

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Wednesday 24 January 2007

Session 2

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## Scottish Parliament

*Wednesday 24 January 2007*

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

### Time for Reflection

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** Good afternoon. The first item of business is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is Linda Todd, national director of the Leprosy Mission Scotland.

**Linda Todd (Leprosy Mission Scotland):** Many believe that leprosy has been eradicated. For the 300,000 who will be diagnosed during 2007, their reality is different. Today, more than 800 people will hear the words, "You have leprosy." Leprosy is not eradicated, only forgotten.

A man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees,

"If you are willing, you can make me clean."

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

Jesus is still willing. The Leprosy Mission is willing. Our vision is for a "world without leprosy". The same compassionate care and healing are proffered to patients in our 244 projects across 29 countries in Africa and Asia. Since 1981, multidrug treatment has healed 14 million people. The battle today is against the stigma that permeates the centuries. As Burns wrote:

"Man's inhumanity to Man  
Makes countless thousands mourn!"

Our theme for world leprosy day is, "Give Hope". Leprosy still stigmatises, which is so unnecessary. I recently visited Kuta leprosy village in Nigeria. They had known exclusion. Working in partnership with one another, the Leprosy Mission and local government health workers, they transformed their lives, working their way out of poverty. To cut a long story short, the village now boasts electricity, a borehole and a flourishing school and church. They are successfully growing crops, using an electric-powered grinding machine not only to ease their workload but to earn additional income by hiring it out to their neighbours. They are a successful, thriving community with three or four generations of families refusing to allow any circumstance or people to take away their hope. They are an excellent example of what people empowered can do for themselves. We just provided the resources.

Like this Parliament, the Leprosy Mission Scotland is in the business of giving hope. We raise funds for the provision of fully developed hospital care, increased activity in preventing disability, training health care workers, education and seeking long-term solutions, for example vocational training and socioeconomic interventions.

If we all choose, we can make poverty and exclusion history. We can achieve a world without leprosy. Make that choice.

To quote Burns:

"Then let us pray that come it may,  
As come it will for a' that,  
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth  
Shall bear the gree, and a' that.  
For a' that, and a' that  
Its coming yet for a' that  
That Man to Man, the world o'er  
Shall brothers be for a' that".

## **Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1**

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-5339, in the name of Hugh Henry, that the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill.

14:33

**The Minister for Education and Young People (Hugh Henry):** Improving the health of people in Scotland is a key priority for the Executive. We are taking action on a number of fronts to tackle our poor health record. The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill is but one important step that we are taking to improve the health of the nation.

Scotland is at the forefront of making health promotion and healthy eating a priority of school life. Our active schools programme has increased pupils' opportunities to engage in a healthier lifestyle. Hungry for success and our health-promoting schools initiatives have gained international recognition. Parents and children are already reaping the benefits, and we are committed to building on that success.

We owe it to our children and young people to go further than just trying to influence and encourage. We must accept our share of the responsibility for ensuring that schools give them the best possible start in life.

**Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** The minister talks about the need for our children to be given the right start in life. Will he say why the Executive has set its face against extending the bill to cover the independent sector? The children in those schools are Scotland's children too.

**Hugh Henry:** I will touch on that later.

Before discussing the bill in detail, I thank the many pupils, parents and professionals from the education sector, health services and the food and drink industry who all contributed to the consultation on the bill.

The bill will ensure not only that health promotion is integral to the curriculum but that it pervades the atmosphere and ethos of schools, their policies and their services. A health-promoting school must address the physical, mental and social well-being of pupils as well as encourage healthy lifestyles and healthy eating habits. That will help to produce confident and healthy individuals who can develop to their full potential. Good health is essential to the well-being of Scottish society.

The bill will make health promotion a central purpose of schooling, rather than an add-on. It will amend the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 to place a duty on education authorities to set out strategies in their annual statement of improvement objectives to ensure that schools are health promoting. That will flow through into school development plans and subsequent progress reports.

A health-promoting school will need to consider health promotion in all its activities. It should adopt a whole-school approach and should involve pupils, staff, families and the wider community in efforts to promote health.

The bill will place a duty on education authorities to ensure that the food and drinks that they provide meet nutritional standards as set out in regulations. That will go beyond the achievements of the hungry for success initiative and will include what is on offer at the tuck shop or in the vending machine.

It is fitting to take this opportunity to thank the expert working group on nutrition for all its hard work and for its proposals for the food and drink regulations. I am grateful for the contribution that it and many others who have had an interest have made. The regulations will guarantee that school lunches are a healthy option, but we also want to increase the number of pupils who benefit from them. This is why the bill will require education authorities to promote school lunches and to encourage pupils to take them.

It is particularly important that we encourage all families to take advantage of any entitlement to free school meals. It is every child's fundamental right to access food in schools without the fear of stigma, so the bill will also require education authorities to protect the identity of those who are eligible for free school meals.

Finally, the bill will give education authorities the power to provide pupils with free or paid-for healthy snacks throughout the school day. That will allow education authorities the flexibility to address local priorities and the freedom to tailor provision of healthy snacks to those whom they feel are most in need.

I thank the Communities Committee for its detailed consideration of the bill's principles and its subsequent report. I note the committee's concerns about extending the bill to cover independent schools and the pre-school sector. Problems would arise in implementing what the committee has asked for. I will need to return to that, as I do not have time to develop the arguments in full. However, I will examine the committee's proposals closely. As I have said, improving the nation's health requires action on several fronts.

As the independent regulator of care services in Scotland, the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care already has a role to play, not only in improving standards in the early years sector but in taking action when services fail to improve. Building on the achievements of hungry for success, we have issued guidance to the sector that provides advice on good eating habits, nutrition and menu planning. The guidance underpins the national care standards for early education and child care, which the commission takes into account when inspecting services.

The bill will require education authorities to consider nutritional standards when they place a pupil in an independent school. Beyond that, we will share the health promotion and nutrition guidance with independent schools and we will certainly encourage them to adopt it. We believe that those arrangements will achieve our aims. If, in time, more seems to need to be done in those sectors, we will consider further action.

I move to the amendments to the motion. Parliament has considered and rejected the principle of universal free school meals. The bill is not about universal free school meals but about the quality and content of food that is provided in our schools.

We must do what we can to improve the uptake of free school meals by those who are currently eligible for them. It is important that the bill addresses that matter because we have still not ensured that everyone who is entitled to free school meals takes them. Providing universal free school meals is not an effective use of resources. We want to target our resources where they are needed. Many families can afford to pay for meals. Providing free school meals to the children of members of the Scottish Parliament, the children of doctors or the children of lawyers, for example, would use money that could otherwise be used to help those in need. Universal free school meals would, in effect, make children in the poorest families no better off than they currently are.

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I understand why the minister is cautious about introducing universal free school meals, but the Scottish National Party's amendment simply asks that the bill be flexible so that universal free school meals could be introduced at a later date. I think that he said that he will review the matter later, but we are simply asking for flexibility so that a pilot scheme can be introduced. We have made a very small request.

**Hugh Henry:** I did not say anything about reviewing proposals for universal free school meals at a later date. As I explained, I do not accept the principle behind providing universal free school meals.

**Frances Curran (West of Scotland) (SSP):** Will the minister take an intervention?

**Hugh Henry:** No, thank you.

As I said, universal free school meals would make children in the poorest families no better off than they currently are.

Ensuring that children are healthy, that they eat healthy food and that schools promote healthy eating to their pupils does not mean that free food should be given away; the issue is to do with educating young people about why healthy eating and healthy lifestyle choices are important.

**Tricia Marwick:** Will the minister give way?

**Hugh Henry:** No.

Frances Curran's amendment is not factually accurate. The research in question is independent research, not research by Hull City Council, and I have been advised that it revealed significant flaws in the programme. There are plans to end the pilot scheme for the same reason that we do not propose to introduce a pilot—namely, that resources could be targeted to better effect.

**Frances Curran:** Does the minister accept that Labour councillors do not want to end the pilot, but Liberal Democrat councillors do, and that Labour councillors accept the research, which is independent research by the University of Hull?

**Hugh Henry:** Frances Curran talks about independent research, but her amendment states that the research was done by Hull City Council. Perhaps she can clarify for us at some point who did the research. Hull City Council does not intend to progress the pilot scheme.

Our bill will build on the success that we have already achieved, make health promotion a central purpose of schooling and embed in law the culture that we seek in schools for the benefit of our children's health and our nation's future.

In order to ensure that such things are achieved, I move,

That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill.

14:43

**Fiona Hyslop (Lothians) (SNP):** The SNP supports the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, which contains a great deal that we have called for over the years. It is essential that we tackle nutrition in schools and reinforce the responsibility and duty of ministers and local authorities to promote health in our schools.

At this morning's meeting of the Education Committee, we heard from several representatives

of head teachers and teachers, who said that the changes that have been made under the McCrone agreement in relation to non-contact time and the curriculum for excellence were opening doors, ensuring that schools can pursue even further the promoting health agenda.

I welcome proposals that have been made to tackle chip vans outside school premises, because the trail of chip papers across towns throughout Scotland has exercised communities long and hard. The aim of tackling nutrition in schools is also involved, but the real issue, which is contentious and on which many of the debates that have taken place have centred, is the choice agenda for young people.

I am disappointed that the Education Committee did not consider the bill, but perhaps that was the result of the rush to legislate at the end of the parliamentary session. We should reflect on that rush to legislate.

I emphasise the argument that we must take a whole-school approach, which has been made by the Communities Committee and the Executive. The debate is not about one solution or one issue—it is not simply about the provision of free school meals being the silver bullet that will solve obesity. Things must be thought through under a wider agenda.

The whole-school approach is absolutely essential. We have heard about Hurlford primary school's agenda of working with local farmers and communities. We must ensure that the old adage "you are what you eat" is central to this issue. If young people understand where their food comes from, what it is and why it might harm them, they will be far better equipped to make decisions about what food they want to eat.

There are other issues. We want to teach young people more about the food that they eat, but who will teach them that when there is a recruitment crisis among home economics teachers? Perhaps that has been to do with the age profile in the past, but it is also about connections between policy areas, and it is important that we address that issue. We should look long and hard at the agenda of classroom assistants helping and supporting—perhaps with grandparents or mothers—health promotion in home economics. That would also require home economics teachers on the ground.

The Scottish National Party has always taken a joined-up approach, and our action plan for fit, healthy young Scots addresses a load of issues to do with fitness, health and education. Essentially, we have to take an early intervention position in relation to policy on education and young people generally. The SNP's proposals for the early years are to have 50 per cent more nursery provision for

three and four-year-olds and nursery teachers for all nursery pupils. We also want to cut class sizes in primary 1 to primary 3.

As part of our package of early support and firm foundations for life, we want to pilot the provision of free school meals in the early years. I support the extension of such provision into the nursery sector—that proposal is also supported by the committee—but we must also consider the number of hours from which pupils benefit from state nursery education in the first place. By extending those hours, we would have an obligation to consider the provision of support.

We want the provision of free school meals for many reasons, covering different areas. Obesity is one reason. Does the minister really think that Scotland's obesity problem is a class issue? Having read his biography, I understand that he is a former class warrior, so does he recognise that obesity is not isolated to one class in Scotland?

**Tommy Sheridan (Glasgow) (Sol):** Does the member agree that the minister misled Parliament when he said that universal free school meals would not help poorer kids? Evidence from the Child Poverty Action Group, One Plus and others shows that that policy would directly help poorer kids.

**Fiona Hyslop:** I agree. The minister misled us on two points, one of which the member has just raised. The other is that the issue has been considered by the Scottish Parliament previously. That is right, but it was considered during the previous parliamentary session, not during this one, and it is right that the current Parliament should be able to make a decision about whether it wants to pilot and proceed with free school meals.

The minister has set his face against universality as a general principle, but I have two points to make on that. Why is it okay that child benefit is universal? If he is so against universality, why did he not reject completely and out of hand the Education Committee's report of its inquiry into the early years, in which the point was made that if we really want to reach those who need support and early intervention most, we have to have a universal system? That report recognised that not everyone would receive the same—that is fair enough—but the point of free school meals is that if everyone got the same, there would be economies of scale.

One of the interesting things about nursery, kindergarten and other schools in Helsinki is that every class in every school has the same meal every day over a six-week rotation. There is no choice; there is only one meal. That brings me back to my point about trying to break through the choice agenda, which has to be about forming



habits early: if young people's palates are formed at an early stage, their habits are more likely to last them a lifetime. The biggest choices that young people have to make are not made in school. Those choices are about what they do out of and after school. That is why early intervention and piloting schemes in the early years is the right way forward.

The minister needs to expand his horizons. He should not close the door to our ideas but should consider being flexible enough to allow a future Parliament or Government to be able to choose to proceed with free school meals. That would be a bold step forward, and the right one. It would benefit not just the pupils and children of Scotland but the health of the nation.

I move amendment S2M-5339.3, to insert at end:

"but, in so doing, regrets that provision for the piloting of free and nutritious school meals on a universal basis in public sector nurseries and the early years of primary school has not been included in the Bill, nor the flexibility to introduce this at a later date, as a key element in tackling health and nutrition of children and improving the uptake of school meals in the longer term."

14:49

**Frances Curran (West of Scotland) (SSP):** At the outset, I say to the minister that we have evidence—which the Scottish Executive has tried to ignore for three years—that the provision of free, healthy school meals works. We knew that from other countries, but we now have evidence of that from within the United Kingdom. The policy works—not just a little bit, but spectacularly. As the researchers from the University of Hull put it, the policy "works wonders".

For three years, Hull City Council has given a free healthy meal and pudding to all primary school children in Hull. The policy has worked. That is not a matter of conjecture or opinion but of hard evidence and percentages. It has worked not only for the kids but for the family diet. The research shows that 30 per cent of parents said that, as a result of children eating healthier food at school, they now eat healthier food at home. Has the Executive not had a target since the previous parliamentary session on changing the food that is eaten in the house? In every debate on school meals, the Executive has said that any policy must be aimed at the parents as well. How much did the Executive spend on the fish phone billboard that advertised the healthier eating hotline and encouraged people to eat more healthily? That was a complete waste of money.

Given the results of the research into Hull's three-year programme, people might think that politicians would be lapping up the policy and shouting about its marvellous results. All other healthy eating initiatives, including those of the

Scottish Executive, have failed to tackle obesity in children and have failed to increase healthy eating. According to the statistics and the research, every other initiative has resulted in either a very small effect or, in many cases, a negative effect. People might think that politicians would shout from the rooftops that they now have a policy that works. Unfortunately, that is not the case for Liberal Democrat councillors in Hull. As I said in my intervention on the minister, Hull's Liberal Democrats have decided to pull the plug on the eat well do well programme, under which the previous Labour administration in Hull introduced free healthy school meals.

Hull is at the bottom of England's school league tables but, within the past three years, it has risen to the top of the school league tables for the uptake of school meals. The Minister for Education and Young People said that one of the intentions behind the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill was to increase the uptake of school meals not just among those children who are entitled to free school meals but across the board. What policies does he have for that? How will he implement that intention? What targets does he have? When he gave evidence to the Communities Committee, I asked him what targets the Executive has. There are no targets. The Executive has no serious intention of increasing uptake of school meals, but Hull City Council has achieved that. Hull is now top of the list in England.

The research goes on to state that the provision of free school meals in Hull has had a dramatic effect on pupils' grades and behaviour. We now have a ridiculous situation in which the Labour Secretary of State for Education and Skills—perhaps Hugh Henry should give him a wee phone call—has attacked the Liberal Democrats for scrapping the scheme. Alan Johnson said:

"For the council to be scrapping the free school meals just as its success is being proved by this study is perverse."

That right honourable member from Hull is right on. He has got it right. He understands the research.

The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill is nothing more than a blocking bill. It is a cynical manoeuvre. The bill was not introduced with the interests of children's health in mind. It is supposed to tackle health and nutrition in schools, yet it will change the existing law to make it illegal for individual local authorities to introduce free healthy school meals. While the law in England is being changed to let individual local authorities introduce free healthy school meals, the bill before us will specifically make that illegal. The bill is a politically sectarian and cynical manoeuvre.

**Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** The member has made an interesting case, but so far she has not mentioned once how much the policy that she advocates would cost. Will she give Parliament an estimate—I assume that she has done an estimate—of how much it would cost to implement her policy?

**Frances Curran:** It would cost £73 million. Considering that the Scottish Executive's underspend over the past four years has left £1.3 billion in its Westminster bank account, I think that that is cheap. Given that obesity in Scotland costs £170 million, our policy is by far the cheapest option.

**Tricia Marwick:** Will the member give way?

**Frances Curran:** I have only a minute left in which to make my last few points.

This is a politically sectarian bill that is not about nutrition. If it were, it would take on the arguments with which the free school meals campaign across Scotland has beaten its opponents. We have beaten them on the argument that children will not eat healthy food. We have beaten them on the argument that the best way in which to improve take-up is to provide free school meals. We have beaten them on the argument about universality versus targeting. I do not accept the points that the minister makes. The Dundee research of Morelli and Seaman proves that provision of free school meals right up to the 10<sup>th</sup> decile has an effect on the family income of children throughout the country—it tackles poverty. With the Hull research, we have beaten the Executive and won the argument on behaviour and better learning. The Executive is behaving worse than weans in the playground: it is trying to ignore advice by putting its fingers in its ears. We have beaten it on all the arguments.

Let us move forward and not have this cynical manoeuvring. Let us have the Parliament introduce a measure that will benefit children across Scotland for a generation: the provision of free, healthy school meals.

I move amendment S2M-5339.4, to insert at end:

"and, in so doing, urges the Scottish Executive to consider the crucial research by Hull City Council, announced on 22 January 2007, which shows how free healthy school meals can assist take up and improve learning and behaviour; acknowledges evidence already given to the Communities Committee which supports free healthy school meals, and considers that amendments should be brought forward at Stage 2 which would introduce free healthy school meals for all state school children, including those in nurseries."

14:56

**Dave Petrie (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** My initial reaction to the bill was a straight

question: why do we need legislation to decide what our kids should eat? Was that not the aim of the hungry for success and health-promoting schools policies, which appear to have failed to increase uptake of school lunches? However, we acknowledge that the health and welfare of pupils are increasing causes of concern, so we are generally supportive of the proposals in the bill at this stage.

There is a cycle of poor nutritional standards in key areas throughout Scotland. Childhood obesity is on the increase: in Scotland, 20 per cent of 12-year-olds are classified as obese and 33 per cent are overweight. That has knock-on effects on the health service, employability and the learning abilities of children while they are in school. Ironically, Scotland is one of the richest countries but has among the worst health statistics.

One positive aspect of the bill is that it puts the child first and tackles health issues from an early age. It has been proved that healthy eating from a young age continues into adulthood. We support the Soil Association's food for life campaign, which Fiona Hyslop mentioned earlier, to educate pupils about food production on farms, but we do not agree that free school meals should be universal when many can afford to pay.

I turn to the negative sides of the bill. Although it would promote healthy, nutritious food in schools, there is no guarantee that that would improve uptake. Regrettably, hungry for success has resulted in a downturn in uptake. Statistics show that in Edinburgh only 23 per cent of children take up free or paid-for meals. Areas where health concerns are more serious, such as Glasgow, Dundee, West Dunbartonshire and South Lanarkshire, have school meal take-up rates of less than 50 per cent. Many pupils still bring in lunches or go out to eat. Initiatives need to be introduced to encourage the take-up of school meals. Providing more lunch time activities may be the key to that.

If the hungry for success initiative has not brought about a great deal of improvement, why should legislation? I share the serious concerns that have been expressed about the popularity of mobile catering establishments outside schools, which may not be serving the best dietary interests of pupils. However, although eating outside school presents unhealthy eating temptations, it should not be assumed that all children who leave school for lunch are choosing that option. Many senior pupils enjoy a break from the school environment at lunch time and eat healthily.

Health promotion is not just about diet—exercise must also be taken into consideration if we are to be successful. There is scope for greater emphasis on extracurricular activities in school. Lunch time activities could encourage pupils to

stay in school and, I hope, to take up school lunches. When taking evidence in Airdrie, the Communities Committee identified the potential for provision of healthy, nutritious snacks to coincide with sporting activities. If kids stay at school for sport, we could give them snacks—food and drink—free of charge.

We must work to encourage children who are entitled to free school meals to take them up and must examine the reasons for their failure to do so.

**Frances Curran:** Does the member accept that that we know the reason? Research that has been done by a number of children's charities has shown that it is stigma.

**Dave Petrie:** I accept that stigma is a problem and was about to address the issue. I have taught in schools that operate a card system, to ensure anonymity, but let us make no mistake—the children know which kids are getting free school lunches. A lot of kids are not bothered about getting free school meals, although I appreciate that there is stigma for some.

Schools must decide on appropriate anonymity systems. Although it is true that primary school kids sometimes lose their cards, the committee agreed that palm scanning is not the way forward. Children with special needs must be given particular attention. Some pupils have allergies and diet-related conditions such as autism, which must be taken into consideration at, I suggest, stage 2.

There is general agreement on the provision of free water. Rather than bombarding schools with hundreds of cases of plastic bottles of water, I suggest that we go back to what it was like when I was at school, with water dispensers in the toilets providing good old-fashioned Scottish water. That would be more environmentally acceptable to everyone.

**Tricia Marwick:** Will the member give way?

**Dave Petrie:** I am sorry; I would struggle to finish if I did.

There is talk of banning foods. We need to influence the culture of nutrition in schools, but we should not be heavy handed—let us take a carrot and not a stick approach. Banning certain foods seems a little too prescriptive, particularly in school hostels, where it is important not to be too heavy handed. Civil liberties and parental choice need to be respected.

Although preparation of food on site, as the committee recommended, is the ideal scenario, we must take into account the fact that that is totally impractical in rural areas such as the area that I come from, where the school population is small. Staffing resources, fresh-food storage and

the unpredictability of uptake all have major financial implications.

Overall, we are generally supportive of the bill at this stage, although we have some reservations.

15:01

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** I came to the bill halfway through the Communities Committee's consideration of it. I thank the clerks and my colleagues on the committee for their forbearance in helping me up what was a rather steep learning curve. Necessarily, my comments this afternoon will be based on the stage 1 report, which we published recently.

As the minister said, the bill is about the promotion of health and good nutrition in schools and ensuring that minimum standards are met. We mention in our report that we need an all-embracing culture change. We need to involve schools but, as we say in the report, the issue is also wider involvement. We make the point that the bill is about all children, not just children who are educated in the public sector. There was a meeting of minds of all committee members on that point, which poses a question to the Executive about how to achieve that ambition. Perhaps some work remains to be done.

A crucial point that struck me deeply is the absolute importance of reaching children at pre-school stage. If we start them eating healthily at that stage, they will grow up with it. That point was put to me by schools in my constituency. My former school, Tain royal academy, pointed out that it is easier for it to go further down the path of good nutrition if the children who join in first year have experience of good food from primary and nursery.

Nutritional standards in schools will be introduced by regulation. The committee made a point about the importance of scrutinising those regulations as and when they are introduced. That will be of some assistance to the Scottish Executive. Hand in hand, we can help to achieve our goals.

Dave Petrie spoke about providing free water. He is right: providing it will go a long way towards what we want to achieve. We heard in evidence some not terribly convincing arguments from the food and drink manufacturers that if their products were not allowed in schools, it would lead to dehydration. That argument is precisely why we should have water in schools.

We heard good evidence and not so good evidence that did not persuade us. I will mention a straw argument that was made by the food manufacturers, on which I am sure the convener

will touch later. We were not persuaded by the manufacturers' argument that supplying a smaller size of confectionary bar somehow supported their right to sell them in schools.

We considered tuck shop income. It is probably true that cutting back on tuck shop sales will lead to a reduction in income, at least in the short term, but, as we say in our report, that will be addressed in the longer term. Tain royal academy has been down that route and it is working. We also mention in our report pupil involvement. Along with pupils at many other schools in many other constituencies, the pupils at Tain royal academy have been involved in arguing for the tuck shop to sell a healthier list of products.

On snacks and breakfasts, the flexibility of education authorities will be crucial. The promotion of school lunches is about working with pupils and involving them in decisions. In many ways, pupils are more health aware than their parents and the members of the previous generation. That gives me hope to believe that in future it will be much easier than we think to persuade our young people to eat more healthily. In fact, they will probably end up persuading us that that is the best way forward.

It would be wrong of me not to deal with free school meals. When the committee took evidence in Airdrie, pupils told us that they did not see why the children of better-off families should get free school meals. That is a philosophical point with which I agree.

**Frances Curran:** Will the member give way?

**Mr Stone:** In a second.

A parallel argument that both Frances Curran and I accept is that it should be horses for courses when it comes to taxation—in other words, we should tax people who can afford it but lay off those who cannot. A similar argument can be made for charging for school meals. I could afford to pay for my children's school meals and I do not see why I should not have done so.

**Tricia Marwick:** Will the member give way?

**Mr Stone:** I will do so shortly, after I have given way to Frances Curran.

It is worth remembering that, according to the Executive's calculations, it would cost £180 million to introduce free school meals for all school pupils—I see that Hugh Henry is nodding. That is well above any figure that Frances Curran is talking about.

**Frances Curran:** I thank the member for letting me intervene. I was at the meeting of the Communities Committee to which Jamie Stone referred. I think he will find that the pupils' answers were much more ambivalent than he suggests. One answer was that they were in favour of free

school meals and another was that they did not support them for all children. Their position was more ambivalent than he implies.

By the way, the figure of £180 million would cover all school students, not just those at primary school.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You are entering your final minute.

**Mr Stone:** If the member cares to check the *Official Report*, she will find a rather different story.

I have a final, significant point to make. The committee heard interesting and, I believe, important evidence from the Soil Association about children and their awareness of farming. At the agricultural shows in Scotland, children and young people come to look at the animals and have the opportunity to work with the farmers. We must encourage that.

Departments must work together, because I regret to say that the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department is promulgating a draft Scottish statutory instrument that would severely restrict the access of members of the public and young people to shows. I imagine that the SSI will not come before the Parliament before the election, but it may well do so in the summer, in the next session. The agricultural shows are where we showcase our agriculture and our agricultural products. The matter is for the future Parliament to deal with, but it would be deeply unfortunate if the policy of another department were to cut across the best intentions of the Minister for Education and Young People.

15:08

**Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab):** The stage 1 examination of the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill has been an interesting and quite enjoyable experience—not that I am saying that consideration of the Planning etc (Scotland) Bill was not.

Despite some disagreements about the approach, there is widespread agreement that we must take steps to improve the diet of our young people. Childhood obesity is a long-term problem for Scotland. It is a particular problem in my constituency and in other constituencies in Lanarkshire, which have some of the worst health statistics in Scotland.

It is important to state at the outset that the bill will not and could not work in isolation from other policies. It is part of a wide-ranging drive to improve the health of the people of Scotland. It seeks to build on initiatives such as health-promoting schools, hungry for success and sports academies. Improving the eating and drinking

habits of an entire nation is no easy task, and we must acknowledge that it is a long-term project. However, I am pleased to note that the overall aims of the bill have received widespread support from a wide range of agencies, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and many of the children's agencies in Scotland.

I am particularly pleased that young people engaged with the stage 1 examination of the bill. Their contributions proved valuable in drafting the committee's stage 1 report. Indeed, before moving on to address the detail of the bill, on behalf of the Communities Committee I want to thank a number of people. I am sure that I speak for all the committee members who participated in the visits to Hurlford primary school and Drumchapel high school when I thank both schools for the warm welcome that they gave us and the informative examples of good practice that they shared with us.

I was particularly pleased to welcome committee members to the @Home youth centre in my constituency, where we heard excellent evidence from pupils from Rosehall high school and Caldervale high school. I extend the committee's thanks for the welcome and hospitality that we received from all the staff at the centre. I also thank the staff and pupils of Janet Courtney halls of residence in Lerwick who took part in a videoconference with the committee to discuss the bill's implications. Finally, I thank all the schools throughout Scotland that responded to our call for written evidence. There is no doubt in my mind that the evidence that we heard from all those schools helped the committee to understand more fully the key issues that surround the promotion of healthy food in our schools.

I turn to the committee report. As I stated, we found widespread support for the bill's aims. Everyone seems to agree that we must improve the diet of all Scotland's children and young people. Everyone also agrees that that shift in eating culture has to happen at an early stage. That is why, based on the evidence that we heard, I, along with all other members of the committee, decided that nursery children and those who attend independent schools should be included within the scope of the bill. That recommendation applies to both the health promotion element of the bill and the introduction of statutory nutritional standards, to which I now turn.

The committee feels that there is a need for food manufacturers to take nutritional standards more seriously. They should provide a far greater range of healthy food in the school environment. The committee does not feel that sugary drinks suddenly become any healthier because they are not gulped down but sucked through a straw. In

fact, it is hard to believe that that was put forward as a serious argument—sadly, it was.

I hope that the food manufacturers and the drinks industry see the committee's recommendations as much as an opportunity as a challenge. If we are to change the eating habits of future generations of Scots, the food manufacturers and drinks industry must be on board and working with us.

I turn to the issue of vans and outlets near schools. Clearly, it is damaging to efforts to promote healthy eating in our schools if large quantities of unhealthy food are available just outside the school gates in the form of the products that are sold from burger and chip vans. The committee notes with interest that some local authorities have already taken steps to address the problem through their existing licensing powers.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** One minute.

**Karen Whitefield:** The committee also feels that, where possible, local authorities should work with those who run such vans, outlets and shops to promote healthier options. Clearly, the task is not simple.

Finally, I turn to the two amendments that are before the Parliament today. It is true that there was disagreement within the committee on the merits of the universal provision of free school meals. However, at no point did the committee call for evidence on the subject. Some witnesses chose to voice their views on the subject. The evidence was, therefore, sketchy and often based on opinion.

In response to the arguments in favour of universal provision, I quote from the evidence that we heard from Lynsey Currie, a pupil from Caldervale high school in Airdrie. When asked whether she thought it fair that the children of wealthier families should also get free school meals, she said:

"I do not think that that is fair. If you are well enough off to pay for your own lunch, you should do so. If someone from a poor family cannot pay for their lunch, that is not their fault, which means that they should get free meals."—*[Official Report, Communities Committee, 22 November 2006; c 4348.]*

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** Will the member give way?

**Karen Whitefield:** I am in my last minute. I am quoting from the *Official Report*. The quote can be referenced.

When we visited Drumchapel high school, a young boy told us that he was entitled to free school meals, but that that did not encourage him to stay in school. He was not taking up that entitlement.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You should be finishing now, Ms Whitefield.

**Karen Whitefield:** That demonstrates the complexity of the issue. It is not simply a question of providing free school meals.

I recommend the committee's report to the Parliament. Much of the detail of the bill remains to be debated, but I am sure that all members can unite around its general principles and begin the process of improving our children's health.

15:15

**Shona Robison (Dundee East) (SNP):** The Scottish National Party welcomes the bill, which offers one way of promoting good health and nutrition in schools. During the first session of the Parliament, I called for the removal of unhealthy products from vending machines in schools, because their presence undermines the healthy eating message that is promoted in the classroom and sends a mixed message to children. I am thankful that the Executive has come round to our view on the matter.

It is essential that we ensure that minimum nutritional standards are met for all food that is provided to children in schools throughout Scotland. We welcome the health promotion duty and concur with the evidence from witnesses that health promotion will become a central component in schooling, which will reinforce the practice of providing and promoting healthy food and drink in schools. We hope that the bill will contribute to a culture change in the understanding of nutrition and health issues and that it will help to change habits, so that young children's palates are exposed to healthy food, as Fiona Hyslop said, and children do not become addicted to a diet of salt and sugar at an early age. Schools' involvement in health promotion will have an effect on the wider community, because families will become engaged. The role of parents is hugely important. We hope that children will take home their experiences in school.

The SNP agrees with the Communities Committee's unanimous view that

"the Scottish Executive should extend the health-promotion provisions contained in the Bill to ensure that they apply to all children in Scotland, regardless of where they are educated."

Children in the independent and early-years sectors should be included. It is unfortunate that the Executive is prevaricating on that.

We share the committee's concern that food and drinks manufacturers appear to produce an extremely limited range of healthy and nutritious products, particularly products that are suitable for vending machines. However, it has been

suggested to me that under European Union rules some products that meet all the nutritional standards, such as some cereal bars, are categorised as confectionery. That commonsense issue needs to be addressed, because vending machines that contain only pumpkin seeds might be of limited value. We need to get it right.

We welcome the flexibility that is provided by giving local authorities a discretionary power to provide food and drink free of charge, but that flexibility should be extended to apply to school lunches, as Fiona Hyslop said. We regret that the bill does not give local authorities the flexibility to introduce free school lunches or even to pilot them. We strongly believe that a pilot should be conducted, to assess the benefits of free school lunches and consider the implications of the approach for education authority resources. Such work would provide evidence from Scotland that people on both sides of the debate could consider. We would not have to look elsewhere for evidence.

We share members' concern about the challenge that is presented by vans and outlets that are close to schools, which are magnets at lunch time, particularly for secondary school students. Local authorities should do all that they can to work with outlets to promote healthier options and, if necessary, they should use their licensing powers, perhaps to set up exclusion zones around schools.

An important point has been made about the use of local produce in schools. In Dundee, we are fortunate to be surrounded by berry fields and we have the Tayside berry project, which has done a lot of good work. Unfortunately, the product is brought into schools on only limited occasions. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry that Jamie Stone thinks that that is a laughing matter, but healthy food is an important issue for the Scottish National Party. We believe that it is necessary to get produce from local farms into schools to improve health.

We pioneered and support many of the measures in the bill, but we realise that, alone, they will not be an adequate response to the growing levels of childhood obesity. That is why the SNP's action plan for fit, healthy young Scots contains a range of other measures, including annual fitness checks and individual health plans, to ensure that children, their parents, schools and local health professionals are all involved in a planned and managed way in the continuous improvement of children's health. That will allow potential problems to be picked up at an early stage and will encourage children to take more responsibility for their health through to adulthood. We cannot continue with the present situation, in which there are fairly low levels of obesity in primary 1 but high levels of obesity in primary 7,

and in which one in five 12-year-olds is clinically obese. That is why we need active intervention.

Other measures in our action plan include an increased level of physical education and more sport through innovative sport volunteer programmes. The issue is about diet, but it is also about fitness. We need a range of measures. I hope that members will support the SNP amendment.

15:21

**Mr Charlie Gordon (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab):**

The bill will place new duties on various bodies, but especially on local authorities. For example, there will be a duty to try to ensure that all schools are health promoting. However, according to the Scottish Parliament information centre, every local authority school in Scotland is preparing to achieve that status this year. One wonders why we propose to legislate for something that is already being implemented.

Hungry for success, which is the Executive's programme to improve nutritional standards, improve the uptake of school meals and reduce the stigma that is linked with free school meals, has worked well in primary schools since 2004. However, it has been implemented in all secondary schools only since December 2006. Given that the programme is monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, surely we should wait for an evaluation of the programme's impact in secondary schools. We need to know what the experiences have been before we rush to judgment.

I make it clear that I have no quarrel with the objectives of health promotion and better nutrition in our schools. The city of Glasgow, perhaps more than any other part of Scotland, needs better nutrition as part of a response to the city's major health challenges. That is why Glasgow City Council, with resources from the Scottish Executive, introduced Europe's largest free fruit programme and the United Kingdom's largest free breakfast programme in schools.

**Frances Curran:** Given that the member was the leader of Glasgow City Council when the free breakfast programme was introduced, will he say what the difference is between a free breakfast and a free school meal?

**Mr Gordon:** The free breakfasts were initially wrapped round breakfast clubs in schools and were not part of the school meals service. One matter that the bill will tidy up is that, at present, the legal powers under which free breakfasts can be provided in schools are not particularly apparent. However, the uptake of the free breakfast scheme was surprisingly variable, which I attribute to the complicated lives that people lead

these days, even on a day-to-day basis. We should not kid ourselves that, with any sort of universal free meals service, we would get anything like 100 per cent take-up. However, that is not what the debate is about.

**Ms Rosemary Byrne (South of Scotland) (Sol):** Will the member give way?

**Mr Gordon:** Sorry, but I want to carry on.

The free fruit and free breakfast programmes in Glasgow, which were initially funded through the better neighbourhood services fund, together with the council's innovative pupil points reward programme, which gives pupils an incentive, and which is within the ambit of the council's branded school meal service, fuel zone, have brought a high level of success in Glasgow's primary schools.

As I said, it is too early to evaluate the impact of the hungry for success programme in our secondary schools. The early experience in Glasgow's secondary schools, from August 2006 to the present, was of a 17 per cent reduction in take-up, but the figure has now gone down to 11 per cent. Some will say that such figures show that the bill is needed, but others might point out that once the cohort of children who have been successfully exposed to hungry for success in primary school enter secondary schools, more of them will make the right choices. What about trusting children's choices? What about—here is a novel idea—trusting local government on such issues? Why not maintain local flexibility?

I recently attended a nutritional evening at King's Park secondary school in my constituency, where, purely in the line of duty, I had to taste all sorts of delicious dishes prepared by pupils as part of a school nutrition action group. That indicates that a cultural shift is taking place on the ground. It would be a pity to inhibit such local flexibility. Is there not a danger that an overprescriptive approach might be counterproductive? Might school meal take-up fall and overall diet deteriorate? We might want to ban burger vans near schools, but what would we do about cafes and fast food outlets? If we are not prepared to go as far as locking the school gates at lunch time, are we not gambling that young people will vote with their feet? Surely we must consider the danger of doing the wrong things, albeit for the right reasons.

15:26

**Mr David Davidson (North East Scotland) (Con):** As a health professional, I believe very much in good balanced nutrition for all. Among children in particular, we are seeing an epidemic of diabetes and a range of allergic responses and hypersensitivities due to poor nutrition, ignorance of risk and lack of exercise. The Executive should

by now have sorted out the lack of opportunity for exercise in schools, yet the number of hours given over to exercise in Scotland is falling behind the figure for the rest of the United Kingdom.

The bill as it stands will not deliver what I think all members want, which is that children should have good, healthy, balanced diets. That does not start when they go to school. As it is presented, the bill is almost an attack on or interference in the role and responsibility of parents. Instead of children being forced to eat balanced and healthy food when they get to school, surely they should learn the lessons of good nutrition from their parents. I repeat what I have said in the chamber over the years: when are we going to teach children how to become good parents and give them the tools to help them to understand the problem?

**Patrick Harvie:** Does the member acknowledge that improving what is happening with food in schools can be one way of disseminating knowledge to families? If we engage in that constructively, it can improve parents' attitude to food at home.

**Mr Davidson:** I do not disagree, but what age would children be by then? If possible, children should start learning lessons at their mother's knee. Sometimes, parents need help to do that.

I am afraid that the Scottish Executive is again trying to impose more nanny-state medicine and to do away with the role and responsibility of parents. I accept that some parents need help. That reinforces my previous point, with which Charlie Gordon agrees: what is the point of a school providing only so-called healthy foods if the children can exercise their choice and eat what they have brought with them or leave the building to buy what they fancy—be it junk food or whatever—elsewhere? Surely if the children are allowed out of school at lunch time, they will simply vote with their feet and carry on as usual.

As I have said before, the way to break that cycle starts when children are young. If the school head teacher is given the chance of running the school, why cannot it be left to them, in conjunction with parents and pupils, to make the decisions about what is served in the school? Once again, we have evidence that the Executive does not want parental input into education. It is high time that we brought back school boards, which, along with head teachers, should run schools in the best interests of local communities. That would partly involve raising awareness of various types of food, especially, as others have said, fresh local produce.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Will the member give way on that point?

**Mr Davidson:** I do not have time.

The bill is far too prescriptive. It is not well written and it does not seem to have any sanctions. What role do ministers think that local education authorities will have? If a school does not deliver the state-prescribed diet, what sanctions will be imposed on councillors and the school?

Why does the Executive seem hellbent on removing the responsibility of parents? By removing parental involvement from school boards, the Executive is depriving parents of the opportunity to participate for the good of the children—even on the issue of children's diets.

People have asked why we need legislation. Is the Executive prepared to employ extra staff to keep children in school? Will those staff members be teachers, security staff or what? Will there be food-frisking controls as children go in and out of schools? I begin to wonder where we are going.

The management of the situation should start at home. It is fairly obvious that, in areas where Scotland's health is poorest, the uptake of school lunches is at its lowest.

The bill may be well intended, but it is not well thought out. As presented, it will not deliver what it says on the tin. On the Conservative benches, we believe that parents should be encouraged to teach their children from an early age so that they grow accustomed to healthy eating and develop an appetite for it. That appetite will have to be coupled with physical activity. There will have to be a real understanding of the need to provide for pupils who have diet-associated health problems.

Where will all the money for the bill's proposals come from? What happened to the Liberal Democrat notion of civil liberty and parental choice? Why do we seem to be heading for prescriptive central control in everything? When we go round their doors, as we are doing just now, the public tell us that the Parliament does nothing but ban things. Why do we not have a bill that promotes healthy eating from the very beginning—not when children go to school but from the very beginning, when they are at their mothers' and fathers' knees? That is where we have to start.

I would like the minister to come back at stage 2 having given the issues some thought. He is responsible for children, not just schools. He has to consider what can be done to help parents at the very early stages of their children's lives. We all share the objective of improving the quality of Scotland's children's diet. However, as written, the bill will not deliver that objective.

15:32

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I cannot help expressing a little disappointment at David



Davidson's speech. I hope that the Conservatives will not oppose the general principles of the bill. Even in Conservative terms David Davidson is wrong. If the Executive's bill was telling parents what they were allowed to feed their children at home, he would have a much more valid civil liberties argument.

When we first received the bill, I, like Dave Petrie, asked myself whether we really needed legislation. I considered the evidence of hungry for success and wondered whether we needed a bill. I concluded that the bill is good and that it will improve not only what is happening in schools but what is happening in children and young people's wider lives, including their family lives.

I will talk briefly about the health promotion aspects of the bill. When taking evidence, the Communities Committee heard a gargantuan phrase—the obesogenic environment. Young people in that environment, even when they take rational decisions, find that conditions such as obesity are more likely to occur. Making health promotion a core function of schools is taking a step in the right direction away from the obesogenic society.

Our ambition to give young people a healthy environment should not end at the school gate. The bill does what it can in the context of schools, but I would argue that in the next session of Parliament we should look beyond the school gate and consider ways of making a fundamental shift towards a healthier society for young people outside of school as well.

On the issue of nutritional standards, the bill gives us an opportunity to shift the philosophy. Food should not be regarded merely as the feeding of children; it should be regarded as part of the education of children. Food in schools should be part of the educational experience. As I think Jamie Stone said, children should be aware of where food comes from. They should know about the farming in Scotland that helps to feed them. Such awareness will stay with them for life. Children should also learn about how food can assist them in their health and in their academic attainment. The opportunity that the bill gives us to make that philosophical shift breaks the link that David Davidson sees, with food being a parental responsibility and education being the school's responsibility. The food that is provided in schools should be seen as part of the educational experience and I can see no reason why it should be paid for differently.

We have heard about the contradiction between the universal free provision of breakfast, water and fruit and the lack of such provision for lunch. The bill says:

“The authority may—

- (a) provide any food or drink free of charge, or
- (b) charge pupils for any food or drink.”

That applies to anything outside of lunch—for anything that cannot be called lunch, there is local flexibility. Let us explore the minister's argument. The central point is to do with targeting. We have a certain amount of resources—where do we target them? Why should the taxpayer pay for a free lunch for the child of an education minister, a successful architect or a general practitioner? If that is the argument that is being used, why does it not also apply to free breakfasts? Why should a taxpayer pay for the free breakfast of the child of a rich family? We should pay for free breakfasts and for free lunches, because there are some things for which society is better off if it provides them collectively. Education is one of them. Given that food in schools should be seen as part of education, the same argument applies to it.

The Executive's approach with respect to poverty is to focus on stigma. It seeks to remove any distinction by producing anonymous systems. I think that we should remove any such distinction by removing the distinction between who is entitled to free school meals and who is not. The proposed anonymous systems give me cause for concern, partly because they address a problem that exists only in some people's perceptions. The evidence that the committee heard did not show clearly that stigma is a problem for young people—or indeed for teachers. The evidence suggests that some parents perceive it to be a problem, at least for other people. However, I am not convinced that there is strong evidence to suggest that young people themselves feel it to be a problem. The young people whom I have asked about it in schools have had a very mature attitude to the issue.

As I said, I have concerns about the anonymous systems that the Executive wishes to introduce. Some of them might be unnecessary and some of them might lead to the introduction of technological systems such as swipe cards and fingerprinting. There are longer-term worries. If we are teaching children to put it on the plastic, I worry that we might pay the price in consumer debt in 20 years' time. If we are teaching children that biometric systems are a normal and natural thing in society, I worry about the civil liberties implications.

I will close by speaking about the draft nutritional standards and the draft regulations. I think that they place too much emphasis on a narrow approach to nutrient levels, with nothing on artificial additives or the sustainable procurement and freshness issues that the Soil Association has discussed so articulately while promoting them in schools in Ayrshire in particular.

I hope that there will be some improvements to the bill, but the Greens will certainly support its passage this evening.

15:38

**Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab):** I am happy to have the opportunity to speak in support of the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill. Stage 1 consideration has been a comparatively short piece of work for the Communities Committee, as its convener mentioned earlier—compared with our previous involvement with another bill, it has been very short. Nonetheless, this bill is very important.

Who could object to the principle of ensuring that our children and young people have a balanced and nutritious diet? Research tells us that, in the school year 2004-05, 9 per cent of pupils in primary 1 were obese. As we move up the school, we find that almost 20 per cent of pupils aged 11 or 12 were considered to be obese. That is not the best start to life that we can give a child, and the Government was right to take action to address that trend. It is right to legislate to ensure that we achieve a balance throughout Scotland and all its local authority areas.

As we know, poor diet is a contributor to poor health. Not only can improving children's diet make a major impact on their health, it has been shown to have beneficial outcomes for educational attainment as well as for health in later years. If we are to address the issue, we must educate our children at the earliest opportunity on the benefits of eating a healthy and balanced diet.

The majority of schools in Scotland have made progress on changing the attitudes of young people. They are challenging the attitudes of some young folk who think that healthy food must be dull and unappetising. I am pleased that schools have approached that challenge head on with the support of staff at all levels.

The committee visited schools in Glasgow and Ayrshire during its stage 1 scrutiny of the bill. Unfortunately, I was unable to join the committee on its visits, but I have taken the time to visit schools in my constituency at lunch time, when I have had the chance to have lunch with the pupils and to hear their views on health promotion and the hungry for success strategy. I have listened to their views on the need to tackle the issue head on and introduce legislation. I wanted to know what they thought about the changes to their school lunches, the choices that are available to them and the environment in which they have their lunch.

I was pleasantly surprised by the responses that I heard from the young people in schools

throughout my constituency. Not only did they understand the importance of eating healthily, they knew, too, the importance of exercise. To my surprise, they were not just practising that lifestyle change in school but taking what they had learned home to their parents and grandparents. The young people were not only making healthy choices from what was available in the lunch cafeterias; they were making healthy choices about what they had in their lunch boxes. The schools have been successful in getting the message across.

At one school in particular—St Patrick's primary school in Kilsyth—the school council was way ahead of what the committee was doing. While we were at the start of scrutinising the bill and preparing our report, the school council was finalising a report to the head teacher that suggested ways in which the environment of the school dining room could be improved. I came away from the school thinking that it all looked very healthy for the future.

Concern has been expressed that the number of pupils who take school meals could decline when—or, I should say, if—the bill is enacted. Numbers may go down. Indeed, I understand that there is evidence that that has happened, in some cases, as a result of the hungry for success strategy, particularly in secondary schools. However, I believe that it is an expected short-term dip, which I am confident will be overcome as time passes and the benefit of working with the young people in our primary schools makes its way through. I fully support the duty that will require local authorities to promote healthy school lunches.

During the committee's evidence taking, and in speaking with young people in schools, I heard about the importance of social interaction at meal times. I hope that the minister will give guidance to local authorities to consider that issue and the environments of the lunch rooms.

**Fiona Hyslop:** Will the member give way?

**Cathie Craigie:** I am sorry, but I do not have time.

Breakfast clubs provide a longer meal time, and the children can eat their food in a more relaxed way. That is certainly better than having to rush their food at lunch time.

To sum up, I think that the bill is worthwhile legislation that will have a beneficial impact on the long-term health of our schoolchildren and on the long-term health of the population of Scotland.

15:44

**Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** Initially, I was not convinced that the Schools

(Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill was needed. The hungry for success campaign seemed to be working fairly well and I struggled to understand why statutory measures were required. The turkey twizzlers that were so hated by Jamie Oliver were never a feature of school meals in Scotland, thanks to the hungry for success campaign.

However, the exchange, which has already been mentioned, between the committee and the Scottish Food and Drink Federation and the British Soft Drinks Association convinced me that the bill is needed. They suggested that they could meet the nutritional standards by reducing the size of their chocolate bars and that concerns about fizzy drinks in schools could be solved by providing straws. We were grateful for the British Dental Association's absolute rejection of the idea that straws can mitigate the effects of fizzy drinks on teeth.

In the face of an obesity epidemic, appalling oral health and growing concern about the food that we shovel into ourselves and our children, the evidence from the food and drink associations was astonishing. It convinced me that culture change is not enough and that legislation is required. I hope that the food and drink associations and their member organisations will reflect on the evidence that was given to the committee and consider whether they served their cause and their membership well.

I turn to the issues that divided the committee and are the subject of the amendments to the motion. The bill does not provide for free school meals. It affords local authorities the flexibility to provide free breakfasts and snacks but not the flexibility to introduce free school meals. As Patrick Harvie said, that is illogical. If local authorities are to be trusted to make decisions about breakfast and snacks, I do not see why we cannot trust them to make decisions about free school meals. As Charlie Gordon pointed out, we should give them the flexibility to do that. The Government at Westminster has given such flexibility to local authorities in England and Wales, but the Labour and Liberal Executive in Scotland will not provide similar flexibility here.

The committee heard evidence from the Child Poverty Action Group and others on Hull City Council's pilot project to provide free school meals. That evidence was not sought by the committee and was not part of the Executive's consultation. The majority of the committee pointed out, rightly, that the pilot scheme in Hull has not been evaluated in Scotland. That is why they would not support my proposition that local authorities in Scotland should be able to introduce pilot schemes on free school meals. Today, in a statement on the project in Hull, the CPAG states:

"There has ... been a 'dramatic' increase in the take up of school meals, with 64% of pupils now taking a healthy school lunch."

That is a figure that we can only dream about. The CPAG also quotes the director of the institute for learning at the University of Hull, who said:

"There has been a significant impact in all areas of children's schooling: from behaviour, social relationships, health and learning, children were more relaxed, more alert, more calm and less irritable."

I instinctively believe that a nutritious school meal at lunch time is a benefit to children. Even if there is no evidence to prove that, I instinctively believe it, as a parent who has brought up children. Labour and Liberal members might believe that there is no benefit to a nutritious school meal at lunch time, but they have no evidence to support that view. If they are convinced that they are correct, why do they not have the courage to allow local authorities to run pilot schemes in Scotland so that we can evaluate the health benefits and the costs to local authorities? However, the Executive has set its face against that.

The Executive has also set its face against the committee's unanimous view that the provisions in the bill must be extended to independent schools. One of the minister's officials said:

"Essentially, it is not normal practice for the Executive to impose legislative burdens on independent schools as, by their very nature, they are independent."—[*Official Report, Communities Committee*, 24 October 2006; c 4148.]

Frankly, I have never heard such nonsense in my life. That would mean that Disclosure Scotland would not apply and that no inspections would ever take place. Of course we place legislative burdens on independent schools. As I have said to the minister before, the issue is about all our children in Scotland, regardless of where they are educated. I suggest that the bill should be extended to cover the independent sector.

Anonymous systems using palm prints and biometrics have been talked about. If the Government wants to introduce identification cards or palm-print and biometric technology, it should have the courage to come to the Parliament and debate it. What is not acceptable is that, by the back door, in a piece of legislation that has nothing to do with it, the Executive would introduce palm printing and biometrics to our schools. That is unacceptable behaviour.

I am sorry that David Davidson is no longer in the chamber, because his speech was the silliest that I have heard for such a long time. It suggested to me that he has not read any of the evidence submitted to the committee. There will be no frisking of children bringing food into schools—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh):** You must close.

**Tricia Marwick:** The conclusion at paragraph 27 of the committee's report makes it clear that there has never been any suggestion that children will be frisked. David Davidson was extremely silly, and I hope that he will reflect on that tonight.

15:51

**Ms Rosemary Byrne (South of Scotland) (Sol):** Some aspects of the bill are to be welcomed. It is good that we are going to ensure that schools are health-promoting environments and that food and drink supplied in schools meet defined nutritional standards. Promoting the uptake of school meals is also a good move. However, all those things should be happening already—that may be a slightly cynical approach to take, but I think that schools are health promoting and always have been. It is good that we are encouraging them, but I do not know whether we needed a bill to do that.

I regret that the bill does not extend to early years education, because the young children are the ones whom we can influence the most. If we can get our young children into eating healthy food at an early age, that will go right through life with them. We will make the changes by tackling the problem with the very young and their parents, and the best setting for that work is the nursery and other pre-school settings.

I feel strongly that the principle of universal free school meals would have a huge impact on the health of the nation in the long term and provide nutritious meals for those who would otherwise go without. Many families do not take up the opportunity for free school meals, and there is still a stigma attached to them. Children are often well aware of who is getting a free meal and who is not.

**Patrick Harvie:** What does the member think about the evidence that we heard that, even with an anonymous system such as swipe cards, kids know who is getting a free meal?

**Ms Byrne:** We had swipe cards in the school that I taught at in my previous existence, but the kids still knew who got free meals. There are a lot of reasons for that—I will not go into them, but I can talk to any member who wants to discuss them. However, there is no doubt that the children know.

I have experienced situations in which children who have not been well fed have not been given free school meals because their parents would not fill in the forms for their own reasons—members can imagine what some of those reasons were. Those children were very deprived because of

that. That still happens frequently, so let us not fool ourselves.

There is the idea that universality means that the rich are getting away with something. As somebody mentioned, the system works in other ways with benefits, especially with family allowances. If someone is rich enough, they can pay more in their tax—it is as simple as that. With universality, we would combat child poverty and we would also enhance learning. Children should have a good social setting for their school meals, where everyone can sit and interact. The fact that children are rushed through the school day is one reason why the uptake is so low in some cases. As other members mentioned, if we had a good environment in our school dinner halls and if everybody knew that they would get their meal and nobody had to worry about paying for it because it was all there for them, we would make a tremendous difference to children's attitude to learning about healthy eating and the social skills and interaction that go with it.

That is the situation in Finland and that is what was found in Hull recently. We are talking not just about nutrition but about all the other aspects. There is a lot of research to show that healthy eating makes a difference to learning. Access to water was provided under hungry for success at a time when it was much needed. We need to build on all that. The social aspect, as well as the educational aspect, appeals to me.

It is interesting to note that 90 per cent of pupils in Finland take free lunches. We could reach such figures if we implemented the measures properly.

As for locally produced foods, East Ayrshire's example is good. That area uses as much locally produced food as possible, much of which is organic. I have visited a school in that area and eaten a meal there. Uptake dipped when the scheme there started, but it is being built on. East Ayrshire is doing the social thing, too. Schools are bringing in parents in the evening to discuss the food that they are offering children.

We need to firm up some practice throughout the country. If we talk to children, they will tell us what menus they want and what they want to eat. That is important, too. Ross Finnie said that we should buy local and eat local. We should try to think about that a bit more.

I have a great issue with breakfast clubs, because I have found that many schools in deprived areas in the south of Scotland have never had a breakfast club, whereas the school up the road in a much better-off area has one. That is inequality.

The bill will allow schools and local authorities to make decisions but, unless we have universality, we will have an unequal system under which the

most deprived will sometimes be left out. That is a disgrace. I hope that we will reconsider that.

I will say a little more about uptake.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Very quickly.

**Ms Byrne:** Since the introduction of free meals in Hull, uptake has increased from 40 to 80 per cent. That is another move in the right direction and Hull City Council hopes to extend its scheme to secondary schools. We could follow that lead and I hope that we will re-examine the matter.

15:57

**John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab):** Nutrition in schools has been high on the agenda in my family this week, because my wife has spent the past three mornings dishing up healthy, locally produced breakfasts in primary schools as a volunteer with the Royal Highland Education Trust. I commend that organisation's excellent work to the minister.

Good nutrition and healthy eating for children are a very high priority. However, I confess that, like Dave Petrie and Tricia Marwick, I approached the bill with some scepticism. That was partly because I had my doubts about section 1, which says:

"Ministers must endeavour to ensure that ... schools ... are health-promoting."

The words "must endeavour to ensure" do not convey the smack of firm government; they sound a little woolly. The minister might like to consider something a bit clearer for the initial section.

Another reason for my approach was that I am aware from my constituency experience that many schools are doing well. The public-private partnership developments at all six high schools in East Lothian mean that we now have attractive dining areas, pretty good-quality catering, cafe areas and good-quality food. Much good work is going on out there.

However, along with committee colleagues, I heard compelling evidence in our initial proceedings. We heard, saw and tasted important evidence. I will leave aside the embarrassing nonsense to which Karen Whitefield and Jamie Stone referred—the suggestion from people who tried to justify the sale of fizzy drinks in schools that using a straw means that a drink does not come into contact with the teeth. Someone who has spent money on a fizzy drink might be prepared to let it bypass the teeth, but they would not want it to bypass the taste buds. Fizzy drinks cannot be tasted without coming into contact with the teeth, which leads to tooth decay, so what was said is drivel. Such comments bring the industry into disrepute, so the idea can and should be discounted.

We heard serious and alarming evidence on children's obesity. Obviously, problems exist in some areas as a result of low-value and high-cost catering, and there are problems associated with large numbers of pupils buying burgers, pies, chips, fizzy drinks and worse outside schools. On the basis of the evidence that the committee received and on reflection, I accept the case for legislation.

Like committee colleagues, I was impressed by East Ayrshire Council's promotion and procurement of fresh local food. It is assumed far too often that big, centralised distribution networks must be the most efficient means of procuring food in the public sector. EU competition rules have sometimes been cited as the reason behind such procurement. East Ayrshire Council has demonstrated that such an assumption is nonsense and that excellent local food at competitive prices can be obtained. Local meat, vegetables, fish and dairy produce are usually healthier foodstuffs; better still, they help children to enjoy healthy food. They also enable children to become more aware of where food comes from, which is good for local producers and processors and children's health. The initiative is clearly well worth while, and must also be good news for local education authorities. I have spoken to East Lothian Council about the case for a similar initiative in my constituency.

The Communities Committee made the case for extending the bill's scope to cover food in private schools, particularly nursery schools. I think that the minister said that he is prepared to consider that matter further. I hope that he will respond positively to the recommendation. Educational standards in private schools are subject to inspection and it should not be too difficult to include nutrition in the scope of those inspections. The matter is certainly important for nursery schools. I hope that the Executive will consider the matter further.

Frances Curran and nationalist and Green colleagues have returned to the theme of free school meals for all, regardless of means. However, it is obvious that free school meals are not actually free—the taxpayer pays for them. I question whether it makes sense to spend taxpayers' money from the education budget on buying meals for families that can afford to pay for them. People who call for such an expenditure commitment have a duty to say where money should be taken from in the education budget. We have not heard where that money would be taken from.

One third of pupils who are entitled to free meals do not take them. We should therefore work to improve the uptake of those meals. That figure

also undermines the argument for extending eligibility for free school meals to the better-off.

A lot of good work is being done in schools throughout Scotland, and I hope that the bill will drive up standards even further. However, I conclude with the vexed problem of pupils buying snacks and other things from nearby shops, cafes and vans. There is a real risk that those pupils will buy bad food and that their nutrition will be poor. Buying such things can also contribute to litter and bad behaviour in the streets. I do not agree with the line that Charlie Gordon has taken—I tend to take a more Stalinist view of such matters. The Communities Committee suggested that local authorities should encourage food outlets near schools to provide healthy food. If that fails, they can use their licensing powers to regulate those outlets. That is a good idea, which I hope the minister will consider. I am puzzled by the line that Frances Curran has taken. We all want to promote healthier lifestyles for children, and I hope that members will support the bill.

16:04

**Donald Gorrie (Central Scotland) (LD):** I will make two points. First, I endorse everything that Charlie Gordon said. It is clear that, as a result of his local government background, he has great experience of the matters that we are discussing and that he fully understands them. I share his concerns about the apparent centralising and anti-local government aspects of the bill. We should give much more scope to schools, local councils and groups of parents to develop their own way forward to healthy eating.

The two amendments raise an interesting point. Neither would have any effect if it were to be passed. Obviously, the proposer of the amendment would achieve a victory, but such issues should be dealt with at stage 2. We should agree to the general principles of the bill, which would enable all those who argue about free school meals or how to approach the issue in a different way to put their ideas forward, and for the committee, which has obviously studied the issue very carefully, to go ahead with the ideas or not as the case may be.

On my other point, one or two members have spoken about sport and physical activity, which are very important as part of a healthy life for a young person. However, no one has spoken about mental health. The mind is far more important than the body. Pupils' morale is very important. Many of our areas suffer from individuals or communities having low self-esteem and low morale. The other day, I was talking to a friend who teaches in a perfectly respectable school in a respectable area, but a lot of his pupils think that the community and the school are a dump and that they themselves

are useless. We have to get people out of thinking like that. We have to devote far more attention to teachers working with small groups of kids to develop their self-esteem, to help to develop their community's self-esteem, and to create a better atmosphere.

I think it was Napoleon who said something like the moral is to the physical as three is to one. We want to aim at the kids' heads as well as their bodies if we want to make them healthy.

16:06

**Frances Curran:** There is a battle on over what our children eat. The big question is whether the Executive is serious about that battle and equipped for it.

There has been a lot of talk about figures during the debate. The big food companies spend £1 billion targeting our children so that they will eat junk food such as sweets, crisps, burgers and pizza. Those companies have no problem with universality; they are quite happy to target the rich children and the poor ones as long as they get the sale in the end. They are also prepared to spend as much as it takes to win the battle.

The question in this debate and in all the debates that we have on the issue should be whether, in 10 years, our children and the society in which we live will be eating healthier food. The jury is out on that. So far, we do not have the policies that will make an impact and the independent evidence, some of which was commissioned by the Scottish Executive, shows that we are not shifting towards the targets and outcomes.

Dave Petrie said that take-up of school meals is falling overall, not just among those who are entitled to them free. He is absolutely right. Charlie Gordon said that if meals are made healthy, the danger is that overall take-up will fall. He is right, too. Glasgow City Council and the secondary schools showed in evidence to the committee that that has been their experience.

What is the answer to that? When healthy meals were introduced to the primary schools in Hull, take-up fell from 48 to 34 per cent. When the meals were made free, take-up rose from 34 to 65 per cent. Any good researcher would see the dramatic changes in those figures. We are talking about the same group of children, and figures that changed over a year. So what had changed? The meals had been made free. Providing healthy meals is only half the equation; the other half is providing them for free.

Karen Whitefield said that the committee did not call for evidence on free school meals. That was a missed opportunity. Both Karen Whitefield and

Jamie Stone referred to Lynsey Currie and the evidence session in Airdrie to show that young people do not want free school meals or that they support the Executive's position. Annisha Davie, who was sitting beside Lynsey Currie, said:

"If school meals were free, a lot more people would always go to the cafeteria to eat, as that would save them having to go and pay for stuff. They would be like, 'Oh yes, the school's paying for more stuff for us.' They would get their free lunch and then be able to go wherever they wanted after that."—[*Official Report, Communities Committee*, 22 November 2006; c 4348.]

The young people would not necessarily go to burger vans and chip shops. If members want to use that evidence, they should quote more than just one individual.

Moreover, the Scottish Youth Parliament supports the provision of free healthy school meals not just for school pupils, but for all 16 to 19-year-olds who are in college. The Scottish Youth Parliament represents young people in this country.

In response to David Davidson's complaint about the nanny state, I will not go as far as Tricia Marwick did but I must ask what the Tories have against nannies. What have nannies ever done to them?

Let us consider what we know about school meals. As Cathie Craigie said, we know that healthy eating is linked to educational attainment and we have evidence to prove that. We know that, if we provide free healthy school meals, children will eat the healthy food on the plate and take-up of school meals will massively increase.

On the issue of universality, which is at the heart of the debate, the arguments of Labour ministers, Liberals and Labour back benchers are all over the shop. They were in favour of free fruit, so they introduced that policy. Because it costs just 50p a head, children can have an apple and an orange. Charlie Gordon and Glasgow City Council are in favour of the provision of free breakfasts. Because that costs just 78p per child, it is made universal and everyone can get it. However, because lunch costs £1.15 a head, pupils such as my son, who attends a Glasgow City Council school, are not given a free lunch. Surely members should be either opposed to universality or in favour of it. However, is money the real issue? If the issue is how much universal provision would cost, why can pupils get free fruit and a free breakfast but not a free school meal?

The minister knows the arguments. He and I have spent many hours on street corners and other places—

**Members:** Ooh.

**Frances Curran:** —such as at high street stalls, with leaflets in hand, campaigning for free higher

education, free grants to 16 and 18-year-olds and free nursery places for all who need them. The minister knows the arguments. That is what is so frustrating about today's debate.

Is it the case—I ask this honestly of the minister—that his support for measures such as universality and for the sort of society that we want became a little less when he was returned as a Labour MSP on £52,000 a year, became a little less again when he was made a junior minister on a salary of £77,000 a year and turned to outright opposition when he became a minister on £92,000 a year?

The message that I am getting loud and clear from today's debate, especially given the measures that have been included in the bill, is that the Executive's attitude is, "We don't need it, so nobody else across the country will have the opportunity to get it." My sister-in-law, who is a home help, pays £80 a month for school meals for her three kids. She is in one of the lowest-paid jobs.

If members want to tackle poverty and ill health and to change eating habits within a generation, they should do the right thing by supporting my amendment.

16:13

**Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD):** I do not get that. If we want to tackle poverty, why should we give free school meals to the rich? That does not make sense to me.

No organisation that is supported by taxpayers' money—least of all our schools—should contribute to poor health. In our schools, children should be learning habits to ensure their long-term health. Since devolution, we have made great progress on improving the nutritional value of school meals. The bill is another step towards ensuring a healthier future for our children.

I am thrilled that the bill provides for local authorities to offer, free of charge, breakfast clubs and healthy snacks throughout the day. Given the quantity of evidence—including the University of Hull study—that links healthy eating to increased concentration and academic performance, the bill makes sense not only on an educational basis but from a health standpoint.

Along with the majority of Communities Committee members, I am not convinced that the case has been made for universal provision of free school meals. Personally, I would prefer money to be spent on improving the nutritional quality of school meals than on providing free meals to those whose parents can well afford to pay for them.

In addition, there is no guarantee that universal provision would increase the take-up of school lunches among those who need them. According to the Hull study, 65 per cent of children in Hull take advantage of the universal free school meals provision. In Scotland, where the provision of free school meals is targeted, take-up of free school meals is 67 per cent among those who are entitled to them. I do not know whether take-up of school meals in Hull has increased among those who would have been entitled to free school meals anyway. We will need to wait until the three-year pilot in Hull is complete before we can make judgments on it. However, those figures suggest that universality of itself does not necessarily mean that those who most require free school meals will take them up.

Choice and quality are fundamental, as is the support of parents, in encouraging children to take school meals. It is also important to ensure that it becomes the cool thing for pupils to take a school meal instead of—as it was known in my day—going “doon the street”.

I strongly support the committee's recommendation on chip vans, because local authorities have not always been able to use licensing powers to deal with such vans at school gates. We need to try to ensure that local retailers offer healthy options. My local newsagent now provides bakery services. At lunch time, the shop is full of children from Ladybank primary school who are buying sausage rolls and pies to be heated up for lunch, rather than eating the nutritious meals that are available to them in the school.

**Carolyn Leckie (Central Scotland) (SSP):** Will the member give way?

**Iain Smith:** I have only limited time and there is much that I want to cover.

I deliberately mentioned the role of parents, because that is surprisingly lacking from the Communities Committee's report. I thought that some reference would have been made to the importance of parents' support in getting children into the habit of eating healthily. I agree with Fiona Hyslop and others that that is vital and must start from the earliest age. My constituent Christopher Trotter, who is a leading Scottish chef, is seeking the Scottish Executive's support to develop a scheme for new mothers to receive a DVD that shows them how to make healthy, nutritious meals from fresh ingredients for their newly weaned children. The aim is to get the scheme backed by local supermarkets, which would donate starter packs of fresh vegetables. I hope that the Executive will consider the scheme carefully, because it is important to encourage children to eat healthily at an early age.

The same approach needs to feed into pre-school settings. During the early years inquiry, which Fiona Hyslop mentioned, some members of the Education Committee, including me, visited Finland, where we enjoyed the fresh, nutritious food that was prepared for children on the rolling six-week menu to which Fiona Hyslop referred. Lunch is a central part of the day in early years settings in Finland. We need to examine what we do in early years, to see whether we can do more in that area in Scotland.

However, it is not enough only to feed our children healthy food. Our children often feel no connection to the process of food production and preparation; changing that situation is key to instilling in them a healthy understanding of the food that they eat and their ability to make informed choices about what they consume. Jamie Stone made that point in relation to agricultural shows. School gardening projects and cookery classes should be seen as key to our curriculum, as they are in countries such as Germany and Italy. I offer members another example from my constituency. The nursery class in Pittenweem primary school was recently praised in a report by HMIE for an initiative to grow its own vegetables and to use them to make soup. A lot of people in my constituency seem to be into soup. That kind of project could be adapted for use in the entire school curriculum and is a proportionate response to a real problem.

We must continue to encourage our children and young people to exercise both in and out of school—not only through traditional sports, which do not appeal to everyone, but by inspiring them with play, movement, outdoor education and sport. We must ensure that the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill, which the Education Committee is considering, does not discourage people from taking part in those important activities. We must support and invest in initiatives that encourage exercise, both in and out of school, and acknowledge them as community-strengthening resources that aid health and education and reduce antisocial behaviour.

**Carolyn Leckie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** He is in his last minute.

**Carolyn Leckie:** He is just finishing.

**Iain Smith:** I will take a very brief intervention.

**Carolyn Leckie:** Given that the Labour Party is opposing moves by the Lib Dems in Hull to abolish free school meals there, will the member give advice to his colleagues in Hull on how to get the Labour Party to dance to the Lib Dem tune?



**Iain Smith:** Unlike the SSP, my Liberal Democrat colleagues in Hull understand that initiatives cost money. I argue that £179 million in Scotland would be better spent on providing better meals and on other priority areas than on providing free school meals to those who do not need them.

Let us not forget that we have made great progress in improving our school meals. Jamie Oliver agrees that Scotland is light years ahead of England on that issue. The Scottish Liberal Democrats do not believe that any part of the public sector in Scotland should contribute to ill health. The bill is a big step in the right direction, but we must look to go further still: a healthy diet must be backed up by regular exercise in communities and schools. The bill is an important part of ensuring that all schools follow the practice of the best and give our children the right start for a long and healthy life.

16:19

**Mrs Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** Having come somewhat late to the bill, which went to the Communities Committee rather than the Health Committee for stage 1 scrutiny, and not having had the benefit of hearing at first hand the evidence that the lead committee took, I have listened intently to this afternoon's debate. Like my colleagues, I am content to support the general principles of the bill at this stage. It would be perverse not to support the concept of health-promoting schools when our nation is faced with the major health consequences of the poor nutrition and underactivity that are the experience of an increasing number of our young people.

I was reared when there were concerns for children's health because of food shortages. Like most of my generation, I remember with disgust the lukewarm milk that we were given at primary school. Indeed, to this day, I cannot swallow milk unless it is ice cold. I see that Christine Grahame is laughing—she remembers, too.

**Tricia Marwick:** The member must have been delighted when Thatcher snatched the milk back from the school kids.

**Mrs Milne:** I will make no comment on that intervention.

Today's nutrition problems are different. Food shortage is not a national issue. Thankfully, the malnutrition of the modern western world is rarely of the type that we see in emaciated and starving youngsters in third-world countries, who tear at our heartstrings when we see them on television; our malnutrition is largely the result of excess calorie intake compared with energy expenditure and because our diet often consists of processed food that contains more fat and salt than is good for us.

However, it tastes good and stimulates our palate more than the simple and relatively bland food that my generation experienced in childhood.

The frightening statistics about overweight and obese young children and the emergence of type 2 diabetes in teenagers must be addressed. Many of the measures that are proposed in the bill will, I hope, assist in that process. The provision of healthy food in schools will give choice to many pupils who do not have that option at home. Charlie Gordon's words about children learning to cook food at school were timely and I would like that to be encouraged.

I have concerns about how effective the bill will be in practice. Prescribed nutritional standards will ensure that the meals that are on offer in our schools are uniformly nourishing, but the challenge will be to persuade children, especially teenagers, to eat them.

My local primary and secondary schools already serve excellent school lunches. By and large, the primary school children eat them, because they are kept in school, but once they graduate to the academy they swarm down the road to the local supermarket and chipper, where they buy pies, crisps, chips, chocolates and all the other tasty items that they will not get as part of a healthy school meal.

As Dave Petrie said, there are some young people who just want a break from school, who buy fruit and other healthy food for their lunch, but too many go for the junk food option. I agree with Dave Petrie that we need initiatives to encourage the take-up of school meals. His suggestion that lunchtime activities at school could be the key to keeping pupils in school premises—which would ensure that they eat a school lunch—is worthy of consideration.

I disagree with those who promote free school meals for all. I agree with the majority committee opinion that there is no need for a universal element to the provision of free school meals—a majority of people can afford to pay for them. I would prefer resources to be focused on finding out why many children who are entitled to free school meals do not take them up. We must encourage them to do so, not least by seeking a sensitive way to overcome the stigma issue.

Eating habits are established early. I agree with the committee's view that health promotion provision should be extended to pre-school children, but I hope that parents will not be left out of the equation and that health promotion in schools will include families and will help to educate parents who, through no fault of their own, lack an understanding of what is best for their children's health and nourishment. I would like menu planning and cooking lessons to be

made available for such parents if they want them, alongside the education of their children about the origins of the food they eat and the opportunity for some basic gardening, which was mentioned a minute ago.

Only with family involvement will we achieve a cultural change in the public's understanding of nutrition and health issues. Of course, some good work is already taking place in that sphere and many parents have learned the healthy message. I see in my grandchildren an awareness of health issues that was absent in my children. My children wanted sugar-sweetened orange juice or Ribena, but my grandchildren generally settle for water, with juice or sweet fizzy drinks being looked on as an occasional treat. They are also more likely to snack on grapes and olives rather than crisps and biscuits.

I agree with Jamie Stone's words about the importance of the availability of fresh water in schools.

As David Davidson said, if good eating habits are to endure, they have to start at home and be reinforced at nursery and in school. Only when we can achieve a continuum of healthy and sensible eating can we hope to reverse the current trend of increasing obesity in our population.

Energy output is as important as intake, and nutritional provision and education have to be accompanied by adequate activity and advice on the importance of exercise, as was highlighted by Shona Robison.

Although I agree with the proposal to place a duty on education authorities to ensure that school meals meet required nutritional standards and that local authority schools are health promoting, and with the requirement to promote the uptake of school meals and eradicate the stigma surrounding free school meals, I share some of the reservations about the bill that have been expressed. I am concerned that it does not stipulate that children and young people should be involved in decision making on nutrition or should participate in the implementation of health promotion, and that it does not provide for the inclusion of parents, whom I regard as vital participants in the process. Without the active involvement of families, the bill's worthy aspirations to change the nation's attitudes will not be fulfilled.

It is a sad indictment of our society today that it is felt necessary to legislate for the healthy lifestyles that we would all wish for our children, but it is hard to argue against the principles of a bill that aims to promote and achieve such lifestyles, so I am prepared to give it my support at this stage.

16:25

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I draw members' attention to the fact that the Scottish National Party's spokespeople for health, education and communities are present for the debate, as is my colleague the housing spokesperson, who is a member of the Communities Committee. We consider that eating runs across all those portfolios. As Fiona Hyslop said, you are what you eat. Unfortunately, some of us eat a little more than we ought to; we should take a lesson from Alex Johnstone on that.

Poor eating impacts on people's educational attainment, as Donald Gorrie said, and their behaviour, as Cathie Craigie and Shona Robison said. Charlie Gordon mentioned early intervention. I subscribe to that, which is why the SNP supports the provision of free school meals at nursery. We must start early, before children's palates become malformed, by which I mean they prefer salty and sweet food to what is good for them.

Investment in ensuring that all our children—including those who are educated in the independent sector—eat at least one square, healthy, balanced meal per day is investment in the future well-being of society. David Davidson and Karen Whitefield mentioned the obesity epidemic and Tricia Marwick highlighted the poor state of our children's oral health. Both have numerous consequences. Eating the wrong things results in poor educational performance and reduced lifetime attainment and, in extremis, can lead to antisocial and even criminal behaviour. I repeat that, in our view, investing in our children's diets through the provision of free school meals—which we recommend should be begun in pilots—will lead to vast savings to the public purse, which at the moment meets the medical, educational and social costs of people's unhealthy diets and lifestyles.

According to the 2003 Scottish health survey, on average, children between the ages of five and 15 consume 2.6 of the recommended five or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day. Only 12 per cent eat the target number of portions, and 12 per cent have none at all. That is the backcloth to the bill.

Fiona Hyslop spoke about the whole experience of eating and a number of members made the worthy recommendation that cooking on the premises is the best way forward. I do not totally accept Dave Petrie's argument that the preparation of food on site is not practical in small rural schools. There are big issues to do with the transport of prepacked food 15 miles up wintry roads. In some small schools, meals could be cooked on the premises. I refer the minister to the paragraph of the committee's report on new builds and school refurbishments, whether under public-

private partnership or private finance initiative arrangements, that recommends that full account be taken of such matters. That should apply not only to dining areas, but to gymnastic facilities and playing fields.

Robin Harper has often highlighted local authorities' selling off of school playing fields for housing developments. It seems to me that what the Executive is doing with one hand it is taking away with the other. We must have a holistic approach—I hate that word, but it seems apt in this context.

I and other members have pursued local sourcing, which the Scottish Consumer Council and the Soil Association advocate. I understand the problem of EU directives and the difficulties of procurement, but they are not insurmountable, as has been demonstrated in East Ayrshire. "Creative contracting" is one of my favourite phrases; it can be done. The minister mentioned that guidance exists in which local authorities are advised to source locally, but I do not think that they are all aware of it. I hope that the guidance will be examined in detail and revised.

The case for universality was well made by many members. Fiona Hyslop's comparison between universality in the provision of child benefit and the lack of it in the provision of school meals was ably made. The take-up rate of child benefit is 98 per cent. I accept that simply offering free school meals does not mean that everyone will take them up, albeit we have such a deficit in society at the moment. We must not get hung up on the red herring of stigma. If we go down that road, we will end up not looking at the real issue, which is that many children who are entitled to free school meals do not take them—we will end up not seeing the wood for the trees. Many children who are living in poverty—some 77,000 in Scotland—are not entitled to free school meals because of the way in which the benefit is operated. The SNP would extend the availability of free school meals through the use of other benefits, such as the working families tax credit.

Enormous issues are involved. Frances Curran, in an eloquent speech—her summing up was particularly eloquent—rightly pointed out the inconsistencies in all of this. The Executive has made provision for free breakfast and free fruit, but not for free school lunches. I neither understand that nor do I see the theme and logic. Surely if free provision is good enough at breakfast time, it is good enough at lunch time. If the Executive feels that there are issues about whether free school meals provision has been properly tested and thinks that a critique of how it should operate is required, let us have a pilot. We should find out for ourselves how this would work. Perhaps we will go the way of lovely independent Finland.

For a moment, I thought David Davidson was saying that he would vote against the motion, but it turned out that his was a remark that was out of kilter with other contributions from across the chamber—it must have been something he ate. I am glad to hear that he will support the motion, but I am sorry that he cannot support the SNP amendment, which is very tentative by our standards. We are asking only for the flexibility to run a pilot; we are beginning to sound like the Government, which we will be shortly.

We are very sympathetic towards Frances Curran's amendment, but the wording does not allow for flexibility to pilot free school meals provision. Although we will abstain in the vote on her amendment at decision time, we think that there is much merit in what Frances Curran had to say. We welcome her speech.

In the last few moments of my speech, by way of trying to make it plain to the minister that the current system is not working, I will read out a short roll-call of those who support free school meals for all primary children. The list makes interesting reading. It is supported by the Scottish Women's Convention, Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, Children in Scotland, Save the Children, Children 1<sup>st</sup>, One Parent Families Scotland—it seems that the minister is not enjoying hearing this; don't listen then, minister—Scottish Low Pay Unit, church and society council of the Church of Scotland; Scottish local government forum against poverty; the Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association, the Professional Association of Teachers, and the Association of Head Teachers in Scotland. Those people know the children in their care better than the minister does.

16:32

**Hugh Henry:** I listened with interest to the roll-call of those who support free school meals. The one organisation that was absent from the list is the SNP. It does not support universal free school meals; it supports pilots. If the SNP believes in universal free school meals, why bother with a pilot? The SNP should make up its mind and stop kidding people, although, of course, that is par for the course from the SNP.

There were a number of interesting contributions this afternoon, in some of which a number of interesting paradoxes became apparent. Fiona Hyslop might want to clarify something for me—I may be the only one who did not understand the point. It was something she said about Finland. She was talking about choice, but it was unclear whether she wants to restrict choice, as Finland does, or to extend choice, unlike Finland. Fiona Hyslop should let us know what she meant to say. She needs to make up her mind. If she wants to

extend choice—unlike Finland—doing so will have significant implications. Finland did not go down that route.

**Shona Robison** *rose*—

**Hugh Henry:** Frances Curran spoke about the Executive wanting to extend the law to make it illegal to provide free school meals. That is not true. In the bill, we are extending the powers of local authorities in relation to snacks.

Frances Curran also raised a bizarre notion when she criticised the idea that the wealthier someone becomes, the more they oppose universality. I thought she would welcome the fact that the wealthier someone becomes, the more they want resources to be concentrated on those who are less well-off. I suppose that I should not be surprised at what she said.

**Shona Robison:** Will the minister give way?

**Hugh Henry:** No, thank you.

Karen Whitefield and David Petrie talked about vans. We are considering what East Renfrewshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council have managed to do by using their existing powers and we have said that we want to ensure that all local authorities are aware of what can be achieved through those powers. We will circulate that information. There are issues to do with the extent to which we can prescribe what goes on beyond the school, but there is an issue about what is provided in vans and nearby shops.

Karen Whitefield and others talked about the independent and early years sectors. Powers that are available to HMIE and the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care could ensure that what is sought could be achieved in those sectors. We are not convinced that the bill could be extended as easily as the Communities Committee suggested, and we think that there are other ways of achieving the objective. However, we are aware that members are concerned to ensure that the approach is extended to the independent and early years sectors and I will reflect on what members said.

Jamie Stone was right to say that the more we involve pupils, particularly upper-school pupils, in effecting culture change, the better, because pupils can be a powerful influence for change. As some members said, an attempt to change habits and behaviour early can benefit not just the young person but the family at home, by encouraging parents to engage with their children and begin to change practice. There is evidence, as Charlie Gordon and others said, that early intervention can influence the behaviour of children as they progress through primary school and go on to secondary school. That becomes evident in the choices that children make as they get older.

David Petrie and Patrick Harvie talked about anonymity. Patrick Harvie said that there is no evidence that young people regard anonymised systems as a major issue, so such systems are not needed. The bill imposes no system on anyone, but encourages local authorities to ensure that there is anonymity and leaves the choice to them. I spoke to young people who welcomed the anonymised system in their primary school, which is simple and fun and means that they do not need to handle cash. One pupil told me that the system helps her to find out whether her younger brother has inadvertently purchased food that might be harmful to him as a result of his medical condition. Conversations with young people can demonstrate the opposite of Patrick Harvie's experience.

**Shona Robison:** Will the minister give way?

**Hugh Henry:** No, I need to make a number of points.

**Shona Robison:** This is a debate.

**Hugh Henry:** No, I am sorry. This is a summing up of what members said.

David Petrie and other members talked about the provision of water. There are positive changes in Scotland in the context of access to and consumption of water. Nanette Milne rightly mentioned the changing habits of young people in Scotland in that regard.

Shona Robison was worried that under EU rules healthy cereal bars might be categorised as confectionery. We do not want that to happen, so we are looking into the issue and we will see what we can do.

**Mr Kenneth Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** Will the minister take an intervention on a related point?

**Hugh Henry:** Yes, if it is on that point—*[Interruption.]*

**Shona Robison:** I thought the minister was summing up.

**Mr Macintosh:** It is a really good point from a member who has not spoken in the debate.

The minister is aware of John Home Robertson's belief in the importance of using locally sourced food. What are his views on the importance of using fairly traded products in schools? Members of all parties in the Parliament want local authorities to do more to buy fairly traded food products for schools. If the bill cannot be amended in that regard, will the minister give me an assurance that he supports local authorities that take such measures?

**Hugh Henry:** Unlike the other member who sought to intervene, Ken Macintosh had not already spoken in the debate.

Our procurement directorate has issued to local authorities and public bodies guidance that shows how fair trade can be encouraged and supported in public procurement without breaching procurement law. Our officials are working with members of the fair trade working group to consider whether the guidance needs to be revised. We encourage local authorities to consider the guidance when they are awarding contracts for school food and catering services.

Charlie Gordon raised issues of local flexibility and spoke about the experience in Glasgow, but the experience beyond Glasgow has not been the same as Glasgow's and it would not be right to frame legislation solely on the Glasgow situation, which contrasts with what is happening elsewhere. To reassure Charlie Gordon and the councillors who have written to him and others, I say that the timescale for the implementation of the bill should be sufficient to allow Glasgow City Council and the other councils that have asked for more time to make the changes that they need to make. The bill will not come into effect immediately. I hope that the timescale will enable Glasgow City Council to adjust as it has said it needs to.

David Davidson made a contradictory speech. He said that parents need help, but he then complained about the nanny state. He needs to make up his mind: does he want parents to be given help or would that be a nanny state? Which is it to be?

**Mr Davidson:** Will the minister give way?

**Hugh Henry:** I do not have time—sorry.

Mr Davidson asked why the Parliament does not promote healthy eating, but we need only read the title of the bill—the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill—to see that we are promoting it. It is clear.

Cathie Craigie was right to talk about early intervention and issues that relate to behaviour. Those are important, because what children eat affects their behaviour. If children are encouraged to eat different food, their behaviour can be influenced for the better. Also, children's eating behaviour in school can influence the choices that they make outside school.

John Home Robertson talked about the phrase

“Ministers must endeavour to ensure”.

I will endeavour to ensure that I take all his points into account. The phrase is a well-tried form of words and I am not sure that being more prescriptive would be helpful. Like John Home Robertson, I praise East Ayrshire Council for its work. I am interested in the DVD that Iain Smith mentioned and I would like more information on that.

The Parliament should embrace the bill, as it will lead to short and long-term health benefits for our young people. We will promote healthier attitudes, but the issue is not only about promotion; we will take specific measures as a result of the bill to ensure that our children eat healthily in our schools.

## Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill: Financial Resolution

16:43

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** The next item of business is consideration of motion S2M-5410, in the name of Tom McCabe, on a financial resolution in respect of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament, for the purposes of any Act of the Scottish Parliament resulting from the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, agrees to any increase in expenditure for existing purposes payable, in consequence of the Act, out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund.—[*Hugh Henry.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

## Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2007 (Draft)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S2M-5442, in the name of George Lyon, on the draft Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2007.

16:44

**The Deputy Minister for Finance, Public Service Reform and Parliamentary Business (George Lyon):** I begin by highlighting the unusual nature of this item of business, which relates to a wholly reserved matter that must, under the Scotland Act 1998, be considered by Parliament at 5 o'clock tonight. Members may have noted that the draft order is a statutory instrument, which means that a minister of the Crown will advise Her Majesty on the making of the order.

However, by virtue of schedule 7 to the Scotland Act 1998, it falls to me to invite Parliament to approve the draft order before it is made by Her Majesty in council. As members may be aware, the act sets out the circumstances in which a person is disqualified from becoming a member of this Parliament. Certain categories of people are disqualified automatically, including judges, civil servants, members of the armed forces and members of foreign legislatures.

In addition, section 15 provides an order-making power to disqualify specified office-holders from membership of the Scottish Parliament. The most recent order that was made under that power took effect in advance of the 2003 elections. That order is in need of updating to take account of developments since then, in particular the creation of new bodies and the abolition of existing ones. The order that is before us today will ensure that proper account is taken of those developments.

I turn to the policy intention of the order, which is clear. If a person holds an office that

“would take up too much time or otherwise prevent an MSP from attending Parliament”,

they should not stand for election. I wrote to the leaders of the main political parties about the policy intentions of the order prior to Christmas. I received no responses to those letters, which I take to indicate a positive consensus in Parliament on the issue. Cross-party support is welcome.

**Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP):** Will Mr Lyon give way?

**George Lyon:** I will make a little headway first.

I know that the deputy leader of the Scottish National Party agrees with me, as she has repeatedly stated on the record that, in her view, MSPs “cannot do two jobs”. She has also stated many times that keeping another full-time job shows that the MSP

“does not have a serious commitment”

and

“should be giving up the day job and focusing on serving his constituents.”

**Alasdair Morgan:** As Mr Lyon is speaking in his capacity as a Government minister, I hope that he will confirm that the powers under the Scotland Act 1998 from which the order flows relate to office-holders.

**George Lyon:** I can confirm that that is correct. I am talking about the general principles behind the order.

It is clear that someone who is expected to work in London until 10 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays, 7 pm on Wednesdays, 6 pm on Thursdays and 2.30 pm on Fridays would have some trouble performing his duty of serving his constituents or indeed attempting to be First Minister of Scotland, let alone having any time left over to pursue his love of horse-racing.

In the extremely unlikely event that Mr Salmond’s dream of being First Minister came true, would a part-time First Minister miss Cabinet meetings because he has to go to Prime Minister’s question time? When the division bell sounds at Holyrood, will the 10 minutes until voting be long enough for two-jobs Alex to race up from London in time? Perhaps that is the real reason for his desire for a bullet train to London. Of course, the SNP is willing to pay for it to go only as far as the border, but I am sure that the United Kingdom Government would be only too happy to front the money to ensure that Mr Salmond is sped away from London as quickly as possible.

On a serious note, eight years on, no one here attempts to straddle the border as a list member of this Parliament and a member of the UK Parliament for the very good reason that both are full-time jobs. I hope that the SNP will support that notion today and put its principles on the record at 5 o’clock tonight.

On a really serious note, can the SNP justify supporting an order that will prevent some people from doing two full-time jobs, while continuing to back its leader in London, who—in the unlikely event that his wildest dreams came true and he became First Minister—has said explicitly that he has no intention of standing down as an MP until 2009? Further, he has made no commitment to stand down at all if he is lucky enough to become just a humble list MSP. I commend the order to

Parliament and hope that there is cross-party support for it.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2007 be approved.

16:49

**Alasdair Morgan (South of Scotland) (SNP):** I suppose the best that we could say about that speech is that it was well read. I shall take no lessons on general principles from members of the Liberal Democrats—I shall take no lessons on principles from the party whose spokesman said on television this afternoon that prisoners should have the vote. Let us have all the convicted murderers and paedophiles voting in the next election, because that is Liberal Democrat policy.

I will also not take any lessons from Malcolm Bruce MP about people doing other jobs. Is he the same Malcolm Bruce who managed to get an MSc in marketing strategy from the University of Strathclyde in 1995, who managed to study for an English law qualification, and who was called to the English bar at Gray’s Inn, all while he was doing his job representing the people of Gordon in the House of Commons?

**Nora Radcliffe (Gordon) (LD) rose—**

**Alasdair Morgan:** I am not giving way.

Is this the same Liberal party that thought that Donald Gorrie and Jim Wallace—and Andrew Arbuckle—could do two jobs at the same time? I will not take any lessons from the Liberal Democrats.

Let us consider Malcolm Bruce, who is quite happy with his relationship with the Scottish Parliament. He sent out a challenge yesterday—as an MSP from a Scottish Parliament e-mail address, using, I presume, the staff of an MSP. He is quite happy to have a good relationship with the Scottish Parliament.

**George Lyon rose—**

**Alasdair Morgan:** No, no. We heard more than enough from Mr Lyon during his allocated time.

In his challenge, Mr Bruce says that

“the new law would ban MSPs from holding two jobs”.

At the same time, the minister’s staff were saying that it would do nothing of the kind. What is this? Is it dishonesty, or is it incompetence? It has to be said that those are two qualities that we expect in equal proportions from Liberal Democrats during their campaign. The whole ridiculous speech says much more about Liberal Democrat despair about their canvass returns in Gordon than it does about whom they want to see in this Parliament.

I would like, very briefly, to address the order that the Government minister, although he is taking his salary, seemed to ignore altogether. Will the minister eventually address the problem that is implicit in the pages of the order? There are 15 pages that list the office-holders who will not be allowed to stand for election to the Scottish Parliament. Four years ago, the order had a list of 12 pages. In four years, this Government and the Government south of the border have managed to grow the quango state by 25 per cent. A total of 25 per cent more office-holders, paid by us, are not allowed to stand for Parliament. This is the Government that promised us a bonfire of the quangos: it cannot live up even to that promise, far less to any others.

To be frank, as far as I am concerned the chairman of the Covent Garden Market Authority can stand for election to the Scottish Parliament if he or she so chooses. It would then be up to the people of Scotland to accept or reject them.

We have to consider the inequality of treatment between the public and private sectors. With the increasing involvement of private industry in the public sector, there are now far too many people who are disqualified from standing if they work in the public sector but who, if they did precisely the same job in the private sector, would not be disqualified. The director of David MacBrayne Ltd would have to give up his job to stand, but the director of a private firm, running the same kind of service—if there was one, and if the Liberal Democrats could ever get the tendering procedure correct—would not be allowed to stand.

We will support the order.

16:54

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** When I was nominated to speak in the debate, the first thing I did was look up the debate from four years ago so that I could see what it was all about. Having read the speeches from that debate, I thought at the start of George Lyon's speech that he had done exactly the same thing; I recognised the speech that Euan Robson gave four years ago. I quickly realised that George had chosen to deviate from Euan's tactic of simply explaining what the order is all about, but then I wished that George had just done what Euan did. George Lyon took the opportunity today—an inappropriate opportunity—to introduce a heated subject to a debate that Parliament should have handled relatively briefly.

In the debate four years ago, the criteria for why someone should be prevented from standing for election to the Scottish Parliament were set out clearly. It was explained:

"Those criteria are: offices of profit in the gift of the Crown or ministers; positions of control in companies in

receipt of Government grants and funds; offices imposing duties that would prevent their holders from fulfilling parliamentary duties satisfactorily; and offices whose holders are required to be seen to be, and to be, politically impartial."—[*Official Report*, 9 January 2003; c 16792.]

That is a fair description of what we want to achieve. The fact that the list gets longer and longer—as was mentioned in the previous speech—is simply an indication that the number of people who are dependent on or beholden to the Scottish Executive gets bigger and bigger every year. That is a problem that we need to address over time.

The sad fact is that many of the people who are in the positions that have been specified are exactly the kind of people we need to be seeking entry to the Parliament. Although they are debarred from becoming members of the Scottish Parliament while in their current roles, I like to think that many of them would consider using the expertise that they have acquired in those roles to demit office and seek entry into Parliament at the next election or at a subsequent election. The one thing that I know we need is more talent.

The Conservative party will, therefore, support the order in the hope that it will lead to a stronger Parliament in the long term—one that will not suffer the criticisms that have rightly been levied upon it for the sort of mudslinging that we witnessed in the first two speeches in the debate.

16:56

**George Lyon:** This has certainly been an interesting debate. Usually, my good colleague and friend, Mr Morgan, is a calm, collected and level-headed gentleman in debates. We must have hit a raw nerve, judging from his speech.

First, I turn to some of the technical points in the order. The purpose of the order is to update the Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2003 (SI 2003/409) by applying the same disqualification criteria to new offices that have been vested since 2003, and to remove offices that have been abolished. We have also taken the opportunity of updating the Scottish order with respect to relevant office-holders in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is worth noting at this point that the number of quangos has, in fact, decreased by 100 under the Executive over the eight years since devolution. That completely contradicts some points that were made by other speakers.

The practical effect of the order is to ensure that no conflicts of interest can arise for public appointees should they choose to pursue a parliamentary career. Clearly, the order does not prevent Parliament from benefiting from the skills and expertise of senior public officials. It is open to anyone to stand down from those offices in



advance of confirming their nomination. On changes to the criteria for disqualification, updates have been made on the basis of the same criteria that were used in the 2003 order.

Although the subject matter of the order might appear to be routine, it is an important element of the constitutional arrangements that are required to be in place in good time prior to the elections in May. The order that is before us is essentially an exercise in good housekeeping. I hope that Opposition members are equally keen to get their house in order before May.

Mr Morgan was quick to dismiss his own principles and to save his leader in London's face. However, that will not stack up with the electorate. The people of Scotland are not going to take seriously a part-time candidate for First Minister, the people of Gordon are not going to take seriously a part-time candidate for MSP and the people of Banff and Buchan should be demanding that their MP stand down—[*Interruption.*]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**George Lyon:** Those people should have someone who is willing to offer their full attention, full time for the full term.

I ask members to lend their support by approving the order, which will enable it to be considered by the Privy Council in February. I hope that all parties support the principle behind the order.

## Business Motions

16:59

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-5461, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Wednesday 31 January 2007

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Stage 1 Debate: Health Board Elections (Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion: Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Bill—UK Legislation

*followed by* Business Motion

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 1 February 2007

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Scottish Green Party Business

11.40 am General Question Time

12 noon First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm Themed Question Time—  
Health and Community Care;  
Environment and Rural Development

2.55 pm Stage 1 Debate: Rights of Relatives  
to Damages (Mesothelioma)  
(Scotland) Bill

*followed by* Legislative Consent Motion:  
Statistics and Registration Services  
Bill—UK Legislation

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 7 February 2007

2.30 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Executive Business

*followed by* Business Motion

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 8 February 2007

9.15 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
*followed by* Executive Business  
 11.40 am General Question Time  
 12 noon First Minister's Question Time  
 2.15 pm Themed Question Time—  
 Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong  
 Learning;  
 Justice and Law Officers  
 2.55 pm Executive Business  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business.—[George  
 Lyon.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S2M-5462, in the name of Margaret Curran, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a timetable for legislation.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Custodial Sentences and Weapons (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2 be completed by 2 March 2007.—[George Lyon.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:00

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** The next item of business is consideration of four Parliamentary Bureau motions.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Farm Woodland Premium Schemes and SFGS Farmland Premium Scheme Amendment (Scotland) Scheme 2007 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that Mr Andrew Arbuckle be appointed to replace Jeremy Purvis as the Scottish Liberal Democrat Party substitute on the Environment and Rural Development Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purpose of allowing up to 30 minutes to debate motion S2M-5454 in relation to the draft Local Government Elections Order 2007 on Thursday 25 January 2007, the second and third sentences of Rule 10.6.5 of Standing Orders be suspended.—[George Lyon.]

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The questions on the motions will be put at decision time.

## Decision Time

17:01

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** There are eight questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S2M-5339.3, in the name of Fiona Hyslop, which seeks to amend motion S2M-5339, in the name of Hugh Henry, that the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

### FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

### AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)

Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, 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)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (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)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahan, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

### ABSTENTIONS

Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 34, Against 77, Abstentions 2.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The second question is, that amendment S2M-5339.4, in the name of Frances Curran, which seeks to amend motion S2M-5339, in the name of Hugh Henry, that the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

#### FOR

Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)

#### AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, 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)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)

Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (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)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 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)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

#### ABSTENTIONS

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 13, Against 77, Abstentions 23.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The third question is, that motion S2M-5339, in the name of Hugh Henry, that the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 107, Against 0, Abstentions 6.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-5410, in the name of Tom McCabe, on the financial resolution in

respect of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**AGAINST**

Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)

**ABSTENTIONS**

Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 106, Against 4, Abstentions 2.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament, for the purposes of any Act of the Scottish Parliament resulting from the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill, agrees to any increase in expenditure for existing purposes payable, in consequence of the Act, out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-5442, in the name of George Lyon, on the draft Scottish Parliament

(Disqualification) Order 2007, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There will be a division.

**FOR**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Arbuckle, Mr Andrew (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baird, Shiona (North East Scotland) (Green)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Ballance, Chris (South of Scotland) (Green)  
 Ballard, Mark (Lothians) (Green)  
 Barrie, Scott (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)  
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)  
 Brocklebank, Mr Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)  
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)  
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)  
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
 Crawford, Bruce (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)  
 Davidson, Mr David (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Deacon, Susan (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab)  
 Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James (Lothians) (Con)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and Upper Nithsdale) (Con)  
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Goldie, Miss Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Gordon, Mr Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)  
 Gorrie, Donald (Central Scotland) (LD)  
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)  
 Home Robertson, John (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hughes, Janis (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)  
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Ingram, Mr Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 Jackson, Dr Sylvia (Stirling) (Lab)  
 Jackson, Gordon (Glasgow Govan) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)  
 Jamieson, Margaret (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Kerr, Mr Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)  
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)  
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)  
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)  
 Lyon, George (Argyll and Bute) (LD)  
 MacAskill, Mr Kenny (Lothians) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)  
 Macintosh, Mr Kenneth (Eastwood) (Lab)  
 Maclean, Kate (Dundee West) (Lab)  
 Macmillan, Maureen (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Mr Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)

May, Christine (Central Fife) (Lab)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Mr Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)  
 McConnell, Mr Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 McFee, Mr Bruce (West of Scotland) (SNP)  
 McGrigor, Mr Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)  
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McNeil, Mr Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)  
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)  
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)  
 Milne, Mrs Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
 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)  
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)  
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)  
 Petrie, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)  
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)  
 Radcliffe, Nora (Gordon) (LD)  
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)  
 Robson, Euan (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (LD)  
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
 Ruskell, Mr Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)  
 Scott, Eleanor (Highlands and Islands) (Green)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)  
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)  
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)  
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Tosh, Murray (West of Scotland) (Con)  
 Wallace, Mr Jim (Orkney) (LD)  
 Watt, Ms Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Welsh, Mr Andrew (Angus) (SNP)  
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)  
 Wilson, Allan (Cunninghame North) (Lab)

**AGAINST**

Byrne, Ms Rosemary (South of Scotland) (Sol)  
 Curran, Frances (West of Scotland) (SSP)  
 Fox, Colin (Lothians) (SSP)  
 Kane, Rosie (Glasgow) (SSP)  
 Leckie, Carolyn (Central Scotland) (SSP)  
 Sheridan, Tommy (Glasgow) (Sol)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 107, Against 6, Abstentions 0.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2007 be approved.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I propose to put a single question on motions S2M-5452 and S2M-5453, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments. If any member objects—if anybody is listening, actually—please say so now.

The question is, that motions S2M-5452 and S2M-5453, in the name of Margaret Curran, on approval of SSIs, be agreed to.

*Motions agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Farm Woodland Premium Schemes and SFGS Farmland Premium Scheme Amendment (Scotland) Scheme 2007 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2007 be approved.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-5455, in the name of Margaret Curran, on substitution on committees, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that Mr Andrew Arbuckle be appointed to replace Jeremy Purvis as the Scottish Liberal Democrat Party substitute on the Environment and Rural Development Committee.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S2M-5463, in the name of Margaret Curran, on rule 10.6.5, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that, for the purpose of allowing up to 30 minutes to debate motion S2M-5454 in relation to the draft Local Government Elections Order 2007 on Thursday 25 January 2007, the second and third sentences of Rule 10.6.5 of Standing Orders be suspended.

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Murray Tosh):**

The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S2M-5406, in the name of Patrick Harvie, on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history month. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament notes that February is LGBT History Month and that events will be taking place around Scotland to celebrate the lives of Scottish LGBT people, past and present; congratulates the many organisations that have contributed to LGBT History Month, including voluntary organisations, religious groups, businesses and the Scottish Executive; regrets that LGBT history, from the horrors of the gulags and gas chambers to the achievements of LGBT people in all spheres of life, often remains unwritten and unspoken; believes that this represents a cultural loss to the whole of society; further believes that young LGBT people in particular have a right to learn about their cultural heritage in all its forms, and hopes therefore that many communities, including schools, will participate in LGBT History Month this year and in the future.

17:09

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I thank the 30 or so members who added their names in support of the motion.

Few people these days accept Henry Ford's view that all history is bunk. Most members will agree that there is great cultural value in the teaching of history. That holds for the history of minority groups in society as well, both because it gives them a sense of the development of their own community and because it benefits wider society. That is part of the purpose of LGBT history month.

One of the last things that I did in my previous job was to create an historical timeline exercise for youth workers, helping to train them on supporting young people coming out. I found references from as early as 8,000 BC right up to the present day, spanning the world's cultural diversity from ancient references, within the world's oldest known written story of Gilgamesh for instance, to examples in the Chinese and Indian cultures, the Greeks—naturally—and the beginnings of formalised legal oppression in Europe's middle ages.

In this year when we mark 300 years since the Act of Union, I will risk mentioning King James VI of Scotland and I of England. James, who commissioned what we now call the authorised version of the Bible and to whom it is dedicated, is one of those characters whose sexuality has not always been recognised by historians. However, it



was remarked at the time of his accession to the English throne that

"Elizabeth was King: now James is Queen".

It was also noted with some scorn by one writer that

"The love the King showed men was amorously conveyed as if he had mistaken their sex and thought them ladies, which I have seen Somerset and Buckingham labour to resemble in the effeminateness of their dressings".

The crudeness of that description obscures the human feelings involved. By the end of James's life, he spoke of his love for George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in terms of marriage—centuries before civil partnership:

"I desire only to live in this world for your sake ... I had rather live banished in any part of the earth with you, than live a sorrowful widow's life without you".

In more recent times we have seen the hypocrisy that masqueraded as Victorian morality and the celebration and condemnation of Oscar Wilde—a moment when same-sex love dared to speak its name and was brutally punished for doing so. We have seen the beginnings of the emancipation movement, particularly in pre-war Germany, and eventually we saw decriminalisation in the United Kingdom after the Wolfenden report, although more than 20 years passed between its publication and decriminalisation reaching Scotland. Now, we see the steady erosion of the swathes of discriminatory legislation and practice in society. That has been driven partly by the legislators and partly by the activists inspired by events such as the Stonewall riot—a response to the police raids that were still occasionally known in this country even in the 1990s.

We have come far—further than many would have predicted even a few decades ago—but have we reached equality? Even if we have, it does not quite count as the end of this history. I remember using the timeline exercise that I mentioned with a group of LGBT young people who were shocked and puzzled at the concept that their sexuality could ever have been a criminal offence. At the time, I could not decide whether it was good that they were growing up without that concept in their heads. On balance, I would say that it is good, but young people have a right to learn about it in the context of history.

I remember my shock on learning about the liberation of the concentration camps at the end of the second world war. The hair stood up on the back of my neck when I learned that, when the camps were finally liberated, the few homosexuals still left alive were rounded up by the allies and re-imprisoned. It was shocking, but is it more shocking that I was never told? All school students learn something about the horror of the Nazi persecution and mass murder in the middle of the

previous century, but very few learn about that fact. Such airbrushing of history—deleting or ignoring aspects of people's lives or even of major world events—diminishes history for us all. That is why we have a programme of events around Scotland for LGBT history month. If history has been airbrushed and if events and people have been left unrecorded, we should remember the words of Oscar Wilde:

"The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it."

I am pleased to acknowledge that the Scottish Executive supports the programme of events. I am pleased, too, that many members have stayed to debate it with us. The Parliament has also made its mark on LGBT history in Scotland, repealing section 2A before the rest of the UK repealed section 28 and in so doing facing down those who wished to turn their prejudice into one of the first major battles of devolution.

That has been the story in more recent years. With every step forward that we have taken towards a society that is more at ease with its own healthy and natural diversity, a small but vocal group has sought to cling to every last shred of discrimination and prejudice, as I am sorry to say is happening again down south even as we speak.

It is greatly to be welcomed that political leaders across the spectrum in all parties are now committed to equality for all in society. That does not mean that there is no more work to do. There is more work to do, such as making good on promises to outlaw hate crime, for example, which many people had hoped the Executive would do in this parliamentary session.

I hope that, if members take away nothing else, they will take away a mental note to return to their parties and examine the commitments that are being made for the coming election, to ensure that the next session of the Scottish Parliament continues to make history for LGBT communities in Scotland.

17:16

**Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD):** I congratulate Patrick Harvie on securing the debate and on his speech about this important event. I will clarify one bit of LGBT history at the start. I mean no offence to Patrick Harvie but, contrary to reports that occasionally appear in newspapers, he and I have not lived together, do not live together and—I assure members—will never live together.

I raise that factual inaccuracy, which has appeared in print more than once, because it resurfaced in the disgraceful article about the motion in the *Scottish Sunday Express* on 14 January. That report entirely erroneously alleged

that members who supported the motion had plans

“to force children as young as six to celebrate gay culture at school”.

There are of course no such plans. That is homophobic scaremongering of the worst kind. It is not only offensive to LGBT people, but dangerous, because it implies that homophobia is acceptable. Yes, LGBT history month encourages schools to become involved and provides materials for teachers on issues such as ending the official invisibility of LGBT people in schools and developing policies that respect their rights. However, most important, those materials are about tackling bullying, name calling and abusive language, which happen too often in our schools.

I hope that the editor of the *Scottish Sunday Express* does not condone homophobic bullying and that the newspaper will consider running an article on that issue in a future edition, but I doubt it. Very few young people read the *Scottish Sunday Express* anyway, so such an article would probably not make much difference.

I am pleased that we in Scotland are taking a more enlightened approach to the issue. I congratulate the Scottish Executive on working with LGBT Youth Scotland on homophobic bullying in schools and on having the courage to award the contract for the next phase of the anti-bullying project better futures to LGBT Youth Scotland along with the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

According to new research that Stonewall has conducted, the majority of young lesbian and gay pupils have experienced homophobic bullying in school and the majority of them do not feel safe when in school. Many young people are confused, isolated and scared about their sexual identity when at school, and homophobia, which manifests itself in physical or psychological bullying, can cause serious mental illnesses and even suicide.

Schools should be involved not in promoting homosexuality—that is the phrase that is often used—but in properly supporting all children, regardless of their sexuality, and in combating homophobia, which too often results from ignorance and the media coverage that we have seen in the *Scottish Sunday Express* and which reared its head in yesterday’s appalling *Daily Mail*.

LGBT history month provides a chance to look back with pride on what has been achieved in the long struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights and recognition. We have come a long way in my lifetime. Let us not forget that homosexuality was still illegal in Scotland 27 years ago.

The bitter fight against section 28 is still so recent in the Parliament’s memory, so it is perhaps

miraculous that the House of Lords voted last week overwhelmingly in favour of keeping intact the goods and services protections for Northern Ireland. However, I am concerned that the United Kingdom Government appears to be backtracking on that important equalities issue. Discrimination is discrimination. It would be unacceptable to backtrack on discrimination on the grounds of race, religion and gender and it is unacceptable on the ground of sexuality, too. Any exemptions that are written into equalities legislation represent discrimination.

We should not forget that horrific incidents still occur throughout the world. Patrick Harvie touched on the Nazi death camps; we should also remember that LGBT people were imprisoned, killed and tortured at Russian gulags. Such incidents continue throughout the world today.

Eighteen months ago, we learned of the horrific torture and execution of two teenage boys in Iran simply for having committed homosexual acts. I wish that I could say that such torture and execution is unusual, but it is a fact that homosexual acts continue to be outlawed and that they continue to carry extreme penalties in many countries.

LGBT history month provides many opportunities. It allows us a chance to reflect on the lives and contributions to society of LGBT people, to think positively about what has been achieved and to look to the future with optimism. However, we must not forget the plight of LGBT people in other places, our bitter history and the prejudices that still exist in our society. Now is the time to brace ourselves so that LGBT people continue to meet the challenges that they face throughout Scotland as individuals and as a community.

17:20

**Carolyn Leckie (Central Scotland) (SSP):** I congratulate Patrick Harvie on securing the debate.

Whether or not a person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, LGBT history month is a fantastic initiative that will inform, educate and celebrate LGBT culture. The initiative is about celebrating and embracing the identities of everybody in society, including those of the youngest children in schools. I totally object to the idea that young children should not be educated and encouraged to be tolerant and inclusive from the earliest age, particularly with respect to sex education.

My younger daughter was notorious in our street as a result of the approach that I took to sex education. I do not know whether any member has seen “Mummy Laid an Egg”, which is a fantastic

book for children by Babette Cole that sets out in graphic cartoon detail how babies are made. A couple of weeks ago, my daughter told her boyfriend about it. He was shocked and horrified, as he had had a different experience of sex education, which was delayed—unfortunately, that is a common experience. My daughter thought that his reaction was funny. When I asked her whether she remembered a time when she did not know about sex, she replied that she did not. There was no need for the big talk or for unpicking misinformation or prejudice.

The same approach should be taken towards the LGBT community. It is much more difficult for prejudices to form if our children gain the relevant knowledge automatically and by osmosis from the very beginning. There should be no taboos or no-go areas. If there are no taboos or no-go areas, society will be much more equal and tolerant and less prejudiced in the long run.

Of course some groups will resist such an approach, but we must challenge ideas about where morality comes from. Everybody has the absolute right to determine their own morality and to take values from their background, whether or not that background is faith based. People with faith-based values do not have a monopoly on determining morality. In fact, if we examine the development of morality and consider the Bible as a literary work as opposed to a work that is literally true, we can see that morality has moved on. I do not accept the morality that results from interpreting the Bible literally from a Christian perspective; I do not accept that it is not all right for men to participate in homosexual activity and that it is all right for a daughter to be offered as a replacement for a man, which happened many times in the Bible. The Bible is ridden with such sexism and violence towards women. I do not accept that the morality in the Bible is the only type of morality. It is not my morality.

I say well done to those who will be involved in LGBT history month, which is a great initiative that should encourage society to have the courage to move on, challenge prejudice and accept people's views but not to bow down to prejudice.

17:24

**Chris Ballance (South of Scotland) (Green):** I congratulate my colleague on his motion for debate—the topic is a very important one for the Parliament.

One of the most positive aspects of LGBT history month is that a wide range of organisations will be working together to provide the programme of events throughout Scotland. In my region, the South of Scotland, OurStory Scotland, which works to collect, archive and present the life

stories and experiences of the LGBT community in Scotland, will be running displays at the library in Dumfries, with storytelling sessions at Lochthorn library.

In the three years since it was founded, the LGBT Youth Scotland Dumfries and Galloway service has established an LGBT centre, an advisory body and a research project that is looking into the particular needs of the community in a rural region. The group has worked with local partners such as the council, the health board, the local constabulary and the Dumfries youth inquiry service. Indeed, a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education highlighted the work done between LGBT Youth Scotland and the Dumfries youth inquiry service as a model of good practice.

Gay people in rural areas face many more difficulties than they face in the big cities. For example, the NHS Dumfries and Galloway survey found poor levels of patient confidentiality, judgmental local health services, loneliness among gay people, a lack of social opportunities and support groups, a limited voice and a sense of a lack of visibility. In one LGBT study in the region, almost half the gay people who were contacted and spoken to reported that they had been assaulted as a result of their sexual orientation. I find that figure extraordinary. The LGBT centre in Brewery Street in Dumfries is now making great strides to remedy that situation, and history month will help to address the great fear and isolation felt by people who might well feel that they are the only gay person in their village or small town.

Also in the South of Scotland, libraries at Galashiels, Earlston, Eyemouth and Duns in the Scottish Borders have agreed to have history month exhibitions or to put on display resources that are available for uplift by library visitors. There will also be adverts inside buses and discussion forums across the region.

Throughout Scotland, trade unions, Government officials, religious groups, businesses, non-governmental organisations and arts venues are all coming together to take part in this event. The Scottish Youth Parliament will be conducting a debate on LGBT history month at its next meeting, and the National Galleries of Scotland will be hosting three LGBT guided tours with the art historian Matthew Wellard.

Eight Scottish police forces, in conjunction with the Gay Police Association, are taking part in the event, hosting awareness-raising and storytelling sessions. That is another sign of the huge amount of progress that our police forces have made in successfully shifting the focus in a generation—10 to 20 years—from policing formerly criminalised sexual minorities to engaging with LGBT communities in the same way that they engage with every other part of society.

It is hard to imagine that such a list could have existed even five or 10 years ago. That is a mark of the progress that has been made in a short time. As my colleague and others have said, there is still work to be done, and it is important that LGBT history month contributes to that work. I am proud and pleased to be a part of a Parliament that is also working to that end.

17:28

**Mr Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I congratulate Patrick Harvie on securing the debate, although I have mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, it is shameful that a special month is needed to highlight both the historical persecution that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have faced and the achievements of individuals from those groups. It is wrong to have to compartmentalise different sections of society; I would rather call for respect and tolerance for all.

I have always tried to take people as I find them, rather than prejudging them by their labels. I was lucky enough to receive an enlightened education at school and from my very enlightened parents at home, which encouraged me to do that. Had I not done so, I know that I would have been a far poorer person.

I am very encouraged that Scotland is now becoming one of the areas of the United Kingdom that is leading the way in tolerance. Historically, that was not always so. In the past, Scotland was not a good place for minorities, and we are still not perfect now. All too often, people experience prejudice when they do not conform to what many consider to be normal. However, I think that it is perhaps unproductive to castigate and vilify those who behave in an intolerant way. They are simply being ignorant, however unjust their views might be. It is better, through education, to turn them into a decreasing minority. I hope that that is what is now happening.

As parliamentarians, we must take every opportunity to condemn intolerance. Tonight's debate will help to draw attention to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history month. I am sure that the many events planned for February will help to educate people about the important role that many LGBT people have played in history and the suffering that they have faced. They have suffered great hardship, especially under totalitarian regimes. In Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, homosexuals were sent to concentration camps alongside Jews, the disabled, the mentally ill, Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses, freemasons, social democrats, anarchists and other groups. In the Soviet Union, homosexuals and other so-called deviants were regularly sent to the gulags, from whence they rarely returned.

In addition to the persecution that the LGBT community has historically faced, people from that community who have made great achievements have not had that aspect of themselves properly recognised. It is only right that the whole person should be acknowledged when we celebrate their achievements. Personally, I am not entirely comfortable with labelling people as LGBT. I believe that a person's sexuality is only part of their identity and should not necessarily be the most important thing about them. There is also a problem with claiming LGBT identity for historical figures. For some historical figures, the issue is clear cut and well known, even outside the LGBT world. For others, the claim depends on the person's lack of a known partner. However, I can see that, if someone is having difficulty with coming to terms with their sexual or gender orientation, it might be of great help to be able to look to LGBT people who had achieved great things. Famous role models inspire confidence and pride.

LGBT history month aims to educate people about the different standing that LGBTs have historically had and to celebrate the lives of those LGBT individuals who have made a contribution to society. I sincerely hope that the month will lead to greater tolerance and understanding, especially among those who are disinclined to change entrenched views. Personally, I have recently seen a big change in the views of younger people. I hope that events such as LGBT history month will bring even greater tolerance to future generations in Scotland, the UK and throughout the rest of the world.

17:33

**Ms Rosemary Byrne (South of Scotland) (Sol):** I congratulate Patrick Harvie on securing tonight's debate. National LGBT history month is important, because it at last celebrates the lives of a significant number of people who have traditionally remained hidden and disengaged from civic participation and who have often been treated with a shameless and unreasonable degree of dislike, distrust and fear.

We need to remember that many people are still bullied in our schools and attacked in our communities because of their sexual orientation. LGBT history month can only help, because of the breadth of activities that will take place. I thank Chris Ballance for describing the range of activities that will take place in the south of Scotland. It is very helpful indeed that events will be spread throughout the country. Those events will illustrate the energy, talent and spirit of LGBT people. The events will be far removed from the death and persecution that, throughout history, this vibrant community has suffered worldwide. During the

Holocaust, lesbians were forced to wear the black triangle as a symbol of their perversion. Gay men had to wear the pink triangle as they awaited death or torture, but they still maintained a dignified sense of self. The Holocaust was horrific for many groups of people who did not fit the image of Aryan perfection. To some extent, those perceptions have continued to filter through the decades.

LGBT people can still remain apart from their communities. Recently, I spoke to a young man who had just left school and moved from a small community to the city of Glasgow to live and work, because he knew that when he came out there would be intolerable attitudes towards him in the community in which he lived. We still have a long way to go to educate our young people. As Patrick Harvie said in his opening speech, reminding them of history is the right way forward. We should not bury our heads in the sand and pretend that things did not happen; we should move forward, educate and hope that our young people and our communities improve their attitudes. The attitudes of many young people come from their home background. The more that we do to educate people and to ensure that events such as LGBT history month take place in our communities, the better we will serve LGBT people.

There are many positive images. Young LGBT people laugh when they see photographs of the complicated signs, such as handkerchiefs worn in a certain way and of a certain colour, that indicated that someone was gay. Such things are now gone, so there has been a vast improvement. In February, LGBT people will hold events such as a storytelling evening at Glasgow LGBT centre, where older community members will share their memories with younger people. It is essential that we remember and pass on the rich history that the community has struggled to own.

We must also remember that LGBT people can still be poor, still be afraid to engage with services, still suffer poor education, still be bullied and still think that they have no rights. They can suffer domestic abuse and are often forced to socialise in environments where alcohol and drugs are prevalent. The community's young people often fall through the net of generic services because they are afraid to be open about themselves. When that happens, they are sometimes left homeless, hungry, afraid and lacking in formal education, and they can easily fall victim to the sex industry. We must bear in mind that we still have a long way to go, but this kind of celebration moves us forward a great deal. I thank Patrick Harvie for bringing it to our attention.

17:37

**Susan Deacon (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (Lab):** I join colleagues in

congratulating Patrick Harvie on securing this debate. Although I recognise the contributions that many organisations have made to LGBT history month and its associated activities and congratulate them on them, I single out for special mention LGBT Youth Scotland, which the Scottish Executive has commissioned to co-ordinate the event. That is testament to how much confidence Government has in the organisation. I share that confidence and declare an interest, as one of its patrons. I am proud to be so and believe that LGBT Youth Scotland is one of the most effective and professional youth organisations that I have ever come across.

I particularly like the concept of LGBT history month, because it enables us to take a step back to reflect on, recognise and celebrate the contributions that people have made. It is a hobby-horse of mine that we do not do that nearly enough. I am struck by how short our memories are, and feel that they are becoming ever shorter in the world in which we live. I ask members to consider the fact that the Parliament has existed for only eight years. How much have we forgotten about why things happened, why decisions were taken and who was behind ideas at their inception—not just in the Parliament but, crucially, outside it? How often have we forgotten—perhaps not consciously, but just because we have moved on—that decisions on legislation and policies that we are taking now have their roots many years ago either in the Parliament or before its establishment?

There are three reasons why it is important to remember. First, it is right for us to recognise the contributions that individuals make. It is important that when people work hard, especially in spheres where they attract much criticism, or worse, for pushing forward ideas and issues, we recognise what they have done. Secondly, our doing so encourages and motivates other people to follow in their footsteps and to build on what they have done. Thirdly, if we reflect, it helps us to understand better how change happens and, therefore, to be better at effecting change in the future. That is why I particularly applaud the emphasis of this initiative.

As others have said, we have come a long way and attitudes have changed greatly. I am struck by the way in which civil partnerships have been widely embraced in society. Even those of us who have been around issues to do with diversity and sexuality over the years have been pleasantly surprised by that. Similarly, I am particularly pleased that the first winner of the Scottish Executive's new diversity award was the LGBT health inclusion project that is run jointly by the Health Department and Stonewall Scotland. I do not believe that something like that could have happened a decade ago.

However, there is much still to do. The issue of hate crime has been mentioned, and the Executive still needs to consider ending the iniquity that exists in that area in relation to race and religion on the one hand and sexuality and disability on the other. Further, we must be vigilant to ensure that the principles and the approach that have been evident in today's debate are applied with regard to the on-going debate about adoption law.

There is much to celebrate, of course. The message to take from the approach that has been taken to LGBT history month is that, sometimes, we need to decode some of the techno-speak that is used in relation to these issues and turn it into human-speak. My mother and father would never have recognised the language of tolerance and diversity, but I am glad that they brought me up to believe that, although people are different, we are all Jock Tamson's bairns. If we apply that in our lives and if we bring up our children to believe in it, we will continue to contribute to an ever prouder and better future for our country and ensure that we have a Scotland that values, respects and celebrates the lives of all its people.

17:42

**Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green):** I thank Patrick Harvie for bringing the motion for debate.

In 1985, when I started as a guidance teacher—I continued being a modern studies teacher, but had a part-time role as a guidance teacher—one of the first things that was drawn to my attention was section 28 because, of course, guidance classes discuss issues such as citizenship, sexuality and health. I am proud of the fact that I cheerfully ignored the strictures of section 28 throughout my time as a guidance teacher.

We have heard good, thoughtful and educative speeches this evening. In my contribution to the LGBT history month information pack, I said:

"LGBT History month is a most welcome development.

It is much easier to know where you are going if you know where you have been—that is true of all history, and because change has come so rapidly, this is particularly true of the history of LGBT issues."

We know how bad things have been in the past and how much better they are now. We also know how much further we need to move.

During the debate around the Scottish Parliament's intentions with regard to section 28, members received hundreds and hundreds of vituperative letters and e-mails, which were dripping with bile and hate. That drew to our attention the fact that there is in Scotland an unconscionable reservoir of deep prejudice that we must do everything we can to lessen. Prejudice will always be with human beings but, because of the depth and quantity of prejudice that was

displayed at that time, I was not surprised earlier when we heard that 20 per cent of people in Scotland show some hatred and distrust of gay people. Receiving those letters was a pretty awful experience but, like everyone else in the chamber, I am glad that the Scottish Parliament took the lead in getting rid of section 28.

Scrolling forward a little, I remember clearly the discussions that took place in 2002. To pick up on what Susan Deacon said, there should be praise where praise is due—the Equality Network has given incredible support to all MSPs who progress LGBT issues. I was very sad that after protracted negotiations with Jim Wallace and the Executive, we did not manage to get the Executive to accept that, along with the other five groups that are recognised in European law as regularly suffering from discrimination at work and who are therefore protected under European law against such discrimination, LGBT people should receive equal treatment when it comes to hate crime. We must revisit that in the next session of Parliament.

The vision of LGBT Youth Scotland is that

"Every LGBT young person will be included in the life of Scotland

Every LGBT young person will enjoy a safe and supportive upbringing

Every LGBT young person will grow up happy and healthy

Every LGBT young person will be able to reach their full potential".

Those rights still have to be asked for, even though every young person in this country should have them. Our LGBT youth must be accorded all those rights and access to a healthy and happy future.

Many wonderful events have been arranged to celebrate LGBT history month, including concerts, visits, musical events and plays. I know from experience that LGBT young people know how to enjoy themselves. February will be a month in which they celebrate their new-found confidence in a Scottish society that is becoming a much better place for everyone to live in from the point of view of equalities.

I thank Patrick Harvie for securing the debate and I thank everyone who has spoken in it.

17:47

**The Deputy Minister for Communities (Des McNulty):** I begin, as other members have done, by congratulating Patrick Harvie on bringing the issue to Parliament for debate. It is a debate that acknowledges the diversity that exists in Scotland and which celebrates the benefits of that diversity. I am delighted that people feel that Parliament is making progress on LGBT issues.

From its outset, the Scottish Parliament has been concerned with promoting equal

opportunities. The Scotland Act 1998 explicitly defines equal opportunities as including sexual orientation. As an Executive, we are committed to promoting equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as part of our wider work on mainstreaming equality and promoting equal opportunities.

Over the past few years, the Scottish Parliament has passed significant legislation that promotes equality. An example of that is the provision in Scots law that acknowledges same-sex couples. Along with Executive agencies and partners in health and local government, we have taken action to change how our public services are delivered, to ensure that people can access those services without experiencing discrimination or prejudice on the grounds of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We understand that another of the tasks that are before us is to positively influence change in wider social attitudes towards people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The 2002 Scottish social attitudes survey showed that although people acknowledge that there is a great deal of prejudice against lesbians and gay men, there is reluctance to say that something should be done about it. As several members have said, that needs to be addressed.

Alongside legislation, we need to consider other ways of tackling prejudice. Last year Malcolm Chisholm hosted a seminar for LGBT organisations so that the Executive could hear directly from those communities about their experiences and ask what they thought needed to be done to tackle prejudice. We listened to what was said and have taken action. A group of LGBT organisations is now working with us to develop an action plan for tackling prejudice and discrimination. It is hoped that the working group will deliver its action plan towards the end of the year.

The needs of LGBT young people, and other young people who find themselves affected by these issues, need to be addressed. Where homophobia occurs in our schools, it must be tackled. Any form of bullying, including homophobic bullying, is completely unacceptable. We commissioned LGBT Youth Scotland—which has been mentioned in the debate—in partnership with the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland to carry out research on how schools deal with homophobic incidents. We know from the research that, although the majority of homophobic incidents are challenged, teachers would welcome supportive materials that would increase their confidence and awareness levels in this area. We are looking to see how such materials can be supplied.

Cultural issues have also been mentioned in the debate. It is fair to pay tribute to the tremendous

contribution that LGBT people have made to the cultural life of Scotland, which is already recognised in festivals such as Glasgay. A vigorous and diverse cultural life is at the core of the Executive's aspirations for Scotland. We intend that everyone should have equality of opportunity in accessing and participating in Scotland's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

The Executive has announced its support for a number of pathfinder projects that focus on the needs of different underrepresented and marginalised groups. In particular, it is hoped that community groups that currently face barriers to participation in cultural activity will be encouraged to experience the benefits of culture through the pathfinder projects. In turn, we hope that the learning from those projects will be used to inform the ways in which entitlements are delivered across Scotland. LGBT communities are included in the pathfinder programme along with other underrepresented groups—disabled people, minority ethnic communities, older people, people who live in areas of multiple deprivation and people in peripheral communities.

LGBT history month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of LGBT issues generally and to impact positively on social attitudes. I remind members of the impact that Sheila Rowbotham's seminal work, "Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It", had on the development of the feminist movement. The recovery of the history of the LGBT community is an important dimension in building awareness more generally. That point has certainly been made positively in the debate.

My predecessors as Minister for Communities agreed to fund LGBT Youth Scotland to develop materials that are aimed at helping people to understand better the global, national and local histories of LGBT communities. The project, which is set against contemporary Scottish culture, will also raise awareness locally and nationally, and contribute positively to LGBT communities and wider society. I am delighted that a significant programme of events and activities is taking place this year—there will be around 150 across Scotland. I congratulate LGBT Youth Scotland on its work on delivering this programme. I hope that its LGBT programming will have the same kind of impact that feminism had around 20 years ago in terms of recovering a history and bringing to the fore an explosion of different kinds of activities.

The Executive's support for LGBT history month will continue next year and beyond. I look forward to further progress on LGBT equality in the months and years ahead. I hope that everyone in the Parliament will participate in taking forward that agenda.

*Meeting closed at 17:53.*





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