

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 10 May 2001

Session 1

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 10 May 2001

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

Tourism

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson): The first item of business is a Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party debate on motion S1M-1914, in the name of Mr David Davidson, on tourism. There are two amendments to the motion.

09:30

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con): The Conservatives have brought the issue of tourism back to the chamber today to highlight the Executive's abject failure to offer leadership and direction to Scotland's largest industry.

On 1 November last year, Wendy Alexander stated that the Scottish Tourist Board's

"main aim is to help maximise the economic benefit of tourism to Scotland".

She then laid out a series of objectives for it. If she was laying down the STB's remit, she must accept responsibility for the board's failure to date. I hope that she will respond on that point. Does she intend to pretend that there is an arm's-length relationship, leaving others to take the blame, or will she be accountable?

On 9 November, the minister stated:

"We have world class assets, world class performance is achievable but it needs world class leadership."

What was her role? She went on to detail a 10-point action plan—presumably that was her notion of assuming command. After laying out the 10 points of the plan, she concluded:

"Scottish tourism has been underperforming and this must improve. Scotland has world class assets and now needs world class performance."

That was a bit of a schoolmistress scolding, as if the matter was not her direct responsibility.

The truth is that the copious press releases by the minister and her predecessor, Henry McLeish, have solved nothing—it was all talk and no action. On 12 October 1999, Mr McLeish stated:

"I am determined that Scotland should have a genuinely world class tourism industry".

What has he done in the 19 months since then? We had a review of tourism—another initiative. We had the famous announcement of three-year funding of area tourist boards by councils. That

was a McLeish initiative with no teeth—it was up for review even before the year was out.

The Executive, with its poor record of local government settlements and the new burdens that it has placed on councils, has damaged local authorities' ability to support area tourist boards. It would have been far better if the Executive had accepted our proposal to fund area tourist boards directly via the Scottish Tourist Board. Had Mr McLeish grasped the nettle then, perhaps tourism would have been in a better position to cope with the aftermath of foot-and-mouth disease than it is now. The Executive cannot continue to fiddle while the industry burns. I hope that the minister will say what initiatives she will take to move forward on the issue.

On 25 March, Ivan Broussine of the Scottish Tourism Forum said that

"the tourism industry is increasingly angry at the slow speed of response of the Scottish Executive".

He also complained that, whereas the Prime Minister and other Westminster ministers had met tourism representatives, as had Mr McLeish, the minister responsible had left her deputy to take the flak.

We have seen huge increases in fuel taxation in four years of new Labour. I trust that the chamber recognises our pledge to reduce fuel taxes by 6p a litre. Annual running costs in Scottish business have risen by a staggering £1,500 per employee. The Executive has increased the rates burden on Scottish business by abandoning the uniform business rate, which has caused Scottish business to be less profitable.

Last year, the number of visitors to Scottish attractions dropped by almost 6 per cent and there were reports throughout Scotland of reduced bookings. Henry McLeish, as the minister responsible, presided over a 12.7 per cent fall in the overseas market, as announced in an Executive press release on 7 July 2000. Everyone in the industry agrees that, during the Executive's period in office, the sector has been in decline, whereas global tourism has grown. Since the Executive took power, it has been totally indecisive in reforming tourism support in Scotland.

When the disaster of foot-and-mouth disease struck, the industry was leaderless. The Executive totally failed to take responsibility for that. When the 10-point Executive plan was announced, one of the priorities was to find a new chief executive for the Scottish Tourist Board. Six months on, all we have is an expensive and humiliating failure owing to Ms Alexander's insistence on appointing Mr Rod Lynch without checking thoroughly that he would be a suitable appointee. Perhaps the minister can tell us what abatement she has

received of the fees paid to Heidrick & Struggles, the headhunting firm that was used. Is it not time that Parliament received a clear statement of the minister's position and an apology for the fiasco of what was a disastrous but very public episode?

That was on top of the gaffes made by the First Minister during his visit to America for tartan week. Those gaffes were compounded by the abject failure of the Executive and its agencies to mount an immediate rebuttal campaign to the press reports on foot-and-mouth disease, which dominated American television and sent out a totally inappropriate image of Scotland as a tourist destination. Moreover, staff of the British Tourist Authority—another Government agency—misled American visitors about foot-and-mouth disease in Scotland.

When the minister came to the chamber to announce a recovery package, there was universal disbelief at the small amount of resource from the Executive to try to save the £2.5 billion tourism industry. At the time, I welcomed the resource for the area tourist boards and the quality assurance package, but the money was not enough to allow for a UK-wide marketing campaign to attract our home visitors, who account for half our tourism turnover. It is all very well for local enterprise companies to be given money to conduct business advice clinics, but that does nothing to counter the fact that, without turnover, no business will survive long enough to implement any advice that it has been given.

The Executive was extremely slow off the mark in implementing the foot-and-mouth containment exercise. It has failed to recognise the immediate needs of the many businesses affected, especially in the south-west and the Borders. The Scottish Conservative party, with its colleagues at Westminster, called for a hardship fund to provide interest-free loans to allow businesses to survive. I repeat that call today. Before there can be any talk of recovery, we must recognise that the issue boils down to survival.

We called for a deferment package on liability for business rates and council tax and for the Executive to approach the Treasury to seek deferment of payments of national taxation. We asked that the moratorium be dealt with on an interest-free and non-penalty basis. We expect such support to be available to all businesses that have been affected by the foot-and-mouth outbreak—not only those that deliver directly a tourism product, but all the local businesses that are suffering a downturn in the affected areas.

At the time, the deputy minister, Alasdair Morrison, talked of deferred tax payments. Today, will the ministers say what response the Executive has received from its negotiations with the Treasury? The SNP called for only a three-month

abolition of rates; that is far too short term to help businesses to survive through the summer. I appreciate the relief support that the Executive has given to local councils, but it is too little for too short a period—we cannot agree with the proposed £12,000 ceiling or the period of three months. Many vital businesses, such as small hotels, recreation facilities and even garages, are excluded from the support package by the artificially low ceiling.

It is essential that the Scottish Executive takes a lead in opening up the countryside. It must ensure that landowners carry out risk assessments and it must put in place a mechanism whereby local authorities are given the responsibility of managing the reopening process. It is staggering that no organisation has responsibility for that role. If no organisation has been appointed, the issue must be the Executive's responsibility. I hope that the minister will reply fully on that point.

I have received many requests for support, not only for Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders, but for areas across Scotland that have been affected—whether in Dundee or Inverness, the outbreak has affected tourism. We must ensure that businesses throughout the country are given help to survive.

We are disappointed by visitScotland's eight-point plan, as it merely reiterates activities that have already been announced. It is unbelievable that the organisation has not already met Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the British Tourist Authority. Surely the Executive must have co-ordinated such activity. I look forward to hearing what the Executive has done on that. I hope that the minister will also tell us what part, if any, the Executive intends to play in any future appointment process and what additional resources it has offered visitScotland to market the country.

The Executive has totally failed to respond to the urgent needs of the tourism industry and has compounded that failure with its ineptitude in dealing with its six-month-old plan for reforming the STB. Having the Executive wear tartan underwear and eating McHaggis burgers is not a realistic solution to the crisis.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the failure of the Scottish Executive to complete the restructuring of the Scottish Tourist Board/visitScotland which has undermined efforts to regenerate Scottish tourism following two years of decline; calls upon the Scottish Executive to implement a survival and recovery plan for Scottish businesses affected by the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak which includes a hardship fund to provide interest-free loans to supplement the limited measures announced to date, and further calls upon the Scottish Executive to expedite the opening up of the countryside via the risk assessment procedure.

09:40

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander): I thank David Davidson for choosing a debate on tourism. No one doubts the importance of the industry and its revitalisation, which is one of the Executive's highest priorities. Consequently, I read Mr Davidson's motion and listened to his opening remarks with some regret.

I am deeply saddened by the condemnation of visitscotland. We should be talking up the industry instead of talking it down. As the SNP motion recognises, the crux of the matter is industry leadership: the future of Scottish tourism needs an industry-led strategy, which means industry leadership for the board. The board needs the support of the Parliament in delivering change. Less than a month ago, the appointments of Peter Lederer and Mike Cantley—both of whom have spent a lifetime in the industry—to the chair and vice-chair of the organisation were widely welcomed. It is truly a small nation that covets grievance when errors are made. visitscotland's board meets today in Dumfries and Galloway to review with the ATB what needs to be done to move forward. It is not just the weather that has turned for the better; we are working with visitscotland on a series of positive steps to aid the revitalisation of our tourism industry.

As people know, Scotland is now over the worst of foot-and-mouth as far as disease control is concerned. Infections have declined from the rate of seven new cases a day at the end of March to fewer than one case a day now. There has been a decline in the epidemic, for which we should congratulate the state veterinary service, the Army and the local authorities. Of course, we must remain vigilant and plan for recovery. To that end, the Executive has been working closely with those affected by the foot-and-mouth outbreak.

We announced an immediate package of hardship relief in March. The Executive is writing today to the convener of Dumfries and Galloway Council, setting out our interim response to the recovery plan. We recognise that the area has special needs, as it was the worst affected by the outbreak.

I shall outline the main aspects of the further package of hardship relief that is on offer. First, there will be a payment to Dumfries and Galloway Council of £2 million on account to pay for costs that it has incurred in controlling the disease. Additional funds of £5 million from Scottish Enterprise's existing budget will be allocated to Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway to assist economic restructuring and to provide for the kind of small loans support that South of Scotland MSPs have been asking for. There will be further dialogue on the terms of that scheme.

visitscotland has also given a commitment to meet the area tourist board and other industry representatives in Dumfries today to discuss additional funding requirements.

On the subject of financial resources, I should note that we have already committed an additional £5 million in Scotland, which is the equivalent of an allocation of £50 million for England alone. The actual allocation in England has been £3.8 million. That is a measure of the Executive's commitment. We are also introducing a grants and loan scheme for small-scale capital investment to provide environmental or landscape benefits. Moreover, Dumfries and Galloway is being given sympathetic consideration under European structural funds schemes and we are appointing a woodland development adviser in south-west Scotland to advise on how woodland development might assist farmers and other land managers in recovering from the effects of foot-and-mouth disease.

I want to move from the specific issue of Dumfries and Galloway to consider the bigger picture. We were asked to take decisive action, which took the form of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on visitscotland. The suggestion in the Conservative motion that the implementation of the report's recommendations has been put on hold is simply not true—since the hour the report was received, the board has put it into practice. I will provide some examples of what has been achieved so far.

The recommendation that visitscotland should secure greater industry involvement has been acted on. Not only have a new chair and vice-chair been appointed, but Norman Murray of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Norman Lauritson—the chair of the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board—and Paul Murray-Smith have all been appointed as advisers to visitscotland's board. An interim chief executive has been appointed to drive forward implementation. The visitscotland board confirmed last week that interviews for the three new senior director posts are in their final stages. As for the ATBs, there have been discussions to develop much better relationships that do not marginalise the role of local authorities.

Mr Davidson: The point of my speech was not what was happening inside visitscotland, but the Executive's response to the absence of leadership while the organisation was being restructured. I welcome the appointments to the board—I know the men personally and that they have great experience. My point is that, in the six-month vacuum, the minister and her predecessor could have taken an active grasp of the problems.

Ms Alexander: That is why, for the first time ever, we appointed a chair and vice-chair from the

industry. That was one of the central recommendations on how we should drive things forward. Furthermore, we appointed an experienced interim chief executive and embarked on a worldwide search for a chief executive and other industry leaders. I point out that the appointment of the board's chief executive is visitscotland's responsibility. It is common practice that no minister should be involved in the selection process—the minister's role is simply to approve the appointment that the board has made. We have very much strengthened the board through industry leadership, which was a recommendation that the Parliament supported.

Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): The minister says that the appointment was not an Executive responsibility. Will she confirm that it is an Executive responsibility to accept or reject visitscotland's recommendations? On her point about Executive involvement, what was the ministerial or Executive involvement in the selection process and the interviews?

Ms Alexander: No minister had any involvement in the selection process. That is common practice in the appointment of chief executives—the minister's role is to approve visitscotland's appointment. As I have said on numerous occasions, it is time to move on. Within 24 hours of my being made aware of Rod Lynch's extensive outside interests, visitscotland withdrew its offer. I think that making such a move within 24 hours counts as decisive action.

I want to highlight the impact that the debate in Parliament will have on visitscotland's staff as they face their difficult task. Peter Lederer has assured me that his staff are absolutely committed to the task of supporting our tourism industry, as has been amply demonstrated by their extensive efforts. We must support that industry leadership in order to move forward.

As for the Conservatives' points about access, we share their desire to expedite the opening of the countryside through risk assessment procedures—that is what we are doing. Although an extremely precautionary approach was taken at the start of the outbreak, the situation has moved on and much of Scotland is in the provisionally free area, where the risk of transmission is much lower. The restrictions on access in those areas should be seen in the same light, with a greater presumption in favour of public access.

It is important that, in working through the crisis, we lay the foundations for the longer-term revitalisation of the tourism industry. We need consensus from all tourist operators about building longer-term international competitiveness for the industry. Members have much to contribute to that debate and it is only right that visitscotland and the industry should take the lead.

I note in passing that, although the SNP amendment is interesting, it does not suggest any proposals for VAT reduction. How much VAT should be reduced for which operators and in what circumstances? As for the level of sterling, the problem that people often refer to relates to the euro zone, whereas, in terms of visitors, the United States is our largest market. If the SNP were to make any progress in the upcoming election, would it instantly have Scotland adopt the euro and would the exchange level be based on the level of sterling? I also understand that the Conservatives will propose an extensive reduction in fuel tax, the cost of which will be in excess of £2 billion. The knock-on effect of such a reduction would be a cut in our budget of more than £200 million. It would be interesting to find out what the Opposition parties propose on all those points.

The message from this chamber must be that, as far as tourism is concerned, Scotland is open for business. We must all work with visitscotland and the industry to revitalise tourism and to find a way forward for the future.

I move amendment S1M-1914.2, to leave out from "notes" to end and insert:

"welcomes the actions being taken by the Executive to assist the tourism industry to recover from the effects of foot-and-mouth disease and supports its commitment to work with the relevant agencies including visitscotland and the industry to prepare and implement an appropriate and effective strategy to ensure the future growth of the industry."

09:50

Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP): The Tories are right to have lodged the motion: there is a crisis and action is needed. Much of the motion is perfectly reasonable, but the SNP cannot support it for two reasons. First, it fails to acknowledge the Tories' culpability for the sorry circumstances in which tourism finds itself. Secondly, the solutions that it proposes are inadequate both as immediate action and as long-term strategy.

In 1997, tourism went out of the frying pan and into the fire. Whatever fond memories the Tories have of being in government, the reality was not so benign for the industry. I do not seek to underestimate the catastrophe of the foot-and-mouth outbreak. However, it is no famine following feast; it is a disaster following five or more fallow years and it has occurred at the worst possible time in the industry's financial cycle. There should have been an opportunity for replenishment after the winter; instead, the lights are on but no one is about. Many businesses are living on borrowed time and borrowed money, with a shutdown that, to all intents and purposes, will run from winter 2000 to spring 2002.

Had there been previous years of feast, the damage might have been sustainable, but there were not. The culpability for that lies on both sides of the British political divide. A high pound, high VAT and high fuel prices were imposed not under the heel of an iron chancellor, but under the handbag of an iron lady and her successors. No matter how sincere their sympathy is now, the Tories will not be forgiven by the tourism industry for their previous complicity.

What of the current incumbents? Before I address their belated and inadequate response to the crisis, I shall critique their period in office at Westminster and in Scotland. Did they roll back the Tory legacy? Did they invest where there had been shortage? Did they promote where there had been silence? Did they change where change was overdue? No. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. What did they inherit? A high pound, high VAT and high fuel prices. What is their legacy? A high pound, high VAT and high fuel prices. Both Labour and the Tories have conspired to make Scotland a high-cost destination, for which the tourism industry has paid a high price.

Ms Alexander: Can Kenny MacAskill confirm the VAT level that the SNP supports? What cut in fuel tax does the SNP support, and how would it pay for it? At what level does he suggest that the pound should enter the euro?

Mr MacAskill: We have called for a reduction in fuel prices of 10p a gallon. We have called for interim measures to be taken to reduce VAT on accommodation and visitor attractions from 17.5 per cent to 5 per cent. We believe that membership of the euro is in Scotland's best interests, once the appropriate criteria have been met.

Let us consider some examples of the British neglect of tourism. Hardly a family in Scotland does not have a relative in Canada. Much has been made—even by the Executive—of a call to the diaspora, but what action has been taken to promote our country and to encourage members of the diaspora to visit Scotland? I asked the Executive how much the Scottish Tourist Board and visitscotland had spent on marketing Scotland in Canada every year since 1995. In 1995, the Tories—known for their support of the British diaspora on the Costa del Sol—spent the princely sum of £8,000 on marketing Scotland in Canada. In five years, new Labour has reduced that princely sum by 50 per cent; in 2000, its advertising budget in Canada, the place of our diaspora, was a king's ransom of £4,000. One hundred and thirty-six thousand Canadians visited Scotland. To secure those high-spending visitors, the Executive invested the sum of 3p a visitor. Is that speculating to accumulate? Those are only the figures for Canada; we have the figures for

other places and we will release them in due course.

So much for the Executive's past failures. What of its current inadequacies? The tourism industry does not want advice on receivership or debt counselling; it wants interest-free loans and hardship grants, assistance in its marketing budget and a credible rates relief package. The Scottish Tourism Forum has put forward its proposals, some of which have been met, but all of which must be implemented.

Finally, what about a future strategy? The tourism industry needs a marketing budget that will allow Scotland to compete not just in Canada, but worldwide. We must ensure that, once interest in Scotland has been ignited, access to our country is reasonable in both time and cost. That must mean the expansion of direct air links to destinations not only in Europe, but in the USA. Fewer than 3 per cent of visitors from the US to the UK arrive at a Scottish airport. We need to be an international gateway not just to Scotland, but to the UK. If we cannot secure the same access to Scotland that there is to Ireland, we will never be able to compete.

The tragedy in Scotland remains that, although the natural product is unsurpassed anywhere else in the world, current and past Labour and Tory Administrations have let down the tourism industry. Only the SNP stands for tourism and for Scotland.

I move amendment S1M-1914.1, to leave out from "notes" to end and insert:

"believes that policies being pursued by successive Westminster Governments, in particular a high pound, high fuel costs and high VAT, have been damaging to the tourist industry; further believes that the aims of visitscotland/the Scottish Tourist Board should be sharply refocused so that it is a marketing rather than a regulatory body; notes the relief package as proposed by the Scottish Tourism Forum and calls for its full implementation, and believes that direct transport links between Scotland and Europe and Scotland and America are essential."

09:56

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): I welcome this opportunity to debate the recovery of tourism in Scotland. It is worth pointing out that the predictions of disaster and ruin for Scotland's tourism industry have not come true, although one would not know that from the previous speeches. Indeed, there is some good news. Reports that I have received over the past few days from industry operators suggest that the industry had a reasonable Easter weekend and a good May bank holiday. There have been problems in the interim period, but the number of day trips and short-break holidays in Scotland has increased. Much of that increase has been facilitated by the good

weather, but the television marketing campaign to persuade Scots to visit our countryside has also worked. A landlady in Oban told me yesterday that she has enjoyed her best-ever start to a season.

It is not all good news, however. The Dumfries and Galloway area still has major problems to overcome—I welcome the minister's announcement of the measures that are to be taken there. There are still serious problems to overcome in our overseas market. I would appreciate it if the minister with responsibility for tourism, Mr Alasdair Morrison, could give us an update in his winding-up speech on what progress has been made in recovering the markets in America and Germany.

The marketplace has a soft underbelly, as long-stay bookings are still well down and there are grave concerns about the summer, which is the long-stay season. Will families book for a full week rather than take the day trips and short breaks that have been a feature of the past four or five weeks? Although much of the hard work of visitscotland and the Scottish Executive has been effective, much more needs to be done. We must build on the work that has been carried out, in which context the measures to help Dumfries and Galloway are welcome. I hope that the Executive will introduce measures to help the Borders as well, as that area has also been affected by foot-and-mouth disease and is stigmatised in the same way as Dumfries and Galloway.

The Tory motion mentions access to the countryside. There are still serious access problems that require to be addressed. In Mull, for instance, there is a major access dispute at the south end of the island, the Ross of Mull. Landowners and tourism operators are unable to resolve the issue. Can the minister tell us what action can be taken in such situations when agreement cannot be reached? Both sides have taken entrenched positions. I understand both sets of arguments: farmers and landowners are still nervous about letting people on to their land but the tourism operators feel that, as the restrictions have been relaxed and animals can be moved freely, the presumption should be that access exists unless a high risk can be proven. I ask the minister to suggest how we can tackle that issue. I have been involved in trying to resolve it, but the problem is difficult.

Another outstanding issue is, as has been said, visitscotland's lack of a chief executive and the fact that the PricewaterhouseCoopers report has not been implemented. There is no doubt that the Rod Lynch affair and the lack of leadership have done immense damage to the credibility of the Scottish Tourist Board and the industry in general. The barrage of media reports that followed the Rod Lynch affair did nothing but undermine the

Scottish Tourist Board and the confidence of the industry. The industry is in a fragile state. It needs leadership from the top of visitscotland. The morale of the 200 people who work for visitscotland is on the floor. We are relying on them to rebuild our market abroad and we are trying to encourage—

Mr Davidson: Will the member give way?

George Lyon: If the member is brief.

Mr Davidson: On the subject of morale, I have tried to make it clear that responsibility for the problems lay not with the staff of visitscotland, but with the Scottish Executive, which had control of visitscotland when the organisation did not have a firm leader. We have to make that clear and I support Mr Lyon's view on that point.

George Lyon: I am trying to make the point that it is in everyone's interest for us to stop kicking the organisation that we hope will lead Scottish tourism to a reasonable recovery from this summer. The last thing that the tourism industry wants is for visitscotland to be turned into a political football, evidence of which we have seen in this debate. It is regrettable that the Tory motion has little to do with the future of Scotland's tourism industry and everything to do with the general election campaign.

Who might we get as a new chief executive of visitscotland? Yesterday, we saw evidence that suggested that a certain man might fit the job. Perhaps the minister will investigate the matter. The man is currently unemployed and word has it that he is likely to continue to be available for work. He is well travelled and has an excellent knowledge of marketing, particularly poster advertising. Given yesterday's display of his expertise in this field, I respectfully suggest that Sir Malcolm Rifkind might fit the bill.

The tourism industry faces serious challenges in its attempt to rebuild confidence and market share over the summer. The 200 people who work for visitscotland want support to come from all the political parties to ensure that the good work that they are doing to turn the industry around succeeds. I appeal to everyone not to turn the Scottish Tourist Board and visitscotland into a political football during the election campaign. The parties must get behind the attempt to rebuild an industry that is vital to Scotland.

10:03

Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con): Some years ago, I wrote an article for a local newspaper entitled, "What Do You Do With an Empty Countryside?" It was not intended to be prophetic, but if one drove from Stranraer to Gretna tomorrow, a virtually empty countryside is

what one would find. The land is almost denuded of livestock and, in empty field after empty field, there is mile after mile of lush grass that no one is yet quite sure what they will do with.

Just as most of Dumfries and Galloway has lost much of its livestock, so it has lost most of its tourism industry, which is every bit as important to its prosperity as is agriculture, if not more so. One of the stark lessons that has come out of the dreadful outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease is how inextricably linked in rural Scotland are the agriculture and the tourism industries.

As we begin to see beyond the immediate impact of the foot-and-mouth outbreak, we must not overlook the inescapable fact that our rural tourism industry was facing severe problems before the cataclysmic virus struck and that those problems will remain after it has gone. While Dumfries and Galloway breathed a collective sigh of relief that its Easter trade was only 20 per cent below last Easter's average—although that is a strange definition of relief—we must remember that the base numbers were already in decline. That decline is hitting the whole of rural Scotland and needs to be addressed across the whole of rural Scotland. There is much that we need to do.

We need to examine the structure, remit and effectiveness of visitScotland. For the benefit of Mr Lyon, I stress that I am not using visitScotland as a political football when I say that; the need for an examination of those elements is a fact. It is unacceptable and unbelievable that the visitScotland board contains not one representative from the south of Scotland. Ministers will no doubt reply that the quality of the individual is much more important than the question of where they come from. However, that is tantamount to an accusation that no one in the south of Scotland is good enough to serve on the board, which is blatant rubbish. Perhaps the current shambles from which the board is trying to extricate itself will provide an opportunity to correct that discriminatory omission from its make-up.

We also need to examine the role of the local tourist board—we should not be frightened to do so. A recent survey that my colleague David Mundell and I carried out showed that the tourist board in Dumfries and Galloway does not enjoy the level of confidence among its members to which it no doubt aspires. I blame not the individuals involved, but the remit of the board, which has to become more promotional and less police-like.

It is no coincidence that many communities seem to be bypassing their local tourist boards by setting up their own websites and promoting their own areas. Examples of such initiatives can be found in Sanquhar and Glenluce. That development points to a failure in the system from

which valuable lessons can and should be learned. Those within the industry need constantly to monitor their standards. Top-quality service does not have to be expensive. A smile costs nothing, yet it can make a stranger's day. We have much to learn from our continental neighbours about the delivery of service. Service means simply giving our visitors what they want and expect, rather than what we think that they should have.

We all agree that we have to rebuild an industry that is facing a disastrous year through no fault of its own. That must be an opportunity as much as it is a challenge and we have the advantage of the perfect base from which to start: Scotland itself. It will be harder to rebuild the industry in the south of Scotland because of the foot-and-mouth outbreak, but I have no doubt that that challenge will be met. I broadly welcome the measures that the Executive has intimated to the convener of Dumfries and Galloway Council this morning but I stress that they must be a first step. On their own, they are not enough. I am glad that the minister accepts that point.

As a resident of Dumfries and Galloway, I am somewhat disturbed by recent ministerial statements that seem to suggest that the current coterminous status that is shared by agencies such as the local tourist board and the local enterprise company in Dumfries and Galloway could be altered. I strongly reject such a move as being unhelpful in the extreme. I suggest that those agencies require considerable support under the current circumstances. There is a need to have their remits made more flexible, but they do not need to be either amalgamated or disbanded. By giving the tourism industry that support and flexibility, we will discover what can be done with an empty countryside as the phoenix of our tourism industry rises from the ashes of foot-and-mouth disease.

10:08

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): The Conservative motion talks about the efforts to regenerate the Scottish tourism industry being undermined. It is important that politicians do not undermine efforts to promote Scotland and its regions in the wake of the foot-and-mouth outbreak. There is a temptation, particularly during a general election campaign, to create headlines, but we and the media must beware of talking down the industry and contributing to its considerable difficulties.

The problems created by the foot-and-mouth outbreak for the economy of Dumfries and Galloway will be debated later today and, obviously, tourism must be part of that discussion. I am concerned about the efforts that are being

made by the local tourist board which, as Alex Fergusson just said, has had problems. However, we must give credit to the chief executive and the chair of the board for their sterling efforts to turn around the situation. Last week, for example, they made an effort to rebrand the region. We must not lose sight of those important initiatives due to the fact that the media likes to concentrate on personalities and problems within visitScotland. Many of my constituents who are struggling to survive at the moment feel that such matters are an irrelevant distraction from the issues that face us.

Tourism is worth £82 million a year to Dumfries and Galloway. It provides around 8,000 jobs and attracts 700,000 visitors. I should point out that few of those visitors are from the diaspora—I, too, have a dictionary, so I know what the word of the day means. Most of the visitors to the region are from the UK and Europe. The foot-and-mouth crisis is estimated to be losing the tourism industry around £2 million a week.

Last week, the area tourist board launched Operation Azalea to try to counteract the damage that has been done. That project was funded through the £300,000 that was allocated to the region's recovery plan by visitScotland. I know that £300,000 is not really enough—I do not think that any of us feel that it is—but it was a start, and was allocated for a particular purpose. That funding enabled the ATB to commission the services of experts, who already had experience in the regeneration of tourism in the Shetlands after the Braer oil spill disaster, for example.

I note from today's speech by the minister that discussions between visitScotland and the ATB are under way on the subject of the additional resources. I can tell members that the ATB wants £7 million over the next three years and is prepared to approach a number of funding sources for that, including the EU and the UK Government. That may seem a lot of money, but, compared to the £82 million a year that tourism in Dumfries and Galloway is worth and to the £2 million that is being lost each week, that is a reasonably small investment to try to turn the situation around.

Clearly, much ground has to be made up in tourism in Dumfries and Galloway. Alex Fergusson mentioned that the figures were down by 20 per cent on the previous year, which was itself a poor season. However, the reduction varied across the region and across sectors. The self-catering sector, for example, suffered worse than some others. I understand that preliminary data from the recent holiday weekend show a similar variation, with very poor returns in the east of the region—in my constituency—but rather better returns in the west. In fact, Threave gardens were busier over

the May holiday than they have ever been. The ground still has to be made up in the parts of the region worst affected by the foot-and-mouth outbreak. That is why it is so important that we project a positive image of the region, and that that is not obscured by the political badinage that inevitably accompanies a general election campaign.

We should bear in mind that 85 per cent of tourist attractions in Dumfries and Galloway are open. That figure is increasing. Forest walks may be reopened; the Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development was in the area on her bike last weekend; all the golf courses and all the beaches are open. In my view, the region still possesses, despite the lack of animals—which is a very sad sight—the greatest variety of beautiful scenery in the whole of Scotland. I did not see a single pyre all weekend, except for some smoke across the Solway firth, near Silloth.

The Conservative motion calls for a number of actions to be taken. I think that the Conservatives are somewhat pre-emptive in doing so, because we have received only this morning the announcement of further interim measures in response to the recovery plan that was put to the Executive by Dumfries and Galloway Council, the area tourist board and Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway. As the minister has told us, the plan includes a small amount of loan support to the affected businesses.

I was pleased to hear today's announcement, but I look forward to further announcements about more long-term measures. I am convinced that tourism in Dumfries and Galloway, like many other industries, has a future. I hope to see the tourism industry rise like a phoenix from the pyre of the disaster that has taken place over the past couple of months. I look forward to support from the Executive and the Parliament on that.

10:13

Kay Ullrich (West of Scotland) (SNP): If I was in any doubt about the extent of the problem facing our tourism industry, it was confirmed to me and my parliamentary colleagues during our visit to Washington DC for national tartan day last month. Everywhere we went, the perception was the same: that of a country in crisis, with the stench of burning animals and the countryside closed to visitors. More worryingly, there was a commonly held belief that our meat was unfit for human consumption.

In the minds of many Americans, foot-and-mouth disease has been confused with BSE. How did that public relations disaster take root? Quite simply, through the media. Night after night, news and documentary programmes such as CBS's "60

Minutes" and programmes on CNN and the other main news channels ran with pictures of funeral pyres and "No Entry" signs. They indulged in what was, frankly, sloppy reporting, which scared their viewers about what to expect if they were to visit this country.

The question has to be asked: what was being done by our Government to inform the overseas media of the facts? Was nobody monitoring how the situation was being portrayed overseas? We in the tartan day delegation took every opportunity to right the wrong. However, it was clear to us that huge damage has been done. It will take a great deal of effort and ingenuity to restore American confidence in Scotland as a tourist venue.

Foot-and-mouth disease has indeed been a catastrophe for tourism, particularly for tourism from overseas. But let us not kid ourselves: the fact is that Scotland's global market share has been steadily falling for the past five years. That problem will still be with us when foot-and-mouth is no more. It is the steady drop in visitors that must be addressed now, before it is too late.

A couple of steps must be taken. One is to do with how we sell Scotland. We need only look across the Irish sea to see how it is done. Not a night goes by on American television without a well-produced advert extolling the pleasures of a vacation in Ireland. I have yet to see a single similar advert urging people to visit Scotland. Scotland continues to be seen, and advertised, as an add-on to a visit south of the border.

As Kenny MacAskill said, a mere 3 per cent of overseas visitors fly directly to Scotland. That situation is exacerbated by the fact that only one airline, Continental Airlines, flies year round with direct flights to and from Scotland. Grateful as we are to Continental, those flights are in small-capacity aircraft of the type more usually used on domestic and European routes. Again, we need look only to Ireland or to other small European states such as Belgium and the Netherlands to see the difference that direct flights can make to the tourism industry.

Tourism employs 180,000 people, which is 8 per cent of the entire work force of Scotland. It accounts for 5 per cent of our gross domestic product, and we have to take it seriously. Tourism is not a hobby. It is time that we invested in the future of the industry. Let us get our act together once and for all, and leave the Mickey Mouse tourism to Disney. I urge members to support the SNP amendment.

10:17

Maureen Macmillan (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): One thing that has come home to us all over the past months is just how important the

tourism industry is to Scotland's cities and countryside. That is a step forward because, before the foot-and-mouth outbreak, I was concerned that the significance of the industry often went unnoticed in the wider country. I do not think that the same can be said now. The images of burning animals that were flashed across our TV screens made us realise how fragile a country's reputation can be, and how important it was and will be to counter those images. The Executive's commitment to the tourism industry and the swift release of money for marketing has been crucial to achieve that.

The £100,000 campaign run by the Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board brought visitors north for Easter in greater numbers than we had dared hope for. The number of visitors was not quite as high as last year, but was on a par with that for 1999. HOST informs me that the level of UK inquiries for holidays in the Highlands is continuing to hold up. The overseas market, which we depend on in August, will be harder to revive. I would like to know what plans are in hand to market for the main summer months.

Access problems are lessening. Although that staunch Conservative, Lord Burton, still refuses access in Glenshiel, the Cuillins are, thank heavens, open at last. More than half the Munros are accessible, as are 80 per cent of formal footpaths.

Crofters still need a lot of reassurance before they allow informal access over inby land, and we can understand their concerns, considering the unfenced nature of the ground, which does not quite fit in under "The Comeback Code".

It is good that people are working together, including councils, area tourist boards, local communities and tourist businesses. In Glencoe, in Ullapool and in Badenoch, for example, they are working to promote their areas in the face of their difficulties.

We cannot deny that the tourism industry has faced difficult times for several years now, and we should not make the mistake of thinking that the foot-and-mouth outbreak is the single cause of problems in the industry, as problems existed before that need to be addressed now if the industry is to have a secure, stable future.

The first need is for strong, effective leadership from the centre. In spite of all the difficulties with the appointment of Rod Lynch, it is important to acknowledge the job that is being done by Peter Lederer and his team. Theirs is not an easy task, and I believe that they can provide the effective and strong leadership that the industry needs until the appointment of a new chief executive. It is important that they are given every encouragement by the Parliament and are not

constantly sniped at.

Obviously, strong marketing is needed. The Executive's strategy for tourism places a lot of emphasis on niche marketing. Although that is important and there are opportunities for it in the Highlands and Islands in particular, there are other areas that do not have niches to market but rely on the general holidaymaker. It is essential that businesses in those areas are not ignored but are given guidance on how to improve and modernise the product that they offer and on how to attract visitors back.

Longer-term issues that were raised in the Executive's strategy for tourism need to be acted on. It is essential to show that tourism is an attractive career option for young people. Investment in employees is necessary to raise morale and esteem in the industry. The strategy says that the uptake of 1,000 modern apprenticeships by 2003 will be encouraged. Perhaps the minister will inform us what progress is being made toward that target.

Achieving quality is perhaps the most important long-term issue. Word-of-mouth marketing is the best way of advertising the Highlands. When people come to visit the Highlands and Islands and other parts of Scotland, we must offer top-quality, fast and efficient service. Visitors expect no less. That is particularly important for foreign visitors, who in many cases are prepared to pay a bit extra for higher-quality service. The remoter Highlands will never be a cheap holiday option due to our distance from the centres of population, so we must become a quality holiday option.

It is important to debate the future of the tourism industry. The industry makes an important contribution to the Scottish economy and cannot be ignored. It is very sad that the Tory motion indulges in gesture politics by appearing to offer solutions to the tourism industry that either are unworkable or are measures that are already being enacted.

10:22

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): In common with other MSPs, I recently received a short-breaks package from the Scottish Tourist Board, enclosing a sample of the board's promotion material and details of the current £2.3 million marketing campaign, which focuses on attracting visitors to Scotland during May and into the summer. *visitscotland* tells us that the campaign is its biggest-ever assault on the domestic market. I believe that the initiative is very much welcomed throughout the industry. The board informs us:

"For every £1 the Scottish Tourist Board spends on promotion £6 is generated in return on behalf of Scotland's

tourism industry."

The financial help that the Executive has given to a hard-pressed tourism industry is welcome.

In our previous debate on the tourism industry, I asked the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning whether she would consider refunding this year's membership subscriptions to all tourist board members. I was pleased that she replied that she would encourage *visitscotland*

"to examine the £5 million package that it has received to ensure that some refunds of subscriptions are made to the most affected businesses."—[*Official Report*, 28 March 2001; Vol 11, c 978.]

I was very pleased to receive a copy of a letter from Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board advising its members that 50 per cent of their membership fees and quality assurance fees would be returned to them. All the refunds would be funded out of the Executive's package. In addition, £104,000 would be spent by Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board on recovery marketing plans, which would help to gain additional funding from the European rural development fund. That represents real help.

I have been contacted by many businesses in West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine that are suffering the effects of the foot-and-mouth crisis. Whether they are large hotels or small one-person businesses, many tell me that bookings are down by 50 per cent and that they face real difficulties. That is why I am so pleased that, with the help of the Scottish Executive funding on which I have concentrated this morning, the marketing strategy is in place and action is under way to give help to businesses in my constituency.

However, once the emergency relief is over, a more effective, longer-term funding mechanism is needed to help the tourism industry. We cannot continue with our somewhat ad hoc approach to the funding of this important industry. We have an ineffective system at the moment. It is no wonder that so much criticism has been levelled at Aberdeen City Council over its refusal to pay its fair share to the tourism industry in the north-east. That refusal resulted in the closure and movement of the area tourist board's office, which affected not just the city of Aberdeen but the whole of the north-east, including Deeside and the Kincardineshire coast in my constituency.

The system whereby local councils are left to decide their own contribution levels cannot continue. We have a national industry, which needs a guaranteed level of funding. We cannot go on funding our tourism industry through our hard-pressed councils. We need a minimum of direct funding from the Scottish Executive. We must reform the ridiculous system of funding now.

10:25

Fergus Ewing (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP): On listening to the radio this morning, I was pleased and relieved to hear that, rather like Baldrick, Mr William Hague is in possession of a cunning plan. That cunning plan is to reduce the level of fuel tax. I commend Mr Hague, the former putative leader of the Opposition, for developing that cunning plan, but I fear that, as with Mr Baldrick's efforts, it will go awry because of one fatal flaw. The flaw is that it is clear to everyone except Brian Wilson and Helen Liddell that Mr William Hague has about as much chance of being in a position after the general election to implement his cunning plan as Mr Ronald Biggs has of becoming a High Court judge.

At least the Conservatives have recognised their sins of the past. We must always welcome the occasion when a sinner repents. However, I offer the advice that when they make a confession, they should make it a bit more fulsome and perhaps a bit longer. It was the Conservatives who introduced the fuel duty escalator. That policy was introduced in the guise of helping the environment.

Maureen Macmillan: Will the member give way?

Fergus Ewing: Certainly, once I have moved on a little.

While the Conservatives' motives were ostensibly of green and greenery, we know that the real motive was greed—the greed of successive chancellors.

Alex Fergusson: Will the member give way?

Fergus Ewing: I will take the lady first, as I am sure that Alex Fergusson would urge me to.

Maureen Macmillan: Which is greater: Mr Ewing's figure, which refers to gallons, or the Conservatives' figure, which refers to litres?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): You must address the motion, Mr Ewing.

Fergus Ewing: Certainly. I think that I am addressing the amendment, which relates to high fuel costs.

We certainly have a shining example of the highest fuel tax in the world, which has been imposed by Maureen Macmillan's party following the Conservatives' example and which is deeply damaging to our tourism industry. The figure that the Labour party is putting to the people of Scotland is zero, as it will not even recognise that the problem exists. Our figure is 10p per gallon as an immediate cut.

Members will recall from my previous speeches that we are committed to reducing the level of fuel

tax in Scotland to the European average. That is where the Conservative proposal is flawed, even if it were not a cunning plan that is bound to go awry. The Conservatives must recognise that the problem is the competitive disadvantage that affects tourism and other areas.

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab) *rose—*

George Lyon *rose—*

Fergus Ewing: I must move on to deal with the point that the minister for tourism, enterprise, lifelong learning and general election campaigns made, which was that we talk down the tourism industry. That argument is the last refuge of a minister who has no coherent criticism to make. It is incoherent and meaningless waffle.

I take the opportunity to praise the efforts of David Noble and Delia Holland of HOST, which covers a massive area of Scotland, as it is important to praise the people who are delivering on the ground. However, their hands are tied by a dreadful rates relief package and "The Comeback Code", which leaves decisions in the hands of the landowners whom the Labour party is supposed to bring into line.

The survival workshop is a complete waste of money. It provides up to £2,000 for legal advice for people who know well that their problems are lack of market and loss of business, about which no lawyer or accountant will be able to do anything.

The Scottish Licensed Trade Association pointed out the fatal flaw and the reason why we lodged our amendment. The SLTA states that the problem is that decisions taken by successive chancellors

"are making the cost of taking holidays in Scotland prohibitive, even to Scots. VAT at 17.5% on accommodation and meals, the high cost of fuel, the exorbitant commercial rates and"—

I stress this point for the minister—

"the strong pound have made Scotland too expensive for both British people and for visitors from abroad."

That is the real problem, but the Labour party has no appetite even to recognise that it exists.

10:31

Elaine Thomson (Aberdeen North) (Lab): As many members have said, we now recognise that tourism is a key part of the Scottish economy and generates substantial revenue—about £2.5 billion, or about 5 per cent of Scottish gross domestic product. That key role has been recognised over the past two years, with the substantial new strategy for Scottish tourism that acknowledges the many challenges that face a successful tourism industry in Scotland and identifies clear paths for the way forward. The strategy identifies

key niche marketing areas, such as golf, culture, genealogy and activity tourism. Business tourism is another area that is of particular importance in Aberdeen and Scotland's other cities. The tourism strategy has been backed up by substantial investment, such as the £11 million that was announced last February.

The current outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease has undoubtedly put the tourism industry under pressure, particularly in areas such as Dumfries. Swift action has been taken to support tourism businesses, both in Dumfries and throughout Scotland.

Mr Rumbles: Does Elaine Thomson, who represents part of the city of Aberdeen, agree with my call for area tourist boards to receive direct funding in future? That would help us to get away from situations such as the one that occurred when Aberdeen City Council did not provide the required amount of money for the tourism industry.

Elaine Thomson: During its recent inquiry, the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee considered funding for area tourist boards. I know that the committee will come back to that issue. A successful meeting involving Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board, Aberdeen City Council and the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and Gaelic, Alasdair Morrison, was held recently at which the way forward in Aberdeen was discussed. Many different contributions are made to support tourism in Aberdeen and the north-east, such as the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, which is supported entirely by Aberdeen City Council. The situation is not as straightforward as it might appear.

Mr Rumbles: What about direct funding?

Elaine Thomson: Discussions on that issue are under way, but I repeat: in supporting tourism, many contributions are made—the issue is not just about support for Aberdeen and Grampian Tourist Board.

One of the most useful activities that any member can pursue is that of not talking down Scottish tourism. There has been quite enough gloom and doom and pessimistic prediction. The Tories' motion is not helpful, particularly given the way in which it undermines visitscotland, which is working hard to restructure itself.

Ministers have taken many steps to support Scottish tourism, such as their visits to America, which is one of our key overseas markets. It has been made quite clear that Scotland is open to visitors, contrary to the sometimes over-dramatic pictures of burning farm animals.

Other measures that have been taken include the provision of £5 million to support visitscotland

and of another £5 million for the enterprise network. Rates relief has been provided, with the Scottish Executive funding 95 per cent rather than the usual 75 per cent. Other industrial sectors, such as the paper industry and the fish processing sector, are quite envious of that support.

Today, the minister offered further help for Dumfries, through Scottish Enterprise, which I welcome. While we shall have to wait to see the full impact of foot-and-mouth disease on Scottish tourism, we know already that the figures for Easter were higher than predicted.

I note from television advertisements that visitscotland is heavily targeting the home market. Sixty per cent of the Scottish tourism industry's revenue comes from within the UK and I think that visitscotland's campaign will be productive. I hope that many more people will take short breaks in Scotland this year. I am a firm adherent to the belief that Scotland is a great holiday destination, so I am off to visit Orkney for the first time this summer. I hope that others will take this opportunity to go on similar visits.

Many of the problems that affect Scottish tourism are deep seated and existed well before the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. The Scottish tourism strategy is designed to address those problems and I believe that they will be addressed clearly over the next few years.

10:36

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): This morning, we have heard Dismal Dave and Kenny and the Moaners talking about tourism. We also heard a bit of fantasy from Fergus Ewing.

Helen Eadie: Does Ian Jenkins agree that Fergus Ewing, who raised the issue of fuel taxes, failed to acknowledge or to agree that Britain has the lowest income and business taxes in the European Union? We must consider taxation policy in the round, rather than concentrate on fuel duty.

Ian Jenkins: I am happy to agree that tax is a complicated issue. Fergus Ewing's comments about William Hague's chances of being able to make decisions about taxes might have resonance for Alex Salmond and others.

The Rod Lynch episode was a bad start, but the Tories will hope that a bad start to a campaign does not preclude recovery. I hope that they will be sympathetic and recognise that the Rod Lynch affair should not condemn visitscotland to failure for ever.

The tone of today's debate has been negative and unhelpful. It is neither fair nor right to kick an organisation when it is in difficulties, given that it is

doing the job that we want it to do in difficult circumstances. At a time of crisis, it is absolutely wrong to lodge critical motions that sap the organisation's morale.

Mr Hamilton: Will the member give way?

Ian Jenkins: I am sorry, but I will not give way just now. Helen Eadie's intervention took up about half my time.

Yesterday, I spoke to the chief executive of the Scottish Borders Tourist Board. He assured me that tourist board chief executives and visitScotland are determined and committed to working together professionally in a way that clarifies their roles and prevents the overlap that existed previously. We ought not to decry the work of the STB, which introduced standards of professionalism. No one can deny that, broadly speaking, quality in Scottish tourism has risen hugely over the past few years. It must continue to rise and, as Maureen Macmillan said, we must get to the stage where Scotland is seen to be a quality destination.

The second part of David Davidson's motion refers to the recovery plan. The recovery plan has two aspects, one of which is getting people to Scotland. That is a chicken-and-egg situation—we must ensure that when people arrive, the infrastructure and quality businesses are in place to greet them. I welcome the recovery plan announced by Ms Alexander, which attacks on both those fronts and will help businesses survive. The trouble is that some of the best businesses are those that have invested most and that are in the greatest difficulty when there is a lacuna in their funding. We must ensure that those businesses are able to survive, so that they can cater for visitors when they come back.

When George Lyon welcomed the announcement on Dumfries and Galloway, I was pleased to hear him say that similar consideration should be given to the Borders, which has been stigmatised by the outbreak of foot-and-mouth in the area. I saw Ms Alexander nodding when he said that and I hope that she will convert her agreement into action shortly. It is crucial that, when the Borders economic forum meets Mr McLeish shortly, those things are treated positively. Of course the Scottish tourism industry has been affected nationally, but the areas that have been infected with the disease must overcome a psychological barrier in trying to attract visitors.

Mr Davidson: Liberal policy is quite interesting this morning. Two years ago, when I introduced in the chamber our policy of direct funding for area tourist boards, the Liberals talked it down and voted against it. Do Mr Rumbles and the Liberals now agree with our policy?

Ian Jenkins: I am sure that Mr Davidson is mistaken. I may recall imperfectly, but I spoke in favour of direct funding and do so again now. I support Mr Rumbles in that aspiration, which may take time. I welcomed three-year funding through the councils, but direct funding would be better.

The third strand of Mr Davidson's motion is on the opening up of the countryside. Yesterday, I was at a meeting of the cross-party sports group. We were made aware of the difficulties that are caused by the mixture of open and closed areas for people with tourism businesses and those who are trying to run events such as the great Caledonian run.

It is vital that we send out clear messages. The Executive has done so positively with the gradings of infected, at-risk and provisionally free areas. That policy should be hardened up if it can be. Publicity and moral pressure should be directed towards people who have areas and estates that are closed to the public to open them whenever that is possible without risk. We live in a democracy and so cannot always order people to do things. There are clearly difficulties in the Borders, where farming people are really nervous about that. We must accept that there are limitations.

On an optimistic note, hundreds of visitors came to Peebles last weekend. They did not need to go into the forests. They could walk on Tweed Green, listen to silver bands or go shopping. Much of the Borders is as good as it can be for tourists.

10:42

Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): Again I welcome the opportunity to enter the debate on the future of the tourism industry. I want to concentrate my remarks on three issues that have been raised: the position of visitScotland and ministerial responsibility; consequential compensation, which seems to have slipped off the agenda; and the wider aspects of tourism and the urgent action that needs to be taken now.

In her opening speech, the minister said that it is a small nation that covets grievance when errors are made. That was apparently a cover suggesting that no one is to blame. I am not seeking a scapegoat for the crisis in the tourism industry or for the complete mess in the appointment of the chief executive. Believing in parliamentary accountability is not seeking grievance and does not make us a small nation. As she is the minister, the minister is responsible. We were told by the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and Gaelic at the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee that she is responsible, so it is not uncharitable of MSPs to call her to account. That does not belittle us.

I want to ask some of the questions that remain unanswered. We were told that no minister was involved in the debacle surrounding the chief executive and that no minister was available to go to the interview panels. The minister did not say that a civil servant represented the Executive. At no point has it been denied that there was an Executive representative. If there was no representative, what was the civil servant doing there? Were they there to keep out the cold? Were they there to represent the Executive or were they just lost? Did they just wander in and wonder where they were? They were there to represent the ministerial interest. Did they ask pertinent questions of the candidates? Did they ask the candidates how many jobs they had? Did they even bother to check whether the person was available to give 100 per cent commitment to the industry in its time of need? If they did not, why not? Why did the minister not demand that those questions were asked? What was the point in having a representative there if those serious questions were not to be addressed?

Despite the fact that ministers are trying to put the problem at arm's length, the decision about whether to appoint the new chief executive was ultimately for the minister responsible for tourism. Before the contract was signed off, it was the minister's responsibility to ensure that all the details were right. Rather than hiving off to Tuscany, perhaps it would have been more useful if he could have done so. Perhaps his deputy could have given the matter some of his close attention.

Before I deal with consequential compensation, I want to put in the *Official Report* that the Executive has not made one attempt to contradict any of those details or to answer any of those questions. Perhaps the minister will do so in his closing remarks.

Henry McLeish is another minister who seems to have had a lot of trouble. On 22 March 2001, the current First Minister—we do not know for how much longer—told Parliament in answer to John Swinney:

"We are working on every front. Over the next few weeks, we hope to be able to develop consequential compensation."—[*Official Report*, 22 March 2001; Vol 11, c 877.]

What have we seen since then? Total inertia. Businesses still do not know whether consequential compensation will come, what it will mean or how to qualify for it. That is another example of the First Minister promising something that he later realised he could not afford to promise, or did not understand. I would welcome from the Executive today some clarification of whether the First Minister was misleading Parliament, whether he was misled by his

advisers, or whether he did not understand the terms that he used.

Mr Lyon asserted that we should not turn visitscotland into a political football. He said that we should not use visitscotland to highlight Executive failings. Is that the same George Lyon who used visitscotland and the debacle surrounding it to do precisely that? Is that the same George Lyon who told the nation in a burst of unparalleled publicity for him that he was the person to call the Executive to account for fighting like ferrets in a sack and for its members looking at their own promotion before the industry's needs? Mr Lyon is losing credibility by the minute.

I welcome the debate because it is a chance to put in context the current role of the tourism industry. Before she left the chamber, Elaine Thomson made the point that, before the industry's immediate difficulties, there were problems from the strong pound, the high cost of fuel, poor marketing and two years of consecutive decline in the number of overseas visitors. After the insufficient package of measures that has been implemented—if I had time, I would say why it is insufficient—and after the immediate crisis has passed, let us remember that the systemic problems that existed before the crisis remain and remain unanswered. Once we are out of this particularly dark period, it is time to refocus our efforts not on getting people re-elected but on getting the Scottish tourism industry back on its feet.

10:48

The Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and Gaelic (Mr Alasdair Morrison): I am happy to respond on behalf of the Executive. My colleagues, Maureen Macmillan and Elaine Thomson, were absolutely right when they said that Scotland now appreciates the importance of the tourism industry. Maureen Macmillan was correct when she dismissed David Davidson's motion as a vain attempt at gesture politics.

Mr Davidson spoke of the Executive's abject failure over the past two years. In the past two years, we have taken tourism from the fringes of political thinking and placed it at the heart of the Executive's programme. Mr Davidson said that the Executive had totally failed to respond to tourism. Last week, I met a former member of the Scottish Tourist Board. She spent two terms on the board under the Tory Government and she said that, in the six years that she served, she did not once meet or have any contact with a Tory tourism minister. That shows the way in which the Tories treated tourism.

When we last debated tourism—in the final

statement and debate in this chamber before the Easter recess—Mr Peter Lederer's appointment as chairman was endorsed as an inspired choice by people from across the political spectrum. We should again put on record our recognition of Mr Lederer's undoubted skills and talents.

David Davidson launched into an unwarranted attack on the British Tourist Authority and came out with a spurious claim that BTA staff are misleading American visitors. I have seen and heard for myself the work of BTA staff in their call centre in New York. They are doing an excellent job; they have been doing an excellent job all through this very difficult episode. Mr Davidson would be well advised to establish the facts before so roundly criticising staff who are doing an excellent job.

Mr Davidson: Will the minister give way?

Mr Morrison: I have only five minutes and I want to respond to as many members as possible.

Kay Ullrich made a valid and pertinent point when she talked about the American media hysteria surrounding foot-and-mouth—or hoof-and-mouth, as they call it. I am happy to reassure Kay Ullrich that ministers—both UK and Scottish—have been working with the American media to get the message across. Our ambassadors and consuls general have also been engaging aggressively with the media.

George Lyon rightly began with a positive picture of tourism across Scotland. I am happy to say that, in my constituency over the Easter weekend, the numbers on ferries sailing to Barra, Lochboisdale, North Uist, Harris and Lewis were all up on last year. Numbers on the Ullapool to Stornoway route increased by a staggering 28 per cent. Mr Lyon asked what we are doing about recovering the American market. A great deal of work is being done on that market and similar efforts are continuing in other important markets in Europe. I will deal with the matter of access that Mr Lyon and other members raised in few minutes. I can certainly endorse what he said about it being in all our interests to stop kicking visitScotland.

Alex Fergusson raised concerns about the enterprise company and the tourist board in Dumfries and Galloway. I reinforce the points that have already been made: they have been receiving support and, as was announced by Wendy Alexander this morning, they have now received additional support.

Elaine Murray was absolutely correct when she said that we must avoid the temptation to talk down the tourism industry. I recognise the efforts of tourism leaders in Dumfries and Galloway. Everyone appreciates the need for co-operation between Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders.

For example, I believe that the southern upland way has the potential to become one of the jewels of Scottish tourism. However, before it is properly developed, it will require a lot of co-operation between the councils and area tourist boards in Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders.

The contributions from Kenny MacAskill, Fergus Ewing and Duncan Hamilton can be summed up by words, written in 1943, that I read in *The Herald* yesterday. The article mentioned a report on the Scottish nationalist movement, which was studied by MI5 in 1943. It said that MI5's view was that

"while individual members are mischievous and potentially dangerous, the organisation itself, albeit full of sound and fury, is of little consequence."

I will move on to the issue of access. In responding to last night's debate congratulating the Scottish Youth Hostel Association on its 70th anniversary, Allan Wilson referred to the difficulties being created in some parts of the country by unofficial closure of land. That is causing significant economic harm to some in the tourism industry. I take this opportunity to support fully what Allan Wilson said. Many landowners, farmers and crofters in the provisionally free area have followed our advice, carried out risk assessments and reopened their land where advised that it was safe to do so. However, others have refused to co-operate with local authorities and have kept in place unofficial signs saying that the countryside is closed. That is not acceptable behaviour. It came as no surprise to me to learn that Lord Burton of Dochfour is one of the landowners who is not taking the wider view. He is indulging in the selfishness that has been his hallmark over the years.

In closing, I will reiterate what my colleague Wendy Alexander said in her opening remarks. The message from this Parliament needs to be that Scotland is open for business. Our real task with visitScotland should be to revitalise our tourism industry.

10:54

David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con):

This has been an important debate because tourism is Scotland's most important industry. Many people say that often, but rarely are the words backed up by action and deeds. The vulnerability of the industry and the fact that we cannot take it, its income or its jobs for granted have been underlined by the foot-and-mouth crisis. I welcome, as a first step, the package that has been announced. Interestingly, it was Ross Finnie rather than Ms Alexander who announced it.

I especially welcome the additional £5 million from Scottish Enterprise to Scottish Enterprise

Dumfries and Galloway. That is a start. I hope that in the welcome debate that we will have this afternoon on the specifics in Dumfries and Galloway, we will get some more detail. As the minister knows from her various meetings and from the people's protest last week, the priority is to provide some form of survival loan to businesses. That must be included in the detail, otherwise the package will disappoint and cause genuine anger. I look forward to hearing that the detail is in place so that, as we have done today, all in Dumfries and Galloway can move forward positively to overcome this crisis.

It was interesting to have a debate in which Ian Jenkins turned nasty; and if there is anyone in this chamber who can lecture us with gravitas on incoherent and meaningless waffle, it is Fergus Ewing. As Duncan Hamilton so well pointed out, George Lyon did yet another volte-face and, rather than blaming the Labour party for all the problems in the Scottish tourism industry, he proposed that Sir Malcolm Rifkind could lead the industry. I am afraid, George, that Sir Malcolm will be otherwise engaged.

I agree with Elaine Thomson, Maureen Macmillan and others who pointed out that the tourism industry was in serious difficulty before foot-and-mouth. The high value of the pound and the cost of fuel were major disincentives to come to Scotland. The chaos—or what we thought then was chaos—that prevailed at the Scottish Tourist Board, leading to the departure of the chairman and senior executives; the PricewaterhouseCoopers report; the curate's egg that is the area tourist board structure; and the lack of clarity between the tourist boards, Scottish Enterprise and local government, existed before. Now, they have been compounded by the foot-and-mouth crisis.

I accept that the Executive did not bring the crisis about, but it caused the fiasco surrounding the appointment of Rod Lynch. I make no apology for criticising those things. As Elaine Murray mentioned, Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board is now well led by a new chairman and a new chief executive. I had no difficulty in calling for the resignation of the previous chairman, who had led in a most incompetent fashion. If people do not highlight such difficulties, they go on and on and on. It is the duty of the Opposition parties in this Parliament—and even the duty of Mr Lyon, on occasion—to highlight genuine difficulties that exist in the visitscotland organisation.

In restoring confidence, Peter Lederer has a big job to do. As the minister knows, he has a big job to do in Dumfries and Galloway, where there is genuine concern that visitscotland is unable to represent all our tourism businesses. I am very pleased that Alasdair Morrison, the minister with

responsibility for tourism, gave an undertaking last week to take up that very issue with the acting chief executive. I am pleased that the board of visitscotland is in Dumfries today. We need to see some action, with the south of Scotland being properly represented on that board.

As my colleague Alex Fergusson said, much needs to be done. Interestingly, our survey of more than 1,000 tourism businesses in South of Scotland, asking them what the Scottish Parliament could do, highlighted lobbying of the UK Government on the cost of fuel as being the single most important thing for the tourism industry.

Tourism businesses and other electors will have their opportunity to influence the UK Government on the cost of fuel over the next four weeks. As David Davidson said, our promise on that is very clear: a 6p a litre reduction in the cost of fuel. By my calculation—Mr MacAskill should note this point—that is more than 10p a gallon. Given the SNP propensity for foreign figures, I am sure that Mr MacAskill will be using the US or Canadian gallon. Today, as ever, Mr MacAskill gave us figures for Estonia, Lithuania and Canada, but did not give us a budgeted figure for Scotland.

The other plea that I would make to ministers is to end the mishmash and lack of clarity between the respective roles of Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and visitscotland/the Scottish Tourist Board. Who is responsible for tourism? We know that it is not ministers. Who is there to support businesses and help them to develop? The current area tourism structure is a mess. In many cases, good people operate it, but there is a lack of clarity about what they are doing.

The fact that the area tourist board is a membership organisation leads to increasing exclusion of hundreds of tourism-related businesses. That must be reviewed. I am very concerned to find myself agreeing with Mike Rumbles, but I am reassured by David Davidson, who tells me that Mike Rumbles is agreeing with us when we call for the direct funding of area tourist boards and local organisations, rather than funding through local authorities. Local authorities and area tourist boards must work in partnership, but it must be a partnership of equals and that cannot exist where the tourist board is dependent on the council for funding.

Tourist boards must take issues forward and lobby the council on behalf of their members. As members, particularly those who represent rural areas, will know, there are many important issues in relation to changing councils' development and planning policies and signage. The tourist boards must be able to have an arm's length relationship with the councils.

I want to draw attention to yet another shambles, which in previous debates was heralded as the future of Scottish tourism yet failed to get a mention today: Project Ossian. How many times did we hear that Ossian was the future and that thousands of people would use it to book their holidays in bed and breakfasts, hotels and self-catering accommodation across Scotland? In reality, Ossian was another shambles. It was the wrong system—all too reminiscent of the computer system used at the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Some measures are in place. For example, I have met the people who are developing the website, which will be an important element of the Scottish tourism industry, but we cannot have shambles after shambles in our most important industry. It is time to stop saying that tourism is Scotland's most important industry and to have some action instead.

Holyrood

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The next item of business is a Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party debate on motion S1M-1918, in the name of David McLetchie, on Holyrood, and two amendments to that motion.

11:04

David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): The motion seeks to reaffirm the resolution passed by the Scottish Parliament on 5 April, which placed a £195 million cost limit on the Holyrood project, and to call on the Scottish Executive—conspicuous by the absence of its members this morning—to confirm that no more public money will be wasted on that project.

It is more than a year since the Parliament debated the subject. In the meantime, there have been numerous reports indicating that the £195 million cash limit may well be breached and that the project will not be completed on schedule by the end of 2002. Indeed, according to Mr David Black—author of “All The First Minister's Men”, which was published today—the eventual cost of the Parliament building will not so much breach the £195 million limit, as drive a coach and horses through it. In his book, Mr Black predicts a total cost in the order of £300 million.

What is not in doubt is the duty of the Holyrood progress group, the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and the Scottish Executive to advise the Parliament whether the £195 million figure is going to be exceeded and, if so, how the cost overrun is to be financed. It is a serious matter. The Scottish public expect the building to be built for that amount. To fail to do so would further undermine the reputation of the Scottish Parliament and public confidence in it.

The last thing that we need is for people to start trying to wriggle out of the £195 million figure by claiming that we should take account of inflation. That is what the amendment in John Home Robertson's name seeks to do. Of course, we are being asked to take account, not of bog-standard inflation with which we are all familiar, but of super inflation, which apparently affects only building projects in Edinburgh and London. Let us not forget that the Spencely report estimate, which informed the decision that the Parliament made in April 2000, included an element of £9.4 million for inflation, covering the period from March 1998 to completion of the tender process.

We must also knock firmly on the head the idea—again to be found in the amendment in Mr Home Robertson's name—that by sticking to the £195 million figure we will somehow end up with a

substandard building. That idea should be treated with the contempt that it deserves—it simply reinforces the damaging perception that politicians inhabit a completely different planet from the rest of the population. Nothing has done more to tarnish the reputation of the Scottish Parliament than the handling of the Holyrood project. The chain of deception that has characterised the project from beginning to end has rightly angered people in Scotland. The project has also been characterised by incompetence, mismanagement and misinformation.

In the white paper published before the devolution referendum, less than four years ago, the Scottish people were promised a Parliament for between £10 million and £40 million. Since then, there have been attempts to suggest that the £40 million figure was not realistic. That is not true. In a letter to me, the permanent secretary, Muir Russell, confirms that we could indeed have had a Parliament building for around that figure. He writes:

“The £40m figure related to a new build (at Leith) on a brownfield site to a reasonable modern standard. The costings for this were obviously on a notional basis rather than being built up from detailed design elements, but, having checked our records, I can say that this figure was intended to include not only construction works but also fees, fitting out, furniture, VAT and land acquisition.”

As befits our most senior civil servant, Mr Russell is a man who measures his words with care. Would that the same care had been exercised by his political masters.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): I want to underline the fact that Mr McLetchie's claim of incompetence stretches back to the very time that he describes, when the original specifications were drawn up. At that time, the assumption was that there would be 250 people working in and around the Parliament. Five months after Parliament opened, however, 1,200 people were working here. The advice tendered to the then Secretary of State for Scotland was wrong and the people who tendered it should have walked.

David McLetchie: I could not agree more with those sentiments. That is one adminicle in the case against both the Executive and the Scottish Office ministers who were initially responsible for this misbegotten project.

The £40 million economical option was rejected by the Scottish Office in favour of a new Holyrood Palace and the desire to build a monument to the political egos of the architects of devolution. Ever since, the cost of the project has escalated out of control.

However, instead of doing something about it, the Scottish Executive—and the Labour party in particular—has spent its time trying to evade

responsibility. The problem has been exacerbated by the spin and misinformation that has surrounded the project from the beginning. Gaining information about the cost of Holyrood has been like pulling teeth. When the public was told that the cost had gone from £40 million to £50 million, that was accepted at face value.

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

David McLetchie: However, thanks to Mr Stone's assiduous colleague Donald Gorrie, we established that when the extras were added on, the real cost was going to be £90 million. Before the debate in June 1999, we were told that construction costs had risen to £62 million and that when all the extras were added on the cost was going to be £109 million, a figure to which the Executive committed itself in that debate—a commitment, I remind the chamber, that was given by both the late First Minister and the present one.

In keeping with the misinformation that has clouded discussion of the issue, the figures trotted out at that point excluded landscaping into Holyrood park and the cost of new roads. We now know that those things will cost an additional £14 million—another charge on the taxpayer, another dent in the Scottish block grant. Thanks to the Spencely report, we also know that the £109 million excluded design risks and other costs amounting to £27 million. That information was withheld from the then First Minister, albeit with his retrospective approval.

I have no doubt that the rot finally set in with the decision to transfer responsibility for the project to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. That is not to denigrate the efforts of our colleagues, but it was the moment at which ministers were allowed to pass the buck and evade direct responsibility for the project. Without responsibility there can be no accountability. That lack of accountability is acknowledged, I am pleased to see, in Michael Russell's amendment.

The Parliament has had two opportunities to stop, take stock of the process and look again at the available options. Donald Gorrie's amendment on 17 June 1999 proposed just such a move, but was narrowly rejected by the combined weight of Labour and Liberal Democrat votes, with only a few honourable exceptions, such as Mr Gorrie himself. On 5 April last year, a similar amendment, calling for delay so that we could make an informed choice based on consideration of all the options, was rejected in favour of Gordon Jackson's motion, which was bulldozed through with the votes of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties.

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): David McLetchie should be aware that, unlike in his party and the

SNP, there was no whip. Jim Wallace made that clear in the debate that day. David McLetchie should acknowledge that fact and accept it.

David McLetchie: The Liberal Democrats may not have needed a whip, but they certainly exercised very poor judgment when they voted for Gordon Jackson's motion. They should make a better job of representing the interests of the people of Scotland than they do.

Last April's debate gave some cause for optimism, given the Executive's apparent determination to stick to the new limit of £195 million. It looked as if the Executive had finally acknowledged its responsibility for containing costs, but that hope was short-lived. It soon became clear that the Executive had no intention of putting a minister on the Holyrood progress group, which was established at its own behest, pursuant to Gordon Jackson's motion. We have argued consistently that, without a minister on it, the Holyrood progress group is simply a device to shield the Executive from its responsibility, which is why we have refused to appoint a Conservative minister—

Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab): In your dreams.

David McLetchie: I meant a Conservative member. Conservative ministers are coming, just wait. We have refused to appoint a Conservative member to the group until the First Minister is prepared to accept the Executive's responsibility as custodians of the public purse and put a minister in charge. Michael Russell's amendment asks us to end our boycott. We will do so, immediately the Scottish Executive ends its boycott and stops abdicating its responsibility.

The Holyrood progress group has suffered from the fact that it keeps losing members. First Tavish Scott, then Lewis Macdonald abandoned ship for the ministerial Mondeo. I used to think that that meant that the progress group was a fast track to the top, but that theory was scuppered by the appointment of John Home Robertson. In fairness to members of the group, they initially determined to work within the new budget figure, but from February onwards warning signals have been sounded and one member, Linda Fabiani, has had the honesty to acknowledge that the final bill could be £250 million. Would that everyone else was so frank and honest.

Frankly, it is about time—if it is not already past time—that the First Minister finally accepted responsibility for the mess that we now find ourselves in. I fear, however, that the chances of that happening are sadly remote. The very least that we have a right to expect from the Scottish Executive is that it spends our money with due care and attention. Instead, money is being thrown

around like confetti and the most glaring example of that financial profligacy has been the building of the new Parliament at Holyrood. That fact that, in less than four years, the cost of the Parliament building has increased by nearly six times the original estimate is nothing short of a national scandal. That is money that should have been, and could have been, spent on our hospitals, schools and roads.

My motion urges the Executive finally to get a financial grip on the project. It may not be too keen on taking responsibility for overseeing the project, but let us not forget that it is still entirely responsible for funding it and that every extra pound squandered on Holyrood is a pound less for our public services. The farce of Holyrood has gone on long enough. It is time to put a ceiling on the Holyrood project. It is time to cut our coat according to our cloth. It is time for the Executive to say unequivocally, "Enough is enough; not a penny more." It is about time that the Executive gave us a categorical assurance that it will not pour any more taxpayers' money down the Holyrood money pit, and that no more blank cheques will be written. I invite the Parliament to ensure that that is the case by supporting my motion.

I move,

That the Parliament notes its resolution of 5 April 2000 which approved expenditure of up to £195 million on the Holyrood Project and now calls on the Scottish Executive to advise the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body that this figure is a cash limit within which the building is to be completed and that no further sums of public money will be allocated towards the project.

11:16

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): One is tempted to say, "Here we are again." This is the third occasion on which the Parliament has debated the Holyrood project in the context of an actual or expected cost overrun. In June 1999, the Parliament came within a few votes—a few Liberal votes—of halting the project and considering, as we should have done, the alternatives to a scheme that was conceived in haste and political panic, and of which we have now to repent at leisure.

At that time, the Parliament was assured that the cost would be £109 million. That was not true. In April 2000, in the light of the Spencely report, the Parliament returned to the project. Gordon Jackson—I am glad that he is here—displaying the eloquence which, according to *Scotland on Sunday* last week, makes him one of the top earners in the legal profession, persuaded the Parliament, indeed promised the Parliament, that the cost would be no more than £195 million. That also was untrue. I note that in David Davidson's

report to the Finance Committee—and I do not often quote Mr Davidson with approval—he says that

“the motion put to and passed by the Scottish Parliament, known as the ‘Jackson motion’, which was for a fixed cash sum at current prices of £195 million, was somewhat optimistic and, in light of the complexity of the tender and control process ... naïve for such a complicated and indeed unique design.”

The Tory motion today is also optimistic and naïve, which is why I seek to amend it.

Now we are told—or rather not told, because at the heart of my amendment is the concern that we do not have the figures—that the final figure will not be £109 million; neither will it be £195 million. Still less will it be the £40 million with which we started, or even the £10 million that was put about before the Scotland Act 1998 was passed, and it will not be less than Spencely’s upper estimate of £230 million. David Black has estimated the total cost, including the cost of the Calton hill plan, of all the reports that we have had, of all the consultants, of answering 150 written questions to the Presiding Officer before October 2000—only 100 of which came from Margo MacDonald—of refurbishing the premises that we are in and the knock-on costs on traffic, including traffic circulation in the old town. Members will remember the architect’s promise at the beginning of the project that the project would have no effect on the old town, which now turns out to be nonsense. If all those things are taken into account, the cost of the project is certainly £300 million, and is probably rising.

This is a farce. It is also a tragedy, and it would have been easy to avoid if, at the beginning, the Labour party had listened, instead of insisting on getting its own way because it wanted to dish the nats. It could have been avoided if Labour and the Liberals had put reason and common sense to play instead of backing ministerial reputations and if this Parliament, not Westminster, had made the first decisions. As David Black convincingly argues, the root of the problem lies in the way in which the project was conceived and presented from Westminster by Westminster ministers.

Fortunately, we know who was responsible. Parliamentary committees have worked on that. Spencely uncovered some of the information, and David Black has uncovered more. However, the shambles has victims as well as villains. Scottish taxpayers are the victims and will continue to be mugged for cash. The people who are trying to bring some order and probity to the sorry tale will have a heavier and heavier burden. I pay tribute to the progress group, which is trying to bring sense, probity and some vision to a misbegotten project. The reputation of the Parliament is also suffering.

It took something approaching genius from the

Government to create the situation. What should have been the most significant public building in Scotland in a century, or certainly in a generation, has become a byword for profligacy, political obduracy and sheer folly.

Mr Home Robertson: Whose fault is that?

Michael Russell: That is the fault of those who conceived the project and of the way in which the project was introduced.

It is most tragic that the project affects the reputation of the Parliament and our nation. I pay limited tribute to the Conservatives for bringing the matter to our attention. In typical Tory style, they spoiled a good idea with a silly solution. In April 2000, Mr Jackson persuaded the Parliament that it was possible to cap Holyrood costs at a fixed figure. That was not true then and is not true now. The Tories are trying to fit the same cap to a project that is costing well beyond £195 million. If the Tories succeeded, we would have holes in the ground. Those of us who are old enough to remember Edinburgh under the Tories—which was a long time ago—will remember those holes, which represented buildings that were started and never finished. The Tory motion would result in another useless hole in the ground and would be a wasteful solution. The motion is political posturing and would be awful value for the taxpayer.

David McLetchie: How much more is the SNP prepared to spend on completing the Holyrood project, above the £195 million and above the £14 million on landscaping works?

Michael Russell: I will address that issue in just a moment.

My amendment would make the best of a bad job. Reluctantly—and for the first time—I accept that Holyrood will have to be built. To misquote Macbeth, we are now so steeped in debt that to return would be as tedious as to go o’er. My amendment would find the tightest and most responsible way in which the Parliament—the project client—can control events and bring them to fruition.

The amendment asks the Parliament to accept its joint responsibility. All parties—including the Tories—have so far failed to accept that responsibility. The amendment also deals with the fair point that Mr McLetchie made. It says that the Scottish Executive must take its share of responsibility. With the greatest respect to the Minister for Parliament and the Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development, it is a disgrace that the front bench is not full. It is always full when good news is being trumpeted, but never when problems are being discussed. The Executive should respond to the debate, and a minister should join the progress group. The amendment calls for that.

The amendment would build into the Parliament's structures the proper relationship between the progress group and the Parliament—a direct relationship. The Scotland Act 1998 makes it impossible for the progress group to take ultimate legal responsibility for Holyrood, but nothing stops the corporate body from proposing a small change in standing orders that would allow it to establish a sub-committee to which it could give powers. We should tie the progress group into the Parliament's structures.

The amendment would ensure that the Parliament was fully involved and fully informed and would take decisions relating to cost. To answer Mr McLetchie's question, I say that the difficulty is that the Parliament still does not know the final costs. They must be provided now and the Parliament must debate and decide on them with the progress group.

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): Will Michael Russell give way?

The Presiding Officer: Mr Russell is over time already.

Michael Russell: We could go further. My SNP colleagues want the corporate body to explore with the Executive the creation of a public service trust to pay for the building. It is daft that an Executive that will not spend capital on schools and hospitals insists on spending capital in short order on the Parliament. A public service trust, as proposed by my friend Mr Wilson, would be ideal for the project.

There were and are better sites for the Parliament. There were and are better designs for the Parliament. I would rather welcome those than buttress the wrong choice, but that is not the real world. In the real world, foolish decisions were made for all the wrong reasons and were tenaciously supported by those who should have known better. Tragically, those people have won a form of victory, but we can still prevent the logical conclusion of their foolishness, which David Black says would be the endless escalation of cost, public opprobrium and the private anguish of many members. If the Parliament tightens control of the project and takes responsibility, if the Executive takes responsibility and the Conservatives join in, we may be able to make a difference. We could act responsibly—and together—to control the project. It should not be in the mess that it is in, but it is not too late. I ask the chamber to support my amendment.

I move amendment S1M-1918.2, to leave out from “and now” to end and insert:

“; expresses considerable concern that this figure is likely to be exceeded and therefore calls upon the Corporate Body to ensure that any revised costs above that figure, as well as any changes to quality standards and completion

dates that affect that figure, are laid before the Parliament for debate and approval; further calls upon the Conservatives to cease their boycott of the Holyrood Progress Group so that all the principal parties in the Parliament supervise this Parliamentary project together; asks the Scottish Executive to nominate a Minister to the Group, and expresses the wish that the Progress Group should become a sub-committee of the Corporate Body and that, following such a change, the Progress Group itself should report regularly and directly to formal meetings of the Parliament, rather than to informal meetings of members as at present, thus strengthening direct Parliamentary accountability for the project.”

11:26

Mr John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab): Everyone in Scottish politics must have been struck by the finesse of the Tory party's Tesco launch in Edinburgh yesterday. I am afraid—

The Presiding Officer: Sorry, I think I have a point of order.

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Is Mr Home Robertson's amendment from an individual member, a member of the progress group or a member who represents the Executive? I am not clear about why John Home Robertson is moving the amendment.

The Presiding Officer: I invite Mr Home Robertson to respond. Is not the amendment on behalf of the progress group?

Mr Home Robertson: I speak as convener of the Holyrood progress group.

David McLetchie: On behalf of the group?

Mr Home Robertson: May I have some assistance from the chair? I have not yet started my speech. This is injury time.

David McLetchie: Does Mr Home Robertson speak on behalf of the group or as its convener?

Mr Home Robertson: I speak as convener of the group.

David McLetchie: Thank you. Not on behalf of the group.

Mr Home Robertson: I am sure that everyone was struck by the Tory party's confusion at yesterday's poster launch, and I am afraid that they have hit the wrong target, at the wrong time, again today. The motion is an attack on the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, including the Tories' own John Young. I realise that William Hague has positioned himself on the far, far right, but even he might recognise that the motion suggests a constitutional monstrosity. David McLetchie has proposed that the Scottish Executive should control the Scottish Parliament's budget. I hesitate to lecture him about the basic

principles of parliamentary democracy, but briefly, the general idea is that Parliament should control the Executive, not the other way round.

David McLetchie: Will the member give way?

Mr Home Robertson: Once.

David McLetchie: The Executive controls the public purse. The motion simply says that the Executive should tell the corporate body that not a penny more than £195 million should be spent on the project. That is not a constitutional outrage; it is common sense.

Mr Home Robertson: I am afraid that Mr McLetchie is wrong. The Parliament funds the Executive, not the other way around. However, why let the small matter of parliamentary supremacy get in the way of a good rant against Scotland's new Parliament building? The Tory party has reverted to type. It has always been the principal opponent of democratic devolution in the United Kingdom—it ran the "Vote No" campaign during the 1997 referendum. Tory members told us that they were reformed characters when they took their seats here, but they were never very convincing. Now, they try to rubbish the Holyrood Parliament building project.

The decision to establish the Parliament was taken by a majority of three to one in the 1997 referendum. As Secretary of State for Scotland, before he became our first First Minister, Donald Dewar considered alternative sites and set up the competition to select an architect to design the new Parliament building. That led to the choice of the Holyrood site and of Enric Miralles's design concept. I appreciate that opinions differ about the site and the architect. Mike Russell repeated that today. However, there is nothing to be gained from endless girning and griping by politicians, pundits or even architects about those decisions.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member take an intervention?

Mr Home Robertson: No, I am short of time.

Scots in general—and Edinburgh people in particular—have an unfortunate habit of talking down their own successes. After 300 years we have at last achieved our Scottish Parliament. We commissioned one of the best architects in Europe to develop a magnificent new Parliament building that is generating hundreds of new jobs and adding to Edinburgh's prestige as a capital city and as a tourist attraction. In any other city on the face of the earth that would be a cause for celebration. Here in Edinburgh, David McLetchie, Margo MacDonald and the *Evening News* condemn the whole enterprise as a scandal, a conspiracy and a disgrace. I hate to spoil a good moan, but the Holyrood project is very good news for Edinburgh and for the whole of Scotland.

David McLetchie's motion refers to the £195 million figure in the resolution that was passed by the Parliament on 5 April 2000.

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Mr Home Robertson: Definitely not, Dorothy.

The Holyrood progress group is determined to achieve good value for money, but we must also live in the real world—a point that Michael Russell acknowledged. In the real world, major construction projects include unpredictable factors such as Historic Scotland and cost inflation in the building industry. We should welcome the fact that most tender packages have come in at or below cost plan. However, one very big package—for the east frame, which includes the main debating chamber of the Parliament—has run £4.5 million over cost plan. Obviously, we are taking that very seriously indeed.

I have not time to depress members with Historic Scotland's eccentric stipulations about the restoration of Queensberry House, but I must say a word about the market environment in the construction industry in this part of Scotland. Building cost inflation is running at over 10 per cent. Contractors can afford to pick and choose which jobs they tender for. There is some evidence that some contractors may have shied away from the noisy, negative publicity that has surrounded Holyrood—we have had some more of that today. Malicious talk costs money. The fact is that this internationally important building will bring great credit to the contractors who build it and I hope that we will see some competition for the remaining construction, engineering and finishing packages.

Fergus Ewing (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
rose—

Mr Home Robertson: I am sorry, but I have not time.

The Holyrood progress group constantly strives to contain costs. We have authorised savings worth £2.5 million in recent months and we are determined to achieve value for money. David McLetchie's motion could compel us to offset inflation by cutting the specification of the building, either by reducing provision for the public and for people who work in the Parliament, or by leaving out quality materials such as Aberdeenshire granite or Scottish oak, or by making short-term savings that would lead to greater costs in the long run. After 300 years without a Parliament, we would be mad not to make a wise, long-term investment in the new Scottish Parliament building to serve our new democracy into the next century.

and beyond.

Like you, Presiding Officer, I have spent most of my career in the House of Commons, which is part of the new Palace of Westminster that was constructed 150 years ago. I note that *The Times* of 18 June 1849 criticised the fact that that project ran 350 per cent over budget and called for substantial savings. Thank God that Mr McLetchie's pound-saving predecessors did not get their way in 1849. If they had, the world would have had to do without Big Ben or some of the other magnificent features of the United Kingdom's Parliament building.

I appreciate that it may be difficult for the Tory party to get anything into perspective nowadays, but I will put it this way: the Holyrood building will be a one-off, once-in-a-century cost of about £40 for every man, woman and child in Scotland. That is the sort of money that I spent at my local garden centre last weekend. It is the sort of price that most of our constituents regularly spend on a night out. For the benefit of David McLetchie, it is equivalent to the cost of two tickets for Scottish premier league games at Tynecastle—which must make Holyrood seem an absolutely excellent investment, not least because it is quite near to Easter Road.

I acknowledge the constructive approach that the nationalist Opposition has taken in today's debate, but I must advise Mike Russell that the Holyrood project must remain the responsibility of the whole Parliament, not of the Executive. That is why I respond to the debate in my capacity as convener of the Holyrood progress group. I pay tribute to Linda Fabiani and Jamie Stone, as well as to our professional colleagues on the group. I also pay tribute to Lewis Macdonald, who was my predecessor as convener. It is a pity that the Conservatives have decided to boycott the group, but that is their problem.

The Holyrood progress group will continue to make regular reports to the corporate body and to the Parliament. We are determined to get this important project completed to the highest possible quality standards, on time, and with the best value for money.

I urge the Parliament to reject the Tory party motion out of hand and I move amendment S1M-1918.1, to leave out from "and now" to end and insert:

"and notes the good progress of the construction of the Holyrood Parliament Building; welcomes the fact that most of the tender packages have come in at prices in line with the cost estimates but recognises the effect of an above-average inflation rate in the construction industry in the Edinburgh area; further notes the identification of possible savings by the Holyrood Progress Group, which has led to unanimous decisions by both the Progress Group and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to authorise savings of £2.5 million, but endorses their firm commitment

not to compromise the quality of Scotland's new Parliament Building; acknowledges the rigorous work of the Project Team and the Holyrood Progress Group to achieve good value for money, and directs them to continue to work towards the completion of the construction of the building in December 2002 as an internationally recognised home for our new democracy which will be a source of pride for people throughout Scotland."

11:35

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): This is the third non-debate that we have had on the subject. In the two previous debates, it was quite clear that the vast majority of members voted one way or the other out of loyalty or opposition to Mr Dewar. The merits of the case simply did not enter into the heads of most members. That is beyond dispute and is demonstrated by Mike Watson in his excellent book.

Today, we are again having a non-debate. The Conservative motion is premature and foolish and we have just heard from the convener of the group that is meant to be organising the new Parliament building. As I understand it, there will be a shoot-out at the OK Corral—or whatever the right metaphor is—some time in the next month or two. Options will be presented to the Parliament about costs and what we will get for the money and we will then make a decision. We were not promised that by Mr Home Robertson, which I found deeply disappointing, but I understand that that will happen.

It is worrying that, throughout the whole history of this thing, Parliament has been deceived—quite honestly. Go back further. I spent yesterday clearing out my office at Westminster and brought home a lot of old press cuttings. Many of them relate to the project's earlier stages, when it started to go wrong, which was long before the Parliament was set up. The deceit in the answers that were given at that time—I complained officially but was told that there was no deceit—is now absolutely apparent.

The successive figures for the costs that were given during the two previous Parliamentary debates were simply stitched together to ensure that Margo MacDonald and I lost the vote. They had no credibility. I am not sure whether I am allowed to say it, but, frankly, we were lied to—not by individuals, but certainly by the establishment. We were seriously misled on the costs.

Did anyone who gave the matter two minutes' thought reckon that £195 million was in any way a realistic figure? It was not. It was highly optimistic and it was based on crossed fingers and wish-fulfilment. As for the figures before that, one cannot get a public lavatory for £10 million, let alone a Parliament. The £50 million figure was absolutely absurd. The plans that were put out were—to use the favourite Labour phrase—for a

bog-standard Parliament building on an alleged site in Leith. Throughout the history of the project, we have consistently been deceived about the figures.

I do not blame the people who are currently grappling with the problem. I differ from the critics in the Tory party, because I think that those people are honest and are genuinely doing their best. However, they are at the mercy of the information that they are given. One gets all sorts of information from other sources, and in my view the official sources of information consistently mislead the members who are trying to put things right. When the facts come out—which must happen sooner or later—if we have been consistently lied to, some people will be in severe trouble.

The Parliament now has a problem. Our ball is in a very deep bunker because of past errors. We cannot get out of that by imposing a £195 million cap. It takes me back to the time when, 20-odd years ago, the Conservative's budget for the City of Edinburgh District Council would have left the council with half a lift.

That is what will happen if we have such arbitrary figures. We will be unable to roof the building, or we will enter it and there will be no desks. An absurd figure in the past was a big mistake, but to hitch a new policy to that figure is even more absurd. We must consider the options and work out what the costs will be.

Mike Russell's amendment tries to be sensible, and, therefore, I will support it. In all honesty, I find Mr John Home Robertson's amendment remarkably complacent.

11:40

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): It is appropriate that we debate the spending commitment to the Holyrood project because, although—as David Black has made clear—the responsibility for the choice of Holyrood rests with another place, this Parliament is now responsible for the completion of Holyrood.

Holyrood is often described as Scotland's dome, but that is wholly unacceptable—London's dome was a mere financial hiccup compared with the appalling scandal of what has happened here in Edinburgh. As I have often remarked, the story of Holyrood is even worse than that of Sydney Opera House—another conceptual architectural design whose costs escalated well beyond the financial boundaries. At least our Aussie friends have the satisfaction of having the 10th wonder of the world.

The dome was a UK project on behalf of 60 million people, which was funded by voluntary lottery contributions and corporate sponsorship. Labour's Holyrood heresy is a Scottish project on

behalf of 5 million people, which is being funded by taxpayers. The cost of the dome rose from £9.66 per person throughout Britain to £12.63 per person; the cost of Holyrood has risen from £8 per Scottish person to £39 per person. While the cost of the dome rose by some 30 per cent, from £580 million to £758 million, the cost of Holyrood rose from an initial £10 million to £20 million, to £40 million and then from £40 million to £195 million. We all know that the cost will continue to grow to anything between £250 million and £300 million. Those are conservative figures—

Mr Home Robertson: Conservative party figures.

Mr Monteith: Members may misinterpret the meaning of the word conservative. If they look at the Scottish Office documents, they will see that the conservative figures were £10 million, £20 million, £40 million and £195 million. Those are the figures the public understand.

If we compare the original estimate with the worst possible outcome, we would have an overspend of 2,900 per cent. An equivalent overspend on the dome would have meant that the dome cost £17.5 billion. This project is not the dome; it is a Holyrood disaster of our own making.

Michael Russell: I appreciate the passion with which Mr Monteith argues about conservative figures, but will he answer a simple question? From what we have heard Mr Home Robertson say, it is possible that, at the end of the day, it will not be possible to cut the figures to £195 million without leaving the roof off or something. In those circumstances, what would we do?

Mr Monteith: It is quite clear what we would do: we would put a ceiling on £195 million. [*Laughter.*] There would be no difficulty in reining back the expenditure—if one takes the trouble to look at the designs and the architecture, one can see that that can be achieved. Difficulties with costs are strongly associated with the site. The Parliament did not choose the site, despite the fact that it would have been possible to wait until members were assembled before launching this great folly. We could have met in the Royal High School or gathered here before deciding which site was most appropriate. I have never believed that the Royal High School could have become the Parliament building—its supporting facilities were inadequate—but it would have been sufficient as a stopgap and, eventually, as part of a wider campus.

We could have considered doing Edinburgh a favour by knocking down the St James Centre. We could have taken the Greenside Place plot. There were Haymarket, Leith and—my personal choice—Donaldson's College for the Deaf. It was not to be. As a result of the Labour Government's

haste and the aversion of the likes of Tony Blair, Brian Wilson and Donald Dewar to using the Royal High, we were left with only the Holyrood option.

Why it was ever thought that the Royal High was a nationalist shibboleth defeats me. The Royal High produced sons of Scotland who went on to build the British empire. Its foundations were laid following the Scottish enlightenment, which was itself born out of the union. A wee vigil outside its sad gates was not a nationalist demo; it was a non-party, all-party manifestation that haunted Labour, guilty from its failure to deliver devolution in 1979. This new devolution thingie had to be presented as something different, something modern, something new Labour. We are now faced not only with an appalling growth in costs from £40 million to £195 million, but with a debate on whether Parliament should breach that limit.

Did we ever expect the disgrace of a Parliament budget to escalate so much? The Conservatives voted against it; some voted for it. If the motion fails today it will be because Labour MSPs will not vote against the project before or during a general election. Their views will begin to change after that day.

Where is the new politics of Scotland now? Where is the moral high ground now? I will tell members: it is in opposing the growth of this monument to the vanity of the Scottish political establishment.

I support the Conservative motion.

11:46

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): Given the limited number of opportunities for the Opposition to initiate debates, I find it quite extraordinary that the Conservatives have chosen to debate this topic at this time. On reflection, there could be three reasons for the motion. First, I suppose, the Conservatives had to search for a topic on which they are reasonably united—not an easy task. Secondly, they had to search for a topic on which they take a similar line to the UK Tory party or, as in this case, in which the UK Tory party probably has no interest. Thirdly, the party has to be allowed to plough its own line without too much embarrassment and it will want to score some election points.

I congratulate David Davidson on his interim report to the Finance Committee—at least he is prepared to get involved. The interim report is sober, rational and well balanced. It shows where the project team and the progress group are succeeding, where there are problems, where the outcomes are known and where there are still difficulties. I hope that David Davidson does not support his party's ludicrous motion. It is safe for David McLetchie to lodge the motion—no one will

be interested in it south of the border. Brian Monteith made a ridiculous comparison to the dome—the Scots have greater confidence in their future than that.

What about the cost? Well, £195 million is the cost at 1999 prices—Mike Russell acknowledged that. There is the cost of construction inflation.

David McLetchie: Will the member give way?

Dr Simpson: No.

The success of the economy and the construction boom in Edinburgh—one has only to look around to see that all the holes in the earth are being filled up—mean that the construction costs will be much greater than the amount allowed for them in the original budget. I hope that we will hear from the progress group about that.

I congratulate the team on the savings that it has achieved without detriment to the design and the building's appearance. Brian Monteith suggests that the solution to our problems is to stop at the ceiling and leave the roof off—that is where the Tories stand on the matter. They have not come up with one serious suggestion about what we should do. We have committed £90 million in costs already—do we leave the site as a sort of folly?

David McLetchie: Will the member give way?

Dr Simpson: No.

I congratulate the team on bringing in the first £50 million of tenders at the predicted cost and on ensuring that Scottish materials, such as Kemnay granite, Caithness slab and Scottish oak, are used. The building has to be a showpiece for Scotland.

I raise a note of caution in relation to Historic Scotland, which John Home Robertson alluded to.

Fergus Ewing: Will the member take an intervention?

Dr Simpson: I do not have much time.

Queensberry House was not such a unique building that it should have been retained. Its state of disrepair when discovered makes it clear that it should have been demolished and replaced by a replica. I am concerned, if the rumours are correct, that there are some serious problems.

I gather that the stump of a tower has been discovered and that Historic Scotland is insisting that it be restored. I gather that it has been discovered that the roof was raised some 200 years ago to make the top floor of greater use and that now, according to Historic Scotland, it must be lowered at great cost and with loss of space. I understand also that Historic Scotland wants the building to be finished with limewash, which went out 150 years ago because the maintenance costs

were too high. If those three rumours are correct, Historic Scotland is really hysteric Scotland and should, as a quango, be brought under greater control. I encourage the progress group to take seriously those utter stupidities and to go against Historic Scotland. Let us control costs where we can.

Brian Monteith referred to Sydney Opera House. The same carping by Opposition politicians nearly destroyed the construction of Sydney Opera House. The subsequent costs of refurbishing it are such that they outweigh the original costs of the building, because the politicians cut, curtailed and ate into the internal design. Only now have they apologised to the architect for fiddling around with his original design.

We are creating something that Scotland can be proud of. The Tories should stop carping, come on board and help us to control the costs and to create something of which Scotland can be proud.

11:51

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): I thank the Tories for putting this motion on the agenda before the general election. If they had not done so, we would have had to wait until the election was out the road before we heard the true cost and state of progress of the building. We owe them that debt of gratitude.

I came here today—even though it is the third time round—in the expectation that a bit more truth would out. After hearing John Home Robertson, I am sadly disappointed. I have heard what are now shibboleths repeated by Richard Simpson, a man whom I respect, who says that Queensberry House should be knocked down—that was the clear implication. It was vandalised after the project started. We should not allow such things to go unrecorded and unreported.

I used to believe that the Parliament had been misled inadvertently. Having heard John Home Robertson, I believe that it is no longer inadvertent; I believe that systematic deception is being practised on this Parliament by the people associated with the project team and I am prepared to back up that claim if anyone asks me to. If I am wrong, let those concerned come to the Parliament today with the true costs to which they are now working. I do not believe that they do not have a bottom-line figure.

I want to know whether it is true that we now expect to pay £15 million for landscaping. If we are, where will the extra £4 million come from? It will have to come from the health, education or local authority budget. We have a duty and a right—on behalf of the people who sent us here and who believed that we were going to spend £195 million on the building—to find out how much

more is to be spent.

Let me say to anyone who is interested in the facts that I have never, ever carped about the cost of the building; people can go through the records and will see that. What I have carped about are the aesthetics and the siting of the building and whether it represents value for money. The same is true today, which is why I will not support the Conservatives' motion, although I thank them for bringing it to the Parliament.

The rubicon of £195 million has been passed; we cannot now go back on that. I may be the only person in the chamber who believes that the project need not become a hole in the ground. Michael Russell mentioned that and it is true that there is a history of that happening in Edinburgh. However, the same council that was responsible for such projects is now looking for a new place to roost. Perhaps the City of Edinburgh Council should try Holyrood; Eric Milligan said it was a great site. There are a number of uses to which the site could be put and many millions of pounds could be recouped from the sale of the MSP block, such as it now is.

A number of architects do not concede that we must go forward as planned rather than take another route. However, I accept that I have probably lost that proposition, so there are two things we must get straight today on behalf of the people who have sent us here: how much will the project now cost and does that represent value for money? When will we be told?

We must also establish the principle—perhaps the most important principle of all—that, if the Parliament votes for an amount of money to be spent on its behalf by a minister of the Parliament or a group appointed by the Parliament, that minister or group must come back to the Parliament, if they go above the budget, to explain why they have done so and to seek permission to go ahead. That is what the SNP amendment seeks to establish. I am thankful to see Labour Members who agree with what I have just said. Members should support the amendment.

I accept that we are never going to agree on the aesthetics of the building. As far as I am concerned, it will ruin a very beautiful part of Edinburgh. We are never, ever going to hear the admission we should hear that misleading information was given to Parliament about the exact state of Enric Miralles's health. I do not expect ever to have an apology from where I ought to have one, to say that I was right in saying that the poor man would be unable to see his concept fulfilled and that anything following that would be a hotch-potch job.

It is nonsense to say that we have gone down the same route as the politicians in Australia who

objected to Sydney Opera House. Sensible people realised that the architect was a signature architect who had been chosen for his vision and that, when he was no longer there to see the project through, that vision should perhaps be reassessed in the light of reality. We were misled.

As this is probably the last chance that I will have to say this, I urge the Parliament, please, to do away with the lies, to do away with the people who have given misleading information to the chamber and to demand to know what the budget now is.

11:56

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab): I begin by reminding Brian Monteith and Michael Russell that today's debate is not David Black's book launch. We are discussing the future of the Scottish Parliament building. I wonder whether Michael Russell has declared his complimentary copy of David Black's book, which he is promoting today, in the register of members' interests.

I want to promote the report of the Auditor General for Scotland, which is an independent report and is not based on promotional or personal interests. It sets out a number of reasons for the way in which the Parliament's costs increased. Page 22 of the report states that one of the reasons for the increase in expenditure was the client's requirement for additional office space. The corporate body raised the issue of all the political parties requesting more space in the building.

David McLetchie: Paul Martin is repeating the same deception that Gordon Jackson tried to use in the previous debate. The Conservative party asked for space for one more member, because we had one more member elected—the Labour party has one member fewer. That is the truth.

Paul Martin: It would be helpful if we could clarify that. Perhaps the corporate body could bring its minutes before the Parliament to clarify that point.

Brian Adam: Will Paul Martin give way?

Paul Martin: I am afraid that I do not have time to hear an intervention. I would like to continue.

The Parliament is about serving the needs of the Scottish people and I will focus on access for the disabled. Ashcraig Secondary School for children with special needs and severe disabilities is in my constituency. I am appalled by the difficulties that the children experience in trying to access the Parliament. If it were not for the security staff, the children would not have the opportunity to be introduced to their local member of the Scottish Parliament and they would not be able to access the chamber. I want a new Scottish Parliament

that will be accessible to those children, who take time out of their curriculum to access the Parliament. I am assured by the chief executive, Paul Grice, that the new Parliament will serve the needs of the visually impaired, the hearing impaired and all sections of the community. It is important that we deal with that point.

We must put into perspective the fact that new buildings and capital projects such as this one will always be complicated. John Young and Bill Butler will remember the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, which cost us £30 million and went well over its original budget. Following the concert hall's completion, a Tory conference was held there, despite John Young's opposition to its construction, and many other events have been held there. I do not hear people raising concerns now about the increased costs of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. It is part of our heritage in Glasgow and Glaswegians are proud of it.

Ms MacDonald: I appreciate that members from outside Edinburgh might not be familiar with the number of newer buildings in Edinburgh and how much they have cost. The Scottish Widows building, which has a complicated IT system and is a sophisticated building, cost £60 million. A great number of people have questioned whether what we are about to construct represents value for money.

Paul Martin: This is the new Scottish Parliament: it is a Parliament that will be recognised worldwide. It is not an insurance building; it is our heritage. Future generations will look towards the Parliament as their future.

We must be ambitious; we do not want the Poundstretcher Parliament that David McLetchie has suggested. We do not want a cheap and nasty version that will be the laughing stock of the world.

Some members have allowed their personal aspirations regarding where the Parliament should be located to get in the way. Personally, I would like us to consider Springburn Public Halls, in my constituency, but I appreciate that the whole of Scotland must take the decision. We should get away from parochial issues.

We should reflect on many aspects. We should see that the Holyrood project is creating a good building. I hope that we will portray our ambition for Scotland in the new Scottish Parliament building.

12:01

Irene McGugan (North-East Scotland) (SNP): Notwithstanding the SNP's reservations about the project, which have been so eloquently expressed by my colleagues, we should not forget that the building will be not just a working environment for

politicians, but should be an internationally recognised symbol of our new democracy and a source of pride for all the people of Scotland.

I suggest that that could be achieved, to a large extent, by ensuring that the building becomes a showcase for the very best of Scottish materials, Scottish design and Scottish craftsmanship. I welcome the use of Scottish oak and Kemnay granite. I hope that we can go further.

We have not even begun to have the debate about an arts strategy for the building, because we are still tied up in discussion about revised costs, completion dates and the like. I understand that a consultant will be appointed soon to advise on the best use of public spaces in the Parliament and to suggest appropriate pieces of artwork.

My regret is that no budget is currently assigned to that, which might mean that all the artwork in the Parliament will have to be gifted or loaned. Disappointingly, there would then be no opportunity to commission pieces from the vast number of talented artists and craftsmen in Scotland.

Contrast that with the Flemish Parliament, which houses the largest collection of Flemish art, or the European Parliament in Strasbourg, which gives opportunities, on a rotating basis, to each member state to make use of the vast public space to exhibit the best of their talents. We want such opportunities for the Scottish Parliament and I urge the project group to consider making them available.

Many of us will know that artists throughout Scotland have been enthused by the new Parliament and have suggested many varied and imaginative exhibits: from murals to political cartoons to tributes to our late First Minister.

The languages of Scotland also need their rightful place in the building. There should be Scots and Gaelic signage, plaques, poems and whatever would enhance our new Parliament.

The building and its costs currently dominate the discussion. It is right that those issues should be addressed and that the costs should be brought under control. The SNP amendment states that that should be done by enhancing parliamentary accountability for the project.

I suggest that making outstanding examples of Scottish design and talent an integral feature of our new Parliament would have a lasting impact on the people of Scotland and our many visitors. That would give a clear message about our heritage, our identity and our future. We must find ways of making that happen.

12:04

Pauline McNeill (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab): I take the opportunity to say that Irene McGugan's speech was excellent. I agree with most of what she said.

The Holyrood project has been used as a political football from the start and it is about time that that stopped. We all have responsibility for the outcome. It is nonsense to think that we will not all be judged on the final outcome.

As Paul Martin pointed out, future generations will not thank us if we get this wrong. It is nonsense to say that the blame for the situation lies with the coalition Government; all of us will be held responsible and just because they have remained outwith the Holyrood progress group, the Tories will not escape criticism.

A mediocre or temporary home for a Parliament would assist the political outlook of some parties, and—as John Home Robertson mentioned—would serve to undermine the devolution settlement. Unlike David McLetchie, I have been committed to devolution since I was a member of the campaign for a Scottish Parliament. I am not ashamed to say that I want the project to be completed. I want a proper, well-designed and accessible Parliament building that is fit for purpose and that allows ordinary Scots to feel part of the first Scottish Parliament in 300 years.

David McLetchie: Will the member give way?

Pauline McNeill: No.

There are many legitimate concerns about what has happened to the project in the past two years and there are certain issues that the Parliament rightly demands should be discussed as a matter of democracy and which are not for anyone else to decide. To that extent, I do not disagree, largely, with Margo MacDonald's speech. Labour members were nodding in agreement because we believe that any justified case for lifting the ceiling of £195 million will be brought before Parliament for MSPs to decide.

It does not help to keep looking back with hindsight at the history of the project; at some point, we have to move on. I support the call in Mike Russell's amendment for the Tories to return to the Holyrood progress group and to be part of the project once and for all. We should not allow the Tories to play games with the future of our legislature.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

Pauline McNeill: No.

Mike Russell talks as though we have lost the opportunity to make a great Parliament building. I do not believe that. Indeed, I am not clear about what Mr Russell meant in response to David

McLetchie. Is he saying that there is no absolute upper ceiling of £195 million? Perhaps he might want to return to that point.

Although it is only correct for the Parliament to make its views known on the project costs, it is for the SPCB and the Holyrood progress group to make the case. If there is a justified case for a reasonable increase in the budget, we should not dismiss it out of hand.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

Pauline McNeill: No—I do not really have time.

Our job is to ensure that we move out of this temporary home as soon as possible. As Irene McGugan pointed out, we have promised the Scottish people a Parliament with the space to incorporate their needs; we are talking not just about our needs. The current accommodation militates against the democratic process. The lack of committed facilities to allow ordinary people to walk in and see their MSP hinders democracy—I am sure that members of the public, too, have that perception.

Are David McLetchie and others saying that, no matter what, they will not agree to an increase in the £195 million? Are they saying that they will not agree to that increase, even if that means no crèche facility, a smaller public gallery and fewer committee rooms than necessary?

David McLetchie: Is the member asking for a blank cheque?

Pauline McNeill: No one is asking for a blank cheque, but we are asking the Conservatives to think sensibly for once and to be part of the project.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

The Presiding Officer: No; the member is winding up.

Pauline McNeill: The Tory motion is irresponsible. I honestly believe that the party is out of touch with the public, who want us to oversee a Scottish Parliament fit for the 21st century. The tables have turned. The members of the public I have spoken to want us to get things right and if we can justify the cost, I know that they will back us.

12:09

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): I support the amendment in the name of the convener of the Holyrood progress group. Like Richard Simpson, I will begin by supporting the crucial and important work of Linda Fabiani, Jamie Stone and John Home Robertson on this issue. As Pauline McNeill pointed out, the Conservatives should support and take part in that work.

Although last April's motion was less than perfect, the fact is—as the business pages and the *Evening News* constantly report and as everyone except David McLetchie can accept—that the building trade in Edinburgh is buoyant. There is a Holyrood factor, which has a bearing on tender prices. However, those are points for another day.

Donald Gorrie rightly said that, if the budget requirement is greater than the figure that is stated in the motion, the matter should return to the Parliament. Other members have echoed that suggestion, and that is what should happen at the appropriate time.

There is a different motive for the Conservative's motion, which was not hard to find. On Radio Scotland this morning, Brian Monteith—who has left the chamber—said that this is a general election issue. That sums up the Tory approach to the issue. David McLetchie confirmed that it is not just the building that the Tories oppose, but the philosophical principle behind it. They are against devolution—they always have been—and the Parliament is a manifestation of that, which they take every opportunity to run down. The principle that they would follow—in effect, to leave the roof off—illustrates how they would demean, demean and demean again not just the Holyrood project, but devolution itself.

I imagine that there are moderate, sensible Tory MSPs who would support the project if they were given the opportunity to do so.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member take an intervention from a moderate, sensible nationalist?

Tavish Scott: In two seconds.

However, those members will not be given that opportunity because, as Brian Monteith confirmed, this is a general election issue. The Holyrood progress group has saved money without compromising quality—that was the purpose of the group—but the Tories cannot claim one cost saving. Their petulant and destructive determination to avoid the Holyrood progress group has been predictable. Members will notice that a Tory member, John Young, is a member of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and receives monthly reports from the Holyrood progress group. The Tories want access to information without responsibility, so that they can engage in sheer, unadulterated political opportunism.

Ms MacDonald: My question is about responsibility. The Minister for Finance and Local Government may discover that more will have to be paid for the frame for the east wing of the Parliament building—I think that that is what John Home Robertson called it—and that the money for that will have to come from the education budget or the teacher training budget. Should not the

Minister for Finance and Local Government therefore be part of the decision-making body that decides the Parliament's priorities? That is what the Tories are trying to establish.

Tavish Scott: I have every faith that, if the necessity arises, the Holyrood progress group will produce a report for Parliament, via the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, and explain how such matters will be dealt with. That is the way in which Parliament should handle such issues.

As Mike Russell rightly stated, the project has gone too far for it to stop completely. On the radio this morning, John Spencely said that the budget in the brief that was published in June was achievable. It is important to remember that that brief was not confirmed until June. Much has been made of David Black's book, but, as Mr Spencely observed, Mr Black has become very excited by the opportunity to sell it.

Once again, the Parliament has heard nothing constructive from the Tories, just a general election rant—which they need, as they are desperate. Are the Tories seriously saying that the project should be abandoned if unforeseen costs mean that the budget will exceed £195 million? Yes, that is what we heard today. Did they propose closing the millennium dome that they initiated when they were in office? Yes, but only when they were out of office. Was it not the Tories, when they were in office at Westminster, who allowed the building of Portcullis House—the most expensive office space, per square foot, in the UK? Did they ask to put a minister on the parliamentary authorities that were dealing with that building? I do not recollect that.

All that the Tories do is lodge parliamentary questions. This is gesture politics from David McLetchie. There is no Tory member on the Holyrood progress group, and a Tory MSP abdicated responsibility despite being on the corporate body. Even by Tory standards, this is cheap, facile gesture politics at its worst, and the Parliament should have nothing to do with it. We should support a Parliament building for Scotland.

12:14

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): What a miserable debate, with everyone carping and whingeing about money. I regard that as a disgrace to this Parliament. People from all over Scotland are saying to us, "Get on with it and do it well." The situation is as simple as that.

In *The Herald* today, Ruth Wishart said that some of those who are involved with the Holyrood progress group have

"huge enthusiasm bordering on real passion for the project".

Perhaps she was talking about me. Each Wednesday, when the Holyrood progress group meets, I take great pleasure in seeing how the project is coming on. To the critics, however, I say that I take my responsibilities seriously. I also resent the accusation that I am a big enough mug to be lied to, misled and deceived. That is a straightforward insult to our hardworking team and it should be withdrawn immediately.

One thing needs to be said loud and clear: I am damned if I will compromise on quality. There will be no rubbishy jerry-building coming from my direction, although that is what David McLetchie and his cowboy outfit on the Opposition benches want. "To be sure, Mr Holyrood Progress Group, we can do it on the cheap"—I can say that in an Irish accent without offending anyone, because I am quarter Irish.

We can be like something out of "Fawlty Towers" and take the Monteith option of having a fresh-air roof, but if we build the Parliament on the cheap, all the walls will fall in at some stage.

Ms MacDonald: Will the member give way?

Mr Stone: No, I will not.

I will give two examples of precisely the kind of thing that we should not be doing. Members of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body will well know what I am on about. One of the money-saving proposals was that we should do away with the solid concrete vaulting in the public foyer of the Parliament and replace it with some sort of cheap alternative using plaster on chicken wire. We considered that seriously, but everyone knows that if David Steel was to lean against a wall that had been built in that way, he would fall through it. That is not the sort of saving that we are going for.

Another suggestion was that we have some kind of prop to support the building that juts out on to the Canongate. That is the kind of saving that David McLetchie wants—a scaffolding structure to hold up the walls of the Parliament. We will not cut corners for the sake of the silly cash limit that the Tories are on about.

People, MSPs and—dare I say it—Governments come and go, but buildings are here for far longer. As John Ruskin put it:

"when we build, let us think that we build forever".

I never thought that the strange life of being a back-bench MSP would lead me to become involved in anything as fulfilling as the Holyrood project. Unlike those who seek to play a negative role, I shall take great pride in taking my children and my grandchildren—if I am spared, as we say in the Highlands—to the building and saying to them that I am proud to have played a small part in the project. The Tories' motion is an electioneering stunt and, like so many of their

stunts, it is sadly misguided. Like their stance on asylum seekers and Europe, it is, to coin a phrase, so much tosh.

The Scottish people are in favour of the Parliament and want the best for it. Once again, our Conservative friends have misjudged the mood of the country. As has been pointed out, were it not for the Scottish Parliament, David McLetchie would still be doing a bit of conveyancing down the bottom of the Corstorphine Road. He owes everything to the establishment of this Parliament; without it, he would not exist.

Ms MacDonald: On a point of order.

The Presiding Officer: I hope that it is a real one.

Ms MacDonald: It is. I think that I am correct in saying that it is not in keeping with the standards of the Parliament, or with the standing orders, for one member's probity to be questioned by another during a debate.

The Presiding Officer: I heard no member's probity being questioned.

Jamie Stone: We have heard a lot about lies and deception, so I will ignore that remark.

Let us keep our eyes on the horizon and raise ourselves above this squalid little debate. Let us see our way to finishing our wonderful new Parliament building.

Recently, somebody went to Enric Miralles's grave in the Igualada cemetery in Barcelona, which he also designed. They found a note on the grave, which read:

"Your building for the Scottish Parliament is growing beautifully. Thank you for your gift".

The note was signed, "Edinburgh students".

The Conservatives have got this one wrong. They are not in keeping with the mood of the Scottish people. I ask them to support the amendment in the name of John Home Robertson.

12:19

Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP): I find myself in a strange position today. I am speaking on behalf of my party's amendment, but I also have a certain sympathy with the amendment in the name of John Home Robertson. I have listened carefully to what has been said and have agreed with points on both sides of the argument. I will not reiterate the history of the situation, but I have to say that I also sympathise with the Tory stance on the incompetence and the element of deception at the start of the project to build our new Parliament. I certainly make no apologies for the Scottish Executive or for Westminster in that

regard, and I feel that it was a bit disingenuous to pass on all the responsibility to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

Having said that, I also feel strongly that we now have a job to get on with. As Mike Russell said, the Holyrood progress group was established in response to the need to crisis-manage a project that had been badly handled, in political terms, from the beginning. If we had done what the SNP sought to do a year ago and stopped for a period of consolidation, I believe strongly that that would have strengthened the project and saved a lot of what has gone on since then.

Mr Rumbles: Will Linda Fabiani take an amendment?

Linda Fabiani: An amendment?

Mr Rumbles: I mean an intervention on the subject of the SNP amendment.

Linda Fabiani: Yes.

Mr Rumbles: I want to ask about three lines in the SNP amendment. It says:

"asks the Scottish Executive to"—

Linda Fabiani: Excuse me—I will come to the SNP amendment a bit later, if Mike Rumbles does not mind.

Mr Rumbles: Well, all right. I will vote against the amendment in that case; I was thinking of voting for it.

Linda Fabiani: How childish—but that is what I would expect from Mike Rumbles.

When my party agreed that, despite what had happened during discussion of the project, the important thing for Scotland was to move ahead and get a building worthy of Scotland, I had a certain motivation for accepting a place on the Holyrood progress group. The project has been referred to as the best of a bad job, but my first motivation for accepting the position was that I loved the design of the building. I said that right at the beginning. Even when I agreed—almost two years ago—that we should stop and look again at the whole project, I stated that I loved the design. I still love the design of the building, and believe strongly that design integrity has been maintained. Despite the farce and controversy that has shrouded the project from the beginning—courtesy of, among others, Westminster, the Executive and the Conservative party—I still believe that the uniqueness of the design shines through, and that it must be protected. I feel privileged to be part of the group that has been charged by the Parliament with protecting the integrity of the design and moving forward with the project.

Another reason for my wanting to join the group was that I have some experience of the

construction business—albeit on a much smaller scale—and I felt that that would be usefully brought to bear in monitoring the project.

Above all, it is my fundamental belief that honesty, openness and accountability are aims that every one of us who is privileged to be elected to this Parliament should aspire to and uphold in every single project with which we are involved. I am involved with this one.

I thank David McLetchie for saying that he thinks I am an honest person. I am not sure where he got his quotation from—

David McLetchie: The *Mail on Sunday in Scotland*, on 22 April.

Linda Fabiani: Was it? Yet another misquote—that happens all the time about the Parliament building project.

I assure everybody in the chamber that I am honest and that I believe that, in this project, we must be transparent and honest. There is no doubt that the progress group's full intention was to report to the Parliament if and when we believed that the cost was likely to go over £195 million. Note what I have just said: "if and when we believed that the cost was likely to go over £195 million". The cost has not broken that barrier yet. We are flagging up the fact that we think it is likely to do so. We are doing what is set out in our remit and approaching the corporate body. We fully expect the corporate body then to report to Parliament.

I have never been naive about my position on the progress group. There have been accusations that we just sit there, listen to what we are told, swallow everything that we hear and then report. As well as being very honest, I am not daft, and I know when I am getting fed lines. I will not pretend that I sat down with the civil servants, immediately struck up a rapport with them and believed everything that they told me. I did not. In the beginning, it was fairly difficult to strike a balance between what Parliament and Executive staff thought that we should know and what we felt that we had to know. We have now achieved that balance and the group is working very well.

There appears to be some naivety in the chamber. There are members who think that one can deliver everything, for everybody, all the time. That is impossible. Part of Scotland's growing up through the Parliament lies in recognising that fact and dealing with it. We do so by determining our priorities and deciding what is sustainable and which of all the competing demands is worth fighting to deliver.

It is easy to stand apart from something. It is easy to carp and criticise from a base of limited knowledge and the odd piece of leaked

information. All politicians are good at doing that—some are better than others.

The Presiding Officer: Wind up, please.

Linda Fabiani: I do not pretend for one minute that the politicians on the progress group are running the contract. We are monitoring it. That is very important.

With the Presiding Officer's indulgence, I will respond to what was said about the SNP amendment. The amendment mentions cost concerns, which we always wanted to be reported to the Parliament. It also calls for there to be a Tory member of the progress group; I ask the Conservatives to come on board and play their part—I can cope with that. Having a minister on the group may sound horrendous, but there should be accountability. I do not think that a minister should have a vote on the group, because it is a parliamentary body, but a minister should certainly attend in order to be able to report back and be accountable for what is being spent.

The Presiding Officer: You need to wind up.

Linda Fabiani: The Parliament will stand as a testament to Scotland. I want a brilliant Parliament building and I think that we will get one. I want it for the independent Scotland that this country will be.

12:25

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): Today, the Executive has been conspicuous by its absence and, more significant, strangely silent. This has been a lively debate, from which two principles arise, each of which relates to the integrity of parliamentary democracy. The first principle is that people should be told the truth about the costs of building the new Parliament. Secondly, in an area where costs have escalated by leaps and bounds, extra costs should not arise without the full approval of Parliament.

In practice, there has been disinformation. Anybody who knows anything about construction suspected that, even if providing a parliament at a cost of £40 million or £50 million were theoretically possible, it was extremely unlikely on a site outside Leith, but that is what the people of Scotland were asked to believe. We now learn from David Black's book that the eventual cost of the Parliament could conceivably rise not just above £195 million, but to £300 million. Mike Russell described that as a farce and a tragedy. On any view, it is an extremely serious matter, because every time that there is extra capital expenditure on the Parliament, less money is available from the Scottish block for other capital projects, such as improvements to hospitals,

extensions to schools, road building, and improvements to public sector houses below tolerable standard.

If the Scottish Executive is to govern in Scotland's best interests, its requirements for capital expenditure should be kept under strict control. That reasoning could also be applied in cutting down the army of special advisers and countless ministers.

I remind Tavish Scott, who seems to be unaware of the fact, that he who pays the piper calls the tune. It is no use for the Executive to try to wash its hands of the issue. I will press the minister on how much extra spending will be involved for road and transport improvements, such as traffic-calming measures, for landscaping, and for Queensberry House. As Margo MacDonald rightly said, the public have a right to know. We have a duty to find out the facts and to see whether they amount to value for money.

Holyrood will be remembered as one of the most glaring cases—if not the most glaring case—of public sector capital costs spiralling out of control, as David McLetchie and Brian Monteith have pointed out. Enough is enough. If a man or woman built a house, they would not allow the cost to escalate by more than five times. We should be no less careful with funds that could greatly benefit the Scots in other ways.

On page 1 of "All The First Minister's Men", David Black wrote that Holyrood even

"eclipses Sydney's notorious Opera House, and might yet turn out to be the building with the highest budget overrun in recorded history".

Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde (Lab)): Earlier in Lord James's speech, he made a point about the Executive's responsibility. Does he agree with his colleague, Ian Davidson—[MEMBERS: "Who?"]—who compiled the report that is available all members today, that the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body has responsibility for the project and is the contracting client? Does he agree with the report produced by Ian Davidson—[*Interruption.*] It appears that David Davidson—that Tory person who is sitting over there—produced the report.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Executive will provide the funds and therefore it has a duty to be involved in the project. The fact that not one member of the Executive was prepared to stand up and speak in this debate speaks for itself.

It is noteworthy that David Black, on page 105 of his book, refers to

"stitch-up politics, personal ambition and deceit."

Donald Gorrie said in his excellent speech this morning that Parliament has been deceived and that that deceit is now "absolutely apparent". Such

obfuscation must cease.

The test that should be applied is that parliamentarians should have sufficient facilities to be of maximum service. Of course we want a good building that is worthy of Scotland, but surreptitious increases, without the knowledge and whole-hearted approval of Parliament, should not and must not take place. Such matters should be for democratic decision in the Parliament.

The Executive's competence is at stake and it is up to parliamentarians to press the Executive to keep the Parliament's capital costs under strict control. John Home Robertson's speech contained nothing that indicated that he would keep those developments under strict control. He mentioned the case of Big Ben, but I remind him that Big Ben was constructed at a time when Britain was arguably the most powerful country in the world. The circumstances today are not identical and it is no use for him to imagine that the circumstances of over 100 years ago could be replicated exactly.

Mr Stone *rose—*

Mr Home Robertson *rose—*

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will not give way to John Home Robertson, because he refused to give way to Dorothy-Grace Elder and Brian Adam. However, I will give way to Jamie Stone.

Mr Stone: How terribly nice to see that very acceptable face of Scottish Conservatism. Does not Lord James realise that we have made savings over the past few months? In view of that fact, is he seriously accusing John Home Robertson and me of being irresponsible over the way in which we oversee the Holyrood project?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My point is that there have been surreptitious increases and a spiralling of capital expenditure since the beginning of the project and its plans. Those increases must be brought under strict control. That would be in the best interests of the people of Scotland. Jamie Stone must appreciate that the project is taking funds away from other capital projects that could be of the utmost service to the people.

I believe that the electorate will see this issue as a litmus test of our good faith. I support the motion.

Business Motion

12:33

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S1M-1919, in the name of Tom McCabe.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees:

(a) the following programme of business—

Wednesday 16 May 2001

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Executive Debate on Architecture and the Built Environment

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business - debate on the subject of S1M-1897 Tavish Scott: Rural and Islands GPs

Thursday 17 May 2001

9.30 am Education, Culture and Sport Committee Debate on its Report on Special Educational Needs

followed by Business Motion

2.30 pm Question Time

3.10 pm First Minister's Question Time

3.30 pm Stage 1 Debate on Scottish Local Authorities (Tendering) Bill

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business - debate on the subject of S1M-1859 Elaine Smith: National Breastfeeding Awareness Week

Wednesday 23 May 2001

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Committee Business

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 24 May 2001

9.30 am Scottish National Party Business

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

and (b) that the Justice 1 Committee reports to the Justice 2 Committee by 14 May 2001 on the draft Sex Offenders (Notice Requirements) (Foreign Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2001—[*Euan Robson.*]

Motion agreed to.

12:34

Meeting suspended until 14:30.

14:30

On resuming—

Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): My opening words this afternoon may be thought by some to be an example of the triumph of hope over experience but, now that the elections to another Parliament have been announced, I hope that we do not spend question time over the next three weeks fighting that election in this chamber.

Question 1 has been withdrawn, so we move straight to question 2.

Devolution

2. Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it has had any discussions with Her Majesty's Government about the continued devolved status of any currently devolved matters. (S1O-3369)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): The Executive has regular discussions with Her Majesty's Government about a wide range of matters. However, any proposals to add to the list of reserved matters set out in schedule 5 to the Scotland Act 1998 would require the agreement of both Parliaments by way of an order under section 30(2) of that act. The Executive has no plans at present to seek the Parliament's agreement to any such order.

Mr Gibson: I am pleased to hear the minister's positive reply. However, if new Labour wins the election, will he and his Executive colleagues take action to counter proposals made by John Prescott's Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions to remove Scotland from policy making on key environmental issues by taking powers from the Scottish Executive and handing them to an new all-Britain quango, the UK nature advisory council? Will he stand for Scotland or bend the knee to Whitehall?

Mr Wallace: Mr Gibson can be absolutely certain that my party and the partnership Executive will stand for Scotland, as we have been doing for the past two years. His question is purely hypothetical. I do not wish to trespass against what the Presiding Officer has said, so I will not speculate on the outcome of the election and on who might be in a position to make any proposals about the environment. The Executive has no plans to present the Scottish Parliament with any order for any transfer of functions under section

30(2) of the Scotland Act 1998.

Foot-and-mouth Disease

3. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): To ask the Scottish Executive what the most up-to-date position is in relation to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak. (S1O-3401)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): As at 10 am today, there have been 182 confirmed cases of foot-and-mouth disease in Scotland. That means that no new cases have been reported in Scotland since 4 May. The absence of new cases is encouraging, but vigilance needs to be maintained.

Dennis Canavan: Is it any wonder that people are confused when they hear the First Minister telling America that Scotland is open for business while the reality is that much of the Scottish countryside is still closed? Why is it that, in disease-free areas, the Executive continues to tell ramblers and hillwalkers to obey official "Keep Out" signs and to respect other such signs, when it should be telling public bodies and private landowners to get the signs down unless the state veterinary service has assessed the risk as being too great in a particular area?

Ross Finnie: I do not think that there is any inconsistency in our position. What the First Minister said in America was absolutely right. However, Mr Canavan has pointed out that inconsistencies have arisen due to private landowners and others taking a disproportionate response, even though the access code has been published and the Executive has made available to a variety of bodies an assisting guide on how they should assess risk. In respect of the provisionally free area, I agree entirely with Mr Canavan. We hope to issue further guidelines. Local authorities, landowners and everyone in those areas should recognise that the risk is very much reduced and that there are very few parts of the provisionally free area where the country should not be open for business.

Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): I have two questions that relate to the provisionally free area. When can the collection centres be used for store cattle? Can we expect a resumption of exports before the autumn lamb sales and, if not, what plans does the minister have for those sales?

Ross Finnie: We have opened collection centres but not yet for store cattle. I hope that that will be the next move and that it will happen relatively soon. In respect of exports, we are engaged with the Standing Veterinary Committee in Europe to establish what will be required to determine that Scotland is disease-free. I regret to say that those discussions are proving to be

prolonged. We know that extensive testing will be involved and, as a precautionary measure, the Scottish Executive has started a series of tests to facilitate that process. I am unable at this stage to give any guarantee of the date when exports might be resumed. I assure the member that I am more than well aware of the danger if that market is not available for the lambs in the autumn.

Nick Johnston (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): What plans does the minister have to review the status of the provisionally free area so that the provisional tag may ultimately be removed? What is the likely impact of the removal of that tag on the movement of stock and animal products into the area, should it be declared completely free of the disease?

Ross Finnie: Taking into account the epidemiological evidence that is available to me and in the light of the changing pattern of disease, I continue to review all the current regulations in conjunction with the state veterinary service, including the point that was raised on collection centres.

As I have explained to the chamber previously, I face two conflicting difficulties with the status of the PFA. The current area is satisfactory but, as the member will be well aware, a substantial proportion of our slaughtering and processing capacity is placed in that area, which has a dislocating effect on the rest of the meat industry, especially in the at-risk area. If I were to declare the area completely risk-free, I might put at risk the difficult process of trying to move animals out of the at-risk area into the PFA for the purpose of continuing the meat trade. We are wrestling with that balance. I assure the member that we will continue to consider the matter on a regular basis. Our objective is to dismantle the restrictions as quickly as possible, consistent with the control of the disease.

Social Work

4. Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive, in light of the publication of the chief social work inspector's first annual report, what its priorities are for social work services in the future. (S1O-3413)

The Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs (Mr Jack McConnell): Our priorities are to improve service outcomes and quality of life for children, adults and older people. To achieve those goals, we are developing better-integrated services for children, breaking down barriers between health and social care and focusing criminal justice services on results. We are establishing a new commission for the regulation of care and a new council for staff. The chief inspector's report provides a basis for judging progress year on year in each authority

and throughout Scotland.

Scott Barrie: I thank the minister for that answer and that comprehensive list of priorities, but I draw his attention to the report, which states:

"Overall, there are not enough social workers to meet current needs. Worryingly, too, the number of people applying for courses in the Diploma in Social Work have fallen."

Given that statement, what practical measures does the Scottish Executive propose to take to improve morale in the profession, increase the status of social work and cut the stress levels facing social workers, especially in the area of child care?

Mr McConnell: Initiatives are under way in a number of authorities, particularly Glasgow, to recruit new social workers to deal with the case-load backlog. The Executive and the Parliament will, I hope, shortly establish the new Scottish social services council, which will raise the status of the profession and ensure that there is consistency of standards throughout Scotland. The council will ensure the professional recognition of those who work, not necessarily under the title of social workers, but in social services, which will ensure that we can raise standards.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): The report also recommends the promotion of enlightened entrepreneurship in the social services. Is that a new Scottish Executive initiative? Who will train the social workers in enlightened entrepreneurship and how will it benefit those receiving the service?

Mr McConnell: The phrase used in the report was an interesting one, which I intend to discuss with the chief inspector when we consider his report in more detail.

Litter

5. Andrew Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to tackle the level of litter across Scotland. (S1O-3376)

The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Rhona Brankin): The Executive pays core grant to Keep Scotland Beautiful, which runs anti-litter campaigns to encourage communities to take pride in their local environment.

Andrew Wilson: Does the minister agree that Scotland has the cleanest bins in Europe because no one seems to put their litter in them? Will the Executive ensure full implementation of existing litter laws and consider new laws where existing laws are deemed inadequate? Will it further consider a Scottish anti-litter task force to draw

together public agencies to deal with the scourge of litter, which is causing frustration and anger in communities throughout Scotland?

Rhona Brankin: We recognise that there is a problem with litter in Scotland. That is something that we are keeping under review with the local authorities. In view of the proliferation of litter that is likely during the general election campaign over the next few weeks, I take this opportunity to remind colleagues to ensure that any unwanted leaflets and large posters are removed expeditiously.

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): The minister knows my beautiful area of Easter Ross well, so she will be aware that Tain Royal Academy in my constituency has recently done some pioneering work on the litter front. Does she agree that, during the next few weeks, similar schemes should be pursued with other secondary schools in Scotland to pick up all the posters and leaflets?

Rhona Brankin: Absolutely, but I hope that colleagues will take part in such schemes as well.

The Presiding Officer: In view of the minister's remarks about unwanted posters, I had better call Phil Gallie.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Thank you, Presiding Officer. Given the wish of the Scottish Executive to widen the use of community service as opposed to imprisonment, will the minister consider using community service programmes on roadside clean-ups? I believe that that would help to beautify Scotland's image and, at the same time, get offenders to pay back a debt to society.

Rhona Brankin: As I said, we are fully committed to keeping Scotland as beautiful as we can. We recognise that Scotland is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. I am sure that, if Mr Gallie writes to the appropriate minister, he will receive an appropriate response to his proposal.

Karen Gillon (Clydesdale) (Lab): The minister will be aware of my constituents' concerns about increased litter along the M74 corridor. What steps will the Scottish Executive take to clean up our motorway sides?

Rhona Brankin: I am aware of concerns that the outgoing trunk road operating companies may have neglected the clearing of litter from motorways during the final months of the old contracts and left a legacy for the new operating companies to address. That is far from satisfactory, but the backlog is being tackled.

Extradition

6. Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP):

To ask the Scottish Executive in what circumstances it would consider not taking the necessary steps to return a person to a foreign state that had requested their extradition. (S1O-3412)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): Scottish ministers are able to refuse an extradition request where one or more of the statutory bars to return under the Extradition Act 1989 applies or where the Scottish ministers decide to exercise their discretion.

Mr Quinan: Does the minister agree with Lord Milligan, who gave a judgment on 16 July 1992 that Antanas Gecas, a citizen of Edinburgh, was guilty of the killing of innocent Soviet citizens, including Jews in particular, in Belarus during the last three months of 1941, and in so doing committed war crimes against Soviet citizens who included old men, women and children? Will the minister tell the Parliament when the extradition order that was granted by the Lithuanian Government, and transferred from the Home Office to Scotland, will be applied and when Mr Gecas will be sent to stand trial in Lithuania for his crimes?

Mr Wallace: As members know, it is not normal to discuss extradition requests, because of the risk of individuals absconding. However, as the Lithuanian authorities have made the matter public, I am prepared to make an exception. An extradition request was received towards the end of March, but the Scottish Executive has asked the Lithuanian authorities for further details, which are still awaited.

Mr Quinan: That is a somewhat disappointing reply, but I have a further related question. Will the minister agree to reconstitute the police war crimes unit in Scotland to initiate investigations into former members of the 14th Waffen SS Galician division who are living in Scotland?

Mr Wallace: As someone who voted for the War Crimes Act 1991, I treat alleged offences under that act very seriously indeed. With regard to Lloyd Quinan's question about that specific unit, I would not wish to give an undertaking without giving the matter further consideration.

visitscotland

7. Mr Kenny MacAskill (Lothians) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what direction and guidance it has given to the interim chief executive of visitscotland. (S1O-3370)

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander): The interim chief executive has received the direction and guidance that chief executives of all non-departmental public bodies receive about their role—the management statement, the NDPB

guide and the accountable officer memorandum.

Mr MacAskill: The minister will be aware that the marketing budget for visitScotland in Canada has gone from the princely sum of £8,000 in 1995 under the Tories to the veritable king's ransom of £4,000 under new Labour in 2000. That is a spend of approximately 3p per visitor. Who is responsible for that absurd situation in the homeland of the diaspora? Does the blame lie with visitScotland? If so, does it lie with the current chairman, the past chairman, the current interim chief executive, the past chief executive or the chief executive who was appointed but was subsequently not appointed? Alternatively, does it lie with the Executive, which has underfunded and neglected Scottish tourism?

Ms Alexander: I will take each of those points in turn. The chief executive—past, present and future—of visitScotland, like all other chief executives, operates under the direction of the board by which they are employed. I hope that that clears up their employment status.

We have made £11 million of additional funding available to visitScotland over recent years; the funding is associated with some of its important new responsibilities and with information technology, for example.

It is appropriate that visitScotland has the opportunity to decide how its marketing budget is best spent. This morning, members from all parts of the chamber welcomed the fact that, in the past week, visitScotland launched the largest-ever short-breaks campaign. It is appropriate for members to take up with visitScotland the spending of its marketing budget, but it would be a poor show if we were looking to individual MSPs to carve up marketing budgets for individual nations through the auspices of this chamber.

George Lyon (Argyll and Bute) (LD): How many individuals are being interviewed for the job of chief executive of visitScotland, now that Rod Lynch has withdrawn from the post? How long will that process take? Is the interim chief executive willing to continue after June until a replacement is found?

Ms Alexander: As I indicated, the chief executive is appointed by the board. The matters that George Lyon mentions are for the board of visitScotland, but I can confirm that visitScotland indicated in the action points that it released last week that the current interim chief executive would be staying on, that it had commenced a search for a new chief executive and that it expected interviews to be conducted this month.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): Could the minister advise—not tell to do, but advise—the Scottish Tourist Board, of fond memory, that we would like it to spell its name properly again,

because the spelling of the new name confuses visitors, never mind the rest of us?

Ms Alexander: Margo MacDonald may recall that the change of name to visitScotland was endorsed not only by the board of visitScotland but by the vast majority of the area tourist board network, which did not want a disconnection between the name of the organisation and the name under which it operated electronically. We accepted the recommendation and the board, as far as I know, has no plans to change the name.

Lung Cancer

8. Michael Matheson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what progress is being made in the fight against lung cancer. (S10-3396)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): Lung cancer is the most common cancer among Scots and tobacco use is the most common cause of the disease. The Executive is continuing to work with NHSScotland and other bodies to achieve improvements in prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Specific measures taken to date include: the provision of nicotine replacement therapy on prescription; the expansion of smoking cessation services; enhanced health education measures; £29 million additional investment in imaging and radiotherapy equipment; six extra cancer consultant posts; and a major capital investment programme to rebuild the Beatson oncology centre in Glasgow.

Michael Matheson: Scotland has a terrible record on lung cancer, but not one of our five cancer centres in Scotland provides a treatment called continuous hyperfractionated accelerated radiotherapy—CHART—which is a form of radiotherapy that can considerably extend someone's life expectancy. In a written reply, the minister told me that the National Institute for Clinical Excellence was currently considering the matter. I have been in contact with NICE, which has advised me that it is not considering the treatment and that the issue is not on its work schedule. Why did the minister provide that inaccurate information? Is she prepared to refer the treatment to the Health Technology Board for Scotland for consideration?

Susan Deacon: When that answer was provided, the advice that we had been given was that NICE might be examining the treatment. My understanding now is that the position that Michael Matheson has stated is the correct one. In Scotland, CHART would benefit only a small number of people with lung cancer. It is offered in a limited number of centres in England. We continue to consider the matter as part of our ongoing development of cancer services across Scotland, through the Scottish cancer group and in

other forums.

Maternity Units

9. Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive which hospitals' in-patient maternity units may be relocated following acute services reviews. (S10-3397)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): It is not possible for me to comment on or indeed speculate about the location of hospital in-patient maternity units ahead of the completion of local acute services reviews that are currently taking place. However, I expect NHSScotland to take full account of the national framework for maternity services when considering the most appropriate configuration of maternity services to meet the needs of the local population.

Mr Monteith: I am disappointed that the minister could not give the chamber a fuller answer, as she must have the information at her disposal. She might have mentioned the proposals to move maternity services from Stirling to Falkirk, from Perth to Dundee, from Dunfermline to Kirkcaldy and so on—there is a list of 13 or more maternity units that might be moved. Perhaps the minister will place that list in the Scottish Parliament information centre some time. When she gives her strategic overview of the service, will she consider the population growth in Stirling over the past two years, which has been 10 times that in Falkirk?

Susan Deacon: Brian Monteith's representation of the issue is disingenuous, dishonest, misleading and—I must say—scaremongering, particularly as it concerns such an important and sensitive area of service provision. He is well aware that there has been full and considered local debate about the right configuration of maternity services now and in future. It is only right that local people should be properly informed about those issues and involved in the debate; they should not be misled by local politicians making a bid to score cheap political points.

Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): The minister is well aware of the continuing public outrage at moves to downgrade maternity services at Perth royal infirmary. Will she join me in welcoming the late addition to the acute services review of another option that would retain a consultant-led maternity provision at PRI? Will she also go further and give a commitment to Scotland that she will continue to push for locally accessible services within the framework that she mentioned and confirm that there will be no orthodoxy of centralisation in Scotland's health service?

Susan Deacon: The national framework for maternity services makes it clear that there must

be proper local provision not just of delivery units but of general maternity care from pregnancy through to post-natal care. Current practice—and current expectations based on modern medicine and technology—enables us to provide far more support and services to the community than was once the case. I hope that, when health boards across Scotland consider those matters, they will think and act flexibly and that they will listen and respond to the real concerns of local communities. In that light, I am pleased that Tayside Health Board has been thinking flexibly and continues to be in dialogue with the local community about its concerns.

Dr Richard Simpson (Ochil) (Lab): Does the minister agree that safety must be the paramount consideration in the implementation of the maternity strategy? If we are not to demoralise Scottish midwives, will she ask her officials to ensure that the changes required in working practice to implement the team midwifery systems—which are important for pre-conception, prenatal and postnatal care—are handled carefully? Furthermore, will she ensure that her first priority in appointing additional community midwives should be understaffed areas and areas of deprivation?

Susan Deacon: I certainly endorse Richard Simpson's comments about the importance of safety as a key consideration in debates about the future of maternity services. I would add the importance of enabling women to exercise informed choice about their maternity care and, in particular, the birth of their child.

Alongside those considerations, a crucial issue is how we organise the many staff—not least midwives—around women's needs. As the national framework for maternity services sets out, we are working closely with the profession and have put in place mechanisms to ensure that, in future, the capacity and organisational training of the work force matches the needs and expectations of the women who use the service.

Hospitals (Mixed-sex Wards)

10. Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive when it plans to publish its review of the progress made to date in ending mixed-sex wards in hospitals. (S10-3371)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): The Scottish Executive is committed to the elimination of mixed-sex accommodation and has allocated £4.8 million to NHSScotland specifically for that purpose. The most recent review of progress shows that a third of NHS bodies have achieved full compliance and that the remainder have plans to do so.

Tricia Marwick: Will the minister confirm that more than half Scotland's hospitals still have mixed-sex wards? Will she also confirm that the Executive does not have a clue where the £4.8 million has gone, which trusts have received it or what it has been spent on? Will she give an assurance that the unsafe, undignified mixed-sex wards will be replaced as a matter of priority?

Susan Deacon: The Executive has been consistent in its commitment to ending mixed-sex accommodation. We have backed that commitment with investment and continuing work with the service to ensure that plans and changes to buildings and working practices are established. Contrary to what Tricia Marwick has just claimed, we undertake regular monitoring of the situation, and we are well aware of the state of play throughout the country, which changes continually. I am especially pleased that new hospitals have come on stream, in which the highest possible standards of dignity and privacy are provided. We will continue to ensure that the targets that we have set are met.

ME Awareness Week

11. Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to recognise and promote ME awareness week. (S1O-3382)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): Events and activities to promote awareness weeks for any condition are usually led by the voluntary support groups. I have not received any invitations from the various ME support groups to participate in ME awareness week, but I hope that it will succeed in raising awareness of this little-understood illness.

Alex Fergusson: I assure the minister that invitations will be forthcoming shortly.

I regret the fact that the Executive cannot give recognition to such events; however, I have been pleased with the press coverage that this horrible illness has received over the past few days. Does the minister agree that, whatever the outcome of the chief medical officer in England and Wales's report, there is an urgent need for research in Scotland into the causes and cures for ME, and that the best agency to foster and encourage such research is the national health service? Will she join me in welcoming the launch last Tuesday of MERGE, a Perth-based charity that is dedicated to funding research into ME?

Susan Deacon: I welcome any developments that enable us to improve the understanding and treatment of this extremely debilitating condition—I have seen it at first hand—which affects a great many people and has significant effects on them.

I commend Alex Fergusson, John McAllion and

the others who have been involved in the cross-party group on ME for the work that they are undertaking into raising awareness of the condition. As Alex Fergusson said, we expect the report of Professor Liam Donaldson's working group on the issue in the summer. The Scottish Executive has observer status on that group, and we will consider carefully what actions ought to be taken in the light of that report.

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): The minister has given a sympathetic response, but what about action? As the minister is aware, the provision of health care—if care is provided—from diagnosis to treatment and therapy for those who have ME is, to say the least, patchy in Scotland. Will the minister commit to undertake a national audit of provision for people in Scotland who have ME and to act on its findings?

Susan Deacon: On this issue, as in other areas, I share the concern and frustration of members, ME sufferers and their families, who believe that we must take the right action to make a difference. Sadly, it is not as straightforward as that. The causes of chronic fatigue syndrome and ME are not fully understood, nor is there any generally agreed treatment. Nevertheless, I hope that the CMO in England and Wales's report on the matter will aid our understanding and inform the NHS in Scotland for future service provision.

Judiciary (Training)

12. Mr Gil Paterson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to introduce mandatory training programmes for the judiciary on issues such as rape and domestic abuse. (S1O-3405)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Justice (Mr Jim Wallace): Judicial training is a matter for the independent Judicial Studies Committee, which is chaired by the former Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Ross. It is a constitutional principle of considerable importance that the judiciary are independent of the Executive; therefore, it would not be appropriate for the Executive to determine mandatory training requirements for judges.

Mr Paterson: Does the minister agree that certain rulings, especially the recent ruling of Lord Abernethy, could have been avoided if the judiciary had been properly trained and aware of how women react to rape and how it affects them?

Mr Wallace: I am not sure that I would come to the same conclusion. With regard to the case that Gil Paterson raises, and which he has raised with me before as his cross-party group takes great interest in the matter, the Parliament will be aware that the Lord Advocate has agreed to make a

reference to the High Court of Justiciary seeking clarification of the law on rape. That court will clarify the points of law raised under this reference, an issue that is of considerable concern and interest to all members of this Parliament.

Foot-and-mouth Disease (Dumfries and Galloway Council)

13. David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con):

To ask the Scottish Executive what steps it has taken to ensure that Dumfries and Galloway Council is refunded the £5.5 million it has spent to date on the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease. (S1O-3386)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): As I announced this morning, we are making £2 million available to Dumfries and Galloway Council on account to reflect the costs that it has faced in dealing with the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. We will work with the council to help it achieve reimbursement for expenditure that it has incurred on behalf of other organisations. We will also assist the council with any cash-flow problems it might face as a result of the outbreak.

David Mundell: I welcome the minister's answer. In his capacity as general factotum for all Dumfries and Galloway issues, will he make a public confirmation of the fact that all the money that the council has spent on the exercise will be refunded?

Is the minister satisfied that, once the presence of the Scottish Executive rural affairs department and the Army is scaled down later this week, the council will have at its disposal sufficient resources to deal with any issues that may arise?

Ross Finnie: We have given that public confirmation. My announcement this morning dealt with issues around the recovery of the moneys and cash-flow problems. We have the agreement of the council on those matters.

I assure David Mundell that we have arranged the scaling down of the presence of SERAD officials and armed forces personnel in a way that will ensure that they can be recalled in sufficient time should that be required.

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): Will the minister confirm whether the £2 million that was announced this morning towards the expenses that have been incurred by Dumfries and Galloway Council is additional to the expenses that are likely to be underwritten by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food?

Could the minister comment on how that and further assistance might be affected in the event of a Conservative Government in Westminster cutting the Scottish budget by £16 billion?

Ross Finnie: The first part of Dr Murray's question specifically addressed the present known total expenditure of £5.5 million. I said that we were making £2 million available on account right now. I went on to say that we would assist the council in the recovery of moneys in relation to other organisations on whose behalf it had undertaken expense. The phrase "other organisations" encompasses MAFF.

I can see that the Presiding Officer, with a steely glare, is advising me not to indulge in speculation about the general election. I will therefore decline to answer the second part of the question.

Schools (Promotion of Industry)

14. Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what is being done to promote industry in schools and, in particular, what is being done to encourage young people to acquire the skills that industry needs through the study of technical and other relevant subjects. (S1O-3381)

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander): There is a wide range of education for work activities in schools, which are designed to give young people direct experience of the world of work. From this summer, the Scottish Executive will be conducting a review of education for work, focusing on establishing best practice. We are also working with the private sector to launch a major enterprise initiative in primary schools for the new academic year. New general and credit courses for standard grade technological studies have been developed and will be implemented from the session that starts after the summer.

Cathy Peattie: I welcome those changes. However, what will replace the foundation level of technological studies? Parents are concerned that youngsters will not be able to access foundation courses.

Ms Alexander: There is no doubt that Jack McConnell, the Minister for Education, Europe and External Affairs, is much better informed on that part of the question than I am. The job of my department is simply to encourage industry to engage with schools.

However, Jack McConnell has kindly provided me with further details on that initiative: the new standard grade technological studies course is designed to be more attractive to all pupils and teachers. We intend to raise interest in presentations, and Nicol Stephen is undertaking a programme of work to ensure that everyone with an interest is aware of the new courses and of how to participate in them.

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): Does the minister accept, after listening to

the view of Electronics Scotland, that there is now a void between the need and the provision of skills in Scotland? Does the minister acknowledge that that is an area of profound concern in our schooling, not just because of the fact that we may not have adequately trained or skilled teachers to provide the skills that are so desperately needed, but because there may be an attitude problem on the part of parents and their contemporaries in advising youngsters that a successful career may lie ahead in technological areas? How does the minister propose to address those factors?

Ms Alexander: I agree whole-heartedly with Annabel Goldie's points. It is true that across the entire spectrum, not just in schools, there is an unfortunate mismatch between the skills that people have and the opportunities for employment that exist. The raising of the profile of learning and skills in the enterprise network, the realignment of the careers service and the creation of the future skills unit are designed to deal with that problem. I welcome the fact that Electronics Scotland is holding a summit, which will touch on those matters, in June. I know that the Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee is participating in that.

As I indicated, Jack McConnell, the Scottish Executive education department and I are examining the whole area of education for work in schools, to ensure that it has the topicality required for our young people to be fit for the employment market of tomorrow.

Gaelic

15. John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive why a department of the Gaidhealtachd, to advise it on Gaelic policy, has not yet been set up and when such a department will be operational. (S10-3365)

The Deputy Minister for Sport, the Arts and Culture (Allan Wilson): Matters relating to Gaelic are handled in the Scottish Executive education department. The Executive is currently considering ways to ensure that all Gaelic-related initiatives are properly supported.

John Farquhar Munro: In view of the fact that the recommendation to establish such a department or unit in the Scottish Executive was made several months ago by the task force that it appointed, will the minister ensure that that recommendation is implemented at an early date?

Allan Wilson: In December 2000, Alasdair Morrison established the advisory group on Gaelic, with the remit to prepare a strategic plan for the language. The advisory group will have produced a report by June. I assure John Farquhar Munro and other members that Alasdair

Morrison and the entire Executive are committed to supporting Gaelic. We will be pushing that agenda forward with vigour. I will meet the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning and Gaelic to discuss additional measures to support the Gaelic language and, vitally, the culture that underpins it.

Respite Care

16. Mr Keith Harding (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what level of funding has been allocated to local authorities in 2001-02 for respite care for profoundly mentally and physically handicapped adults. (S10-3404)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Susan Deacon): We have allocated £1.25 billion in grant-aided expenditure to local authorities for social work in 2001-02. Of that, £15 million is earmarked for carers and respite care. The allocation is largely unhypothecated. It is for local authorities to determine the detailed use of their resources in the light of local circumstances.

Mr Harding: Is the minister satisfied that adequate monitoring procedures are in place to ensure that councils utilise those resources in the manner intended? There is a lack of full-time respite care services in Fife in particular.

Susan Deacon: We have sought to ensure that effective monitoring processes, provided from within the Scottish Executive, are in place, to ensure that the additional resources that have been allocated for the purpose are put to best use.

What is, arguably, even more effective and important for bringing about change is the involvement of carers groups in determining the spend at a local level. I am pleased that one of the requirements that we have placed on local authorities is that they effectively involve carer groups when reaching local decisions.

Tuition Fees

17. Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive whether "in Scotland, all graduates will pay £2,000" in the coming year, as stated by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment in a letter to the *New Statesman* of 30 April 2001 referring to tuition fees. (S10-3385)

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning (Ms Wendy Alexander): Because of exemptions for higher national certificate and higher national diploma students, mature students, lone parents and disabled students, we expect that around half of the students who study in Scotland and fall under the responsibility of the Student Awards Agency for Scotland will be liable for the graduate endowment. Only graduates beginning their studies from 2001 onwards will be

liable.

Donald Gorrie: I am obliged to the minister for setting out the true state of affairs. I would be even more obliged if she would pass that information on to Mr Blunkett.

Ms Alexander: I am content to do that.

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-1066)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): The Prime Minister and I have no immediate plans to meet. In the current circumstances, that may change in the very near future.

Mr Swinney: In the current circumstances, I will begin on a note of consensus. I am sure that the First Minister will agree that the Conservative party damaged the health service very badly in its term of office. [MEMBERS: "Oh."] Oh yes, it is true.

Will the First Minister explain why, as a survey entitled "The reality behind the rhetoric" shows, eight out of 10 general practitioners in Scotland believe that the health service has declined under Labour?

The First Minister: I thought John Swinney was going to raise another issue about activities yesterday, but that will possibly come later.

We live in a democracy in which people have a right to make comments, but I reject utterly that assertion about the national health service. In the four years since Labour was elected we have done a number of things. It is important to remember that more than 100,000 more operations were carried out in 2000 than were carried out in 1997. Over the next five years, 1,500 more nurses and midwives will be recruited. Six hundred extra NHS consultants will be recruited. Already, 500 extra doctors are employed. That is our record. We have made a promising start. We need to move forward, invest and build more in the health service.

Mr Swinney: I notice that the First Minister gave me absolutely no explanation why, in response to a survey, eight out of 10 GPs in Scotland said that hospital care had declined under Labour. Perhaps that has something to do with the fact that waiting lists have gone up, despite the fact that it was promised that they would go down. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that the First Minister has presided over a reduction in nursing staff of 1,000 and announced this morning a pledge card that promised no new nurses in Scotland. Perhaps that explains why eight out of 10 GPs believe that the health service has declined under Labour.

The First Minister: That is a bit rich coming from the SNP, which is the party that offered £35

million; it is hard to believe. We are talking about raising funding between 1999 and 2000 from £4.9 billion to £6.7 billion. That dwarfs the expenditure of the SNP. We are also talking about having more nurses, consultants and doctors. John Swinney simply is not listening.

Let me repeat that over the next five years we will train 10,000 nurses and midwives, which is 1,500 more than planned. In the same period, there will be 600 more consultants. We are also embarking on the largest ever building programme in the NHS. Surely the SNP should stop being selective. It should praise the work that is being done on behalf of the Scottish people by the Executive partnership and the Parliament.

Mr Swinney: The First Minister is a member of a Government that has presided over the first cut in health expenditure in this country since the war. He is also in the Government that attracted the great praise of Dr Kenneth Harden of the Scottish General Practitioners Committee, who said:

"The Scottish Executive has had its head in the sand ... The results of the survey ... show a service facing crisis."

Yesterday, the Prime Minister promised 20,000 extra nurses in England, but this morning, the First Minister promised no new nurses in Scotland. Is not it time that we had a First Minister who stopped listening to the spin-doctors and started listening to the real doctors? Perhaps it is time that we had a First Minister who addressed the reality of Scotland and started to stand for Scotland.

The First Minister: Presiding Officer, you asked us not to talk about the general election. In the current mood, that was simply a pathetic assessment of the state of the national health service in Scotland.

I repeat: there will be 1,500 more nurses and midwives over the next five years and 600 more national health service consultants. If John Swinney were to look at the pledge cards that we produced this morning, he would see that we are also funding the biggest ever hospital building programme. That answers the questions that the SNP poses.

Let me say also that the NHS is moving forward rapidly under the coalition in Scotland. In partnership with the Government at Westminster, we are providing the funding. That is the best bet for the Scottish people—that is delivering. I urge the SNP to start taking the NHS seriously. Thirty-five million pounds is a paltry sum when it is set against the increase over the next three years of £6.7 billion on building, building and building our national health service.

Secretary of State for Scotland (Meetings)

2. David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the

Secretary of State for Scotland and what issues he plans to raise. (S1F-1055)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): I have no immediate plans to meet the secretary of state.

David McLetchie: When the First Minister meets the secretary of state, he and she will no doubt become mutually and totally absorbed in the forthcoming general election campaign. I am sure that, for the First Minister, it will be a welcome diversion from the many problems that beset the Scottish Executive.

I was interested in the First Minister's answer to Mr Swinney on pledge cards. I draw his attention to the pledge cards that he brandished four years ago, during the previous general election in 1997, and to the fact that he has failed to deliver on two key pledges made on that pledge card. There are still more than 600 classes in the first three years of primary school that have more than 30 pupils and there are 2,000 more people waiting for hospital treatment in Scotland today than was the case in March 1997. The First Minister is directly responsible for those pledges from the pledge card of four years ago. If he cannot deliver on those pledges in four years, why should anyone believe the brand-new promises that he unveiled this morning?

The First Minister: David McLetchie simply gets it wrong. I am extremely pleased that he has recovered from yesterday's trauma. *The Sun* suggested that he had been tanked and pasted. It is difficult to imagine the situation: David McLetchie, standing near the Mound, beside a poster that does more for a Tesco supermarket in Stevenage than it does for the Tory party. Then, all of a sudden, a tank drives up, blasts fumes in his face and drives off—the scripts are priceless.

I am happy to hold up a pledge card instead of a Tesco loyalty card, which is blue—the Tories' colour. As the press said this morning, at least Tesco delivers. [*Laughter.*] Presiding Officer, I will not stretch your patience for much longer, but someone asked me, "What is the other difference between Tory MPs and Tesco supermarkets?" to which the answer is, "At least you can find Tesco supermarkets in Scotland." [MEMBERS: "More."] No—I must resist.

David McLetchie is simply wrong on both counts in relation to the 1997 pledges. We have committed to getting waiting lists down, which we are on track to achieve by 2002—that will be done. At present, two thirds of health boards are totally focused on that and we will put extra resources, effort and focus into the one third of health boards that have yet to deliver.

It is important, when we talk about pledges, that we have the courage to say up front to the Scottish people, "These are important priorities for

you and we want to make sure that we actually deliver." We will continue to deliver for the Scottish people.

David McLetchie: I thank the First Minister very much for that. It was a welcome brush. I am glad to see that he has discovered a sense of humour after about eight months in the job. The next time I am in Tesco, I will buy him a pound of mince, which is a pretty apt description of the Scottish Executive, given the experience of the past couple of years.

As usual, the First Minister failed to acknowledge Labour's failure to fulfil its pledges to the Scottish people at the previous election. I suggest that he polishes his specs, reads the 1997 pledge card and concentrates on trying to deliver yesterday's promises before he delivers any more false ones to the people of Scotland.

The fact of the matter is that, despite a massive increase in the taxes that are imposed on the people of Scotland, the Administration has failed on health and education and is, at the same time, pouring more and more taxpayers' money down the Holyrood drain. Is not that the reality that no new glossy pledge card can disguise?

The First Minister: I was keen to be magnanimous in victory, but David McLetchie unfortunately raised the pledge card again. It is important that the Tories learn lessons about delivery from yesterday's absolute shambles. We do not need any lectures about having pride in our Parliament at Holyrood. The Tories can carp on all they want. We want a Parliament that will deliver for Scotland. We want a Parliament in which people can have pride. At this stage in the election, the Tories should be saying to Scotland that they have their hearts in the devolution project. Up till now, there has been no indication that the Conservative MSPs will support Scottish devolution in heart and mind.

It is important that we have taxed people. On top of the £16 billion of spending cuts that the Tories were going to impose, Michael Portillo this morning suggested an extra £4 billion, to make the figure £20 billion. That is reckless. The Tories have no interest in dealing with the interests of the Scottish people, so we will take no lectures on tax or pledges from them. As someone once said, we often thought that the Tories were off their trolleys. Yesterday confirmed that they certainly are.

Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): When the First Minister next meets the Secretary of State for Scotland, will he take the opportunity to congratulate her and her United Kingdom Government colleagues on the agreement between the Treasury and the insurance industry which, we understand, will finally deliver justice for asbestos victims? Does

he agree that the agreement is great news for victims and their families in my constituency—Greenock and Inverclyde—and other shipbuilding constituencies? Will he join me in calling on the insurance companies that are involved in the continuing cases to act swiftly, pay up and bring the shameful chapter to a close?

The First Minister: I am pleased to associate myself on two counts with the points that Duncan McNeil made. First, I associate myself with his comments on the excellent work that has been done by our colleagues at Westminster, which is supported by nearly everyone in this Parliament, to ensure that a settlement could be arrived at. Secondly, some haste needs to be injected into the process because of the long-term suffering of many people in many constituencies in many parts of Scotland.

We should convey our thanks to those concerned, including the Secretary of State for Scotland. I also hope that the insurance companies will move quickly. The victims deserve payment, especially those who have been suffering for a very long time.

Devolution

3. Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what benefits the first two years of devolution have delivered for the people of Scotland. (S1F-1071)

David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): This will be a short answer.

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): I am being intimidated again by David McLetchie, who does not seem to know when enough is enough.

Devolution has made a real difference to the lives of the people of Scotland. The coalition has a solid record of delivering for the Scottish people, including the McCrone agreement on teachers' pay and conditions; a commitment to fund personal care for Scotland's elderly; providing money for a record number of police officers in Scotland; scrapping tuition fees; a £350 million package to provide free installation of central heating in all pensioners' homes; free nursery places for all four-year-olds and most three-year-olds; and a £680 million improvement package for Scotland's motorway and trunk road network. People talk about delivery. I think that that list reinforces the central message: we are delivering.

Rhoda Grant: Does the First Minister agree that the principle of devolving power cannot stop at this Parliament? Does he accept that we need to continue bringing government closer to the people? Will he ensure that civil service job dispersal does not slip off the Executive's agenda?

The First Minister: Civil service job dispersal is

fixed on the Executive's agenda. We used to talk about devolving civil service jobs from London north; in our new Parliament, parliamentarians and Executive members talk about dispersing jobs to every part of Scotland. A reasoned case for that has to be made—we must consider accessibility and cost-effectiveness—but I can give Rhoda Grant a guarantee that we want to pursue that policy, and vigorously.

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): As Mr McLeish has given us some good laughs this afternoon, I was going to amend my question to: "What's the difference between a Scots Labour front bencher under Mr Blair and a Tesco trolley? At least a Tesco trolley has a mind of its own."

What benefits have the first two years of devolution delivered for Glasgow and the west? We know that the unemployment figures are down—the Government figures, that is, not unemployment—but child poverty in Glasgow has increased under new Labour. I do not think that the First Minister will deny that. Glasgow's population is falling rapidly. Glasgow people still die four years earlier than people in the rest of Scotland.

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Order.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: Is not it the case, First Minister, that Labour in this Parliament has turned its back on its heartlands in Glasgow and the west of Scotland and is ignoring the plight of our people—

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Order. We will have the answer now.

The First Minister: Uncharacteristically, Dorothy-Grace Elder has simply got it wrong. In the past two years, apart from the achievements that I have described, there have been new schools and new developments in the health service and there is the prospect of massive change in housing. Unemployment has tumbled from its high level during Tory days. The whole of Scotland is now benefiting from devolution. When we argued the case, all those years ago, we said that the whole of Scotland should benefit. Glasgow is benefiting. We enjoy a close relationship—the Executive, the Parliament and the city. That augurs well for the future. Glasgow, along with every part of the country, will continue to share in the work that we do here.

Scottish Qualifications Authority

4. Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): To ask the First Minister what recent guarantees the Scottish Executive has received from the Scottish Qualifications Authority that the 2001 examination diet will be completed and processed successfully allowing all candidates to receive accurate results on time.

(S1F-1065)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): The Scottish Qualifications Authority has repeatedly assured the Executive and, indeed, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee that it is doing everything in its power to deliver a successful examination diet in 2001. Ministers are monitoring its progress and we will continue to report regularly to Parliament on that.

Ian Jenkins: Does the First Minister agree that what is needed over the next few weeks—and the election may help with this—is a period in which schools, the SQA and pupils can get on with the work of data transfer and getting through the examinations, without being troubled by irresponsible and exaggerated reporting of normal problems? Such reporting serves only to create unnecessary stress and anxiety. Will he assure us that ministers will continue to monitor the situation closely and will offer every assistance to the SQA to ensure the successful delivery of results?

The First Minister: Jack McConnell will shortly report to Parliament on the update. I can reassure Mr Jenkins that ministers will continue to be vigilant. They will be involved in monitoring the situation closely.

Young people are now sitting their exams. This is a time for calm and a time to ensure that young people's confidence is invested in passing their examinations rather than worrying about what might happen.

There is tremendous pressure on us all to ensure that the 2001 diet is a huge success—it is about the integrity of the education and qualification systems. We must ensure that our children, young people and adults can sit their exams in the knowledge that everything is being done to deliver the results of the examination diet on time.

Tartan Day

5. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): To ask the First Minister what the potential benefits are for Scotland's trade and tourism links with north America from tartan day. (S1F-1056)

The First Minister (Henry McLeish): Tartan day is a unique day when the United States focuses on Scotland. It offers a great opportunity for Scotland to promote its trade and investment links with the US. It also provides an invaluable window for Scotland's tourism industry—coming as it does at the start of the season—in our biggest market for overseas visitors.

In addition, tartan day plays an important role in the relationship-building process between Scotland and the US that continues throughout the rest of the year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Following concerns expressed by the Scottish business community, will the First Minister assure the Parliament that there will be monitoring and assessment of the effects of Scottish involvement in tartan day, with a view to maximising the benefits to tourism and trade between Scotland and north America?

The First Minister: I am happy to give that assurance. It is a matter not simply for the Executive, but for the involvement of the Parliament through the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and the political parties. It is important that we take an all-parliamentary approach. It is about tourism, trade, technology and all the things that help to add to the quality of life in Scotland.

I assure Lord James that he will have access to the monitoring of our involvement. Over the next few years, we want to build up a capacity in America that serves the interests of our country.

Urban Regeneration

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The next item is a debate on motion S1M-1922, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on urban regeneration, and two amendments to that motion.

15:32

The Minister for Social Justice (Jackie Baillie): Governments in Scotland have been remaking and renewing some of our poorest places for at least half a century. That took place not just in the cities, where the emphasis was on slum clearance and rather soulless urban renewal from 1950 until the mid-1970s, but in rural areas with the forerunner of Highlands and Islands Enterprise, which was set up in the 1960s.

Models and fashions in urban renewal change. By the middle of the 1970s, community-based and housing-led rehabilitation became a key route to regenerating our rundown older areas. In due course, similar approaches rolled out to housing schemes and smaller towns through new life for urban Scotland and smaller urban renewal initiatives.

Indeed, it is one of the great ironies of the long period of Conservative government in Scotland that the Tories developed some effective models for the physical regeneration of small places. It would be wrong to say that we have not learned from that experience. We have learned about some effective models, but we have also learned some of the damaging limitations of the Conservative approach. It is those shortcomings of conception and commitment that we have been addressing and reversing.

I want to take time today to explain why our approach is different from and better than what has prevailed in the past—those differences are substantial. The position of our predecessors was that unfettered market solutions were generally the best for Scotland. However, in some cases, concentrations of those who failed to make it in markets required some palliative policy. For them, rural and urban regeneration policy was relatively expensive sticking plaster, patching over some enduring scars resulting from their cuts. Our view is different. Markets do not always work effectively and may undervalue some places and people.

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con): Has the good lady ever been to Liverpool, which was run by the notorious Derek Hatton and, I believe, the Labour party? Did she know about the model for the regeneration of that city and the rebuilding of its central community, which Michael Heseltine was involved in?

Jackie Baillie: Having worked in regeneration for some time, I will not take lessons from anybody in the Conservative party. I have witnessed at first hand the damage that it has done to communities, not just across Scotland, but across the whole of the UK.

We view the people and places I mentioned not as a problem, but as an opportunity, because if the appropriate mechanisms are put in place they can be levered back into social and economic action. For us, poorer places are not just an awkward moral corner, they are an affront to our sense of social justice and to our concern to maximise the contribution of all to our economy and society.

Our approach is not just to fix up estates and hope for the best. Rather it is to reconnect households to each other, to the community, to the education system and to the labour market. Instead of naive Thatcherism, our approach is based on complex local development economics; instead of denying that there is such a thing as society, it recognises that economic success is embedded in strong family and social networks. Yes, financial capital matters, but so does human capital, so does social capital and so does place capital. We are rebuilding the capital of our poorest communities in diverse ways that were unimagined by our predecessors.

The second important difference in our approach is that we wish to create a context in which limited area renewal policies are not simply the unavoidable consequence of cuts in public services and unstable, inadequate economic policies. For us, area regeneration is about building community capacity, making the employment linkages that allow poor places to benefit from steady economic progress, expanding public services and reducing spending on public debt. Area inequalities feature at the centre of our thinking, not at some peripheral margin.

In consequence, our third point of difference is that we have emphasised the importance of joined-up approaches to area regeneration. We have all seen what happens when job opportunities improve but neighbourhoods do not—those with jobs and incomes inevitably move out. We have all seen what happens when homes are improved—some for the second or third time in 20 years—but there is no improvement in policing and no increase in employment. In those circumstances, change is not sustained.

To meet our aim of addressing acute inequalities between neighbourhoods, our approach to urban regeneration deals with the physical, economic and social needs of our most disadvantaged. Our approach is cross-disciplinary, broadening the partnership base and the investment base to harness mainstream services for renewal in enterprise, health, education, justice, housing and

transport. We have adopted an approach that stresses not only the importance of connections between health, housing and employment, for example, but the essential vertical joins in policy, because as members who have worked in this area in their previous lives will know, it is only by capturing the policy levers and making connections that we will deliver sustainable solutions to multiple disadvantage in the long term.

I stress that Westminster has given us growing resources and new tax programmes, which potentially are worth £100 million for Scotland, specifically to boost older-area investment and to promote new measures to reduce financial exclusion and promote the role of the social economy. This Executive has put in place social justice strategies and an economic framework that properly values the role of area regeneration. We have strengthened and given extra support to social inclusion partnerships by investing something like £169 million to lever action locally. Even more important, we have expanded service programmes across portfolios which benefit poorer places in particular.

We have also introduced the £90 million better neighbourhood services programme to expand innovation in services in renewal areas. We have put community ownership of housing and the massive uplift in physical renewal resources that that will generate at the heart of our housing policies. We have given the enterprise network a new remit to raise training and employment performance in our poorest areas. All that is mainstreaming and prioritising regeneration.

In working together with Westminster, we witness the highest employment levels since the 1960s and the lowest unemployment levels since the 1970s. Youth unemployment is down by 70 per cent. Long-term unemployment is down by 50 per cent. We are talking about policies that are making a difference that has been achieved by working in partnership.

We believe in devolution.

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): The minister is now eight minutes into her speech. She talked about partnerships, but the one element that she did not talk about—she may well be about to—is local government. She talked about the importance of investing in public services. Did the Westminster Government's decision to follow Tory spending plans between 1997 and 1999 hamper the delivery of what ministers now want to do and the restoration of public service investment to the levels that are required to achieve the regeneration policies and partnerships that the minister talked about?

Jackie Baillie: I hope that the Presiding Officer will afford me some extra time to answer some of

those points.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): You will have about two minutes.

Jackie Baillie: Prudent management of the economy has meant that we can invest substantial sums—more than the SNP dreamed of in its previous manifestos—in public services and in making a difference for our communities. We believe in devolution, not only for this Parliament from Westminster, but from us to councils and from councils to communities.

We will produce a neighbourhood renewal statement by the end of the year. That will be a key document that will summarise the good and bad lessons from the regeneration work that has been undertaken by many partners in Scotland in the past 30 years. It will also provide a framework for future work within which central Government—including the new executive agency, Scottish Homes—and local partners will operate. We intend to draft that statement in close co-operation with all those who have contributions to make, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Local authorities have a central role in leading the renewal of their neighbourhoods and supporting the development and empowerment of their communities. We need to set efforts to promote neighbourhood renewal in the context of community planning. I expect the neighbourhood renewal statement to make that clear. Some community planning partnerships are thinking imaginatively and constructively about social justice issues and I am keen to support that work.

Community planning is relatively new and is further advanced in some areas than others. As it continues to develop, I look forward to community planning partnerships becoming the central regeneration and renewal mechanism, operating within a national neighbourhood renewal framework. It is important to make those linkages to achieve social justice for all our communities.

Today's debate is an opportunity to engage members of all parties not only in a review of what we are doing, but in a celebration of how ordinary people in those communities are becoming involved in regeneration. We have worked with communities and groups in the past two years to develop capacity and we budgeted in community empowerment from the start.

I am delighted to confirm that, from the resources that were made available to me in last year's spending review, I am allocating £3.7 million this year—about £60,000 per partnership—to provide support for community representatives. That will help them operate as equal partners with their colleagues from the enterprise networks, local authorities and health. Those representatives

can determine how best that resource will help them.

The multilevel and multisectoral approach that regeneration needs requires cohesion and partnership working. That is why I am pleased members have the opportunity to contribute to the neighbourhood renewal statement. It is my intention to use that statement to provide the national framework for renewal for all Scotland's disadvantaged communities. I also intend to make the connections to parallel reviews of strategic planning and the cities review. We will engage in a debate with the organisations and individuals who are vital to Scotland's future success in delivering change and renewal.

I am interested to hear members' contributions because, after all, we are interested in what works. We are seeking to build, from communities upwards, faster and fairer progress for Scotland. I commend the motion to the chamber.

I move,

That the Parliament endorses the Executive's approach to urban regeneration and the steps it has taken to enable the people in some of our most disadvantaged communities to become involved in regenerating their areas and welcomes the Executive's intention to engage in discussions to formulate the Neighbourhood Renewal statement for Scotland.

15:45

Mr Kenneth Gibson (Glasgow) (SNP): I welcome today's Executive debate. For obvious reasons, rural issues have dominated the Parliament of late—which proves how wrong opponents of devolution were to say that the Parliament would be dominated by central belt concerns. However, it is pleasing to be able to discuss an issue of such importance as urban regeneration. I am only sorry that the Executive has allocated so little time for today's debate.

Scotland's towns and cities are where most of our people live. Thirty per cent live in the five cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh and—our newest—Inverness. Cities can and should be seen as a source of dynamism and creativity that stems from the density and diversity of population and the proximity of firms, homes and institutions. Unfortunately, if cities are neglected, they can become reservoirs of social inequality and economic decline.

The Parliament has a crucial role to play in revitalising urban Scotland by establishing a strategic perspective within which social needs, economic opportunities and environmental problems can be considered together and addressed effectively. That requires that the Executive's stated commitment on social inclusion, economic development and urban regeneration be

turned into concrete action.

What issues do we face? In Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, the population has declined from 1,061,000 to 608,000 since 1961. In 1962, the Tothill report recommended a policy of relocating industry and people from our cities to new towns. That policy was slavishly followed by Labour and Conservative Governments. Investment in infrastructure and the ability to build on greenfield sites were incentives for companies to move out of old industrial sites. People were encouraged to move to improved housing. That left Glasgow and Dundee in particular at a competitive disadvantage. Vast numbers left Scotland altogether, with the result that we are the only west European nation to suffer a recent decline in population. Scotland's population sustained a fall of 250,000 over the last generation, which included a disproportionate number of the young, skilled and well educated.

The result of such policies, coupled with decline in heavy industry and massive structural economic change, is that Glasgow and Dundee—and, indeed, Greenock and Coatbridge—have been left bereft of much of their industrial base, with high levels of unemployment and, in Glasgow's case, almost 60 per cent of Scotland's most socially excluded communities.

Regrettably, the process of decline still continues. Last Sunday, I took my eight-year-old son and four-year-old daughter on a powerboat cruise along the Clyde. It leaves from Stobcross quay and costs £5 for adults, £2.50 for the kids. On a sunny day, I assure members that they will love it. It was a beautiful sunny day and the children enjoyed the sights, but I found them disheartening. All the way from Glasgow down to where the QE2 was launched, we saw scenes of unmitigated dereliction on both sides of the Clyde. Indeed, the guide told us that today the Clyde's biggest export is scrap metal to Russia and Sweden.

The Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning said in a recent parliamentary answer that only 65.2 per cent of Glaswegian males of working age are in employment. That compares with an average of 77.3 per cent across Scotland. As the minister herself stated, that means that Glasgow will have to find 24,000 additional jobs just to equal the Scottish average. For women, 14,000 additional jobs are required. That is the equivalent of 12 Motorola factories, yet the Glasgow Alliance strategy, which was set out in 1999, set a target of only 15,000 additional jobs by 2003. As the creation of full-time, well-paid jobs is the key to prosperity, health and community, it is little wonder that Glasgow is struggling. Half of new jobs in Glasgow are likely to go to non-residents, so there is a real mountain to climb to

turn Glasgow round.

It is regrettable that little progress has been made with school leavers. A report last week from Glasgow careers service shows that in each of the past five years, the proportion entering work, training and higher and further education has remained in the 70 to 72 per cent bracket—far lower than the Scottish average. The Executive has mentioned the better neighbourhood services programme and its plan to allocate £90 million over three years to local authorities. That is welcome, but relative to needs and Executive action in the opposite direction, that sum pales into insignificance.

Members do not need to take my word for it. On 13 March, the Local Government Committee took evidence from George Black, director of finance at Glasgow City Council. In response to a question from me, he said:

"I can confirm that from 1996-97 the council's share of aggregate external finance reduced. Our research showed that, in real terms, the level of aggregate external finance for Glasgow at the end of 2003-04 will be about £50 million less than in 1996-97. The impact of that reduction is well documented. We have had council tax increases of 19 per cent, 22 per cent and 9.4 per cent in the three years since 1996-97. We have had about 4,500 council job losses."

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Mr Gibson: I will finish the quotation, but I will let the member in. He knows, because we discussed it earlier, that I will quote him in a minute or two.

Mr Black continued:

"We had what is commonly termed a double whammy; we had to reduce services, while dramatically increasing council tax. That is hard for the public to understand. The evidence can be seen."—[*Official Report, Local Government Committee*, 13 March 2001; c 1665.]

That puts the real situation in perspective.

Dundee presented a similar picture to the committee only last Tuesday. Such is the level of decline in that city that the population is expected to fall by 15.3 per cent over the next 15 years. Areas of greatest need continue to sustain relative decline in their resource base—a situation that must be reversed.

What should be done? There is little purpose in reinventing the wheel. That is why the SNP amendment emphasises learning from achievements and mistakes here and elsewhere, to ensure optimum use of the public pound. In November 1998, the policy and resources committee at Glasgow City Council, which Mr McAveety and I attended, was advised that a report had been produced that showed that, in the previous 10 years, £500 million spent in Glasgow on regeneration had produced no discernible

improvement. At my suggestion, the committee—and subsequently the council—agreed unanimously to investigate how that money had been spent. If we could learn from the successes, and indeed the failures, we could ensure a better bang for our buck in future. Two and a half years later we still await that report.

Other cities, from Sunderland to Lille to Baltimore, have successfully turned around a steep economic and social decline using broadly similar methods. We must consider those successful strategies and adapt them to Scottish circumstances. Glasgow has 74,000 fewer manufacturing jobs than it did in 1974, yet Sunderland has 8,000 more. We must analyse how that and comparable successes have been achieved.

Jackie Baillie: I do not for a minute underestimate the scale of the problem in Glasgow. The member paints a bleak picture. I wonder whether he recognises the current picture, which I am about to paint for him. Over the past 10 years, unemployment in Glasgow city decreased by 9.4 per cent—faster than across Scotland as a whole. There is a higher proportion of people of working age in Glasgow: 64 per cent, which is much higher than in Scotland as a whole. Average earnings in April 2000 were 3 per cent higher than in Scotland as a whole. It is a good picture in Glasgow.

Mr Gibson: The minister should take the issue up with Wendy Alexander, because Ms Alexander gave me the answer to the parliamentary question I referred to.

City tax rises in Glasgow have been curtailed, allowing nearby authorities less of a competitive edge. In 1998, at the count for a local government by-election at Garrowhill, Frank McAveety asked, “Why did we lose this by-election, Kenny? It was the Lally situation, wasn’t it? It was sleaze and so on.” I said, “No, Frank. It was the council tax.” To Frank’s great credit, he went to the Labour group and persuaded his colleagues that Glasgow City Council’s tax was ridiculously high. They agreed to reduce it to a more reasonable level.

Significant investment in new infrastructure, industrial and commercial property, skills, training and education are crucial. The Executive’s failure to provide adequate resources for derelict land reclamation is cause for concern. In Glasgow, discussions on setting up a land renewal programme have been going on for more than five years and no progress has been made. Sending the M74 extension back to the drawing board and initially ignoring the road’s potential as an industrial corridor—a key strategy in the economic renaissance of Chicago—is worrying, given the new lead time on the road.

The doughnut effect, wherein a prosperous core is surrounded by poor estates, which are surrounded by wealthy suburbs, should be avoided by investing in quality of life initiatives such as improving community policing, de-littering, removing graffiti, addressing loitering, establishing children’s play areas and allotments, and—although it is not popular these days in Glasgow City Council—establishing community facilities.

A housing-based regeneration strategy without comparable quality-of-life improvements or job creation is not sustainable. Stimulating demand for local jobs evokes a sense of community pride in towns and cities, especially when people from one neighbourhood work together in a nearby firm. Public transport systems must allow people cheap and easy access to work.

We must focus not just on the sexy high-tech sector, but on positive measures to attract industry and retain it as a way of protecting and creating blue-collar jobs. Scotland cannot survive on screwdriver jobs alone, as Motorola has shown. Tourism is vital, but a chambermaid economy based on low-skilled, low-wage, seasonal work, coupled with very high-tech jobs is not enough. Economic diversity is essential and stimulation of indigenous business is crucial.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You are now well over your time limit, Mr Gibson.

Mr Gibson: I am just about to finish, Presiding Officer.

Unfortunately, joined-up government remains a myth in most of Scotland’s towns and cities. Local people should be put in charge of the highly paid, highly trained professionals who believe that they know best but whose priorities are in conflict with those of local people.

Initiatives that have been successfully employed in Phoenix, Baltimore and Indianapolis include low-interest loans, a business infrastructure assistance programme, provision of façade rebates, tax increment financing and the creation of a support network between industrial and non-industrial sectors. The SNP amendment is positive, not self-congratulatory or condemnatory, and I urge all members to support it.

I move amendment S1M-1922.3, to leave out from “endorses” to end and insert:

“notes the activities being undertaken by the Executive with regard to urban regeneration; congratulates the key agencies, organisations and citizens involved in regenerating urban Scotland; recognises that despite these efforts, levels of poverty, sickness and unemployment remain stubbornly high across much of urban Scotland, and undertakes to carry out a comprehensive review of regeneration policy in our towns and cities with specific regard to infrastructure and employment, examining the successes and failures of the past and including an analysis of thriving models of urban renewal across the

United Kingdom and beyond."

15:56

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): As stage 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Bill grinds on and on and I find myself in constant conflict with Jackie Baillie and her deputy, perhaps I can begin my speech by congratulating the minister on her consensual approach to the matter that is being debated. In particular, I pay tribute to her generous recognition of the achievements of the previous Conservative Government. It is true that where the Conservative party has gone, the Labour party has followed with alacrity.

The regeneration of our urban areas is a major and vital priority for the Parliament, and our approach must be one whereby we benefit from the good experiences of the past as well as learn from the mistakes that have been made. Like Kenneth Gibson, I make no apology for dealing at some length—but not at the same length as he did—with some of the problems that face the city of Glasgow. Not only is Glasgow Scotland's largest city, but it has suffered because of the failure to recognise that a different approach to the inner cities had to be taken. Sadly, it seems that, in some instances, the lessons have not yet been learned.

It is very easy to have 20:20 vision in hindsight, and I am aware that the post-war choices that had to be made in Glasgow were stark. They were not easy choices, and the decisions took place against a background of appalling housing conditions, poor health, lack of infrastructure and poor educational attainment. Having said that, the disastrous planning decisions of that time left us with an awful lot to do, and the misconceived peripheral schemes are testament to a disaster that lives with us to this day. The equation is this: bad housing equals bad health equals high unemployment plus law and order problems.

It would have been so much more constructive, and easier, if the lessons had been learned earlier and if we had recognised that communities had to be retained. In that respect, I take some encouragement from the fact that the Executive has built on the line that was taken by the Conservative Government, and by the Conservative Administration on Glasgow City Council in 1970, whereby communities were retained. The private sector grants that were made freely available in the 1980s built on those earlier decisions, and the eventual realisation that Glasgow's problems could be sorted from the outside moving in, rather than in the other direction, has definitely prompted significant improvements.

Jackie Baillie: Having worked in those

communities and witnessed Conservative policy at first hand, I am stunned to hear that the Conservatives' answer to problems was simply a lick of paint for many houses and communities. Bill Aitken claims to address matters and to recognise that they should be addressed from the inside out. Why then did the Conservative Administration leave us a legacy whereby a third of children were born into poverty, lived their lives in poverty and died in poverty?

Bill Aitken: I question whether "a lick of paint" is an appropriate description of some of the rehabilitation work that was carried out in Govanhill, Partick and Dennistoun—areas with which the Deputy Minister for Social Justice will be familiar. Let us be blunt about one thing: one of the major factors in the city's degeneration was the successive Labour Administrations, which presided over a complete and utter shambles. That cannot be gainsaid.

Mr McAveety: Mea culpa.

Bill Aitken: It should be mea maxima culpa, because Mr McAveety presided over the continuation of that shambles.

Inner-city regeneration is not only a matter of bricks and mortar, or crumbling stone and derelict land. Much more requires to be sorted out and much more requires to be done. Attitudes have had to change and must change again. I am clear, in my own mind, that the only way in which we can make a difference in some of our cities is by calling on the people who live there to be more responsible for their own lot. In that respect, we fully endorse the moves towards a housing stock transfer to build upon the progress of the housing association movement. That movement is a classic and eloquent testament to what happens when people are given ownership of problems and it demonstrates clearly that people will invariably respond positively. At the same time, the Executive must respond much more positively and robustly to cope with the difficulties that are caused by, for example, anti-social tenants.

Although there seems to be a growing realisation, especially on Margaret Curran's part, that there is a problem, the lack of determination and resolve in dealing with it fills me with all sorts of fears for the future. Until the law-abiding majority is defended from the anti-social minority, people in many parts of Glasgow and other cities will continue to live along the lines that they do at present. That extends to criminality in general. Our inner cities have been subject to a high level of criminality and the growing and sinister drugs menace. The Executive is soft on law and order. Unless a more robust approach is taken, we will not make progress.

The Deputy Minister for Social Justice (Ms Margaret Curran): Will Bill Aitken give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: He is winding up.

Bill Aitken: I am in my last minute.

We must consider the national health service and recognise that many of the problems are historical. Heavy drinking, heavy smoking—if I dare say that to the minister—and poor diet are significant contributing factors. The Executive is not approaching the problems properly. We left the Executive a successful legacy in Glasgow and other cities. Please do not squander that.

I move amendment S1M-1922.2, to leave out from “endorses” to end and insert:

“notes the Scottish Executive’s approach to urban regeneration but considers this to be inadequate to achieve the desired result of regenerating both inner city areas and peripheral estates.”

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will have to keep members to their predetermined times.

16:03

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): This is one of the debates when, behind all the party rhetoric, there is more consensus than might be imagined. Nevertheless, there are major disputes between us.

I was struck by the simplistic analysis that we heard from Bill Aitken on the anti-social tenant issue. He does not seem to recognise that such matters have many and complex causes. It should not be a matter of the Mr Plod response. I was struck, too, by the forward-looking and comprehensive approach with which Jackie Baillie began the debate—I congratulate her on that—and the general response that there has been from colleagues in other parties.

The main point that has been recognised is that, in the words of an old Liberal slogan, “People count”. This is about people; people are, in a sense, the problem, but are also the dynamic to the resolution of the problem.

This is a worthwhile and, in some senses, overdue debate. It is somewhat ill focused, as it concentrates on a neighbourhood renewal statement that is yet to come, but we can see the outline within which the debate is being conducted.

Although the success of the Scottish Parliament will be tested on many issues, it will stand or fall on its ability to tackle the issues that we are discussing today: the problems and challenges of urban Scotland, especially our cities and in particular Scotland’s largest city, Glasgow.

As I indicated, the matter must be approached with some humility. I do not think that any party has covered itself in glory, in the post-war period, in the approach that it has taken to the problems. Some of the soulless estates that we have inherited from past generations, in areas such as Glasgow, should be cause for concern to anyone who proposes simplistic solutions to the problems. However, the debate should not centre on a whinge that particular areas do not get enough money for particular problems or priorities, or that they compare badly with other areas. Although certain issues about funding must be addressed, it is up to the Parliament to set out the vision and the direction of how to build on the positive aspects of city life. I will attempt to highlight the broad context, with a sideswipe at what is going on in the outside world now that a general election is coming.

Although the arguments are not all black and white, the plain fact is that, after 18 years of Conservative Government and four years of Labour Government, the gap between rich and poor has become wider than ever. As the minister mentioned in an intervention, in 1979, 9 per cent of the UK population was below the poverty line of half the average income. By 1995-96, that figure had risen to 24 per cent; 4.5 million children across the UK were living in poverty, almost one in five of whom were suffering from multiple deprivation. What a challenge—and an opportunity—for a radical Government, but instead the Labour Government in London stuck to Tory spending limits for two years and continued the income tax-cutting agenda. The resources that could have made a major impact on the problem were used for debt repayment. At the start of this general election campaign, the Prime Minister has ruled out any tax increases at the top end of the scale that might fund social reform. That view certainly contrasts with the position of the Liberal Democrats.

Jackie Baillie: Does not Robert Brown recognise—as he has done in the past—that, since Labour came into power both in the UK and in partnership with the Liberal Democrats in Scotland, we have lifted 100,000 children out of poverty, which is something that should be commended? Does he accept that we have achieved that aim by working in partnership?

Robert Brown: I accept the minister’s comments, but my point is that much that required to be done has not been done, and that the ability of the Scottish Parliament and the Executive to deal with such issues has been hampered by some of the failings of the Labour Government in Westminster.

There is no magic solution to the problems. The Conservatives made a valiant start with their £0.5

billion investment in the new life for urban Scotland initiative, which was in many ways the precursor of later policies. However, the Central Research Unit reported recently that the outputs on the ground were less impressive, with no significant improvements in any of the aspects relating to quality of life on the estates. The social trends behind all those issues show greater breakdown of family units and communities, which means that more challenges must be met.

The Scottish Parliament and the Executive have brought about an increased focus on urban regeneration issues through social justice targets, voluntary sector initiatives, health promotion themes, student support arrangements and community-based housing and stock transfer. A lot is happening, and those measures will lead to a long-overdue step change in the general quality of life for future generations.

We must keep several issues clearly in view as we proceed. First, there is the crucial importance of community control and the ability of local people to shape their local environment. Secondly, there is a need for community. There is no gain to community life if local shops and services wither; if successful projects are disbanded when their funding expires; or if local banks close and people go elsewhere to shop or to play. Thirdly, economic regeneration is extremely important. There must be employment opportunities, and we must ensure that income is retained in the local area and that family income is built. Finally, there is the need for choice. Although the monopolistic, soulless, choiceless estates of the 1960s might have been physically better than what went before, I welcome unreservedly the arrival of the community-based approach to the problem, the diversification of housing choice and the local control of housing. Furthermore, we must keep the green lungs of our cities and not lose sight of other aspects beyond the bricks and concrete of housing development projects.

At the end of the day, people count. That notion should be the hallmark of all our policies, and I think that it is beginning to infuse everything we do. We must proceed on that basis and the framework that the minister outlined in her opening speech is a good step in that direction. I support the Executive motion.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to open debate. Because of overruns, I will have to keep members to four minutes, with a warning tap at three and a half minutes.

16:09

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the debate. Although the temptation just to talk about my own home city of Glasgow is powerful, I

recognise that the debate also centres on urban communities outwith cities. Forty-three per cent of Scots live in or just outside a city, and we must recognise the tensions and dualities that that creates.

I am not tempted to dwell on the year zero approach of the Tories, in which they eliminate the reality of the supposedly golden period of Scottish political, social and economic life in the 1980s and 1990s, under Thatcherism and John Major, whose loss is much lamented. We are speaking on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Glasgow eastern area renewal project in the east end of Glasgow. That project came to a shuddering halt with the introduction of a Tory Government in 1979; that, if anything, was a symbol of the change in attitude—from comprehensive urban regeneration to a piecemeal, non-strategic approach—that was indicative of Bill Aitken's political predecessors. I would never define Bill Aitken as a Thatcherite Tory, but trying to define the Thatcher years as a period of greatness in Scottish political history is a denial of the reality that we all suffered from.

Shakespeare once wrote:

"What is the city but the people?"

That is the theme that has come across in speeches by Robert Brown and others. We are learning from previous strategies that regeneration is not just about things that are done, but about encouraging individuals to take ownership of their communities and to change them for the future. The GEAR project managed to achieve some stability in unpropitious economic circumstances in the mid to late 1970s, following the oil crisis and the economic dislocation. It managed to mitigate against some of that weakness, but the regeneration was housing-led and other issues that needed to be tackled were not identified.

Bill Aitken mentioned one important thing about which Labour politicians in Glasgow have learned. We have learned that we must focus on educational opportunities and the quality of education in our city. That is a massive challenge, not only in Glasgow but in Dundee and other major UK cities. Unless we tackle that, we will have a double problem: the aspirational families will not use the state education system, and their not being in that system will work against the interests of families from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds, who might find self-improvement through education.

I thank Kenny Gibson for his—alleged—contribution to the great vision when there was a change in the political leadership in Glasgow. Allegedly, the advice that I received from him swung the Labour group in Glasgow. That would be a unique achievement, if it were true.

We require—members from other cities in Scotland will identify with this—a critical strategy for city regeneration. I shall touch on a couple of related issues, as those connections need to be made. The great problem for Glasgow and other cities is that there has been prosperity for those who have been in work, but significant poverty for those who have not. The challenge is to redress the balance. My experience, and that of my colleagues, my friends and my family, is that education is the only route that makes a difference. We must deal with education issues.

The second issue that we need to address—which is close to the heart of Robert Brown, who spoke about it recently—is civil leadership and how we use the language of civic leadership to deal with the many concerns that come from the communities. Any critical examination of city regeneration must identify how we can get forms of governance that make a genuine difference and that are about stakeholders and people participating.

I will conclude with a story that should touch the heart of the Deputy Minister for Social Justice. When I was a councillor in the Easterhouse area, a Polish cinematographer came to make a film about crime, violence and gang fighting. He planned to call the film “Easterhouse”. We complained, as we thought that that title had negative connotations for the community, and the title was changed to “Small Faces”. However, the Polish cinematographer, who came from a Catholic Christian background, said that he thought that Easterhouse was a beautiful name—Easter meaning resurrection and renewal, and house meaning something that people come home to. If we can similarly redefine our city communities in a much more positive way, we will make a genuine difference.

I commend the Executive’s approach to urban regeneration, and I hope that it will listen to members who have experience—Des McNulty, myself, perhaps even Kenny Gibson—and allow them to contribute.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Linda Fabiani, to be followed by Des McNulty.

16:14

Linda Fabiani (Central Scotland) (SNP): What a team, eh?

I was pleased to hear that the minister is interested in hearing what all members have to say. I take that in the spirit in which it was offered. The vast majority of us in the chamber care about urban regeneration and want to find a solution that will make a huge difference to our country in the long term—and we have to think about the long term if we are being realistic. Kenny Gibson’s

amendment was put forward in the same spirit of genuine co-operation and I ask members to consider the amendment in that spirit. One part of the amendment, in particular, that strikes me as eminently sensible is the suggestion that we should undertake

“to carry out a comprehensive review of regeneration policy in our towns and cities with specific regard to infrastructure”.

The infrastructure of our cities, which has been declining, is one of the most important elements of this discussion. There seems to be a Glasgow bias in today’s debate and I can speak about Glasgow as much as any other member. Having said that, Glasgow is a major city in our country and has suffered most from deprivation over the piece.

There are, of course, positive stories in Glasgow, particularly in relation to the folk who take on board the community responsibility ethos and work to improve their areas. Bill Aitken mentioned the idea of individual responsibility. Individual responsibility is fine and we should all have it—although we might disagree about what it entails—but only collective community responsibility can make real differences in the regeneration of a city that has been run down in the way that Glasgow has.

It is sad that many people believe that we can regenerate some areas but forget about the cities. I do not believe that. The only way in which we can regenerate west central Scotland is by regenerating Glasgow and examining the services that it provides, not only to the people who live there but to the peripheral areas.

I am concerned by suburban creep. In my area, people in towns such as East Kilbride, Cumbernauld, Bothwell and Hamilton are not happy about some of the development processes that are going on. A lot of the problems are caused by the fact that Glasgow, which is the main hub—

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Linda Fabiani talks about urban creep and the perception that Glasgow is a problem. Does she agree that Glasgow should instead be perceived as a place that generates huge amounts of wealth that is not necessarily directed towards the most needy communities in the city? I recognise that there is a strong case for examining the business rates, but we should at least acknowledge that the Scottish Executive is attempting to target resources appropriately within the city, despite the protests, from those who complain about urban creep outside the city, that Glasgow is being treated as a special case.

Linda Fabiani: I am not sure why Johann Lamont felt it necessary to make an intervention, as we appear to be on the same side of the

argument. I believe strongly that, to help west central Scotland, we must consider the positive parts of Glasgow and use them in our attempt to build a good and strong community in the area of which Glasgow is the centre. No one will ever hear me criticising input into Glasgow because, if anywhere deserves it, Glasgow does. Everybody should recognise the part that Glasgow plays in Scotland.

Some concerns have been expressed in today's debate. The minister mentioned community planning. It is good for such a scheme to have a name, but, often, communities feel that they are being failed by their planning process. That is why I would like a review of urban regeneration. We have to ensure that people have an input. The process is about more than simply putting money into small communities and telling people that they have input and ownership and should get on with the task. We have to consider the wider infrastructure of the country. The planning regulations at present do not promote the regeneration of cities or their peripheral small towns. Many such small towns are dying and the only generation that is going on within them is housing; we are forgetting about the shops and the community facilities that have to be put in place as well.

I ask the minister to take that in the spirit in which it is meant. I admire much of what is going on; I think that some of it could be done better, but that is the nature of politics—other colleagues will speak about that.

We need to look at the whole picture, not just identify specific areas to put money into. Let us have a plan and a real vision for the future.

16:20

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): I am delighted to participate in this debate on urban regeneration, and I very much welcome the comments that the minister made in her speech.

The Parliament has spent much of its time dealing specifically with rural issues, and that is perhaps understandable in the context of the foot-and-mouth epidemic. It is vitally important that we specifically discuss urban issues, because the people who suffer most from long-term unemployment, from poor health, from inadequate educational opportunities, from child poverty and from drugs misuse are found in urban areas. Almost every one of the major priorities that the Scottish Executive has identified for Scotland to tackle is found in its most acute form in urban areas. We should explicitly recognise the urban dimension of problems, because that often frames the way in which we can achieve results.

It is important to note—and I take issue with Bill Aitken on this—that urbanisation is not just about the inner cities and the peripheral areas. Clydebank, which I represent, suffers from all the urban problems that are identified in Glasgow. In some dimensions, notably unemployment, the problems are more acute. That is a product of the area's history. In responding to that particular history and situation, we must find the appropriate solutions, and they have to be a combination of elements, because no single policy or group of policies will deal with the problems that we face.

The question of how we bring the different policy initiatives together and of how we manage them will determine the effectiveness with which we deal with the problems. Across the range of problems that the Government is trying to solve, it has generally identified the correct issues to tackle, and I have no quarrel with the priorities that have been identified. However, some serious questions need to be asked about how some of the priorities are being addressed. There is a question of whether enough attention is being devoted to each dimension and of whether the various dimensions are being brought together properly.

In Clydebank, it is important for there to be a programme of environmental consolidation, particularly of the area that Kenny Gibson mentioned. He went down the Clyde; I have been down it frequently. There is dereliction, and we need to bring some of the riverside areas back into economic use. That requires infrastructural investment. We also require housing investment, which is vitally important if we are to improve the conditions in which people live. We need to combine physical, economic, housing and social regeneration with initiatives that focus on improving the circumstances of people and on giving people skills and support to come back into employment.

We have to do that on a partnership basis, but we really need partnership plus. If I was given a pound for every time that I sat in a room with 10 people from different agencies talking very generally about what they would like to do, but without an outcome being reached, I would be a lot better off than I am. Partnership has to lead to outcomes. Part of the way in which we need to achieve that is through the Government giving a clear steer. It can do that by saying explicitly to the various agencies that it does not want them to discuss problems or issue policies, but to deliver definite change for people. That needs to be done in my area, and many other people in the chamber who represent urban areas are asking for the same thing. We want action, we want delivery, and we want it quickly.

We also require sustainability and need to move

from a position where much of the regeneration budget is coming through challenge budgets, so that the need for it can be demonstrated through various criteria, to one where there is an actual process of sustainability. That means that it is embedded locally, is appropriate to local needs and brings about medium-term and long-term change. That is what we are looking for. We are moving in the right direction. I only express impatience that we are not moving forward more quickly.

16:25

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Lothians) (Con): I am very glad to say a few words on this subject, which I had to deal with at first hand at the Scottish Office a few years ago. I remember vividly one year looking to see whether there were any end-year savings and finding about £3 million. I was told that the best place for the money to be allocated was Glasgow, because Glasgow could spend it immediately, so that is where it was allocated. However, the headline in the evening paper said "Insult to Glasgow", so I thought that sometimes one just cannot win. Then the telephone rang. It was Pat Lally, who said, "I just want you to know privately that I made a mistake. I thought that the supplementary allocation that you have just issued was the main allocation and I wish to withdraw what I said." I have to say that he did not do so publicly, but after that I got a very good welcome in Glasgow.

I learned that partnership is the key to success. If the skills of the private sector, the local authorities and the Administration are drawn in, a great deal can be achieved very quickly. The need for job creation must be taken into account as well as the desperate need for shops and access to shops. Planning mistakes were made originally. When Easterhouse was planned, it was not planned as a new town, with jobs to go with it. We have to address job creation in great detail. We have to consult the local communities. Local house condition surveys are terribly important. The profile of housing—for example, whether it is for the disabled or people with special needs, for low-cost rent or home ownership—can be determined after full consultation with the electorate.

I will tell a story about the late John Smith, with whom I happened to be on a visit to India, during which he asked what I would describe as an urban regeneration question. We were visiting a nuclear power station alongside tremendous squalor. He asked the director how he justified all the expenditure on an experimental nuclear power station when there was unbelievable squalor on a tremendous scale. The director replied, "It takes time." If we wish to accelerate progress, we require partnership at local and national level. We

need to bring in every sector to maximise the success that can be achieved.

This is a subject on which there should be continuity. I was very glad that the Minister for Social Justice took on board one Tory creation and absorbed it. I see that she is shaking her head, but I shall tell her what it is: Scottish Homes. Not only has Scottish Homes been absorbed by the Executive, it is now part of the Administration. Some ideas are good ideas regardless of where they come from. With that, I wish the minister success. I hope that she will accelerate progress in this area.

16:28

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): I will build on Frank McAveety's reminiscence about how Easterhouse got its name. When I was appointed as a head teacher there, I piled all my children into a car on a very wet Sunday and took them out towards Easterhouse. The youngest one asked whether that was where the Easter bunnies come from. When we got there, I saw from the depth of the water on the playing fields that they would have to be amphibians to live there.

Before I entered politics, it struck me that no matter what national or local government was in charge, there seemed to be endless degeneration in urban areas in Scotland. Of course, there are many reasons for that. We all know that it is very demoralising for people in such situations to make lives for themselves, be optimistic and feed their ambitions.

Urban degeneration is not exclusively the result of a downturn in industry or a change in society. Sometimes bad planning brings about urban degeneration and affects whole town centres. For example, Paisley centre is suffering because of the proximity of the Braehead shopping centre, which was more or less imposed on the area against the will of the local council. IKEA will open shortly and will be a further challenge to the shopkeepers of Paisley. Shops that are closing afflict the pedestrian area in the new town centre of Paisley, and the town is trying to reinvent itself as a university and office centre. Newly planned shopping centres in nearby Johnstone will force the centre of gravity in that town to change. Who knows what the long-term effects of that will be.

To particularise, I will talk about Inverclyde, as Glasgow has been spoken about a lot, with perfect justification. Inverclyde is in the unenviable position of having lost 1,000 people a year for the past 20 years, and faces the prospect of its population continuing to decline at that level. Its URBAN II application was predicated on the need to reverse the precarious demographic trend in Port Glasgow, which has four wards, each with

people who could be helped by urban regeneration. Three of the wards have great opportunities. There is a chance of reviving the old Gourrock rope works—which is in Port Glasgow, for those who do not know—and the town centre and of building a ferry terminal.

The fourth is an area of chronic social need. I have met the residents of that area, decent people who have seen the value of their flats eroded by the presence of anti-social tenants and who are afraid to go out at night. Landlords rent out property indiscriminately and a lot of drug dealing takes place. Years ago, a housing action area was planned, but that has fallen through several times.

I spoke about regeneration during the debate on European structural funds, when I was concerned that the Scottish Executive's interpretation of the rules of URBAN II might lead to areas of Port Glasgow or Clydebank south being dropped from the proposal. At worst, if the total available funds cannot be increased, the total sum available under URBAN II should be fairly allocated, on a strict equal sum per capita basis, across both communities.

I have a letter that arrived from the Executive yesterday that says:

"it is important that we do not spread resources too thinly".

The letter also says that the Executive wants to

"ensure that resources are targeted on clearly defined areas with significant problems".

I take the view that the second quotation is open to at least two interpretations, of which one is that narrow targeting of resources remains an option. Given that Clydebank south is too small an area to be divided, such an approach could lead to the elimination of an area of Port Glasgow—the larger part of the URBAN II application—from the final plan.

That must not happen. It would be socially, economically and, in relation to regeneration, completely unacceptable; it would also be politically unacceptable. When the deputy minister sums up, I would be delighted if she would assure me, and the people of Port Glasgow, that no area of the town will be left out of that proposal for urban regeneration.

16:32

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I commend the ministers for having good intentions and for having had some clear successes in achieving those intentions, which is harder. Given that urban regeneration is such a huge subject, it is obvious that there is a long way still to go. However, the idea of the neighbourhood renewal statement, if sufficiently flexible and varied, is a

good one. We must learn from best practice in this sphere, as in so many others. In local areas, many good things are happening that could be replicated elsewhere. In particular, I commend the minister for consulting on the funding of the voluntary sector. The Finance Committee has agreed that it should also examine—perhaps from a slightly different angle—the funding of the voluntary sector, which, I believe, is a critical sector.

Lots of factors are involved, such as a progressive taxation system, which the present UK Government will not give us, partnership—as explained by James Douglas-Hamilton and other members—and the private sector. The fundamental line that I will take is that of developing the point made by Robert Brown and other members: urban regeneration is all about people. We must develop communities and consider them as groups of people. We tend to consider them more as categories, such as kids who need a bit more education or pensioners who need a bit more help, rather than considering the community as a whole and getting the community to help itself.

Despite the ministers' good intentions, there is still too much of a talk-down, a parachuting-in of David Livingstone types to sort out people who cannot sort out their own affairs. In a sense, that is easy to do. It is much harder to give them help to sort themselves out. Stirrers-up of local activity are needed rather than gauleiters. Much more development is possible to help communities to help themselves.

There are many organisations in the voluntary sector. Colleagues must have had the same experience of those. A few hundred pounds can often make a huge difference to the efficacy of a local group working at the front line of deprivation. We must have a system that makes it easier to give that sort of money out. We do not want such money wasted, but we do not want huge, disproportionate amounts of accountancy stopping people from doing useful things. Sometimes those people will fail, but they will learn from their failures.

We must work together at a system that makes communities come alive, develops small businesses and encourages people to take in one another's washing and wash one another's windows, for example. If things occasionally happen that the tax system does not know about, that is tough. It is better that things happen, even if some of them takes place in a marginally grey economy, than that things do not happen at all.

Ministers are going in the right direction but they must help to create communities in a better way. Schemes such as social inclusion partnerships suffer from the involvement of the usual suspects rather than new people. In many areas, the Labour

party is dominant and many of those who are active are involved in the Labour party. Ministers must show enough imagination to draw in people from the outside. They should not just have the process dominated by the usual suspects, who are often members of the Labour party.

The ministers are doing well and I hope that they will do even better in the future.

16:37

Kate MacLean (Dundee West) (Lab): I welcome this opportunity to have a debate that concentrates solely on urban Scotland. Since January, there have been 16 debates, ministerial statements and Opposition debates that were specific to rural and fishing communities. This is only the second debate on urban communities specifically. I realise that farming and fishing have been in crisis recently but I hope that Parliament also realises that parts of urban Scotland have been in crisis for many years. Many people see no end to that.

My main knowledge is of my own city, Dundee. Dundee is a tale of two cities. The Dundee City Council website highlights the fact that Dundee is a flourishing centre for life sciences research, the arts, and high-tech manufacturing and telecommunications as well as a centre of excellence for higher education, leisure and entertainment. That is true. However, the "Constituency Health Report: 2001" for Dundee West, which was produced by the Office for Public Health in Scotland, paints a gloomier picture of below-average educational attainment for school leavers, a high proportion of income support claimants, below-average household income and a higher-than-average instance of teenage pregnancies. That is also true.

Unlike some other urban areas, Dundee has just got on with the task of regeneration. The local authority and its partners have had a clear strategic vision and a commitment to partnership. Dundee has piloted many practices in urban regeneration that are now being adopted as good practice by other local authorities and recommended as good practice by the Scottish Executive. Community planning partnerships, which Jackie Baillie said are relatively new, were adopted in Dundee almost 10 years ago. The Ardler estate is the only—or first—success story in Scotland for new housing partnerships.

Dundee City Council recognises the need to raise the quality of life for Dundonians as well as improve the image of Dundee, by investing heavily in the arts, leisure and entertainment. It was only possible to deliver those strategies through partnership. I welcome the Scottish Executive's commitment to build on the good work that has

already taken place. In particular, I welcome the substantial additional funding that is being made available through various initiatives.

I have two concerns. I do not suppose that the minister would expect me to get to my feet without having concerns. The first does not come directly under the minister's remit—the cities review. I was heartened when that review was announced in Dundee some time ago, but it seems to have disappeared. Although it does not come under the minister's remit, I hope that she will take the matter up with the Executive and discover what is happening with that review.

Jackie Baillie: I can give the member an absolute assurance that the cities review will happen. It will consider the economic, social and environmental factors that are the key drivers of change and growth in our cities. Full details will be provided shortly by the appropriate minister. We are in discussion with local government in Dundee, Glasgow and elsewhere, in order to make progress.

Kate MacLean: That is reassuring, because that review is crucial to the regeneration of the cities and other large urban areas.

My second concern is the criteria for eligibility to access funding—in particular, to access the better neighbourhood services fund. We have to look seriously at moving away from area-based initiatives to theme-based initiatives. Many areas have started to undergo massive transformations and improvement because of being involved in SIPs. However, the experience in Dundee has been that an area-based approach tends to displace problems of deprivation to other marginal areas. Unless we concentrate on addressing specific themes of deprivation across all urban areas, there is a danger that we will just be storing up problems for the future. I would be grateful if the minister could address that point in her summing-up, and if the Executive could look seriously at flexibility for that and for future initiatives.

16:42

Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): When I tell people what I do for a living—which I try to do as seldom as possible—I am often asked to describe my constituency. I say that it is fairly diverse. I mention what could almost be described as a rural fringe, with a few farms, towns such as South Queensferry and small villages. I mention the zoo, Ingliston showground and the bridges—and I mention Muirhouse. Immediately I do that, I see a change on people's faces. I see recognition—but it is recognition of a perception, rather than recognition of the truth. One of the most heartening things that I have experienced in the two years that I have been a member of the

Parliament has been seeing at first hand the incredible amount of work that has been done in Muirhouse and in the greater Pilton area of north Edinburgh. I have seen that alongside my colleague Malcolm Chisholm, who represents the other part of that area.

It is wrong always to see areas such as Muirhouse in terms of their problems; they are also areas of great opportunity. I look forward to hearing what the Executive has to say in the neighbourhood renewal statement and in the cities review. The Executive has certainly learned some lessons from the work that has been done on the ground in Muirhouse. The impact that urban regeneration has had on the area is clear to see. The work has been co-ordinated by North Edinburgh Area Renewal, which links a whole host of partners.

The key message of the debate has been the importance of partnership—partnership on the ground and at national level, backed up by a vision from the Parliament and proper resources. In my constituency, the council, Scottish Homes, the enterprise company, Lothian Health, the Pilton partnership, Telford College, business groups and community groups are all working together. We have seen key infrastructure successes. There have been 1,100 new homes—many of them housing association homes. There have been new mixed-tenure homes.

Margaret Curran came to the constituency a few weeks ago. Everywhere Margaret goes, the paparazzi are there, clicking away. On that occasion, a photographer, who was waiting with bated breath for her arrival, turned to me and asked, "Which houses are council houses, and which are private?" I said, "Can you not tell the difference?" He said, "No." I said, "Well, that's the whole point. There shouldn't be a difference. People should live in a decent home. It shouldn't matter what label is attached to it—it is still their home."

It was important that Margaret Curran came to the launch of the new north Edinburgh housing plan, because it is important not only that we monitor the success of the work that has gone on so far, but that we plan for the future—and that is what is happening. The population decline in north Edinburgh has been halted and the number of vacant houses has fallen by half. However, as someone said earlier, regeneration goes beyond bricks and mortar. It is about regenerating people's education, health and life chances—it is about much more than houses. I am pleased to see that, in my area, progress is being made on a proposed arts centre, a new library is being built and there are new schools—albeit built through public-private partnerships. The essence of such projects is partnership.

We require help from the Executive when people try to realise a vision. One of the visions for the future of north Edinburgh is the waterfront development. Not only is the involvement of ministers such as Jackie Baillie and Wendy Alexander critical, so is that of the Minister for Transport. Sarah Boyack must realise that, in effect, we are building a new town, which links up and reconnects the people of north Edinburgh with other parts of the city. That development will give Edinburgh a waterfront of which it can be proud. The fundamental thing that it needs is a transport infrastructure that acknowledges that level of development and makes it a reality.

I back the Executive's work. There is an incredible challenge ahead of us. However, given the speeches that we have heard this afternoon, it is clear that, aside from the odd gripe, we all wish the Executive well in the challenge ahead.

16:46

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland)

(Con): The ministers will recognise our usual consensual and positive approach to such a debate and I hope to participate on that basis. I welcome the listening approach that the Minister for Social Justice took at the beginning, although I was a little disappointed by her narrow knowledge of social history since the industrial revolution. Perhaps there are some lessons that she could learn by going back into that history.

Having given that lecture, I should say that I am a little disappointed that Glasgow, although it has its problems, has occupied such a large part of the debate. I was pleased that Kate MacLean talked for at least one of the cities in the north-east. Colin Campbell made the point that when it comes to re-examining the rules for structural funds and so on, Aberdeen bitterly regrets the Executive's decision to move away from the ward-based survey and consider cities in the round. Every one of our cities has huge pockets of deprivation, some of which are larger than others, some coterminous and some not. We must go beyond the surface of the issue.

Today's debate has focused on people and I welcome the fact that so many members have talked about the need for a people-centred approach. The subject of the debate is people and their communities.

Degeneration—as someone called it—and dereliction of the inner cities breeds a lack of confidence. That lack of confidence leads to a turning away from the establishment and from those with the power to do anything about the problems. That is not a new thing, but has been happening over the last century. However, we are all working to adjust that.

Members mentioned the requirement for planning. Planning must be refocused and we must reconsider the consultation process attached to it. I hope that the ministers will approach the Association of Scottish Community Councils, which is very active in considering planning apolitically. I pay the association credit for its work. Some of the community councils in our cities, particularly the inner cities, are very good and deserve some support from local authorities. Regrettably, not all the community councils get the support that they require. That leads us to the voluntary sector—about which Donald Gorrie talks regularly—and the need to support it in communities.

Conservatives believe that communities must be helped to help themselves. If we give people ownership of the process and offer them support, they will develop. They will raise their horizons, put together their efforts and work better together. We must consider town centres and communities and what we need to be doing in the inner cities—that is where a lot of the problems are, not just at the periphery. We need to raise civic pride and to involve civic leadership, as Frank McAveety suggested.

It is important to have pride in one's city, but private sector finance can also regenerate shopping access, shopping facilities and recreation facilities, which give people a reason to get involved in their cities. That can lift the quality of building design and planning applications, which can roll on into rebuilding city centre estates.

I deplore what the minister said about some Conservatives in the past not looking after council property. When there was a Conservative council in Stirling, it outstripped anything that had gone before in the renewal of double glazing, central heating and so on. It is incumbent upon ministers to recognise quality when it happens. The Conservative council also successfully dealt with anti-social tenants.

On community representation, I hope that the Minister for Social Justice will take time out to visit communities and consult them. It is important that people are involved. Local authorities have a major role to play in that, but it is not just local authorities that must be involved.

Health was mentioned frequently in the debate and it is an important factor in raising confidence, but law and order are also important. Many people who live in inner cities are terrified to go out at night. Because of under-resourcing, police forces have been unable to cope with what has been happening. It is important that the Executive accepts the message that it has a role to play in making communities safe.

In conclusion, I welcome the fact that we are

debating inner cities, not just rural areas, although both are important. It is important that we address inner cities, but it is essential that we do not focus just on the central belt.

16:52

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): The debate has been interesting. I appreciate the tone with which the Minister for Social Justice opened it. She started by talking about regeneration over the past half century. I was struck by the fact that some of the first regeneration, particularly in this city, happened many centuries ago. Part of the social re-engineering then was the development of the new town on the other side of Princes Street. Interestingly, the issue of new towns was one of the themes that kept coming up in the debate. Kenny Gibson talked about the impact of new towns on Glasgow. We also heard from Margaret Smith that we may have another new town in Edinburgh, but this time on the waterfront.

Bill Aitken, who traded guilt with Frank McAveety over Glasgow, used the term *mea culpa*. It struck me that we are having a debate about urban regeneration, yet as Robert Brown pointed out, the debate is unfocused, because it centres on a statement that we have not yet received, although the minister said that she was canvassing views on what should be in that statement.

I make the plea that in examining regeneration we do not just consider cities and larger areas. Given what has happened in West Lothian with Motorola and Bathgate, the issue is also about towns. In its drugs inquiry, the Social Inclusion, Housing and Voluntary Sector Committee looked at places in Ayrshire and Fife. I hope that the minister will consider the west of West Lothian and the east of Lanarkshire, because regeneration should not be seen only in terms of cities and urban areas; it is about wider communities.

Some interesting comments have been made in the debate. The Minister for Social Justice referred to the new executive agency that will take over from Scottish Homes, which will be addressed in the long haul that is the passage of the Housing (Scotland) Bill. Therein lies one of the problems, because we are not sure what we are focusing on. I hope that that will become clearer as we move along.

I welcome the announcement of £3.7 million to support community representatives. I have said before in the chamber that we have received representations from members of SIPs who feel that they do not have the support that they need to be equal players in the regeneration process, so I am glad that there has been a response to that.

Kenny Gibson talked about the doughnut effect in Glasgow. Johann Lamont also talked about

Glasgow. I agree that cities should be hubs, and that they can be dynamos. How we view situations is as important as what we do.

In a considered speech, Des McNulty said that policies should not just be talked about, they should be delivered. Kenny Gibson made the point that environmental improvement is important. That is one theme that must be part of urban regeneration.

Infrastructure is also needed. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton referred to the need for job creation. Sometimes getting people to the jobs is the problem, not creating jobs. That is why the transport infrastructure and regeneration arguments are important.

Robert Brown made an unusually party-political, point-scoring speech. Are the pressures of 400 amendments to the Housing (Scotland) Bill getting to him, or was the speech influenced by an announcement a few days ago? He talked about poverty, which is at a high level and has hardly been alleviated. The Scottish Parliament's responsibility is to contribute to ensuring that regeneration is not only economic, but social.

The UK Government's response to the proposals of the English urban task force talks about the need for civic leadership, which Frank McAveety mentioned. What is the balance between urban renaissance and helping deprived communities? At what point do those tasks meet, so that we are not simply helping poor people—the patronising attitude of the past that has bedevilled so much regeneration? We must develop partnerships that work. I intervened to ask the Minister for Social Justice about local authorities, which she had not mentioned and subsequently did. An equal partnership is required. I will be interested in the developments on community planning, which will make a difference.

Kate MacLean mentioned Dundee. In talking about the city of discovery, she attempted to rediscover the cities review that is disappearing off the radar. A serious point must be made about Dundee. This week, the director of finance at Dundee City Council said that he had been allocated only £8.4 million for capital projects, when the council needs £428 million for a decent level of capital provision.

Our cities have problems, but they also have opportunities. They need leadership. It is up to the Scottish Parliament to make a difference to regeneration. Mistakes have been made. I am glad to say that the SNP was not party to the problems of post-war Scotland, which Robert Brown mentioned, where communities were devastated because of a lack of regeneration and housing provision.

Much reference was made to community ownership and new housing partnership arrangements. I warn members that all parties examine the issue from the point of finance, or of getting the vote through. It is about time that we dealt with regeneration quality issues and ensured that we have the best provisions for the future.

We should learn from other places. Kenny Gibson talked about Phoenix and Baltimore. We must look beyond our horizons and consider international best practice. Our regeneration policies must be fit for a first-class Scotland in a first class new century.

16:58

The Deputy Minister for Social Justice (Ms Margaret Curran): I am delighted to respond to the debate on behalf of the Executive. The debate was interesting, and, unusually for the chamber, constructive. Frank McAveety made one of the best speeches. He outlined a positive framework that we can develop and made an honest analysis of some of the challenges that we face. The debate laid foundations for progress.

Jackie Baillie identified three essential features of the Executive's approach to urban regeneration and Fiona Hyslop referred to the first. We are trying to reconnect and create linkages of households with one another and communities with economic opportunities. Urban renaissance should ensure at last that the poor begin to benefit from some of those policies.

We also intend to develop strong social networks and build community capacity. The theme throughout the debate was community. Members use and abuse the term "community". Sometimes we are far too romantic and do not think through some of the details. We are making not only sectoral connections, such as those between jobs and neighbourhoods or health and housing, but vertical connections, such as those between the Government, local authorities and communities. The realisation of strong and vibrant communities is a key plank of our social justice strategies. For the first time, we are concentrating delivery on local action. That is a fundamental characteristic of our approach. [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Patricia Ferguson): Order.

Ms Curran: I am aware that I am on the graveyard shift and I thank the Deputy Presiding Officer for helping me out.

We want to deliver community-based approaches so that people living in our most disadvantaged areas are empowered to participate in regeneration. Many members, in particular the Liberal Democrats, have talked

about that today. What is needed is development of the capacity to support the growth of active, informed citizens and effective local action—not just because that is worthy in itself, but because of the outcomes that that kind of process delivers and what people get out of it.

We are supporting community activities such as credit unions, local child care co-operatives and community infrastructures, which enable community responses to current initiatives, including housing, drugs and health. I am surprised that Fiona Hyslop has not yet recognised that people are at the centre of our housing policy. Community response is also at the heart of solutions to the drug problems that Bill Aitken mentioned. Community involvement in local partnerships is important for community learning and community safety.

Our focus is on communities that are experiencing exclusion and disadvantage. That is not to stigmatise communities, or to expect our most disadvantaged people to do the work of Government. It is not about those communities working twice as hard to receive the same services and opportunities that are afforded to people from more affluent and confident communities. Our approach recognises that some neighbourhoods require a step change in service delivery and in the community's confidence and capacity to participate. Undoubtedly, the new demands that we make present a challenge to services: to the professionals involved and to the structure of our public services. That is why we have increased investment in mainstream services. We have also increased the focus on our most deprived neighbourhoods.

Kate MacLean made very interesting points about the better neighbourhood services fund. On a recent visit to Dundee, I was very impressed by the work of Dundee City Council and some of the services that it is delivering. I was also impressed by the work of the social inclusion partnerships. I want to stress to Kate MacLean that there is flexibility in the better neighbourhood fund—the fund is about innovation and creativity—and that our guidance will be on the strength of outcomes. Whilst I accept the point that she is making about area-based distribution, I am not convinced that we must abandon that approach. We are trying to develop a theme and area-based approach to funding.

We are also looking to partnerships—such as the social inclusion partnerships—to add even more. That will happen not simply by partners levering in action, but by developing local plans that fully engage local residents. It is not political rhetoric when we say that our approach is about giving people a say in the things that matter to them. Research shows that substantial

consultation with local people will lead to a full definition of the problems they face. That will help us to find the most appropriate ways of dealing with those problems and to deliver solutions.

As I said earlier, communities across Scotland are very different. They are not the romantic places that members imply when they mention them in the chamber. Communities can be very difficult places to live. We should never underestimate the scale of the problems that local people face.

It is uncharacteristic of me to break the consensual approach, but I want to say to the Tories that their proposals for sin bins and for dealing with anti-social behaviour take us back to the start of the very problems that we are trying to solve today. Tory policies have given us the scale of urban degeneration that we have today and sin bins will do nothing to help us solve that.

It is not a lack of responsibility on our part that puts empowerment in the hands of Scottish people. We take learning very seriously. We take monitoring very seriously. The targets and milestones that are tracked in our social justice strategy will take us forward. We are expecting, through that strategy, to see improvements in health, jobs, education and decreasing levels of crime. To emphasise our commitment to learning from experience and evidence, we have announced various initiatives. The new executive agency will also contribute to that.

During our debate on regeneration in Glasgow, when the Parliament was in Glasgow last year, I emphasised that, although people are important, places are important too. We need a strategy to marry people and place. We have systematically worked to turn around the major problems that we face. We have done that by investment, by recognising the proper role of public services—with a proper emphasis on quality and standards of practice—and by partnership with the voluntary sector and the private sector. Urban regeneration issues are fundamental to the Executive's programme for modernisation, change and social justice.

Let me again break with consensus. The SNP has failed to present any coherent analysis of, or alternative approach to, the key issue of urban regeneration. I will finish up with the Tories, who had the audacity to say that they are proud of their record in Glasgow—that is obviously why they have so many elected politicians there. Let us never forget the mass unemployment, industrial decline, communities in conflict and cast adrift, and the urban blight that the Tories brought us. Let us remind ourselves that Scotland will never go back there again. To pick up a theme that Robert Brown introduced, let me say that, on urban regeneration, the work goes on.

Decision Time

17:05

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): There are nine questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S1M-1914.2, in the name of Wendy Alexander, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1914, in the name of David Davidson, on tourism, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, 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)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahan, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)

Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

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, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (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)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 45, Abstentions 2.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: Because amendment S1M-1914.2 is agreed to, Kenny MacAskill's amendment falls.

The third question is, that motion S1M-1914, in the name of Mr David Davidson, on tourism, 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)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, 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)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (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)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)

Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

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

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 18, Abstentions 27.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament welcomes the actions being taken by the Executive to assist the tourism industry to recover from the effects of foot-and-mouth disease and supports its commitment to work with the relevant agencies including

visitscotland and the industry to prepare and implement an appropriate and effective strategy to ensure the future growth of the industry.

The Presiding Officer: The fourth question is, that amendment S1M-1918.2, in the name of Michael Russell, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1918, in the name of David McLetchie, on Holyrood, 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, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 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)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 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, Iain (North-East Fife) (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)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 31, Against 76, Abstentions 3.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The fifth question is, that amendment S1M-1918.1, in the name of Mr John Home Robertson, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1918, in the name of David McLetchie, on Holyrood, be agreed to. Are we

agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, 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)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 61, Against 19, Abstentions 30.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The sixth question is, that motion S1M-1918, in the name of David McLetchie, on Holyrood, 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)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)

Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, 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)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 61, Against 30, Abstentions 19.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament notes its resolution of 5 April 2000 which approved expenditure of up to £195 million on the Holyrood Project and notes the good progress of the construction of the Holyrood Parliament Building; welcomes the fact that most of the tender packages have come in at prices in line with the cost estimates but recognises the effect of an above-average inflation rate in the construction industry in the Edinburgh area; further notes the identification of possible savings by the Holyrood Progress Group, which has led to unanimous decisions by both the Progress Group and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to authorise savings of £2.5 million, but endorses their firm commitment not to compromise the quality of Scotland's new Parliament Building; acknowledges the rigorous work of the Project Team and the Holyrood Progress Group to achieve good value for money, and directs them to continue to work towards the completion of the construction of the building in December 2002 as an internationally recognised home for our new democracy which will be a source of pride for people throughout Scotland.

The Presiding Officer: The seventh question is, that amendment S1M-1922.3, in the name of Mr Kenneth Gibson, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1922, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on urban regeneration, 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, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 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)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)

Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 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)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, John Farquhar (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, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 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 80, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The eighth question is, that amendment S1M-1922.2, in the name of Bill Aitken, which seeks to amend motion S1M-1922, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on urban regeneration, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

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, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (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)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacLean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)
 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)
 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)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (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)
 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)
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (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)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 45, Against, 63, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The ninth question is, that motion S1M-1922, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on urban regeneration, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Mr Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (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)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)

Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, 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)
 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)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McLeish, Henry (Central Fife) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 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, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fergusson, Alex (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)

Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGregor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 2, Abstentions 45.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament endorses the Executive's approach to urban regeneration and the steps it has taken to enable the people in some of our most disadvantaged communities to become involved in regenerating their areas and welcomes the Executive's intention to engage in discussions to formulate the neighbourhood renewal statement for Scotland.

Foot-and-mouth Disease (Dumfries and Galloway)

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The final item of business today is the debate on motion S1M-1742, in the name of Dr Elaine Murray, on foot-and-mouth disease in Dumfries and Galloway.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises the severe problems being faced in parts of Dumfries and Galloway as a result of the current outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease; notes that the effects are not confined to the farming industry but also affect slaughterhouses, hauliers, food producers, tourism and retailing businesses; notes with concern that workers have already been laid off by several firms and that many more workers may imminently be laid off, and urges the Scottish Executive to work in partnership with other agencies to seek ways of ameliorating the situation as a matter of urgency.

17:16

Dr Elaine Murray (Dumfries) (Lab): Foot-and-mouth disease arrived on 1 March. Since then, 176 cases have been confirmed in the region and nearly 1,300 farms have been affected, the vast majority through the pre-emptive cull strategy. More than 0.5 million sheep and more than 60,000 cattle have been slaughtered. Many ancient and established herds and flocks have had to be sacrificed. Dumfries and Galloway, which has 0.2 per cent of the United Kingdom's population, has endured more than 11 per cent of the cases. Within Scotland, 96 per cent of confirmed cases have occurred in the region.

Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway has undertaken a four-week survey to track the effects on the local economy, the results of which were expected today. I have not been apprised of them yet, but preliminary results indicate that 50 per cent of the region's businesses have been affected, with an average loss of £22,000. Stena Line reckons that its losses now approach £1 million.

In Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway, 584 people have registered for benefit as a direct result of foot-and-mouth disease, but the figures for job losses are much greater. Self-employed people are not entitled to jobseekers allowance and 132 temporary jobs associated with the cull and disinfection process were available for agricultural workers who had been laid off from their usual employment. Those jobs will cease in the near future and the problem of retaining staff where farmers intend to restock will become more urgent. If no further cases arise in the region—and we all hope fervently that that will be the case—the slaughter is expected to cease by tomorrow.

The Army will be withdrawn, the seconded vets will leave the area and the full impact of the outbreak on employment will begin to be felt.

Seasonal employment is crucial in the region, especially during the summer. It is crucial to many household economies. Usually, 24 per cent of businesses employ seasonal labour, but this year that is likely to halve. The situation is worse in tourism, with only 19 per cent of businesses, compared with the usual 48 per cent, expecting to employ seasonal staff.

The cost to Dumfries and Galloway Council of combating the disease reached £4.9 million at the end of April and is expected to rise to £8.5 million at the end of May. This morning, the Executive announced £2 million to assist. I understand that additional expenses will be met by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and others. That illustrates the level of the council's involvement. More than 30 council staff were redeployed and more than 100 other staff changed working patterns and duties in the fight against the disease. They have made a vital contribution to preventing the spread of the disease to other parts of Scotland.

The council agreed a hardship relief package in April, which includes deferral of rates for three months, a hardship rates relief scheme, a small business loan fund of £100,000 and £500,000 seedcorn money for a multi-agency community fund. That is costing the council around £6.5 million. I understand that the council is a bit disappointed that only £2 million was made available in this morning's announcement, but I have reassured it that that is an interim package and that longer-term measures are being considered.

The outbreak has drawn public attention to the number of local businesses that depend on agriculture. That is perhaps not surprising, as Dumfries and Galloway is one of the few areas of the UK where the local gross domestic product for agriculture and related services, at 23 per cent, is higher than it is for tourism. Before the foot-and-mouth outbreak, 14 per cent of the region's employment was in agriculture.

Forty-two per cent of businesses in Dumfries and Galloway have a direct connection with agriculture. Those businesses include farm machinery retailers, veterinary services for farm animals, farriers and builders. They have not even been able to get access to many of their clients. Downstream industries are also included—food processing in Dumfries and Galloway has a turnover of £314 million and employs 2,500 people.

Glanbia Foods UK, which owns the Lockerbie Cheese Company and relies on milk production in

Dumfries and Galloway and Cumbria to supply the factory at Lochmaben, has expressed serious concerns about the reduction in local milk supply and the possible consequences for the 215 people who work at the plant.

This morning, we discussed the value of tourism to the region. The May bank holiday helped some, but not all; one publican in Langholm who took £1,420 over the May bank holiday in 2000 took only £85 last weekend, primarily because of the loss of the self-catering market. Other leisure industries have experienced a downturn. For example, visitor attractions have had fewer visitors. Last week, the manager of the zoo at Kirkcudbright told me of the problems there, which have been caused in particular by the public interpreting advice to keep away from animals as applying to zoo animals as well. The equestrian centre where my daughter works on a Saturday has had 30 per cent fewer pupils as a result of the outbreak, with a much steeper loss on the retail side. Other major events in the area, such as agricultural shows and the common ridings, have had to be cancelled; all of them attracted visitors and encouraged spend in host towns and villages.

I do not want this debate to be a catalogue of woes, as that would be unfair to all the organisations that are looking to the future and planning for the recovery of the region. The council, the area tourist board, the trade unions, the Federation of Small Businesses, the National Farmers Union of Scotland and various local community group initiatives have shown the determination to fight back and to use this terrible experience as an opportunity for improvement.

This morning, the Executive announced an interim package of measures in response to the recovery plan from Dumfries and Galloway's joint economic impact group. I welcome the additional £5 million from Scottish Enterprise to assist with business survival and look forward to hearing further details about how that money will be used. I understand that a portion will be allocated for infrastructure projects and for a business loans scheme, for which there has been strong local demand. Furthermore, on Tuesday, the Executive announced that it would match public donations to the voluntary sector made by the Scottish Community Foundation for relief for rural communities affected by foot-and-mouth.

The economic recovery plan proposed by the impact group is substantial and amounts to more than £40 million over three years: £3 million for rural development and agriculture; £17.5 million for business; £7 million for tourism; and £12.5 million for people and communities. That final category recognises that community spirit and civic pride are one of the region's greatest assets and that, as with past problems, that spirit is

helping the area to survive the crisis. The determination of local communities in Langholm, Annan, Moffat and throughout the region will play a pivotal role in the area's recovery. By improving locally based training and business opportunities and developing local information and communications technology centres, we will build on the unique strengths of each community, as owned, identified and appreciated by its citizens.

Assistance with funding a recovery programme could come from several sources, such as the Executive, or from redirecting the existing spending priorities of local or national agencies, as we have seen today with the redirection of £5 million of Scottish Enterprise funding to the local enterprise network. Money could also come from UK sources, objective 2 funding and lottery funding. If lottery funding could be used to keep the millennium dome open for a year, surely it could be used to keep open visitor attractions in Dumfries and Galloway or indeed to fund new attractions to bolster tourism throughout the region.

No amount of funding can take away the sadness of the past 10 weeks. If we had a pound for every tear shed over foot-and-mouth, all our problems would probably be solved. That said, tears and sympathy will not provide a way forward and I welcome the Executive's interim measures, including those announced this morning.

My constituents are not holding out a begging bowl; the people of Dumfries and Galloway have never believed that anyone owed them a living. What we seek is further investment in local communities to create a transformed, modern and forward-looking local economy. I am grateful to all who have contributed to what has been achieved so far, but I hope—and ask—for further, longer-term measures, because I believe that economic recovery in Dumfries and Galloway will bear fruit for the entire Scottish economy, not just for the region.

17:24

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): I pay tribute to Elaine Murray not just for securing this debate, but for her speech, which went to the very heart of the issue and touched on many of the problems that people in Dumfries and Galloway see around them. It is also appropriate to pay tribute to Dumfries and Galloway Council and its staff—particularly its convener, Andrew Campbell—who have done an extraordinary job in very difficult circumstances. Furthermore, for once in a lifetime, I will pay tribute to the minister. The way that he has dealt with the crisis has proved him to be the most effective and able Scottish Executive minister. It is easier for me to say that because he is a Liberal Democrat and I do not

have to praise Labour. He has done extraordinarily well.

The reality of foot-and-mouth disease must be brought home to people who do not know the area, visit it or work in it. Three weeks ago, through a combination of circumstances, I passed a farm on the side of Loch Ken, near Parton, five times in four days. I passed on the day that the pyre was completed and I passed on days when the pyre was burning. It is a hideous and frightening sight, which makes us all wonder whether we could ever again tolerate that means of dealing with the disease—essential as it was. Let us hope that the situation never arises again. When the crisis is over, we must think again about how we treat animals, about how we relate to the countryside and about what our stewardship of the countryside means. Those are big issues for the future.

Elaine Murray is right to concentrate on the issues of here and now, which are serious. I will focus on one example, because if we range too widely and talk about economic statistics and strategies, we lose sight of the difficulties that individuals face. John Morris, the owner of the Selkirk Arms Hotel in Kirkcudbright, is not a member of the Scottish National Party: he was an independent councillor who was much more of the persuasion of the Conservative party. Alex Fergusson can confirm that I did not ask about the privacy of the ballot box the last time I had a drink with him. John Morris runs a fine hotel. He has been an ambitious businessman and has built the hotel up, changing and transforming it into a considerable asset to the town.

This year, the number of bedrooms that John Morris let for March was down by 24 per cent and the number for April was down by 30 per cent. Over a busy bank holiday weekend, he let five of his 16 rooms, whereas last year he let them all. His food and drink sales have collapsed and his bookings for the summer are virtually non-existent. He will not be taking on seasonal staff and he has shed full-time staff. His trade is down on last year not just because of tourism, but because the Ministry of Defence range at Kirkcudbright has been inactive during the period, meaning that there has been no trade from there. He says:

"The help the tourist board has offered has been completely inadequate"—

I want the minister to acknowledge those words—

"waiving fees which only amounted to £100 anyway. The promotional efforts are not right at this time. VAT bills are a major headache, as they are a tax on turnover, not profit. The Inland Revenue are not moving an inch."

John Morris has a mortgage to pay and he says that he cannot see how many businesses like his will be able to make it through next winter unless

there is a substantial improvement in trade.

Although the banks are being flexible—many of us have corresponded with the banks and secured their assurance that they will be flexible—they are merely delaying inevitable payments. What businesses such as John Morris's need is an injection of money now. All the plans that we have for the future are necessary. Nevertheless, there must be an injection of money now, not just to the tourism business, but to agricultural contractors and people who work in a variety of sectors, some of whom are mentioned in Elaine Murray's motion.

I like the language of the motion, because there is an urgency to it that is not being addressed. There will be no survival unless there is cash—that is the message that the debate must get across.

17:29

David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): I commend Elaine Murray not only for lodging this motion, but for all her efforts throughout the crisis. I doubt whether many MSPs who represent other parts of Scotland understand the nature and intensity of the difficulties that began in her constituency and spread across Dumfries and Galloway, into the Borders. They have challenged all members who represent the region, not least because we have had to be in the front line, dealing with the day in, day out people issues that the crisis has brought.

I welcome this morning's announcement of additional funding and look forward to receiving the detail—as a matter of urgency—of what the £5 million from Scottish Enterprise will mean for local businesses. The minister has heard at first hand the overriding concern for business survival. Michael Russell has made that point eloquently this evening. The Dumfries and Galloway recovery plan is an important document, but if we do not have as our goal the survival of our businesses, particularly those that have been the most innovative in sectors such as contracting, tourism and agriculture, there will not be a recovery but a long and slow decline.

Money needs to be focused on the sort of soft loan scheme that has been so much talked about. An example of such a scheme, which is highlighted by the Federation of Small Businesses, is the pig breeders scheme that was deployed when swine fever struck in East Anglia. I urge the minister to make the detail available as a matter of urgency, otherwise there will be a considerable backlash in Dumfries and Galloway of disappointment and distrust of the Executive and the political process. The minister must make clear the fact that today's announcement is part of a process—an initial step, not the only step.

The Dumfries and Galloway recovery plan sets out many other initiatives that need to be pursued. We look forward to hearing what the Executive will do about them in the weeks and months ahead.

I adhere to the view that the brightest day can follow the darkest night. There have been some very dark nights over the past few weeks. I have been greatly encouraged by the ability of all the MSPs and MPs who represent Dumfries and Galloway to work together and with the council and other agencies, which in their turn have also been working together. Moreover, during the numerous public meetings that Elaine Murray alluded to and which I and others have attended, I have been heartened by the fact that people are coming up with ideas about the future.

Earlier this week, for example, Alex Fergusson and I met Donald Biggar, who chairs the farmers support group. He told us that many farmers are not considering leaving farming but looking to the future and considering bringing in new stock from around the world. At meetings in towns such as Langholm and Moffat, people have come up with some interesting ideas. Today, I received a copy of a document that details the Langholm regeneration plan. It does not contain a request for a handout, but clearly identifies priorities that could ensure that Langholm makes progress on a social and commercial basis. We have a tremendous opportunity to turn a corner and address the inherent weaknesses that have long existed in the Dumfries and Galloway economy.

It will surprise no one—certainly not the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning—that I believe that investment in telecommunications infrastructure is vital for the development of the area. I believe that with her support and that of other ministers, we can develop some exciting digital initiatives, possibly including the creation of an electronic community, and bring in world expertise to examine the opportunities for the electronic regeneration of a rural area.

I want to place on record my thanks to Mr Finnie for the access that he has given all MSPs not only to himself but to his civil servants and the veterinary support services during the crisis. We have not always agreed about how matters were being handled, but the way in which the minister and his staff have worked with the representatives of Dumfries and Galloway has been a great credit to him. I thank him for that.

17:34

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): I am sorry that this debate is taking place today. I wish that it were not necessary.

I will start with a few words from a farming friend

of mine who is also a vet. He went to Dumfries and Galloway just after the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak and wrote a long letter to me that I have passed on to Mr Finnie. It reads:

"I recently left Dumfries and Galloway after working just over six weeks; the most intense and vivid period of my life. My mind is still trapped there. Six weeks of living with the courage, generosity and support of the farming community is an experience that has left me stunned but privileged."

He goes on to talk about ways in which issues such as access might be dealt with.

Members will not be surprised if I say a few words towards the end of my speech about the situation in the Borders. However, the motion is quite rightly concerned with Dumfries and Galloway and I acknowledge that first.

I was deeply touched by Dr Elaine Murray's opening remarks and appreciate totally the tone in which Michael Russell spoke. I am happy to associate myself with David Mundell's saying that all the members representing the South of Scotland are working together to a common end, perhaps showing this Parliament at its best. I welcome the announcement of support that was made by Ross Finnie today. It seeks to support the local agencies and I recognise it as an interim measure.

As Elaine Murray said, we must recognise the vast scale of the problem and its effect on Dumfries and Galloway—which unfortunately spills over into the Borders. It has sparked from a part of the Borders close to Dumfries and Galloway to other areas—to me, Moffat and Langholm are part of the Borders generically, although they are not part of the Scottish Borders local authority area.

The motion's reference to the widespread effects of the outbreak chime with me with great resonance. My mailbag has illustrated the huge range of individual businesses that have been affected by the disease. I think of the equestrian businesses in the Borders, which are massively affected by the cancellation of local common ridings and agricultural shows. Suppliers of feed, saddlers and pony-trekking stables are affected over a wide area, stretching as far north as the Penicuik area, in my constituency.

Also affected are tourism businesses, from the big hotels such as the Peebles Hydro Hotel to the small cafe at St Mary's loch, as well as new businesses located on the southern upland way, which have been set up to cater for walkers. When Alasdair Morrison spoke this morning about the southern upland way potentially being a jewel in the crown of the south of Scotland's tourism industry, as I think he put it, I was aware of the urgency of the situation, in that such new businesses might not survive long enough unless we work hard to develop the ministers' idea and

ensure that it comes to fruition.

In infected areas—Dumfries and Galloway and the area I represent—movement and access continue to be a problem. I look forward to a time when farmers can move their animals to slaughter, out of the infected area and to Galashiels, for example. I also have in mind a pest controller. He has contracts that he cannot fulfil because he is not allowed on to the land to do the job. He believes that he could be perfectly well disinfected and could carry it out. Such problems ought to be examined.

In an area of wider access, I can think of two golf clubs where sheep legitimately wander on to the course. That has caused real, enormous, insuperable problems for those clubs.

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

Ian Jenkins: I am anxious for it to be recognised that the Borders has special problems, comparable to those being suffered—in nature if not in scale—in Dumfries and Galloway. Our area tourist board has told me that £30 million is expected to be lost this year. We cannot afford that without some sort of help. I know that ministers—Mr Finnie, Mr McLeish, Ms Alexander and Mr Morrison—have all said that they recognise that the matter is not confined within Dumfries and Galloway's administrative boundary.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Please come to a close.

Ian Jenkins: I am looking forward to the time when Mr McLeish meets members of the Borders economic forum. I hope that he will be able to consider that Dumfries and Galloway and the Borders can be considered together in that regard.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sorry to chivvy members, but if speeches are not kept to four minutes, the last two will be cut considerably.

17:39

Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab): I associate myself with the comments that have already been made in congratulating Elaine Murray on securing this debate. My constituency borders on Dumfries and Galloway and we were very lucky to escape the worst of what Dumfries and Galloway has suffered.

I will concentrate on a few points that are in danger of not being picked up in the debate, starting with the knock-on effect on many of the agricultural workers and those in associated industries. They will shortly—if they have not already felt them—be feeling the consequences, with potential lay-offs.

The Transport and General Workers Union, of which I am a member, represents more than 100,000 food and agriculture workers throughout the UK, including a considerable number in Dumfries and Galloway, with whom the union has been in close touch. The problem for many of them is that they live and work in areas where there are few alternative sources of employment. Many live in tied housing, so if they lose their jobs they may risk losing their homes. Those people feel particularly vulnerable because if their industries are not regenerated they fear for their whole lifestyles.

Many workers are already experiencing short-term and in some cases indefinite lay-offs as a consequence of foot-and-mouth disease. At the beginning of March, it was estimated that around 1,800 food-processing workers had already been laid off and analysts predicted that in the region of another 500 workers, including stock and haulage workers, would be laid off for periods exceeding several months. Problems arise because, unless those workers' contracts state that they will receive full payment or an element of their pay during lay-off periods, they receive only the statutory minimum. For some people, that may be £16 a day for a maximum of five days in any three-month period of lay-off. Thereafter, they have to claim jobseekers allowance. For many of the workers who have spoken to me, that has meant in effect a £200 a week cut in their income and a huge knock-on effect on their families.

Other issues have been raised during the crisis, such as potential health and safety risks in the agriculture sector. That highlights the need for open and transparent risk assessments for workers who are involved in activities such as the cull and disposal of animals, the development of codes of safe working practice, guidance on the use and disposal of protective clothing and information for workers on what to do if any adverse effects are suffered. I appreciate that efforts have been made and that, because the crisis emerged very quickly, measures could not be implemented, but markers have been laid for the industry in the future.

The crisis has highlighted a genuine public concern about the perceived dangers of intensive profit-driven farming methods. In the aftermath of the crisis, we have an opportunity for a debate on that. I am sure that the industry will want to be involved in the debate about how we regenerate an industry while taking into account the highest possible welfare standards for animals, increasing the opportunities for organic farming and locally produced goods, and supporting the retention of jobs as part of any compensation package. One of the greatest fears of agriculture workers is that their jobs may be at risk even though businesses are regenerated.

To recognise that the trade union movement and the workers supported the initiatives that have been taken in the crisis, I think that the T & G should be congratulated on suspending Agricultural Wages Board negotiations and lifting restrictions on the number and duration of food-distribution and livestock journeys by road transport during that time. I hope that the views of the unions and the workers will be taken account of during future negotiations.

17:43

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): First, I tender Alasdair Morgan's apologies. He is caught on business elsewhere.

I may change the tone a little as I am that sad person who reads the Scottish Executive press releases on its website. I have some questions for the minister to which I genuinely do not know the answers. I do not expect to receive answers now, but I would like them some time in writing.

An Executive press release on 28 March announced an additional £13.5 million Scottish emergency relief package for businesses because of the foot-and-mouth outbreak. The amount was split as follows: an initial £5 million for visitScotland; an "additional" £5 million that was made available to Scottish Enterprise; and £3.5 million of support to local authorities to provide rates relief. What are those amounts additional to? Are they from the agreed budgets? If not, from where is the money being diverted?

An Executive press release on 10 May announced a payment to the local authority of

"£2 million 'on account' to pay for costs in controlling the disease".

Is that a loan? If not, from which budget will the money come? David Mundell asked about that amount at question time, but I am not sure whether he received an answer—if he did, I certainly did not catch it.

The same press release refers to

"Additional"—

that word again—

"funds of £5 million, out of Scottish Enterprise's existing budget".

Is that amount the whole of the £5 million that was announced in the first press release? If so, does it mean that there is nothing within that resource for other local authorities?

I am bewitched, bothered and bewildered by those figures, and I would like some answers. For example, how much funding is available to Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway and how much has been disbursed? How much

funding is available to Dumfries and Galloway tourist board, and how much, at the time of speaking, has been disbursed?

I will move from the larger picture to the extremely important issues Elaine Murray and others referred to. I remind the minister of the petition—known as the people's petition—that was presented to the Parliament this week. The petition is fronted by a Stewartry businesswoman, Jane Sargeant, who headed the protest of more than 100 representatives from the region. The petition outlines the immediate and urgent difficulties facing small local businesses and seeks the establishment of a survival—an apt word—fund to alleviate the immediate cash flow problems that have been brought about by foot-and-mouth. That is what is really required on the ground.

People who have lost grazing rentals, who are agricultural engineers or livestock hauliers or who run small independent tourism enterprises, need money now. Already, some rural businesses are being sequestered or are in liquidation. Other members have referred to difficulties in relation to deferred payments.

I have another set of questions for the minister, to which I would like answers at some point. How do small businesses access funding? I am not simply talking about rate support. How many in Dumfries and Galloway have done so? How much has been paid out, to whom and on what terms? For the time being, that is enough for the minister to be getting on with.

17:46

Alex Fergusson (South of Scotland) (Con): I draw members' attention to my entry in the register of members' interests. Like all other members who have spoken, I congratulate Elaine Murray on securing this important debate.

I have never felt my existence as an MSP to be more justified than it has been over the past eight or nine weeks. While I have often felt more like a social worker than a politician, I am sure that I share with Elaine Murray, Alasdair Morgan and David Mundell the feelings of despair, frustration, anger, sorrow, bitterness and humility that have epitomised the hundreds of telephone calls that we have all received over the past weeks and months. We have experienced the resigned acceptance of long-time family farmers that the stock that they have built up over many generations is to be lost, often without the farmers knowing whether their animals had the disease. We have experienced the fury and wrath of others who believe that the policy was wrong from the outset.

That debate is for another time, but I pray, honestly and earnestly, that this outbreak of foot-

and-mouth disease is as good as over and that the sacrifice of those in the south of Scotland will have prevented the spread of the virus to so many others. We cannot be certain, but I am touching every wooden surface that I find, with my fingers firmly crossed, in the hope that we have seen the back of foot-and-mouth disease.

Looking back to the early days, which seem so long ago, I am afraid that I must bring a touch of criticism into the debate. With, I admit, the benefit of hindsight, I am not convinced that the eight-day interval between the first case at Heddon-on-the-Wall and the first case in Scotland was used as wisely as it might have been. As soon as Longtown market was mentioned, anyone who knew anything about sheep farming in Scotland knew that foot-and-mouth was headed for Scotland. That gap gave us an opportunity to prepare, but it appears to have been spurned as we sat back and hoped that the inevitable would not happen.

Even when cases of the disease were confirmed north of the border, too much was left to the local authority. Right from the start, the council did its very best in increasingly difficult circumstances, until the Executive intervened, almost at the 11th hour, and responded with the massive input of resources that appears to have begun to have the desired effect.

I know that hindsight is a great thing but, for future reference, we must ask whether application of the eventual resource from the start might have hastened the extinction of the disease and lessened its geographic spread.

However, we are where we are. I thank the minister for his great willingness to have meetings and discuss the various problems that have been brought to members. In particular, I thank him for allowing me to hijack him in his office early on the morning of his announcement that the contiguous cull of cattle was to cease. The fact that he shared his statement with me some four hours before he was due to make it helped calm a situation in Wigtownshire that could have become ugly. I know that that saved at least two herds of cattle from an unnecessary cull.

I hope that we can now turn to the future. Even if we have got rid of foot-and-mouth disease, the problems will remain with us for some time. Two things are needed: the first is urgency, in addressing how farmers can begin to go about their business again; flexibility must be the watchword. For example, most farmers will need to make silage in two to three weeks' time, but no farm has yet passed the disinfection criteria. There must be a fast-track system to allow normal farming operations to go ahead wherever possible.

Farmers also need to be told when they will be

able to restock and over how long a period that can take place. If everyone must restock this autumn, we will create a false market value and more disease will be spread than has already been exterminated. Farmers need information. I know a farmer who culled five weeks ago and has not heard from any official since, although he received a call 10 days ago to ask whether a Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food vet could inspect his sheep. That is not good enough. He and others need information desperately and they need it now.

Secondly, we need imagination. I have a suggestion as to how imagination could help. Many farmers will consider restructuring their farms and might consider planting woodland. I urge the minister to consider extending the challenge fund scheme, which operates successfully in Grampian, and the farm woodland premium scheme to cover Dumfries and Galloway. I believe that the imaginative extension of existing schemes points the way ahead for the Executive to deliver the special-case funding that it has promised for Dumfries and Galloway and towards which today's announcement is—I hope—a welcome first step.

17:51

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): I share the concerns that Dr Elaine Murray and others expressed in the debate. We all realise the devastating impact that foot-and-mouth disease has had on families and communities in Scotland, particularly in Dumfries and Galloway.

The foot-and-mouth outbreak was a disaster. It was a disaster for Dumfries and Galloway, the south of Scotland and the Borders. It was a national disaster. It was the first one of such scale that has confronted the Parliament.

I am grateful to the members who expressed thanks for the way in which I handled the disaster, but I was doing no more than discharging the responsibilities that I have. I wish more properly to return that thanks, because the dignified way in which the Parliament has handled the crisis—a largely bipartisan approach—has been of enormous help to the farming community and to the other communities that have been so affected by the outbreak.

I will pick up on some of the important points that were made in the debate. Elaine Murray, who is rightly concentrating on the epicentre of the disease, pointed out that agriculture in that area accounts for more of the local gross domestic product than tourism, which is rather strange in comparison to most parts of Scotland. She therefore highlighted the importance of agriculture.

She also made reference to a range of issues with which, I think, we all empathise.

Mike Russell was quite correct to highlight the fact that, for the future, the treatment of foot-and-mouth disease has to be considered afresh. I wonder whether, perhaps even at a European level, we have to consider what investment might have to be made in research. The present range of available vaccines does not provide the answer to the problem but, on the other hand, in the 21st century, there simply has to be another way of dealing with such a disease.

To add poignancy and piquancy, Mike Russell cited the instance of a particular individual. I am sure that all of us could repeat many such stories from our many postbags. I am sad to hear that the authorities which the Executive has made strenuous efforts to ensure might be sympathetic—such as those dealing with VAT and the Inland Revenue—are not perhaps being as helpful as they could be. I will certainly act on that matter.

In the same way, I address David Mundell. I hope that members will appreciate that, following the reasoned advances that were made to me, I thought that it was important to respond to those who came to see us last week and to draw up the package of further interim measures. The details will be announced in the next day or two, but I thought that it was important that we should indicate to those who came to see us that we had not allowed matters to rest following their visit to the Parliament.

I say to David Mundell that we can all share with him the hope that the brightest day could come from the darkest night. That is all our hope in what has been a very dark night.

David Mundell and his colleague Alex Fergusson raised the urgency of providing information to local farmers. The committee headed by Donald Biggar has managed to keep its work within a tight and narrow scope that addresses the immediate problems, such as those raised by David Mundell and Alex Fergusson. I am pleased and not at all surprised by that, because Donald's work is known to most of us. Problems include what to do about silage and what should be the timing for restocking. I hope that Donald Biggar's committee, with which the Executive is in close touch, will address those matters.

Ian Jenkins made the valid point that the disease has spread outwards to many other areas in Scotland. The spread north has affected tourism; there has also been a spread into the Borders, although not to the same extent and density as elsewhere.

Cathy Jamieson properly drew our attention to the plight not only of ordinary agricultural workers

but of workers in associated industries—such as the food processing industry. I hope that some of the measures that we have announced today will lead to opportunities, even if only for short-term work. Some of the projects should be able to offer short-term work that might enable people to remain in the agricultural industry while we seek to achieve some form of recovery.

I shall be charitable with Christine Grahame. I am not really sure about the reason for asking a range of questions about who has got it and where they have got it. It might have been more proper for her to recognise that the Executive, by announcing an immediate £13.5 million relief package, and by—this morning—announcing a further £5 million to be devoted to the particular area that she spoke about, has made a serious effort to respond to the crisis. The *Official Report* will show that she has asked questions to be answered, and I will ensure that that is done.

Much effort has gone into trying to eradicate the disease. I am pleased that we have had no confirmed case since 4 May. However, we must not yet lose our grip and we must not become complacent. There is a small tail in any previous event of this nature. We must ensure that this thing is eradicated. We must not take our eye off the ball.

The main point that has been put to the Executive has concerned partnership and working with other bodies and associations. I assure members that the impact assessment group and others who are feeding into the ministerial group that I chair recognise the need for the Executive not to impose solutions but—

Michael Russell: Will the minister give way?

Ross Finnie: Certainly.

Michael Russell: I am sorry to interrupt the minister, because many of us agree with him, but I want to ask about what he said about ensuring that eradication was complete. As he knows, I have recently written to him about the genuine feelings of disquiet—I will not put it any more strongly than that—in one or two places about the completion of the cull. Some cases are highly publicised and some are not, but I am thinking about the case of the animal sanctuary about which there was an appeal this afternoon. I am not asking for a definitive response now, but the minister might recognise that that disquiet needs to be taken into account at this sensitive time.

Ross Finnie: I am fully aware of the degree of disquiet. However, I want to say that at no stage have I sanctioned policies whereby I believed we were recklessly taking the lives of animals and taking away farmers' livelihoods. My policy decisions have always been taken on the basis of careful advice. We were not dealing with animals

that appeared to be disease free. On the contrary, we were dealing with animals that we genuinely believed had a risk of carrying the disease. Anyone who has studied the epidemiology of this outbreak will know the real danger of sheep that have been in any proximity to the disease. I can reassure the member that, at the same time as I quickly increased the measures, controls and culls, I sought at every stage to write those down, consistent with the objective of eradicating the disease. I have done that consistently throughout the crisis.

In the recovery process, measures including the £13.5 million were our first reaction. The measures that we announced this morning were a further reaction to the request from Dumfries and Galloway. We now move on to perhaps more difficult stages in the longer-term recovery. In each of those stages, we will work in close co-operation with all the bodies involved. Of course, it will be important to set some kind of overarching strategic framework, because much will depend on us reassuring markets and re-establishing confidence in both our tourism and agricultural industries.

As many members have pointed out, we must also recognise the ripple effect that the disease has had on many other businesses in other sectors. We are turning our attention to those businesses because, having turned the corner—I hope—we are now able to do that. It will require us to consider the various sectors and aspects that are involved. I hope that today's announcement has indicated our earnest desire to put our money where our mouth is in order to help those communities and to help us all to re-establish a competitive rural economy, which is the only way of getting us out of this crisis.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: That concludes the debate on foot-and-mouth disease in Dumfries and Galloway.

Before I close the meeting, I must put on the record a correction from tonight's decision time. The result of the vote on motion S1M-1918, in the name of David McLetchie, on Holyrood, as amended, was announced as: For 61, Against 30, Abstentions 19. The last two figures were mistakenly transposed. The true result was: For 61, Against 19, Abstentions 30.

Meeting closed at 18:01.

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