

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 24 January 2002

Session 1

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 24 January 2002

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

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh): Good morning. The first item of business will be a debate on motion S1M-2631, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on the abolition of council tax, and two amendments to that motion.

Points of Order

09:30

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. This morning, we have an hour and a half to debate three motions, which means that we have half an hour for each. This is supposed to be a debating chamber, but it is ludicrously impossible to have a meaningful debate on any of the motions. Are there any procedural rules to limit the number of motions that can be debated within a period of time? I know that that has been the subject of discussion at the Parliamentary Bureau, but I feel strongly that to impose such debates on the chamber is ridiculous. I seek your guidance on that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh): Had any such rules existed, we would have applied them. The Parliament has approved this morning's business, so it would be impertinent to challenge the decision of Parliament. Although there are difficulties in the timing of this morning's business, I am afraid that we shall have to make the best of it. I urge those members who will speak in the debates to pay careful attention to the time limits as time is so constrained.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Perhaps this is more a point of information—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We shall see.

Cathie Craigie: How do you intend to manage the debates? Will you ensure that each debate lasts for half an hour, as is set out in the business bulletin, or do you intend to let the debates run over?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will manage the debates to the best of my ability and will follow the time scales with due diligence. I will try to tell every member who is due to speak how many minutes they have. I will indicate when their time has expired, when I expect members to close promptly.

Council Tax

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh): I call Tommy Sheridan to speak to and move motion S1M-2631.

09:32

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): Had the two members who raised the points of order been present at my debate last year, they would have known that there were 22 contributions in the course of 90 minutes, during which we managed to discuss three issues. That is quite a healthy number of speeches. I hope that we will get the same level of contributions today.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Tommy Sheridan: No, thank you.

I open the debate by drawing members' attention to what the social reformer and socialist Richard Tawney said some 90 years ago. He said:

"What thoughtful rich people call the problem of poverty, thinking poor people call, with equal justice, the problem of riches."

Today is the third time that I have introduced a debate on the abolition of the council tax and on its replacement with a progressive, redistributive service tax to be levied on an individual's personal income. I make no apology for doing so because, in the three years of its existence, the Parliament has failed to tackle the obscene inequality of wealth that exists in this country. The Parliament has failed to introduce redistributive policies to improve the disposable income of the families on the lowest incomes. That is why this measure is so important.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Will the member accept an intervention on that point?

Tommy Sheridan: No, thank you.

The motion would replace an unfair and regressive council tax system. The council tax has been condemned by illustrious bodies such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies—as well as scores of others—for being acutely unfair because the families who are on the lowest incomes are charged more than those on the highest incomes.

Of course, it would be better if we had an independent socialist Scotland that had control of all Scotland's resources, including our oil, gas, electricity and finance sectors. We could then effect a wholesale redistribution of wealth and power.

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): Will the member take an intervention?

Tommy Sheridan: No, thank you.

However, it is incumbent on the Opposition to try to use the limited powers of the Parliament to the maximum to effect a redistributive change. That is what the Scottish service tax would do. The proposal is radical and has been academically scrutinised and developed. It has been updated—

Mr Michael McMahon (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): Will the member take an intervention?

Tommy Sheridan: No, thanks. I do not want Pinky or Perky.

An updated research note has been provided to members to enable them to work out that the Scottish service tax would redistribute income significantly, especially for the lowest income households across Scotland. Those households and individuals who are on incomes of less than £20,000 per year—the overwhelming majority of income earners in Scotland—would pay significantly less under this tax measure. Those with incomes that are less than £10,000 per year—there are 882,000 of them in Scotland, which is a shameful statistic—would be automatically exempt without any means test being applied.

The Scottish service tax would impose a marginal rate of taxation of 12 per cent on those with incomes between £50,000 and £70,000 per year. For those on incomes of more than £90,000 per year, the marginal rate would be 20 per cent. I hope that Labour members will remember that even Thatcher imposed a 63 per cent marginal rate of taxation on the top earners. I therefore hope that Labour members will not oppose this meagre level of fair taxation and redistribution of wealth.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that the council tax is a fundamentally unfair and regressive tax; believes in social justice and the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor; therefore agrees to abolish the council tax and replace it with the Scottish Service Tax which is based on an individual's income and is inherently fairer, more efficient and redistributive; notes that the Scottish Service Tax would raise more revenue than the council tax and that it would remove the burden of paying for local government jobs and services from the shoulders of low paid workers and pensioners and place it firmly on the shoulders of the well paid and the wealthy, and believes that the introduction of the Scottish Service Tax should be complemented by the return of the right for local authorities to raise and retain their business rates and a thorough investigation of land value and speculation taxes to supplement local authority revenue.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Before I call Peter Peacock to speak to and move amendment S1M-2631.2, I ask members to be respectful in the

way that they refer to other members. I call Peter Peacock.

09:37

The Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services (Peter Peacock): During yesterday afternoon's budget debate, I confessed to having a strong sense of déjà vu. The same applies this morning, as it is only a year since the Parliament debated a similar proposal from Tommy Sheridan. Yet again, as Robert Brown indicated, the fact that Tommy Sheridan has allowed precious little time for a proper debate on the issues demonstrates that his motion is more about grandstanding than about exposing ideas to proper parliamentary scrutiny. His proposals today are no more acceptable than they were last year; I am sure that Parliament will not take long to reject them once more.

Mr Sheridan's service tax would not be a local tax. People would pay all their current central Government taxes to the Exchequer and their Scottish service taxes to the Scottish Parliament. In one fell swoop, he would remove a vital element of local accountability that exists between the local electors who pay local taxes and their council, which is accountable to that electorate. The proposal would destroy the principle that those who live in an area should contribute towards the costs of local services and exercise discretion in the local service levels that they receive. Tommy Sheridan's proposal would also undermine the financial stability that we have provided for councils in recent times. More fundamentally, the service tax would put at risk the approximately £300 million of public expenditure that comes through council tax benefit, which people on low incomes in Scotland currently receive each year to help to meet their council tax commitments.

The property-based council tax provides councils with stable and predictable levels of income. With the three-year grant allocations that we have announced, authorities are able to give their local electorates the certainty of three-year indicative council tax levels. With a Scotland-wide income tax, that predictability would be lost. Mr Sheridan's proposals would also create additional unpredictability and instability in Scottish business rates. It would remove the power of local electorates to influence the budget decisions of their local council and replace it with a power for councils to place additional tax burdens on local businesses.

Furthermore, Tommy Sheridan argues for the retention of non-domestic rates at the local council level. That would be of no benefit to the councils because the way in which the grant system operates means that the grant that councils would otherwise receive would be reduced to equalise

any increase in non-domestic rates revenue. That is called redistribution of wealth. It is interesting that Mr Sheridan argues so vehemently against the principle of wealth redistribution, which the Labour party supports.

Councils are collecting a higher proportion of council tax than ever before. The legislative changes that we have introduced for this year allow councils to start collecting one month earlier and to take action more quickly when people fall into arrears. That is helping the further increase in collection rates across Scotland. We continue to work with councils to improve further the efficiency and targeting of their collection arrangements. We look forward to seeing the outcome of the research into the operation of the council tax that the Local Government Committee has commissioned.

The council tax supports vital local public services. Mr Sheridan's simplistic tax proposal does not provide any sensible alternative. It joins his many other simplistic ideas.

I move amendment S1M-2631.2, to leave out from first "believes" to end and insert:

"welcomes the substantial reforms that the Scottish Executive has brought to the operation of local government finance, including the stability for three year council tax figures and welcomes the Executive's commitment to pursue further reforms; further welcomes the fact that councils are now collecting a higher proportion of council tax than ever before and the continuing work by the Executive and local authorities to better target and further improve collection arrangements, and notes that the Local Government Committee of the Parliament will shortly conclude its inquiry into local government finance and local taxation."

09:40

Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):

I start by expressing regret that Mr Sheridan has chosen to split the debating time available to him into three half-hour sections. It is, of course, Mr Sheridan's right to determine how his allocation of time is used. When this was discussed last year, as SNP business manager, I robustly defended his right—and the right of all non-Executive parties—to do so. However, it is clear that Mr Sheridan has no wish to engage in debate. There will be little time for meaningful speeches from other members.

The present system of council tax is undoubtedly unfair—it takes no account of ability to pay. For that reason, the SNP advocates a system of local income tax. However, a change in the method or form of collection cannot be considered in isolation, without an examination of how local government is financed at present. Such an examination would include consideration of the method of distribution of moneys from the Executive as well as consideration of the system

of raising tax locally.

The McIntosh commission recommended that an independent commission should examine all aspects of local government in Scotland. Following the refusal of the Executive to set up such a commission, it has been left to the Local Government Committee to carry out a review. As the minister said, the committee will report shortly.

I do not want to pre-empt what the Local Government Committee may say, but it has been clear to me in my short time on that committee that few people or organisations are satisfied with the present system. Few organisations agree with each other on what should be done. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Executive do not even agree about the percentage of money that is ring-fenced or is for grant-aided expenditure: COSLA claims that the proportion that is ring-fenced is 30 per cent while the Executive claims that it is 10 per cent.

It suits the Scottish Government to take a smoke-and-mirrors approach to local government finance because Labour in government has caused an increase of £103 in council tax bills while services to the public are worse than they have ever been. Local government has been underfunded for decades. Schools are crumbling and lighting, footpath and bridge repairs have all but stopped. Social work services are at crisis point, with social work posts going unfilled and services to the vulnerable being reduced.

We need radical reform of local government finance and we need independence to free up the wealth of Scotland and to provide the resources and services that we need and desire.

I move amendment S1M-2631.1, to leave out from second "believes" to end and insert:

"notes that it is part of an unsustainable system of local government finance which, under Labour's stewardship, has resulted in an increase of £103 to the average householder's yearly tax bill while local services have deteriorated, and calls for a full review of local government finance which includes the replacement of unfair property based taxation with a system of local income tax, which takes account of ability to pay."

09:42

Mr Keith Harding (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): As a Scottish Conservative, I firmly believe that a thriving enterprise economy is the best way of both ensuring the prosperity of Scotland and providing our people with high-quality public services. For easily understood economic reasons, people and businesses in Scotland should not be penalised by having to pay higher taxes than those paid by people and businesses elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Mr Sheridan wants to penalise people by picking the pocket of

every hard-working Scot. The Parliament's tartan tax power can impose a maximum increase of 3p on the basic rate of income tax, but there is no ceiling for the Scottish service tax. The tartan tax, if implemented, would make the average Scottish family around £250 a year worse off, but Mr Sheridan's plan makes that cost seem insignificant.

Mr Sheridan tells us that many will be exempt. However, 27 per cent of households in Scotland already receive full or partial council tax benefit from a system that he claims is unfair to the poor. The facts are that the less well off do not pay council tax and that local services are already charged according to ability to pay.

Perhaps the most fundamental issue in this debate is the need to make local taxation democratic and accountable. The service tax proposal would further destroy local decision making as the Executive would determine taxes for local services. Councils would have even less autonomy than at present, as they would be able to set only their spending.

Even on practical grounds, the Scottish Socialist Party proposal would not work. It would be hugely costly and bureaucratic. However, the most serious effects would fall on our economy, as the introduction of a Scottish service tax would have extremely serious disincentive effects on businesses and entrepreneurs. If someone is rich and mobile, they will simply move, so reducing the overall tax take. As high-income earners flee, it will place the burden on low-income and middle-income earners and the tax will become more and more regressive. Taxpayers will vote with their feet. That will mean boom time for the north of England at Scotland's expense and it will produce poverty and unemployment traps for people on benefits.

The council tax may not be perfect, but it is fair, it takes account of ability to pay, it is easy to administer and collect, it allows for local democratic variation and it does not damage Scotland's economy. On each of those points, the opposite would be true for the Scottish Socialist Party's proposal. I urge Parliament to reject it once again.

09:45

Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD): I have a terrible feeling of déjà vu because we seem to debate this subject every year and then throw it out. No doubt we will do the same today.

Tommy Sheridan is right to say that his tax proposal would redistribute income—it would redistribute income from local government to central Government, which is a strange thing to want to do. The tax would be set centrally and not

by local government, so local government would lose the ability to determine its own tax rates and improve its own services. That would be odd and certainly not something that Liberal Democrats could support.

The council tax is not a perfect form of taxation. Liberal Democrats have long supported the idea of a local income tax and we will continue to work towards that. However, once we take account of benefits, the council tax is not as unredistributive as Tommy Sheridan suggests. That it requires a benefit system to make it fairer is a weakness of the council tax, but if we take account of benefits, we can see that the percentage of income that any group pays is roughly the same across all income ranges. The lowest percentage of their income that people pay on council tax is about 1.8 per cent, and the highest percentage is, I think, about 2.5 per cent.

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Iain Smith: I am afraid I have only three minutes.

It is important to bear in mind the fact that taking council tax benefit into account removes what would be fairly severe regressive problems. That is not to say that the council tax is perfect. In its inquiry into local government finance, the Local Government Committee has considered how to make the system more progressive by increasing the number of bands—with more bands at the lower and higher ends to ensure that the banding system more accurately reflects differing incomes.

An interesting point that a number of people have made in evidence to the Local Government Committee—and, surprisingly, a point that the socialist party does not seem to acknowledge—is that a property-based tax takes account of wealth as well as income. It is interesting that the socialists do not seem to want a tax that has anything to do with wealth.

As I have said, the Liberal Democrats support a move towards a local income tax. We hope that that will happen in time. However, it will happen effectively only if the Parliament has more income tax-raising powers, because change would require a move from national taxation to local taxation to give local authorities sufficient scope to vary the tax and so vary their income.

It is interesting to note that the last party to suggest, as Tommy Sheridan has suggested, removing income from local government and having central Government taxation was the Conservatives—when they tried to buy off the poll tax by increasing the VAT rate to 17.5 per cent. It is interesting that the socialists want similarly to take powers from local government and give them to central Government.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We now move to open debate.

09:48

Brian Fitzpatrick (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab): Looking in the shaving mirror this morning and contemplating this debate, I had—a bit like Iain Smith—recollections of “Groundhog Day”, although sadly there is no Bill Murray. Mr Sheridan’s motion for debate this morning is the same as last year’s. It is in exactly the same terms—motion S1M-2631 is motion S1M-1627. I thought that only disreputable lawyers gave the same advice twice and charged for the same thing twice, but apparently not. In any event, the motion pops up, we scratch our heads, feel a vaguely uneasy sense of déjà vu, and carry on.

I do not think that any Labour member has any particular dogmatic reason for persisting in levying and collecting the council tax. Any progressive—and certainly any left progressive—should be ready to keep policy and structures under continual review, in so far as the unchanging values of solidarity, community and fairness must be upheld and promoted in varying social circumstances.

The fundamental principles and values are constant, but the judgments and adaptations are renewed. We should not rule out innovation that might arise or recommend itself to us in changed circumstances. However, the proposers of innovations—particularly innovations that impact on the incomes of and services for working families—have a responsibility to demonstrate and provide evidence for the benefits that are claimed, to explain the consequences for policy and for infrastructure, to explain costs and to reduce or eliminate concerns about likely results. At some future date, we might inquire more broadly into the consequences of Mr Sheridan’s programme for working families, but it is obvious that we are not going to hear the appropriate indications from the proposer today.

I want to outline some reasons why I will not support Mr Sheridan’s motion and why I urge other members to reject it. The best reason for rejecting the proposal is that it would add to the current burdens on working families in my constituency and constituencies throughout Scotland. It would also put at risk the jobs that those families depend on and place all Scotland at an economic disadvantage. The proposal would hang a high-tax tag around the neck of the whole Scottish economy. Every working family knows that our economic success depends on our ability to attract investment, encourage growth and compete with neighbours who would quickly and willingly take up the businesses and skilled workers who would make a rational choice about where their best

future lay. Moreover, the proposal would transfer the burden of local services on to those who make an income—those who work hard for a living. There is no mention of the asset rich; no longer is all property theft—under Mr Sheridan it is sacrosanct. I wonder whether that has anything to do with his entering the housing market.

The terms of the motion are yet further evidence of the centralism at the core of the proposer’s beliefs. There is no mention of the role and independence of local democracy through local councils.

Mr McAveety: Will the member give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No. The member is in the final minute of his speech.

Brian Fitzpatrick: I would love to give way.

The proposal is the total subjection of local communities to the determination of the centre. As Peter Peacock reminded us, lest those who support local income tax are tempted by the terms of the motion, the proposal is for a tax that would by no definition—save that anything said in defence of the revolution is necessarily honest—be a local tax. The tax would be set, collected and allocated centrally, presumably by a central committee, chaired, staffed and minuted by Mr Sheridan. All we need to hear is, “If you don’t meet your quotas you’ll get it.” I urge members to reject the motion.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Mr Fitzpatrick was the last speaker in the open debate.

09:53

Tricia Marwick: Thank you for giving me an additional two minutes, Presiding Officer. This has been a very short debate. In summing up a debate, one usually refers to what previous speakers have said. Brian Fitzpatrick made a humorous speech and Keith Harding said, quite rightly, that the council tax is not perfect. Indeed, it is not a perfect tax; neither was the poll tax perfect, but I am sure that Mr Harding defended that tax to its death.

We need to rethink radically the way in which our council tax is determined and the way in which local government is financed. Iain Smith said that the Parliament needs more powers. He, too, is right. The real and radical changes that we need to make to local government finance will happen only when the Parliament acquires the powers necessary to do that.

09:54

Peter Peacock: As members on all sides of the Parliament have suggested this morning—Brian Fitzpatrick most eloquently—Tommy Sheridan’s

proposals are not realistic, credible or deliverable. They would undermine fundamentally the principle of local accountability, which is held dear by most members. Many of us came through the local government system and understand how important local accountability is.

Local authorities do not support the proposal. In written evidence to the Local Government Committee, which is investigating local government finance, COSLA said that the Scottish service tax would undermine local democracy and be less predictable than council tax. The service tax would lead to significant increases in bills, not just for the mega-rich, as is often portrayed, but for people on average and below-average incomes. It would replace local accountability with additional burdens on Scottish business.

In evidence to the Local Government Committee, those who created the Scottish service tax proposals acknowledge that their proposals would put at risk the £300 million-worth of council tax benefit that currently comes into the Scottish system. That money has a huge redistributive effect at lower-income levels—as Iain Smith described—but, under the proposals, it would be lost permanently to Scottish public service.

As usual, Tommy Sheridan's timing is immaculate—he is holding this debate on the day on which the Accounts Commission announces that in Scotland we are collecting higher proportions of council tax than ever before.

There are important issues about local tax that need to be debated. That is why the Local Government Committee is advancing its inquiry. The Executive looks forward to receiving the committee's proposals. As Brian Fitzpatrick and others have suggested, we should have an open mind about how we can refine and improve our tax system. Mr Sheridan's contribution adds nothing to the discussions that are already taking place in Parliament.

09:56

Tommy Sheridan: Mr Peacock referred to timing and, indeed, timing is of the essence. We are holding this debate only a couple of days after an NCH report confirmed that we still have 310,000 children getting brought up in poor families and 200,000 pensioners who are officially poor. In other words, nothing is changing in relation to poverty. Iain Smith's comments raise some difficulties and I advise him to read the Scottish Parliament information centre research note. The Institute for Fiscal Studies studied the effect of council tax and pointed out that the top 10 per cent in society pay 1.22 per cent of their income in council tax, whereas the bottom 10 per

cent pay 7.5 per cent of their income. The IFS noted that taking benefit into account had comparatively little effect.

Iain Smith: Will the member give way?

Johann Lamont: Will the member give way?

Mr McAveety: Will the member give way?

Tommy Sheridan: The centre for council tax reform states:

“after benefit the richest fifth of non-retired households pay 2 per cent of gross income in council tax, while the poorest fifth pay 5 per cent.”

Iain Smith should check his facts. *[Interruption.]* There is a gaggle of geese here—will you try to get them under control, Presiding Officer?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There have been some lively exchanges this morning, Mr Sheridan. It is for you to decide whether you wish to take an intervention.

Tommy Sheridan: I thought that it was obvious that I did not intend to give way.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: It helps for the member to say no or to make a gesture to indicate that they are not giving way. It is now clear that Mr Sheridan is not giving way.

Johann Lamont: On a point of order. Is it in order to define as a gaggle of geese members who want to participate in a debate on a policy, rather than listen to Mr Sheridan make the same points that he has made repeatedly over a long period of time?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I acknowledge the point and I have already drawn Parliament's attention to an unfortunate expression that Mr Sheridan used earlier to refer to two Labour members. In the formality of debate, members must observe a proper degree of respect for other members.

Tommy Sheridan: I am sure that the two members to whom I referred are big and broad enough to take my comments in the playful way that they were meant.

On Johann Lamont's point of order, it is interesting that I am accused of not allowing proper debate on the issue and then I am accused of bringing it back for debate three times.

Johann Lamont: Will the member give way?

Mr McAveety: Will the member give way?

Tommy Sheridan: That is a bit of a contradiction—either there is proper debate, because it has been on the table for three years—*[Interruption.]*

I am sorry, but I cannot hear myself think.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is closing.

Tommy Sheridan: In relation to the squeals of anger from Labour benches about higher rates of taxation on the wealthy, I remind Labour members that we already impose a 60 per cent rate of taxation—we impose it on the poor. I remind members that 950,000 people are subject to the withdrawal of benefits—council tax benefit and housing benefit—as soon as their income rises. Instead of being tough with the poor all the time, is it not time that we got a wee bit tougher with the wealthy and the rich?

Progressive Water Tax

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-2632, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on the introduction of a progressive water tax, and one amendment to that motion.

10:00

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): The proposal in the motion is an excellent complement to the proposal in the previous debate, which dealt with the removal of an unfair system of taxation—the council tax. If we accept that the council tax is unfair to the root, it is also fair to assume that water rates are unfair, as they are based on council tax. However, water rates are even less fair than council tax, because there is no rebate system for water rates. The so-called relief system that the Executive intends to introduce from 1 April has rightly been condemned as pathetic by all independent observers, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, which has said that the system is totally inadequate and will miss out 1 million of the poorest households in Scotland. Water and sewerage services are essential and should be properly resourced in a progressive fashion.

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): Tommy Sheridan's motion states that

"sewerage service charges to domestic customers should be paid for by using an income-based personal tax".

In my case and in the case of many of my constituents in rural Aberdeenshire, we have to take care of the sewerage ourselves—we do not pay sewerage charges. Is Tommy Sheridan suggesting that we should be taxed on personal income for a service that we do not receive?

Tommy Sheridan: As the member knows, only a very small proportion of the Scottish population are not connected to the sewerage system. With the extra £201 million a year that the progressive water tax would bring in for water and sewerage services, we could ensure that everyone in Scotland is properly connected.

The proposed tax would be fair and progressive. We have to ask ourselves, "Is this service essential? Should this service be recognised across Scotland as an essential service, similar to the police, fire services and health services?" If so, it should be paid for progressively via income. That means recognising the unacceptability of the burden of paying for water and sewerage services that is placed on the low paid and pensioners. Pensioners and poor households simply cannot afford it.

Since 1996, domestic water charges have risen by 105 per cent, whereas benefits and wages to the low paid have risen by less than 10 per cent. That represents a significant reduction in an already low disposable income, which is why we should move towards a system that taxes according to ability to pay. That suggestion is not rocket science; indeed, it is part of the post-war political consensus, which disappeared after Thatcher moved from a system with a preponderance of direct taxes to one with a preponderance of indirect taxes. New Labour has supported that. The move has been regressive, because it taxes low-income households at the same rate as high-income households.

If the water tax was combined with a service tax, a low-paid couple in Glasgow who earned £12,274 a year would save £628 on what they currently pay for council tax and water rates. A couple on average earnings who each earn £17,289 a year—despite the fact that the average annual wage in Glasgow is £15,000, we will take the higher rate of £17,289—would save £370.40 a year. Of course, those at the higher end of the income scale would pay more, but that is right and proper. For far too long, they have been getting away with paying too little.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that water and sewerage services are essential services which should be publicly owned and democratically controlled for the benefit of all Scotland's citizens; further believes that water and sewerage service charges to domestic customers should be paid for by using an income-based personal tax which would be progressive, efficient and easily understood; therefore endorses the replacement of the current unfair water rate system for domestic customers with a new individual income-based water tax that would be fair and redistributive, while raising more revenue for Scotland's water and sewerage services, and notes that this new Water Tax would be collected by the Inland Revenue in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish water industry.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I now call Ross Finnie to speak to and move amendment S1M-2632.1. Speakers in the remaining opening round have three minutes.

10:04

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): I listened with interest to the last two thirds of Tommy Sheridan's opening remarks. Of course, it is difficult to disagree with a general philosophy of progressive taxation. There is no difficulty in agreeing that we could fund the range of services that we want to provide through progressive income tax and apply the sum that is raised to a variety of purposes. However, the difficulty with the motion is that Tommy Sheridan is not proposing a general tax to pay for a variety of services; he wants to raise

income tax specifically to meet a water charge. Where is the equity in that?

If we ask citizens to bear a form of taxation for a specific purpose, do we not have to tell them the amount that will be charged and their personal relationship to the tax? That relates to the point that Mike Rumbles made. The proposal for a specific income tax for water charges fails on two counts. First, the system would not tell citizens why an unspecified sum of money was being raised for water charges. Tommy Sheridan's calculation is that the sum would be £201 million, which is different from the sum that he has mentioned in committee meetings. Secondly, there is no way of identifying within the income tax system the link between the customer and what they are being asked to pay. Tommy Sheridan has presented no evidence on the link and on the amount that will be raised. There is no way that the citizen can be told that they should raise a general sum when they are being asked specifically to pay a water income tax.

I do not claim that the existing arrangements are perfect—far from it. For example, there are problems with collection rates and how to determine the quantity of water used, but I will come to those in a minute—sorry, I mean in three seconds.

I say to Tommy Sheridan that the creation of a specific tax from income tax would raise the collection rate for that tax to an unacceptable level. How would he change the current system so that it more equitably relates to use and the specific charge that is required? He has to accept that, although the current system may not be perfect, it is, through its link to the council tax band system, more progressive than any other utility charge.

The Executive's policy is far less cumbersome to administer. Scottish Water—if Parliament approves the Water Industry (Scotland) Bill—will have to consider carefully the way forward, because the present arrangements are not sustainable in the long run. However, the tax that is proposed in the motion would be far more cumbersome and difficult to operate. It would not be equitable, it would not relate to the cost, it would not tell citizens why they were paying it and it would not address the link between those who use water services and those who are being asked to pay.

I move amendment S1M-2632.1, to leave out from the first "believes" to end and insert:

"commends the efforts of the Scottish Executive in ensuring that the public water industry in Scotland is strong and efficient, bringing considerable benefits to all customers; recognises the Executive's continuing commitment to a public water industry; recognises that the best way to fund the Scottish water industry is through

charges on domestic and non-domestic customers utilising the services provided; recognises that the current system for charging domestic customers already provides a degree of protection for lower income households and the most vulnerable through the link to council tax banding, and finally recognises that the reduction scheme provides help to those low income households facing the biggest charge increases."

10:08

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): We should ask why water charges are now an issue, as we have had them for many years. We had them in the form of an addition to domestic rates; we had the water community charge, or poll tax; and then we had the council tax. For many years, water charges have been a separate item. At best, the charge has been a minor irritant. It usually came with the main bill, but people always complained about the main bill and never said much about the water element. The imperfections of the water charge system could be safely ignored.

As with the rates, we all agree that the imperfections lie in the fact that the system is property based, as we discussed in the previous debate, and unrelated in any direct way to the ability of people to pay. We also all agree that water and sewerage services are a special case. By and large, they are not an option that one can buy into or buy out of; they are services that we must have.

The council tax, for all its faults, at least has a benefits mechanism—albeit expensive, cumbersome and slow to respond—that can mitigate the system's worst features, but that cannot be said about the current water charge arrangements. The imperfections of those arrangements have come to light because of the huge increase in charges that consumers have faced recently. That increase has come about because of the neglect of our water system infrastructure over decades. Our railways, roads, school buildings and most of the rest of our infrastructure have been neglected in the same way; in this debate, it might be appropriate to say that they have gone down the pan. Helen Liddell says in the introduction to the Scotland Office website:

"Through devolution, Scotland enjoys the best of both worlds."

If the running down of our infrastructure is an example of the best of both worlds, the sooner we get rid of those two worlds, the better.

Even that neglect is not the whole cause of the crisis. At the heart of the crisis is the insistence on paying for the necessary improvements to our water infrastructure out of current revenue. That is why charges have gone up so much, making

consumers rightly annoyed. It is also why some groups of consumers are facing bills that are disproportionate to their incomes. In those circumstances, the anomalies and unfairness of the property-based system become an important factor.

To set up a separate tax-based system is not a sensible way of addressing the problem, even if that system is run by the Inland Revenue and is based on a different method of collection, which could have its own inconsistencies. If, instead of council tax, we had a local income tax system that was related to ability to pay, water charges related to tax might be a sensible option. Until then, we have to keep the pressure on the minister and the water companies to mitigate as much as possible the undoubted unfairness of the current system.

10:11

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): It has been interesting to hear Tommy Sheridan outline his proposals for the introduction of a progressive Scottish water tax. It has also been interesting to hear his proposal that the tax would be collected by the Inland Revenue. As the minister pointed out, those proposals display a considerable naivety about the real world.

The increased tax burden that Mr Sheridan proposes would certainly be redistributive, but it would also cause relocation. His tax would drive businesses and businesspeople from Scotland. If businesses were faced with greater costs in Scotland than in the rest of the United Kingdom, new businesses would not locate in Scotland. Unemployment would rise and fewer people would be left to pay Mr Sheridan's tax.

Although the Water Industry (Scotland) Bill is far from perfect, it at least makes a good attempt to deliver high-quality water and sewerage services on an equitable basis throughout the country. The bill is redistributive in that customers in the east and west of Scotland will pay for the redevelopment of the north of Scotland's water infrastructure. That burden, which we accept we should take on, will be hard enough for customers to bear. The suggestion that we go as far as is proposed under Tommy Sheridan's tax would provoke a public outcry and a mass exodus of business from Scotland. Keith Harding made a similar point in the previous debate.

The current system of charging for water and sewerage services already provides reliefs for lower-income households. In its own time, Scottish Water might introduce proposals for a different collection process—a process that will be subject to the scrutiny of the Parliament. When that happens, we will probably have to consider Mr Sheridan's proposals again. In the meantime, the

Conservative party will not support the motion.

10:13

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): I have been driven to reflect on what the 22 contributions could have been the last time that we debated three separate issues in 22 minutes, as it seemed. I presume that at least a quarter of them were made by Mr Sheridan.

I caution Mr Sheridan. I trust that he will reflect on today's proceedings so that he does not end up being described, as the Earl of Selkirk was by Burns, as

"a man of immense vanity, bordering on insanity—and every corner stuffed with mighty self".

I make a serious, rather than a debating, point.

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): Does the member agree that there is a considerable amount of male vanity in the Parliament? I ask her to stop targeting Tommy Sheridan, who has made an excellent contribution. I am tired of the harassment of that member and the attempts to make him run out of time on one of the few occasions on which he has had the opportunity to secure a debate.

Johann Lamont: I would never suggest that vanity is solely a product of the Scottish Socialist Party. There are many expressions of vanity elsewhere. I was cautioning Mr Sheridan that the Parliament is a place where we have debate—it is not a platform or an opportunity to get headlines. I deprecate spin-doctoring elsewhere and I deprecate it in this debate.

Water charges are an important issue. I have argued on record that we need to address the problems of the poor and those on low incomes, particularly in the context of rising water charges. We have been put in the unfortunate position of not having the opportunity to reflect on the strengths of the arguments; we have been told what the solution is and we must like it or lump it. Frankly, that is not what the Parliament is for.

The proposals that are the subject of this debate and the previous debate have been scrutinised by our committees and, sadly, have been found wanting. In the time that we have had, we have not had the opportunity to expose that further. It is important to consider the Parliament's powers to address the needs of the poor in relation to water charges. We must question the credibility of getting the Inland Revenue to deal with the problem, which is a rather cobbled-together solution.

Iain Smith made the point about socialists no longer wanting to tax property. Mr Sheridan wants to tax property—that is why I find his proposals on the council tax and the water services tax

unacceptable and not sufficiently thought through. We must acknowledge the importance of keeping water services in the public sector. I ask the minister to reassure us that the Executive will look seriously at how the proposed water charges will affect the poor. That central issue is not the monopoly of one person in the Parliament; it is of grave concern to Labour members. It is not simply a party matter; we must find a genuine solution to the problems, so that people can have a good water service that is affordable and appropriately delivered.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to open debate. It gives me inordinate pleasure to invite Mike Rumbles to speak.

10:17

Mr Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): It gives me inordinate pleasure to accept the invitation to speak.

I do not intend to take the full three minutes. I want to make it clear that I believe that income tax is the fairest form of taxation that we can have in this country. We should be prepared to pay more in income tax to fund proper public services. However, Mr Sheridan's motion betrays a complete ignorance of real life in rural Scotland. The Scottish Parliament is the Parliament for urban and rural Scotland. It strikes me that the motion could only have been lodged by a Glasgow MSP.

In my intervention, I explained to Mr Sheridan why his proposal is so wrong for people in rural Scotland. I will give an example of that. The number of people who are not connected to the public water supply is greater in Aberdeenshire than anywhere else. I am not connected to the sewerage system—[*Interruption.*] That is a great opportunity for humour. My situation is normal across rural Scotland. It is remarkable to suggest that we should be charged through income tax for services that we do not receive.

In answer to my intervention, Mr Sheridan said that the increase in income tax would pay to connect everyone to the public water supply and the sewerage system. I would be pleased if he would confirm that in his closing speech. Does he have any idea how much that would cost in Aberdeenshire, never mind in the rest of rural Scotland? His motion is oriented towards an urban agenda. It completely ignores the service needs of rural Scotland. I want him to answer that point.

10:19

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): Water is regarded as special by many societies. In some countries, that is because there is too little of it and wars are fought over it. In Scotland, we feel that

there is too much of it. Traditionally, we have been proud of our drinking water and have contrasted it with the unpleasant-tasting water in other less fortunate countries, such as England.

Tommy Sheridan believes that redistributive taxation is the answer to everything in Scotland. The Scottish service tax for local services, which looks remarkably like a clumsy form of income tax, would be highly centralised and totally unaccountable at local level. For water, we are to have a new, centrally collected income tax—the service tax mark 2. As the socialist service tax and the water tax are to be decided on and collected centrally, I am not sure why Tommy Sheridan does not forget about the red tape and the administration and just double the rate of income tax. Why does he vehemently reject the move to community ownership by way of housing stock transfer, which will strike a major redistributive blow for resources in Scotland and involve billions of pounds of investment and the creation of thousands of jobs?

As Mike Rumbles said, the Liberal Democrats—more than any other major party—support an element of redistributive taxation, but that must be implemented nationally within fairly narrow limits. There comes a point at which there are no wealthy people left to soak, because they have taken their wealth elsewhere and their jobs and their wealth-creating enterprises with them.

Tommy Sheridan's taxation proposals, whatever their intention, would destroy jobs, erode pensions and reduce incomes. I urge the chamber to reject the motion.

10:21

The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Allan Wilson): I agree with Brian Fitzpatrick, who compared today to "Groundhog Day". I recall many similar debates with Mr Sheridan in the 1980s, when he was a member of Militant in the Labour party, about the number of angels who could dance on the head of a pin. In his attempt to hang a rather unsophisticated model for redistributing income, if not wealth, on the nearest passing vehicle, he has missed some fairly fundamental philosophical debating points.

A water charge is not a tax, but a payment for services provided. Charges must relate to the use of services, but Mr Sheridan's proposals divorce the level of charge from the service that is provided. Charges must produce sufficient resources to fund services, as the current system does. Mr Sheridan claimed that his scheme would collect more, but why should the Scottish charge payer be burdened with higher charges than are necessary?

In the competitive environment that the water industry is about to enter, there is a serious risk of the consumer opting to desert a high-charge, high-tax public service in favour of a low-cost private alternative. As ever, the losers would be the low paid and those who are on fixed incomes—the very people whom Tommy Sheridan hopes would benefit from his proposal.

I have heard nothing that substantiates any claim that Mr Sheridan has made, particularly the claim that his scheme could be cost-effective. Administrative costs would surely outweigh any benefits.

As Ross Finnie and Johann Lamont said, the Executive fully accepts that the current system is not perfect. Scottish Water will consider the future of billing and collection arrangements. We are therefore committed to ensuring that more work is done on affordability issues, including research by the water industry commissioner, whom we have asked to inform us of his findings. That will ensure that affordability issues are taken fully into account as Scottish Water considers options for tariff structuring, billing and collection arrangements.

However, the claim that, in the interim, Mr Sheridan's proposals represent an improvement on the current system is misguided. The current system has proved workable, fair, equitable and efficient. It successfully funds the Scottish water industry, relates charges to the service that is provided and ensures that customers remain at the heart of the system. It addresses ability to pay through a link to council tax bands and the transitional affordability scheme.

I commend the Executive's amendment to the Parliament.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Tommy Sheridan to wind up the debate, which we have timetabled to run until 10.30 am. If we do not make it to then, we will start the next debate immediately.

10:24

Tommy Sheridan: I thought that you were going to suggest that I should have a wee bit more time, Presiding Officer.

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development made an interesting point. He seemed to accept my argument that water and sewerage services are essential services. If they are essential services, I suggest that they should be paid for via general taxation or a specific tax that relates to a person's ability to pay, as represented by their income.

Although the minister accepted my point, he attacked the water tax. If a specific water tax was levied, the person who paid that tax would know

that it was a water tax, because it would be denoted as a water tax on that person's wage slip.

The minister also said that we should relate charges to use. That is a dangerous principle. If it is accepted that water and sewerage services are essential services, like the police, fire and health services, it does not take much of a leap of imagination to say, "Why don't we relate those services to use as well? Perhaps those who do not use the fire service or the health service should not pay as much as others."

The water tax is appropriate for the political situation because of the Parliament's ridiculously limited powers. The Parliament has a power in relation to local authority taxation and services that allows it to raise revenue in different forms. In anticipation of the use of the 3p-in-the-pound variation, the Inland Revenue conducted an exercise in Scotland—

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

Tommy Sheridan: Yes—I am not sure whether it is Pinky or Perky.

Mr McAveety: I have heard that reference again, Presiding Officer—it is obvious that Mr Sheridan did not listen to your comments.

The main problem is that Mr Sheridan wants to centralise decision making and not take into account local factors. That is strange. This week sees the anniversaries of the deaths of three important historic figures—Louis XVI, George Orwell and V I Lenin. Of those three, who would most approve of Mr Sheridan's centralising ideas?

Tommy Sheridan: It is funny that Mr McAveety mentions Louis XVI. He may be aware that Louis's finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, once said that

"the art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest amount of feathers with the least ... amount of hissing."

It is unfortunate that, although new Labour used to agree that the rich should be taxed until the pips squeak, that is no longer on the agenda.

The proposed taxation system recognises the essential nature of water and sewerage.

Johann Lamont *rose—*

Tommy Sheridan: I have taken two interventions during the debate.

Members must recognise that the service tax is democratically neutral, because in exchange for the loss of the right to set council tax, local authorities regain the right to set the business rate. I had to laugh when the Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services talked about the current system for setting the business rate being

redistributive. It is so redistributive that the poorest local authority in Scotland loses £83 million in net terms from it.

The Inland Revenue has coded Scottish workers, and the water tax system would allow an exercise that has been conducted to be used to generate even more revenue for the essential services.

Mr Rumbles: Will Mr Sheridan answer my point?

Tommy Sheridan: I am just coming to it. Mike Rumbles was right to say that many rural citizens are not connected to the public water supply or sewerage system. I contend that we should have a campaign and should raise the resources to connect everyone in Scotland to the public sewerage system and water supply. However, I take umbrage at Mike Rumbles's suggestion that the water tax is only an urban issue. Low pay is one of the biggest problems in rural areas. The water tax would redistribute income to individuals in rural areas who are low paid but face high water charges and high council tax charges.

In combination, the two systems that I have proposed would redistribute income throughout Scotland. One tax would raise more money for local government jobs and services and the other tax would raise money for water and sewerage services in a fashion that is fairer and more efficient as well as transparent and clear. That is the type of redistribution of wealth that the Parliament should be responsible for.

I give members fair notice that they will have a chance to debate the issue next year, because it will be back on the agenda, as far as the Scottish Socialist Party is concerned. Members will then have another opportunity to defend the council tax and the water rate.

Anti-nuclear Campaign (Faslane)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh): The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-2633, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on Faslane and the anti-nuclear campaign, and one amendment to that motion.

10:30

Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): The motion should be straightforward. However, the minister—Allan Wilson—is leaving the chamber, perhaps because he knows that I might make reference to debates in the 1980s when I, along with other socialists, was expelled from the Labour party. In those debates, the minister might recall that we agreed on unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Is it not incredible that new Labour lodged the only amendment, which removes reference to the opposition to nuclear weapons? As I look around the chamber, I see quite a few ashen faces on the new Labour benches. Many of them probably have their Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament membership cards and, although they might not be able to produce them very often, they continue to support a movement that is morally, politically and economically correct.

Mr Michael McMahon (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab): The key word in the reference that Mr Sheridan made was unilateral. Now that the Labour party is in power, we have reduced the number of nuclear missiles and we are working with our counterparts in other countries towards arms reduction. That is what happens when parties get into power. Unilateralism was something for the 1980s; arms reduction is something that we are doing now.

Tommy Sheridan: It is utter tosh—with apologies to the Deputy Presiding Officer—for Mr McMahon to say that the Labour party is reducing nuclear weapons or other weapons. The new Labour Government has given more licences to export weapons of destruction across the world, has continued to accelerate the nuclear programme and is about to sign up to the star wars programme, which will lead to a further acceleration in nuclear proliferation around the world.

Mr McMahon has to accept that his party's problems are those of a political party that used to have some principles and soul. His party has abandoned principles, including the principle of unilateral nuclear disarmament. That principle was established at the 1982 Labour party conference by a two-thirds majority in a card vote and was in the Labour party manifesto. People might say that Labour lost elections in the 1980s, but it did not do

so in Scotland. Unilateral nuclear disarmament is popular and it is right.

It is morally correct for Labour members to oppose inhumane weapons of destruction. Those weapons were declared illegal in 1996 by the International Court of Justice precisely because of their indiscriminate nature. Nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminate weapons ever created by mankind. It is right and proper that Scotland should stand for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

I will take an intervention from a member who is at least honest about his pro-nuclear stance.

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): I am grateful to the member for giving way.

On the point that Tommy Sheridan made about the International Court of Justice ruling, I have examined the appeal court decision that was made last year. It states clearly that the use of such weapons for offensive measures could be considered illegal, but the use of such weapons to guarantee self-defence and protection against mass genocide was considered not to be illegal. That ruling was made referring to United Nations conventions and law of custom.

Tommy Sheridan: The point that I made about the International Court of Justice hearing was to establish that the use of nuclear weapons was illegal and that their very possession was illegal. The UK holds nuclear weapons systems that are first-strike and offensive. That is illegal to the core. The Conservative party has continually and consistently supported nuclear weaponry. At least it is wrong consistently. The problem with new Labour is that it has moved from a position that was politically right to—

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Tommy Sheridan: I am not sure whether I can take another intervention.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: No, the member must not take any more interventions. He is already over time and he is now summing up.

Tommy Sheridan: I am sorry.

When it comes to decision time at 5 o'clock, I hope that some new Labour members examine—or re-examine—their consciences and vote for a motion that most of them, perhaps privately, support.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that nuclear weapons pose a very real threat to humanity and accordingly should be opposed on moral, social, political and economic grounds; opposes the possession of nuclear weapons; supports unilateral disarmament in Scotland and across the UK in pursuit of a non-nuclear world, free of the threat of destruction by nuclear weapons; further supports the

Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares blockade of Faslane nuclear submarine base on 11-13 February 2002, and upholds the right of demonstrators to protest peacefully in support of world peace.

10:34

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Dr Richard Simpson): I have listened with interest to the points that were made by Mr Sheridan in support of the motion. As has been said already, defence is a reserved matter. It is for the UK Government to determine policy on Britain's nuclear deterrent and to account for that to the UK Parliament and, ultimately, to the UK electorate. Members of the Scottish Parliament can express views. Mr Sheridan's views were known from his previous speeches on the subject.

I will deal briefly with the second part of his motion, which he did not address in his opening remarks, as it is important in terms of the issues that the Scottish Parliament can and should deal with. Strathclyde police are responsible for policing the annual protests and demonstrations that take place at the Faslane base. It is not uncommon for as many as 1,000 persons to take part in such events. Each protest demonstration represents a significant policing challenge.

As my amendment sets out, such protests are entirely appropriate. We respect the right of individuals to hold strong views and to protest peacefully. However, Mr Sheridan needs to recognise the fact that peaceful protest is one thing, but other forms of protest are not victimless. When individuals have their cars rocked, they feel it and are traumatised by such an experience. I am aware that Mr Sheridan would not support that form of protest but, nevertheless, he is a regular part of a protest that involves victims.

I want to make another point, in what will be a brief speech: because of the element who are involved in attacking individuals in a way that is totally unacceptable, such protests require the deployment of up to 750 officers. That is not without cost. It involves additional payments to Strathclyde police to manage the annual protest. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are required to have 750 officers, one tenth of the Strathclyde police number, police the protest.

I would prefer to see police on that day policing the communities that Mr Sheridan professes to be concerned about. I also profess to that concern. Yesterday I was in Govan, talking to people about how to deal with the effects of crime on communities in Glasgow. Anything that distracts the police from that is unacceptable.

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

Dr Simpson: No, I am sorry, but I am into my last minute. I was almost into my last minute before I began.

Dorothy-Grace Elder *rose*—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Dr Simpson: The amendment sets out the right of peaceful protest. That is guaranteed in our constitution, as it must be by the Scottish Parliament. Protest must be peaceful. It is unacceptable to block a road and prevent people from getting to work.

I had intended to refer to the matter of jobs in relation to Faslane, but Jackie Baillie, the constituency member, will talk about that issue in her speech.

I move amendment 2633.1, to leave out from "believes" to end and insert:

"supports the right of demonstrators to protest peacefully in support of world peace, but condemns those in a democratic society who abuse this right and act in contravention of the criminal law."

10:38

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): The right to peaceful protest is a fundamental right that we all recognise. I am appalled that Dr Simpson has diminished the debate by taking it down to such a level. Whether members like it or not, the debate is about idealism and the situation in which we find ourselves.

In July 1998, the Labour Government said that its goal was

"the global elimination of nuclear weapons."

However, new Labour is stuck with Trident. It was notable in the 1998 strategic defence review that the consultations did not include Trident, Eurofighter or Challenger II tanks. New Labour was determined to continue the Tory commitment to nuclear deterrence. I am sure that Tory members in the chamber are quite relaxed about that. Despite the fact that Labour in Scotland votes against Trident when it has the opportunity to do so, new Labour insists on the UK nuclear deterrent. The reason for that is to deter aggression from states in possession of chemical or biological weapons or to deter rogue states.

The appalling thing about chemical and biological weapons is that they are indiscriminate; they make no distinction between service personnel and civilians. I do not understand the argument that says that such weapons can be morally countered by the threat of the use of similar weapons. Nuclear weapons are indiscriminate and inaccurate. They contaminate people and land. Long before 11 September, experts had worked out that nuclear weapons

would be no deterrent to anybody armed with a lorry-load of explosives or a bottle full of anthrax. It is unfortunate that 11 September proved that to be the case.

When I was young, the indiscriminate bombing of civilians was part of the strategy to defeat Germany, and few questioned it at the time. We now live in an age where war takes place under the microscopic eye of television and in front of a critical media and world population. Images are transmitted into living rooms and people react unfavourably to the deployment of careless force. Minimum force is normally deployed, smart weapons are utilised and civilian casualties are to be avoided. Everybody would agree with that.

Is it not ludicrous that, at a time when we are becoming even more fastidious in the prosecution of war, new Labour clings to a weapon of mass destruction? Does its persistence in that respect not diminish the moral pressure that it can bring to bear on other nations that are thinking of taking on board nuclear weapons? Nuclear weapons are unusable. Russia's defence budget is a third of the UK's and Putin relies on the support of the west. The cold war is over. There is no threat that merits the possession of nuclear weapons by the UK.

Ben Wallace: Will Colin Campbell give way?

Colin Campbell: No. I have only a few moments left.

In a 1996 International Court of Justice advisory ruling, nuclear weapons were judged to be contrary to the rules of international law applicable to armed conflict, but new Labour persists in maintaining the system. Our nuclear capability is a weapon that cannot sanely be used. It is kept by the UK to secure its place in the Security Council, to feed its post-imperial delusions of grandeur and to maintain the illusion that the United Kingdom is still a world power.

10:41

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Today is pan Tommy Sheridan day, to judge from what I have heard in this morning's debates. It is not my intention to pan Tommy Sheridan for anything other than perhaps actions that I consider criminal. I would certainly not pan him for his views, which I recognise he holds very personally and has the courage to stand up for. I do criticise him, however, on the basis that his views do not hold water in many instances.

When I look at Tommy Sheridan's motion, I have to tell him that it is the kind of motion that would have been tabled at Westminster some 10 years ago by the very ministers who now control such issues as members of the Government. The difference is that those people now have

responsibilities. They have to consider the issues realistically rather than through the eyes of those who wish to achieve nuclear disarmament without considering the practical realities. When I consider issues such as unilateral actions, I have to say that the Government is absolutely right, as Mr McMahon said, to reverse its stand on those issues.

There is a change in feelings across the country. I recently attended a University of Edinburgh debate on the retention of nuclear weapons. When I go along to such debates, I usually expect to be heavily defeated. My opponent was Robin Harper, the rector of the university, but the students backed the idea of retaining nuclear weapons. They recognised the practicality of the situation.

Colin Campbell: Was it a Tory club debate?

Phil Gallie: No, it was not. It was an open debate at the University of Edinburgh.

Tommy Sheridan referred to the horror of nuclear weapons, and he is absolutely right, but in fact that adds to the strength of the weapons and the reason for their retention. It was said earlier that the Conservatives were consistently wrong, but I suggest that we have been consistently right. The fact that, over the past 50 years, we have avoided a major world war is very important. In the second world war, 15 million people died. That must never happen again. In my view, the horrendous effect of using nuclear weapons has prevented such an event. That is something that we must value very much indeed. Consider the current situation between India and Pakistan. I wonder whether the threat of nuclear warfare is the factor that has managed to keep those two nations apart. I suggest that it may have been a major factor.

I make no apologies for backing Richard Simpson's amendment. He is right to make the point that people are entitled to have views on such important issues and entitled to demonstrate those views, but that they are not entitled to break the law by so doing. The law has been set by legislators such as every one of us in the chamber today, and it lies heavily on our shoulders that we must be seen to protect the law at all times.

10:45

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): My Liberal Democrat colleagues and I will be supporting Richard Simpson's amendment. It is no secret that there is vigorous internal debate in the Liberal Democrat party and in the Labour party on the issue between those who think that we should not have nuclear weapons and those who think that, although it is regrettable, we need them as a deterrent against other less well-intentioned states using them against us. It is quite a fair argument

and will no doubt continue.

Putting my party first, as I always do, I would like to make clear the party's position by reading from our manifesto for the most recent general election. It says that Liberal Democrats would

"Work for the elimination worldwide of all nuclear weapons. We will press for a new round of multilateral arms reduction talks, but will retain the UK's minimum nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future."

The manifesto goes on to say that we also oppose the American proposal for a national missile defence system, which we think greatly destabilises the status quo of nuclear weapons. We want multilateral disarmament.

Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP): Will Mr Gorrie explain why his party's support for the retention of three Trident submarines whose weapons cannot be fired without the agreement of the Americans is an acceptable position but support for the missile defence system is not?

Donald Gorrie: The official argument accepted by the party is that we need to have a deterrent and that missiles with which we can threaten other people must be available so that they do not shoot at us.

The Liberal Democrat position is as I have stated it. My own view is that I am against nuclear weapons, but I am also against the sort of demonstrations that take place at Faslane. It can be argued that such demonstrations draw attention to the issue and create publicity, but it creates bad publicity. The scenes that we see on television deter a lot of other people from supporting the argument.

I used to have exactly the same argument with Peter Hain in the days when he was a radical Young Liberal and went round digging up cricket pitches and golf courses, which I said harmed his case. I still feel the same. Legitimate, peaceful, respectable demonstration can do a great deal of good in shifting public opinion, but I am not prepared to support what happens at Faslane. I hope that the British Government will move more vigorously in the direction of getting rid of our nuclear weapons, but my party's position is as I have stated it.

10:48

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): It is fair to say that there are many activists in the Labour movement, including me, who have campaigned over the years for nuclear disarmament. Let me say at the outset that I will always protect the right of people to demonstrate and to protest peacefully in support of world peace.

World peace and a nuclear-free world are aspirations that we all share. We differ

fundamentally on how we achieve those aims, but I know of no sane person, inside or outwith this chamber, who ever wants to see nuclear weapons used, not just here but anywhere in the world. Whether one is a unilateralist or a multilateralist, the ultimate aim is the same. The moral high ground that Tommy Sheridan seeks to claim is not his alone. It belongs to anyone and everyone who opposes nuclear weapons.

It is worth reflecting on the fact that Labour has reduced the number of warheads by a third. That is action, not rhetoric, and demonstrates a clear commitment to reducing arms in Britain and across the world.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: Will Jackie Baillie give way?

Jackie Baillie: No. I would like to move on. I shall move from an international perspective to an extremely parochial one, because Faslane is in my constituency.

The onus of thinking through the consequences of every action is put on all responsible politicians. Members might find interesting some facts in an EKOS report that was commissioned in 1998. More than 7,000 people are directly employed at the base, 4,000 of whom are civilians. Some 3,700 indirect jobs result from supplier linkages and income multipliers. Civilian jobs account for more than 70 per cent of the base's employment. The base is one of the largest single-site employers in Scotland and by far the largest source of jobs in the West Dunbartonshire local economy.

Given that West Dunbartonshire is one of the most disadvantaged areas in Scotland and that Faslane is the source of a quarter of the employment in the area, what do we get from a party that masquerades as being on the side of the working man? It gives no real answers and no costed alternatives, only screaming headlines that call for the shutting down of Faslane in that parody of a newspaper that is published by Tommy Sheridan's party. What thought has been given to workers and their families? Unfortunately, Tommy Sheridan would consign them to unemployment and poverty. That is nothing short of irresponsible.

Mr Quinan: Must we have jobs at any price?

Jackie Baillie: I say to Lloyd Quinan that what I have said also describes the SNP's behaviour. There is nothing on its website because its policy is under review. Perhaps a blank screen is the true indication of what that party offers.

Colin Campbell: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member will not as she is in her final minute.

Jackie Baillie: I am winding up.

Perhaps the SNP will enlighten the chamber whether it is in favour of withdrawing from NATO. Will it clarify comments that were made by one of its candidates at the Scottish Parliament elections? He said that we should not worry because when Faslane is scrapped, the Scottish navy and customs and excise can be based there. So far, so good. However, his leader at the time favoured Rosyth rather than Faslane. Does the SNP have one policy for the west of Scotland and a different policy for the east? When a question was put about the size of the navy, an estimate of seven frigates was given—that means 100 jobs. What about the missing 10,600 jobs?

Once again, we are debating reserved matters. Perhaps Tommy Sheridan should stand for the Westminster Parliament. He could then represent his views at Glasgow City Council, the Scottish Parliament and the House of Commons.

I urge the chamber to reject the motion.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Dorothy-Grace Elder has three minutes.

10:53

Dorothy-Grace Elder (Glasgow) (SNP): I declare an interest as convener of the cross-party group on nuclear disarmament.

The mornings are dark, but I have not seen Mr Gorrie protesting at Faslane. Indeed, I assume that he has not been at a Faslane protest. The protests are completely peaceful and are made by decent people, including people in wheelchairs who travel all the way from the south of England. Mr Gorrie insults those good people by referring to the protests as violent. That is absolutely shameful. The Liberals are in favour of nuclear submarines, as long as they will not quite be used. The Liberals will take tea somewhere and not notice.

In the Scottish Parliament, members are treated like children in respect of all nuclear issues. We are told, "Thou shalt not ask." There are 161 reserved issues—that is 161 subjects on which the Parliament is gagged—the most important of which relate to the nuclear industry or nuclear defence. All Britain's nuclear weapons are dumped in Scotland, but we are not allowed to ask questions about them. That gives ministers in the Scottish Parliament an easy cop-out. A minister can simply jump up and shout, "Reserved issue." We are gagged. It is no wonder that the Parliament was invaded almost a year ago by peaceful protesters. Some protesters shouted to members, "Why don't you talk about something important such as Trident?" Why not indeed?

Just 30 miles from Glasgow, each Trident

submarine carries 144 nuclear warheads, but we are told that that is a reserved matter and that Trident submarines must not be discussed. The issue will be unreserved and undeveloped if there is an undeveloped tragedy. Devolved hospitals will have to cope with that tragedy, if any hospitals are left.

Court cases involving the protesters and the decent people who invaded the gallery and who should have made all of us feel ashamed that we had not discussed the subject are still dragging through the courts. The incident happened last spring, but the court cases are continuing well into April. The establishment has its ways of making the peaceful public suffer for protesting. Few members stood up for those people. Many slunk out of the chamber while the most important issue in Scotland was once again not tackled.

Trident has been declared illegal—

Ben Wallace: Rubbish.

Dorothy-Grace Elder: I am speaking about the threat of Trident, not its deployment. I say to Ben Wallace, who is an ex-soldier, that he should do everything to stop the waste of £1.5 billion a year on Trident and help to put that money into conventional forces, because Scottish command is undermanned and the navy is undermanned outside of the nuclear industry. Trident is a disgrace and it is up to members to join together and do the decent thing: protest against it. Members should join us in February at the blockade.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Dr Richard Simpson has two minutes to wind up.

10:56

Dr Simpson: My main objection to the debate is that half an hour is not long enough for members to discuss the whole issue of defence. However, that is not the Parliament's purpose: members are here to deal well with devolved matters.

I am not disappointed that members have expressed strongly held views about unilateral disarmament. They are entitled to express their views. However, they have failed to address the issue of how the protests should be managed. There are some 200 arrests on each occasion, although Dorothy-Grace Elder said that the protests are totally peaceful.

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Dr Simpson: I am sorry, but that is impossible as I have only two minutes.

The chamber must send a strong message that the small number of violent people who create victims in such circumstances must be

condemned. The majority of protesters are peaceful and there is good co-operation and understanding between the police and that majority, but we must condemn the hard-line activists who attempt to breach security and who are totally disruptive.

A number of members have indicated that the UK Government takes part in multinational nuclear disarmament. That is appropriate and most members would not oppose it, although some would wish to go much further. The process of reducing one third of weapons and plans for considerable further reductions have been welcomed by Kofi Annan and the United Nations. That is a responsible approach.

Mr Quinan: Will the minister give way?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Dr Simpson is already over his time. Sit down, Mr Quinan.

Dr Simpson: I would love to take an intervention, but I cannot.

Kofi Annan praised the UK Government. I hope that the jobs issue will be addressed. Jackie Baillie spoke strongly about that, but it is almost impossible in a debate of this length to address the issue.

I am glad to have participated in Tommy Sheridan's day in the sun.

10:59

Tommy Sheridan: Given the authority with which the minister spoke about the protests, will he tell members before he leaves the chamber how many he has been to? As he has not replied, I take it that he has not been to any. On the ridiculous and serious accusations—

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Order. Mr Sheridan, you should not speak for the minister. You have one minute and 20 seconds.

Tommy Sheridan: I apologise, but I hope that the minister will tell us how many people have been charged with assault or threatening behaviour in the past three years, given that he talked about harassment and threats to people. He does not say anything; he does not know because there have been no such arrests. He should be careful about what he says about the protests. He knows nothing about them because he has not had the courage to attend them.

I welcome each and every member to the next protest on 11 February. It will be a three-day rolling protest against nuclear weapons, so everyone should be able to fit it into their diaries. Fortunately, some Labour members still have the courage of their convictions and have come along to the demonstrations. Although there have been

far too few of those members, I hope that more will attend now that they have been given plenty of notice.

As Colin Campbell said, it is about time that the Parliament had a bit of idealism and vision. Someone has to act first on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Let an independent, socialist Scotland have the courage to stand up and say loud and clear that it will decommission nuclear weapons and create five times more socially useful jobs from the money that would be diverted from those weapons of destruction. Unless someone on the world stage has the courage to take such action, we will continue to threaten the destruction of humanity by stockpiling these weapons. I hope that, by 5 o'clock, some new Labour members will find their courage once again.

Environmentally Sustainable Employment and Recycling

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-2635, in the name of Robin Harper, on environmentally sustainable employment and recycling, and three amendments to that motion.

11:01

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): This debate concerns the massive potential for employment in environmentally friendly economic activity in Scotland, which I conservatively estimate at 50,000 new jobs over the next 10 years. In Denmark, it is estimated that between 20,000 and 30,000 jobs have already been created in renewable energy, mainly in the wind industry. In Europe as a whole, 800,000 new environmental jobs could potentially be created. There is no reason to suspect that Scotland should not get more than its fair share of those jobs.

I covered the potential for renewables last year, and things seem to be moving a little on that issue. However, they are still not moving quickly enough, especially in research. In public transport, we still need to set targets on traffic reduction, which the Executive has so far steadfastly refused to do. The latest round of funding, with its emphasis on road building, has been a huge disappointment to the Scottish Transport Studies Group. Although road building might create short-term jobs, they are not sustainable in any meaning of the term. It is difficult to assess how many jobs would be created by a more environmental transport strategy, but if we take into account buses, rail staff, stations and signalling, track maintenance, increased economic activity and incremental job increases in areas served by the new or upgraded railway lines in Edinburgh, the Borders, Clackmannan, the central belt, the north of Scotland, Ayrshire and so on, we must be looking at thousands of new, sustainable job opportunities.

The latest organic farming figures show that the Executive is missing yet another trick by completely ignoring the contribution that a greater conversion of land to organic status could make to our environment and to local economies. Organic farming supports considerably more jobs than conventional farming; however, while organic farmers in Scotland may get a few thousand pounds over only two years—which is the meanest support system in Europe—27 landowning industrial farmers in Scotland receive well over £250,000 each in subsidy every year. I wonder how many jobs are created by that huge giveaway.

Furthermore, if the Executive followed the

philosophy of environmental and outdoor education that was being developed in the 1970s, we would create more than 300 teaching jobs—and probably hundreds more—by expanding existing outdoor centres and reopening those that have been closed down over the past 20 years.

In the first debate on Green party business in spring 2000, I called on the Executive to step up its efforts to insulate the 30 per cent of Scottish houses that are seriously substandard, and to introduce new building regulations that would compel the house builders of this world to insulate to much higher standards and to incorporate so-called passive ventilation and heating systems. Oddly enough, the further north one goes, the more sense it makes to use photovoltaics and solar heating systems to cut down on electricity and gas bills. Sound research exists to support that assertion. However, there have been very few signs of further activity on that front, despite the fact that new regulation and investment could quickly create at least between 5,000 and 10,000 permanent jobs that would incorporate a very wide range of skills.

The main burden of my argument centres on the looming possibility that we might be throwing away the best opportunity yet for local councils and the Executive to adopt a waste strategy that could create 4,500 permanent jobs, with the knock-on effect of creating many thousands more. I have seen many of the consultation documents that have appeared over the past two years on local authorities' area waste strategies. In some cases, we are presented with five options and absolutely no hint of an underlying drive or set of principles. I cannot understand why the area waste strategy groups did not simply adopt a single set of criteria that would produce the best possible environmental action plans. I call upon the Executive to take the following steps to ensure that we create the maximum number of jobs and choose the best environmental options. The two objectives go together anyway and should be the bedrock on which we plan our strategy and base our funding search.

First and foremost, we need a mandatory target for local authority recycling. Such targets have been set in England and Wales and as a result they are streets ahead of us. Some councils have attained levels of close to 30 per cent recycling, while we languish at the bottom of the European league with 6 per cent of our household waste recycled. New Zealand decided to introduce mandatory targets and attained a level of 30 per cent in eight years. There is absolutely no reason why we should not do the same. Why did the Labour-Liberal Executive not set targets as soon as it came to power in 1999? Was it terrified of upsetting Scotland's Labour-controlled councils by giving them something too politically difficult to do,

such as prioritising their spending plans with some favour shown to recycling?

We also need targets for fridge recycling—including chlorofluorocarbons—and the reuse of white goods. There is so much good practice around in that respect that such a measure would be sensible. Furthermore, we must have targets for recycling batteries and other hazardous household waste. Too many people just chuck it all in the bin. Others have little caches of used batteries, garden poisons, unused medicines that have not been returned to pharmacies and so on. Surely it would not be too difficult to set up collection points for those waste streams.

The Executive should set a waste recycling target of 30 per cent by 2010, and it could take at least six steps to assist in meeting that target. First, environment and waste resource co-ordination and advice centres should be set up in all large business parks. Someone's waste could be someone else's resource, and it is always possible for one to find it more cheaply on site than anywhere else.

Next, the objectives for the waste industry must be clarified, with the clear message that there has always been a presumption against the building of incinerators and waste-to-energy plants, except in very special circumstances. How will the Executive solve the problems that might yet appear in the Highlands and in Aberdeen? If Highland Council follows the logic of its consultation document, it will not be building an incinerator or waste-to-energy plant, even though every bid it has received from contractors contains a costed proposal for a waste-to-energy facility. Does the council reject those bids? If so, what will the financial consequences be? The companies concerned will either have to re-bid, in which case they will wish to recover the costs of their initial bids, or not be offered any contract at all, with all that that might entail. It seems bizarre that both Aberdeen City Council and Highland Council have been engaged in a tendering process for huge incinerators well before completing the first stage of the area waste strategy programme. For all I know, there are others in the same situation, because at least 10 other authorities were considering waste burning as an option a few years ago. What a mess.

We should be starting with the foundations. There should be additional support for community recycling projects, which are a valuable source of innovation and could make a significant contribution to the waste strategy. They use a mixture of voluntary and paid help and often provide jobs for people who find it difficult to get into the jobs market. They must also be viewed in the wider context of the huge social contribution that they make. Grants and low-interest loans should be made available to small start-ups, as

they are in the US, where many states are already reaching the recycling target of 30 per cent and going beyond it—I have plenty of figures to show members later, if I get the chance.

The distinction between commercial and voluntary activity needs to be clarified. Many small recycling enterprises in both sectors find it difficult to access funds because of problems with the rules. Most of the funding in the voluntary sector comes from lottery, landfill and smaller funds. A new source of funding may be required. However, before we think of that, what is to be done about Scotland's share of the reported £3 billion that is lying unused in the lottery fund, as was revealed yesterday? That is scandalous. Is the Executive going to do anything about that? Will it press for our share of it?

Community recyclers were not included in all the area waste planning processes, which is reprehensible and an insult to the value of their contribution. They must be included as of right in all further planning at national and local levels. We also expect the Executive to set the best example in the use of its resources, through procurement, consumption, reduction, reuse and recycling. I look forward to the publication of the next audit of its environmental performance.

UK landfill companies have been using the landfill tax to ingratiate themselves with local communities and to support their own strategic interests. The landfill tax is intended to provide a foundation for the promotion of the production of energy from waste. However, it has been used to promote research to undermine the case for intensive recycling and glossy booklets have been sent to every council in the UK. The Environmental Industries Commission's waste minimisation group, in evidence to the House of Lords, stated that it had not been able to obtain a penny of the landfill tax to support its research. The access of the big companies to our local authorities and the exclusion of the local community recyclers from the development of the area waste strategy plans means that the process has been fatally flawed.

As a start towards ensuring a transition away from a throwaway society, I ask the minister to consider introducing a national mandatory target for recycling in Scotland. I move,

That the Parliament recognises the significant potential to create sustainable employment that will benefit both the economy and local and global environments; further recognises the potential of such employment to reduce the impact of climate change and toxic pollution of air, land, rivers and seas, protect and enhance biodiversity, reduce social exclusion and make better use of natural resources; in particular recognises the potential for new jobs in the sectors of renewable energy, energy efficiency, public transport, organic food and farming, nature conservation, eco-tourism, education and outdoor pursuits and materials re-use and recycling, and calls on the Scottish Executive to stimulate environmentally sustainable employment as a

matter of priority, including by (a) ensuring that at least 30% of electricity comes from renewable energy sources by 2010 with further increases to 2050, (b) achieving between a 40% and 60% increase in energy efficiency across domestic and industrial sectors, including the introduction of enhanced building standards regulations for insulation, heat recovery and passive heating and ventilation, (c) developing a strategic plan for organic agriculture that would support conversion of up to 20% of land to organic production within 10 years, (d) setting targets for traffic reduction to further encourage a modal shift from private to public transport and to redress the present imbalance between road and rail funding, (e) setting a mandatory national target for recycling of 30% of household waste by 2010 and further, independent targets for recycling of fridges, re-use of white goods and recycling or safe disposal of batteries and other hazardous household waste and (f) producing, in order to achieve the mandatory national target for recycling, a National Re-use and Recycling Action Plan to include (i) additional support for community recycling, (ii) clarification of objectives for the waste industry including a presumption against incineration and waste-to-energy plants in new guidelines, (iii) a commitment to set an example in all areas of sourcing, consumption, re-use and recycling, (iv) new guidance to developers of composting operations including on methane reduction and recovery, (v) finance for and establishment of Environment and Waste Resource Advice units in all large business parks and (vi) steps to ensure that community recycling operators play a full part in all planning and development of area waste strategies.

11:12

The Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning (Lewis Macdonald): I thank Robin Harper for framing the debate in terms of the link that sustainable development provides between the environment, and the economy and employment. As he points out, sustainable development must cut across government, which is why the Executive's response will address a range of issues under different ministerial portfolios. I shall focus on some of the issues that Robin Harper has raised in the areas of employment, enterprise and transport.

There are two good reasons for having the debate. First, it is often forgotten that there is a strong link between employment and the environment and—worse—it is falsely assumed that better environmental standards inevitably mean constraints on business and fewer jobs. Secondly, the Scottish Executive has a good story to tell on employment in general, especially on employment related to environmental improvement. The first principle in ensuring high and sustainable levels of employment is to create a strong economic environment. That has been a priority for the Scottish Executive working in partnership with the UK Government. As a result, the economic fundamentals in Scotland and the UK are good and we have seen the longest period of sustained low inflation since the 1960s. The base rate is at its lowest level for nearly 40 years and the claimant count for unemployment is at around its lowest level for 25 years.

While striving to ensure high levels of economic activity and employment, we must protect the environment and take advantage of the employment opportunities that it offers. One of the key aims of the Executive's "The Way Forward: Framework for Economic Development in Scotland" is to promote social and regional development and sustainability. The environment business sector, worldwide, is potentially larger than that of aerospace and pharmaceuticals, and it continues to grow at a faster rate than the economy as a whole. It is therefore vital that we target some of our employment creation efforts at harnessing part of that growth to benefit Scotland. We have undertaken to do that.

The Scottish welfare to work advisory task force has already established an energy and environment sub-group that is chaired by Raymond Young, one of the Scottish members of the Sustainable Development Commission. That group aims to increase the number of long-term unemployed people who are going into industries such as recycling and renewable energy by identifying skills gaps and appropriate opportunities.

Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab): There is a widespread belief that Scotland could be a major manufacturer of renewable energy technology. How will the Executive support firms moving towards that new technology?

Lewis Macdonald: Some of the comments that I have made point in that direction. The group that I described aims to develop employer-led routes into employment and to initiate local partnerships to deliver them. There are other aspects of that policy that I shall come to shortly.

The delivery of the group's objectives will be supported by the "jobs in the environment" support unit to be established by Forward Scotland, which has obtained £250,000 in private funding from BP over three years. Forward Scotland is a charitable body, part-funded by the Executive through the sustainable action fund that is designed to promote sustainable development in Scotland by creating such opportunities.

Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP): Many small businesses would like to create employment through the safe recycling of fridges. However, the Government has failed to make regulations that would govern such safe recycling. Storage is not an answer. When will those regulations be made? The European Union has produced the policy, but the Government has failed to make regulations that would allow small businesses to participate in safe disposal of fridges. When will the regulations be made?

Lewis Macdonald: I understand that regulations are in place, but that there are some issues

relating to small businesses that Mr Finnie will address in his wind-up speech. He will give a response then.

The "jobs in the environment" support unit has prepared an initial report that identifies potential employment opportunities in the renewable energy industries—wind power, biomass, landfill gas, hydro and wave energy—and our enterprise initiatives will assist in pointing people in that direction and supporting the development of the industries that Sylvia Jackson described.

Robin Harper also recognised the importance for the economy, as well as for the environment, of having an integrated transport policy. There are good opportunities in the expansion of rail and bus transport, which are primary tools in tackling the challenge posed by growing levels of urban and inter-urban traffic congestion. The motion mentions an imbalance between road and rail expenditure, which was the position that we inherited from the Conservatives. In 1996-97, motorways and trunk roads expenditure accounted for some 87.5 per cent of Scottish Office transport expenditure. By 2003-04—the end of this spending round—our spending plans will show that that figure has fallen to less than half of comparable spending, even though our roads expenditure will remain at the same level in real terms. In other words, we have corrected the imbalance, not by neglecting our trunk road network, but by massively increasing our spending on public transport and other initiatives to ensure that we strike the right balance. From this financial year onwards, we are also taking on responsibility for the Scottish rail passenger franchise

Traffic congestion is an environmental issue, but it is also an economic issue because it has a major impact on competitiveness. Congestion costs Scottish businesses many millions of pounds every year. We are committed to tackling congestion for the sake of the environment and to protect businesses and jobs. For example, we are working towards the target of removing 18 million lorry miles of freight from Scottish roads by March, through the freight facilities grant. Before today, we had announced awards totalling some £27.6 million, removing 13.4 million lorry miles from Scotland's roads. We will continue to build on that. This morning, I have announced a further grant of more than £250,000 to Thurso Business Supplies, which will allow expansion of its premises at Station Yard, Thurso. Although that award is modest in size, compared with some of the really large projects elsewhere, removing those lorry miles from the roads of Caithness will bring immediate benefits to a relatively remote area of ecological importance. There are many opportunities, through the freight facilities grant and other methods, to tackle congestion and remove some of the negative environmental

effects of Scotland's traffic system.

Renewable energy is key not only to the reduction of climate change gases, but to industrial opportunity. The same is true for energy efficiency. Through the warm deal and the central heating programme, many jobs have been created and many gains have been made in improving the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes. Those schemes demonstrate our commitment to sustainable development, to helping low-income households, and to benefiting the environment and creating jobs.

Working in partnership with the UK Government, we have created the right economic environment to stimulate employment. We have identified the environment business sector as a key growth area and we are working to encourage job creation in that sector. The Executive has supported and stimulated key initiatives to address social inclusion, employment and the environment.

I move amendment S1M-2635.3, to leave out from the first "recognises" to end and insert:

"congratulates the Executive on the progress made in integrating sustainable development at the heart of its policy-making and supports the Executive in stimulating environmentally sustainable employment."

11:21

Fiona McLeod (West of Scotland) (SNP): As the minister said, we must congratulate Robin Harper on securing the debate. It is important that the Scottish Parliament takes this opportunity to show that recycling, sustainable employment and so on are not woolly concepts, but realities. If we invest in those areas now, Scotland will reap the economic and environmental benefits.

Members will not be surprised that I start my speech by giving some statistics from abroad. As everyone knows, the SNP likes to benchmark Scotland as an independent country against other independent countries.

Before that, however, I will deal with some information from the UK. Waste Watch, an organisation that is sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, has said that if we can increase the amount of recycled waste to 30 per cent, we could produce 45,000 jobs. There are only 17,700 jobs in waste management at the moment. That shows that sustainable employment based on environmental practice can reap rewards.

In Denmark, 35 companies recycle 60 per cent of the country's domestic waste. Scotland could do with having 35 long-term, sustainable companies. In New York, a recent study on waste management found that a move to composting and recycling would create 890 permanent jobs as opposed to 350 in conventional incineration and

landfill practices. The Bureau of International Recycling tells us that, in 50 countries across the world, 1.5 million people are employed in recycling activities. That business has a \$1.6 billion annual turnover. Those statistics show that it is possible to invest in environmentally safe practices and produce sound and sustainable employment.

International comparisons are all very well, but I want to highlight a well-respected local organisation that, in two weeks' time, will tackle the problem that Andrew Welsh raised: the de-gassing of fridges. As we know, from 1 January this year, the process became much more complicated because of European Community regulations. I did extensive research before 1 January and found out that there is no facility in the UK that is capable of de-gassing fridges to conform with the EC regulations. On Monday, I visited Remploy in Clydebank and was told that, in two weeks' time, the new Remploy site that the First Minister opened in Wishaw will start to de-gas fridges from local authorities, beginning with South Lanarkshire Council. Remploy has seen an environmental opportunity and is using it to create sustainable jobs.

That is not the only good news that I heard on my visit to Remploy. I was also told that the company hopes to open new sites in the north and the north-west of Scotland. That particularly excites me because Aberdeenshire Council recently told me that, from 1 January, the only thing that it could do with its old fridges was send them to Manchester for storage. It is absolutely fantastic that a local organisation will provide sustainable employment in environmental management practices in Scotland.

Remploy has based the scheme on a previous scheme that it ran in Leeds that was worth £500,000 and employed 35 people. That scheme involved working in partnership with Comet to recycle white goods by passing them on to needy communities. That is the sort of sustainable employment that we must have in this country.

Sustainable employment is good for the environment. Recycling paper produces 35 per cent less water pollution and 74 per cent less air pollution than making paper by conventional methods.

With regard to the Government's record, I am sure that Labour and Liberal Democrat members are aware of last year's report card from WWF, which said that, in nearly three years of Labour government in Scotland, there has been no progress toward placing sustainable development at the heart of the Executive's plans. How often has the ministerial group on sustainable development met in the past three years? What has it done?

We have, in Scotland, an unsustainable industry that provides unsustainable jobs: nuclear power generation. It has a limited lifespan—our three power stations will be gone by 2015—but the lifespan of the deadly radioactive waste that it leaves behind is unlimited. Does the Government support new build in that unsustainable industry?

Germany has shown that it is possible to help create sustainable employment in environmental industries with the help of interest rates and investment subsidies to companies. Is the Executive prepared to do that? Is the minister prepared to put his money where his mouth is?

I move amendment S1M-2635.2, to insert at end:

“, and agrees that these objectives, amongst others, should be considered for inclusion in a national environment plan for Scotland.”

11:26

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): I welcome in part Robin Harper's huge motion. This is an important subject and I believe that there is an exciting future ahead for employment in the environment generally and in the renewable energy, recycling and tourism industries in particular.

There is growing interest, particularly among young people, in environmental matters. The prospect of employment in a related industry is what many are looking for. Many students, in their gap year, pay to work on environmental enhancement projects all over the world. That demonstrates people's growing interest in making a career in such fields.

It is clear that the renewable energy market will continue to grow. Whatever the outcome of the energy review that is being undertaken, there is a looming energy gap. The challenge for the renewable energy industry is to fill that gap as efficiently as possible. That is an exciting prospect.

If the demand for renewable energy grows, the work force must grow as well. One of the factors that limit the growth and development of the industry is the small number of skilled and capable people who are available. If we are to develop renewable energy, we must recognise that training and education must be provided. If we are serious about creating sustainable jobs in the environment, a new range of skills will need to be developed in schools, colleges and universities. That is a vital point.

When the appropriate skills sets are available, we will be able more readily to develop our renewable energy resources, whether in wind farming, wave power, tidal power or the deriving of energy through biomass production. One can imagine a new offshore industry growing up

around tidal power generation with on-going construction and maintenance work being required, just as the oil industry requires it. Indeed, as jobs in the oil sector decline, one can imagine that they will be replaced by jobs in wave energy and tidal power generation.

Energy-saving policies will create jobs as well. Encouraging the installation of insulation and double-glazing across the UK would boost the building trades. We should promote that.

Of greatest importance is the technology that will be required to deliver renewable energy. It is important to draw the attention of entrepreneurs to opportunities in that area. We have the brains and we must develop in Scotland and the UK the skills and the technology to enable us to capitalise on what are likely to be enormous markets. If this debate alerts manufacturers to possibilities that would not otherwise have been thought of, it will have served a useful purpose.

I turn to recycling. A particular interest of mine—and of Fiona McLeod and other members—is the recycling of fridges. The fridge mountain grows daily. The Executive must do more than it is with its current policy of sitting, hoping that a solution for the disposal of fridges will appear. I welcome Fiona McLeod's announcement on fridge disposal. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs estimates that 2 million domestic fridges are replaced each year in the United Kingdom. Although 40 per cent of such fridges used to be recycled to developing countries, that can no longer be done under European Union regulations. I am delighted to hear that Remploy is taking up the baton and running with it. I would be interested to know whether it will be able to dispose of all Scotland's fridges, which must be a significant number indeed.

Fiona McLeod: Given that the estimate of the number of fridges that need disposed of annually in Scotland is 250,000 and that Rhona Brankin, when Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development, answered a parliamentary question of mine saying that it was up to businesses to dispose of fridges themselves, we can congratulate Remploy, but should the Government perhaps do more to support businesses to dispose of those 250,000 fridges?

John Scott: I agree entirely.

Household waste is another area in which recycling must be encouraged at local authority level. We must set ourselves realistic targets to recycle more of our waste. On that point, I have total sympathy with Robin Harper's target to recycle 30 per cent of household waste by 2010. Audit Scotland tells us that all councils failed to meet the Government's targets of recycling 25 per cent of waste by 2000. Some recycled as little as 4

per cent of their waste. That we recycle so little of our waste—around 6 per cent—is something of a national scandal when one considers that other EU countries, such as Germany, are approaching a recycling level for domestic waste of 90 per cent.

Incineration should be considered a solution of last resort, so more must be done. Increasing business and employment opportunities within the recycling and renewable energy industries must include solutions that will harness the power of the market, develop and encourage British green technology and give greater autonomy to local communities, as well as protect the countryside.

I move amendment S1M-2635.1, to leave out from "to stimulate" to end and insert:

"to note that the creation of employment opportunities in renewable energy products and recycling industries will require the creation of a broader skills base, and finally notes the need to develop in Scotland and the UK the technology to meet the growing demand for renewable energy, recycling and recycled products."

11:32

Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): The debate has already proved to be worth while. Robin Harper's decision—in contrast to that of Tommy Sheridan in today's earlier debates—to have a lengthy debate on the important matter of environmentally sustainable employment and recycling has been successful.

Robin Harper's contribution to the debate will have influence beyond the outcome of the vote at the end of today's proceedings, whatever that outcome is. I congratulate him on his motion and the various issues that it raises. I also say to him that he betrays tell-tale signs of his former Liberal credentials, not only in the worthiness of his motion, but in its lengthy and convoluted prose. He must be aiming at a mention in "The Guinness Book of Records" for the longest sentence.

A sustainable environmental policy is of enormous and growing importance. There is now wide acknowledgement that part of sustainability is sustainable jobs and that radical environmental policy can create a lot of jobs. Acknowledgement is one thing; public policies that put sustainability at the heart of government are another. In Britain and Scotland, we have a long way to go.

Ross Finnie inherited the environment brief at a time when he was burdened with the foot-and-mouth disease crisis and the various other rural issues that make the Liberal Democrats' group meetings so enjoyable for urban members. Ross Finnie is doing a lot to equip his department to tackle the environmental challenge and the new First Minister has also undertaken to give a new urgency to something that has to be applied not just in the Scottish Executive environment and

rural affairs department, but throughout the Government as a whole.

We must put effective policy drivers in place to deliver challenging targets for organic farming, recycling, harnessing natural energy sources, energy efficiency, waste and packaging. I do not know whether Robin Harper's targets are realistic; that is an expert issue into which we need more insight. We have a national waste strategy for Scotland and we are declaring 11 area waste plans. It is about time too.

Robin Harper: Does Robert Brown agree that, as state after state in the United States has managed to surpass targets of 30 per cent recycling of waste within eight to 10 years and New Zealand has achieved a target of 30 per cent within six years, it is only sensible to suggest that we could do the same? There is no essential difference between our economy and those economies.

Robert Brown: My point was not about the desirability of setting effective and challenging targets; it was about whether the targets in the motion are the right ones and whether they should be greater or smaller. That requires more expertise than I have to offer.

In Scotland, we produce 16 million tonnes of waste a year. With 10 tonnes of resources, we create a tonne of so-called product. Two million tonnes of the 16 million tonnes are domestic waste, of which 80 per cent is recyclable. We recycle, as I think Robin Harper mentioned, 6.6 per cent, which is one of the worst records in Europe.

The area waste plans have no national targets to work towards and are, in essence, voluntary for local authorities. Even worse, local authorities are tying themselves into unsustainable policies, with which they will be stuck for years. Aberdeen City Council, for example, has signed a 25-year contract with a private company of which the main component is the production of a large incinerator.

Such a strategy gets the jobs potential the wrong way round. A study by Friends of the Earth identified that, per million tonnes, landfill creates 40 to 60 jobs; incineration creates 100 to 290 jobs; composting creates 200 to 300 jobs; and recycling creates 400 to 590 jobs. Good environmental policy is also good employment policy, but local authorities have missed that challenge throughout Scotland. The performance of Glasgow City Council, which recycles 2.4 per cent of its waste, or North Lanarkshire Council, which recycles 1.8 per cent of its waste, is quite simply lamentable. How can they be so far behind Dundee City Council, which manages to achieve a recycling level of 8.6 per cent?

Incineration is a bad way of dealing with rubbish.

It emits heavy metals, dioxins and acid gases into the atmosphere. That damages human health as well as the environment. Estimates suggest that incineration leaves 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the volume of the original compacted unburnt waste, which contains some nasty substances.

We must take recycling seriously and use the levers of public policy to support, encourage and require it. Recycling creates permanent jobs and has the potential to create more. The Scottish Executive cannot create the jobs, but it can do a good bit to create the potential.

We are at something of a pivotal point. I hope that the minister will tell members when he sums up that the momentum is growing and that the opportunities that Lewis Macdonald mentioned in his somewhat underwhelming speech are being seized with both hands by Parliament, the Executive and Scotland.

11:38

Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): I will try not to underwhelm my colleagues. I will start, as all members have done, by stating that, although the motion is an Opposition motion, I welcome the debate as useful and timely. Many of us also have a great deal of sympathy with the general thrust of the motion but, like me, disagree about how it should be translated into policy commitments.

On the surface, there is a lot of support among politicians and the general public for the principle of sustainable development. However, we also know that, when push comes to shove, that support can be little more than lip service. People are often frightened that support for environmentalism could threaten their economic prosperity. Many of us are happy to be a little green, but not at the expense of our well-being. Rather than addressing that concern, the motion exacerbates it. It is full of uncostered commitments. It is perhaps radical, but it is definitely unrealistic.

The only way to deliver sustainable development is to take people with us and to show that support for the environment can mean more jobs, not fewer, and that it can lead to greater prosperity, not less. We in the Labour party learned the hard way that, to be trusted to deliver social justice, we have to be trusted to deliver on the economy. The economic stability that we have now achieved and the reduction in unemployment that that has meant would be undermined if we were to go down the route that Robin Harper suggests.

I said that the debate is timely. Later this year, the world summit on sustainable development will take place in Johannesburg. Our record will be put to the test there. I also know that many of my Labour colleagues will recently have seen the

Socialist Environment Resources Association pamphlet on sustainable jobs, which I welcome for the emphasis that it places on making sustainable development a political priority. I am sure that many more members will quote from that pamphlet.

I welcome the Executive's reinvigorated commitment to sustainable development. I am particularly pleased that the First Minister has joined the ministerial group on sustainable Scotland—I do not know whether that is a direct result of some of my questions on the issue. In the past, much of the Government's good work has been undermined by ambiguity and the lack of a clear message from the centre. Perhaps the First Minister will take his cue from another written question that I submitted and will lead our delegation to the world summit in Johannesburg.

Although I sympathise with many of the policies that are detailed in Robin Harper's motion, I feel that it overemphasises the need for sustainability at the expense of development. People must be able to develop while not abusing or overusing the world's physical resources. I will give an example from the developing world. In rural areas in the Philippines, people lived sustainably, if not in luxury, for generations. They grew what they needed and enjoyed a measure of independence and autonomy. When the multinational companies came along, they bribed the people to part with the land—to which they had no formal titles—and planted thousands of acres of bananas and pineapples. The corporations turned people into wage earners with no choice but to work for the corporations at the rate that they chose to pay and under the working conditions that they chose to apply. That is the opposite of sustainable development. I do not claim that people do not have the right to progress and to try to better themselves, but that must happen in a just and sustainable manner and with respect for democracy.

We do not have to look abroad for examples of sustainable jobs or excellent initiatives. The warm deal is probably the best known of such initiatives in this country. It shows that it is possible to create thousands of jobs and simultaneously tackle fuel poverty and ill health. It improves the lives of many pensioners, while keeping money in their pockets.

My final point is on renewable energy and the sustainable jobs that result from our commitment to it. This week, Scottish Power submitted plans to build the biggest wind farm in Britain, in my constituency of Eastwood. That investment comes because of our Government's commitment to renewable energy. The plans will help us to meet our targets of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and will benefit the national and local economy by providing jobs. The turbines for the wind farm will

almost certainly come from the Vestas plant in Campbeltown, which provides 150 jobs in a remote rural area.

As Sylvia Jackson mentioned, we can do more. Scottish Enterprise is seeking to highlight renewable energy to Scottish companies and to encourage them to invest in what is a growth industry. We have come a long way since our reliance on heavy, smoke stack industries with mass low-paid and disempowered work forces. The future lies in building a sustainable, knowledge-based economy and work is well under way.

Robin Harper's motion is commendable in some respects, but it would risk much of the work that has been done. I urge members to support the minister's amendment.

11:42

Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP): It has been mentioned that some people pay lip service to environmental principles. I agree—we need positive, practical action. The Accounts Commission report entitled "Environmental services: Comparing the performance of Scottish Councils" reveals Scotland's poor recycling record. In 1999-2000, 5 per cent of household waste was recycled, but 93 per cent was dumped as landfill. Only six councils reported a recycling rate of more than 10 per cent of household waste. I am delighted that SNP-controlled Angus Council was one of them and has one of Scotland's best recycling rates. In one Angus initiative—the Angus community recycling opportunities project—a trainer leads new deal trainees in all types of recycling work, such as servicing community glass and can banks, bailing of cans, collection and shredding of quality paper and refurbishing and adding value to articles such as bicycles and furniture. That practical work provides employment and a valuable community service.

Recycling creates more jobs than other types of waste disposal. For every million tonnes of waste that are processed in New York, landfill produces up to 60 jobs, whereas recycling creates up to 590 jobs. The UK Government estimates that the 30 per cent recycling target by 2010 could create 45,000 skilled and unskilled jobs. We should all aim for that target.

The clear message is that recycling is better for the environment and for creating employment. Up to 80 per cent of household waste can be recycled. There is huge potential, but no Scottish local authority has reached the Government's 2000 target of recycling 25 per cent of household waste. That is simply not good enough.

Holland and Austria have overall recycling rates of more than 40 per cent, compared with

Scotland's pitiful 6.6 per cent. A practical job of work has to be done, with a great reward at the end of it, if the Government manages to achieve the target. There is no reason why, by implementing changes and examples of best practice from elsewhere in Europe, Scotland cannot match the best in Europe.

Last July, the Scottish Government launched its £1 million "do a little - change a lot" campaign to raise awareness of what we can all do to protect the environment. Doing little sums up the Scottish Executive's environmental policy. It is time for a more dedicated and radical approach. By expanding recycling facilities such as kerbside collection and having a comprehensive education and advertising programme, Scotland could shed its shameful recycling record and create much-needed employment.

Good, sustainable environmental practice must start in the hearts and minds of every individual citizen, with each citizen voluntarily shaping an attitude of mind that looks to the public good and a better environment for all. With a people freely persuaded of the benefits of such a system, the best is achievable for Scotland. That is the way it should be.

11:46

Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): As a Highlands and Islands MSP, I am particularly interested in creating sustainable employment in any way possible. I recently supported Alasdair Morrison's debate on wind energy. I pointed out the huge significance of the new wind farm turbine manufacturing plant at Machrihanish, both for its benefit to local employment in Kintyre and because of the technology transfer to Scotland from the Danes, who are world leaders in the field. I supported the concept of the enormous wind farm project on Lewis, with its implications for jobs in the Arnish yard, and suggested that similar projects should be initiated in other parts of Scotland, with the important provisos that every possible precaution should be taken to avoid noise and visual pollution and that the views of local people should be listened to.

For those projects to go ahead, it will be necessary to substantially improve the grid, so that the electricity can be carried to where it is needed. That would provide more employment. Significant local projects will be windfalls from wind farm projects, which will in themselves create extra local employment. The Executive must introduce a fast-track planning system so that applications can be more speedily processed. Individuals have been wrestling with applications for seven or eight years. That is hopeless if the Executive is to meet its targets by 2010.

I applaud the creation of small hydro schemes—provided that they do not block the passage of migratory fish—as the financial benefit will again bring more income and thus more employment to remote rural areas. People involved in hydro schemes smile when it rains.

I will now focus on recycling. According to Audit Scotland, every Scottish council failed to meet the Government recycling targets, but there is not a council in Scotland that would not trumpet recycling in evangelical terms if they were given the funding. I have one thing to say to the Executive, which sets the targets: no targets without markets. It is unfair of the Executive to snipe at councils. Recycling at any cost is not a sound policy. No target figure should be set by this or any other Parliament until there is a full economic and environmental rationale for achieving such a target. Currently, especially in the Highlands and Islands, there is a lack of reliable, sustainable and expanding markets to pass or sell collected materials to. In other words, the councils can easily afford to collect the rubbish but they cannot sell it.

Two institutions—Remade, which is based in Scotland, and the Waste and Resources Action Programme, which is UK-based—are meant to identify markets, but I have been told that that is not happening. Remade and WRAP should be given the task of identifying the precise way in which targets can be met. Councils in the Highlands suffer extra costs because of the long hauls to transport collected materials outwith their areas. New incentives are needed to encourage local production of goods from waste, which would also achieve Robin Harper's target of extra employment.

It is stupid to put all our eggs in one basket. We should not exclude technologies by making presumptions against incinerators and waste-to-energy plants. We should consider the policies of such countries as Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria, which lead the European field in waste management. Those countries use every means at their disposal to manage their waste and we should do the same.

It is essential for Government and local councils to work hand in hand. Orkney Islands Council's record of recycling 20 per cent of waste is commendable and Argyll and Bute Council's subsidised home composting scheme, which was advertised by leaflet drop, has been impressive. The council sold 3,500 home composters, which equates to one each to 10 per cent of all households. Thanks to its pollution prevention and control arrangement with Shanks, the council is well ahead on its targets. However, the council is faced with the expense of having to lift 1,200 scrap cars each year. Those are not counted as

household waste because the nearest scrapyard is in Helensburgh.

To improve local marine environments and coastal employment, we need profitable aquaculture industries in our sea lochs to co-exist with wild fisheries. Sea lochs should play a big part in future employment in diverse aquacultures. If fish farming is profitable, conservation is far more likely to fall into place.

Although I share Robin Harper's wish for better public transport, I re-emphasise the fact that the private car is still essential in most of the Highlands and Islands. In that area, any movement of timber and other heavy freight from road to rail or to sea transport is most welcome.

11:51

Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD): I congratulate Robin Harper on securing the debate and on his thoughtful speech, which raised a number of important issues—so many that it is difficult to address them all in a debate of this length. Perhaps that is why the debate has concentrated on waste plans and recycling. I would not want to disappoint, so I too shall cover that area but I want to mention one or two other matters first. The environment is a topic to which the Parliament has perhaps not given as much attention as it should have, and we should be giving a bit more time to it, with a few more debates on how we can improve on our environmental record.

Robin Harper's bringing together in the motion of the environment and employment is positive. The issues are not, as is often said, in competition; they can be addressed together. The environment is central to employment in conservation, the agri-environment, woodlands schemes and tourism, but we should also be developing other opportunities, such as those that are brought by renewable energy, including research into and the development and manufacturing of renewable energy technologies, energy conservation and community recycling.

The Liberal Democrats are recognised as being at the forefront of environmental policies in the United Kingdom. At the general election in June last year, Friends of the Earth gave the Liberal Democrat manifesto nine out of 10 for its green policies, which was the same rating as Robin Harper's party. I do not think that the SNP or the Tories even registered on the scale.

Fiona McLeod: Iain Smith is lauding the Liberal Democrats as a UK party, but does he consider that the Scottish Liberal Democrats have failed in regard to their 1999 partnership agreement with Labour? The agreement states:

"We will set targets for recycling in public and private sectors".

The Government has not yet set mandatory targets. Will the Scottish Liberal Democrats, within the coalition, be pushing for those targets to be set?

Iain Smith: We have put sustainable development at the heart of the Government's policies. It is, rightly, at the heart of all policies and should be considered across the board. We have a Liberal Democrat Minister for Environment and Rural Development, who I believe will help to deliver that policy, although I agree that much more needs to be done to improve the work of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament in that regard. The Parliament and the Executive need to work much more effectively with environmental groups to develop better policies for the future. We need to develop environmentally based support for agriculture, and we require much more support for research and development in renewable energy.

It is important to recognise the work that has been done by industry to develop good environmental practice. The paper industry, for example, has done a great deal to reduce the amount of pollution that is caused by its manufacturing process, and we should ensure that the industry's work is rewarded rather than punished in relation, for example, to water extraction and waste water directives.

On recycling and waste plans, we do not yet have good policies on reduction and reuse, which, in terms of the scale of the waste involved, are more important than recycling. However, we need to do much more on recycling. The recycling record in Scotland is pathetic—I will, perhaps, recycle an old speech.

We used to lead the way in recycling in Scotland in North-East Fife—North-East Fife District Council was, of course, Liberal Democrat controlled. We had campsite paper collections and civic amenity sites, which offered opportunities to recycle glass, cans, plastic and clothing. We had composting schemes; fridges were collected for recycling purposes; battery and oil recycling were being considered; and there were bins for glass from licensed premises. All those schemes contributed towards an effective policy. Unfortunately, the collapse of the recycling market led to many cuts in local government recycling services.

The landfill tax was another issue. If the tax is used as it should be, it can support new policies. However, although areas that did not have kerbside collections could use the revenue that was raised to support such collections, areas that already had kerbside collections could not use the money to continue to support them. The tax

should be used to promote the environment, and not simply to put more money in Treasury coffers.

11:56

Mr Alasdair Morrison (Western Isles) (Lab): I agree with those other members who have stated that this is a useful and important debate. Sadly, I cannot agree with Robert Brown's criticism of Lewis Macdonald's opening speech, which I thought was a good exposition of the job opportunities that will be available if we grasp them. I believe that Lewis Macdonald focused on all the relevant areas.

Robin Harper's motion rightly

"recognises the potential for new jobs in the sectors of renewable energy ... organic food and ... eco-tourism".

We all appreciate that renewable sources of energy can and will make a vital contribution to combating global warming, and I am delighted by the commitment of the Scottish Executive and the UK Government to the domestic development of renewables.

We have a lot to offer in the Highlands and Islands. We have the highest average wind speeds in Europe and some of the best wave and tidal resources. Coupled with that, we have a long track record of renewables development. As far back as the 1890s, monks at Fort Augustus abbey installed an 18kW turbine on a hill burn near the village. That made Fort Augustus one of the first communities in the world to have a supply of hydroelectricity. Some six years later, the Fort William Electric Lighting Company followed the Fort Augustus lead. In the same year, 1896, the world's first large-scale hydroelectric power station started operation at Foyers on Loch Ness-side.

As some members present will recall, 50 years later came the pioneering efforts of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board. Then, the potential of our lochs and rivers was exploited to help bring mains electricity to almost every household in the Highlands and Islands. For the record, the home in which I was brought up, in North Uist, was first to be supplied with electricity in 1970. The inordinate delay was thanks to the lords and lairds who then ran much of the Highlands and Islands through Inverness County Council, one Lord Burton of Dochfour being one of the great men of that era. Lord Burton is still with us, it is good to hear—withering inanely about our land reform proposals.

Obviously, I am delighted that my constituency is playing a pivotal role in the exploitation of renewable energy. Last month, the chief executives of two blue-chip British companies came to Lewis to announce, with the Minister of State for Industry, Energy and the Environment, a £600 million wind farm development. All three gentlemen supported the proposals, with equal

vigour. Not only did they represent the largest inward investment in the Western Isles; they represent what is potentially the largest wind farm development in Europe. I was also delighted when the Executive clearly committed itself to the Arnish yard in my constituency.

As Robin Harper notes in his motion, there is great potential for jobs in the organic production of food. Crofting, a non-intensive form of agriculture, is now recognised across the European Union as a viable and sustainable form of agricultural production. It is sympathetic to the environment and should be rewarding to everyone who is involved in it. Will the minister consider doing more to assist crofters who are involved in the organic production of both vegetables and meat?

Robin Harper *rose*—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The member is in his last minute, Mr Harper. We are running out of time.

Mr Morrison: I am sure that the minister is well aware of the success of the crofters' markets, which ran for the first time last summer in Stornoway and on the island of Benbecula. That has to be a welcome development, but I ask the minister if he will consider further support for the crofters who are involved in such production, further assistance for crofting townships and advice on soil husbandry and how to access markets. It is important that the minister uses his good offices to ensure that the Soil Association becomes less cumbersome and more accessible.

It is regrettable that Robin Harper's motion does not recognise what has been achieved since 1997 at UK level or since 1999 in Scotland by Labour in partnership with the Liberal Democrats. I urge members to support the Executive's amendment.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We have time for brief speeches from Colin Campbell and John Farquhar Munro.

12:00

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): My green credentials are very modest—my bottles and newspapers go to Renfrewshire Council's facility in Bridge of Weir. Renfrewshire Council provides glass and paper recycling facilities and pays a paper recycling company to remove the paper. In Elderslie, the council is running a pilot scheme that provides recycling boxes into which cans and plastic can be put. In Bridge of Weir, Brookfield and parts of Ralston in Renfrewshire, the council is collecting and composting garden waste, along with shredded Christmas trees, to produce top dressing for its parks and to cover land that is being reinstated. One hundred per cent of what is collected under the pilots is recycled; unfortunately, those pilots are running in

only three wards out of 40. Execution is running behind the council's noble intentions.

Listening to Jamie McGrigor's speech, I was reminded of my recent visit to Islay where, with European money, a farmer was shredding all the island's used newspapers and converting them directly into cattle bedding. The material was moved from one shed to another, which is probably an ideal version of recycling.

Robin Harper's comprehensive motion calls for

"a modal shift from private to public transport".

I spoke last week about rail transport and will not expand on what I said then. We all appreciate the benefits and disadvantages of the private car. Car ownership grows daily and the car industry sustains a huge work force that is involved in building, selling, servicing and fuelling vehicles. The tax-earning Government and all the individuals who are involved in the car industry have a huge vested interest in increasing car output. The advertising power of the car and the car fuel industry far outweighs any funding that Government produces to educate people in environmentally sound solutions.

How do we tackle that problem? The environmentally generated jobs may have to be in place before any political party will take the courageous step of really getting to grips with moving people out of private cars and on to public transport. A bus can move 80 people who would otherwise be using 80 cars. A shift from cars to buses would lead to a reduction in the number of people who are employed in manufacturing cars. We all understand the challenge of persuading people to forfeit their personal travelling space, to cut back on unnecessary car journeys and to walk a mile to the bus or train. As yet, the missing ingredient is a sense of commitment and urgency from every citizen in relation to that challenge.

Everything that I have said emphasises the need for a national environmental plan for Scotland, which is the substance of the SNP amendment. I hope that members will support it.

12:03

John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD): Anyone who was in doubt about the availability of tidal and wave power in Scotland had only to visit the west Highlands last week to see the tremendous potential and power of those elements.

Scotland's renewables resources are the very best in Europe. We have a constant tidal, wave and wind resource. Surprisingly, most of the development in this area is undertaken in Denmark, where 18,000 people are employed in wind turbine manufacture alone. That is more

people than are employed in the entire UK coal industry. If we can develop wind, wave and tidal technologies, the prospects for employment in Scotland are good.

Lowering the threshold for renewables obligation certificates to units of 1kWh would be an extremely useful way of creating jobs in smaller communities. Smaller projects would have the advantage of creating and dispersing a large number of new jobs throughout the rural economy. A secure, cheap energy supply for the future would be created, run and managed closer to the source.

The Executive needs to send a clear message to the developers of small renewables schemes of all kinds—biomass schemes, methane recovery schemes, small hydro schemes, solar cell schemes, and wind, wave and biofuel schemes—that they will receive maximum encouragement through facilitated capital funding from lottery grants, landfill grants and the renewables obligation Scotland scheme, and under local authority planning guidelines. Developers need all the help that the Executive can provide from those or other sources.

The Executive must not pass up this opportunity to support an industry that, in the long run, could provide jobs throughout the north of Scotland, perhaps using the oil fabrication yards of Ardersier, Nigg and others. Alasdair Morrison has already mentioned Arnish. We have all the required skills and experience of designing and building for the hostile conditions of the North sea. That means that we have the research and expertise to become world leaders in wind, tidal and wave power generation. The possibility of providing ourselves with a sustainable green power supply, supporting a variety of jobs, is within our grasp.

I suggest that we harness the elements to our mutual advantage and demonstrate that we are prepared to put Scotland at the forefront of this exciting development. All we need is a crucial financial push forward. The Executive and the Westminster Government must give a firm commitment to making available capital backing for the projects to which I referred, as well as for some of the vital new infrastructure developments attached to those. It is in their hands. Time will tell whether their commitment is real and sustained.

12:06

Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab): Like other members, I welcome today's debate, which has been of high quality. That does not mean that I agree with all the points that have been made. However, it is clear to me that members have done their research and thought about how the

issues that we are debating affect their communities.

Robin Harper has proposed a huge topic for this annual Scottish Green Party debate. In my speech, I would like to acknowledge how far we have come and to flag up some of the key areas in which we need to go much further.

We in the Labour party have come a very long way in a very short time. If we go back to the party's roots, we find that it has always been interested in people's working and living environment. That concern has driven the Labour and trade union movements since their very early days. However, only in the past decade, since the Rio conference, have we directly linked our commitment to the environment to our economic ambitions.

Ken Macintosh mentioned the superb pamphlet by the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, Labour's environmental pressure group, on the opportunities that we need to grasp in Scotland. In 1997, and again in 1999, Labour committed itself to greening government; we can now see the benefits of the work that is being done in the coalition coming through in Scotland. Big investment is being made in renewable sources of energy. Today's debate is about not whether we are in favour of renewables, but whether those constituencies that could accommodate renewables schemes have them; in Edinburgh Central, we will pass on those.

The standards of energy performance that are required in our building regulations have been increased to bring us further into line with the northern European countries, but we need to do more in that area. In the next round of changes, we may want to consider photovoltaic technology. We are not yet quite ready for the mass application of that technology, but in very few years we should be.

Lewis Macdonald described the massive shift that we have begun to make in transport policy. We are seeking long-term investment and a better balance in how money is spent. Investment is being made in safer streets, safer routes to school, walking, cycling, buses and trains. We need to ensure that we cater not just for longer trips, but for short trips, too.

Almost everyone who has spoken mentioned the national waste strategy, which local authorities are beginning to implement. Robin Harper is absolutely right to say that we are at the bottom of the European league table on waste and that that has to change. That means making some difficult changes, such as reducing the amount of waste that we produce in the first place—few members have spoken about that this morning—and making maximum use of recycling and composting. The

Parliament should welcome the first two area waste plans, which emphasise recycling and composting. Recycling and composting offer the most potential for job creation and provide opportunities for local companies.

While incineration is likely to be part of the solution to our waste problem, it is vital that it is not seen as an easy short-term replacement for our dreadful reliance on landfill. That is why we need to promote recycling and learn from pilot schemes, such as those in Edinburgh, which have shown that people will act sensibly if we make it easy for them to do that. That means providing local access to recycling facilities.

There is much in Robin Harper's motion with which we could concur, so I am a bit disappointed that the Executive's amendment leaves out the motion's first proposition, on which we could all have agreed. However, the test is what happens in government. Since Labour came to power in 1997, there have been huge shifts in UK and in Scottish Government policy.

Fiona McLeod's suggestion that our waste problems stem from the fact that Scotland is part of the UK is laughable. The fact that Germany, Denmark and Sweden have made huge progress has much more to do with the political composition of their Governments. In the debate, we should be positive about what we have achieved instead of using the opportunity to be negative all the time. We need to tell the non-governmental organisations, such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF, that we take them seriously and that we are making progress.

We have an awful lot more to do. The report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution stated that we need to cut our CO₂ emissions by 60 per cent within the next 50 years. That is a huge challenge. I believe that we have made the right first steps in government. We need to welcome what the Executive has done. We need to ensure that sustainable development hits the whole of the Executive and does not simply focus on the environment. That is what sustainable development is all about and that is why I support the Executive amendment.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Keith Harding to wind up for the Scottish Conservatives.

12:11

Mr Keith Harding (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): This has been an interesting and worthwhile debate. I too welcome the opportunity to contribute to it.

The problems of environmental improvement and recycling often fall to Scotland's local authorities to resolve. Many local authorities have

taken steps to encourage recycling, but often there are considerable difficulties in their path. The greatest problem is that, despite the landfill tax, sending material to landfill is often easier on the councils' restricted budgets than recycling. Considerable costs can be involved in separate doorstep collection of recyclables, especially given Scotland's sparse population. There are also problems if the value of the recyclable material is low or if it has a negative value. However, many councils should, and could, do better than they do at present.

The real problem is funding. It is time that the landfill tax was used much more proactively to fund councils to promote more recycling schemes. For a start, we need to change the culture in our councils and in the Scottish Executive. Much though ministers may protest, government at all levels has a duty to reduce the number of glossy brochures that are produced. In view of what Sarah Boyack has just said, I trust that she would support such an initiative. Such a move would mean much less waste. From the parliamentary questions that I have asked, I know that the costs of producing such publications are considerable. The money that was saved could be diverted to schemes to encourage recycling.

Ultimately, if we are to do better, we need more markets for recyclable material. I believe that there are new markets. We need to encourage Scots entrepreneurs and inventors to harness our natural resources and skills to exploit them. Let me quote from the briefing paper that WWF helpfully provided for today's debate:

"The natural resources of Scotland - and the potential for industrial development that is environmentally sound - offer the key to a successful and dynamic economy. Further, in many areas such as energy, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, waste management and transport - recovery of depleted or damaged resources together with responsible stewardship and investment in new opportunities could lead to increased productivity, growth in employment and job security."

Indeed, there is great potential for recycling to be increased and developed to create employment. Today we have heard from various members about different and successful initiatives throughout Scotland. If we make better use of our financial resources, and if the Chancellor frees up some of the proceeds from the landfill tax, we can encourage more Scots to take up the challenge and start up the enterprises that will have a growing future in protecting our environment and increasing employment.

I support John Scott's amendment.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excellent. We have picked up the bit of time that I was looking for. I call Adam Ingram to wind up for the SNP.

12:14

Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP):

At the core of Robin Harper's motion is the simple message that if we are to build a society and a world in which the standard of living and the quality of life can be improved for all, we can no longer misuse finite natural resources in unsustainable consumption.

If I may borrow a concept from welfare economics, we are very far from a Pareto optimum—making everyone better off, without making anyone worse off, by moving down the road of sustainable development. It will pay us all to think globally and act locally, to use the catchphrase.

Robin Harper's motion is certainly ambitious but, given the level of cross-party support for most if not all of its targets and aspirations, is there any good reason for us as a nation not to take up its challenge? A national environment plan, as the SNP advocates, is required. We can lead the world in this form of economic development—we have done so before. More than 200 years ago, this city and country developed the philosophy of economic rationality; we were at the forefront of the industrial revolution, which changed the world beyond recognition in the century that followed.

In resource terms, we are a fabulously wealthy country. I am not referring to our reserves of fossil fuels but rather to our sources of renewable energy—the wind, water and wave power that Alasdair Morrison mentioned earlier. As John Farquhar Munro suggested, marry those sources of energy to our expertise in engineering and offshore technology and we could and should make rapid progress to shrug off our current nuclear dependency.

Although I acknowledge the steps that the Executive has taken in the direction of renewable energy, we must get rid of the timidity and we must strengthen the political will to move forward faster. Clearly, such developments would create jobs in both the construction and the operational phases and would reach parts of the country where employment opportunities have been thin on the ground.

As for energy efficiency, for the life of me I cannot understand why, given the similarities in our climates, we have not adopted the Scandinavian approach to insulation and building standards long before now. In this area—as in so many others—the British way has not been best for Scotland.

As many members have said, on the key problem of waste management Scotland trails a long way behind best practice elsewhere. We are limping along at the bottom of the waste hierarchy, throwing most of our waste into landfill. Given the

failure of voluntary codes, mandatory targets are clearly required. Although it is important that a 30 per cent recycling target be achieved, how it is achieved will also be important. Robert Brown spoke about the problems involved with incineration.

I do not want to see huge waste management facilities, to which waste is transported from all over the country for treatment and disposal, and the carrot of local jobs being dangled in front of planning authorities in economically disadvantaged areas. Such proposals are in the pipeline for Killoch in East Ayrshire and Westfield in Fife. They seem to me to be designed to gain control of the waste stream rather than to minimise disposal to landfill or by burning. They may represent a quick fix for many councils but the receiving communities will be further blighted. When it comes to waste management, the discipline of the proximity principle must obtain to ensure the achievement of best practice.

12:19

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): This has been a very worthwhile debate and I congratulate Robin Harper. As others have suggested, he is the only person who can get something like two thirds of his manifesto printed on the business bulletin. That is a significant achievement.

In his opening remarks, Robin Harper focused on waste—a topic that was discussed by almost every speaker—and on renewables. I would like to tackle him on some of the points he made. I would have been happy to agree with much of the sentiment in his motion, but I regret the slight fixation with targets and I was surprised at his condemnation of having local strategies. Perhaps he did not mean to, but he seemed to suggest condemnation of local area waste plans.

The Executive is totally committed to tackling the problem that many members identified. Almost everyone quoted the Audit Scotland figures, which are not in dispute. The issue is what on earth we do about them. We have a lamentable record and, regrettably, in the years before the Parliament—I hope it has not been in the past two years—we rushed to the cheap option of landfill. Landfill was the simple solution. That is why we are taking a bottom-up approach and creating a national waste strategy for Scotland and 11 area waste plans. We are well advanced on those plans and have been encouraged by the response of local authorities in trying to develop plans that focus attention.

The area plans will be brought together to create a national plan, which will require each area to demonstrate that it is employing the best practicable environmental solution. In answer to a

point raised by Fiona McLeod, I can say that those in the north, in Ayrshire and elsewhere who want to put the case for incineration will have to demonstrate—before the plans are adopted—that incineration is the only available and best practical solution. There is no question of our sitting back and simply accepting that as a solution.

Fiona McLeod: Will the minister comment on the £50.4 million strategic waste fund, which works out at about £1.5 million for each area waste plan each year over three years? Is that enough to encourage those areas to move away from the initially cheap quick-fix solution provided by incineration?

Ross Finnie: The first point that I want to make—to Robin Harper—is that we are totally committed to tackling the problem. The second point is that there is only one published target, which is to reduce biodegradable municipal waste by something in the order of 25 per cent. I do not regard that as good enough, but I cannot set further targets until I have a plan in place. We cannot say, suddenly, that we are going to double, treble or quadruple the amount of recycling if we do not know how we are going to do it. The whole purpose of the national waste strategy is to enable us to find that out. In other words, the next stage is to start looking at elements in waste disposal and, when we know that we have the capacity and ability, to move towards more definable targets, such as those that members have called for.

The £50.4 million over three years is a reasonable start. Much is being done. Local authorities recognise that. I am not saying that it is enough—we can always argue that point—but I think that that valuable contribution shows the Executive's commitment to stimulating a debate about a national waste strategy.

Mr McGrigor: Will the minister give way?

Ross Finnie: I am sorry, but I must move on to talk about renewables—although I want to take up a point that Jamie McGrigor raised about recycling targets. There is a question about stimulating the market; there is no doubt that WRAP has a lot to do in trying to answer that question.

Robin Harper and Adam Ingram raised a question about building standards, but I think that the point was incorrect. The regulation on building standards that we have just promulgated, which came into force in March, should improve the thermal performance of new construction by between 25 and 30 per cent. The Executive is taking that issue seriously across its portfolio interests.

Alasdair Morrison and other members based in the north, who have experience in such projects, mentioned renewables. We are wholly committed to that. Issues about consuming organic

purchases were raised. I am happy to say to Alasdair Morrison that I am conscious of the need to get the Soil Association and others to work with the Executive in providing advice.

Fiona McLeod asked what the ministerial group on sustainable development has done. The policy that has moved much freight off roads and on to rail is a direct result of the Executive's commitment to sustainability. The introduction of building regulations, embedding structural funding in sustainable development, the national waste strategy and our commitment to renewables development are all projects that have been pushed forward.

We must use our resources better and we must use less of them. We must put the environment and sustainable development at the heart of the Government's programme. That is what we are doing.

12:24

Robin Harper: I express my heartfelt thanks to all members in all parties who have contributed to the debate. Much has been said that is encouraging and that I can take to heart.

I will begin by addressing the Executive's response. I was disappointed that the Executive's amendment seeks to wipe out my entire motion and substitute for it a self-congratulatory set of platitudes on how well the Executive is doing at the moment and how well it hopes to do in the future. Not until the Executive's winding-up did it confront the centre of the environmental argument, which is the setting of targets. It may be a chicken-and-egg argument, but if a target is set, it is something by which one can measure success. If a target is set, one can go back to an area waste strategy and say, "The strategy will not meet the target. You have to do better." At the moment, there is nothing against which to measure area waste strategies.

I will lay to rest a misconception. I am not against area waste strategies, but they do not go down far enough. They do not go down to community recycling, where most of the recycling in Scotland is happening at the moment. The people who really know something about it have not been involved in the discussions at the level that they should have been. That is another point that the Executive did not address. It has not addressed in detail any of the advantages of setting targets for the areas that I have proposed; it has simply dismissed them. The Executive has not won the argument.

I welcome Sarah Boyack's speech. I am sure that she was invited to respond to disarm me. She is a member of SERA—the Socialist Environment and Resources Association. In one its pamphlets

that I read she called for 25 per cent renewables by 2015. I welcome that. Freed from the shackles of ministerial responsibility she can express herself in the way that she likes.

Alasdair Morrison did not address the real problem in farming, which is the fact that the Executive will not introduce tapering, which would mean that small farms and crofters would get their share of the money that is available for support. He was a little bit coy. I recommend that he read the same SERA pamphlet that Kenny Macintosh quoted from, and the contribution by Hugh Raven on organic farming. Kenny Macintosh must have been writing his speech during the second half of my speech, because my fundamental point was that we should start at the bottom and not hand everything over to big business.

That brings me to John Scott's point about giving money to big business so that it can train more people. It may surprise him to know that Scottish Enterprise has already identified more than 70 firms that have the technical expertise to contribute to the wind energy industry.

John Scott: Robin Harper may have misheard me. The point of my speech was to encourage the market to take up the opportunities that undoubtedly exist, not to give money to big business. My position is that the situation should be entirely market led.

Robin Harper: I take John Scott's point and many of the other points that he made, which were most welcome.

I have a quotation from a book on making money from waste that addresses what John Scott and Kenny Macintosh said. It states that "the consolidation of power", which means handing it to big business,

"can easily run into conflict with innovation and innovators. Innovation from below will become halted when it becomes successful enough to threaten existing structures of authority ... While large scale technologies provide administrative solutions to those at the centre, they create real problems at the base."

I also thank Robert Brown for his contribution. He said that 500 collection jobs per million tonnes will be created. I add that a further 2,000 jobs will be created in remanufacturing.

One of the chicken-and-egg arguments is that we cannot recycle until there is a market and we cannot set up a market until we have the recycled material. The problem has been solved all over the United States, in Europe and in New Zealand. The answer is to bring the two projects along together over a period of eight years. Can we not remember that it is being done elsewhere?

Members said that I am being negative. I do not think that there is anything negative in my motion.

My motion is positive. I am saying that the environment is not a problem; it is an opportunity to be grasped as soon as possible.

I have notes on almost everyone else's speech, but I am sorry that there will not be time to mention them. The Executive says that the environment is at the heart of all its policies. That heart is beating a little bit faintly. I prescribe a diet and some exercise—a diet of the best available information on the environment and recycling and an exercise of the mind to ensure that we get the right solution.

I have already moved my motion and wish to indicate that I am happy to accept the SNP amendment.

Business Motion

12:31

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S1M-2634, in the name of Patricia Ferguson, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme. Any member who wishes to speak against the motion should press their request-to-speak button now.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 30 January 2002

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
<i>followed by</i>	Stage 1 Debate on the Fur Farming (Prohibition) (Scotland) Bill
<i>followed by</i>	Debate on Adoption and Children Bill - UK Legislation
<i>followed by</i>	Executive Motion in respect of UK Legislation
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business – debate on the subject of S1M-2302 Dr Sylvia Jackson: Introduction of a Pollution Inventory

Thursday 31 January 2002

9.30 am	Stage 1 Debate on the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman Bill
<i>followed by</i>	Financial Resolution in respect of the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman Bill
<i>followed by</i>	Procedures Committee Debate on its 5th Report 2001 (Changes to the Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament) and 1st Report 2002 (Changes to the Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament)
<i>followed by</i>	Business Motion
2.30 pm	Question Time
3.10 pm	First Minister's Question Time
3.30 pm	Debate on the Local Government Finance Order
<i>followed by</i>	Parliamentary Bureau Motions
5.00 pm	Decision Time
<i>followed by</i>	Members' Business - debate on the subject of S1M-2528 by Mr Kenneth Gibson: Young Runaways

Wednesday 6 February 2002

2.30 pm	Time for Reflection
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followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
followed by Stage 3 Debate on the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business
 Thursday 7 February 2002
 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 Stage 1 Debate on the Public Appointments (Parliamentary Approval) (Scotland) Bill
followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions
 5.00 pm Decision Time
followed by Members' Business.—[*Euan Robson.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Fiona Hyslop has indicated that she wishes to speak against the motion and has up to five minutes to do so.

12:32

Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): I speak against the motion with some regret, but I want to share with the chamber my anxiety and disquiet at what I see as a dumbing down—it will be evident to members who look at the business motion—of some of our procedures and the debates we are having in the Parliament.

We will spend as much as an hour and a half debating the abolition of fur farming, which is hardly the most contentious issue facing the people of Scotland, whereas a debate on the Public Appointments (Parliamentary Approval) (Scotland) Bill, which is about the abolition of cronyism, will not receive a sufficient amount of time.

Although we must debate bills that have been approved as part of the Parliament's legislative programme, we are spending too much time on non-contentious issues—issues that are not the big burning issues that face the people of Scotland. We should spend time debating health, education and transport. Significantly, the only occasions on which ministers debate those issues in the Parliament are during Opposition party debates. There have been Opposition debates on the economy and on transport—which the Scottish National Party secured—and on the environment and council tax, which were debated today.

Over the past few months, the Parliament has not had the opportunity to debate the big issues that we should debate. There is a danger that the

Parliament is being dumbed down as a result of spending excessive time on issues that I feel do not reflect public opinion in Scotland. Because of that, I regret to say that the SNP might have to vote against business motions in future.

It is essential for the working of the Parliament that we have consensus in the Parliament and in the Parliamentary Bureau. I made those points in the bureau this week. I make them again in the Parliament. I sincerely hope that in future the SNP will not be put in the position of having to vote against business motions because they do not address the issues that the Parliament should address. I will not force a vote on the business motion, but I want to express my disquiet and concern.

12:34

The Deputy Minister for Parliamentary Business (Euan Robson): The SNP business manager has not fully understood what will happen next Wednesday afternoon. The business motion clearly states that the Sewel motion will follow debate on the Fur Farming (Prohibition) (Scotland) Bill. If that debate finishes early, it is perfectly possible that more time might be devoted to the Sewel motion.

The claim that a legislative programme that includes debate on the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill is dumbing down the Parliament beggars belief.

It is important that debates are held on some more minor measures. The measure may be minor, but the prohibition of fur farming is quite important. Anybody with experience of trying to eradicate escaped mink will know how important it is for rural communities that some practices do not continue. Although such measures may not seem particularly important to the vast majority, they are important to groups, and the legislation involved must be passed.

We note what the SNP's business manager says, but the legislative programme must progress. I have no hesitation in commending the motion to the Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

12:35

Meeting suspended until 14:30.

14:30

On resuming—

Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Amateur Football

1. Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive how it is promoting amateur football. (S1O-4516)

The Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport (Dr Elaine Murray): I thank Donald Gorrie for his question, which gives me my first opportunity to answer questions at question time.

The Executive promotes and supports football at all levels in Scotland, including amateur football. Generally, that happens through a number of sportscotland initiatives, such as the sports facilities programme, the junior groups programme and the awards for all programme.

Donald Gorrie: Given that a large amount of public money has gone, and is going, into top-level football, will the Executive promise to give more money and support to amateur football? The number of amateur football clubs is falling and clubs have great difficulties with the quality and quantity of football pitches and with the increasing expenses that they must meet.

Dr Murray: If Donald Gorrie has in mind a particular football club that has particular problems, the Executive would be interested to hear more. I assure him that the Executive remains committed to amateur football. He will have noted the First Minister's statement yesterday on Euro 2008, in which he made it clear that, in going for six stadiums, we want additional investment to go into amateur football and into football for young boys and girls in Scottish schools. The Executive's commitment to football at all levels has been made quite clear over the past couple of days.

Dennis Canavan (Falkirk West): Will the Executive ensure that both amateur football and professional football benefit from our bid to stage the Euro 2008 championships by stipulating that public investment in football stadiums should be combined with community use of such facilities? Does the minister agree that, whatever preferences some people may have had for a solo bid, it is now absolutely essential that the entire football community in Scotland—and all Scotland's politicians, irrespective of political persuasion—unite behind the joint bid, so that it turns out to be a winner for Scotland and Ireland?

Dr Murray: I thank Mr Canavan for his question. I agree entirely with the points that he made. I refer him to the statement that the First Minister made yesterday, which I hope will offer Mr Canavan some reassurance. The First Minister said that he wanted

“part of the bid to present competitive bids for”

the additional stadiums to

“maximise the benefit to ... communities.—[*Official Report*, 23 January 2002, col 5653.]

Therefore, community benefit will be central to our bid for Euro 2008.

Trish Godman (West Renfrewshire) (Lab): I am pleased to hear the minister's support for amateur football. However, I make a plea on behalf of the many women's football teams and their supporters. For far too long, women's football has been the cinderella of the sport. In her discussions with sportscotland, will the minister stress the need to encourage women's football teams? After all, many women followers of the beautiful game are much more knowledgeable than the average male supporter.

Dr Murray: I know that Trish Godman was a footballer previously and I realise that the sport is of particular personal interest to her. Although I have never been a good footballer, I, too, have an interest in women's football.

Trish Godman might be aware that specific funding is available from sportscotland for women's football development officers and that women's football is probably the fastest growing sport in Scotland.

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): Will the minister clarify that such participation will not be mandatory?

Dr Murray: I assure Annabel Goldie that neither she nor I will be forced to play football.

Mental Health

2. Shona Robison (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether mental health is still a key clinical priority. (S1O-4508)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm): Mental health is one of the three clinical priorities. The Scottish Executive is strongly committed to implementing the framework for mental health services, to developing mental health services in primary care and community settings and to promoting mental health and well-being as part of the broader health improvement agenda.

Shona Robison: I thank the minister for that answer. However, does he accept that that will be

cold comfort to the 47 people who have been trapped in the state hospital at Carstairs—some for as long as three years—despite their having been assessed as able to leave? They have been unable to return to their communities because of a lack of appropriate beds and staffing locally. Will he agree to visit Carstairs and to meet the patients concerned? Will he agree to intervene personally to stop that infringement of human rights?

Malcolm Chisholm: I am scheduled to visit Carstairs at the beginning of March. It is clear that there is a problem with people who need more appropriate accommodation in local forensic units.

I am very glad that one such unit opened recently in Edinburgh—the Orchard clinic. We all know the controversies that have surrounded such local forensic units in Glasgow and other parts of the west of Scotland. The important thing is that planning for those local forensic units goes ahead as quickly as possible. That is the solution to the problem. We are strongly committed to that and funding will be provided for it.

I hope that a solution to the case of the individual to which Shona Robison referred can be found soon. I know that work is being done on that case as a matter of urgency.

Dr Sylvia Jackson (Stirling) (Lab): What steps is the minister proposing to lessen the correlation between mental health problems and social deprivation?

Malcolm Chisholm: I was pleased this week to chair the first meeting of an advisory group on the promotion of mental health and well-being. That is an important new part of the health improvement agenda. As part of that, we are considering the wider issues of social justice and social deprivation, which is a broad and exciting new part of the mental health agenda that has not been covered before. Along with the expansion of services in primary care and community settings, it complements the more traditional mental health agenda as embodied in the framework for mental health services.

Phil Gallie (South of Scotland) (Con): Is the minister aware of the Scottish Health Advisory Service report, "Review of Mental Health Services in Ayrshire and Arran September 2001", which says that services for mental health in Ayrshire are among the best in Scotland?

Does the minister acknowledge the importance of the Arrol Park Resource Centre in Ayr to the provision of services for mental health, and particularly for people whose health has been profoundly damaged? Will he join me in congratulating the staff and all who are associated with what is happening at Arrol Park?

Malcolm Chisholm: I will certainly join Phil

Gallie in congratulating those people and thank him for drawing attention to the centre. I congratulate the staff there and acknowledge the great effort that has been made in Ayrshire. It was not so long ago that Ayrshire was being criticised for not spending enough of its budget on mental health. Ayrshire has made big improvements in mental health because of the work of the mental health and well-being support group and other monitoring arrangements.

I commend the work of the Scottish Health Advisory Service. It does vital inspection work that is critical in improving standards in mental health and other services.

Mr Adam Ingram (South of Scotland) (SNP): How would the minister respond to concerns that have been expressed to me to the effect that Executive support for public health and awareness campaigns that are associated with mental health—such as those that he mentioned—although welcome, merely give the illusion that mental health is a priority? However, in practice national health service boards continue to fund mental health services sparingly in comparison with other services?

Malcolm Chisholm: I accept that there is an historical problem in relation to mental health spending. However, I remind Adam Ingram that expenditure on mental health in the NHS increased by 9 per cent last year.

People will welcome the £4 million over three years from the health improvement fund, which is going toward the new work that I described. That is no threat to the massive amounts of money that are, in comparison, spent in the service sector. I believe that that agenda—which I am sure Adam Ingram supports—including the work on addressing stigma issues on mental health, will be welcomed widely by service users within the mental health system and the wider public.

Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Meetings)

3. Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive when it last met representatives from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and what issues were discussed. (S10-4473)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): Officials are in regular contact with DEFRA on a variety of issues. I met Mrs Beckett—the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs—on 16 January at a meeting of agricultural ministers at which a range of agricultural matters were discussed.

Mr Hamilton: Can the minister estimate the impact on those discussions of George Lyon's comments? He said:

"Labour want to get rid of 50 per cent of crofters and farmers. Beckett herself"—

I assume that he means Margaret Beckett—

"has made it clear that support to crofters and farmers will be slashed if she gets her way in Europe".

Rather unfortunately, George Lyon went on to say:

"Labour could trigger another Highland Clearance".

Could the minister tell us on behalf of the Lib-Lab Executive whether George Lyon is right?

Ross Finnie: I am sure that Duncan Hamilton recognises that there is a perfectly legitimate place for party-political contests and politicking. However, when I represent the Executive at meetings of agricultural ministers, I represent the Scottish Executive, the Scottish people and the interests of Scottish farming—I do not debate narrow party-political points. The points that I make at such meetings are in the interests of ensuring that there is sustainable agriculture throughout the crofting parts of Scotland and all Scotland.

Alex Johnstone (North-East Scotland) (Con): When the minister met Margaret Beckett on 16 January, did he take the opportunity to back calls from his party colleagues in Westminster for a full public inquiry into foot-and-mouth disease?

Ross Finnie: No.

Transport Priorities (Glasgow)

4. Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive whether the Glasgow airport link and the Glasgow crossrail projects are among its transport priorities. (S10-4497)

The Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning (Lewis Macdonald): The Scottish Executive gives high priority to a safer, bigger and better railway network. We have already started work on a detailed analysis of the case for rail links to both Glasgow and Edinburgh airports. Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive is looking at options for Glasgow crossrail and we will consider any formal proposals when they are received.

Robert Brown: Does the minister accept that we have had study after study on both projects and that it is entirely unacceptable that passengers to Scotland's largest city cannot travel there—or to other parts of Scotland—by rail from the airport? Will he take more of a leading role and agree to meet British Airports Authority, SPTE, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and other interested bodies to discuss not whether the projects can be done, but how and

when they will be carried out?

Lewis Macdonald: It is important to recognise that the studies that have been done on the projects and the studies that are currently under way are essential in identifying which options offer the best value for money. We will pursue those options on the basis of well-costed and well-argued cases. We will consider those cases when they are presented and take matters forward from there.

It would not be appropriate for us to act without understanding the choices that are before us. We have made our priority clear, particularly in the strategic plan that was published last week by the Strategic Rail Authority. That plan identifies rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh airports as being of strategic importance from a UK perspective as well as from a Scottish perspective.

Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): I notice that the Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning is not here—perhaps her portfolio is as overloaded as the transport infrastructure. Does the deputy minister agree that the Government has failed in respect of the lack of progress on the airport direct link and the crossrail link? Will the Government find the time to ensure that progress is made toward implementation of those vital long-awaited schemes?

Lewis Macdonald: We will find the parliamentary time that is required to make progress on such schemes when they come in—I assume that that is the essence of Sandra White's question. We have said that they are strategic priorities. We are not prejudging the studies on rail links, which will consider several options in relation to both airports. It would not be right for us to prejudge that work.

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): Is the minister aware of the considerable anxiety that is shared by bodies such as Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and the Labour-controlled Glasgow City Council, about the fact that no movement is being made in respect of the rail link to Glasgow airport? Does he realise that there will be considerable resentment if, at the end of the day, the project does not go ahead despite the airy-fairy promises that he and previous ministers have given?

Lewis Macdonald: I am sorry that Mr Aitken takes the view that no progress is being made. We are expecting the consultants' initial report on the rail links to airports in the next few weeks. We expect to receive their final report in the course of the year. We will make rational judgments that are based on the evidence before we make choices about which strategic priorities will deliver the best value for money for the Executive and the best services for passengers throughout Scotland.

Perth and Kinross Council (Meetings)

5. Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive when it last met representatives of Perth and Kinross Council. (S1O-4476)

The Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services (Peter Peacock): Scottish Executive representatives meet all local authorities regularly to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Roseanna Cunningham: I will take that answer to mean, "Not recently." When the minister, or his colleague, next meets administration members of Perth and Kinross Council, will he remind them that the Parliament is committed to open government and freedom of information? In particular, will he tell the Labour-Tory-Lib Dem coalition that it is unacceptable that it refuses to publish the report of an investigation into the training and care assistants fiasco, which recently resulted in the withdrawal from school of many vulnerable children in Perth and Kinross, some of whom will never re-enter mainstream education?

Peter Peacock: Roseanna Cunningham might be interested to know that I spoke yesterday to representatives of Perth and Kinross Council. I am sure that they will be pleased that she is beginning to take an interest in the affairs of that council—my understanding is that such interest has hitherto been singularly lacking. Nonetheless, it is a shame that she has done so in such a negative fashion, but perhaps that is to be expected from the SNP. The matters to which Roseanna Cunningham referred are matters for the local authority. Local authorities are locally autonomous. We respect that. It is about time that the SNP did the same.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Is the minister aware that on all recently published performance indicators, Perth and Kinross Council performs well above the Scottish average, and that it outperforms the adjacent Angus Council, which is SNP controlled? Will the minister join me in congratulating the partnership administration of Perth and Kinross Council on its performance?

Peter Peacock: It is right to point to the fact that according to Accounts Commission reports, improved performance is being reported in many local authorities. The performance of Perth and Kinross Council, to which Murdo Fraser referred, has improved since the SNP lost control of the council.

Cannabis Possession

6. Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (SSP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to issue guidance to the police on dealing with possession of cannabis cases in the light of the Home Secretary's recent announcement on categorisation of cannabis. (S1O-4486)

The Deputy Minister for Justice (Dr Richard Simpson): Classification of drugs is reserved to the UK Government. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has been asked by the Home Secretary to review the classification of cannabis. A decision on reclassification is expected in the next few months and any advice to police forces will reflect the Home Secretary's decision.

Tommy Sheridan: Does the minister accept that it is time to stop criminalising the thousands of Scots who use cannabis recreationally through choice, or medically, because they have to? Does the minister also accept that police time and other resources should be diverted from the pursuit of those who use cannabis, and released to help to treat and rehabilitate those who are addicted to harder drugs? That is where our resources should be concentrated.

Dr Simpson: I am disappointed that Mr Sheridan has not welcomed the fact that the Home Secretary is adopting a much more realistic approach to the issue. Reclassification, if it happens, will be done on the advice of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. That committee's advice is important.

In practice, the police seldom arrest people for simple possession of cannabis, although that ultimately depends on individual cases and quantities. It is crucial that the message goes out from the Parliament that reclassification is not decriminalisation. Cannabis is harmful if it is misused; there is no doubt about that. If Tommy Sheridan had—as I have in my professional life—faced individuals whose psychosis had developed in association with the use or misuse of the drug, he would be much more cautious about overwhelming embracement of it.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): I am sure that the minister is aware that in many communities, including some in my constituency of Pollok, there is a problem of chaotic drug use, which includes cannabis use. Will the minister reassure my constituents, who often suffer problems of crime and disorder as a consequence of drug misuse, that the safety and security of their communities will remain a key policing priority, regardless of the change in categorisation of cannabis?

Dr Simpson: I visited a constituency in Glasgow yesterday—not Johann Lamont's constituency, but Govan—and that was exactly the message that I was trying to give out. It is crucial that we support and rehabilitate chaotic drug users. To that end, the fact that we have provided £100 million for expenditure over the next three years is an indication of our commitment. Indeed, the funds have been so great that some local authorities have found it difficult to spend them this year.

We will pursue the issue actively. It is crucial to our communities, particularly communities such as Johann Lamont's, that we support chaotic drug users and move them from such use back into mainstream society.

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): I welcome the fact that there is some change in the attitude to cannabis use and abuse. What plans does the minister have to make plain his point of view, and those of chief constables and senior police officers in Scotland, when senior police officers in England and Wales inform the Home Secretary of their deliberations on whether a similar attitude should be taken to people who are found in possession of hard drugs such as heroin, ecstasy and cocaine? I would be most concerned if the Parliament and Scottish police forces were not consulted on the matter.

Dr Simpson: Consultation is taking place with the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland about the way in which we handle drugs matters. However, in practice, there is already a distinction between the handling of cannabis users and users of other drugs—that is appropriate. It is crucial that we support all drug users. The communication strategy, which we will launch in March, will indicate clearly that all drugs, when misused, are inappropriate. That is the strategy that we will adopt. I hope that Margo MacDonald will support that strategy because it is a realistic one.

Aquaculture Sites (Relocation)

7. John Farquhar Munro (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to encourage the relocation of aquaculture sites to more exposed offshore locations. (S1O-4503)

The Deputy Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Allan Wilson): The issue is one that we want to debate during our consultation on a strategic framework for aquaculture. We are aware that new technologies are being developed that could make offshore sites more viable. Some Scottish companies are exploring those possibilities. However, moving further offshore also raises important issues of staff safety and carries a higher risk of damage to cages and escape of fish.

John Farquhar Munro: I thank the minister for that reply. Does the minister agree, with hindsight, that many fish cages have been located too close to the mouths of rivers and in sea lochs that do not have the necessary level of water exchange? Could the minister ensure that any new locational guidelines for sea cages will cover retrospectively any fish farms that are currently applying or re-applying for licences?

Allan Wilson: Hindsight, as John Farquhar Munro will know, is a precise science. Knowing what we know 20 years on from the inception of the industry, most observers would admit that some farms are not ideally located. Relocation is a credible option if those farms are to remain in production and the industry is to expand. However, that development must be sustainable and it must take account of environmental prerogatives. On licences, where consideration has been given to relocation, we should also expedite licence consideration.

Dr Winnie Ewing (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): The minister might know that I asked a similar question last year. The then minister promised to consider and make a study of the example of Northern Ireland waters. Was that done? If so, what opinion did the Executive form about the practicality of that option?

Allan Wilson: It is now more than two years since the locational guidelines were introduced. I want those guidelines to be reviewed in the context of the overall aquaculture review that is currently under way. That review will incorporate views from Northern Ireland, Norway and elsewhere where the practices that Dr Ewing mentioned are in vogue. Those views will inform our environmental work. I hope to report on the aquaculture review in the summer.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (Report)

8. Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what action it plans to take in light of the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, "Standards and Quality in Primary and Secondary Schools: 1998-2001". (S1O-4488)

The Minister for Education and Young People (Cathy Jamieson): The report emphasises that there is much to be proud of in our schools. Standards are improving year on year. However, several areas for improvement are identified. We are already taking action to deal with those areas through a range of policies, the framework for improvement, and action to promote effective leadership in schools. We are considering whether any further action is needed to raise pupil attainment in S1 and S2.

Susan Deacon: I thank the minister for that answer. Does she share my concern that the achievements of schools and pupils are all too often defined on the basis of exam results alone? Will she assure me that, in continuing to improve standards, due recognition will be given to the development of life skills and vocational education and experience? Will she also assure me that appropriate recognition and encouragement will be given to innovative projects such as the Instep

project at Castlebrae Community High School and the joint work between Scottish Power Learning and Portobello High School in my constituency?

Cathy Jamieson: I assure the member that the Executive's priority is that every young person should achieve their fullest potential. We want to close the gap between those who have not had the opportunity to do well in school and those who have. For some young people, that will include using innovative projects that allow them to participate in initiatives such as those that have been described. Those with special educational needs will be given the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability too.

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): The minister will be aware that the inspectorate links attainment and class size. How does the minister respond to figures released yesterday which show that Labour's binding commitment to reduce primary 1, 2 and 3 class sizes to 30 or below, given by Brian Wilson, Helen Liddell, Peter Peacock, Sam Galbraith and none less than the First Minister, has not been achieved and that attainment has been affected?

Cathy Jamieson: I am sure that Michael Russell has examined the figures and knows that they relate to the year 2000-01 and to primary 1 and 2 only. If Michael Russell really wants to consider what we are doing to improve the quality of education, he should commend initiatives such as that on classroom assistants. Not only are we reducing class sizes, we are improving the adult to child ratio in classes throughout Scotland. We know that that will benefit children and young people.

Organ Donation

9. Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to provide young people with information on organ donation. (S1O-4519)

The Minister for Health and Community Care (Malcolm Chisholm): The Executive believes that young people should have information on organ donation. Transplant co-ordinators visit schools regularly as part of their educational work. Earlier this week, we announced that we are developing an education resource pack on organ donation and transplantation.

Margaret Jamieson: I welcome the Scottish Executive's initiative to provide young people with information on organ donation. Does the minister agree that all in Scotland should be encouraged to register as organ donors, to give opportunity to the many who await a transplant? Will the minister pursue all avenues to allow more registration?

Malcolm Chisholm: I congratulate Margaret Jamieson on the initiative that she has taken. She

requested 10,000 donor cards this week and will contact employers in her constituency about distributing those cards with pay slips. A large number of lives have been saved because people have carried donor cards and registered on the organ donation register, of which Margaret Jamieson reminded us. More lives will be saved if more people do that. At the Scottish Transplant Group's conference on Monday, which Janis Hughes and Shona Robison also attended, I was pleased to announce that we have asked the Scottish Transplant Group to produce proposals for a campaign to promote the issue and ensure that more people are willing to save more lives.

Youth Work

10. Bristow Muldoon (Livingston) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to promote youth work. (S1O-4492)

The Minister for Education and Young People (Cathy Jamieson): The Scottish Executive is committed to raising the profile of youth issues and to bridging the gap between the voluntary and statutory sectors. From 1 April, YouthLink Scotland will assume responsibility for delivering an enhanced youth issues agenda in Scotland.

Bristow Muldoon: Does the minister welcome initiatives such as the establishment of the Having Your Say youth forum in West Lothian, which gives a voice to looked-after young people? What plans does the Executive have to promote such initiatives?

Cathy Jamieson: I was delighted to meet young people from that initiative when they attended the Parliament for my statement on services for looked-after children. That is the sort of initiative that brings young people and adults together and allows them to construct an agenda. I hope that such initiatives will be replicated throughout Scotland.

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): Is the minister aware that in the latest swingeing cuts by Scottish Borders Council, the core funding of the Gala Youth Project in Galashiels—£60,000—will go as at 31 March? That will end at a stroke a 50-year-old project for young people in difficulty that has 150 young people on its books and is highly regarded by police and educationists. Will the minister release a pauchle of those millions underspent on the education budget, on whatever terms, to Scottish Borders Council, so that at least those 150 young people are not punished for the mistakes of others?

Cathy Jamieson: The member has raised the circumstances of Scottish Borders Council before, as have the local constituency MSPs who keep me up to date on progress. At this point, it would

be inappropriate for me to make a commitment to an individual project. As I understand the situation, discussions are ongoing between council officials, the Minister for Finance and Public Services and others to see what initiatives can be taken. The matter is primarily one for Borders Council. That will remain the case.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): I know that the minister recently visited a youth event in North Lanarkshire. Does she agree that North Lanarkshire Council's youth strategy and the approach that it adopts is a model from which other local authorities could learn? Does she accept that the strategy has been an important catalyst in involving young people in their communities and, more importantly, in shaping and developing local policies?

Cathy Jamieson: On Sunday, I was delighted to attend the initiative about which Cathie Craigie spoke. Although I was too late to participate in the aerobics class, I was delighted to see Cathie and another of her colleagues performing in the class. The initiative demonstrates, once again, how important it is to bring young people and adults together. I am particularly impressed by the way that North Lanarkshire Council has gone about involving young people. I am also impressed by the work that it is doing in a partnership approach with other local authorities. I commend that approach to other local authorities in Scotland.

Strategic Planning (Local Health Services)

11. Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive how it will ensure that planning authorities, when developing their strategic planning requirements, give full and proper consideration to the provision of local health services. (S10-4484)

The Minister for Social Justice (Iain Gray): The Scottish Executive is satisfied that the current arrangements for land use development planning and community planning are such that, if local authorities and NHS boards fulfil their respective roles in those processes, there should be adequate liaison between those bodies to ensure that full and proper consideration is given to the provision of local health services.

Fiona Hyslop: Is the minister aware that there is some urgency in the need to change those provisions? Does he agree with the British Medical Association's recent comments on the matter? We have closed waiting lists and hospitals, but is he aware that in Livingston, two doctors' surgeries have had to close their patient lists to new applicants? Surgeries across Livingston are being asked how many new patients they can take before they too have to close their lists. West Lothian is one of the few areas in Scotland that is bucking the trend, as it has an increase in

population. Does the minister agree that planning measures need to be in place sooner rather than later to ensure that people can access their doctors when they need to and that they can do so locally?

Iain Gray: My point was that planning measures are in place. The partners, who have a role in that process, can be expected to use those processes in order to deliver access to health services for all our people. Fiona Hyslop spun slightly when she described the situation in Livingston. Patients in Livingston have access to general practitioners.

I am aware of the problem in Dedridge. However the process that she describes of further closed lists being pursued is not that at all. The local health trust is taking action. It has undertaken to reach an agreed solution to the problem in Livingston in six months and to develop a proper business plan, which may include investment in GP premises and staff. That seems entirely the right approach to take. I know that Bristow Muldoon, the constituency MSP, has spoken to the trust and to the health board. He is playing a constructive role in resolving the situation at the local level, which is exactly where it should be resolved.

Bristow Muldoon (Livingston) (Lab): I thank the minister for his recognition of the role that I have been playing in meeting the health board and the health trust. Will the minister join me in welcoming the fact that the health trust has already invested in expanded GP facilities at the GP practice in West Calder? As the minister indicated, the health trust is investigating the possibilities of an additional health centre in Livingston. I also ask the minister to hold discussions with his colleague, the Minister for Health and Community Care, to ensure that areas of strong population growth, such as Livingston, receive appropriate primary care services. That will enable areas such as Livingston to meet future growing population needs.

Iain Gray: I am certainly happy to raise that issue with the Minister for Health and Community Care. In fact, I am sure that he heard what Bristow Muldoon said, because he is sitting right next to me. We must ensure that health boards and trusts have the resources and tools that they require to provide services, including the capacity to provide salaried GPs in areas where it is difficult to attract GPs to practise. In the end, the important thing is that local agencies that know their areas and understand local needs are helped and supported to provide those services.

The Minister for Health and Community Care is pursuing changes in governance in health boards, which may have the beneficial effect of ensuring that local authorities are represented on health boards, bringing together two of the key partners

in an important way.

Livestock Movements

12. Richard Lochhead (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to remove the 21-day rule relating to the movement of livestock off farms. (S10-4471)

The Minister for Environment and Rural Development (Ross Finnie): On Tuesday 22 January, a consultation paper was issued proposing the retention on an interim basis of the 20-day standstill rule, subject to exemptions for specific categories of stock and for animals that are held separately from the rest of the herd.

Richard Lochhead: Given that the purpose of the regulations was to prevent the spread of disease, and given that the international authorities declared the whole of the UK foot-and-mouth free earlier this week, does not the minister accept that the remaining regulations leave Scottish farmers at a competitive disadvantage? Is not there a case for a further immediate relaxation of the rules, and perhaps for the introduction of a 14-day standstill rule for cattle? Will the minister tell the chamber whether he has carried out an economic assessment of the impact on the industry of his latest proposals?

Ross Finnie: The first thing that I want to tell Richard Lochhead is that it is not a question of taking into account the views of just the industry, although that is very important. I am sure that he would agree that I have to take account of the views of the chief veterinary officer in Scotland, who is quite clear and unequivocal that, notwithstanding any Office International des Epizooties—OIE—statement, he still considers there to be a considerable degree of risk in the United Kingdom and particularly in Scotland, for which he is responsible. It is on that basis that we have carried out extensive discussions with those in the industry who are involved, at meat and livestock level, in farming and in the marts to consider how we can apply the advice of the veterinary officer in a reasonable and equitable way. I believe that the proposals that we have made represent such an arrangement.

Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): The minister will be aware that the labelling of meat imports is woefully inadequate and that the system is being abused. What is being done to protect UK livestock farmers and consumers from those bad labelling practices?

The Presiding Officer: I do not think that that is relevant to the question.

Ross Finnie: I think that it is germane, Presiding Officer. There are three elements to the control of foot-and-mouth disease. First, there is the key element of assessing the risk from illegal

imports and those that are improperly labelled. Secondly, there is the issue of taking account of the risk assessment by the chief veterinary officer in relation to the containment of the disease. The third element concerns what we must do next to ensure general standards of on-farm biosecurity. In relation to Jamie McGrigor's question, the chief veterinary officer for Great Britain is conducting a risk assessment of all labelling and import practices with a view to introducing further legislative proposals to curb, if we can, the potential danger to our livestock industry from imports.

The Presiding Officer: That is all very interesting, but it is not actually relevant to the question.

Alcohol Misuse

13. Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what action it is taking to tackle the misuse of alcohol. (S10-4507)

The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care (Mrs Mary Mulligan): The Scottish Executive published its plan for action on alcohol problems on 18 January 2002. The plan sets out a powerful package of national and local measures for a range of organisations and individuals to reduce alcohol-related harm in Scotland. The action proposed includes changing the culture surrounding drinking; prevention and education; support and treatment services for people with alcohol problems; and protection of individuals and the wider community. Copies of the plan have been placed in the Parliament's reference centre.

Janis Hughes: I welcome the Executive's commitment to an alcohol strategy. Does the minister agree that, historically, Governments have failed to provide adequate strategies to deal with misuse of alcohol and have focused instead on the obvious problems of drug misuse? Given that there were almost five times as many alcohol-related deaths as drug-related deaths in 1999, will she assure me that there will be financial assistance to give alcohol misuse the same priority as drug misuse?

Mrs Mulligan: I assure Janis Hughes that the Executive recognises the problems that are caused by alcohol misuse. We are already making resources available under the plan that was announced last week. Some £1.5 million has been made available for a communications strategy and the funds available to local projects have been doubled to more than £1 million. However, we want to go further than that and we are seeking further plans and proposals from local projects to deal with concerns in their areas. Further resources may be sought.

First Minister's Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Secretary of State for Scotland (Meetings)

1. Mr John Swinney (North Tayside) (SNP):

To ask the First Minister when he last met the Secretary of State for Scotland and what issues they discussed. (S1F-1576)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): I last met the Secretary of State for Scotland on 14 January and we discussed a joint approach to tackling the problem of the illegal use and trade of drugs in Scotland, among other matters.

Mr Swinney: I thank the First Minister for his answer. As more people die in Scotland as a result of infections acquired from hospitals than as a result of road accidents, and in a week in which dirty hospitals have caused misery to thousands of people, does the First Minister have any intention of restoring the 7,000 hospital cleaning jobs that have been lost in the past 15 years?

The First Minister: The question minimises the considerable action that has been taken since the Parliament was established to deal not only with hospital-acquired infections, but with cleaning standards in our hospitals and health establishments. The establishment of the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland in April 1999 was a significant move forward in the setting of national standards for care and treatment in our hospitals and health establishments. The Executive's decision—which was supported by the Parliament—to ensure that the board had responsibility to see through national standards in cleaning hospitals and in infection control from December 2000 was a significant step forward.

This time last year, Mr Swinney made the pertinent point that we did not have the statistics on infections to monitor the situation properly. The Executive is acting in that area, too, ensuring that there are statistics to allow us to monitor the problem and to take the action that is required to reduce infection and improve cleaning standards in Scotland's hospitals.

Mr Swinney: We certainly have the statistics. They show that the number of cleaning staff in the national health service has decreased from 11,000 to 4,000 over the period that I mentioned. On Tuesday, the Minister for Health and Community Care said on the radio that many of those contracts were contracted out to the private sector

"on the basis of cost rather than quality".

If the problem is the result of those contracts going out on that basis, the First Minister is not delivering the clinical care and hygiene standards

in hospitals. Is not it time that he started to put patients before profit and restored those jobs?

The First Minister: That is an outrageous assertion by the leader of the SNP. In the national health plan that was launched and debated in the Parliament in December 2000, it was clear that there would be a change in the relationship with cleaning contractors and that, from that time, quality and effectiveness would be at least as important as value for money and cost. That was widely supported in the Parliament, although perhaps not by every member. The Administration made a significant and genuine change that will—with the national standards for cleanliness, the national programmes to control and monitor disease and infection in our hospitals and the other measures and resources that are being invested in our national health service—result in significant improvements to the situation that we inherited. The situation is improving, but it is not yet good enough.

Mr Swinney: The problem is that that is just talk. Since the NHS plan to which the First Minister referred was published, only one contract has been returned from the private sector to the public sector. This week, Scottish hospital patients have been put through misery.

I do not know whether the First Minister had a chance in his reading time to read the *Evening Times* this week. It had an article from a member of the cleaning staff at the Victoria infirmary, who said:

"the people we work for don't seem to give a damn about patients. It's their job to make money and that's what they have to do."

Is it not time that the First Minister set an example and put patients before profit?

The First Minister: I assure Mr Swinney that if any NHS trusts or boards are putting profit before patients in any of their hospitals or health centres, they will answer to the Executive for their actions. The national health plan is quite clear that any contracts that are established should be based on quality and effectiveness as well as on cost. It is also quite clear that the establishment of the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland in April 1999 and the new standards for cleanliness and control of infections in our hospitals through the health plan in December 2000—as well as the other measures that are now in place not only to deal with the current outbreak but to improve standards, cleanliness and hygiene in our hospitals—are all important. It is simply not good enough to quote figures about jobs or contracts without mentioning standards or quality. We are interested in standards and quality, and will continue to deliver them.

Prime Minister (Meetings)

2. David McLetchie (Lothians) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister and what issues he intends to raise. (S1F-1579)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): I expect to see the Prime Minister again soon and our agenda will cover the priorities that we both share.

David McLetchie: As we know, the Executive has many priorities; the problem is the confusion about which comes first. Most people would say that the health service should come first and I am sure that the First Minister's discussion with the Prime Minister will centre on the level of public confidence in the NHS in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK.

Last week, I asked the First Minister about the whole direction of the Executive's health policy. One week on, we have seen hospitals closed to new admissions, wards shut, scores of operations cancelled and the spectacle of the Minister for Health and Community Care running around trying to pretend that he can sort out all the problems. Is that approach not indicative of the centralisation of the service under the Scottish Executive's policy and the absolute futility of trying to micromanage an organisation as large and as complex as the NHS?

The First Minister: Not at all. Before I answer the question, which at least specifically relates to this week, I think that we should all extend our sympathy to the individuals and families affected by the recent outbreak of salmonella in Victoria infirmary and show our concern for those affected by the winter vomiting virus. I hope that all members in the chamber will also record their thanks to and admiration for the NHS staff, who have reacted outstandingly to this increased winter pressure. *[Applause.]*

Those staff are precisely the people to whom I referred in my answer last week. As I said then, since I became First Minister, I have visited nowhere in Scotland where I have heard the staff say, "Please privatise what we do and send us into private hospitals." If I remember rightly, the accusation that was made last week was that we had taken no action to use up any spare capacity that might exist in the private sector in Scotland and that we had taken no action to deliver more operations for patients. In fact, when the figures were released this week, they showed that we had done so and that more than 300 patients had had their operations as a result. That is action rather than rhetoric. Furthermore, the action is based on belief in the principle of a national health service, which I am disappointed to see again this week is not shared by Conservative members.

David McLetchie: I am rather surprised that the First Minister can come to that conclusion. We are talking about ensuring that all the resources of our health service benefit all our patients. If the First Minister is talking about the 300 patients who are now going to Health Care International, why have he and his predecessor been so shy about that over the months that I have been asking about putting all the resources together?

I want to address the issue of infections that Mr Swinney partly raised and to illustrate the problem of micromanaging the service from the centre, which was Malcolm Chisholm's approach this week. As part of the response to the viral outbreak, Mr Chisholm told us yet again about the nurses who are being trained to tackle hospital-acquired infections. However, he could not get even the basic facts right. He first said that 40 nurses were already being trained; the next day, that figure fell to 30. It then turned out that the true figure was only 13. We were then told that another 20 nurses would start training within the next few months, but the start date now turns out to be September. It is a year since Susan Deacon first told us that these things would be done in August 2001. No one at the centre appears to know how many nurses there are, where they are, what stage of training they have reached and when they will be in place. Perhaps the micromanaging First Minister can enlighten us about that.

The First Minister: It is surprising to be criticised for increasing the number of nurses and expanding other parts of the health service by a party that was responsible for the decline in those areas. However, such comparisons are not always relevant. It is important that we talk about what is happening here and now in the health service. The reality is that the number of nurses trained to deal with such circumstances will rise by a quarter. That is a significant investment in our health service. Coupled with the national standards to which I referred, that is an important new development.

David McLetchie thinks that the establishment of national standards for cleanliness and hospital-acquired infections is unnecessary micromanagement in our health service, but I disagree. I wish that there had been a Clinical Standards Board for Scotland between 1979 and 1997. I wish that there had been national standards for cleanliness in hospitals and a national system for monitoring infections. If there had been any monitoring of the statistics before 1997, Mr Swinney's question to Mr McLeish last March could have been answered. We are now rectifying those wrongs. That is the right thing to do. The improvement is coming and it is long overdue.

Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab): When the First Minister next meets the Prime Minister, will he express the regret of Labour members at the SNP's failure last week to back Scotland's candidate for the presidency of the European Parliament? Will he also join me in condemning the SNP's failure to support Scotland's joint bid with Ireland to host Euro 2008? Does he agree that that is another example of the SNP's putting petty party politics before the interests of the country?

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): Order. The First Minister is not responsible for SNP policy.

Hospitals (Control of Infection)

3. Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what action is being taken to control infections within hospitals. (S1F-1590)

It is good to know that back benchers' questions have been filched by the Opposition leaders this afternoon.

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): Mr McAveety's question was lodged three days ago, before those of the Opposition leaders.

The Executive is creating a new national system of surveillance of hospital-acquired infection and is investing in infection-control training for nurses. National standards have been set on infection control and the first round of local and independent assessments will lead to a report as soon as possible. We expect the highest standards of cleanliness in our hospitals. Any decline in standards must be dealt with urgently. The new national standard for hospital cleaning services will be set by the end of this month. The Clinical Standards Board for Scotland and Audit Scotland will ensure compliance in a series of hospital visits in the near future.

Mr McAveety: Does the First Minister agree with me and my constituents in the Gorbals and Govanhill area, who use the Victoria infirmary, that there is concern about the future of the hospital, which the infections have not helped; that no matter who provides the service—whether it is public or private—the standards should be of the highest quality; and that we should intervene if the South Glasgow University Hospitals NHS Trust does not meet those standards?

The First Minister: I want there to be no doubt about this. Responsibility lies with the local trust or the board to ensure that those standards are met. They should act when standards are not met. If the trust and the board do not act, we will act, because we ultimately have responsibility.

Nicola Sturgeon (Glasgow) (SNP): I welcome the fact that the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland is to inspect hygiene standards in hospitals. Does the First Minister agree that we must involve in that process a body that, unlike the Clinical Standards Board, has power to take action against hospitals that are failing to meet the national standards? Will he consider giving a specific role to the Health and Safety Executive—a body that would, ultimately, have the power to prosecute hospital managers who run dirty hospitals and put the lives of patients and hospital staff at risk?

The First Minister: Let me be clear about this. Hospital managers who put the lives of patients at risk should be sacked by those who employ them. That would be the appropriate action in those circumstances. The appropriate action of a Government is not to pass the responsibility on to another agency but to establish through the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland the clear standards that we expect in our hospitals and health centres and to ensure that those standards are met. *[Interruption.]* Ms Sturgeon might want to sit there and shout about this, but if she did her research properly, she would know that the Clinical Standards Board for Scotland already involves the Health and Safety Executive and can do so whenever it feels that that is appropriate. The board sets the standards and helps us to police them and it is the body that should deal with this matter. We will support it in the standards that it sets and in the action that it requires us to take.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): What targets have been set to reduce hospital-acquired infections and free up the 1,000 beds that are occupied every day in the NHS in Scotland by patients with hospital-acquired infections?

The First Minister: I do not want to repeat the point about what happened prior to 1997, but, unfortunately, previous Governments did not collect statistics on that matter. We need to get the statistics on the number of hospital-acquired infections before we can set targets. That makes perfect sense. The work initiated by Susan Deacon to ensure that we have that information is well under way. When we have it, we will publish it and ensure that we have a standard against which to monitor future progress.

Mrs Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): Does the First Minister agree that we require robust research and statistics to ensure that this matter is tackled properly? Is he aware that some of the suggested statistics that have been published by academics and the UK Department of Health do not equate with the figures that have been used by the Scottish Executive and can be up to five times higher than the Scottish

Executive's estimates?

The First Minister: I agree that we have to get the most accurate statistics possible. I believe that those statistics should be published and used to monitor the Executive's performance against our previous performance and against health services elsewhere. Where statistics show discrepancies, it is incumbent on public authorities to resolve those discrepancies and clear up any disagreement that might result.

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): Does the First Minister agree that we have discussed at length the issue of hospital-acquired infections, which is particularly relevant given the tragic deaths from salmonella that he mentioned? Will he assure me that the Executive is urgently pursuing all avenues of investigation on the salmonella issue and the small round-structured virus outbreak at the Victoria infirmary, so that my constituents who are awaiting admission to that hospital or who might have to go there in the future can be reassured prior to their admission?

The First Minister: I believe that the hospital has confirmed today that some wards will reopen on Monday. That is good news for Janis Hughes's constituents. It is important that we do not leave this matter lying. We will ensure that the preliminary reports that Malcolm Chisholm received last weekend are followed up with a full and comprehensive report. Should any action be required—either to learn lessons or to take action in the hospital—we will make those reports public.

Football Grounds (Safety and Security)

4. Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what plans the Scottish Executive has to review safety and security at football grounds. (S1F-1593)

The First Minister (Mr Jack McConnell): First, I condemn utterly the violence and hooliganism at last weekend's football matches. Like many members, I watched the events unfold on television and was horrified to see what took place. We have asked the football authorities and the police for a copy of the inquiry reports once they are completed and we shall carefully review the findings and take any necessary action on safety and security procedures in football grounds.

Brian Adam: I thank the First Minister for his reply and declare an interest as a shareholder in Aberdeen Football Club. I had the dubious pleasure of being present at last Saturday's match. Does the First Minister agree that we need a zero-tolerance approach to football hooliganism? Will he tell the chamber whether ministers or Scottish Executive officials will accompany the Scottish Football Association officials to the Euro 2004 championship draw tomorrow to promote the

bid for the Euro 2008 championship? Will he take that opportunity to liaise with the Union of European Football Associations and others on safety and security needs in relation to the 2008 bid?

The First Minister: My answer will take one thing at a time. I share Brian Adam's concern about safety and security. We will follow the progress on the inquiry reports and monitor the situation very closely.

I am pleased that, this season, Brian Adam's shareholding in Aberdeen Football Club is, I presume, worth a little bit more than it was over recent seasons.

Given the autonomous nature of football associations, it is right and proper that the SFA should represent Scotland at the draw tomorrow. The SFA will work with the Football Association of Ireland at the draw to promote the joint bid on which we are working. However, it is critical that Executive ministers and the SFA are not the only ones to promote that bid. I hope that, following yesterday's legitimate exchange in the chamber, in which different views were expressed, all members will as of this afternoon unite to promote the joint bid and to ensure that Scotland and Ireland are successful in securing the European championship in 2008.

The Presiding Officer: I am sorry that we have not reached question 5, but there we are.

Iain Smith (North-East Fife) (LD): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. As we have reached only question 4 of First Minister's questions, will you review the *Official Report* of today's exchanges and consider the length of the supplementary statements—I use the phrase advisedly—from the leaders of the Opposition, particularly the Conservative leader? Those statements reduce the time that is available to back benchers to ask questions.

The Presiding Officer: I assure you that the Presiding Officers review the *Official Report* every day and that today will be no exception.

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: Is it the same point of order?

Michael Russell: No, it is a different one. You are no doubt aware that the standing orders lay down a standard of questioning, particularly for written questions, which should be to the point, brief and avoid prejudicial language. I am sure that you would want to advise any member, who, as the *Official Report* shows, regularly tries to ask supplementary questions that are self-serving, petty and purely political, that that is not the way to behave. Perhaps you would so advise Rhona

Brankin, to whom you have given warnings on, I think, half a dozen occasions. *[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: Order. I ruled that question out of order, so there is no reason to raise another point of order on it.

European Structural Funds

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): The next item of business is a debate on motion S1M-2630, in the name of Peter Peacock, on European structural funds, and one amendment to the motion.

15:33

The Deputy Minister for Finance and Public Services (Peter Peacock): I am an unashamed European enthusiast. I believe that the development of the European Union and its continued expansion are two of the most remarkable achievements of any century in our history and that of our European partners. The EU has contributed enormously to the peace and security of Europe over the past 50 years and more.

That, to me, is the underlying goal of the EU. It is about peace and security. That is one of the reasons why many countries that have not enjoyed such peace or security for much of their history want to join the EU. The peace and security throughout Europe are built on a common marketplace in which vibrant, shared economic activity is trying to create the prosperity that acts against conflicts such as those that we saw in the past.

The EU is not just an economic phenomenon. It has a sophisticated view of social justice and it is the only trading block in the world that operates an explicit policy to bring about what it calls cohesion, which is a regional policy of which structural funds are a major part. That policy is about ensuring that a country, wherever it is in Europe, has the opportunity to share in the wealth and prosperity of the EU and to become able, if it is not already able, to compete on equal terms with other parts of the EU.

That is why so much European money has poured into parts of Scotland over many years through structural funding. I have seen the major difference that that has made to my part of the world—the Highlands and Islands—in the past 25 years. It has made a significant difference.

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): I have a question for the minister before he goes on to make a point about the structural funds. Given that the minister talked about cohesion and his enthusiasm for Europe, when does he think that the United Kingdom will have reached the level of cohesion with the rest of Europe that will allow it to join the euro?

Peter Peacock: Alasdair Morgan is straying into territory that it would not be right for me to get involved in. Perhaps he can detect my personal

view on the matter from my comments about my enthusiasm for Europe.

When we last debated European structural funds, in April of last year, Parliament welcomed the progress that had been made in ensuring that the funds would have a lasting effect on Scotland and supported the steps that we were taking to put together a broad strategy to prepare for European enlargement. That debate took place in the early days of the new programme period. The structural fund programmes for the Highlands and Islands and the objective 3 programmes were only a few months old and the three objective 2 programmes for east, west and south Scotland had been approved by the Commission only a few weeks before.

The programmes are now fully under way and are bringing benefit to people all over Scotland. European structural funds are being used to underpin domestic, regional and local priorities throughout Scotland. In Autumn 2001, the Executive issued a policy statement in which we set out the key message for the use of the structural funds in a way that brings synergy between those funds and the funds that are at the Executive's disposal for domestic priorities.

European structural funds support jobs, education, transport, crime reduction and health, which are key priority areas for the Executive. So far, in this programme period, the south of Scotland has received £19 million, the east of Scotland has received £45 million, the west of Scotland has received £23 million, the Highlands and Islands has received £85 million and the objective 3 area has received £104 million. Although such global figures give an indication of the impact of structural funds, it is far more meaningful to examine the impact on local projects. That is where the funds deliver tangible benefits and make a difference to people's lives in communities throughout the country.

First and foremost, structural funds are about creating opportunities for employment and employability by, for example, giving people the confidence to enter the labour market for the first time—or to re-enter it—by providing back-up child care facilities, careers guidance and coaching in vital social skills.

In the west of Scotland, the objective 2 programme will create many thousands of jobs over its duration. However, creating and sustaining quality jobs needs a higher level of skill than ever before. Training and learning are therefore major priorities of European structural funds. A good example of that is the Wellbank training centre in Peterhead, which aims to increase training provision, particularly for young people, and provides courses in pressure systems and subsea technology to local engineering companies. Jobs

and education head the list of priorities within the structural funds.

Structural funds are also about the quality of life in individual communities. Community development projects often contribute to our priorities in crime and health issues. For example, the Princes Trust young offenders youth opportunities scheme will enable more than 500 ex-offenders between the ages of 16 and 24 to work together to improve the quality of life for themselves and their communities, developing their skills and their capacities to enter into employment.

The Scottish Association for Mental Health project in Irvine offers an integrated guidance, counselling and pre-vocational training course and aftercare for 165 people with disabilities, specifically those with mental illness. Those people are often disadvantaged in accessing employment because they have low self-esteem, lack transferable core skills and up-to-date vocational skills, or are discriminated against in the workplace.

In the Highlands and Islands, transitional funding is especially suited to supporting transport projects, which address issues of peripherality. A good example of that is the north isles ferry infrastructure, which enhances lifeline links to the northern isles and provides new economic opportunities for those areas.

The five main programmes and the community initiatives that together make up the structural funds drive forward our priorities as well as those of the European Commission.

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): Peter Peacock is describing the range of soft-infrastructure projects and hard-infrastructure projects. Does not that illustrate the difficulty that Government faces in delivering its priorities? The First Minister announced five priorities for Executive spending in the debate a couple of weeks ago. Mr Peacock is now outlining the balance between soft and hard infrastructure projects. How do we get that balance right?

Peter Peacock: That is a continual challenge. Over the period of the use of structural funds, which now goes back for a number of years, the emphasis has changed. The early programmes, particularly in the Highlands and Islands, had a clear emphasis on major infrastructure projects. It is felt that those problems have been overcome to a significant extent, but by no means all of them have been overcome and we are still addressing some of them. It is recognised that it is not just hard infrastructure that creates jobs and wealth over time. Softer issues, such as training and helping people back into the labour market in a variety of ways, must also be addressed. Over

time, the European Union's priorities have shifted towards those softer measures—if I may put it that way.

Dr Winnie Ewing (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): The minister mentioned lifeline ferry services. I have always wondered—and have asked ministers before—why we do not seek to benefit from cross-border funding. We could have done so if we had added a link to the Republic of Ireland to the ferry service between Campbeltown and Northern Ireland. That would have opened up such funding.

Peter Peacock: I am not clear about the specifics of that, nor about how that project would be affected. I took part in an event only two or three weeks ago relating to the next version of the INTERREG programme, which is about a variety of means of cross-border co-operation. We are making progress on that general theme.

European structural fund projects build on and foster partnerships, an approach that has been endorsed by the European Commission and for which Scotland is particularly well noted. Partnership is a key to using structural funds.

On the theme of partnership, I am delighted to announce that the LEADER + community initiative programme has now been approved by the Commission, and that we will move into the first stages of its implementation immediately. Local partnership is the key to LEADER +, which follows the LEADER II programme and encourages sustainable development in rural Scotland.

Now that the Commission has approved the programme, we are able to designate the local action groups. I am pleased to say that 13 local action groups will share about £17 million of grant, which will, in turn, support programmes worth over £40 million. They will happen in communities throughout Scotland: in Orkney and Shetland, the north Highlands, the Western Isles, Skye and Lochalsh, the Scottish Borders, Argyll and the islands, Dumfries and Galloway, the Cairngorms, East Lothian, Midlothian, upland Tayside, east Fife, South Lanarkshire, Loch Lomond and Stirling—the national park area—and Moray. They will all benefit from those funds.

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): Why has that announcement—which is similar to the announcement that was made by the European Commission on 10 January—been made only now, in 2002, a third of the way into the LEADER + programme and two years after it should have started in Scotland? England and Wales proceeded with the programme 18 months sooner, much ahead of us.

Peter Peacock: I am sorry that Ben Wallace is unable to welcome the announcement with open arms. The plain fact is that, sometimes, getting

approval—[*Interruption.*] Ben Wallace asked the question; I would have thought that he would want to hear the answer. The fact is that dealing with the European institutions can sometimes be a lengthy process. All of us who have dealt with them know that. It has taken us a certain length of time, but the good news is that the money is now coming in and may be spent on projects throughout Scotland.

Continuation strategies need to be in place to ensure that the significant funds that are involved in this programme period have lasting benefits, and that reduced receipts in the future target the right priorities. In November, the Scottish European structural funds forum endorsed the Executive's approach to ensuring that Scotland's voice is prominent in the debate on future funds. I spoke at the cohesion forum in Brussels in May, and intend that Scotland should participate fully and effectively in Commission seminars on the priorities that were identified in the second cohesion report in May this year. Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, has welcomed our contribution to the debate on structural funding so far; we in turn will welcome him to Scotland in May this year so that he may see some of our projects for himself.

Be in no doubt: the approach that is likely to deliver what Scotland needs post-2006 is not one of special pleading. We must focus on what is required to produce a competitive Scotland and on where the most intractable problems remain. That could be in our island or mountainous communities—the communities that are most peripheral to the centres of population—or in our deprived urban communities. The Commission recognises that in its programme.

The enlargement of the European Union potentially adds 100 million consumers to the existing market. That offers Scotland scope to win lucrative contracts and to extend her influence. We are working with a number of partners throughout the EU, as well as with the accession countries, on ways in which we can help.

Through regional policy, the EU has brought undeniable and visible good for Scotland. It has helped us to create jobs; it has given us impetus to innovate; and it has supplied and supported entrepreneurs, and nurtured them so that they may stay here.

Before I move the motion, I want to say a word about the SNP's amendment, which I regret we will have to reject. However, I very much welcome the positive tone in which it was cast and look forward to the positive contribution that the SNP will make to the debate. I might well have accepted the amendment had it been in the form of an addendum to the motion, rather than the form in which it was lodged.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the success of the Executive's strategic approach and decentralised administration in managing European Structural Funds and underpinning its commitment to key policy priorities, in particular education, jobs and transport, and endorses the continuation of this approach to ensure a sustainable impact from this funding.

15:44

Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):

I thank the minister for his warm words. Perhaps he could have accepted the SNP amendment as an addendum to the Executive motion. I wish that we were not constantly forced to lodge amendments to the Executive's self-congratulatory motions. That is an issue that the minister may want to consider in future.

As the minister indicated, Scotland has been a long-time beneficiary of EU regional policy. Some £6 billion has been made available to Scotland through structural funds. Credit for that must go to our very own Madame Ecosse, Winnie Ewing, who won objective 1 status for the Highlands and Islands. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that successive Tory and Labour Governments have not provided the necessary match funding to allow our country to access European money. Significant improvements to our nation's infrastructure that could have been put in place remain unmade. The Executive was also responsible for losing objective 1 status for the Highlands and Islands. While other areas in the United Kingdom were devising cunning plans and redrawing boundaries to ensure that places such as west Wales, Cornwall and Merseyside could access structural funds, the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Office were twiddling their thumbs.

It would be easy for me to dwell on those matters, but the SNP amendment is positive in tone. I intend to move the debate forward to examine what is required now. However, lessons must be learned if the mistakes of the past are not to be repeated.

The end of the current programme, in 2006, is not far away, and already the rest of Europe is beginning to discuss the future for structural funds. One thing is not in dispute—that the money available to Scotland through structural funds is likely to diminish in the future. The European Union faces swift expansion, with a dozen or so additional member states seeking entry to it. The income levels of those states are well below the EU average and their need for structural funding is at least as great, if not greater, than Scotland's. They include Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Tavish Scott: I accept what Tricia Marwick says

about the pressure that new entrant countries in the east will place on structural funds. Presumably at that stage the SNP will not criticise whatever Administration is in power in 2006 for not obtaining exactly the same amount of money that Scotland is receiving at present.

Alasdair Morgan: We would hardly criticise ourselves.

Tricia Marwick: As my colleague says, we would hardly criticise ourselves. If Tavish Scott waits to hear the rest of my speech, he will find out exactly where I am going.

Trish Godman (West Renfrewshire) (Lab): Down the tubes.

Tricia Marwick: That is unworthy of the member.

Several applicant countries may join the EU before the next round of structural funding begins in 2006. An article by John Bachtler quantifies some of the possible effects of that: a reduction in overall wealth per capita of as much as 15 per cent; an increase in the gap between richer and poorer member states; and the appearance of an even wider gap between the regions.

Structural funds were designed to iron out disparities, to ameliorate the structural problems that are faced by certain regions and, principally, to level the playing field for trade. One of the main issues exercising our European neighbours is the reform of structural funding. How does Scotland stand and how do we face the challenges to which I have referred?

First, we must ensure that our economy is leading the current EU 15. We must ensure that the £1 billion or so that is left of EU funding for Scotland is used wisely and to provide long-term benefits. We must have something to show for that money. That means having infrastructure investment in transport and communication links to make areas such as the Highlands and Islands more accessible.

Secondly, we need to participate in the debate. When the previous funding map was redrawn, Scotland was on the sidelines; the cost of being a spectator was the loss of objective 1 status for the Highlands and Islands. The debate for the next round has already started—

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): Will Tricia Marwick give way?

Tricia Marwick: I ask the member to let me finish.

The debate for the next round has already started and will involve an even more fundamental Europe-wide rethink. We cannot allow Scotland to be excluded from that debate.

A number of proposals are on the table, including proposals for opt-outs from structural funds for richer countries, proposals for a redrawing of the map, proposals for supporting poorer nations rather than poorer regions and proposals for different regional support policies for the current EU 15 and for new member states.

Where does Scotland fit into all that? First, rather than being inward looking, we must take an outward-looking, European viewpoint. New European regional policy will be based on the lessons of the past. As one of the main beneficiaries of EU funding, Scotland can make a valuable contribution to the debate. Securing regional assistance for our own areas will present some difficulties. However, securing such funding will be possible only if we are involved in discussing the mechanisms by which that funding will be distributed. If we want to argue that funding should be allocated on social criteria, the case will have to be made for using a different statistical approach. If we want to make Scotland's case on geographic criteria, we must start to make common cause, and find common ground, with neighbours such as Sweden and Finland.

We must do three things. First, we must acknowledge that changes to European politics mean that we will face a significant drop in EU funding. Secondly, we must take an honest, rather than a self-congratulatory, look at the way in which we spend what remains of the current round of funding. That means that we must concentrate on sustainability as we ready our economy to be in the leading EU 15. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, we must engage Scotland in the European debate. We must be participants, not spectators.

I quote John Bachtler:

"The message that EU funding is making a significant commitment to cohesion is often lost amidst the debate of whether supposed national interests have been advanced or not."

The Parliament must look outward. Scotland, as a European nation, should be satisfied that we are arguing not just for Scotland but for our neighbours, old and new, and for the benefit of Europe as a whole.

I move amendment S1M-2630.1, to leave out from "the success of" to end and insert:

"that £6 billion has been made available to Scotland since 1975 through European Union (EU) structural funding; further recognises that, because of EU enlargement, the level of support offered to Scotland in future years is likely to diminish, and urges the Scottish Executive to ensure that the full benefits of EU structural funds still available are used for sustainable, strategic and infrastructure improvements and to involve itself fully in the ongoing debate about the future of EU enlargement and the consequences for EU structural funding."

15:51

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland)

(Con): I began to wonder why we had come to the chamber this afternoon, because the minister had reached the end of his speech before he announced anything new—that is usually what the Executive call debates for. Even though the announcement was late, we welcome LEADER +. Obviously, we cannot agree with the wording of the motion, as that would suggest that we accept the Executive's policy priorities and its management of the funds. However, I agree with the minister that we must get sustainable benefit out of anything that comes through the structural funds system.

I remind the Parliament that the Conservatives managed to obtain a 20 per cent share of UK structural fund allocations between 1979 and 1998. We are quite proud of that record, and we would like the Executive to play the same role by ensuring that Scotland is well represented.

Dr Winnie Ewing: Is the member aware that when Mrs Thatcher was in power, she cast her vote against the Highlands and Islands receiving objective 1 status?

Mr Davidson: I thank Dr Ewing for her intervention—we have got her point.

Unlike the SNP, we do not think that there is a conspiracy theory, with Scotland being done out of things. There is no such conspiracy. We believe that we must promote better use of partnership funding with the private sector, but the SNP has some difficulty with that approach. It is not good enough for the separatists to continue to talk about doing better than Westminster when we have more strength in Europe by being part of the union. We must have a guarantee from the Executive that it will promote early on, and at every possible stage, the need for Scotland's case to be put in Westminster, so that there is a united front on negotiations with Europe. I welcome the fact that the minister said that he will be part of the delegation and I wish him every success.

Tremendous business opportunities for Scotland are coming out of enlargement, which the Conservative party supported. I hope that the minister will reflect on how we can best assist Scottish businesses to benefit from those opportunities. On the range of funds that Scotland receives at present, although we know where some of them go, we do not have in-year clarity about when they are called down. Far too often, the Executive takes the credit for expenditure without defining exactly how much came from European funds and how much came from the public purse. We must have that information. I am afraid that the minister did not address the issue of transparency in the use of funds.

On spending priorities, we must remember that we are net contributors to Europe. Tricia Marwick was right to say that enlargement means that our opportunities for calling down funds will become fewer. We must have a robust set of arguments in order to ensure that Scotland gets a fair share. However, we must ensure that the money is spent on long-term infrastructure and economic opportunities, not only on the social side. We must invest wisely, with good partnership operations with the private sector, get people into employment, create the infrastructure that we need to take forward the economy, particularly in the regions that suffer badly because of rurality or distance from market, and do the training not only at the centre, but out on the ground. The minister talked about such an exercise in Peterhead. Such opportunities are welcome, but we want to see more of them throughout Scotland.

It is important to understand that if we get the funds that will create additional funding, on a match funding basis from the private sector, and get the jobs going, then, internally, the taxation benefits that will allow us the social programmes will follow in time.

I want to hear from the minister in his wind-up how the Executive intends to deal with match funding. There is a lack of obvious movement towards operating match funding, and that is very much in the hands of the Executive. I want the minister to have a go at explaining away how the Executive has not managed to do the match funding. Every member in the chamber can list projects that have failed because the Executive did not get the match funding together, whether that was Government funding or third-party funding. It is essential that we maximise whatever opportunities we get from the structural funds programme.

If we are to enable individuals to attain the skill sets—which the minister talked about—that lead to employment, we must be sure that all the Executive ministries hold hands to ensure that there is a proper structure to deliver that.

I presume that the minister will accept the Conservative thinking that is based on our successful delivery in the past of structural funding for Scotland.

15:57

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): I welcome the minister's opening speech, particularly his careful and diplomatic remarks on the subject of the euro, which Alasdair Morgan raised with him. I recognise a good European when I see one. I would say the same about many members on the SNP benches. I am not so sure about those on my extreme right here. The Conservatives always give

themselves away by using phrases like "We must remember that we are net contributors to Europe" as David Davidson did. It is, of course, absolutely the case that we are net contributors to Europe.

Those of us who believe in Europe and in its expansion and in so much more of what needs to happen to raise standards, as well as the aspirations and living standards of people who live throughout the European Union, will recognise that we are one of the richer nations in the EU. If we are to play a proper, constructive and meaningful role for the future, contributing to Europe is an essential part of that process. I have no difficulty with that.

I welcome also the minister's announcement on LEADER +. An important aspect of the Parliament is that the European Committee—I greatly enjoyed my time on that committee—and the nature of the plenary sessions have given us the opportunity to discuss structural funds. Some of us who were previously in local government will remember not being able to get to the heart of how structural funds were distributed throughout Scotland and how the more shadowy mechanisms were used. That opportunity is now here with the Parliament, and members of all parties across the chamber can take that opportunity.

I swiftly move to a couple of areas that I want to mention in terms of how funds should be applied, given that they are available. The transitional relief for the Highlands and Islands, which other members have mentioned, is of considerable importance to me as a constituency member for that area. Last week we debated in Parliament renewable energy and last night I and other members from the Highlands and Islands heard presentations from the Crown Estates Commission and Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd. It struck me that the issue of structural funds was a connecting theme throughout those events.

If Government is serious about, for example, using renewables for a long-term energy policy, that can come about by the use of structural funds. For example, the interconnector that is being talked about for the western seaboard and the interconnector that could produce and take power from the northern isles down through Dounreay and the northern Highlands, through the main grid, could be usefully funded through structural funds. That is one of the hard infrastructure projects that bear attention, as Mr Peacock mentioned in his opening speech. Investment in airports is equally important in terms of infrastructure.

A project that would pool soft and hard infrastructure investment would be to address the digital divide—investment in the hard infrastructure of broadband and satellite telecommunications and in all the ways in which people can take advantage of the advances in telecommunications

and digital technology, no matter whether they live in urban or rural Scotland. We must allow people to use the skills, which can be funded through other sources, to drive forward a knowledge economy. If a knowledge economy and Executive initiatives such as a smart, successful Scotland are to mean something, they should be funded in a supportive way.

Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP): It is appropriate to use structural funds to advance the causes of peripheral areas and those of deprivation. However, does the member not agree that a better approach to tackling broadband issues would be to place a universal service provider obligation on those who are implementing it, so that everyone can have access irrespective of location or circumstances?

Tavish Scott: The driving initiative that the Executive is taking through the pathfinder projects will create access. In the areas that are being considered in the first instance, the public sector is the driver. That will lead to the private sector picking up the kind of initiative that Mr Adam talks about. That is already happening in central Scotland.

We must recognise the importance of the Executive's role in using the hundreds of millions of pounds that are available to Scotland. Tricia Marwick made the point that it is important that we do not think of it as the tap being turned off in 2006, but that we ensure that we take a position about Brussels—arguing through different agencies, the Government at Westminster, and using our MEPs as well—to allow us to take the best advantage of what happens thereafter. We should not necessarily conclude that the relationship will end at that point. We must make the case for continued investment in Scotland.

16:02

Trish Godman (West Renfrewshire) (Lab): Before I start, I must make an apology because I will disappear from the debate for a minute or two to say goodbye to two of my sons, Michael and Mark, who are in the visitors gallery. They are returning to Australia in a couple of hours' time and I do not want to wave from the floor of the chamber in case I am greetin.

I welcome the debate on EU structural funds. I know that such assistance has been of immense value to some of the communities that I represent in West Renfrewshire. Indeed, a written answer from the Minister for Finance and Local Government reminded me of the fact that, in the past four years, 180 projects based in my constituency have received awards through European structural funds—through the European regional development fund, the social fund and the

urban community initiative.

In the near future, I hope that Port Glasgow, along with West Dunbartonshire, will receive URBAN II funding. URBAN II places emphasis on developing local initiatives, based on a bottom-up approach. I anticipate genuine partnership between local community groups in Port Glasgow, local councillors and the Scottish Executive. I hope that the minister noted that I referred to the local community groups first and the minister and his officials last. That is the way it should be. Those welcome developments should be as far away as possible from the bureaucrats in Brussels and, dare I say it, Edinburgh. That is subsidiarity in practice.

Could the minister tell us whether it would be possible to apply for European structural funds for the semi-permanent home in Port Glasgow for the Stanley Spencer war paintings of Port Glasgow? I understand that European structural funds have been used for cultural activities in the past. As the Rev Andrew MacLean of St Andrew's church in Port Glasgow reminded me last week, the paintings usually languish in the basement vault of the Imperial War Museum. I believe that a suitable place could be found to house those historic paintings. Considerable funds would be needed. I hope that the minister will answer the question and that he will hear my plea sympathetically.

As others have said, how long can Scotland expect to receive structural funding once EU enlargement takes place? Many communities in Poland, the Czech Republic and other applicant countries are in dire need of structural funds. Nobody can deny that. On a scale of affluence through to poverty, it could be argued that they are in much greater need than many of our communities.

It may be, in the light of French, German and Irish reluctance to support enlargement, and the abject failure of member states to radically reform the common agricultural policy and EU institutions, that enlargement is some way off, but I agree with remarks made by Tavish Scott and others that that should be no excuse for us not to be in there working full blast to get what we can. However, we have to be aware—and as a socialist I am very aware—that if other countries are in dire need, that has to be addressed by members of the EU.

I am sure that the minister will agree that things move at a snail's pace in Brussels. I certainly think that they do. Communities can become disillusioned by the cumbersome and time-consuming procedures. I ask the minister to assure me that he will argue for more efficiency and speed when next he has discussions with his EU counterparts.

16:06

Colin Campbell (West of Scotland) (SNP): I share Trish Godman's desire to see a solution to the URBAN II question. I have a note in my hand, dated "Brussels, 22 January 2002" which states that

"Michel Barnier, Commissioner responsible for regional policy, has announced the approval by the European Commission of a programme for urban regeneration in Clyde Urban Waterfront in Scotland."

The programme is to run from 2000 to 2006, which gives us a mild problem. That is today's good news from the Opposition. I rather thought that we would get it from the Administration.

In April last year I took part in a debate on European structural funding, specifically on the European regional development fund. The object of my attention in that debate was the URBAN II funding project for what was splendidly entitled the Clyde urban waterfront regeneration programme. With the exception of local MSPs, members will be forgiven if the location of the project does not immediately spring to mind. It has now had its name reduced to Clyde waterfront, which gives the impression of a continuous strip of land in need of a massive injection of cash. In fact, it is composed of two completely separate areas, one of which is Port Glasgow and the other, a few miles away across the Erskine bridge, is Clydebank south. I expect that if the area was presented to the European Commission on a small-scale map with a big blob of highlighter on it, it could seem like one place.

I bring this issue to the chamber because it was brought to my attention that the reason for these geographically separate towns being brought together was not that they had major problems—which of course they do—but that the Labour party on both sides of the river was not prepared to give up a chance of URBAN II. One can understand that. In other words, the Clyde urban regeneration programme appears to have been cobbled together as a political compromise between two arms of the Labour party.

Peter Peacock will remember that early last year I asked questions about the maximum number of people who can be included in an URBAN II project area—a maximum number has been applied. That is not to disparage the intent or the work of the people involved, nor to criticise the planned effects of the URBAN II programme. I raise the issue because there was a delay in meeting the deadline for submissions, which slipped from April 2001 to November 2001. I wonder to what extent that slippage was due to the difficulty in marrying the differing priorities of the areas, because the councils on either side of the Clyde identified different priorities.

When I spoke on this issue last year, it was known that the authorities in England had not decided how they were going to distribute the projects in England. To what extent was the Scottish proposal delayed to meet a slower-moving bureaucracy in the south? The very fact that I raise that question indicates that Scotland could have moved more quickly to seek an outcome had it been free of Westminster. I am not being difficult, but we do have to sharpen up our act for the future. As Ben Wallace pointed out earlier, the URBAN II programme runs from 2000 to 2006, so in my very large constituency, which embraces the constituency of Trish Godman—who I see is absent—there are only four years in which to spend the money. If there are any lessons that we can learn from that about speeding up other matters in the future, we should learn them.

16:10

David Mundell (South of Scotland) (Con): Although the minister referred to remarkable achievements at the start of his speech, he did not mention a few of his own.

First, he appeared 11 times—in 11 photographs—in a South of Scotland European Partnership leaflet that was only four pages long. Those leaflets must have been a success, because when I tried to obtain a copy of one today, I was told that they had all been given out. Alasdair Morgan will appreciate the minister's second achievement, which was to be pictured on a bike in the Mabie Forest with the leader of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Mr John Forteath, a man who is rarely seen on a bike.

I want to refer to another remarkable achievement. I congratulate Irene Oldfather on becoming convener of the European Committee. Along with Tavish Scott and Ben Wallace, I had the pleasure of serving on the European Committee at its start. In those early days, the committee did a lot of important groundwork on the scrutiny of European funding that had not taken place before. As a result of that, we ensured that there was a south of Scotland area. It was thought initially that the funding might be allocated in fewer areas.

I want to pay tribute to Donald McKinnon and his team at the South of Scotland European Partnership. The fact that they are on an away day in Hawick today has made it rather difficult to obtain the facts that I wanted for my principal point.

Alasdair Morgan: That has never stopped the member in the past.

David Mundell: Indeed. In the *Galloway Gazette and Stranraer News*—although Mr Morgan's picture did not appear 11 times—a

member of the public mistook him for Ian Lang, which must considerably reduce the member's credibility in his ranks.

It is perhaps not the best idea to try to illustrate my point with a diagram. Dumfries and Galloway will receive about £3 million or £4 million a year in structural funding for the next six or seven years. The amount of money that comes in via the common agricultural policy is £60 million plus. As Trish Godman indicated, that figure is likely to change significantly with the enlargement of the EU. Although some areas might be able to cope with the reduction of structural funding, it is clear that if we do not begin to plan for a reduction in the level of CAP funding that comes into an area such as the south of Scotland, we will face serious structural difficulties if that funding ends abruptly.

Although we welcome the structural funds that are the subject of the debate, we must step back and consider the wider picture of European funding and the impact that changes in the EU will have on that. Those changes will be very significant.

16:14

Ian Jenkins (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): I will cover territory that is similar to the ground that David Mundell covered. I am happy to support the Executive's motion on European structural funds, because the Scottish Borders and the south of Scotland have benefited substantially from European structural funds. European officials are discussing related matters in the south of Scotland today, probably in Hawick.

Between 1994 and 1999, the objective 5b programme and other Community initiatives were of assistance. More recently, the south of Scotland objective 2 programme and the lowland Scotland objective 3 programme have made possible many projects that will continue until 2006. Structural funds have been used to support large numbers of economic development and vocational training projects that are undertaken by public agencies, such as councils, enterprise companies, further and higher education institutions and a range of voluntary bodies. Without those moneys, support for economic development activity would have been significantly reduced.

The south of Scotland programme area is the only wholly rural strand objective 2 programme in the UK, and was the first objective 2 programme to approve projects. The South of Scotland European Partnership has completed three successful application rounds and 71 projects have been offered grants that total approximately £19 million. They include projects such as the Hawick and the Eyemouth regeneration programmes, the Advance building in Selkirk, the project for the Borders

showground in Kelso and the Peebles arts centre. Those projects are wide-ranging and many more could be mentioned.

Under the objective 3 programme, we have received almost £1.25 million. I hoped for and was delighted to hear an announcement on the LEADER + programme, which should help the south of Scotland significantly.

The Liberal Democrats support the motion. In a fragile area with difficulties in agriculture, tourism, electronics and textiles, structural funds have been a lifeline. However, I press on the minister the need, which others have mentioned, to take a hard look at the future for the south of Scotland and the Borders.

First, we must ensure that opportunities between now and 2006 are maximised. We have problems when match funding is necessary. It would be desperately disappointing and damaging if available funds could not be accessed from Europe because of limits on available match funding here. I urge the minister to take that on board.

Secondly, it seems to have been passively accepted and assumed, for good reasons about expansion and so on, that structural funds programmes as we know them will finish in 2006, to be seen no more in Scotland. I hope not. Like others, I stress to the minister that if an area such as the south of Scotland loses support and has no replacement at the same time as the changes in the CAP will mean that funding for agriculture is massively affected, the danger exists that the south of Scotland will be left in a parlous economic state. We must avoid that double whammy at all costs and do everything that we can to ensure that plans are laid.

It is vital that a form of regional assistance is maintained. We must have the means to improve our economic infrastructure. It is a shame that the criteria have changed, because we could have done with road improvements and the re-establishment of the rail link—the hard infrastructure that was mentioned. It is vital that such provision is made in some way or other.

We need continuing support for a fragile rural economy that has experienced and will continue to experience the economic restructuring that such European funds target. The restructuring will continue and the support must continue. I support the motion strongly, but I urge the minister seriously to recognise and respond to those concerns and to negotiate with Westminster and the European Union to ensure that provision is made for the south of Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr George Reid): Irene Oldfather will be followed by Brian Adam. Both have an abundance of time.

16:18

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab):

Thank you, Presiding Officer. I was about to say that I would address my comments only to the motion, but I am pleased to hear that there is plenty of time.

We have had an interesting debate. Since the Scottish Parliament's establishment, I have no doubt that there has been greater monitoring of the distribution and implementation of structural funds in Scotland than ever before. David Mundell was right to speak about the European Committee's role. Since its inception, the committee has been vigilant in scrutinising structural funds. We have produced no fewer than five reports on the subject, all of which have been agreed unanimously and so have attained cross-party support.

We have a commitment to review the process annually. Post-devolution, the system has the accountability that it lacked. Those of us who were in local government will remember that lack of accountability. I often used to speak about the democratic deficit in the allocation and implementation of structural funds. That has gone.

I am happy to recommend the European Committee's sixth report of 2000 to anyone who has not read it—I know that Ben Wallace has read it. It is complimentary. We took much evidence to produce that report. We have heard about the difficulties of finding match funding. As we have time, I will take a moment to quote from paragraph 133 of the report, which states:

"The Committee has found little evidence of a significant problem with the provision of match-funding in Scotland. While there are some examples of difficulties experienced by certain organisations, these do not appear to be common or widespread."

Nevertheless, the committee gave a commitment to monitor the situation and we will certainly continue to do that.

Scotland expects to gain around £1 billion in the next programming period. Taken with match funding, the amount for projects will be about £2.4 billion. To state the obvious, Scotland has done well from European structural funds and will continue to do so.

As the minister explained, the objectives of the funds are to assist in reducing inequalities and to achieve cohesion across the European Union. Many members spoke about projects in their areas. Those of us who have been involved in European matters for some time can look back and see real differences and improvements in areas of deprivation. Over the years, we have learned how better to focus and target funds to make the money work for us and to get the greatest return. In my area, we have benefited

substantially from moneys to assist people with mental health problems and for capital projects such as the Magnum leisure centre, James Watt College and the Big Idea.

Much has been achieved, but it would be remiss of me not to mention the perennial problem of delayed and late payments, which seem to dog the system. I know that the minister is aware of the problem. Over the past couple of days, I did a quick ring-around and a number of organisations highlighted substantial delays in receiving payments. I am happy to write to the minister separately about that. He knows from contributions that have been made by the European Committee to the Scottish European structural funds forum that the issue has not been resolved, despite attempts to improve online management and information systems. John Home Robertson raised the matter at the forum. I would welcome an assurance from the minister that he will look into the matter, so that people in the voluntary sector can have confidence in future programmes.

I will turn to future strategies for structural funds. Does the minister feel that there is merit in something that I have lobbied on for some time—the idea of an instrument to deal with unexpected asymmetric shocks to a regional economy? Instead of the Council of Ministers staying up for three days and three nights—something that Dr Ewing will remember—to agree aid packages in exceptional circumstances, the instrument would be in place on the basis of pre-agreed and objective criteria. I have to say that economic and monetary union makes an instrument of that sort all the more important for regional economies. I welcome the minister's views on such a measure.

I also want to say a few words about the opportunities that enlargement brings. The European Commission estimates that between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of all EU funding that is spent in poorer member states eventually finds its way back to the richer member states in the form of purchases or expertise. Improving the quality of life in the candidate countries can bring benefits to us all. We should examine the formation of partnerships at parliamentary and Executive level. I welcome the minister's comments on that.

I am aware that the Executive has already made links with the Czech Republic. We must examine how we can capitalise on that and share our expertise of drawing down structural funds. We have been commended by the European Commission as being flagship performers in that respect. If we can share that experience and expertise with our colleagues in the candidate countries, that could produce real dividends in the future for Scotland post-2006.

There is one front on which we should be a little

wary. Structural funds must not be used to displace jobs—directly or indirectly—from one area of the Community to another. The Committee of the Regions expressed an opinion on that. The opinion is good—I do not say that because I wrote it myself—and I would welcome the minister's commitment to it. It concludes:

"The aim of regional policy should be to ensure that direct subsidies do not simply lead to a shift in existing jobs from one area of Europe to another."

Therefore, we must look for ways in which, even in the transitional periods for the accession states, social and environmental standards are adhered to across the European Union.

I fear that I may be running out of time.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You may take another three minutes yet.

Irene Oldfather: That is fine. Perhaps, then, I may take a moment to mention areas outwith the big European funding projects—some of the smaller community projects and initiatives that have delivered first-class results.

I have been immensely impressed by the links that we in Scotland have been able to develop in relation to educational aspects of European funding. Some of those links have been developed with very little expenditure and through specialist education programmes that have brought great benefits to our young people. In my area, there is a teacher and pupil exchange programme with Catalonia and the Balearics. As a consequence, only this week, we started to teach Catalan in North Ayrshire. Our children have visited Tarragona and Lleida and are set to visit Gerona this week.

The opportunities for children, including those from deprived areas, to develop language and learning skills demonstrate that programmes such as Socrates and Comenius have given us tremendous returns on our expenditure of quite small amounts of money. Such programmes are an investment in the skills that our young people will need to compete in the challenging knowledge economy.

I shall begin to conclude my remarks now, Presiding Officer, if that is okay. What I want to say is that Europe should not simply be measured in terms of structural funds, important though today's debate is. We have much to learn, much to offer and much to understand.

I support the motion.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you. We are all indebted to you. I call Brian Adam, to be followed by Rhoda Grant. Both speakers will have approximately five minutes.

16:27

Brian Adam (North-East Scotland) (SNP): I am certainly indebted to Irene Oldfather. I had no intention of speaking for 10 minutes.

I echo the remarks made by other members about the dangers of arriving in 2006 unprepared for the significant changes that will take place. I hope that the minister will not take my contribution as a series of carping complaints—that is not what I intend to contribute—but there appear to be one or two difficulties with the administration of the existing programmes. Irene Oldfather referred to the fact that there appear to be problems getting the money. I have had complaints from the area that I represent that some financial claims are not being met timeously. I hope that the minister will look into that and rectify the situation.

It has been suggested that we also need improvements to the rather complex interactive software that is currently used to process claims. It is difficult for organisations other than councils to deal with such things directly. It has been suggested to me that it is difficult for community groups and voluntary organisations to make direct applications for funds. That is a problem particularly in social and capacity-building areas, where we are looking for voluntary organisations to take a significant lead. We should not always try to deliver everything directly through Government agencies or even through local government. We should do all that we can to encourage and support the voluntary organisations. Where mechanisms have been set up that create a barrier to that, we should try to rectify the situation.

As we have a little time to spare, I ask the minister to apply his mind to how we might best deal with some of the drug problems that exist in areas covered by European structural funds. We could encourage those who have already gone through the process of overcoming their afflictions but who are not yet able to participate fully in society to have access to those funds and to get training as support workers. We should also look to help those who have chaotic lifestyles to assert themselves and adopt a more disciplined lifestyle, which will allow them to return to work. There may well be an opportunity to have access to funds for such purposes. Perhaps the minister can give guidance to local organisations on how that might happen and give support from the centre.

Mr Davidson: Does Mr Adam agree that one of the difficulties with structural funds is the mapping exercise that was carried out, so that postcode wealth covers up gaps in different communities? I am thinking of the inner cities in particular. There is a difficulty in the city of Aberdeen. The council has done its best to have the mapping altered, but it is rigid. If there happen to be two or three good streets and two or three with real problems, that is

often swamped because it does not fit in with the rules. Does Mr Adam agree that the minister should consider that?

Brian Adam: I agree. When the boundaries were drawn, Europe had a slightly more relaxed approach, where the mapping would allow it. Mapping was not based on whole council areas. For a variety of reasons, the Executive has drawn the map in the way that it has. I agree that there are pockets here and there in which broader access to funds might have been helpful.

I hope that the minister will give us guidance on how we might increase the number of applications from a variety of areas so that the usual suspects are not relied upon to dream up schemes to use up the money, which would not be helpful. I was concerned to hear that Tavish Scott is looking for access to broadband only in certain areas. We must not use the funds to tackle issues in such a way. Universal service provision is needed. Totally unregulated markets, in which people with a significant share do not accept that they have a responsibility to provide a universal service, cannot be allowed. I hope that the minister will discuss that with colleagues who have broader responsibility in that area.

16:32

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I know that I have extra time, Presiding Officer, but I do not think that I can copy Irene Oldfather's feat and make a three-minute speech stretch to 10 minutes. I will do the best that I can.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You could aim to finish at 16:38.

Rhoda Grant: I am glad to have the chance to discuss structural funding, which is extremely important to Scotland and especially to the Highlands and Islands.

The Highlands and Islands have enjoyed structural funds through objective 1 funding and through the special programme funding, negotiated by Tony Blair, which brings more funding to the Highlands and Islands than would have been attracted had the area been chopped into parts to attract objective 1 status. Those parts are sparsely populated and funding is allocated per head, so it is important that we attracted the special funding, so that it can have the impact that it has had and is having in the Highlands and Islands.

In the Highlands and Islands, and throughout Scotland, it is important to allow communities to have an input into how money is spent. The LEADER II project helped to enable communities to consider issues that create barriers to economic development and allowed them to look with fresh

eyes at the opportunities that exist. The project went a long way towards enabling communities to gain confidence, which the Executive has made a priority. We need only consider the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill to see that that is happening.

The minister mentioned that the LEADER II project has now been replaced by LEADER +. That project builds on the work carried out by the LEADER II project and comprises three strands: support for integrated and innovative development strategies for rural areas, which is based on partnership and giving priority to initiatives proposed by local people; support for inter-regional and transnational co-operation; and networking among all EU rural areas, whether or not they receive LEADER + funding, and those who are involved in rural development.

Through work on previous projects, the Highlands and Islands have shown that they are ideally placed to make the best use of funds; the area has worked hard to identify issues and to put together solutions. Such information has been used by partners in the Highlands and Islands and elsewhere in the EU. Indeed, I was privileged to take part in two of the many dissemination conferences that were held in the Highlands.

Those who took part in LEADER II are well placed to seek support from LEADER + for the projects that they have identified. As a result, I very much welcome the minister's announcement. The money will have an impact on many areas and I am pleased that a lot of it will go to areas on the periphery of my constituency. Such projects will give communities a real opportunity to build on the work that they have carried out and will put the creation of solutions into their hands.

The priority given to the views of communities has been carried into other aspects of structural funds. The Highlands and Islands Partnership has spent time consulting local authorities and community bodies on how best to use the money, and the effect of that is evident throughout the area. For example, on infrastructure, causeways, piers and harbours have been built. There have been social changes, thanks to the provision of support to women who are returning to work after having children and to disabled people. The last time we debated structural funds, I mentioned the jobs for all project, which goes a long way towards enabling disabled people to enter the employment market and has significantly changed their lives.

Contrary to concerns that have been raised, structural funding has not been spent in the centres of population but has been put to good use. Most of the money has been allocated to peripheral areas, with the benefit of the additional per capita payments obtained through the special funding.

It has been said that enlargement makes it unlikely that we will attract structural funding in the future, but we should not aspire to attract it. To secure such funding, we need a lower gross domestic product than the rest of Europe. We must use the money to ensure that we never again need to claim it. The money must be spent on projects that will continue to benefit the area once the funding has run out.

I urge the Executive to ensure that that theme runs through all structural funding commitments in future.

16:37

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): I want to press various issues on the Executive in a friendly manner. First, the Executive must work harder to publicise the benefits of being a member of the EU. I know that that is a very hard job and that the press is not always receptive. However, there is still far too much totally erroneous anti-EU publicity. For example, the EU's alleged insistence on straight bananas enables journalists write stories that ask why, if we have bent politicians, we cannot have bent bananas. We must counter such stories with factual good-news stories about the EU.

Everyone who has benefited from grants would welcome anything that the Executive can do to persuade the EU to simplify its bureaucratic procedures. The paperwork that is involved puts many people off, causes a great deal of difficulty and means multiple reporting from institutions such as colleges that receive grants from many different sources.

It would also be interesting to find out the number of people who have really benefited from objective 3 training funds. Although we have figures for the number of people who have benefited nominally, courses always have a lot of drop-outs. As a result, it would be useful to conduct some research into the exact number of people who have really benefited.

As far as additionality or match funding is concerned, the relevant committee examined the question of match funding and the Barnett formula and concluded that Scotland did not suffer seriously in that respect. However, we should pursue the issue with the Westminster Government to ensure that we get our fair share. Scotland's share of areas that require European funding is larger than the share that it receives per capita through the block grant allocation.

There is also match funding between councils and the European Union. We have missed out in the past because either the Executive or the previous Government—especially the Conservative Government, which was

unenthusiastic about Europe for a long time—did not provide the resources to help councils to produce match funding and we lost out on the funding. Although the sum that is involved at the moment—about £160 million—is relatively small compared to the overall Scottish budget, it is vital to areas that have significant problems.

Finally, at United Kingdom level, the Labour Government seems to have problems with regionalism in England. That has a knock-on effect on us. The Government needs to sort out the north versus south issue. Although the issue is basically English, it affects us.

I welcome the debate. I am happy to support the motion and I hope that the Executive will pick up on the points that I have raised.

16:41

Ben Wallace (North-East Scotland) (Con): I have concerns about the timing of the debate. Several members—of all parties—to whom I have spoken said that it was perhaps too early to comment on some of the outcomes of the structural funds and that it would have been better to have the debate later in the year or even next year. Today we have heard not filibustering so much as filler-upping in some speeches.

I would not, however, detract from the content of Irene Oldfather's speech, which was good and knowledgeable. One of the problems of structural funds is that they are not simple even for those who scrutinise them. Each of the three plans for Scotland ran to a 600-page document. Nevertheless, the European Committee conducted that scrutiny. We were looking forward to seeing how the plans would be implemented.

Of course, the outcomes must be matched to ensure that a plan has been successful. I recently visited the business centre in Huntly, where there are some very good examples of the ways in which EU objective 2 funds can kick-start a project and help attract capital without being used as core funding to run it. Once such projects are up and running, they use other income so that they can carry on. The business centre in Huntly also incorporates a learning centre that will be in operation for many years to come.

As a good European—[MEMBERS: "Ooh."] Yes—the Conservative party was engaging with Europe while the SNP and the Labour party were trying to pull out. We will not take any lessons from other parties on how to be good Europeans.

A report will be published on the benefits of EU enlargement—I cannot disclose any information from the European Committee—which it would be useful for all members to read. Enlargement of the EU will have an impact on all our constituencies and I urge members to read the report when it is

published. Much work has gone into it and it is a very positive document. That is all that I can say without feeling the wrath of the Presiding Officer.

There are problems. To say that there is a delay in LEADER + is not to be negative. People who have waited for LEADER funding and who use LEADER II funding have waited for more than two years for the next round, which should have begun in 2000. It is not a bad thing to ask why it could not have come a bit quicker. If the minister's reason is that Europe is slow in such matters, why did the Government in England and Wales introduce it before the Executive? It is perfectly reasonable for Opposition members to pass on the concerns of groups that have made plans and which have expected to be engaged in a funding process, but which were left in the lurch for two years. I therefore make no apologies for doing so.

Further difficulties with the application procedures were highlighted in the European Committee's interim report and acknowledged in the Executive's response to that report. I have not seen much evidence that those difficulties are being cleared up. As for the outcomes, as I said earlier, we could have waited a little longer to ensure that we could compare the outcomes with success.

The Executive has a responsibility to make it clear what will be possible post-2006. It should not say that there will be nothing or that the process will carry on as before. The Executive should ensure that we are made aware when issues emerge from Europe that give us clues. For example, the minister never alluded to the fact that about five months ago the European commissioner on structural funds said that he believed that Scotland would receive about 50 per cent of what it gets at the moment.

The onus is on the Executive to communicate that to people and so ensure that they can make plans for the post-2006 situation. The European Committee allows us to examine Europe closely. Irene Oldfather was right when she said that the closer scrutiny that the committee allows is one of the major benefits of the Scottish Parliament. However, we do not get to examine one of the key issues relating to structural funds, which is the pointing system. Perhaps that is because there is a fear that we might use that access to help our constituents. However, it is important that we are allowed to examine some randomly chosen examples to enable us to understand how decisions are made. It is all very well knowing what the procedures are, but it would be helpful to be able to examine the process—perhaps after the decision has been made—so that we can decide whether it has been fair, just and based on the idea of equity. That is what structural funds are all about.

We will not oppose the motion although, as ever, it contains an element of self-congratulation and its timing is not satisfactory. We look forward to seeing what the outcome of the current process will be and whether the structural funds become the success that we hope for.

16:46

Alasdair Morgan (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP): We have had a good, short debate but, like David Davidson and others, I am not quite sure why we had it today. I do not think that the LEADER + programme announcement, particularly given its lack of detail, justified it. As other members have said, the delay in the LEADER + programme is unfortunate.

The minister rightly pointed out the benefits to many areas of Scotland of the application of structural funds. He talked about a tendency of structural funds applications to move toward soft projects rather than toward hard infrastructure projects. However, we could do with more infrastructure projects. On that, I note that Greece and Italy have built substantial motorway projects as part of their contribution to the EU's trans-Europe networks. It is a great disappointment to me and to my constituents—and, I am sure, to David Mundell, who represents the area as well—that successive Governments have not been able to come up with the match funding that is necessary to deliver improvements to the A75, which runs from Stranraer to the motorway network at Gretna and is part of the trans-Europe network. I say that regardless of what Irene Oldfather said, although I congratulate Irene Oldfather on her excellent filibuster.

I thank the minister for his words on the SNP amendment, but I wish to say, as others have, that it is difficult for Opposition parties to table addendum motions when the original motion is not party-politically neutral. The Executive should be able to phrase an original motion that we could add to, rather than one that forces us simply to substitute words.

We do not know what the shape of the structural funds will be after 2006 but, as other members have said, there will be substantial differences. We cannot object to a large part of the structural funds going to new entrants, particularly countries that were formerly part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We welcomed those nations when they became free and we owe it to them to help them to recover from the devastation of their infrastructure during those dark years.

If I heard him correctly, we got David Davidson to apologise for one of Mrs Thatcher's votes which, I suppose, is progress. However, I was disappointed by his insistence that Scotland could

make progress only by increasing its lobbying of Westminster. That suggestion betrays poverty of ambition.

Ben Wallace: I remind Alasdair Morgan that, no matter how much we administer the structural funds, they are distributed through the Department of Trade and Industry and the other Westminster departments, with which the Secretary of State for Scotland liaises. That is the role for the SNP members at Westminster.

Alasdair Morgan: The point that I was making—perhaps only subliminally—was that it is possible to change that arrangement, should the people of Scotland wish it.

Tavish Scott made a valuable point about renewable energy and the building up of infrastructure in that sector, particularly in telecommunications and broadband communications on which, despite the Executive's strategies, we are still falling behind.

Trish Godman and David Mundell also raised the problem of the reform of the CAP. It is interesting to note that, in the south of Scotland, funds from the CAP dwarf structural funding. We must wonder whether that balance is correct but, as other members have said, we cannot afford CAP funding and structural funding to be decimated in tandem. We need to be aware of what is happening on that point.

David Mundell mentioned the minister's cycling proficiency. We can see now why the minister has held on to his job. I presume that he took away all the copies of the leaflet himself. I was suitably chastised by David Mundell, who reported that one of my constituents had mistaken me for Ian Lang. Clearly, I am not being radical enough. On the other hand, Ian Lang held his seat for 18 years, so perhaps that is not all bad news.

I emphasise, as others have done, that we must begin to think about whatever changes are likely to come along in 2006. Far too often in the past, there have been gaps in moving from one state of funding to the next. Those gaps are not helpful to anyone; they certainly do not help community projects and other organisations that are trying to move their communities forward.

16:51

Peter Peacock: I agree with Alasdair Morgan that the debate has been short but good. Members have made some worthwhile contributions. We will try genuinely to pick up the constructive criticisms that members have made of the processes in which we have been involved.

I was shocked by David Mundell's revelation that there were 11 photographs of me in his leaflet. As members know, the Executive sets targets and I

am sure that the target was 14. The Executive is committed to continuous improvement and we will expect better performance next time. That would imply my going in one direction and David Mundell's going in the opposite direction. We will consider that matter.

I am sorry to have to correct the SNP yet again on objective 1 funding in the Highlands. I do so only in passing, because Rhoda Grant put the record straight. The fact that the Highlands and Islands did not get objective 1 funding is a matter for celebration because it demonstrated that, for the first time in many years, the gross domestic product of the Highlands and Islands—its prosperity relative to other areas—has increased dramatically. Notwithstanding that, the Prime Minister—using the strength of the United Kingdom in the EU—was able to negotiate that splendid deal of some £210 million over six years for the Highlands and Islands to continue the good work.

Dr Winnie Ewing: My memory is clear that the transitional moneys were laid down in advance. It was not a case of the Prime Minister doing a marvellous job of securing them; the moneys were laid down in advance for objective 1 areas that lost that status.

Peter Peacock: I have nothing to add to what I said. The record is clear that the Prime Minister was able to secure that resource for the Highlands and Islands through the strength of the UK at the negotiating table. That is a position that we want to continue.

I will move on, as members made many other more constructive points. Trish Godman, who has had to leave the chamber, raised a number of points, particularly about the URBAN II programme. I confirm that that has now been approved by the European Commission. We want to implement that very quickly. We will make announcements about that soon. She rightly pointed out the rules of subsidiarity—passing down decision making on the use of those funds to the lowest possible level. Our proposals will reflect that. On her point about cultural activity and the war paintings that she mentioned, we will happily consider in detail the eligibility of her suggestion but, on the face of it, it might be difficult to secure structural funding for that.

David Mundell and Ian Jenkins also made valid points about the CAP and funds from the agricultural programme, which affect the south of Scotland in particular, relative to funds from the structural funding programmes. CAP funds and other support measures from the EU are significant to the wider economy of Scotland. The Executive is aware of the difficulty that would be caused were the structure of those funds to change dramatically in any short period of time.

Whether the accession of countries such as Poland into the EU will accelerate or hold back CAP reform is a matter for debate. It remains to be seen. We are, nonetheless, well aware of the problems.

A number of members, particularly Irene Oldfather, but also Brian Adam and Donald Gorrie, raised points about delays in payments. I assure them that we are investigating those delays thoroughly. We are concerned about them and we want the situation to improve.

Brian Adam also asked questions about the way in which organisations can make applications for funds using computer technology. Again, we realise that there are difficulties with that and we are making appointments to Executive posts to try to pursue and solve that problem. He also made a point about drugs problems and about broadening the range of ways in which we can apply European funds to help particular disadvantaged groups. If Brian Adam will give us his suggestions, we are happy to consider whether European funds can stretch to that directly or whether it can be done through training programmes of the sort that I mentioned, which help those who may have had drug problems back into society.

A number of members mentioned match funding—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order. There is far too much private conversation and chuntering going on, which is discourteous to the minister.

Peter Peacock: Match funding has never been a serious problem in Scotland. We have always been able to use the European funds that are available. Although finding the cash is a challenge for local authorities or enterprise companies, they have nonetheless found the cash and given priority to that kind of expenditure in ways that have brought benefits to their communities.

David Davidson mentioned economic development and the potential for further use of European funds. There are many good examples of that in the private sector. Perhaps the most recent and striking example is the development of the Vestas Wind Systems factory in Kintyre, which produces wind turbines. Significant sums of money are going into that from the European Union, the enterprise companies and private investment. We want more of that.

David Davidson also mentioned the transparency of the decision-making process, as did Tavish Scott. Under European rules, we are required to ensure that we advertise well the resources that are available from European funds. We seek to do that. If there are difficulties, we are more than happy to review the procedures. Irene Oldfather said that because of the existence of the Parliament and its committees, European funds—

among many other aspects of Scottish life—are subject to more rigorous scrutiny than they were before the Parliament. I welcome that scrutiny; there is much to be said for drawing out such matters in public.

I have given answers to the smaller points that were made, but members made two central points recurrently. One was on enlargement and its implications; the other was on what we will do about the next round of European funds. For the reasons that I set out in my opening speech, we support the process of enlargement; it will lead to the development of Europe, of the marketplace and of peace and security in Europe. Inevitably, enlargement will mean that the European Union will engage with countries whose gross domestic product measures are significantly below those of Scotland.

Mr Gil Paterson (Central Scotland) (SNP): Does the minister find it rather ironic that Scotland is seen as one of the richest countries in Europe, yet we have many children who live below the poverty line and are born to fail?

Peter Peacock: The member makes a good point. He knows that we are committed to tackling the issues that he mentioned, through domestic and European programmes.

As the new accession states enter the European Union, funds will inevitably and properly flow to meet the needs of those countries. Equally, the accession of new states into the EU opens up enormous opportunities for Scotland. There will be about 100 million new consumers in the marketplace, which means enormous opportunities for growth, given the development of those countries' economies relative to ours. As Irene Oldfather rightly pointed out, for every pound that we spend on European investments of that sort, a significant amount comes back to this country by way of the goods, services and expertise that we provide to the accession states. We are working closely with the Czech Republic to help it to develop opportunities from joining the European Union. We are also working with the Finnish Government on helping Estonia with its process of joining.

Irene Oldfather made another equally important point about enlargement. We must ensure that we have a level playing field throughout the European Union. That is why we are paying attention to state-aid policy to ensure that competition, environmental standards and social policy are treated equally throughout the European Union.

Members mentioned Scotland's involvement in the negotiations for the next round of funds. As I said, we take an active part in those negotiations. Last year, I took part in the cohesion forum. Angus MacKay attended the Namur council in the middle

of last year on behalf of the Executive and as part of the UK delegation. We will be an active part of the discussions on the next round of funds. I have been fairly open about the strategy that we are developing and negotiating. I am happy to share the strategy with members in other debates on the subject. Members should be clear; special pleading will not win resources for Scotland. We must attach ourselves to the arguments about how we remain competitive in the new marketplace and we must develop those arguments with our UK colleagues.

I have indicated not just my support for and enthusiasm in our involvement in the European Union, but that of the Executive. Scotland has a very important part to play in Europe's continuing development. It is not simply a question of our receiving funds; it is also about sharing our understanding and expertise with the new, accession states and with the developing union that we see before us. I commend the motion.

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): I did not want to interrupt the minister, but there has again been too much noise during the wind-up speech prior to decision time. That is not fair to whoever must respond to the debate. I ask members to confine their conversations to the coffee lounge.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel): We will need a lot of concentration for decision time today, because we have a record 13 questions.

The first question is, that amendment S1M-2631.2, in the name of Peter Peacock, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2631, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on the abolition of council tax, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)

Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 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)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 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)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 60, Against 21, Abstentions 30.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: Accordingly, amendment S1M-2631.1, in the name of Tricia Marwick, is pre-empted.

The next question, therefore, is that motion S1M-2631, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on the abolition of council tax, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)

Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 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)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (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)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 62, Against 19, Abstentions 31.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament welcomes the substantial reforms that the Scottish Executive has brought to the operation of

local government finance, including the stability for three year council tax figures and welcomes the Executive's commitment to pursue further reforms; further welcomes the fact that councils are now collecting a higher proportion of council tax than ever before and the continuing work by the Executive and local authorities to better target and further improve collection arrangements, and notes that the Local Government Committee of the Parliament will shortly conclude its inquiry into local government finance and local taxation.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S1M-2632.1, in the name of Ross Finnie, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2632, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on the introduction of progressive water tax, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 61, Against 3, Abstentions 47.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S1M-2632, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on the introduction of progressive water tax, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)

Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

AGAINST

Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 61, Against 3, Abstentions 47.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament commends the efforts of the Scottish Executive in ensuring that the public water industry in Scotland is strong and efficient, bringing considerable benefits to all customers; recognises the Executive's continuing commitment to a public water industry; recognises that the best way to fund the Scottish water

industry is through charges on domestic and non-domestic customers utilising the services provided; recognises that the current system for charging domestic customers already provides a degree of protection for lower income households and the most vulnerable through the link to council tax banding, and finally recognises that the reduction scheme provides help to those low income households facing the biggest charge increases.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S1M-2633.1, in the name of Dr Richard Simpson, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2633, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on Faslane and the anti-nuclear campaign, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 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, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 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)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Murray, Dr Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 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, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, 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)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (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)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 77, Against 32, Abstentions 3.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S1M-2633, in the name of Tommy Sheridan, on Faslane and the anti-nuclear campaign, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (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, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 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)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (Lab)
 Muldoon, Bristow (Livingston) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mrs Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Munro, 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)
 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, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Wallace, 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)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 77, Against 26, Abstentions 8.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament supports the right of demonstrators to protest peacefully in support of world peace, but condemns those in a democratic society who abuse this right and act in contravention of the criminal law.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S1M-2635.3, in the name of Lewis Macdonald, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2635, in the name of Robin Harper, on environmentally sustainable employment and recycling, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)

Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 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)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 59, Against 51, Abstentions 1.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: Amendment S1M-2635.2, in the name of Fiona McLeod, and amendment S1M-2635.1, in the name of John Scott, are pre-empted and fall.

The next question is, that motion S1M-2635, in the name of Robin Harper, on environmentally

sustainable employment and recycling, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 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)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 60, Against 51, Abstentions 1.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament congratulates the Executive on the progress made in integrating sustainable development at the heart of its policy-making and supports the Executive in stimulating environmentally sustainable employment.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S1M-2630.1, in the name of Tricia Marwick, which seeks to amend motion S1M-2630, in the name of Peter Peacock, on

European structural funds, 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)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

AGAINST

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)

Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 50, Against 62, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S1M-2630, in the name of Peter Peacock, on European structural funds, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Canavan, Dennis (Falkirk West)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Ms Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Fitzpatrick, Brian (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Lab)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Home Robertson, Mr John (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)
 Jenkins, Ian (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 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)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McAllion, Mr John (Dundee East) (Lab)
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Mr Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Morrison, Mr Alasdair (Western Isles) (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)
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mr Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Ochil) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North-East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Mrs Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Thomson, Elaine (Aberdeen North) (Lab)
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)
 Watson, Mike (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Campbell, Colin (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Davidson, Mr David (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)
 Elder, Dorothy-Grace (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Dr Winnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallie, Phil (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Gibson, Mr Kenneth (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Hamilton, Mr Duncan (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Harding, Mr Keith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Ms Margo (Lothians) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McGugan, Irene (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 McIntosh, Mrs Lyndsay (Central Scotland) (Con)
 McLeod, Fiona (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothians) (Con)
 Monteith, Mr Brian (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (SNP)
 Mundell, David (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Mr Gil (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Quinan, Mr Lloyd (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Reid, Mr George (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (North-East Scotland) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (SSP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Swinney, Mr John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Tosh, Mr Murray (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Ullrich, Kay (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wallace, Ben (North-East Scotland) (Con)
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Ms Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Andrew (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Young, John (West of Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 0, Abstentions 49.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament recognises the success of the Executive's strategic approach and decentralised administration in managing European Structural Funds and underpinning its commitment to key policy priorities, in particular education, jobs and transport, and endorses the continuation of this approach to ensure a sustainable impact from this funding.

The Presiding Officer: I thank members for their patience and co-operation.

Colin O'Riordan Trust

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Mr Murray Tosh): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S1M-2585, in the name of Angus MacKay, on the Colin O'Riordan Trust. The debate will be concluded without any question being put. I invite members who wish to speak to press their request-to-speak button as soon as possible.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises the outstanding contribution made by the late Dr Colin O'Riordan to the provision of access to music for all children in Edinburgh, and particularly Sciennes Primary School, and throughout Scotland, in founding the City of Edinburgh Music School and in the many youth orchestra activities with which he was associated, and congratulates his family on the foundation of the Colin O'Riordan Trust, which aims to assist aspiring young musicians by promoting musical excellence and improving access to musical instruments for those children who might otherwise not have the opportunity to pursue music.

17:14

Angus MacKay (Edinburgh South) (Lab): I suppose that I should begin the debate by thanking the process through which we secure members' business debates. I do not understand the process, but I am glad to have secured my first such debate.

I also begin with a confession: I never had the privilege of meeting Dr Colin O'Riordan, which is unfortunate. I recall that, during my time at school, my brief interlude with music resulted in one day with a recorder—I did not really know one end of the instrument from the other. That was a sad state of affairs and it is the experience of too many schoolchildren in Scotland—certainly it was in my day.

Music brings so much to the lives of so many people by developing their individual skills and the richness and quality of their lives. It is clear that Dr Colin O'Riordan played an immense role throughout his life doing just that in his professional duties and beyond.

One reason why I sought to secure tonight's debate was simply because of the process that I went through upon hearing about the life and work of Dr O'Riordan. I had never heard of him, but when close colleagues in the Parliament—one of whom, Sarah Boyack, I hope will be called to speak later—mentioned him to me, I assumed that they had been taught by him. I assumed that they were talking of their personal experience and that it was a happy coincidence that they should have known him.

In the days following, however, and particularly

with the establishment of the trust and the report in the newspapers, I was deluged with e-mails and letters from, and had conversations with, individuals who were taught by the late Dr O'Riordan or whose children benefited from the support he had given them. That growing experience made clear to me the sheer magnitude of the impact through music of this man's life and work upon the lives of others.

Sadly, Dr O'Riordan died last October. It is evident that he was one of Scotland's foremost musical educators. He benefited literally thousands of young people not only throughout Edinburgh and the Lothians, but in the whole of Scotland.

Perhaps at this point I should say that despite what the motion says about the work Dr O'Riordan did with Sciennes Primary School, he had an impact on a fantastic number of schools and orchestras and touched thousands of lives. I do not want the terms of the motion to suggest a narrowness of impact, because the work that Dr O'Riordan did had a genuinely profound impact on an enormous number of institutions and lives. I want to ensure that the record is put straight on that point.

It is clear that Dr O'Riordan believed strongly in the importance of developing the self-confidence, social skills and talents of young people from all backgrounds. I do not think that any member of the Parliament or any person in the chamber tonight will dissent from that view.

Dr O'Riordan's work proceeded over a period of about 30 years, during which time it seems he touched the lives of many people. That is why I wanted the opportunity to record in the Parliament and the *Official Report* of this evening's debate a testament to his work in Scotland and a recognition of the value of the Colin O'Riordan Trust, which his family established, and the work it hopes to do. It seeks to support musical excellence in Scotland, particularly by trying to support young musicians—for example, those who might find themselves in financial difficulty trying to acquire access to instruments. Its purpose is also to establish access to master-class tuition and development for musicians who have a particular skill that they would like to develop.

The trust applies its means and intentions to a wide age bracket. On that score, it is appropriate to consider January's fundraising event in the name of the trust at the Usher Hall. My understanding is that the original intention was to hold the event in the Queen's Hall, but that it had to be moved to the Usher Hall because of the sheer volume of applications for tickets. That in itself is testimony to the popularity of Dr O'Riordan and the sincere feelings of gratitude that many feel for his work.

I have been told that, on the night of the concert, so many people turned up that some had to be turned away at the door. I do not know whether that is true but, given the warmth of emotion that people have expressed, it would not surprise me if it were. I think that some full-time orchestras would be heavily tasked to fill the Usher Hall on a January night.

Many of Dr O'Riordan's former pupils asked to participate in the concert, but had to be denied the opportunity as more than enough individuals were willing to support the event. I understand that it raised about £17,000 for the trust. It is worth paying tribute to those who put so much effort into organising the event.

I want to say a few words about the City of Edinburgh Music School, which Dr Colin O'Riordan assisted in setting up; he played an important role as a member of the working party that developed the school 21 years ago. It is a unique specialist music school that caters for talented youngsters aged four to 19. The music school is funded by the new Scottish Executive excellence fund and does not charge any fees.

To put the quality of the City of Edinburgh Music School into perspective, I point out that Sir Simon Rattle CBE is its patron. I understand that students from Edinburgh, the rest of Scotland and as far afield as Russia, Mexico, Korea and Japan audition for places on any instrument, playing any style of music they wish. That is the quality of development work that Dr O'Riordan was involved in.

I do not pretend to have known Dr O'Riordan. I will not try to describe him as an individual or to set out his qualities—I am sure that many of the members who approached me before the debate will do that in their speeches. I will finish simply by saying that it is clear that Colin O'Riordan was an ordinary Scot but also an extraordinary Scot—one who gave much more than a professional salary and terms and conditions require of any individual. If we have more Scots like Dr Colin O'Riordan, we will be a much richer culture and a much better country.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: There are seven members who wish to speak, so I advise members to limit their speeches to four or five minutes.

17:21

Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD): It is excellent that we are having a debate on this subject—it is the first debate relating to a particular individual that I can remember.

I had a close connection with Colin O'Riordan in three ways. First, when I was a councillor in

Lothian and Edinburgh, Colin O'Riordan ran and helped to develop the area's music services. Secondly, I am chairman of the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra, of which Colin O'Riordan was the main musical adviser and mainstay. Thirdly, my wife used to play string quartets with Colin several times a month.

Colin O'Riordan was an interesting man because he was highly qualified and educated—he was a violinist of great quality and held a doctorate in music from St Petersburg. He had a great belief in bringing music to young people, both through individual tuition and through groups, bands, orchestras and so on. He did everything. In the case of the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra, he advised on the programme and helped to put out the desks and chairs. He put his heart and soul into the whole thing. When slightly more money was available, he made a great contribution to persuading Lothian Region, in particular, to build up orchestras, bands and musical groups. I think that seven of those groups played in the Usher Hall concert to which Angus MacKay referred. The hall was full and there was a great atmosphere.

Colin O'Riordan made a great personal contribution and it is right that we recognise that, but there is a wider issue. Colin O'Riordan typified the importance of musical education. That is something we must push hard. Some people—in education and outside it—think that musical education is a nice add-on. That is not the case. Music should be at the heart of our education system and seen to be so.

I have a separate motion on which I am trying to secure a members' business debate on another occasion. It relates to the important issue of the future pay of music instructors. I will not trespass on that subject now, as I hope to secure a chance to debate it more fully at a later date. The overall question of the funding and promotion of music education is critical. In some council areas, people have to pay for tuition. In many areas, such tuition has been cut. One of the things that caused Colin O'Riordan stress in recent times was trying to manage an ever-diminishing budget.

We should ensure that the Executive puts its money and heart behind music tuition being at the heart of our education system—and we should ensure that councils do the same. It is not satisfactory that music is hanging on by its eyelashes and risks being pushed out altogether.

Many schools' main shop window to their parents and local communities is the concerts, shows, musicals and dramas they put on. Music teachers are at the heart of those events. They are important for schools and young people. There is no better way to develop team spirit than by playing in an orchestra. Someone who plays in a football team or a cricket team, for example, can

still be egocentric and try to do it all themselves, but someone who plays a flute cannot play the bassoon or fiddle that somebody else is playing, so they have to learn to fit in with the others.

Music instruction is of huge importance for people's intellectual and fingering development. I was the world's worst bassoonist, but I gained enormous pleasure from playing in various bands and orchestras. There is also a team-spirit aspect to playing in an orchestra, which is important. I hope that while we celebrate Colin O'Riordan and applaud and support the creation of the Colin O'Riordan Trust, the minister will give a clear indication that the Government really values music education.

17:26

Ms Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (SNP): I congratulate Angus MacKay on securing the debate. Like him, I do not know how that happens but I am glad that it has happened because it allows us to do two things. First, as Donald Gorrie said more eloquently than I might, we are able to mark Colin O'Riordan's extraordinary contribution to music in the city. I met him twice in the course of my work as a journalist. It was his work that I knew. I did not know the man, but his work stands as testament to the man. It is absolutely proper that we should find time in the Parliament to record what he did for this city and for the music education of children outside the city—and not just their music education.

Secondly, the debate gives us the opportunity to put into context the contribution of music to the education of the whole person. It gives us the opportunity to make the case, again, for motivated and inspired specialist teachers of music, drama and physical education, because those three subjects link and they are all required. They must be taught by people who are as motivated as Colin O'Riordan was.

Yesterday, I was out in Wester Hailes. As Edinburgh members will know, the school there is in an area that is pockmarked by severe deprivation—which, unfortunately, is reflected in the results in quite a number of the academic subjects. They are not as good as we would want them to be, but the results in music soar way above the others. There is a life about the music in the school. It is the music that inspires children. It is the music that makes them feel a sense of self-confidence and self-worth. There is also an inspired teacher in the school, whom I will not embarrass by naming. I wish to pay tribute to the work that is done by her and other specialist music teachers in Edinburgh.

During question time this afternoon, Susan Deacon asked the Minister for Education and Young People for an assurance that we will

continue to educate the whole person. To do that, we should not just concentrate on the basics and the three Rs, although they are important. We will never produce civilised citizens unless they are taught about music, art and drama. Unfortunately, as Donald Gorrie said, those subjects are looked on as frills.

I learned much from Peter Mooney, who was the conductor of the Glasgow Phoenix Choir and who I am very happy to record was also the man who took the choirs when I was at school. The choir was where I learned the self-confidence to get up in front of a crowd of people. The first time I entered the Usher Hall was to sing in a choir conducted by Peter Mooney. Experience convinces me that it is important that people learn to appreciate music and, from being part of the orchestra or the choir, experience being part of a team. Doing those things in school is part of education.

I make a plea: that the Executive and the minister realise that we will not be educating our children unless we give them the motivation that comes from the arts, particularly music and, in this case, the memory of Colin O'Riordan. The Executive should support the trust in any way possible.

17:30

Brian Fitzpatrick (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab): My friend Angus MacKay does well to secure the debate.

I did not know Dr O'Riordan, but from what has been said I wish I had known him. In supporting the motion, I want to say something about the role that access to music can have in forming citizens and widening opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged youngsters.

I have to declare an interest. I grew up in Priesthill on the south side of Glasgow. It is one of the most deprived parts of Glasgow; sufficiently deprived that we considered the bit of Pollok that was inhabited by the likes of Tommy Sheridan a bit posh. I attended what was then called Bellarmine Secondary and is now called St Paul's. I do not think that the change in name reflects a demotion of the sainted Cardinal Bellarmine; a man you would not have crossed—ask Galileo.

I had the great fortune to be at that school when the music department was under the guidance of Miss Winifred Dean—Winnie Dean—the creator of the Bellarmine summer school and youth orchestra and, like Dr O'Riordan, a singular individual and an extraordinary Scot. She shares his belief in the liberating effect of music and spent much of her time and energies instilling in youngsters a love and appreciation of music. She shares the belief that every youngster can benefit

from the opportunity to play an instrument and to have an understanding of musical traditions and forms.

As a result of the considerable volume of research in the United States and Switzerland, we know that there are direct connections between exposure to music at an early age and intellectual development and educational achievement across the subject range. There seems to be something about music that stimulates other intellectual competences. That was played out in my school by the above average rate of admission to university that those who took part in music courses achieved.

A welcome curricular development in recent years—in Scotland and across the rest of the United Kingdom—has been the introduction of space in the timetable not just for musical performance, but for listening to and appraising music. Music is a uniquely educational tool. I cannot think of another discipline that provides the time and space for the analysis of a complex and abstract subject.

I benefited from the one-to-one attention that music tuition provides. It is perhaps the only time we replicate a parent-child relationship in the school environment. As it turned out, my musical skills were limited. That might have had something to do with comparing myself with fellow pupils such as Willie Conway, who went on to the European Youth Orchestra and even greater heights; with Gerry Docherty, who is now in the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; and with that whole generation of contemporary artists who graduated from schools on Glasgow's south side such as Bellarmine Secondary School and Holyrood Secondary School.

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity that I had. I tried the violin and then the trumpet. I was not patient enough to develop a lip, although that has not held me back since. I struggled, literally, with the E-flat bass, which at that time weighed more than me—I know that that is hard to believe. I ended up with the cello. Although I would never earn a living playing it, it was a transforming instrument in my life.

What heart, what soul could listen to Rachmaninov's "Vespers"—which I was introduced to by Winnie Dean at the age of 13—and not be touched by the transcendent and put to thinking about our relationships with each other, our interconnectedness and our shared experiences as human beings. I cannot think of a more useful opportunity for my children. I want that opportunity for the children in my constituency and for children across my country.

In preparation for the debate, I spoke to my friend James MacMillan, who hails from Cumnock.

The keys to his growth as a musician and his journey to his place as one of our foremost modern composers were the stimulus that was given by his working-class parents and his good fortune in meeting music teachers who captured and nurtured his musical interests and talents.

They were good men and women, like Colin O'Riordan and Winnie Dean, who opened those closed doors of opportunity and helped to ensure that those opportunities were offered to the many, and not just the few. God will bless them and will look kindly on them, but we should thank them. I am honoured to have joined Angus MacKay in the debate.

17:35

Mr Brian Monteith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I congratulate Angus MacKay on securing the debate and am pleased to support the motion.

I, too, did not know Dr Colin O'Riordan personally, but I knew of him from educational circles, from people in the City of Edinburgh Council and from music teachers, all of whom spoke well of him. I support the motion for several reasons. First, I am from Edinburgh and, as an Edinburgh citizen, I pay tribute to Dr O'Riordan's extraordinary achievements, not least of which was the foundation of the City of Edinburgh Music School.

Secondly, as Conservative education spokesman, I pay tribute to Dr O'Riordan for all that he did for music tuition in Scotland. Thirdly, I attended Portobello High School, where the music department provided some of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences of my education. When I saw Angus MacKay's motion, I knew that the debate was important. We should remember not only the fine man of whom we have heard tonight, but the work that he did.

I remember my teachers—Mr Dempster, Miss Noble, Mr Pow and Mr Morrison—fondly. I remember particularly the time that I wore a cassock and sang at Old St Paul's church and the school operas and music competitions that were the highlights of everyone's year at Portobello High School. That was quite an achievement for a music department: after second year, not everyone chose music, yet throughout school, whether people played instruments, sang or painted scenery, the music competitions and the opera were the highlight. I am sure that Colin O'Riordan would look for such things in a school, which would bring people together and inspire them.

Since that time, I have been keen to advocate the important role of music, not only for its own sake but because it provides a rounded education. Much more can be done. The foundation of the

Colin O'Riordan Trust will be not only a fitting tribute but an effective way of improving access to music tuition.

One of the trust's roles will be the provision of instruments, which is crucial. Both my sons attended a local primary school in Edinburgh and were interested in playing the violin. Like many in their class, they were put through an audition to find out whether they had some sort of ear for music. Both were found to have some ability, but what could be done was limited by the number of available violins. The teaching by the musical tutors was free, but once those who could take up the instrument were isolated, they still had to participate in a ballot. The provision of instruments, which will ensure that more people have access to musical tuition, is fundamental.

It is one of those strange coincidences of life that, after the debate, my first appointment will be to return to my old high school, Portobello, to attend a teachers evening on music tuition so that we can hear what the next stage will be for the sons and daughters who attend the school. I can think of no better way of honouring Dr O'Riordan's memory than pupils and teachers working with the trust to learn music and play in Edinburgh and throughout Scotland. We should ensure that his name is remembered.

17:39

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): I had the privilege of knowing Colin O'Riordan for 25 years—not well, but well enough. He was a man of great gifts, who had a great sense of humour. As Donald Gorrie said, he set out the seats for the orchestra as well as encouraging young people by conducting and teaching them.

I taught at Boroughmuir High School for a long time—nearly half my life. In addition to leading the sections of the orchestras, Colin taught many of the Boroughmuir pupils. The orchestras used to use the school annexe, and it was a delight to hear them practising and to know that Colin was there, encouraging them. I have not met a pupil who did not hold him in the highest esteem.

I was delighted to hear about the setting up of the Colin O'Riordan Trust. I went to the concert at the Usher Hall, but did not hear the last, grand finale, as I was busy in the corridor outside the hall, collecting money for the fund. I hope that the fund will make a significant addition to music opportunities for young people in Scotland.

Another good, long-lasting and much-needed testimonial to the enormous work that Colin did would be for the Executive to take a robust attitude to the teaching of music, art, outdoor education and all the subjects that have, over the years, been pushed to the periphery of Scottish

education. Those subjects must be returned to the centre of Scottish education.

I support what those members who have spoken so far have said. It is wonderful to be here to hear their speeches. I wish that other members were here, so that they too could hear the debate. It was wonderful to hear what Donald Gorrie, Brian Fitzpatrick, Brian Monteith and Margo MacDonald said about the central place that the teaching of music should have in our primary and secondary schools and of the value that should be put on the work of music instructors. As Brian Fitzpatrick pointed out, there is nothing to replace the value of the one-to-one relationship with an instructor. What happens in music in Scotland is founded on the one-to-one relationship between music instructors and their pupils. Without that foundation, the big orchestras, small groups and the wonderful things that happen at the City of Edinburgh Music School would not happen.

I look forward to the fund swelling to the point where it makes a significant contribution. I congratulate Angus MacKay on securing the debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Sarah Boyack. By saving her to last, I can offer her a couple of extra minutes, if she would like to use them.

17:42

Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab): I am not sure that that was a wise move.

I congratulate Angus MacKay on securing the debate and giving members the chance to come together in the chamber, and I welcome the establishment of the trust in Colin O'Riordan's name. The speeches that we have heard tonight demonstrate why it is appropriate and important that the trust be established. It is appropriate that, in our new Parliament, we acknowledge the contribution that Colin O'Riordan made to music in Edinburgh and the marker that he was for others across Scotland.

As Angus pointed out, I have to declare an interest: I was a student of Colin O'Riordan's. To put that into perspective, I used to sit up at the back of the orchestra. I knew who he was, but he might not have known who I was—although he would have done if we had got the notes wrong. On occasions, that happened.

I was a member of ESSO—the Edinburgh Secondary Schools Orchestra—circa mid-to-late 1970s. It was exciting to be in a proper orchestra. I was in our school orchestra, which was a great personal experience, although there were times when you wished that the violins were in tune. It was exciting to be able to go to an orchestra that

drew pupils from all the high schools across the city. It made sense of the endless hours of practice that were required if you were to be any good at your instrument.

One of the exciting things about being in an orchestra was being part of a team and also of a sub-team. I was in the brass section. We sat at the back and we were the slightly bolshie element of the orchestra.

Brian Fitzpatrick: What has changed?

Sarah Boyack: Nothing has changed.

Those identities are important to young people. I agree with the comments that Margo MacDonald and Brian Fitzpatrick made about the personal development that being involved in music allows young people.

As well as talking about the importance of Colin O'Riordan's work, I also want to stress the importance of the work that was done at individual school level across Edinburgh, which let us come together as an orchestra. As students, we did not have any appreciation of the effort that was needed to achieve that, or of the individual relationships between peripatetic music teachers, who had to cover the whole city, and the other people in the schools where they taught.

Such teachers have a different relationship with their schools from that of the average teacher. They certainly do not get lots of praise at the time from the school students that they teach. They would get that praise only some years later. School students, as everyone knows, are not the most flattering people and never appreciate how much extra effort it takes to run an orchestra. Kids take it for granted that teachers are happy to stay on after school and to take them across the city.

That is why I am pleased to be able to speak in tonight's debate, many years on. Although we were not personally appreciative at the time, I am sure that Colin was able to tell how much we were enjoying ourselves when we were playing. It was quite exciting for us to come together as part of an orchestra and play Mussorgsky, whom most of us had never heard of until we were in the orchestra. It gave us a real sense of purpose and gave all of us the chance to develop a love of music and a personal confidence. There is a liberation in understanding how music fits together, to be part of an orchestra and to play one's part. That is something that is incredibly important. I acknowledge the important role that the Edinburgh Secondary Schools Orchestra played at the time. It built on the backbone of work done in individual schools across Edinburgh and made us proud to come together.

At Christmas, I was pleased to attend the Royal High School choir's performance of Christmas

carols in the Parliament canteen. All the Edinburgh schools are still putting their orchestras and choirs together. As Brian Monteith said, that is still a core part of education and is important.

It is superb that Colin O'Riordan's family and friends have put together a trust. Not only does it let his name live on, it also allows some practical work to flow from that. It continues to enable there to be a stimulation of interest in and access to music by young people. That is superb, and that is mentioned in the first point of Angus MacKay's motion.

The trust also addresses the practicalities of allowing young people to have access to instruments. That sounds like the kind of thing that one would take for granted, but musical instruments are not cheap. The cost of a new bassoon these days, for example, is not cheap. It is not simply a case of buying a new instrument when a child starts to learn. They might start off with a battered trumpet or a pretty ropy clarinet, but there comes a point at which the child can play the instrument. To play a good instrument is sometimes what lifts people up from being talented amateurs to being the kind of people Brian Fitzpatrick mentioned, who can make a life and career out of music.

I am glad to support the establishment of the trust. I hope that, in addition to the fund-raising concert, the fact that we are having a debate on it will raise the profile of the trust, give it a boost and let more people know about it. I congratulate Angus MacKay on securing the debate and thank him for allowing us to pay tribute to Colin O'Riordan and give our collective support to the establishment of the trust and the work that we hope it will do for young people across the city.

17:49

The Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport (Dr Elaine Murray): I congratulate Angus MacKay on securing the debate on the life and work of Dr O'Riordan, who contributed greatly in the service of young people and music. I echo whole-heartedly members' comments on the loss of so dedicated an educator and someone who obviously loved music so much. He was clearly greatly devoted to giving opportunities to young people to experience and participate in the magical world of music. The trust that his family and friends have set up is a fitting memorial and tribute to the man and his work.

Unlike Sarah Boyack and Robin Harper, I did not know Colin O'Riordan personally, but undoubtedly I saw him perform, as I used to go to Edinburgh Youth Orchestra concerts in the 1960s. I was sufficiently inspired to become a member of the EYO in the early 1970s. Unfortunately, Mr

O'Riordan had left the orchestra by then, but at least I had seen him perform.

Performing in youth orchestras in my mid and late teens was a wonderful experience, although I was a violinist of limited ability. Like Sarah Boyack, I was often seated at the back of the orchestra; I often seemed to be put near the timpani, which was possibly done to drown out the noise that I made. To rehearse intensively and perform with talented young people and professionals was a terrific opportunity. As Sarah Boyack said, the EYO gave an opportunity to play real music at a much higher standard than would have been possible in a school orchestra.

Music provides useful lessons for later life. Donald Gorrie said that a person cannot be an egotist and play in an orchestra. We learned many things. I remember the violin instructor talking about a difficult piece. He said, "If you cannot keep up with it, just smile, keep your bow going and catch up at the end." I am sure that that advice stood me in good stead in later life.

I was impressed and moved by the enthusiasm and passion of the professional conductors and musicians who worked with young people. They seemed to have a real joy in sharing their talents and experience. I know from what has been said about Dr O'Riordan that he brought that passion and talent to his work with young people. It may not always be apparent that such passion and talent are appreciated. As a not very good musician, I always felt that it was a great honour to work with such people and experience their love of music.

I have been asked to indicate the Executive's commitment to music and the arts. I cannot disagree with Donald Gorrie, Margo MacDonald or Robin Harper that music is a vital part of every child's education and that all young people ought to have the opportunity to experience music. That music does not always have to be western classical music. I came to music through western classical music, which I enjoy, but other forms of music—such as traditional Scottish music and contemporary music—can be equally important in young people's development. All such forms are valuable in helping young people to develop their skills.

An effective music department makes a positive contribution to the overall ethos of a school. Margo MacDonald referred to the importance of culture in educating the whole person, but said that some people regard it as a frill. I do not regard culture as a frill. Culture and arts education are essential and are as important and useful as any other part of the education system.

Practical music making has been proved to be a particularly strong stimulus to motivating pupils

and boosting their creativity. Brian Fitzpatrick spoke about how musical education often results in greater achievement in other subjects. Music is valuable in itself and for the many skills that it helps to develop in young people.

Nowadays, most—if not all—pupils in primary school and the first two years of secondary school experience music and music making in timetabled music classes. A range of instruments and singing are involved. However, as Brian Monteith and Sarah Boyack said, there can be problems with the cost and provision of instruments. On Friday, I presented a £5,000 cheque from the Scottish Arts Council to a local group of clarsach—Scots harp—players. I got the opportunity to play one for the first time, which was thrilling. I was amazed that that money can buy perhaps two and a quarter harps. Musical instruments are extremely expensive, which is a problem for authorities.

Reference was made to councils' charging policies. Authorities decide whether to charge for music tuition, but I strongly opposed charging in my time in local government. Music education should be free, as other subjects are, and I hope that authorities can provide that.

The five-to-14 expressive arts curriculum contains advice on the music and arts provision that should be available in classrooms. More broadly, school concerts and Christmas concerts involve communities in schools. That is important, as such concerts bring people from the local community into the school to appreciate and value the contribution that teachers and pupils are making.

The issue does not just centre on what happens in schools; we must also recognise the contribution of the voluntary sector, which has been extremely important to the musical tradition in Scotland. Although Colin O'Riordan did much work as a professional, he also did a hell of a lot above and beyond that as a volunteer and as someone who believed in and gave to the subject.

Members will be aware that the Executive is currently examining the details of a pilot programme for cultural co-ordinators in schools, which I hope will help teachers to maximise the potential contribution of cultural activities such as music to young people's education. Such activities are vital for developing self-confidence and skill. I hope that the details of the pilot programme will be announced in the very near future.

The need to develop excellence among young musicians was mentioned. One of the interesting aspects of the sports and culture debate is the recognition that even people like me who might not be very good at something can get enjoyment simply by taking part in cultural or sporting activity. At the same time, we also need the inspiration that

excellence—the importance of which Donald Gorrie mentioned—can give us, which is one of the reasons why the Executive has allocated funding for the excellence fund. Indeed, one of the projects that will receive funding is the City of Edinburgh Music School at Broughton High School, which Angus MacKay mentioned and which Dr O'Riordan was instrumental in establishing.

Members will also be aware of the Donald Dewar scholarships. One of the ways in which the Executive wanted to reflect Donald Dewar's contribution to Scottish life and his love of arts and music was to establish a scholarship for fostering excellence in the arts and to offer youngsters from less-privileged backgrounds the opportunity to develop their talents. Twenty students will initially benefit from the scholarships; four will be funded with each of the four national arts companies for the performing arts and four will be funded in the visual arts with the Scottish Arts Council. We are currently discussing how the scholarships will operate.

I join members in lamenting the great loss of Dr O'Riordan to music education in Edinburgh and Scotland and in celebrating the contribution that people like him make to our country's cultural life and the development of our children. I congratulate Dr O'Riordan's family and friends on their vision in establishing the trust. I wish them well and hope that the trust and other initiatives will carry forward his passion for music and education in the years to come.

Meeting closed at 17:58.

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