:** I am always keen to show Margo MacDonald that I am listening and I fully endorse her aspiration to a safe railway. That is what everyone wants. We do not want to get bogged down in the question of ownership. What we need is investment and relevance. We need the passengers to be taken seriously.

I want to send a message from the chamber to everyone associated with rail that their performance so far has not been good enough. If we are to rebuild public confidence, we must ensure that there is investment and that the concerns and views of the people of Scotland are communicated to those responsible for the railways.

**Mrs Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab):** Is the First Minister aware that the extension of the Airdrie-Bathgate rail line would create an east-west link across Scotland that would be of great benefit to passengers throughout the central belt?

**The First Minister:** When Mary Mulligan was asking her question, I saw the Minister for

Transport looking at me—although I cannot yet discern what her response to the question would be. Sarah Boyack wants to work with local MSPs to ensure that we have a sensible policy to get people and goods on to the railways, having regard to investment and needs. That is vital for the economy of Scotland. I am sure that the point that Mary Mulligan made will be acknowledged by the Minister for Transport.

### Hepatitis C

**4. Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Executive has any plans to establish a national screening programme for hepatitis C. (S1F-685)

**The First Minister (Henry McLeish):** The Executive has no plans to establish such a programme.

**Alex Neil:** Is the First Minister aware that, although in Scotland there are only 10,000 diagnosed cases of hepatitis C, a recent survey has shown that as many as 50,000 people may be infected? Will he overrule the advice of the deputy chief medical officer, Dr Andrew Fraser, that there should not be a screening programme, on the spurious grounds that we do not have a cure for hepatitis C? The purpose of a screening programme would be to prevent the spread of the disease, so that in Scotland we do not have an epidemic similar to the AIDS epidemic in Africa. Will the First Minister follow the example of France, Canada and the United States, where, according to a report by Dr Graham Fisher of London, such programmes have been introduced?

**The First Minister:** I am sure that Alex Neil recognises that I will not overrule medical advice in this area. Hepatitis C is a serious issue. That is why the Scottish needs assessment programme report concluded that, although at present screening even of high-risk groups is not justified, counselling, with the opportunity for testing, should be offered to individuals in high-risk groups as an integral part of the discussion of the management of their risky behaviour. It is relevant that the expert advisory group on hepatitis for the whole of the UK has as yet not seen fit to recommend a screening programme. However, the issue is sensitive and we will want to continue monitoring what is happening in Scotland and to respond effectively when required.

**Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP):** Will the Executive consider no-fault compensation for people who have contracted hepatitis C through infected blood products?

**The First Minister:** That issue has been raised previously at First Minister's question time. The most helpful thing that I can do is write to Nicola Sturgeon, along with the other two SNP members

to whom I am writing, to clarify the issue of compensation in its widest sense and in relation to the particular point that she raises.

### Tuition Fees

**5. Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** To ask the First Minister what the cost is of paying tuition fees for all eligible students in Scotland in the current academic year. (S1F-686)

**The First Minister (Henry McLeish):** There is £122 million set aside for tuition fee payment in the financial year 2000-01. Members will notice that in my answer I refer to the financial year, rather than the academic year.

**Mr Rumbles:** Does the First Minister agree that the information that he has just provided, and the provisions in the Education (Graduate Endowment and Student Support) (Scotland) Bill that is currently being considered by Parliament, are fine examples of the new politics of Scotland, with the Liberal Democrats and the Labour party working together to remove barriers to accessing further education? [*Interruption.*] This is not an inspired question. If the nats will keep quiet for a moment, I will ask the First Minister whether he believes that, taken together, those measures will prove to be one of the best student support packages in Europe.

**The First Minister:** I am delighted to endorse that. We have a working coalition, which has delivered the best student package in Europe. Members on the Opposition benches are shouting about Cubie and what we did not do. However, this is a £50 million package; it is formidable.

Wendy Alexander has introduced an £18 million package to help access. From the autumn of next year, students from low-income backgrounds will get significant help. That is the level playing field. On St Andrew's day, we should talk about confidence, compassion and competition. I believe that we need that investment in our universities and our students to create cohesive communities and a prosperous society. I am delighted that the coalition has delivered big time on that commitment. It has been warmly welcomed—that was shown in Anniesland as well. We are delivering the policies and the people are responding.

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con):** While the first miniature is—did I say miniature? I beg your pardon.

While the First Minister is enrapturing us about the wonderful package of money for higher education, could he tell us—on this day of confidence-building in Scotland—how many of Scotland's universities are in deficit now and how many will be in deficit in the next two years? What

is he going to do about it?

**The First Minister:** On a sympathetic note, Presiding Officer, I was referred to as a miniature. Perhaps Mr Davidson is getting mixed up with *The Herald* awards dinner this evening, where more than a few miniatures will be available to the member.

We must look forward. Are we not sick and tired of the Tories lecturing us on investment in public services and education after 19 years of dismal failure? We have an education system in Scotland of which we can be proud. We want to invest in it. We are not complacent about the future, but at least we are embracing it.

## Economic Development

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-1405, in the name of Wendy Alexander, on the framework for economic development. There are two amendments to the motion.

15:32

**The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander):** This debate is about the framework for economic development. It is an opportunity for members from all parties to discuss how they see the framework being developed and implemented in the interests of the Scottish economy. At root, the framework is about how Scotland becomes an earning, learning and connected nation.

I begin with a candid admission: there is a risk that the debate may become dry, worthy and dull. I will devote my speech to some of the specifics—how do we make the dry document on the framework real? The framework is about bringing together social justice and economic efficiency to the benefit of all Scots. At the heart of the partnership is our determination to make every Scot job ready for tomorrow's jobs. That is what it is going to take for the nation to win economically and for our people to prosper.

This morning I was in Glasgow, at the Scottish end of the UK-wide celebrations for the new deal, which has helped 250,000 youngsters in the United Kingdom into work. In Scotland, we hit our part of that target last spring. Today 29,000—almost 30,000—young Scots have moved into work. That is on average more than 400 youngsters in every constituency in Scotland.

**Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP):** Will Wendy Alexander tell the chamber how many of those young people went into sustainable—rather than short-term—employment?

**Ms Alexander:** I am delighted to do so: 29,200 entered jobs, 21,800 of which were sustained. More than three quarters of the participants were in jobs three months later.

Let me outline what that figure of 400 in every constituency means in practical terms. Donna is now with the Accounts Commission; Michelle is now an air hostess; and the new deal for musicians lets young Scots set up their own record companies. As we celebrated the 250,000 jobs created by the new deal, it all seemed easy, so the organisers of the event took us back to the very beginning.

Three years ago this week, the first adverts for the new deal appeared on Scottish Television and

Grampian Television and featured a man called Jack Hendry of Dundee Travel urging employers to sign up to the scheme. He said that people would think that the first employer to sign up was mad, that the second one to sign up was rather sad and that the third one to sign up was rather naive. Today, more than 11,000 Scottish employers are participating in the new deal. They are business people the length and breadth of the UK who were embarrassed to be part of a nation that for 20 years threw its youngsters on to the scrap heap and who have gone on to sign up people to the new deal. Three years ago, plenty of Jeremiahs said that there would never be full employment again. They were wrong.

**Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con):** I do not wish to be a Jeremiah. However, more than £5 billion of taxpayers' money has been poured into the UK-wide new deal. According to the *Financial Times* on 10 November, 80 per cent of the jobs that it created would have existed anyway. Is that not a matter of concern?

**Ms Alexander:** It is hardly a matter of concern that we are running the economy so successfully that there has been a boom in employment. However, it is clear that, since Annabel Goldie's party left power, the number of young people in Scotland who have been out of work for more than six months has been reduced by three quarters.

We do not stand alone in our crusade against unemployment, because it is not just the young who are benefiting. Unemployment in Scotland is at its lowest rate since 1972 and has been more than halved in every constituency in the land, and there are more Scots in work today than at any point in my life. That highlights the sound economic management by Westminster and Edinburgh, which is delivering for Scotland. The nation is no longer paying the bills of failure; however, too many Scots are still paying the personal price of Tory failure, which is why the mission of my department and the purpose of this framework is to make every Scot job ready for tomorrow's jobs.

That does not happen by accident. Annabel Goldie mentioned tax; taxing the windfall profits of the major utilities made the new deal possible and both the Conservative party and the SNP stood aside from that measure. Not only has the windfall tax enabled us to introduce the new deal, but we have been able to invest in transport and pioneer new innovative financial instruments to do so. We have been able to demand fairness at work, to extend access to universities and to improve student support. Each of those measures is about creating opportunity for all.

On St Andrew's day, we can be proud that we are winning the battle for employment in places and for people who have been forgotten for too

long. However, beyond the battle for employment is the battle for enterprise for all, which starts with opportunity for all. The level playing field was mentioned during question time. However, the issue is not just about a level playing field for access to nurseries, warm homes or universities; it is about a level playing field for access to ambition, self-confidence and self-belief.

This morning in Glasgow, we were not just celebrating the new deal. With Scottish Enterprise, we launched a project to get youngsters from all backgrounds into enterprise. The next challenge for us is enterprise for all.

**Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** If a level playing field is so important, why will those youngsters pay higher business rates than they would in any other region of the UK when they get into work?

**Ms Alexander:** As someone said, that is rather a cheap point. I struggle to think that some of the entrepreneurs—

**Andrew Wilson:** Answer the question.

**Ms Alexander:** Let me make my point. If we ask youngsters what gives them self-confidence, the first thing that will spring to their lips will not be the taxation system of the time, but whether we can give them the self-confidence to succeed.

Three years ago, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Scottish Business Forum, which was also held in Glasgow. One of Scotland's leading bankers said that the reason why there are fewer business start-ups in Scotland is that too many people still live in council houses and cannot borrow the money to start up a business against the collateral of their house.

Three years later, I do not think that we will hear those statements. In the new Scotland that this partnership Government is creating, young people know that they have the chance to succeed. Let us consider the generation of entrepreneurs who are making it in Scottish business today: Richard Emmanuel in phones; Chris Gorman in web design; and Michele Mone in lingerie—bras and knickers to the rest of us. None of those people went to business school or started with a silver spoon. Chris talks of working in Fine Fare and Michele had a Saturday job in a Glasgow fruiterer's. They want other young Scots to believe in themselves. They succeeded and they know that others can do so; it does not depend on where someone grew up.

Scotland will succeed because we will create a level playing field. We must nurture self-confidence and self-esteem. Self-confidence is not about the flag someone waves, but about the work that they do and the commitment that they have. We must do more.

Today, when unemployment in Scotland falls, the start-up rate for small businesses also falls. We have to change all that for ever, which means that politicians must be willing to change. The Opposition parties cannot defend the old world while wishing the new world into existence. They cannot say that they are for growth but against new ways of investment.

When we came to power, we knew that we were probably the last generation of politicians who would be able to say to ordinary Scots that they should stick with a publicly funded health and education service to get the best education and treatment in the world. The underfunding and destruction of those services was so real that people began to believe that they should buy their way out of the system. We made the tough decisions. We have put all additional resources into employing new doctors, nurses and teachers, and we have not stopped there. We have said that we will also improve the public infrastructure by new means of investment. That is what the framework for economic development is all about. It is about making the tough decisions to deliver higher standards of living for the people of Scotland.

I am nervous that today's debate will contain a lot of hot air—the ritual denunciations and wish lists—when, for all of us, the challenge is how to win the economic race. It is in that spirit that I say to colleagues that I accept the amendment that calls for the measurement of results. It is absolutely right that we must get better at measuring our results.

I endorse whole-heartedly the sentiment that is contained in the SNP's amendment: we need to invest in our skills and our digital infrastructure. However, that amendment then "insists" that we find more money; members will not be surprised to find that it does not contain a word about where that money will come from. I agree with the SNP's priorities, but SNP members should come into the real world and tell us where we should take that money from.

This framework is about equipping Scotland to win in the new world of tomorrow and I invite all members to join the Executive in that challenge.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the publication of *Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development* in Scotland; agrees with the clear aspirations for the Scottish economy which it sets out; agrees that for future economic success and prosperity, Scotland needs to improve productivity, its capacity for learning and innovation and transform its technology base, and that the Framework provides a basis for the joined up economic decision-making which is vital, and welcomes the work being done in partnership with all the key players in the Scottish economy towards achieving the Framework's vision.

15:44

**Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP):** The nationalist party supports the framework document. I have no difficulty in saying that, although I was rather disappointed with the tone that the minister adopted. Not only do we support the Executive motion, but we are fully supportive of the Tories' amendment. We had hoped that the minister would find it possible to accept our amendment, especially in the light of an article by the First Minister in *The Herald* today. He says:

"Above all, there are two imperatives that are particularly key to Scotland's success in the global economy . . . One of these is no surprise: education."

He then states that the second priority is delivery of "the e-commerce ethos".

**Ms Alexander:** I made it clear that we endorse the sentiment of the SNP motion, but the motion "insists" on new investment. I invite the member to specify where that new investment should come from.

**Mr MacAskill:** If we want to prioritise those areas, we must invest and make the resources available, but that is a judgment to be made once the budgets are out. Like the First Minister, we are saying that those are the two key matters.

At the start of the new millennium and with a new Scottish Parliament, it is the duty of all members to contribute to and work towards a comprehensive economic development strategy, not just for one term of government, but for a generation. In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United Kingdom laboured under short-termism and stop-startism. Governments came and went and, even within Governments, ideas and directions were invoked and dispensed with. That is not an argument against change or innovation, but a call for stability and balance. At the start of the new century, and with the commencement of our new Parliament, now is the time to reject the errors of the old ways. We have the opportunity to learn from nations that practised a different method and reaped a better harvest, whether Scandinavia in the 1960s or Ireland in the 1980s and 1990s. There is a better way.

Governments will come and go in Scotland, but the fall of each Government should not mean the upheaval of a major reversal of policy or a massive change in direction. It is the democratic right of any Government to decide its priorities, but it is also the responsibility of any Government to take cognisance of the national interest. Within the framework of the new Scottish Parliament, we have an opportunity to replicate the social and economic growth of Scandinavia and Ireland, which was based on parliamentary consensus on the national interest and on the general direction that the nation should take. Governments will still

decide their priorities, but the ship will be steered with a steady hand on the tiller and on a steady course of economic stability. That is not just desirable, but essential.

What is the role of Government and what is the role of the strategy? The role of Government is to provide the framework and the facilities to allow individuals and businesses, indigenous or otherwise, to grow and expand in Scotland; to educate its people to ensure that the work force is available; to provide resources for research and development that can add value to and enhance commerce and industry; to provide the framework and infrastructure to allow our enterprises to compete; to provide assistance—financial or other—to add value to what business does; and, vitally, to sell Scotland abroad in every shape and form, in all economic areas and in all appropriate markets.

What needs to be done? First, we must recognise that Scotland needs to run to catch up. We lag behind and are in danger of falling further behind. No one in this brave new world owes Scotland a living. If we are to prevent an ever-increasing number of people from receiving a giro of ever-diminishing value, we must build the base on which to progress.

We have intimated our support for a strategy and a philosophy. Now it is time to turn to the practical requirements—education and infrastructure. That is not a mantra; it is an absolute necessity. We must invest in those areas to compete. They are the areas that we must prioritise and in which we must deliver. I will spend some time on each of them.

Infrastructure falls into two parts: transport and telecommunications. Our transport network, whatever mode, is woefully inadequate. I do not want to use this debate for political point scoring. Accordingly, I will say merely that, given our geographic peripherality, ease of communication is necessary for trade and commerce. We are distant from our markets and we have impediments inflicted on us, such as the high value of the pound and high fuel costs. We cannot, therefore, allow additional impediments through inferior infrastructure. We are paying the price of a generation of under-investment by British Governments, whatever their political hue. In Scotland, we must prioritise transport infrastructure to wipe out the legacy left by the British and to create a future for the Scottish economy. We must allow our businesses to reach their markets easily, speedily and cheaply.

Telecommunications is the new infrastructure and it matters in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is as important as a completed A9, a constructed M74 or a railway that runs. However, on bandwidth and internet connectors, we are sadly lacking.

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland)**

**(Con):** Before Mr MacAskill finishes this part of his speech, will he give us his model for investment? How much does he expect the central purse to put in? What leverage percentages does he seek? Where in the private sector should the money come from?

**Mr MacAskill:** We cannot expect the private sector to do it all. British Telecom has made that quite clear. The Government at Westminster has received a bounty of approximately £22 billion from third-generation telecommunications licences. Should not that money at least in part be hypothecated to ensure that everybody in Scotland has access to something that should be liberated? The funds are there. We can use the money to develop our infrastructure or we can spend it. The SNP believes that it should be invested. BT expects that 66 per cent of Scotland's population will have access to asymmetric digital subscriber lines by 2002, yet the UK figure is 75 per cent. We must aspire to attain and go beyond the UK average. The tragedy is that rural Scotland, which should benefit the most, will receive the least. Far from being liberated by a new form of communication, people in rural Scotland will once again be imprisoned by their isolation. That must change. Ireland and Finland have stolen a march on us. We must invest and prioritise to catch up and compete.

Investment in education—in schools and throughout people's lives—must be a priority. At present, too many children leave school inadequately educated and inadequately skilled for the workplace. Ministers have denigrated the success of the Republic of Ireland; that is not only insulting but fallacious. It should be noted that the economic success of the Republic of Ireland was built on a base not of European handouts but of investment in education. A generation ago, the Irish recognised that their greatest resource was their people. They invested in them and now they call to their diaspora to return home. We must do likewise. We face a skills shortage in numerous sectors while we have substantial unemployment in far too many areas. We need to skill up Scotland. We need to train the hands that are idle to do the work that we need them to do. We cannot live in hope of a major factory being fabricated in Scotland—we face too much competition from the southern hemisphere and eastern Europe. We must skill up our people and the jobs will follow from within and without.

There must be a strategy, a philosophy and action. We must leave behind the British disease that afflicted us in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We must look to small nations that blossomed while Scotland withered. Ireland has often been mentioned in that context, and we can learn from other nations as well. Scotland has a population akin to Finland's.

Both countries are geographically isolated but, a generation ago, the Finnish people agreed a consensus, created a strategy and invested in education and infrastructure. They did not have the benefit of North sea oil off their shores, but they have delivered economic prosperity balanced by social responsibility. If we do likewise, we can create a small nation that is economically wealthy and socially just. That is the framework that we must follow. The Executive has its chance to prioritise and deliver. The jury is out.

I move amendment S1M-1405.2, to leave out "and that" and insert:

"and to that end insists that further investment is made in education and in the transport and electronic communications infrastructure to ensure that the aspirations of the framework document can be achieved; agrees that with such investment."

15:52

**Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland)**

**(Con):** Today's debate on the framework for economic development in Scotland is welcome and worth while. Not only does it give us an opportunity to debate the merits of the framework; it allows us to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of differing approaches to running the economy. All parties support the idea of a framework of some kind or another and, to that end, we support the principles of the motion. There is much to commend the framework and our amendment recognises that.

We welcome the notion of a framework and cautiously welcome the proposals. The reason why our support is given with a qualification is that, with respect, the Conservative party thinks that it understands the needs of the Scottish economy and I think that the business community would acknowledge that the Executive has still to prove that it understands that.

Supporting the framework is, in principle, simple, as it offers a reasonably sensible strategy for improving our economy, promotes a strong vision and offers strategic guidance for economic policy and the attainment of economic development throughout Scotland. The framework is aimed at eliminating duplication and ensuring value for money and is proactive in that it aims to enhance our knowledge of the Scottish economy. Naturally, we support all of that. However, our amendment makes two pleas: that the framework document should be rigorously reviewed; and that it should put the needs of the economy first. In business speak, we want measurement, priorities and response. That is what my party is about. We want businesses to flourish and our amendment proves that. We want the Executive to militate against the prospect of the framework becoming a vacuous and meaningless series of soundbites. That

danger is obvious. I welcome the minister's indication of support for the amendment.

We want a document in which economic review stands out from technical mumbo jumbo. Strategies, frameworks and visions are all fine as long as there is substance behind the verbosity.

We want the Executive to put the needs of the economy first. Our vision is one of individuals being given back their freedom and not one of the Government taking it away. Conservatives would allow people to develop for themselves, as that is the only positive way in which to run an economy. Our record on that is proven. It may be unpalatable to record history, but the economy was revolutionised under a Conservative Government, which introduced privatisation and deregulation, giving us the modern economy that we are now debating.

Many of the statistics on which the minister based her argument came into being not just within the past three years; they were there many years before, under a Conservative Government. We presided over an economy in which 90 per cent of the population benefited from a growth in wealth, and in which the remaining 10 per cent had no loss in income. *The Economist* of 25 November 1999 is my authority for that view.

The number of Scottish companies in the FTSE 100 index has more than doubled over the past decade; the number in the FTSE 250 has risen sixfold. That is because we believed in empowering companies to develop for themselves, instead of telling them how to do it. Two signal examples are Scottish and Southern Energy and Scottish Power. Both those companies would not be where they are now if the Conservative party had not rolled back the frontiers of the state. We empowered individuals to think for themselves, but we were belittled by our political opponents for having the courage to take that view.

Our framework for economic development is very simple: to put the economy first and to cut red tape and bureaucracy. We also have to concentrate on a low-tax agenda. The party of the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and her coalition Executive purport to support that view. In fact, the burden of taxation has increased from 35.2 per cent to 37.3 per cent under Labour. Business rates are higher in Scotland than they are in England.

The Executive's plans for the Scottish economy are flawed. The framework needs a stronger focus on business and a greater emphasis on scrutiny. The Conservative party is determined that what is essentially a good proposition, a proper framework for economic development, perhaps a sacred cow for the Scottish economy in the future, should not

become its Trojan horse. That is why we lodged our amendment, which it is my pleasure to move.

I move amendment S1M-1405.1, to insert at end:

"but emphasises the importance of monitoring such activity in order that a meaningful response can be made to any negative outcome or trend."

15:57

**George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD):** It is a great pleasure to take part in the debate, which has finally been secured at the third time of asking. I welcome the publication of "The Way Forward". There is a need for a national economic development strategy. In our manifesto, we in the Liberal Democrats committed ourselves to such a strategy, and the framework is the key milestone in the delivery of that policy.

During the investigation of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee into the delivery of economic development services in Scotland, virtually every organisation that gave evidence called on the Scottish Executive to set up an economic development strategy for Scotland. It was the main priority for the businesses that gave evidence to the committee, and they were adamant that an overarching economic strategy was vital to ensure that all organisations involved in trying to improve Scotland's economic performance were given a strong, powerful lead by the Executive.

The framework document has been warmly welcomed by representatives of the business community. I believe that that is because the document responded to the messages that they gave to the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee.

**Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** In reference to the tributes given to the document by the business community, does George Lyon agree with Iain McMillan, the director of the Confederation of British Industry Scotland? He stated:

"The transport section, on first reading, is a bit self congratulatory. Quite frankly they have nothing to congratulate themselves about".

**George Lyon:** Selective quoting will always get some mileage, but the quotation taken as a whole was a welcome from the CBI.

**Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** Could George Lyon remind Bruce Crawford that the then convener of the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee is now the leader of the SNP—or did he forget that one?

**George Lyon:** I am quite sure that Bruce Crawford is aware of who his leader is; perhaps he is not happy about it.

Another issue that arose in the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee's investigation was the lack of robust statistics on the Scottish economy. It is clear to us all that, if we are to measure the impact of the Scottish Executive's policies on developing the economy, we need a firm baseline of statistics from which to start. How on earth can we measure that impact without that solid baseline? I am glad that that problem has been recognised and addressed in the framework document.

Two key priorities are highlighted in the document: first, the strengthening of the basic education system; and secondly, the improvement of our electronics and transport infrastructures. It is right to concentrate on those areas. Mr MacAskill referred to the Irish example. According to the Irish, with some of whom I spent five or six days last year, the secret of their success is clearly education, and investment in their electronic infrastructure, but not in their transport infrastructure because at one time they did not have funds to do both.

**Fiona McLeod:** The member says that the Irish accepted the need for investment in their electronic infrastructure. I take it that the Liberal Democrats will support our amendment, which calls for exactly that.

**George Lyon:** I do not think that we need to support the amendment, as the framework document says that we will invest in the electronic infrastructure.

The education system is fundamental. Globalisation and the competitive world economy mean that producing large numbers of well-educated students and a well-educated work force is essential to allow us to attract inward investment and encourage firms to set up in this country.

Investment in good communications infrastructure is a top priority. The result of Ireland's investment in its telecommunications infrastructure has been substantial growth. It is only now that Ireland is starting to invest in the physical infrastructure of road and rail.

Such investment has delivered for Ireland. I believe that by prioritising those two key areas, it should deliver for Scotland. The Scottish Executive has made a good start. More money is being poured into schools and a commitment has been given to lifelong learning. Tuition fees have been abolished, grants are being reintroduced through the graduate endowment scheme, and individual learning accounts have been established. Those measures should help to deliver the goods: a well-educated work force and a pool of skilled labour on which international firms relocating in this country could draw.

We need to invest more in our infrastructure. We

need to do more in our rural areas, which are a key concern. Thankfully, we took substantial steps in the Highlands and Islands about 10 years ago, so there is a reasonable telecommunications network there, but it needs to be updated and to receive more investment. We must ensure that rural areas benefit from these opportunities.

Business has asked for an economic strategy for Scotland. The Lib Dems promised that in their manifesto. With this document, the Scottish Executive has started to deliver an economic blueprint for the future.

16:02

**Elaine Thomson (Aberdeen North) (Lab):** St Andrew's day is an appropriate occasion on which to take stock and hold a debate on the economic framework for Scotland. We should celebrate the fact that we have the lowest unemployment that there has been for decades, youth unemployment has been slashed by 73 per cent since October 1997, and we have the highest number of people in work since 1960. We can look forward and realise that full employment is now an achievable goal for all Scotland.

As a result of the review of economic development in Scotland, we have the most comprehensive assessment of economic development policy for a generation. It is published in "The Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development in Scotland", which gives a long-term vision for Scotland and clearly sets out where we want to go. We want to be a small, vibrant and dynamic economy, which is globally competitive and has a highly skilled work force, and which can succeed throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We want to use the opportunities of the new economy to create prosperity in every city and region of Scotland, from Shetland to the Borders.

It is becoming more crucial every day to get the people without jobs into the jobs without people. In Aberdeen, we have been fortunate to have had low unemployment for a long time, but there are still people in my constituency who cannot find jobs. In many of the areas that are covered by the local social inclusion partnership, unemployment is three times as high as it is elsewhere in the city. People in those areas are socially disadvantaged and do not have the skills and education that are required. There are problems that keep people in those areas out of the employment market. They may be too old—over 50. They may be women, particularly single parents, who seek more family-friendly policies and flexibility so that they can combine the needs of family life with employment. People with disabilities face particular difficulties in getting into the job market. That is true all across Scotland.



The minister's announcement today of the Scottish Enterprise initiative "Get into enterprise" is very welcome. It will build on the many other initiatives to help to get people into work: individual learning accounts, the Scottish University for Industry, the new futures fund, which helps particularly disadvantaged groups access training and employment, and the new deal, which in Scotland hit Labour's pre-election target on youth unemployment many months ago and has now reduced youth unemployment nationally by a quarter of a million. That was one of Labour's five key pledges.

The creation of a new labour market research unit will be essential in identifying skill shortages and in improving the quality and quantity of labour market information. For example, as many members know, the fish processing sector in Aberdeen is facing a major crisis because of the low cod stocks in the North sea. Because of poor regional data, one of the issues facing Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Enterprise Grampian is identifying accurately the number of fish processing workers in Aberdeen. It is estimated to be over 2,000. The new labour market research unit would be able to help with that.

Such information will allow better planning and ensure that we have the right kind of retraining and assistance where needed. It will also assist with skill shortages, which are appearing in many areas in Scotland. The oil and gas industry recently announced billions of pounds' worth of new investment in the UK, but it is facing a demographic crisis. Many of those in the offshore work force—some 30,000 workers—are due to retire over the next five to 10 years. The industry is having increasing difficulties in attracting people with the right kinds of skills and education. The people needed are living throughout Scotland, in the Borders, Glasgow and the Highlands. The framework that is now in place will help put together the conditions that we need to get the right skills to the right people.

Scotland is more vibrant and exciting now than has been the case for decades. The framework for economic development, together with record investment in education and encouragement of enterprise and innovation, will help develop a better and more prosperous future for Scotland.

16:07

**Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP):** There is broad consensus about the need for a national economic development strategy for Scotland and about many of the issues that we face. There are a number of strategic issues and challenges that we need to face up to and by which any economic development strategy or framework will be judged.

The Scottish economy today is not just the result of what has happened in the past few years; in many aspects, it is the result of trends over a century that we still need to deal with. One such trend is population change, which is an issue that has not usually been highlighted in economic discussion but which might have a fundamental effect on the future of the Scottish economy.

We are the only country other than Italy in western Europe that will suffer from a net reduction in population in the foreseeable future. One long-term forecast for the population in Scotland shows that our population could decline over the next 70 years to about 3.8 million people. Such depopulation would have a number of effects.

That forecast is due very largely to the fact that we are losing young people, whom we need to rebuild our industry and build the society of tomorrow. There are some years when 60 or 70 per cent of computer graduates from Scotland leave Scotland to get work. Last year, 45 per cent of all graduates left Scotland to get their first job. That is a very substantial bleeding of population—in terms of numbers and of the quality of the people and skills we need. The more general issue is that when there is depopulation, it can in itself become a major contributory factor to unemployment. As more people leave the country, they take with them the purchasing power needed to generate new jobs in the economy. If fewer jobs are generated, more depopulation follows. The danger arises of a spiral of depopulation feeding on unemployment and vice versa.

In the latest available figures, from the second quarter of this year, the percentage increase in gross domestic product in Scotland was around 2.1 per cent, whereas the UK figure was 3.2 per cent. In that quarter, the Scottish economy was growing, and that is welcome. However, the gap between Scotland and the rest of the UK in long-term output growth is such that, had we enjoyed the same rate of growth over the past 10 or 15 years as the rest of the UK has enjoyed, the Scottish economy would now be £7 billion or £8 billion a year bigger than it is. That would represent public sector investment of an extra £3 billion or £4 billion, with the balance in the rest of the economy. Closing that gap must be one of the measures of success of the framework for economic development.

The narrowness of our commercial and industrial base—in terms both of the sectors and of the companies—is an important issue. We rely on three or four sectors for about 75 per cent of all our exports from Scotland. That is too few eggs in one big basket. One company, Motorola, accounts for about 20 per cent of all our exports. That makes us vulnerable, and we need to address that

by diversifying the base of the economy.

We need to boost research and development as a percentage of GDP. Our spend on research and development in industry as a percentage of GDP is about half the European average. If we are to compete in an expanding European market, we need to double our figure.

The final challenge that I want to talk about is investment. In the late 1970s, public sector investment represented about 7.5 per cent of GDP; it now represents about 0.2 per cent. Although the planned increase in investment over the next few years is welcome, it goes nowhere near meeting the challenge.

We must not underestimate the challenge of the expansion of the European Union. We have already lost investment to countries such as Poland. That trend will increase if we do not address the issue.

16:13

**Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab):** Last week, I asked the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning a question that highlighted the loss of what I thought was 86 jobs at the knitwear manufacturers Robertsons of Dumfries Ltd. I have since realised that I gave the minister wrong information; unfortunately, the company has gone into liquidation and all 121 jobs have been lost as we approach Christmas. We have also heard that the Nestlé factory in Dumfries will, before Christmas, close its doors for the last time. Over the past 18 months, 100 jobs have disappeared from that factory.

I do not mention all that because I am a new recruit to the doom and gloom brigade or the Jeremiahs; I mention it because what is happening in and to my constituency is happening elsewhere in Scotland. We have to face that. I believe that the framework document faces up to the realities in Scotland, especially in terms of the jobs that are being lost in the traditional industries as they change.

Mr MacAskill mentioned one particular topic, and I would like to quote to him from the document:

"there must be safeguards for those whose enterprises and jobs are lost, with a focus on the rapid reintegration of people into the workforce through the commitment to lifelong learning and the redevelopment of their skills".

In my constituency, at the same time as jobs are being lost in traditional industries, jobs are being created in the new industries. I was present when a German company named Tailgate recently announced an initial 120 jobs in a call centre. Such work is a new venture for that company in the UK. The jobs are being created at the Crichton University campus. It is projected that around 700

jobs might be created on that site. We will therefore have to address training issues: people are losing jobs in the traditional industries and a number of new industries, needing people, are moving in. In respect of the Tailgate jobs, I was especially pleased to hear of the collaboration between Dumfries and Galloway College and Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway to ensure that people were being trained.

What is happening in my constituency demonstrates why it is so important that we have a national strategy, which recognises the changing nature of employment in Scotland and the consequent requirement for training in order to match skills, people and jobs.

I was pleased to hear the minister say that the new deal has been more successful in Scotland than we expected. However, we must not be complacent, because other news is more disturbing, such as the report by Her Majesty's inspectors of schools on the weakness of science teaching in the five-to-14 curriculum. That will not help future opportunities in Scotland and I am sure that the Executive will act to address that deficiency.

One of the four objectives of the framework for economic development is

"regional development: ensuring that all regions of Scotland enjoy the same economic opportunities".

I want to make two points on that. We must address the fact that currently there is not equality of access to training and education throughout Scotland and that there are barriers of poverty, geographical access and access to electronic information. I do not dispute that the issues that the SNP raises are important, but I do not think that its amendment is necessary, because those points are highlighted in the document. There are issues for employees in small and medium-sized enterprises—often in rural areas, where there are more small enterprises and fewer very large ones. Smaller employers may not be able to offer their workers the training and skilling opportunities that larger employers can offer. That issue must be addressed.

When we talk about entrepreneurial dynamism and enterprise, we must recognise that there are many different models of employment in Scotland that provide financial security and personal fulfilment. Many Scottish people work in the public sector and increasing numbers work in the voluntary sector. People also work in co-operatives, in community enterprises or as self-employed individuals, supplying services and goods to others in their community. Not everyone wants to be a millionaire. Entrepreneurialism and a culture of enterprise must never be seen as equating to an individualistic philosophy of, "We

are all capitalists now.” Social responsibility and individual fulfilment within, and as part of, our community are absolutely necessary for—as it says in the document—

“the kind of society we would like to see in 5 to 10 years time”.

16:17

**Bruce Crawford (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** Here we are in Scotland at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a small nation of 5 million people on the periphery of the continent of Europe. We are not doing too badly in economic terms, despite the many barriers in our way. We are doing okay, but that is not good enough if we want to prosper and compete effectively in tomorrow's global market. To prosper—not just to do okay or to survive—we must remove the barriers that hinder Scotland from achieving her full economic potential.

Scotland is putting herself at a competitive disadvantage because we are not as well connected, internally or internationally, as we should be. For Scotland to prosper, we need to improve radically the way in which we move our materials, goods and people. Without a first-class transport infrastructure, how can we expect to compete effectively in global markets?

The Confederation of British Industry Scotland has said that business in Scotland needs high-quality, free-flowing interurban roads; a high-quality Scotland-England transport corridor; good road and rail connections to Scottish ports and airports; and good access to ports and airports outside Scotland, including the channel tunnels. However, it was Lex Gold of the Scottish Chamber of Commerce who said recently that Scotland had a transport infrastructure akin to that of a third-world country. Comparing the ambition with the reality as seen through the eyes of business people makes depressing reading. The reality of Scotland today is that we still have many barriers to overcome in relation to transport.

Let us consider some of the starker examples. The M8 is a complete joke of a motorway—a two-lane shambles, which is not even constructed to motorway standard between Baillieston and Newhouse. The Forth road bridge has horrendous levels of congestion at peak times, which would be greatly eased by the upgrading of the A8000. In financial terms, that would need only a modest contribution, but the Executive would rather squabble with City of Edinburgh Council about who should take responsibility rather than just get on and get the job done.

Rural Scotland also faces severe problems in maintaining its road network, especially given some of the reductions in local authority funds for

minor roads. For example, Highland Council has warned the Executive that on the basis of current resources, the fabric of the B roads in that area will deteriorate to the extent that some might face closure on safety grounds.

As far as the railways are concerned, the least said, the better is probably the view of the Minister for Transport. Unfortunately for the minister, she has no real powers to act when it comes to Scotland's railways. The minister can talk a good game, but she has no real clout when it comes to issues of funding rail infrastructure—no real clout, and no guarantee on funding.

To enable our nation to prosper and overcome barriers, investment from the Executive at levels not seen in Scotland will have to be achieved. For the moment, the Executive has allocated £1.27 billion over the next three years to transport. Yet in May this year, John Prescott announced a massive expenditure of £180 billion for the 10-year period to 2010. To ensure that Scotland prospers, is not it time to transfer the powers over rail, air and shipping that currently rest with the UK Government to the Scottish Executive, and use those powers to spend Scotland's £18 billion share of Prescott's treasure chest in Scotland on Scotland's priorities?

If members believe in Scotland and its future economic prosperity, they must believe that the Parliament needs to have within its remit the powers stretching across the entire transport arena, together with the wherewithal to get the job done.

16:22

**David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con):** I welcome the strategy, but I am always concerned by diagrams. Exactly what an

“iterative process of defining approach”

is, as shown in the diagram on page 82 of “The Way Forward”, is beyond me.

It is important to look at the role of government. The document does not fully address either the role of government as an external factor or the role of government as part of the economy. In large tranches of Scotland, particularly in rural Scotland, the south and the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and Gaelic's constituency, government in its various forms—the health service and local government—is a fundamental economic actor. We have to recognise that. When the framework is being drawn up and various other initiatives are taking place, we have to realise that those organisations are a much greater part of the process. In developing an e-Scotland, we have to break down the distinction between e-government and e-business, because they are, and should be,

one and the same.

I am always keen to examine overseas examples, although our friends in the SNP always cite examples of countries. There are good examples in states in the United States. I am a bit nervous of the Finnish example, because to have two thirds of a country's gross domestic product in one company, as is the case with Nokia, is not as good an idea as it might seem. I commend what has happened in Finland, but there are problems in that country.

I recently visited Virginia in the United States, where there has been a strategic approach to tackling rural development, and the public sector, be it health services, universities or whatever, has addressed its own role. It has created a demand relative to its own needs, for example, for telecommunications infrastructure, and it has used its global leverage to improve the network there. The interesting fact is that in the United States, if people are given the same, or roughly the same, income opportunity in a rural area as in an urban area, they are beginning to see a migration of people back from conurbations into rural areas. However, to do that they must have access to the appropriate infrastructure, to allow them to maintain their incomes.

I am absolutely committed to wiring up Scotland. The Government has a strategic role, which I believe—this is not necessarily the view of the Conservative party—needs to go a bit further. I do not kid myself that that is an easy task. For example, stocks in the telecommunications and technology sector are at some of their lowest levels for years. Companies such as Scottish Telecom, which is now called Thus, BT and ntl do not have the money swilling around that they might have had a few years ago. They must be engaged if we are to get the investment into the infrastructure.

My final point concerns engagement with business. Yet again, the names of a few business leaders were trotted out in the minister's opening speech. Every time that a business leader agrees with something that the Government says, their name is trotted out. We do not engage in the necessary mature discussions with business. We must take what we do not like in what businesses say and also what is constructive in what they say. We must engage and connect more maturely with business in Scotland if we are to proceed on the way forward, in line with the title of the document.

16:26

**Euan Robson (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD):** I will concentrate my remarks on the regional objectives section of the framework document, on pages 64 to 67. The document says:

"There are three regional issues of importance",

of which the first is spreading the economic strengths of some regions to other sub-national economies. The second is the deployment of

"various instruments of economic development"

to promote sub-national economies that are doing less well. The third is population issues.

On the first point, I trust that ministers will confirm that the Executive's policy is to ensure that sub-national economies throughout Scotland can draw some of the economic growth from those that are doing very well indeed. The framework talks about changing perceptions, such as the old adage that the east prospers while the west struggles. The situation is more complicated than that. There are performance differences within regions and even within industrial sectors in some sub-national economies. The picture is not clear.

The parts of Scotland that are doing well and where the pressure of overheating is obvious can shed some of that overheating to other areas. Members throughout the chamber will be able to give examples. I invite the minister to consider the south of Scotland. The obvious advantage is that it could absorb some of the population and development pressures from the Edinburgh conurbation to the mutual benefit of both parts of Scotland.

The minister talked about level playing fields. We need to address some of the inequalities in the deployment of the various instruments of economic development. For example, if accessibility to and from the south of Scotland is to be enhanced, it will require direct public investment in roads, rail and telecommunications. I draw the minister's attention to the fact that infrastructure projects—even soft ones such as telecommunications—are not included in the south of Scotland objective 2 programme. If we are talking about level playing fields, the new European funds will deliver £194 million to the Highlands and Islands—£526 per head of population—whereas the objective 2 programme in the south of Scotland is only £42 million, or £174 per head of population.

I welcome the emphasis on opportunities in the document—that important point is made in the regional objectives section. Of course, we need to strike a balance between need and opportunity. Ministers must back opportunity where, even at first glance, need may be less obvious. For example, my constituency has lower levels of recorded unemployment than the national average, with, unfortunately, one or two significant exceptions. However, that is because one of our major exports is our young people, particularly those who enter the professions and high-skills, high-technology industries. I am sure that that is

also the case in other constituencies in Scotland. My part of the world could support considerable economic development and appropriate diversification of our economic base, which would prevent the progressive aging of the population and, at the same time, help to reduce overheating in Edinburgh and the Lothians. There are opportunities that can be grasped and I welcome the framework's general approach, although I want to see how that approach is played out in practice.

I want to make a final point about the textiles industry, which is not a sunset industry, although the document suggests that that image of the industry still lurks in the recesses of the civil service and the enterprise and lifelong learning department. It is not a sunset industry because parts of it are doing immensely well. The cashmere industry, in particular, is a major export earner. A skills crisis is shortly to emerge in parts of the textiles and knitwear industry—that crisis will need to be addressed. I hope that, when the minister comes to see us on 31 January, she will have the opportunity of understanding those problems at first hand.

16:31

**Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP):** Any framework for economic development at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must give due cognisance to the fact that future development will be based on e-business and e-commerce, both of which will grow from the knowledge society. I am heartened by the emphasis placed on that by both the framework and the minister's opening comments, and I will re-emphasise the importance of that in my speech.

Recently, Robert Crawford, who is the chief executive of Scottish Enterprise, said:

"E-commerce is the most profound economic development since the industrial revolution and it must be embraced before the challenges become threats."

I fear that we may be approaching the level of threat if we do not do something soon.

I was at Scottish Enterprise's annual meeting in August this year, at which Professor Jim Norton, from the Institute of Directors, produced some fascinating statistics on growth in e-business around the world. I will introduce another country into the debate, as Jim Norton told us that Norway was the world leader in e-business—not the United States but Norway, which is the same size as Scotland and which is on the geographical periphery, just like Scotland. I ask ministers whether Scotland can emulate Norway and whether the framework will put Scotland in front, instead of playing catch-up.

We must consider what the Government has done in two crucial areas over the past 18 months.

I bring members back to digital Scotland, which is an area that I constantly mention in debates in the Parliament. I make no apology for that. If we do not achieve digital Scotland, we will not do e-business this year, next year or in 10 years' time. I remind the chamber that we debated digital Scotland more than a year ago. Six months later, in May 2000, a task force report on digital Scotland was published. Four months later, on 14 September, we had the Executive's response to the digital Scotland task force report: the Executive agreed to all 68 recommendations.

But where are we, what have we done and what has the Government achieved a year after the debate? Even the framework document mentions broadband provision, when it says:

"There is already a consensus that investment in high quality broadband telecommunications throughout Scotland would be an important contributor to the building of a knowledge-based economy."

But where is that broadband provision? Where is Scotland's direct access to the north Atlantic cable, which would allow broadband communications throughout Scotland? The south-east of England has such direct access, but Scotland does not. Where is the feasibility study into broadband communications for Scottish schools? That study was due to be published at the end of September, but we have heard nothing. It goes on and on. We must ensure that we achieve and do not just talk. We have a wonderful glossy document, but we need the action and we cannot keep waiting for it.

One of the key points that the digital Scotland task force and the knowledge economy action group talked about was leadership for digital Scotland and for the e-economy. They talked about energetic leadership and about appointing a Scottish e-envoy and a Scottish Cabinet minister for the information age strategy. I refer the minister to recommendation 17 of the digital Scotland task force report. Where is that person? Where is the leadership?

Without wanting to get too personal, Peter Peacock has been the minister responsible for digital Scotland. If we were conducting a performance review and were measuring Peter's application to digital Scotland in the past year, we would have to question his results. Where is the action plan that the EU said that we should have produced by June 1999? We need action and we need it now.

In closing, I was going to say to Wendy Alexander, "Wendy, we need action and I hope you'll lead it." However, given her responses to some of the questions that were put to her earlier, I am very disappointed that our minister is someone who thinks that three months' work is sustainable employment for young people and that

words, not funding, are the way of achieving an e-Scotland.

16:36

**Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie (Lab)):** For the first time, this document brings together the Executive's economic development policy and its social justice agenda. That is vitally important because, in the past, Scottish Enterprise has seen its role essentially as a business support agency. I believe that it did not take social inclusion sufficiently seriously and the objectives that it was allowed to set for itself were dictated by its often rather esoteric projections of economic trends and by the business interests that predominated on its board.

In endorsing the framework document in *The Herald* this morning, the First Minister said:

"We need to push ahead on the broad front of economic and social issues that are important for the long term".

I completely agree with that diagnosis, but appropriate solutions can be found only if, as Henry McLeish suggests, we take a radical and searching look at what the people of Scotland need and how it can be delivered more effectively.

Until now, Scottish Enterprise has defined its role too narrowly in terms of economic development, while other agencies more in touch with realities on the ground, including some of the local enterprise companies, have concerned themselves with social and economic cohesion. That has to change if we are to take advantage of the jobs that are being created in the economy as a vehicle for ending poverty and disadvantage.

It is crucial that the co-ordinating agency for economic development accepts responsibility for delivering across the whole agenda mapped out in this document and seeks to target resources to achieve that rather than to achieve purely business-directed ends. The minister announced that new deal policies have brought about significant reductions in official levels of unemployment. Those are real achievements and there are some spectacular falls in claimant unemployment, which has been halved in every Scottish constituency. However, as statistics make clear, labour participation rates for Scotland are running at 75 per cent of the eligible population. In the west of Scotland, the participation rate is currently 67 per cent; in Glasgow, it is around 60 per cent.

If we want to make a real difference, we must target not only those designated as unemployed, but the missing 30 per cent who do not show up in unemployment statistics in the poorer areas of Scotland. Those who are on incapacity and disability benefits, single parents, people who have taken early retirement and the large pool of

potential women returners who do not claim job seekers allowance are among the groups that must be helped into work or helped to acquire new skills. I believe that that task is vital for our economic prosperity.

Denmark and the Netherlands have already recognised, from studying demographic and social trends, that it is no good simply trying to generate new jobs. We have to provide education and training to develop the skills of the people we have, and we must provide support where necessary to enable them to participate. Social inclusion is every bit as central to our economic success as knowledge management is, despite the fact that Scottish Enterprise is lavishing such a large share of its budget on the latter.

I would like to ask the minister for more information about the work being done by Scottish Executive officials, by Scottish Enterprise and by others on strategies for increasing participation rates, especially in the west of Scotland, among those who are currently neither in employment nor registered unemployed. What priority will be given to funding delivery mechanisms that will address the needs of that group of people in particular?

E-commerce is important and so is knowledge management, but it is important to consider the needs of the people we want to work. It is very important that we pay attention to manufacturing, which has a vital part to play in securing Scotland's future. There is a gap in the document when it comes to manufacturing.

Last week I attended a meeting, hosted by the minister, with trade union representatives from the Kvaerner Clydebank factory—the famous John Brown Engineering, as great a name as any in the annals of Scottish achievers. The workers at that plant are internationally recognised for their skills and inventiveness. At the meeting it was clear, as it has been for months, that there was demand from the largest company in the world for the work that they produce, the quality of which GE is unable to match in plants elsewhere in the world. However, Kvaerner has pulled the plug on Clydebank, possibly bringing to an end a century of Scottish engineering excellence.

I am grateful to the minister for the efforts that she is making to retain those jobs for Clydebank and to secure the remaining jobs in the service division, which was taken over by GE. It is a disgrace that here we may lose not low-paid, low-skills jobs, but manufacturing jobs that a modern, dynamic, forward-looking economy should be working hard to sustain.

We need not just electronic business and a knowledge economy, but a secure and effective manufacturing base. I hope that in future the people who are responsible for running the

Scottish economy—both the minister and Scottish Enterprise, which has a vital role to play—will pay attention to the requirements of manufacturing.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson):** We now move to closing speeches. I call Jamie Stone to wind up on behalf of the Liberal Democrats.

16:41

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** We have heard mention of Clydebanks and of Glasgow, quite rightly. It will come as no surprise to members that I want to dwell on the Highlands, particularly the north Highlands.

As the Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Lifelong Learning and Gaelic will know, the counties of Caithness and Sutherland have a declining population. People are leaving those areas. Young people, in particular, are moving out. The situation is rather like the one that Euan Robson outlined. Young people are going to Inverness and further south. That is one of the reasons why Inverness is growing exponentially in population, turnover and number of businesses. However, far to the north of Inverness the story is very different.

Despite the best efforts of the Executive and the enterprise network, our straths and glens are continuing to empty. In Wick, east Caithness, Lairg in Sutherland—perhaps the whole of east Sutherland—and the seaboard villages of Easter Ross there is a sad situation. Those communities are feeling the wind—I do not mince my words.

Members would be surprised by how old, on average, are the people who attend the Lairg sale, the biggest lamb sale in Britain. Young people are not going into crofting. If they see an opportunity to get a job in Inverness, Glasgow or Edinburgh, they will head away. I am afraid that something of the clearances is still with us, even in the face of the best efforts of the Executive. I shall return to that.

It is not all doom and gloom. Massive efforts have been made. I compliment the Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Lifelong Learning and Gaelic on his work on Barmac and his attempts to get orders back to the north Highlands, where the oil fabrication industry is very important. Work was also put in to save Hunters of Brora, albeit with a smaller work force than it had previously. Again, that has been a success story. The point is that in very remote areas three, four, a dozen or two dozen jobs can make all the difference between a community surviving in a strath or disappearing for ever.

David Mundell will recall that this morning I spoke about problems resulting from the strength of the pound and high interest rates. That is why

people in the Highlands embrace Europe. They see the European Union and everything that it offers as our salvation. We can only go forward by selling products to the European market.

I am grateful to those members who mentioned the Highlands, if only in passing. Bruce Crawford referred to the state of the roads. This afternoon we have had a very consensual debate. If the front-bench spokesmen for the Scottish nationalists and the Conservative party are able, I would like them to commit themselves to supporting the remoter parts of the Highlands. People must not forget about us—we are the man on Scotland's conscience.

Wendy Alexander spoke about enterprise for all, employment for all and a level playing field. We have some way still to go on that one in the far north. I know that Mr Morrison and Ms Alexander realise that; I am grateful for that.

Annabel Goldie, in her amendment, quite rightly suggests a kind of audit. When the ministers do that audit, could they look at the part of the balance sheet that is the Highlands and say how we are getting on?

We have much to offer. One thinks of the excellent work that is being done on the University of the Highlands and Islands. It is a partnership commitment; indeed, every political party is signed up to it and it can help.

We have seen a great deal of the European structural funding that has come to the Highlands—Dr Ewing will know this—go to the Inverness area and other parts of the Highlands, but for reasons that are not clear certain parts, such as the far north, have missed out. It has not received as great a proportion of the funding as it should have done. That has underpinned some of the structural problems that we have across the Highlands and is why we have the variation whereby Wick is feeling the wind very badly, but Inverness is not. We must tackle that.

We have fine schools, some of the best in the country. We have the idea of the Highland brand. Thank goodness, if we say that something is Highland—perhaps it does not include MSPs—it means very good. We think of whisky, quality products and a clean environment.

We have talked about tourism. It would be tragic if the tourists eventually come to the Highlands in greater numbers and find the glens empty. It is as simple as this: a lot of members who are not from the Highlands have Highland surnames. Malcolm Chisholm was in the chamber—his forebears must have come from Inverness-shire. Those members are living examples of people whose forebears left the Highlands. We must turn that back.

I make great play of this matter, especially as

my new job is spokesman for the Highlands and Islands and fishing. It is a matter to which I will return, perhaps in a members' debate.

16:47

**Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con):** On Jamie Stone's last comment about the Highland clearances, I remind him that we held all of Glen Truim in the Black Isle, until somebody stole it from us.

In welcoming the debate today, I must thank Wendy Alexander for her gracious acceptance of the Conservative amendment, although I found the debate disappointing. I am sorry to say that, but it was dull in parts. There should have been some excitement and leadership.

The framework document has been well read by everyone in Scotland. We must talk today about a different issue, not about the model as it is written down but about how we will deliver its proposals in Scotland, how we will engage people in the discussion and where leadership will come from. I hope that Alasdair Morrison—when he has finished tying his shoelace—will tell us at the end of the debate how we will get the stimulus and leadership that we need in Scotland from the Executive.

Wendy Alexander made a poor start by using the new deal as a good example. The new deal is a moribund exercise, which has continued for three years without a review. As my colleague Annabel Goldie said, the issue today is constant review and monitoring. We got a nice new definition of infrastructure from Wendy Alexander, which equated—the way I heard it—to bras and knickers. I thought that that was rather sexist; I wonder what she has in mind for the men.

Every party in the chamber has mentioned investment in transport. I accept Jamie Stone's comments about investment in the infrastructure in all parts of the country. The minister talked about investment in transportation. I wonder whether she could tell her deputy minister to respond and give us an answer to this question. Does she have any influence with the Minister for Transport, who has deaf ears as far as the vital infrastructure requirements of the north-east of Scotland are concerned, whether on the Montrose bridge or the Aberdeen bypass? We could come up with a host of requirements.

The review said that the greatest economic driver was the private sector. As I said, we must engage with that sector. The nationalist opening speaker, Kenny MacAskill, seemed to carp that we can get goodness only from a public sector organisation. The balance needs to be changed—we need a partnership and it did not come across that Kenny wants that. I am sorry about that.

The private sector will invest only if conditions are right. That goes back to Wendy Alexander's comments about burning piles of regulations. Jeremy Peat said that we need a bonfire of regulations and I would like to hear what the minister is going to do about that. We heard comments about the need for that to happen, but how and when will it happen?

My colleagues have mentioned taxation and other members in the chamber have talked about the skills base. Is the school education system coping? Is it giving pupils enough to get them into a training scheme and to take them further towards employment? There must be clear links between schools and the further and higher education sectors. A member mentioned the lack of monitoring and knowledge about the base from which we start. Why are not we using the university sector to undertake constant monitoring of the various sectors in a dispassionate, academic way? I have talked to people from that sector and they are willing to do that work, but we need to tell them what we need to enable us to our job.

Members have also raised the issue of access to support so that young companies can survive and expand and get help with marketing and exporting. That issue is mentioned loosely throughout the document, but where is the action plan?

We have not addressed the Pareto effect—which Alex Neil mentioned—by which I mean that we put all our eggs in one basket by concentrating about 80 per cent of exports in only a few sectors, 20 per cent of them in one company alone, and receive a short-term return. Why do not we invest in indigenous companies instead of merely looking towards the inward investor? We need to have that discussion.

As for the delivery of support, no one has mentioned the economic forum. Many organisations are absolutely petrified that such forums will become overburdening talking shops that have a lack of focus and leadership. There is no need to put everybody in a sector on a board that will not agree about anything. We need clarity and an open mind about how we deliver economic development and support. That need not be done by the same organisation in every part of Scotland; one model does not fit all.

I hope that, in his winding-up speech, the minister will make it clear that there will be no more initiatives, and that he will spell out the targets that the Executive will set, how they will be monitored and how often Parliament will discuss how matters are progressing.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Duncan Hamilton to wind up for the SNP. You have up to



five minutes.

16:52

**Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I note the distinction of the phrase “up to five minutes”, which means that I do not have to take that long if I do not wish to. However, I think that I will take the five minutes, if it is all the same to you.

I take this opportunity to close what has been a rather sleepy debate, although it has been constructive in tone. Every member in the chamber has signed up to the principle of a framework for economic development. However, the minister's opening speech was perhaps the only exception to that correct tone of debate; it struck a rather sour note, which she probably now regrets.

It has been interesting to watch the parties' various acrobatics as they tried not to support the SNP amendment. Ms Alexander engaged in all sorts of semantics over whether there would be investment or further investment.

**Ms Alexander:** Will the member give way?

**Mr Hamilton:** No.

Indeed, on our point about the need for further investment, her leader said in *The Herald*:

“Clearly, therefore, we need to scale up our investment in people”.

That suggests that Ms Alexander's own leader supports and advocates increased investment.

It was also interesting to hear that the Liberal Democrats and other members could not support our amendment because its contents were already included in the document. This is a new one on me—members not supporting an amendment because they agree with it. That seems an odd way of going about voting.

The SNP's priorities in the debate have been driven not by dogma or unyielding ideology towards public ownership, but by the needs and interests of the people who have contributed to the process. The priorities of transport, communication and education were outlined to the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee and the Executive in submissions from the CBI, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry. Although members will agree that such organisations are not nationalist banner-wavers, by that same token we should take their concerns very seriously.

Until Jamie Stone's intervention, I was struck by the absence of one crucial fact. As Mr Stone pointed out clearly, the framework is important only in the context of the country's macroeconomic stability. The point about the European aspect of

the issue is worth taking on board. The document says that the framework must fulfil the key enabling objective of

“a stable and supportive macroeconomic environment”

to be successful. I would be interested to find out whether, in his summing-up, the minister considers the current high value of the pound and high level of interest rates as providing “stable and supportive macroeconomic” conditions.

I suspect that, if the Executive does as Mr Stone asks and looks to Europe, it will see that German interest rates have been much lower for longer, which has provided the stability that businesses would perhaps endorse.

It is also interesting to note the role that the Scottish Executive will play in that wider macroeconomic framework. On page 36, the document states:

“From a different perspective, there might be a need, where appropriate, to discuss with the UK Government how elements of its economic policies impact on the achievement of the Executive's vision.”

I suggest that we need a bit more than that—it is much too timid. I want to see the Scottish Executive fighting for the Scottish interest and getting on the phone to Mr Brown and his colleagues south of the border to ask what they are going to do about the problems in the Scottish economy and how they can work together. That must happen not only where that is appropriate or when the Executive runs out of things on its to-do list—it must be a priority.

David Mundell and other members stressed the need to emphasise the importance of the internet and e-commerce and how that can be developed. Kenny MacAskill talked about the disparity between Scotland and England in access to ADSL—66 per cent by 2002 in Scotland; 75 per cent in the UK. That is important. The people who are missing out are those in the rural communities of Scotland—they need to have access to those global markets. If a system that delivers for all Scotland is to be a priority, the move towards e-commerce and improving internet access is vital.

Parliament must be willing to learn from other countries. A range of countries have been mentioned in the debate: Norway, Finland, Ireland, the United States, Denmark and Holland. If we are to be willing to learn, we must move away from talking down the achievements of others. The minister referred a few weeks ago during question time to the success of the Irish economy as being the result of “dollops of EU subsidy”. That sort of statement does not help. There is a great deal in the Irish economy, and in the other economies that have been mentioned, from which we can learn. Until we get rid of our arrogance, we will not move the debate on.

The framework is important and has been agreed to by enterprise companies and most parties in Parliament. However, I ask the Government not to tell us about it any more or continue with the spin. In the words of one of the leading athletic sportswear manufacturers: "Just do it".

16:57

**The Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Lifelong Learning and Gaelic (Mr Alasdair Morrison):** I am happy to respond on behalf of the Executive and I am delighted to announce that we will accept the amendment in Annabel Goldie's name.

"The Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development in Scotland" is an unprecedented and important document that sets the scene for long-term development of the Scottish economy, and, for the first time, offers a strategic overview. It is innovative, fresh and, above all, it learns from the lessons of the past and adds real value to our economic thinking and future policy.

The consultation was extensive and took in the views of all the important players in the economic development community, not only those of a selected few. I believe that there exists a considerable degree of consensus about the drivers of economic development and where the priorities are.

There is a clear understanding throughout the country that, to achieve future economic success and prosperity, Scotland must raise its game. With the development of the new economy and the pace of change in the global economy, it is vital that we have clear, modern aspirations for the Scottish economy and that we set out the big picture on which all our detailed economic decisions can draw—whether at national or local level.

The framework sets a new course for economic thinking and debate in Scotland. After all these years, it would be a mistake to pretend that we can be prescriptive. This is a serious project that needs to be built up from the foundations. We have set out the big picture for the Scottish economy and put in place the building blocks for policy making, which will lead to economic success and prosperity. Now we need to act quickly. The policy developments that Wendy Alexander has outlined are testimony to the fact that the framework has already made a tangible impact on thinking in the Executive.

Economic activity must generate sufficient opportunities, so that the commitment to full employment in Scotland—in the modern sense, of high and stable levels of employment, through the promotion of employment opportunities for all—can be met. That would be a considerable

achievement.

It is central to our economic vision to stimulate action to secure our growth and equity objectives. To put it another way, we want to accelerate economic growth, but we are also fundamentally concerned about the quality of economic growth. We must have growth that is socially just and sustainable, because it embraces all the people of Scotland, including those in geographically peripheral areas or those in peripheral sections of society.

Economic opportunities must be accessible to all and they must be sustainable. Sustainability ensures that our vision takes account not only of the interests of the current generation, but of those of future generations. That means that we must always look ahead and that the opportunities, costs and benefits of economic activity must be relevant to all generations and not merely to those with a short-term horizon.

I turn now to some of the remarks that were made during the debate. I regret the situation that Elaine Murray described in her constituency. She made exceptionally valid points about safeguarding the position of those who lose jobs in traditional industries. It is vital that people have the opportunity to retrain so that we can help to ease them back into the labour market. Elaine Murray was absolutely right to reflect on the success of the new deal. As Wendy Alexander outlined, since the new deal scheme began, 29,200 young people have gone into jobs, of which 21,800 were sustained. That means that 80 per cent of those people are now in unsubsidised employment. Elaine Murray mentioned the potential that is being realised on the Crichton campus. She will be delighted to learn that my colleague, Wendy Alexander, will visit that campus next week.

George Lyon referred to the need for appropriate statistics on the Scottish economy. I assure Mr Lyon that the Executive has in place a programme for the development of Scottish economic statistics, which forms part of the overall Scottish Executive's plan for national statistics. That plan will be published in February next year.

My fellow Highlander, Jamie Stone, made a number of valid points as usual, but I am thankful that he did not mention the dairy industry. As he pointed out rightly, the Highlands have much to offer. There are difficulties and challenges, which we will overcome. Jamie Stone also mentioned the importance of the University of the Highlands and Islands project, which Wendy Alexander is tackling aggressively. She takes an active and interested role in furthering people's expectations of the University of the Highlands and Islands.

David Mundell was right to cite international examples of the e-revolution. I contest what Fiona

McLeod said about my eminent colleague, Peter Peacock. Wendy Alexander will build on the excellent work that was initiated by Peter Peacock. We recognise the importance of e-commerce and digital Scotland, which are firmly ensconced in our department.

The Executive is committed firmly to the development of the internet revolution. As everybody appreciates, digital infrastructure is a national issue. We are in discussion with enterprise agencies and the telecoms companies to map potential demand for such services and to discuss the need for a national strategy.

I turn now to Mr Kenny MacAskill. In her opening remarks, Wendy Alexander prophesied that we would have the usual ritual denunciations. What she should have said is that we would have the usual eulogy to the Celtic tiger. Not once did Mr MacAskill cite where additional resources would come from, and I waited in earnest for Duncan Hamilton to outline where the money would come from. I recall that Mr MacAskill was the man who, one balmy afternoon in the chamber, pledged £800 million for Scotland's roads. He talked about Ireland stealing a march on infrastructure. That is absolute and complete nonsense; he was speaking about a country that has something like 75 miles of dual carriageway. Again, Mr MacAskill was roaring about the Celtic tiger.

In closing, I want to emphasise that the framework is a real sign of the advancement in thinking that devolution always promised; it is an example of devolution making a difference to the lives of the people of Scotland.

For the first time, a comprehensive economic vision for Scotland is set out. It details the philosophy and principles that underlie the Executive's approach to the economy. It considers what the global challenges entail and sets out the Executive's thinking on how that challenge must be addressed. It embraces activity across a spectrum of the Executive's work and is a true example of joined-up thinking. I believe that it can help us take advantage of the economic opportunities that are essential in raising the quality of life of all Scottish people.

## Decision Time

17:05

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** I am late in starting decision time and there are nine questions to be put. Let us keep good order and get through them quickly.

The first question is, that amendment S1M-1404.2, in the name of Iain Gray, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1404, in the name of Phil Gallie, on district courts, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**For**

Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (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)  
 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)  
 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, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 62, Against 49, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The second question is, that amendment S1M-1404.1, in the name of Michael Matheson, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1404, in the name of Phil Gallie, on district courts, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### FOR

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (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)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East 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)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

#### AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (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)  
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 30, Against 82, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The third question is, that motion S1M-1404, in the name of Phil Gallie, on district courts, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

## FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (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)  
 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)  
 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, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

## AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 63, Against 50, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the Parliament expresses its concern over the detrimental effects of the current strike being undertaken by UNISON members in Glasgow District Court on the administration of justice, recognises that the Crown has worked to protect business in District Courts and that this has proved successful except in the case of Glasgow, and urges the suspension of further action affecting the courts.

**The Presiding Officer:** The fourth question is, that amendment S1M-1406.2, in the name of Jack McConnell, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1406, in the name of David McLetchie, on Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

## FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (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)  
 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)  
 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, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

## AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 63, Against 49, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The fifth question falls.

The sixth question is, that motion S1M-1406, in the name of David McLetchie, on Europe, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)

Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (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)  
 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)  
 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, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**AGAINST**

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)

Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 64, Against 49, Abstentions 0.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the Parliament recognises the vital importance of the European Union to the current prosperity of Scotland; welcomes Scotland's positive engagement in the European Union directly and through the UK; believes appropriate decisions in different areas of policy can be taken at Scottish, UK and European levels to ensure democracy and effective government; and supports the work of the Executive and the Parliament to raise the profile of a newly devolved Scotland as a modern, dynamic country with a clear sense of identity within a strong member state.

**The Presiding Officer:** The seventh question is, that amendment S1M-1405.2, in the name of Kenny MacAskill, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1405, in the name of Wendy Alexander, on "The Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development in Scotland", be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)

Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (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)  
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East 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)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Salmond, Mr Alex (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)  
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

**AGAINST**

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Galbraith, Mr Sam (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)  
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)  
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (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)  
 Johnston, Nick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)  
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)  
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)  
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)  
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Munro, Mr John (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)  
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)  
 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)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)  
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)  
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)  
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 30, Against 83, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The eighth question is, that amendment S1M-1405.1, in the name of Annabel Goldie, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1405, be agreed to.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The ninth and final question is, that motion S1M-1405, in the name of Wendy Alexander, on "The Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development in Scotland", as amended, be agreed to.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the Parliament welcomes the publication of Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development in Scotland; agrees with the clear aspirations for the Scottish economy which it sets out; agrees that for future economic success and prosperity, Scotland needs to improve productivity, its capacity for learning and innovation and transform its technology base, and that the Framework provides a basis for the joined up economic decision-making which is vital, and welcomes the work being done in

partnership with all the key players in the Scottish economy towards achieving the Framework's vision, but emphasises the importance of monitoring such activity in order that a meaningful response can be made to any negative outcome or trend.

## Dental Services (Grampian)

**The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):** We now come to the members' business debate on motion S1M-1347, in the name of Mike Rumbles, on access to national health service dental services in Grampian. The debate will be concluded, without any question being put, after 30 minutes.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament recognises that improving access to NHS dental services is a public health priority, welcomes the publication by the Scottish Executive of An Action Plan for Dental Services in Scotland as a first step in this process but recognises that in the Grampian Health Board area, as in a number of rural areas of Scotland, more needs to be done to ensure access for all to NHS dental treatment.

17:13

**Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** I am pleased to open this evening's debate, which is designed to highlight the problems of accessing NHS dental treatment, particularly in the Grampian area.

My attention was first drawn to the problem of accessing NHS dental treatment by the difficulties my local dental practitioner faced when he attempted to recruit a dentist to serve the people of Alford. For about 18 months, he tried to find someone who was willing to come to the rural north-east—but to no avail. The local health authority then tried to cover the area with a salaried dentist, so that NHS treatment could be provided. Six months down the line, the health authority could not recruit a dentist either.

I am concerned that people in rural areas are finding it increasingly difficult to get NHS dental treatment, either for routine work or for more specialist treatment from a consultant. I congratulate the Executive on taking NHS dental treatment much further up the political agenda. I also welcome its publication of "An Action Plan for Dental Services in Scotland".

I know that the Executive recognises that we have real problems with dental care provision in Scotland. Statistics from its document demonstrate that one third of our children are not registered with general dental practitioners and 25 per cent are left entirely without continuing dental care. However, the issues that I am raising this evening go much wider. Non-exempt individuals—for example those who are not children and who are not in receipt of benefits—are simply not able to access NHS dental provision.

After taking up the Alford case, I soon found that the health authority solution was to tell people that

they could access NHS dental provision because an NHS salaried dentist was available in the city of Aberdeen, but anyone who knows the north-east will know that travelling such distances is not a practical solution, especially for people on a low income.

When I pressed health authorities to provide information on the level of NHS dental provision in the north-east, I was amazed to discover that no such information exists—no one could tell me how widespread the problem of accessing an NHS dentist in rural Aberdeenshire is. I conducted my own survey by asking the 10 dental practices in West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine whether they provide NHS access to new non-exempt patients. I found that only half do, so half the people in my constituency cannot register for a local NHS dental service. I cannot believe that the problem is confined to my constituency; it must be a wider problem in rural Scotland. Good schemes, such as the one for salaried dental practitioners that is identified in the action plan and is designed to address this problem, work only if a dentist can be recruited.

I will give some pertinent statistics that were provided to me by the Grampian local dental committee. Nationally, there is one dentist for every 2,500 people, but in Aberdeenshire there is one for every 4,500 people. That means that the problem is double for people in Aberdeenshire. In greater Glasgow, there is one dental consultant for every 100,000 people, but in Grampian and the Highlands and Islands there is only one consultant for restorative dentistry for every 900,000 people. Guidelines suggest that there should be one consultant for every 300,000 people, so the problem for people in the north-east and the Highlands is three times as bad. There is a waiting time of up to five years for restorative dentistry in Grampian.

I received a letter today from Alec Cumming of Grampian University Hospitals NHS Trust. He told me that

"the waiting time for a routine first appointment with the Consultant is indeed around 56 weeks at present. Following an initial appointment, some patients will have to wait up to four years for treatment."

There is no doubt that there is a shortage of dentists, in the north-east in particular. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that half the dentists working in rural Aberdeenshire do not take new NHS non-exempt patients. Those two issues need to be addressed. I will suggest two possible solutions, which I hope the minister will address.

First, the target of 120 graduates per year for the next five years should be increased. Scotland was producing up to 160 graduates before the Edinburgh dental school closed. The Grampian

local dental committee has suggested that a link could be established with the Dundee dental hospital, building on the current expertise in the region. That would help to increase the provision of dentists and bring them into the region in the first place.

Secondly, there has been a reduction in NHS work because the level of fees for basic treatments is unrealistic. If there were a properly funded core service, with full funding for treatments such as check-ups, fillings, extractions and dentures, but more complex treatments were made private, more dentists could be attracted back to NHS work and the problem could be alleviated quite quickly. Of course, there is a shortage of cash—there always is—but the idea is to focus funding on a fully funded core service. That would enable more patients to find an NHS dentist closer to home, rather than have to search for practices providing NHS services.

The radical views of the Grampian local dental committee are worth examining. The fees that are associated with NHS dental services are outdated and provide little or no incentive for preventive dentistry in general practice—general practitioners want to focus on preventive dentistry.

Although the Executive's action plan is very welcome, the problems of accessing NHS dental services are real, especially for rural communities in the north-east. Perhaps we need more radical action to address them.

I will be very interested to hear the Executive's reaction to the ideas that I have outlined today. What about a training link between Aberdeen and Dundee to increase the number of trained dentists? What about incentives to promote access to NHS dentists in rural Aberdeenshire?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid):** Six members have asked to speak, so speeches should be around three minutes, please.

17:20

**Lewis Macdonald (Aberdeen Central) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to debate this matter and the constructive approach of Mike Rumbles's motion. He is primarily concerned with access to dentistry in rural areas; my main focus is on similar issues in the city of Aberdeen and the position of NHS dentistry as a whole.

In the bad old days of internal competition in the NHS, general medical practitioners in the Grampian Health Board area led the way in opting out of mainstream funding arrangements in favour of fundholding practices. Happily, because of local health care co-operatives, those medical general practices have come back into NHS structures based on consistently high standards of

care across the city and region.

In general dental practice, NHS patients in and around Aberdeen have been losing out more than most, in much the same way as was the case with GPs, as more and more dentists have opted out of providing mainstream NHS services. It is a matter of record that the number of NHS dentists is 31 per 100,000 population compared with an average of 37 per 100,000 in Scotland as a whole. The situation is even more serious than those figures suggest because general dental practitioners continue to appear in the figures until they have removed the very last NHS patient from their list. So, for example, although the list of a dental practice in Aberdeen Central has dropped from 1,800 NHS adult patients five years ago to only 35 today and it has stopped accepting new NHS child patients, it continues to have an NHS number and to count as a provider of NHS services. That is typical of the situation in and around Aberdeen. When a dentist ceases to provide NHS services, typically he or she also cuts the total number on the list, seeing perhaps 60 patients on a private basis for every 100 seen on the NHS.

I support what Mike Rumbles said about how we address the issue. It is not that doctors and dentists in Aberdeen are greedy or less socially aware than those elsewhere, but that they face cost and other pressures to an exceptional extent. Because dental practices operate as self-contracted, self-employed, commercial enterprises, those cost pressures exacerbate the differences between levels of provision in one region and another. For the minister to find ways to increase NHS dental services, we need to address the status of general dental practitioners and how they relate to the NHS as a whole.

17:23

**Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP):** I congratulate Mike Rumbles on securing this evening's debate and on sporting a Highland outfit. I think it is fair to say that the subject of the debate was generated by a meeting of the Grampian dental committee that many of us recently attended. We were stunned by what we heard because none of us had appreciated how serious the situation in Grampian was becoming. Many of the concerns expressed then have been covered by Mike Rumbles and Lewis Macdonald; I share those concerns.

Cost is a barrier to people going to the dentist. One of the fuel protestors who came to the Parliament a few weeks ago said that it cost him £5 for petrol to get to his local dentist. The dentists we spoke to in Aberdeen said that they would get a better financial award as a vet taking out a dog's teeth. One dentist told us that he saw a 76-year-old man who had to pay 80 per cent of his own

costs, which meant a £100 bill.

As Mike Rumbles said, we also have to address the very serious situation that is developing in hospital dental services. There are incredible pressures on that service in Grampian, and waiting list problems for all three hospital specialties have gone on for four years. Decades of funding neglect of hospital dental services in the north-east of Scotland is the reason for that. The few consultants who are delivering those services are run ragged; they are covering the jobs of a number of consultants. They say that local dental hospitals are around 40 per cent below the correct staffing level. As a result, patients are being passed from pillar to post. It is not just a problem of overworked consultants: ultimately it is patients who suffer.

Mike Rumbles referred to waiting lists. For restorative treatments, people have to wait 66 weeks for their first consultation and four years for treatment. He raised my next point as well. The British Dental Association and British Medical Association recommend that there should be one consultant for every 300,000 people. Despite that, the same surgeon currently serves the Grampian and Highland areas. That combined area should have three consultants; it has only one.

For orthodontic services, the recommendation is one consultant for every 200,000 people; Grampian has only two instead of the recommended three. For oral and maxillofacial surgery, the recommendation is for one consultant for every 150,000 people; Grampian has only two instead of the recommended four. The conditions that require such treatment are debilitating and people need treatment quickly. It is important to remember that children receive orthodontic treatment at a certain stage in their development and that dentists play an important role in identifying mouth and throat cancers.

As Mike Rumbles suggested, the solution is a dental training facility. We have to build more training posts into the Grampian area and to provide incentives for people to move there to live. At the moment, it is very expensive and that is apparently putting people off.

I ask the minister to support a general review of dental services at general dental practitioner and hospital levels in Grampian. Please do not think that this is just Grampian MSPs coming along and asking for more funding for their area. Ours is a genuine case.

17:26

**Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con):** I would like to thank Mike Rumbles for giving us the chance to highlight the continuing problems in Grampian. His outline of the situation and his

proposals are excellent.

I welcome the Executive's action plan strategy, but it is a simple fact that dentists are not being recruited into our region. Alford, my local village, lost its dentist and many of my neighbours have to drive to Aberdeen or even Banchory for treatment. As Mike Rumbles said, people sometimes have to travel up to 60 miles.

I could extol Aberdeenshire and its virtues all night, explaining why people should come and live there, but people are not coming. Young people are not leaving schools in Glasgow and Dundee to take up positions in the north. I urge the Executive to consider one of Mike Rumbles's proposals and to extend advanced training from Dundee into Aberdeen. In that way, dentists would at least start off in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. They might then decide that it is such a nice place to live that they stay. I also urge the minister to extend the loyalty bonus scheme that is paid to dentists to encourage them to stay with NHS patients.

The problem with the shortage of general dental practitioners is that it puts more pressure on community dentists in Aberdeenshire. They play a vital role with special needs and disadvantaged patients. The pressure on dentists is such that those patients, who need treatment, are being left out.

Dentistry problems in Aberdeenshire and the north-east as a whole are a special case. I know that, across Scotland, consultants in many fields are in short supply, but I urge the minister to consider some of Mike Rumbles's measures and to make a special effort to ensure that my constituents are not seriously disadvantaged when it comes to dental health.

17:28

**Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD):** I would like to thank Mike Rumbles for this members' debate, which allows us to put on record our concerns about the provision of dental services in the north-east. Oral health is an important part of overall health, and statistics on oral health in Scotland make pretty dismal reading. To improve those statistics, people will need access to dentists—that is the single most important thing that we can do to help improve dental health. How can we encourage people to go to the dentist if there is not a dentist within 50 miles?

The remuneration of dentists impacts on the number of dentists that we have. Most general dental practitioners, after they graduate, set up in practice and have to take on a large debt burden. We have to ask whether their remuneration under the current NHS system is adequate for them to repay that debt in a reasonable time and whether it is adequate to allow them to re-equip and to

upgrade existing equipment as their careers progress. The option of salaried dentists has been considered and employed in Grampian to fill some of the gaps in general dental service provision. However, it has proved difficult to attract salaried dentists to work in the area; even with that option there is still a shortfall in the number of dentists.

Ben Wallace mentioned the on-going professional development of dentists and the fact that if we had the option of offering on-going training to new dental graduates in the north-east, we might persuade them to settle there. At the moment people must undertake postgraduate training elsewhere and people tend to settle where they have put down roots and made connections.

No one has mentioned the demographic time bomb. Many of our general dental practitioners are in their late 40s and 50s. When they retire, how will we replace them?

The north-east is disadvantaged by the allocation of resources. Arbutnott said that his formula was based on less than robust data. That is something that must be considered in much greater depth, in relation to the allocation of not only health service resources, but other resources.

17:31

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I congratulate Mike Rumbles on securing today's debate and thank him for giving us an opportunity to discuss dentistry. I would also like to take the opportunity to say that he is looking very dashing tonight in his full Highland regalia.

The action plan that Mike Rumbles highlighted is excellent, but I refer him to another document: "Workforce Planning for Dentistry in Scotland: A Strategic Review". I am the first to criticise glossy documents, but "Workforce Planning for Dentistry in Scotland: A Strategic Review" sets out how to put the plan into action. It is an even better document than "An Action Plan for Dental Services in Scotland" because it takes the plan one step further. I have found it to be an excellent document.

Access to dentistry in Grampian depends on the training not just of new dentists, but of dental nurses, dental hygienists and dental therapists. There is no doubt that the two documents will increase the demand for dentistry in Scotland. We have a problem at the moment and if we are to fulfil all the recommendations in "Workforce Planning for Dentistry in Scotland: A Strategic Review"—which I fully support—we must increase the supply of training, to increase access to dentistry.

We need more training to ensure that dentists can fulfil the recommendations for their continued

professional development. As a fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development, Mike Rumbles will know all about that. We need such training not just for dentists, but for dental nurses, hygienists and therapists. We have never trained dental therapists in Scotland. The debate should not concentrate on dentists, because I understand that dental therapists will now be able to carry out extractions and fillings as well as other monitoring of patients. That may be one way of helping to fill the gap in dental services.

Given that training is so crucial in creating access to new dentists, I would like to highlight the fact that Dundee dental school—one of only two dental schools in Scotland—is currently facing a deficit of more than £250,000, in a health trust that is suffering a deficit of more than £19 million. That is one of the two dental schools that will have to provide funding, training and access for all the courses that I mentioned, as well as the consultant specialties that are needed to achieve the level of training recommended in the two documents.

Nora Radcliffe mentioned postgraduate training, which is a crucial aspect of the debate. I would like to take the opportunity to ask the minister to clarify an issue. Last week, the Dundee dental school was told that it was to be given funding for a postgraduate centre in the Frankland building, adjacent to the dental hospital. However, the next day, the school received a phone call from the management executive to say that it would not get that funding. I seek clarification on that issue.

17:34

**The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm):** I congratulate Mike Rumbles on securing this debate, and I am grateful to all members who have contributed to it.

During the debate on primary care dental services on 25 October, Iain Gray and Susan Deacon made it clear that we are committed to an effective and accessible NHS dental service for all who wish to use it. I acknowledge, however, that there are some problems with access to NHS dental services in some parts of Scotland that need to be addressed. Mike Rumbles referred to his own constituency in that regard this evening.

In the primary care sector, where around 90 per cent of dental patients are treated, most general dental practitioners are independent contractors to the NHS. I find it regrettable that in some parts of Scotland there has been a reducing commitment to the NHS by some general dental practitioners. Looking at the figures, however, it appears that the percentage of those who are registered with an NHS dentist in Grampian is only marginally less than the Scottish average.

Mike Rumbles referred to unrealistic fees. That is not the only issue, but I must tell him that increases in service fees have been recommended by the independent review body on doctors' and dentists' remuneration, which reaches decisions on increases, taking into account all the evidence submitted by the British Dental Association and the UK Department of Health. On a related matter, Ben Wallace suggested extending the commitment payment scheme for NHS dentists. That has just been introduced. The first payments were made this month, and more than £2 million will be paid this year. The same review body will comment on further remuneration.

The problem of access is one of a number of issues that will be considered by the implementation support group that has been set up to take forward the action plan for dental services in Scotland. The group had its first meeting on Monday, and comprises a cross-section of experts with an interest in dental issues.

To achieve improvements in dental provision, we need to have the people to deliver them—the right number of people with the right skills in the right place. Apart from the action plan, we issued in September a discussion paper on planning the dental work force, which proposes that the target for dental schools should now be an output of 120 graduates per year, which Mike Rumbles referred to. I remind him that that is a considerable increase over the past few years, and we are aiming to keep the output at 120. We have been able to arrange with the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council to implement that target.

We are also close to achieving the target of providing postgraduate vocational training places for all Scottish graduate dentists—that did not exist in the past. We can influence where that training takes place, and we will look at the north-east in that regard, which may partly answer Mike Rumbles's point about extending out from Dundee, although I hope to have other things to say about that in a moment.

I will turn now to the hospital sector, which was referred to in general terms by Richard Lochhead, and with specific reference to restorative dentistry by Mike Rumbles. Although 90 per cent of dental treatments are in primary care, hospital specialists are a vital part of the service. We are aware of the concerns in Grampian, in particular about the number of specialists in restorative dentistry. There are 22 such specialists throughout Scotland, or one per 230,000 population, which is better than the guidelines recommend. They are based in the four main cities, and provide outreach services to other health board areas. As with other dental specialties, there is a geographical imbalance between population and the number of

specialists, and we need to deal with that through managed clinical networks. Those are currently being discussed for orthodontics and oral-maxillofacial surgery, and restorative dentistry will follow. Those networks ought to involve new links between Dundee and Aberdeen.

**Richard Lochhead:** I welcome the minister's comments on the need for more consultants which has been recognised in Grampian. Does the minister also accept that for every new consultant we need new support services, such as nurses, and that that has to be addressed also?

**Malcolm Chisholm:** The discussion paper to which I referred earlier proposed significant increases in the number of professionals who are complementary to dentistry to enhance the dental team. Clearly, we will consider those measures, and all the others in the discussion paper, in the light of the comments that we receive.

As well as getting the numbers right, we regard the quality of training as vital. Dentists can register to practise on graduation, but the NHS insists on one year's postgraduate training. In Scotland, we have successfully piloted two-year general professional training, and one of those pilots took place in the north-east. I can tell Mike Rumbles that we will consider making permanent and expanding that pilot, which would help to meet his point about making new links.

We have also funded 10 additional training places for the community dental service, which provides a substantial proportion of its services to remote and rural areas. However, many dentists prefer to remain close to the area where they did their undergraduate training. Although that is not an argument for a dental school in Aberdeen, it means that the local trusts in Grampian, with support from the board and the Executive, must make particular efforts to recruit and retain staff. To aid that, we are encouraging both dental schools to consider outreach training, which will give undergraduates experience in rural areas and in hospitals away from the dental schools. That could help to meet Mike Rumbles's concern about new links between Dundee and Aberdeen.

Mike Rumbles raised the issue of salaried dentists. The trust is working on proposals for a salaried post to provide two days of dental cover at Alford and three days in Aberdeen. That is in addition to the three salaried dentists who already operate in Aberdeen. It is open to the trust to apply to Scottish ministers to appoint further salaried dentists when and where the need arises. I referred to the Scottish dental access grants at last week's question time, when Mike Rumbles asked about dental services. Thirty access grants have already been awarded, and some have gone to practices in Grampian.

As Mike Rumbles and other colleagues may know, the trust has embarked on a series of consultations involving the public, local practitioners, the health board and Dundee dental school. One of the local health care co-operatives has been appointed lead for Grampian-wide primary care dental services. Several ideas are being pursued, including how to provide NHS dental services at Alford, to which I referred. Significant efforts are being made to recruit locums and permanent dentists to the area, including the major recruitment campaign that I highlighted.

**Ben Wallace:** Will the minister take on board the fact that members of Grampian Health Board have almost stopped advertising? Having spent so much money on trying to recruit dentists without any success, they have decided that, until they can find dentists to come to Grampian, the money is better spent elsewhere.

**Malcolm Chisholm:** I hear what Ben Wallace is saying. I am told that an advertising campaign is going on and that, in January 2001, adverts will be placed, but I will check on what Ben Wallace has said about that.

To reply to Mary Scanlon's point, a bid will be put in for capital moneys for the Dundee hospital postgraduate centre for the coming year.

In the light of the recently published "An Action Plan for Dental Services in Scotland" and the associated on-going work, I hope that I have made it clear that we are determined to make a positive difference to dental services throughout Scotland.

*Meeting closed at 17:43.*





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