

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 14 June 2007

Session 3

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Scottish Parliament

Thursday 14 June 2007

[THE PRESIDING OFFICER *opened the meeting at 09:15*]

Trident

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): Good morning. The first item of business is a debate on motion S3M-169, in the name of Patrick Harvie, on Trident.

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Under our standing orders, would it be in order for the member who lodged the motion to withdraw it and to replace it with a motion without notice that omitted the words “at this time”, thereby making it akin to the amendment that I lodged, which was not selected? If so, we could have on the table a position that was clearly anti-Trident. That is not the case at present because my amendment was not selected and, as it stands, the motion is not anti-Trident. If that is possible, I trust that Patrick Harvie will act accordingly so that we have an anti-Trident position on the table.

The Presiding Officer: It would be in order to do as Elaine Smith suggests, but it is only fair to point out that motions without notice can be accepted only at my discretion. She will be aware that I had to make very careful considerations last night. I should point out that I would not be minded to accept such a motion this morning.

George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer: One moment, Lord Foulkes.

I also point out that there will obviously be opportunities for Elaine Smith to raise the issues that she wishes to raise in the normal course of debate.

George Foulkes: My point of order is somewhat different from that of my esteemed colleague. I had hoped that, as a new Presiding Officer, you might have given some thought to the wisdom of accepting for debate any motion that was clearly not on a devolved area. This Parliament has a range of important matters to consider and the more time we spend discussing reserved matters, the less time we have for discussing important devolved matters. Have you given fresh consideration to that issue? Will you give your views on why issues such as Trident are to be discussed by the Scottish Parliament?

The Presiding Officer: George Foulkes will be aware that the Parliament has on many occasions debated matters that are reserved to Westminster. I am not sure that his point is a point of order—it is an issue that he should take up with his business manager, who is on the Parliamentary Bureau, which agrees the Parliament’s business.

We now move to the debate. Mr Harvie, you have seven minutes and time is tight.

09:18

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I appreciate that, Presiding Officer.

There are some members for whom this morning’s debate is their first opportunity to debate Trident in the Parliament, but there are others who will no doubt be thinking, “Here we are again.” However, although we debated the subject a number of times during the Parliament’s second session, it has been six months since our most recent debate on it.

The arguments have been well rehearsed. We have discussed the cost of the system, which affects Scottish devolved services. The cost of Trident has an impact on the amount of money left to spend on other priorities, on many of which people in Scotland would prefer money to be spent.

We have debated the strategic decision and whether replacing Britain’s nuclear weapons system at this time would influence other countries to seek to acquire nuclear weapons. We have debated the hypocrisy of a country that has waged war on other countries over allegations of weapons of mass destruction and has pursued sanctions against such countries for wanting those weapons. We have debated the role of deterrence and whether the original strategic idea behind the possession of weapons of mass destruction is in any way relevant to the modern world or whether that argument died with the cold war.

We have debated the importance to local areas of the jobs associated with Trident. We have considered how many jobs really rely on Trident and how the areas in question might seek economic diversification.

We have debated the United Kingdom’s international responsibilities under the non-proliferation treaty and the requirement on us to work towards disarmament. We have heard the former Labour First Minister recount his personal journey from unilateralism to multilateralism, which I believe he spoke about sincerely. However, multilateral disarmament is still disarmament. Those of us who argue against the deployment of a new generation of submarines and, ultimately, of nuclear weapons make the case that replacement

fails even the multilateralist cause because it amounts to unilateral rearmament.

Just about every argument for and against the replacement of Trident has been heard in the Parliament, but three things have happened since the Parliament's most recent debate, six months ago, on the issue.

First, in January, an opinion poll carried out by ICM for the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament found that almost two thirds of Scots opposed the plan to replace Trident. That figure rose to 73 per cent if the price tag was set at £50 billion, which some people consider a conservative estimate.

Secondly, on 14 March, a clear majority of Scottish MPs at Westminster voted against the Government's proposals: 33 Scottish MPs were against them, including a majority of Labour members, 22 were in favour of them, and there were four abstentions.

Thirdly, in May the numbers in this Parliament changed. I believe that a clear majority of members here also oppose the UK Government's proposals. It is clear that there is a range of views within that majority. Some members, including me, many Labour Party members—I am sure that Elaine Smith comes into that category—most Scottish National Party members, some Liberal Democrat members and perhaps even some Conservative members, are strongly opposed to the idea of replacing Trident at all. Other members qualify that, by reference either to multilateralism or to delaying a decision.

A majority of MSPs oppose the current proposals and although I share Elaine Smith's regret that her amendment was not selected, its selection would not have altered the decision at the end of today. The Parliament can either vote by a clear majority to show its opposition to the proposals to replace the weapons—

Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab): Surely we are talking about an important point, politically. Many of us do not consider the motion's use of the words "at this time" to be appropriate. There is a distinct difference between not supporting the replacement of Trident now and not supporting it at any time. The arguments against Trident rest whether we are talking about it being replaced this year, next year or in four years' time. If someone does not support the system, they do not support it—full stop. Surely we should have the right to have that debate in the Parliament.

Patrick Harvie: We have debated that position on several occasions. I sought to put before the Parliament a position that could gain the support of a majority of those members who are against the Government's proposals. A majority of members are against the Government's proposals

and I hope that all those members, regardless of their motive for reaching that position, will be able to express it at decision time. If we do that, the message from Scotland will be very clear—the majority of Scots and a clear majority of their elected representatives in both Parliaments reject the Government's plan. I hope that members will unite behind that position, regardless of our differences on the other issues.

Sadly, the amendments are disappointing. Largely, each of them seeks to replace the policy position with an expression of deference, even though all political parties have in the past debated and voted on policy positions on a number of reserved issues. I thought that we had got over that in the second session. Not only on Trident, but on a wide range of other issues, including international development—which the Executive parties raised—the Parliament found its voice. As citizens of the world, we have a responsibility to act and to express views on issues that are not within the Parliament's legal remit. I say to George Foulkes that even local authorities in Scotland—including councils that are dominated by members of his party—have a long tradition of internationalism and of expressing views on international issues, and they should be proud of doing so.

I close by quoting Professor William Walker, who spoke at the recent conference organised by Scottish CND. He said:

"there is a unique situation in Scotland. There are nuclear weapons in a land where the mood of the Parliament and of the country is opposed to them. The Parliament has a right to express society's views. Even if it doesn't take steps to obstruct nuclear weapons—"

which we can within devolved powers—

"it can ask questions within the UK. It can raise a voice of dissent from an important new institution within a nuclear weapon state. This could have effect internationally."

I urge all parties and all members who oppose the UK Government's plans to replace the Trident weapons system and, in the interim period, its submarine system to reject the amendments and vote for the motion unamended.

I move,

That the Parliament congratulates the majority of Scottish MPs for voting on 14 March 2007 to reject the replacement of Trident and calls on the UK Government not to go ahead at this time with the proposal in the White Paper, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*.

09:25

Michael McMahon (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab): Eight years on from the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, the views of Donald Dewar, quite rightly, remain important to much of what happens here. I am

never totally comfortable when speculating on what his stance would have been on any given situation, but I am as confident as I can be that although he did not want to shackle in any way the matters that could be aired here, it was never his intention for members continually to attempt to give parliamentary authority to matters over which the Parliament has no competence.

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

Michael McMahon: Let me make some progress.

The Labour Party will not be an accessory to such endeavours. The people of Scotland clearly decided the responsibilities of the Parliament when they voted for the devolved settlement. The settlement was established and we respect that judgment. The constitutional settlement contained in the Scotland Act 1998 clearly established the boundaries between devolved and reserved issues. That is why in the past six years no disputes between this Parliament and Westminster have had to go to the Privy Council. However, members on the Labour benches have detected that, in the early weeks of this session of the Parliament, the new Executive and some other parties have no such scruples in relation to respect for the settled will of the Scottish people. We do not intend to waste Parliament's time on matters for which it is not responsible.

Alasdair Allan (Western Isles) (SNP): The Parliament has already heard many expressions of deference to Westminster. Will the member also defer to the majority of Scottish MPs at Westminster, who—unlike, apparently, members on the Labour benches opposite—have a view on the issue?

Michael McMahon: We will not defer to anyone, but we will respect the devolved settlement. It is ironic that at a time when Alex Salmond is challenging Westminster for encroaching on Scottish legal matters, we are encroaching on Westminster's responsibilities for defence matters. We want to use this Parliament to focus on the matters over which it has power and for which it has responsibility, and to ensure that there is no free-for-all that shows no respect for the devolved settlement or the cause of good government.

Sandra White: The member mentioned that he respected the judgment of the Scottish people, yet he does not respect their wishes. The vast majority of the Scottish people do not want Trident on their shores, down the road on the Clyde. Will he explain his position?

Michael McMahon: The wishes of the Scottish people are for Scotland to remain part of the United Kingdom and for MPs to represent their views on defence matters in Westminster—MPs

are elected to go there to deal with that issue. We should recall that the reason why this Parliament came into being was that we did not want vital matters of importance to the people of Scotland to be squeezed into short debates held after midnight at Westminster. To squeeze a reserved matter into a short debate here is little better than what happened previously in London.

The Labour Party believes that the role of the Scottish Parliament is to concentrate on and debate the matters for which it has competence.

Patrick Harvie: The member seems unclear about whether we are debating the issue for too long or short a time. Why does he support—as I do—the Labour Party when it brings international development issues to the chamber but reject the notion that we should debate other issues of importance to the people of Scotland, such as this reserved issue?

Michael McMahon: The debate is both too short and unnecessary.

The Labour Party is concerned that our minority Government and some Opposition parties want to make the discussion of reserved matters almost the norm in this session. That is what we are opposed to this morning. We take a stance against that tendency, which is why we have never sought to lodge motions on matters that were not our responsibility. Other parties would serve this place better if they followed that principle, rather than merely posturing for effect.

I move amendment S3M-169.3, to leave out from "congratulates" to end and insert:

"affirms that defence policy is, and should remain, the responsibility of the UK Parliament."

Jamie Hepburn (Central Scotland) (SNP): Will the member give way?

The Presiding Officer: No. I am sorry but the member has finished his speech.

09:30

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Ladies and gentlemen—I mean Presiding Officer. *[Laughter.]* I am in the wrong forum all of a sudden. I am back at the student union.

It is disappointing that as their first subject for debate in this session the Greens have picked a reserved issue—not just any reserved issue but one that, as Mr Harvie said, the Parliament has debated many times before. I am not sure whether any more light will be shed on the issue than was shed on previous occasions. The reality is that no matter what the Parliament resolves at 5 o'clock, it will mean nothing whatever. This is a massive exercise in self-indulgence on the part of the

Greens and their supporters in the Parliament. It means nothing.

I came along this morning hoping that the Labour Party in Scotland might have rediscovered its backbone. I was sadly mistaken. There was little evidence of that backbone during the recent election campaign, when I sat in hustings meetings with various Labour candidates—some of whom are here today—in different parts of the country. By remarkable coincidence, not a single Labour candidate with whom I shared a platform during the election campaign supported the Labour Party's policy on Trident. Every single one of them seemed to oppose it.

I hoped that this morning we might hear Labour Party members defend party policy on Trident—a policy that has often been stated in the House of Commons. Sadly, even the redoubtable Mr McMahon was disappointing. In his speech—which lasted five minutes, with lots of interventions—he said not a word about the substantive issue of Trident. If Labour Party members will not do so themselves, it is, again, left to the Conservatives to defend the position of the Labour Government at Westminster.

George Foulkes: Will the member give way?

Murdo Fraser: I will happily give way to someone who may be prepared to defend the position of the Labour Government.

George Foulkes: Will the member first of all confirm that he did not appear on any platform with me, so that I am excused?

I am prepared to defend our position, but I will defend it in a forum that has responsibility for the issue, and not here, where we have no such responsibility. I do not believe that we should turn the Parliament into a protest movement, which is what some members of other parties want. I hope that Murdo Fraser realises that he is contradicting himself. First of all, he says that we should not discuss the issue; then he says that Labour Party members have no backbone because we have not lodged a substantive amendment. He cannot have it both ways.

Murdo Fraser: I appreciate that Lord Foulkes is a relative newcomer to the chamber, but he will be aware that we have debated reserved issues on many occasions in the past—as indeed, to be fair, do other fora throughout the land, such as local councils. I do not have a particular problem with debating Trident, but we should get on with debating the real issue, about which we have heard very little in the previous two speeches.

I wish that we lived in a world without nuclear weapons—a world in which they had not been invented or in which they could be uninvented. However, we do not, and neither of those things is

possible. So long as others have nuclear weapons, we should retain them. I remember the debates in the 1980s about unilateral nuclear disarmament. The debates today are not so different—only the faces of the unilateralists have changed. Back then, Tony Blair, John Reid and Jack McConnell had all signed up to CND and were all opposed our nuclear deterrent—all of them wrong to a man. They now accept the error of their ways, because the Conservatives won that debate. They have been converted to our cause. I believe that we should retain our nuclear deterrent because we live in an increasingly uncertain world. We do not know where the threats are coming from, and we do not know where the rogue states might be that threaten our security in 30 or 40 years' time. It would be madness to give up our deterrent at this time.

The unilateralists were wrong in the 1980s and they are wrong today. It would be foolhardy for us to give up our nuclear weapons unilaterally. We should reject the Green motion and, even if the Labour Party are too feart to make the arguments their party stands for, they can still serve their party's will.

I move amendment S3M-169.1, to leave out from "congratulates" to end and insert:

"notes that defence matters are wholly reserved to Scotland's other Parliament at Westminster and that on 14 March 2007 a majority of MPs voted for the replacement of Trident."

09:35

Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): It is legitimate for the Greens to bring the subject of Trident for debate in the chamber. It is important to be able to debate the issues, so let us remind ourselves of some of the facts. All the UK's tactical nuclear weapon systems have been taken out of service. The UK's nuclear force is now limited to its strategic deterrent, which is Trident. We spent huge resources on procuring Trident and we spend a substantial part of the UK's annual defence budget on the system.

There is a legitimate argument about whether any UK Government would ever use our nuclear deterrent. I think that it is important not only to set out my party's position but to make clear my own views on what is an important moral question for everyone. I cannot envisage any scenario in which use of the Trident missile system would be justified. I am at one with the many leaders of civic Scotland and our churches who have given a moral lead on the issue. During my 15 years' service in the Army—even during the cold war—I found little support among my colleagues for the diversion of funds to strategic nuclear weapons at the expense of our conventional forces.

Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab): Is Mike Rumbles saying that the Liberal party is against Trident in principle both now and at any time, or just for now?

Mike Rumbles: Trident is an important moral issue for every MSP and every person in Scotland. It is important for each individual to take a view on the issue. At the moment, I am expressing my view. In a moment, I will emphasise my party's view on the matter.

Sarah Boyack: Why does the member not answer the question?

Mike Rumbles: The member should wait.

I have yet to hear anyone—even Murdo Fraser—outline the circumstances in which a UK Prime Minister would launch a so-called independent system to destroy millions of innocent people. I do not think that I will ever hear that.

Enough of my personal views on the matter—I want to emphasise my party's view. As much as we would like to see the weapons go, the Liberal Democrats believe that unilateral nuclear disarmament is not the best way forward. We believe that the key to a safer world is to make real progress on multilateral nuclear disarmament. We must be willing to take part in the disarmament process and we want the UK Government to press for a nuclear weapons convention to formalise all the nuclear states' commitment to disarmament.

It is entirely wrong for the UK to commit to renew our so-called independent nuclear deterrent when there is no need or justification for doing so.

Patrick Harvie: Will the member give way?

Mike Rumbles: I cannot give way, unfortunately, as I have only a minute left.

The argument that we must renew Trident because of the unserviceability of Royal Navy submarines is patently nonsense. That is why we are happy to join others today to congratulate the majority of Scottish MPs who made the right decision and voted against the UK Government's line that we should renew our strategic nuclear weapons. Most of our MPs, from all parties—except the Conservatives—joined together to reject that nonsensical argument.

It is clear to us that no effective case has been made for a successor to Trident. In any case, it must be right that the proper place in which to decide whether to replace Trident is the UK Parliament. That is why we lodged our amendment. The Liberal Democrat party is a federal party. We believe that domestic decisions for Scotland are best made here in the Scottish Parliament. However, although it is entirely appropriate for the Parliament to take a view to feed into the decision-making process, actual

decisions on the defence of the realm are clearly and correctly the preserve of the UK Parliament.

The Liberal Democrats want real nuclear disarmament to make the world a safer place. The way to do that is to engage with others on multilateral nuclear disarmament. I urge members to support the Liberal Democrat amendment and then vote for the motion as amended.

I move amendment S3M-169.4, to insert after "Trident":

"recognises that decisions on matters of defence are matters within the responsibility of the UK Government and Parliament".

09:39

The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Bruce Crawford): I welcome this morning's debate on Trident and the Green Party's motion. Trident is a vital issue that divides public opinion and political parties. However, as others have said, it is evident that a clear majority of the Scottish public is against a new generation of weapons of mass destruction. The people of Scotland have shown their opposition to Trident time and time again. As Patrick Harvie said, today is the fourth time in just over a year that the Parliament has discussed Trident. That perhaps shows the importance of the issue and how strongly people feel.

This Government is happy to continue to debate the arguments for and against Trident. In the past, the intellectual argument was that that the Soviet bloc represented a threat and that nuclear capability provided a form of deterrent, kept the peace and prevented further wars.

George Foulkes: In all sincerity, does not Bruce Crawford—as a minister in the Scottish Parliament, which has substantial responsibilities and makes decisions that affect the people of Scotland—find it demeaning to turn the Parliament into a protest movement?

Bruce Crawford: I find it utterly demeaning for someone such as George Foulkes to come here and try to put the Parliament in a box and constrain what it wants to do.

Of course, the end of the cold war put paid to the previous theory, which by any reasonable measure no longer holds water. The UK Government's white paper admits:

"Currently no state has both the intent to threaten our vital interests and the capability to do so with nuclear weapons."

It is far from clear who our enemies are and why a nuclear capability is thought necessary. To be blunt, the UK Government's position that there is no known enemy means that multilateralism is

dead. No one can argue a position of multilateralism if there is no known enemy.

The Government is happy to talk about the costs, including the merit of spending, on the basis of some threat from a mythical enemy, £25 billion in capital and perhaps as much as £100 billion in lifetime costs—an obscene sum—to replace a system of weapons of mass destruction that runs counter to long-standing international non-proliferation agreements. That money could be better spent on public services such as schools, hospitals and housing.

How many more debates will we have during the coming months and years on the rights and wrongs of the son of Trident? Where will those debates take us? Of course, in an independent Scotland we would not have such debates because no weapons of mass destruction would be based in Scotland. In our election manifesto, we stated that Scotland should be free to remove nuclear weapons from our shores. Short of the full responsibilities of independence, the Government will reflect on the views of the majority of Scots and carefully consider which aspects of the plans to replace Trident impact on devolved areas. We will do what we can, using those responsibilities, to persuade the UK Government to change its stance.

We also intend to hold a summit with key stakeholders to agree a joint position against Trident and get the best ideas and proposals from an alliance of people from throughout Scottish life who oppose the son of Trident. We will stand up for our beliefs and do all that we can to represent Scottish opinion on these vital matters. I compare that principled position with the position of the Liberal Democrats.

Bill Butler: At the assembly that is to be called, will the minister invite English and Welsh opinion as well?

Bruce Crawford: I called it a summit. We will consider who we appropriately invite along to that, but provided that it is an alliance of people who believe what we believe—that Scotland should be free from weapons of mass destruction—I think that that is pretty fair.

Until today, the Liberal Democrats' position was typical of what we might expect from a party whose policy bends in the wind and which thinks, "Let's not decide on Trident today." The Liberal Democrats have now made up their minds—at least, I thought that they had, but their amendment seeks to remove from the Green party's motion the words:

"and calls on the UK Government not to go ahead at this time with the proposal in the White Paper, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*."

Mike Rumbles: Will the minister take an intervention?

The Presiding Officer: The minister is in his last minute.

Bruce Crawford: By seeking to remove those words, the Liberals have to all intents and purposes abandoned their party's position. I congratulate them. They managed to lodge a McNulty amendment by trying to be clever, but they ended up making fools of themselves. Unfortunately, they might succeed in giving succour to those who want to press ahead with the son of Trident, whatever the price.

This Government stands for a nuclear-free Scotland—a successful, peaceful and prosperous nation that meets its obligations to the other nations of the world. Trident and the UK's nuclear arsenal have no place in our vision for a modern Scotland.

09:45

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I refer members to my contributions to the various debates on this subject that have taken place in the chamber—I do not intend to rehearse the arguments in detail again. Murdo Fraser did not share a platform with me, but he will be able to read the *Official Report*.

I will concentrate on the impact on and disruption to the lives of the people who live on the Roseneath peninsula and have to cope with the blockades organised by Faslane 365. I say at the outset that peaceful protest plays a vital part in a democratic society, and we have a long and respected tradition of it in this country. Many of the rights and freedoms that we enjoy today were gained because people were prepared to protest. I therefore defend absolutely the right to peaceful protest.

I acknowledge the Faslane 365 activists' determination to make their views known, but their illegal blockades cause more severe disruption than just preventing workers from clocking in at the base. In fact, the activists have caused little, if any, disruption to the base's operation. Instead, students have missed examinations, carers have been unable to get to their older and more vulnerable charges, and others have been unable to get to work or to go about their daily lives. That is to say nothing about the potential for fatalities if emergency vehicles are caught up in the blockades.

When not actively stopping the flow of traffic, protesters are known to illegally paint road markings and obscure sight lines for drivers. That is not just further disruption, it is criminal damage that could cause accidents.

Jamie Hepburn: Will the member take an intervention?

Jackie Baillie: I would rather make progress.

Members will be aware that the SNP supports Faslane 365, the organisation that is responsible for the blockades. In a letter from Alex Salmond's office, I was told that the SNP support does not extend to the blockading of adjacent roads. However, there is really only one road in and out of the peninsula, and supporters of Faslane 365 are blockading it quite deliberately. Will SNP members encourage their First Minister to withdraw his support for that illegal action but not necessarily his support for the principle of what Faslane 365 is trying to do? Mr Hepburn wishes to intervene. I look forward to receiving a yes or no answer from him.

Jamie Hepburn: The member is not actually going to get a yes or no answer—

Jackie Baillie: Then I am not going to accept the intervention.

I turn to the Greens, who take a principled stance on the issue. I quote from an e-mail from Robin Harper to one of my constituents.

Alasdair Allan: Will the member give way?

Jackie Baillie: No.

These are Robin Harper's words, not mine:

"Given that my perception was that these blockades were I thought designed to make things difficult at the base, not aimed at the local community, and that according to recent reports, the protesters are fighting amongst themselves, I am seriously considering withdrawing my support—I need to consult with colleagues, and write to the camp before I take such a step, so give me a little time over this".

That is a well-judged comment.

If members need to be further convinced, they should consider the ill-conceived proposal to hold a disco and barbecue with live music outside the gates of Faslane cemetery. I am grateful that that will not now happen. The organisers did not realise the sensitivities and I commend them for changing their view. That is an illustration of the problem for local people, and I encourage Robin Harper and others in the chamber to reflect on it.

In closing, I refer to Peninsula 24/7, which is a group formed by local people to give them a voice in what is going on in their area. I ask all MSPs and parties that support Faslane 365 to think about the consequences for local people, many of whom do not support the presence of Trident on the Clyde.

What about the peace camp? I understand that there have already been two evictions, and on that basis it looks like "Big Brother" has nothing on the peace camp at Faslane. It is hardly behaving in unity to oppose Trident, which is what Faslane 365 seeks to do.

Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): On a point of order, Presiding Officer. As a new member, I would like some clarification for those who might intend intervening in subsequent debates. If a member gives way to an intervention, can they stand up again if they do not like what the intervening member is saying? I understood that Jackie Baillie had given way.

The Presiding Officer: Yes, if the terms of the intervention have been breached. Ms Baillie made quite clear the basis on which she was taking the intervention, and Mr Hepburn made it equally clear that he was not prepared to accept it, so she was quite entitled to get back on her feet.

09:50

Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP): I remind members that Trident is a weapon of mass destruction, is evil and has no place in a fair and civilised society. It is hypocritical of the Westminster Government to verbally and physically attack any country for having any remote connection to nuclear weapons while it is retaining and renewing weapons of mass destruction on its own soil. It is also immoral and dishonest of Westminster to sign up to the non-proliferation treaty that calls for complete disarmament while ignoring its obligations by voting for the retention and renewal of that category of weapons.

It is also dishonest to claim—and I want to lay this one to rest once and for all; I hope that Jackie Baillie will listen—that removing Trident will cost 11,000 jobs. The removal of Trident will cost just over 1,000 jobs, and it is an absolute fact that those workers can be redeployed through a programme of diversification for a peaceful world, and not just a peaceful Scotland.

Jackie Baillie: Will the member take an intervention?

Sandra White: No. The member would not take an intervention so I will not take one.

Many members say that Trident is a reserved matter—we have heard that from George Foulkes and members of other unionist parties. I and a majority of the Scottish people say that it is not a reserved matter. Trident is on Scottish soil down there on the Clyde, and we in the Scottish Parliament have to decide to get rid of nuclear weapons and Trident for the sake of the Scottish people.

How do we go about that? Bruce Crawford touched on the powers that we have over transport, planning and the legal system. This Parliament can do lots of things to thwart the progress of Trident with the legislative tools at our disposal.

Mike Rumbles: Will the member take an intervention?

Sandra White: No, I am sorry.

We could insist that we become an observer at the non-proliferation treaty committee on the ground that we wish Scotland to be nuclear-free.

Bill Butler: Will the member give way?

Sandra White: I am sorry, but I do not have time.

Patrick Harvie and others have reminded us that some local authorities are already nuclear free. We could make our representation to the non-proliferation treaty committee before 2010, when the real decision will be made. I have not just plucked this idea out of thin air; precedents have been set. I mentioned Palestine in a motion previously, but Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan all signed up to the NPT after the break-up of the Soviet Union, and Palestine has observer status.

Undoubtedly, George Foulkes will say that Westminster must have something to do with it, and perhaps he will run down to his Westminster masters and tell them exactly what is happening in this Parliament. I hope that he does. Maybe they will object, but it is worth exploring the issue to ensure that we highlight Scotland's people's wish to be free of nuclear weapons. We are here to serve the people of Scotland.

Our neighbour, Ireland, which is also a signatory to the NPT, said:

"States should not develop new nuclear weapons ... or undertake the replacement or modernisation of their nuclear-weapon systems"

while they are committed to the non-proliferation treaty. That is the reality. This Parliament must show Westminster and the rest of the world that Scotland will not put up with nuclear weapons on her shores, and the decision that we make today could have a great impact on Westminster and the rest of the world by showing that.

09:53

John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I enter this debate having been gainfully employed at Rosyth dockyard and Faslane naval base. My contribution comes from the perspective of someone who owes their place in this Parliament to having learned difficult and sometimes harsh lessons while refitting Royal Navy ships and submarines.

It is important to remember that thousands of workers throughout Scotland are proud—as I was—of their contribution to the defence of the United Kingdom and to the growth of the Scottish economy. Despite members' different perspectives, I am sure that all will join me in

paying tribute to those workers, particularly those at Rosyth who are currently in dispute with their employer. Those workers and I understand that Trident is an emotive issue that divides public opinion.

I recognise that there are people in my party who have been on both sides of the debate. I point out that there are people in the SNP who have also been on both sides of the debate—indeed, the First Minister was a vociferous campaigner for bringing Trident jobs to Rosyth in the early 1990s. One of the most interesting aspects of that campaign—in relation to which Murdo Fraser gave us an interesting history lesson—is that, if the contract had been awarded to Rosyth in 1993, we would be talking about a lot more jobs in Scotland than we are now. However, we all know what happened in 1993: a certain Malcolm Rifkind betrayed Scotland and made a decision in the interests not of national security but of the political survival of his party in the south-west. That flawed decision cost the taxpayer £666 million. Forgive me, therefore, if I find it difficult to take seriously the Tories' crusade for efficient government.

The one thing that I reject in this debate is the notion that there is public outcry about the replacement of Trident. I just do not see it. Perhaps it is indicative of views in the area of west Fife in which I live and in the wider Fife area but, during the election campaign, not one person mentioned Trident to me.

Bill Butler: Obviously, workers' interests are important. However, does John Park agree that the Scottish Trades Union Congress—nem con—is against Trident renewal now and at any time?

John Park: Bill Butler is absolutely correct that that is the STUC's position. However, I am representing the views of the people of Mid Scotland and Fife. The STUC and CND carried out excellent research into the consequences for jobs of cancelling Trident. Unfortunately, it considered only the removal of Trident from Scotland rather than the removal of Trident from the UK, and obviously there are jobs at Aldermaston and Devonport that rely on Trident. However, it was a sober piece of research and a great contribution to the debate.

On the extent to which the public are talking about Trident, I point out that, since entering Parliament, I have had considerably more correspondence complaining about the removal of the tolls from the Forth bridge than I have had about the renewal of Trident. Perhaps I should use my judgment in that regard.

Being a new and enthusiastic MSP, I was keen to get some feedback from constituents on the subject of the debate before speaking in it. Given the timescales, that proved to be difficult.

However, this week I received e-mails highlighting the content of the debate before I even knew what the motion was—there must be some good organising going on in the Green party.

The people I have managed to speak to divide fairly equally on both sides of the debate. I am sure that we could become preoccupied with the semantic question of what is devolved and what is reserved, but the clear issue that has been raised in the feedback that I have received is that people do not know why the Scottish Parliament is talking about this issue. Although there may be strong views on either side of the argument, it is important that we do not ignore the silent majority in the middle.

The Presiding Officer: I call Bill Kidd, to be followed by Jim Tolson. Mr Tolson, I must ask you to keep your remarks to about two and a half minutes, if you could.

09:58

Bill Kidd (Glasgow) (SNP): It is a pleasure and an honour to deliver my first speech in Parliament on what I believe will be an historic day—a day on which we hammer the first nail in the coffin of the British Government's weapons of mass destruction programme.

I congratulate the Greens on securing this debate, to which we in the SNP are delighted to contribute, as the motion keeps faith with the many thousands of Scots who voted for all the parties in this chamber. The true consensus among members of this Parliament reflects the broad consensus throughout Scotland against the maintenance of nuclear weapons in our nation. It forms a solid bond through civic Scotland, the STUC, Scottish CND, the churches, voluntary organisations and the 76 per cent of the Scottish people who would rather that the £25 billion cost—at least—of upgrading Trident was spent instead on public services such as schools, keeping hospitals local, and police and fire services.

Bill Butler: Will the member give way?

Bill Kidd: I am sorry, but I cannot; this is my first speech.

During the long years of the cold war, we were constantly told that it was only the threat of the Soviet Union that necessitated the endless waste of billions of pounds of public money, but now we see the truth—instead of the promised peace dividend following the fall of the Berlin wall, we witness the gimlet-eyed global imperialist sabre rattlers in Washington and Westminster, who will never allow their hands to be prised from their nuclear phallic symbols until forced to do so by a committed public voice. Is that unfair?

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con): Yes.

Bill Kidd: I do not care, because article VI of the non-proliferation treaty states:

“Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

The replacement of Trident would commit the UK to owning nuclear weapons until at least 2050, which, since the NPT came into force in 1970, would mean 80 years of complete failure to disarm—in other words, barefaced duplicity.

Meanwhile, last week's report from the Federation of Small Businesses showed a Scotland where swathes of rural and urban poverty are still commonplace, early death stalks housing schemes, small businesses go to the wall and 600,000 carers struggle to keep body and soul together as they are denied the resources that are wasted on bombs that must never be used. As I have spent all my life living just 30 miles from the spectre of first Polaris and now Trident, I am qualified to speak out against the spurious arguments of those who want to continue the despoliation of our land, our waters and our sense of ourselves as human beings by spending our hard-earned wealth on big-boy's toys over which we have no control.

Allow me to exercise a word that we have all got used to over the past few weeks—consensus. There is a genuine feeling of camaraderie on Trident in this land. By standing together against Trident, we will be embarking on an historic journey towards common humanity and a more prosperous and peaceful future for all.

I commend the motion to Parliament and the people of Scotland.

10:02

Jim Tolson (Dunfermline West) (LD): I will try to keep my speech as short as you requested, Presiding Officer, but you will appreciate that it is quite difficult to cut big chunks out of a speech. Accordingly, I will not take any interventions.

I speak in this debate as a member with a somewhat unusual background, in that I spent well over a decade working on Trident and Polaris nuclear submarines and believed strongly that our having a nuclear deterrent protected us. That was my view in the 1980s and 1990s, when I worked on refitting our fleet of nuclear submarines at Rosyth dockyard. That view was the key to my livelihood, and I believed that it was also the key to the policy of mutually assured destruction—MAD.

Some views that are held, often with great passion, should remain fixed and others should be flexible as time and circumstances change. My firm belief in the 1980s that the country should have a nuclear deterrent has changed with circumstances and time. I have seen, all too often, reports of our overstretched armed forces battling in many areas of the world, defending the rights of Britain and its allies, with a lack of people and equipment and without the flexibility to respond quickly to new threats. That seems all the more nauseating when we consider the cost of materials and equipment that are involved in facilitating the four nuclear submarines that make up our fleet. I recall being told, when I was a young apprentice in the mid-1980s, that a simple bolt cost more than £5 for a submarine but only 5p for a ship.

It is right that Britain should have an effective, flexible and well-trained armed force. However, even with Mr Putin's recent sabre rattling, I no longer feel that a fleet of submarines with multiwarhead, intercontinental ballistic missiles is needed to defend the rights of Britons at home and abroad.

The cost of replacing our Trident nuclear submarine fleet is estimated at £20 billion—although I am certain that it would be much more once the fleet was brought into service—but the cost of decommissioning the submarines, storing the submarine hulks in the long term and dealing with the dangerous and highly radioactive materials that we bequeath to future generations for thousands of years is incalculable. That is why Liberal Democrats north and south of the border have a long-standing commitment to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons on a multilateral basis.

I welcome the opportunity to support my federal colleagues and debate these important issues in a Scottish context, while recognising that defence is, rightly, reserved to the Westminster Parliament.

10:04

Christina McKelvie (Central Scotland) (SNP): I am delighted that my first speech in a debate is on an issue that has been close to my heart since the age of about 15.

During the recent elections, some Labour candidates argued that Scots should drop our principled objection to nuclear weapons. That is from the party that committed our armed forces to war on the pretence that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that had to be found and destroyed. We were told, however, that we should tolerate weapons of mass destruction on the Clyde, because jobs depended on them.

The truth is out now. Jobs are going at Faslane, but the weapons of mass destruction are still

there. The jobs have nothing to do with Trident. They are not dependent on it and, whether it stays or goes, they are at risk from UK Government decisions. In fact, the STUC and Scottish CND produced a joint report in March year that showed that renewing Trident would cost jobs. Just to be clear: if Trident is renewed, it will still cost jobs in Scotland.

We are told by the Labour Government in London that the running costs of son of Trident will be about the same as those of the current system. That is £2,000 every minute, £120,000 an hour, £3 million per day and more than £1 billion a year on top of the capital costs of £20 billion to buy the beasts in the first place—for a weapon that we are told will never be fired. It is like saying that everyone should carry a knife to avoid being attacked with a knife, or that we should all carry guns to make society safer.

Trident is economically inept, morally repugnant and spiritually bereft. The presence of those weapons in Scotland's waters is an insult to all of us who believe that peace is preserved by diplomacy before war and compassion before coercion. It is also an insult to all of us who believe in spending public money wisely.

I am not a pacifist, but I recognise the impotence, vanity and sheer waste in a weapon such as Trident. It cannot be a defensive weapon, but we are promised that it will never be used in aggression. What exactly is its purpose?

I would rather be a citizen of a nation that looks to persuade and co-operate than bully and cajole, and I would rather be such a citizen safe in the knowledge that my country was free of weapons of mass destruction.

Mutually assured destruction is not the only mad aspect of nuclear weapons. The very idea that London is considering renewing Trident falls into that category.

Defence may be reserved in the strict legal terms of the Scotland Act 1998, but morality, decency and common sense are not. We have a moral duty to oppose that which we see as a waste of national resources.

I support the motion in Patrick Harvie's name, I welcome the stand taken against nuclear weapons and I am pleased that it is the majority viewpoint of the Scottish people. We have the opportunity to make it clear that we believe that nuclear weapons have no place in Scotland, and we should take that opportunity and make Scotland's voice heard.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Alasdair Morgan): I thank the member for her brevity.

10:07

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab): Over the past few months, I have read a great deal about the issue, and it is clear to me that the alliance against the renewal of Trident and in favour of nuclear disarmament is bigger and wider than at any point since the second world war. For many, including myself, the issue is still rooted in the fundamental moral objection to nuclear weapons. I applaud in particular the leadership of the churches and other religious leaders in putting that view so strongly in recent times.

However, many people will not be persuaded by those arguments, which is why we have also to consider the strategic and security arguments. That is where I am struck by the number of people who have changed their minds since the 1980s, including many in the Conservative party—members can read Michael Portillo in last week's *Sunday Times*, and Michael Ancram is even stronger on the subject. Lord Hattersley, who supported nuclear weapons in the 1980s, has said that

"to posture about the importance of nuclear independence is to fight the battles of the past."

Henry Kissinger and three other high-level architects of the cold war, in a remarkable article in *The Wall Street Journal* on 4 January, said that the reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence

"is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective"

in the modern world. They called on nuclear weapons states to engage seriously in nuclear disarmament.

Former chief of the defence staff Lord Brammall, speaking before George Foulkes in a recent House of Lords debate, said:

"it is difficult to see how the United Kingdom can exert any leadership and influence on the implementation of the non-proliferation treaty ... if we insist on a successor to Trident".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 24 January 2007; Vol 688, c 1137.]

The non-proliferation treaty is crucial to the debate. The treaty is a bargain: nations without nuclear weapons promised not to develop them and, in exchange, nuclear weapons states promised to pursue negotiations towards nuclear disarmament in good faith. As Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog, asked recently, how can Britain expect other countries to refrain from acquiring nuclear weapons if it upgrades Trident? It is supremely urgent that we stop nuclear proliferation, which is why the UK Government must change its disastrous policy decision.

I supported Elaine Smith's amendment, as I preferred its wording, but it was not selected for

debate, so, given the urgency, I will vote for the Green party motion.

10:10

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab): It is unfortunate that the back-bench amendment in my name, which was supported by several comrades and is printed in section F of today's *Business Bulletin*, was not chosen for debate, because it is the only clear anti-Trident position.

As it stands, the motion is not anti-Trident; it is party-political posturing by the Greens and is designed to appease the Liberals by using the words "at this time". If we are not to renew Trident "at this time", when are we to do so? A year from now? Two years? Five years? Clearly, it will be at some time. My position is clear: Trident should never be replaced, neither at this time nor at any time.

Storing our own weapons of mass destruction is wrong, replacing them is wrong and using them would be not only wrong but reckless, despicable and immoral. I hope that my views are perfectly clear: replacing Trident is wrong and using it would be an abomination. That is also the view of a number of my colleagues on the Labour benches, and it is unacceptable that they cannot express it.

If we are going to have a debate, we should have a proper one. The reality is that the Greens thought that replacing Trident was such an important issue that they split their time this morning, giving us only half the available time on an issue of world peace. Then they lodged a motion that is wishy-washy at best and pro-Trident at worst, when they could have set out a clear anti-Trident position by leaving out the three little words "at this time".

If we were in the Parliament that actually has responsibility for Trident, a fudge might be better than nothing—if it was the only game in town and we could try again later. However, this Parliament can merely express an opinion. To make that opinion one that says, "We don't want to replace Trident at this time," is ridiculous. It is a wasted opportunity.

The motion is not anti-Trident, it is not a principled position and it is duplicitous. On those grounds, I will find it extremely hard to support it at decision time.

10:12

Iain Smith (North East Fife) (LD): I am happy to make a winding-up speech on behalf of the Liberal Democrats.

I want first to make it clear that our position as a party is clear and has not changed one bit, whatever Bruce Crawford might say. Jim Wallace

made that clear in his excellent speech in the debate on Trident last year. As we set out in our amendment then, we rejected the reasoning in the Government's white paper that we had to make a decision on renewing Trident in spring 2007. As Jim Wallace said:

"We have argued a cogent case that crucial decisions on whether and how to procure a successor system to Trident need not be taken before 2014, when a clearer picture could have emerged of the proliferation of states that possess nuclear weapons and their ability to threaten ... Britain's security."—[*Official Report*, 21 December 2006; c 30690.]

It is important that we consider the debate in the context of whether multilateralism or unilateralism will ultimately bring the best overall result not just for Britain but for the whole world. The majority of our party support the multilateral route. There is a sizeable minority in the Liberal Democrats who support unilateralism, and there always has been, but as a party our majority position is that multilateralism is the best way forward.

It would make more sense for us to take our nuclear weapons to the table in 2010, when the next round of multilateral treaty discussions takes place, than to just say that we are going to get rid of them. Exactly how would Britain getting rid of our nuclear weapons result in North Korea, Iran or any other nation that is considering nuclear weapons deciding not to go ahead?

Sandra White: Will the member take an intervention?

Iain Smith: In a moment, when I have finished this point.

Equally, if Britain decides now to renew our nuclear deterrent and possibly increase it, how will that help to persuade the countries that are considering going down the nuclear route that they should not do so? Neither approach is correct.

Sandra White: Will the member take an intervention?

Iain Smith: The Liberal Democrat position is that we should not agree to renew Trident. We should instead reduce the number of warheads and take the remaining weapons to the table in 2010.

Sandra White: The member mentioned countries that are looking to develop nuclear weapons. How can we persuade them not to do that when Britain is renewing its nuclear weapons? Is that not a hypocritical stance?

Iain Smith: Sandra White should have listened to what I was saying rather than try to intervene. I said clearly that we do not believe that we should renew our weapons, because that would damage multilateralism. No decision needs to be taken now on the question of renewing Britain's nuclear deterrent.

I turn to the question whether the Parliament should have this debate. Of course, the Parliament is entitled to debate any issue that it wishes. It is free to do so, and on many occasions we have debated issues over which the Parliament and, more important, the Scottish Executive have no power to act. Of course we can do that, and we should rightly do so. However, it is also important to recognise the limitations. The people of Scotland must be clear that the Scottish Parliament cannot make decisions on such matters and that we are having this debate to express views rather than to take decisions. The Scottish Parliament cannot prevent the use of nuclear weapons. That is where the Greens' and the SNP's positions are particularly inconsistent. They want Scotland to withdraw from the decision-making process on whether to renew Trident, because they do not want Scotland to be part of the United Kingdom and its defence. However, if Scotland were not part of the UK, it would have no say on whether to renew the Trident weapons system. Perhaps we would have a say on where weapons would be based, but we would not have a say on whether they should be replaced.

I cannot see any difference between nuclear weapons being based in Faslane or Falmouth. The issue is whether we should have Trident and whether we should renew it. I want Scotland to be part of a United Kingdom in which we send elected people to the UK Parliament to represent our views and have a say; to assist with decisions on whether, as part of defence policy, Trident should be renewed; and to take decisions for us. That is important to us. However, the Scottish Parliament should express its view, which I am sure it will make clear in the vote at 5 o'clock.

Alasdair Allan: Will the member take an intervention?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: He is winding up.

Iain Smith: We should not withdraw from the important decision-making process in which Scotland is involved as part of the United Kingdom.

10:16

Jackson Carlaw (West of Scotland) (Con): What an indulgence this debate is: it will have all the force of the early to mid-1980s nuclear-free council nonsense, with their nuclear-free bin bags. There was gesture politics then and there is gesture politics now.

Of course Trident and the defence of our realm are a huge concern to the people of Scotland. They are, no doubt, a concern to my mother's bridge circle, but when that circle gets together it does so to play bridge, not to discuss Trident—at

least as far as I know. A full agenda of responsibilities is devolved to the Scottish Parliament and we should concentrate on devolved subjects, but if we must have such debates, we must.

One image that has stayed with me from my involvement in youth politics more than 20 years ago is of a spoof film poster—a mocked-up version of a “Gone with the Wind” poster, produced by the anti-Trident lobby. In it, Ronald Reagan substituted for Clark Gable; he swept up in his arms Margaret Thatcher, who substituted for Vivien Leigh. It had the immortal catch line:

“She promised to follow him to the end of the earth and he promised to deliver it”.

It was one of many entertaining posters in a campaign that reached a crescendo in the 1980s and then collapsed, not because it naturally ran out of steam, but because events demonstrated that all those who had passionately fought in its support had been wrong. In essence, those who were wrong then are posing the same arguments again now. The Conservative Government stood alone at first, but then, as it was shown to be right to endure the political pain that was endured by standing firm, we were joined by less consistently brave souls. The majority of the public in the UK consistently supported a nuclear defence strategy.

The end of the cold war, which was a massive personal political achievement for President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher, was the decisive moment in the history of post-war Europe—I thank the Greens for giving the Scottish Parliament an opportunity to pay a fulsome and heartfelt tribute to President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher. With President Gorbachev, who recognised the resolve that an increasingly discredited Soviet Union could not match, those politicians made our lives materially more secure and, by extension, liberated a continent not only from a menacing shadow, but literally with respect to the democratic and revolutionary changes thereafter.

When the last real Labour Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, secretly upgraded Polaris, which paved the way for Trident, he could not have foreseen what lay 20 years ahead. The inability of any politician to foresee events not just for their own generation but for the next generation must inform any decision that is taken now. I accept that the situation now is totally different: there is no natural or immediately credible target against which to aim our missiles with certainty. Some conclude from that that there is no threat or that such threat as there is is so general and non-governmental or regime generated that a nuclear response is superfluous—ludicrous, even. I think that that was what Bruce Crawford argued, but the failure of that

argument is that such a position serves only for today.

Just as Callaghan, Thatcher and Reagan could not foresee the demise of the cold war threat, Westminster—the responsibility in question lies there—is now considering, and preparing for, a future in which we can only imagine, and cannot know, the prevailing dangers to our country. Jim Tolson may have changed his mind, but if he changes his mind again in 10 years’ time, it will be too late if we have not made the appropriate investment.

I support what Jackie Baillie and John Park said. People who work in the community in question should not be made to feel that they are doing anything other than proudly participating in the defence of their country.

We have chuntered on with another example of the student union politics that the Parliament should eschew. The Green party, which lodged the motion, should, like any other party, reflect on why it suffered defeats last month. However, as I said, if we must have such a debate, we must.

The world is every bit as uncertain now as the future is unpredictable, and our judgment should be no different from that of the previous generation. Trident remains essential to our future security. We are not required to love it, but our well-being demands that we have it.

10:20

Michael McMahon: In my opening speech, I concentrated on our concerns about having this debate; in my closing speech, I will comment on issues that have been raised during the debate.

The Green party’s motion clearly shows that it has few scruples. It is a so-called anti-nuclear peace party, but its lodging a motion that proposes only a delay in a vote on implementing a new nuclear arsenal merely to make a transparent and feeble attempt to cobble together an anti-Labour majority in the chamber is an example of political deception that is almost unparalleled in the Parliament. We probably should have expected such a fraud, given the way in which the Greens have recently dodged transport and environmental issues to serve their new nationalist masters. For a pacifist party, the Green party has become adept at the military two-step as Green members dance around each issue making excuses for their latest sell-out.

Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab): Does the member agree that it sits rather ill for the Green party to lodge such a motion for its first debate in the new session, given that its members failed to turn up to discuss the future of agri-environment schemes for the next seven years?

Michael McMahon: I could not agree more.

Perhaps worse is the fact that the debate is based on the most facile, superficial and obtuse argument possible, which Bruce Crawford and his colleagues have again put eloquently. The Greens and the nats are so opposed to Trident that they want to pursue a course that would lead Scotland to utter impotence in making decisions on it. The independence parties regularly say that they want Scotland to be like Ireland. If they follow their line of reasoning to its natural conclusion, that is exactly where they will be in relation to Trident. I agree with Iain Smith about that.

Alasdair Allan: Will the member take an intervention?

Michael McMahon: No. I want to make progress.

Durness in the Highlands is further away from Faslane than is Donegal. The member of Parliament for Durness has a vote on Trident at Westminster, but no elected representative in Donegal can have an input into that debate. If Scotland gained independence from Westminster and was like Ireland, Whitehall would still own and control Trident missile systems and would make Scotland, like Ireland, the powerless neighbour of a nuclear state.

Jamie Hepburn: Is Michael McMahon calling for the reincorporation of the Republic of Ireland into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

Michael McMahon: The member's intervention is not clever—and nor was his intervention in Jackie Ballie's speech. He will need to step to the mark if he is to make interventions that contribute to the debate.

Trident would still be replaced, but it would be relocated to a port in England or Wales. Scotland, its First Minister, any future president or even its current cardinal would have no more say over issues relating to Trident than the Taoiseach, the Irish President or any other Irish politician.

Keith Brown (Ochil) (SNP): The Irish do not have Trident.

Michael McMahon: That is right, and they cannot influence the Trident debate.

If the independence movement's ambition is to have no influence over Trident, that ambition is short-sighted. If Scotland wants to have a say on Britain's nuclear missile capability, it must remain part of Britain and allow its MPs to take part in that debate. Scotland will lose its voice on the matter if it gets independence—that is the logical consequence of Scottish independence. However, this debate is not about logic—it is about the all too typical grandstanding that we have come to

expect from the nationalist coalition. That is what members have aimed at: Parliament should not be so easily fooled or seduced by the superficiality of the motion, and it should not support it.

10:24

The Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture (Linda Fabiani): I welcome the debate and thank Patrick Harvie and the Greens for lodging the motion, as the issue is incredibly important. We should debate the matter until the two thirds of Scots whom Patrick Harvie mentioned are given justice and their right to reject weapons of mass destruction on their shores. That right should be recognised and acted on.

There have been a lot of speeches. I thought some were absolutely super in that they showed depth and knowledge. There were too many to mention them all, so I will address them by party grouping.

I say to Mr Foulkes, Mr McMahon and others that it is the right of parties to decide what will be debated during their debating time. Labour members will recognise that when they get the chance to bring debates to the chamber for the first time as an Opposition party. Right from the start, the Scottish Parliament, across all parties, has had a proud record of debating, discussing and voting on issues that are not technically within its remit.

George Foulkes: You can call me George, by the way, with pleasure.

Labour has already put two motions before the Parliament while in opposition. I spoke to one of them last Thursday, when I made my maiden speech. Both were on devolved matters. We recognise the importance of the devolved areas and the importance of spending time discussing them.

Linda Fabiani: See the way I feel about you just now, George? It is going to be Mr Foulkes for a while longer.

One thing that I very much respected about Jack McConnell as First Minister was the fact that he brought to the chamber issues that were not within the remit of the Parliament but about which members right across the chamber felt strongly—dawn raids and how we treat asylum seekers, for example.

Rhona Brankin: Will Linda Fabiani give way?

Linda Fabiani: I am responding to George at the moment.

Similarly, there was anger right across the chamber about the treatment of the Black Watch. Jack McConnell was not slow to recognise that, or to speak about it. When George Foulkes has been

here for a while longer, he will see that we are not a parish council but a Parliament with the right to reflect what people are thinking. We have the right to put forward their views, including the view that we should not have weapons of mass destruction on our shores.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: One minute.

Linda Fabiani: See—I told you I had a lot to say.

Sadly, some Labour members have tried hard to justify being unable to follow their individual consciences on the matter—although following their conscience is what Labour members at Westminster did when Scottish MPs voted against the renewal of Trident. I really enjoyed listening to Bill Butler, Malcolm Chisholm and Elaine Smith. Marlyn Glen did not speak today, but I know that she is re-establishing the cross-party group on nuclear disarmament. I hope that there will be so many members on the group that we will force the Parliament to debate the matter over and over again. That is one of the most important things we can do. I absolutely defend the Parliament's right to do that.

Iain Smith: On a point of order, Presiding Officer. During his speech, Bruce Crawford said that the Liberal Democrat amendment deletes the words:

"and calls on the UK Government not to go ahead at this time with the proposal in the White Paper, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*."

The amendment in the name of Mike Rumbles would not, in fact, do that; it would add some words after "Trident" but it would not leave any words out of the motion. I would be grateful if you could confirm that that is the case.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am sure that members are able to read what is in the *Business Bulletin*.

10:29

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): I shall begin by addressing the point that Jackie Baillie made. I support the Faslane 365 campaign—I have not withdrawn my support for it—but I am concerned when any protest movement has unnecessary and avoidable collateral effects on communities. I am very glad that the campaigners withdrew from holding that inappropriate disco, and I hope that Jackie Baillie will continue to address the problems there. I have not heard anything to the contrary. If she wishes me to come along and help to mediate, I will be only too glad to do so. I have also been there to support members of the Scottish Green Party, including Patrick Harvie, in offering themselves for arrest at the base. Let that be absolutely clear.

Elaine Smith: Why is the motion not clearly anti-Trident? Why does it include the phrase "at this time"?

Robin Harper: I would argue that the motion is clearly anti-Trident. The important thing is that the proposal to replace Trident undermines the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, international agreements and international law. We have the opportunity to support those 33 courageous Labour MPs who stood up in the House of Commons and voted against their party in defence of international law. That is the tenor of the motion and what it is about. It gives the Scottish Parliament the opportunity to support those 33 MPs, to support international law and to support the notion that Trident should not be replaced.

Rhona Brankin: Will the member take an intervention?

Robin Harper: Certainly not from Rhona Brankin, given her inappropriate intervention on the matter of the rural affairs debate. I can tell members why we were not here. We wanted to speak and registered our interest to do so, but we were told that we would not get to speak, so we watched the entire debate in our offices.

Mike Rumbles: That is pathetic.

Robin Harper: It is not pathetic; it is what most members do most of the time when they are not engaged in debates in the chamber. That is enough of such Pontius Pilate Jesuitical nonsense.

The opening speakers did not say very much and avoided the tenor of the motion—the import of what we are talking about. Michael McMahon said that he would rather not be an accessory to the endeavour of the debate. I would rather not be a silent and willing accessory to the decision that was made in the House of Commons. This is the chance for the Scottish Parliament to register, on an international scale, its disagreement with that undermining of international law. The debate is not about the devolved settlement; it is about an international concern.

Murdo Fraser tried to take us into the general argument about whether we should have nuclear weapons at all. Yes, that could be debated in the Parliament, but it is not what we are debating today. The Conservatives know our position on that and we know theirs. He said that the debate is a self-indulgence; I say that saying we should not debate the issue in the chamber is a counsel of despair.

Replacing Trident is not a responsible action in the post-cold-war world. The argument that we need Trident as the ultimate defence is absolutely absurd—it is the ultimate bad example to set to the rest of the world. Scotland should become

world renowned for its peaceful intentions and commitment to non-violence—the majority of the people of Scotland are committed in that respect—not as a country that aids and abets the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We want the Scottish Parliament to be a Parliament that is opposed to the immoral, illegal and unnecessary replacement of Trident. We want it to be a Parliament of peace, non-violence and integrity, that has the wisdom to recognise the utter folly of pursuing a new nuclear weapons system.

I congratulate Christina McKelvie and Bill Kidd on their speeches, and I thank Malcolm Chisholm, in particular, for his magnificent speech, which deserves a round of applause.

I will finish with what underlies our feelings on the matter. I quote Bertrand Russell, speaking in 1961 for the 12 most senior scientists in the world:

“There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death, because we cannot forget our quarrels?”

The Conservatives are always referring back to the cold war. Good Lord, that happened a long time ago.

“We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.”

I ask members please to support the Green party motion, preferably unamended, at 5 o'clock.

Carbon Offsetting

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Alasdair Morgan): The next item of business is a debate on motion S3M-173, in the name of Robin Harper, on carbon offsetting. Members should leave the chamber if they are not participating in the debate.

10:35

Robin Harper (Lothians) (Green): Carbon offsetting is a relatively new concept, whereby the amount of carbon that is emitted when we drive or fly, or as a result of manufacturing processes, is offset by someone else, somewhere else, who does something else to reduce carbon emissions. The concept has grown in popularity among individuals, private companies and even political parties, but it is increasingly coming under fire. It has been likened to the granting of papal indulgences in the middle ages, when the church offered a means for people who had committed a sin to buy their way out of hell—of course, hell was a very hot place.

Although Greens acknowledge that action by polluters to reduce carbon emissions to mitigate the effects of climate change can play a useful role in supplementing sound Government environmental policy, the Government cannot seriously regard carbon offsetting as a substitute for policies that directly reduce carbon emissions.

In 2003, the Scottish Executive announced plans to plant trees alongside the new roads and motorways it planned to build, to offset the emissions from the vehicles that would use the new roads. The proposal was ridiculed after independent experts calculated that the Executive would need to plant 150 million trees over 100,000 hectares—a forest six times the size of Greater Glasgow—to soak up the carbon dioxide from vehicle exhausts. It was suggested that the Executive should plant fig trees, the leaves of which might at least be used to cover ministers' embarrassment. The Executive's tree-planting scheme was further undermined when experts pointed out that even if a gigantic forest could be planted, the carbon would not be locked into the forest in perpetuity. Trees do not stand for ever; they fall down, decay and release carbon back into the atmosphere. The planting of trees is, at best, a temporary measure. Of course, there are other excellent environmental reasons for planting trees. I am an avid tree planter, but I do not offset my carbon production against the trees that I plant.

So much for home-grown carbon offsetting, but what about the alternative, which is investment in projects in developing countries to offset our emissions? There are serious concerns that some projects might increase, rather than reduce,

environmental, economic and social impacts. A report from the World Rainforest Movement outlined human rights abuses at the Mount Elgon national park in eastern Uganda. Villagers who live along the park's boundary have been beaten, shot at and barred from their land, and have had their livestock confiscated, by the armed park rangers who guard the so-called carbon trees inside the national park.

The Times reported recently that an Indian company

"has spent just £1.4m in equipment to reduce its emissions, but it will reap a profit of more than 200 times that amount from British investors and others."

So that it can increase its carbon offset gains, the company is expanding its production of chlorodifluoromethane, or HCFC-22—the replacement for the chlorofluorocarbons that used to be in fridges and are so damaging to the ozone layer—the manufacture of which incidentally produces the gas trifluoromethane, or HFC-23.

China is imposing a 65 per cent windfall tax on the money that is coming to companies through carbon offsetting.

The Environmental Audit Committee at Westminster said when it launched its inquiry into the voluntary carbon offset market:

"the carbon offset market ... is not always seen to be robustly regulated",

and went on to say:

"particular concerns surround the issues of proving additionality, of verification and monitoring, of the permanence of the offset, of possible leakage from offset projects and the potential for double-counting."

Greens are particularly concerned that any international development supported by offsetting must be additional to the existing commitments in that field, because only then will there be any prospect of a genuine contribution to sustainable development in poor countries.

An extensive report on carbon offsetting, which was published recently by Carbon Trade Watch, makes the fundamental criticism that carbon savings that are expected to be made in the future are counted as though they are made in the present. The authors of the report point out that such "future value accounting" was also used by Enron to inflate profits, with disastrous consequences.

There are serious concerns about ineffective offsetting schemes and about the difficulty of verifying the true value of many other offsetting schemes. There are also concerns about the on-the-ground impact of such schemes on people in developing countries. If carbon offsetting is to have any role in tackling climate change, there must be rigorous independent assessments of the

full direct and indirect carbon impact of each project. Any scheme into which a Government enters must at least meet the criteria of the internationally recognised gold standard, the main purpose of which is to ensure that projects reduce carbon dioxide emissions and foster sustainable development. There must also be continuous updating of data throughout the lifetime of the offset infrastructure, to ascertain whether changes are required to annual offset funding.

However, if we are to reduce the carbon dioxide that we emit, there is no substitute for directly reducing our own emissions, here in Scotland—that is the bottom line.

I ask members to support the motion and I move,

That the Parliament notes the growing popularity of carbon offsetting among individuals and private companies; believes that actions by polluters to reduce carbon emissions elsewhere, or to mitigate the effects of climate change, can play a useful role in supplementing sound environmental policy by government; considers however that carbon offsetting cannot substitute for policies that reduce carbon emissions directly and that any role for offsetting should only be transitional; notes the widely held concerns about many commercial offsetting schemes and the difficulty in verifying the true value of most offsetting schemes; notes the Scottish Government's intention to introduce carbon offsetting in respect of transport infrastructure projects, and calls on the Scottish Government, before introducing such proposals, to consider issues such as the need for rigorous independent assessments of the full direct and indirect carbon impact of each project and its associated offset, continuous updating of data for the lifetime of the infrastructure to establish any changes required to the annual offset funding, compliance with the internationally-recognised Gold Standard and the need to ensure that overall transport policy leads to direct emission reductions.

10:42

The Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change (Stewart Stevenson): Climate change is widely recognised as one of the most serious threats that face the world today. Unchecked, carbon emissions will have serious consequences for Scotland's people, economy and environment, and it should certainly not be dealt with solely by granting indulgences.

According to Sir Nicholas Stern, it would cost up to 1 per cent of the world's annual gross domestic product to stabilise emissions by the middle of the century, but—critically—failure to tackle emissions could cost 20 per cent of GDP. The longer we wait to take the necessary action, the more the cost to society will rise.

Action to avoid and reduce emissions is widely recognised as the most appropriate way of dealing with climate change, which is why we intend to consult on ambitious targets to reduce emissions in Scotland through our proposed climate change

bill. Next week, we will announce to the Parliament our objectives for the bill, and we will discuss the bill's content with representatives of the Parliament and others during the coming month. I have started direct engagement with other parties on the matter—I have met representatives of half the parties in the Parliament and will meet representatives of the remaining two parties today. Climate change is truly a cross-cutting and cross-party issue and we need a long-term consensus if we are to succeed.

We know that everyday actions consume energy and produce carbon emissions, but people in Scotland need to travel and use energy—Scotland's economy depends on their doing so. Without access to good transport links and reliable energy supplies, Scottish businesses will be unable to compete in the global marketplace. That could result in our businesses relocating, taking their jobs and emissions with them and giving us a false sense of having reduced our output. Such a result simply would not benefit Scottish people or the global environment.

Avoiding and reducing emissions requires action on many fronts. There is much that everyone can do simply by making smarter choices—there are smarter ways of doing business, of travelling and of reducing energy use. Although the smarter choices can reduce emissions, they do not eliminate them. That is why technology will be such an important part of our fight against climate change. Technology can provide us with new ways of generating as well as saving energy and new ways in which we can continue to grow Scotland's economy without growing carbon emissions.

That is why we want Scotland to become a global leader in developing solutions to the challenge of climate change and a pre-eminent location for clean energy research and development in Europe. We want Scotland to become the green energy capital of Europe. We can do that by playing to our strengths; other people will have the same ambition. We have unique potential for wave and tidal energy. We can build on the world-class Orkney test centre, which the previous Administration supported, and on indigenous expertise in the area. We can make Scotland the global byword for marine renewables, which are the new generation of renewables.

There is another option that can support efforts to reduce emissions: compensating for unavoidable emissions with an equivalent carbon saving. Carbon offsetting is not a cure for climate change, but it can play a part in reducing the impact of our immediate actions. If offsets can be purchased, it means that carbon emissions have a cost that can be avoided if emissions are reduced. A climate strategy that includes offsetting can help

to raise awareness of the carbon impact of actions, influence behaviours to reduce carbon emissions where possible and thus help to drive down further emissions.

We want to lead by example. Continuing from the previous Executive, we want to reduce emissions from our own travel. When I meet David Miliband in London on Monday with representatives of the other devolved Administrations, I shall travel by train. I am afraid that I have to fly back, but at least I have made that 50 per cent reduction. On another occasion, my diary will be better arranged.

Climate change will not be solved by a single country, organisation or action and it will not be solved in a day, a week or a month; it is a long-term issue that requires a coalition of commitment that transcends a single Parliament or Administration and crosses political, economic, geographic and country boundaries—it is a genuine cross-cutting issue.

Carbon offsetting is one of the measures that should be properly considered. I welcome the debate as an opportunity to do so.

I move amendment S3M-173.4, to leave out from “transport policy” to end and insert:

“policy, including transport policy, leads to direct emissions reductions.”

10:49

Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab): We welcome the debate and hope that it will lead to further detailed discussions about the issues that are involved.

Yesterday we debated how to achieve a greener Scotland. Putting targets in place to drive action and ensuring that Scotland plays its part in meeting our United Kingdom and global commitments are crucial, but we need to ensure that we put transport at the core of our policies. Reducing our need to travel must be part of that challenge. That is why Labour in government was so committed to vastly increasing our public transport expenditure, moving freight off our roads, improving communications technology and using videoconferencing and phone calls—I strongly recommend that. Although we can never eliminate the need to travel, we have to look at travel reduction as well as new infrastructure.

We must develop joined-up thinking to deliver what are sometimes minor incremental changes. Can one park a bike anywhere in a new development? Can one store a bike safely in a new housing development? Although those seemingly minor ideas would not count as part of a transport policy, failing to implement them could make it impossible for people to make low-carbon

travel choices. That is why the debate cannot just be about transport infrastructure; it must be about wider transport policy linkages.

We must focus on how people access new infrastructure and how they use it—whether that is through improved public transport information, park and ride facilities or transport hubs. It is also about improving subsidies and the quality of bus subsidies, ensuring, for example, that older people retain the ability to travel on buses without being excluded because of cost. There are genuine carbon benefits in that policy.

Of course, the debate is also about major transport infrastructure projects. That is why we continue to support projects such as the Edinburgh trams; the Airdrie to Bathgate, Stirling to Alloa and Borders rail lines; the upgrading of Waverley station; and Glasgow crossrail. Also crucial are the airport rail links, which would cut road traffic on some of our congested road networks.

Reducing our emissions has to come first. While making sure that we are not looking only at building transport infrastructure, we must look at travel and use of the infrastructure. I welcome the fact that the new minister will continue with the example that was set by previous ministers. It is crucial that not only ministers but the whole Executive and all Executive agencies should be required to travel more sustainably. The Executive should make it more desirable as well as the default option wherever possible. It will then be able to manage down some of the carbon emissions and set a lead.

We are not talking about banning people from using cars—far from it. There will always be circumstances in which the car is the only available choice, but the Executive has to lead the way. We need to ensure that it manages down its own emissions so that others can be persuaded to follow.

We have heard much talk from the new SNP minority Government in the past few weeks about the need to review transport projects to ensure value for money. It will not have escaped many people that the two projects over which Alex Salmond has chosen to hold an axe are those that offer the greatest opportunities to get people out of their cars and on to public transport and to reduce emissions. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, which was published during the election campaign, reinforced the need for us to redouble our efforts to get going on carbon emissions reduction.

We will not support the SNP amendment, because it deletes the reference to transport. We need to ensure that air transport is included in the emissions schemes. That would be a big step

forward. What will replace Kyoto will be important, but we must start acting now. As a constructive Opposition, we want to concentrate minds and scrutinise budget proposals not just for the financial but for the carbon implications—that must be standard.

Robin Harper is absolutely right that we need properly accredited carbon offsetting schemes, but they should be at the bottom of the policy hierarchy, after we have done everything else. We agree with the principles behind the Tory amendment. We should raise with people just how much carbon offsetting costs. It will get us thinking about doing the right thing first rather than last. We need to reduce our travel and make it more sustainable and make sure that carbon offsetting is the last choice, rather than something that the Government crows about.

I move amendment S3M-173.1, to leave out from “and that any role” to end and insert:

“or indirectly; notes the crucial role that transport policy must play in meeting carbon reduction targets and therefore calls on the Scottish Executive to ensure that potential carbon reduction is a central consideration in the evaluation and prioritisation of transport infrastructure projects; reaffirms support for a balanced and sustainable transport policy with the bulk of investment being targeted towards reducing unnecessary journeys and congestion, widening transport choices by providing high-quality and affordable public transport options and support for walking and cycling; further notes the Executive’s intention to introduce carbon offsetting, and calls on ministers to consult widely on the applicability and robustness of such schemes, demonstrating that carbon offsetting is additional to rather than a substitute for the direct or indirect planned reduction of carbon emissions.”

10:53

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):

I thank Robin Harper and the Greens for introducing this issue for debate. Although we have not discussed carbon offsetting at great length in the Parliament, it has nevertheless become important in many people’s thinking. However, there are those who are concerned that carbon offsetting might not deliver all that we would wish it to.

The truth is that carbon offsetting is to some extent the privilege of the relatively well off. The experience in my party and of individuals within it makes it clear that we can offset carbon emissions if we wish to make a difference. The Conservatives make an effort to offset the carbon that is generated by our activity as a political party. Famously, David Cameron is an active carbon offsetter whenever the opportunity arises. The Conservative party and David Cameron have decided that the money that is spent on carbon offsetting should pay double by being spent on third-world projects—for example, the replacement of thermal with solar power plants. Not only do

such projects deliver benefits locally, they deliver the secondary benefit of economic development in the area.

However, the importance that is attached to carbon trading perhaps reflects the complex nature of carbon offsetting. As other members have pointed out, significant concern has been expressed about how we can regulate carbon offsetting and ensure that it does us some good. Many programmes that have been supported under the Kyoto agreement have failed to achieve as much as some of the programmes that are not on the approved list. As a result, in deciding how to offset carbon, the Government in Scotland must evaluate the various programmes to ensure that it employs the best available, not simply those that have achieved international recognition.

The Conservatives are pleased to support the SNP amendment, because we feel that it extends the range of the terms of the motion. The Labour amendment, on the other hand, seeks to introduce a couple of additional elements. We do not object to that, especially as we agree with a broad range of the points that it sets out. However, I seek clarification of what is meant by

“high-quality and affordable public transport options”.

In that context, the word “affordable” could be interpreted in two ways. Are the options affordable only for public transport users or are they also affordable for the taxpayer? If we do not use taxpayers’ money responsibly in the development of “high-quality ... public transport options”, we might find ourselves in a difficult position in the long term. The Conservative amendment, of course, refers to the cost of carbon offsetting, because we are always concerned about the cost to the taxpayer. That said, although I seek clarification of that element of the Labour amendment, I agree with its broad thrust.

The Liberal Democrats’ amendment seems to suffer from the fact that they have been toppled out of government. For a start, they applaud their own record in government, when, in fact, most of the initiatives that they highlight were brought in through the efforts of Sarah Boyack as a Labour minister and, later, as a Labour back bencher.

We must tackle the issue of carbon reduction head on. Carbon offsetting is an indulgence that salves the consciences only of the relatively well-off. Although Government must approach the matter carefully, cutting carbon must still be the first priority.

I move amendment S3M-173.2, to insert, after “and its associated offset”:

“and the related cost to the taxpayer of such schemes.”.

10:58

Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD): I find it interesting that the Green party has brought a debate on carbon offsetting to the Parliament. However, the Scottish Liberal Democrats believe that we must have a much wider debate than that. I remind the chamber that the previous Scottish coalition Government introduced the first-ever Scottish climate change target, which sought to exceed the Scottish share of the UK target by an additional 1 million tonnes by 2010. I believe that such a move should be applauded.

At best, when it is carried out by a reputable organisation, carbon offsetting is a short-term approach; at worst, it is a dangerous diversion from the real problem and an excuse for inaction. Organisations, businesses, and individuals striving to tackle climate change should be encouraged to consider other actions first.

It might be useful to compare the issue with what happened many years ago when waste management issues started to come to the fore. Many of the early discussions and actions focused on how and what we should recycle, and it took some time to reach a proper recognition of the fact that some key steps were being missed out. Now we have all become used to the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and then recycle.

We must take the same rigorous approach in tackling climate change. Indeed, before we even think about carbon offsetting, we need to take two significant steps: first, we must reduce direct emissions; and, secondly, we must work with others to reduce indirect emissions and establish markets for low-carbon energy products. Only then will it be appropriate to consider carbon offsetting and, as other members have pointed out, the integrity of the offset must be guaranteed. Offsetting must be the last resort, not the first thought. In that respect, I commend the work of the Carbon Trust, which has helped to bring about change by working with local government and the public and private sectors.

I note the Scottish Government’s intention to introduce a climate change bill. We believe that such a bill and other Government action should set challenging targets for reducing carbon emissions of at least 12.5 per cent by 2010 and 60 per cent by 2050. Also, the SNP manifesto commitment to annual targets will need to be complemented by an annual report to Parliament.

However, it is imperative that, as the climate change bill is drawn up, we do not find ourselves deflected from taking action now. After all, a great deal can be done without requiring new primary legislation. We believe that early action must be taken before the bill is introduced to reduce energy use, improve energy efficiency and support

microgeneration. If we are to achieve a sustainable future, energy use reduction must come first. The issue is as much about reducing energy demand as it is about generating new clean energy.

Early action brings opportunities. For example, by tackling energy efficiency and building zero-energy houses we can help to reduce fuel poverty. Given the clear link between fuel poverty and poor health, such investment can bring both direct and indirect benefits.

The development and commercialisation of new technologies must be accelerated, which is why the Scottish Liberal Democrats have proposed the establishment of a carbon challenge demonstration fund to support innovative low-carbon developments. Scotland can be a leader in this field. The country is certainly well placed to take advantage of the economic opportunities in renewable energies, biofuels, forestry and construction. Moreover, the public sector must take the lead in ensuring that all Scottish government buildings and transport become carbon neutral by 2012.

Although energy production and use are the greatest producers of greenhouse gases, transport, too, has a significant impact on the environment, and we will never truly tackle climate change if we do not address the problem of carbon emissions from and energy use of transport.

Under the previous Government, investment in public transport was at record levels. Such transport accounted for 70 per cent of funding, and that high level of investment should be retained. However, I am sad to say that the new Government's comments in the chamber over the past couple of weeks suggest that it will not be. It is simply not credible for the SNP to talk about a climate change bill while at the same time claiming that it will ditch the Edinburgh trams scheme. Scrapping major public transport projects will render existing and future plans to reduce carbon emissions unattainable.

Robin Harper's motion does not go to the heart of the issue. As a result, I move amendment S3M-173.3, to leave out from first "notes" to end and insert:

"applauds the introduction by the previous Scottish Government of the first-ever Scottish climate change target to exceed the Scottish share of the UK target by an additional one million tonnes by 2010; notes the intention of the current Scottish Government to introduce a climate change Bill; believes that this Bill and other government action should set challenging and achievable targets for reducing carbon emissions of at least 12.5% by 2010 and 60% by 2050; further notes the SNP manifesto commitment to annual targets to reduce carbon emissions; welcomes the commitment to a climate change Bill but believes that early action should be taken in advance of the Bill to

improve energy efficiency, reduce energy use and support microgeneration; further believes that the public sector should take the lead by ensuring that all Scottish Government buildings and transport become carbon neutral by 2012; considers that carbon offsetting should normally be viewed as a last resort as a carbon reduction measure, and is concerned that the SNP Government's transport plans and opposition to public transport plans will render existing and future plans to reduce carbon emissions unattainable."

11:02

Bill Wilson (West of Scotland) (SNP): There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is real—indeed, it is perhaps the greatest challenge that faces humanity. I say that the consensus is overwhelming, not unanimous, to allow for the peculiar workings of the collective, er, intelligence of the Bush Administration. However, this is as much a development and global justice issue as it is an environment issue.

Rich countries such as the UK are responsible for climate change. Although such change is driven by our excessive carbon emissions, the poor countries will bear the brunt of the impact. Hundreds of millions face drought, floods, starvation and disease. The World Health Organisation estimates that climate change is already causing over 160,000 deaths per year, and the World Development Movement has estimated that a 4°C rise in global temperature could mean that 300 million more people who live on the coast will suffer from flooding. Of course, most of those victims will be in developing countries.

Those statistics on the potential horrors of our future are but the tip of the iceberg. Of course, future politicians will probably not be able to use that allusion unless, as with Dr Who's TARDIS, they first explain to younger listeners just what an iceberg was.

Yet, despite all the misery and suffering that lie before us, all the recent pledges and all the targets and speeches, UK greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. Although the UK Government has claimed world leadership on climate change, it is likely to miss its 2010 target for emission cuts by 20 per cent. In fact, since Labour came to power, UK carbon emissions have increased by about 5 per cent. To make matters worse, we still await a UK Government commitment to annual reduction targets.

The Scottish Government has committed itself to introducing a climate change bill, which will have a mandatory target of a 3 per cent reduction in emissions per annum and a long-term target of an 80 per cent reduction by 2050. Such a move stands in clear contrast to the failures of the UK Government.

That commitment to reducing Scotland's impact on global warming underpins the SNP commitment to renewable energy. Indeed, we must not forget that in 2004 energy accounted for 38 per cent of Scotland's emissions. However, we need energy from renewables, not nuclear energy. It is not our intention to leave future Scots, even unto the 50th generation, to deal with our waste. We must deal with our own problems today.

Some members will no doubt be thinking at this point that I have not yet mentioned the subject of the debate, carbon offsetting, but have instead been speaking about emissions. The answer to that is simple. Offsetting offers us an opportunity to help to reduce global warming, but it is not a replacement for reducing emissions and it cannot be used as an excuse for inactivity. More important, offsetting cannot be allowed to cover up inactivity. There must be a suspicion that when organisations publish their offsetting figures but not their reduction figures, they are failing to meet the challenges that are presented by global warming.

Scotland has potential for offsetting greenhouse gas emissions and for carbon capture. I hope that the opportunities that are presented at Peterhead will not be lost through UK Government inactivity. There are several potential schemes, and I would like to suggest one. There is great enthusiasm in Scotland for the regeneration of the ancient remnants of Caledonian pine forest. That would be a gold-standard project. Caledonian pine forest is home to a wide range of species, including Scotland's only indigenous bird species, the Scottish crossbill. Not only would we be offsetting omissions, we would be making a significant contribution to Scotland's natural heritage. Furthermore, the regenerated forests would be intended to stand for generations—it would be long-term carbon capture.

There is an additional advantage. To regenerate the Caledonian pine forests, we must reduce Scotland's massive red deer population. Ruminants are a source of methane, which is approximately 23 times more potent in its global warming effect than carbon dioxide. Reducing the red deer population would bring an additional benefit to such a scheme. The regeneration of Caledonian pine forest is, by every measure, a gold-standard scheme.

I welcome the Government's commitment to fighting global warming. The fact that it has had the courage to commit itself to annual reductions is a significant step—although that is apparently a step too far for the UK Government and new Labour.

11:07

James Kelly (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab): I welcome the opportunity to speak in this morning's Scottish Green Party debate on carbon offsetting. There is no doubt that global warming presents a tremendous threat not just to Scotland but to the international community. We have a great opportunity to combat climate change and the increase in greenhouse gases in order to build a country that will be safe not only for our children but for future generations.

In meeting that challenge, carbon offsetting has been identified as a mechanism giving individuals and businesses the opportunity to compensate for their carbon dioxide emissions. It is well intentioned, but it has a minimal impact. A recent investigation by the *Financial Times* indicated some flaws. The investigation revealed worthless credits, through which the carbon that was defined was not in fact recovered and it showed that some brokers were not providing value for money and, in some instances, were providing very little service. It further indicated that verification was flimsy, with a lack of controls. Carbon offsetting can be used, but it should be used as a last resort. When it is used, it is important that appropriate controls are in place in order that the offsets can be measured and we can see what the CO₂ reductions are.

The best way to combat climate change is to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing carbon emissions. There is a duty on Government to drive that agenda forward, but there is also a duty on us all—individuals, businesses and the public sector. There are some excellent practical examples in Scotland of organisations that are carrying the agenda forward. In my area, South Lanarkshire Council, which covers 300,000 people, 686 square miles, 1,300 buildings and 600 staff, produces 48,000 tonnes of CO₂. The council has measured and recognised that and it has signed up to a five-year plan to combat carbon emissions and reduce their effect.

Building specifications are a big area in which improvements can be made. The Scottish Natural Heritage building in Inverness has a specification that is 30 per cent greater than the current convention. As a report on "Good Morning Scotland" this morning indicated, individuals are moving from using tumble dryers to drying clothes outside, which has resulted in a fourteenfold increase in the sale of clothes-pegs.

The way forward lies in strong Government action. Unlike the previous speaker, I welcome the strong action that has been taken by the UK Government and the previous Scottish Executive. Transport, which represents 18 per cent of our carbon footprint, is a key area. It is important to have an efficient transport system. A balance is

needed, as transport is an important driver for the economy.

Carbon offsetting has a minimal impact and should be used only as a last resort. The onus lies on Government, individuals, businesses and the public sector to drive down CO₂ emissions and produce a Scotland and an international community that are safe for future generations to grow up in.

11:11

Nigel Don (North East Scotland) (SNP): This debate gives me an opportunity to speak about measurement. In the end, it is all about how we use numbers, and our numbers are only as good as our measurements. There is a certain amount of kudos attached to the phrase “thinking outside the box”. I suggest that, to get good measurements, we have to stand outside the box.

If we want to know whether the planet is warming up, we need to go out into space and look. We need to measure the heat coming off the planet and the heat going into the planet. That can be done quite simply and, although there are statistical problems with measuring a large sphere, that will tell us whether or not the planet is warming up. It cannot be measured down here.

If we want to know, for example, whether a nuclear power station emits a lot of carbon—we will no doubt come back to that example—we do not need to consider the process whereby the uranium degrades, which has nothing to do with carbon, but to consider the amount of carbon that is involved in constructing the power station, in maintaining it, in decommissioning it and, critically, in refining the uranium fuel. Those amounts will change over time.

Alex Johnstone: Will the member concede that the same calculations should be used regarding the building of wind turbines?

Nigel Don: I absolutely agree. If I had time, I would move on to the subject of the foundations that we seem to insist on putting underneath wind turbines and other structures. However, time does not permit.

In considering transport systems, we must do exactly the same thing. It is no good telling me how much carbon my car uses; I have to know what speed it is travelling at and how far it is going. If it is possible to eliminate congestion, it will be possible to eliminate my car going slowly or going nowhere and emitting a great deal of carbon for no benefit.

In addressing the issues about transport systems, we need to ask ourselves how we minimise the impact of getting from A to B and back to A. We must ask ourselves whether people

can park at their local station and whether their local train runs often enough and has enough carriages to transport them to where they want to go. It is not enough to blame everything on the car. It is not enough to examine individual schemes in isolation. We have to build a big box, look at it from the outside and measure absolutely everything.

I ventured into the subject of measurement because we tend not to discuss it, and that is because it is quite difficult. If we do not venture there, however, our numbers will be wrong, our calculations will be wrong and our conclusions will be wrong.

11:14

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab): I welcome the chance that the Green party has given us to discuss carbon offsetting. As always, Robin Harper has put forward his party's position on the subject well and entertainingly. I had not considered the carbon impact of hell before; I am not sure what we can do about it.

The motion is right to say that we need to be sure that we use the most effective methods to address climate change. However, although the Greens put the SNP in power, which I must say was a remarkable act of generosity, given that they lost so many seats to the SNP in the election—it was like Caesar promoting Brutus from beyond the grave—it is not surprising that they have become a bit nervous about the divergence between their strategies on climate change and those of the SNP. The motion refers to the Executive's intention to introduce carbon offsetting for transport projects, but the Greens argue—rightly, in my view—that offsetting is not enough. However, that comes after the Greens put the SNP in power, despite the fact that the SNP, like me, supports the Aberdeen western peripheral route while the Greens oppose it. However, we now understand that, perhaps as a concession to the Green party, the project is under review, which I must say has been met with dismay in Aberdeen.

Stewart Stevenson: It is not.

Richard Baker: Okay. We need more clarity on that, because that is not what has been said previously.

In relation to effective strategies for minimising the carbon emissions that result from transport policy, I converge with the Greens on the need for consideration of the overall weighting of transport investment. In particular, I agree that it is crucial to prioritise further investment in improving our railway infrastructure. The Executive seeks to prioritise road-building projects, such as dualling the A9, rather than schemes such as the Edinburgh airport rail link, which Alison McInnes

mentioned, or the tram system. In my region, I want the Aberdeen crossrail scheme to proceed from the planning to the construction stage. I know that the Green party agrees with me on that and I hope that SNP members do, too, as it is a crucial measure to improve public transport and address congestion. However, the Executive's Scottish transport appraisal guidance, which is used to assess the value and viability of transport proposals, has traditionally been weighted to favour road over rail.

Therefore, I am attracted to the motion's proposal for

"rigorous independent assessments of the ... carbon impact of each project",

as that may create a more level playing field for those who make the case for rail projects. Our amendment talks about making

"potential carbon reduction ... a central consideration in the evaluation and prioritisation of transport ... projects".

Robin Harper: Does the member agree that, in considering the Edinburgh airport rail link project's total carbon impact, we should take account of the extra emissions from the tripling of air transport, along with the emissions from the construction of the scheme?

Richard Baker: There is a debate to be had about the fact that an increase in the number of direct flights from Scottish airports can reduce the overall number of flights that people in Scotland make.

Although there is heated debate in the Parliament about transport policy and its impact on carbon emissions, there appears to be broad agreement on strategies for carbon offsetting and its place in the overall policy on climate change. The Executive has inherited a legacy of investment in public transport and renewables because Labour set strong foundations for progress in this crucial area. For as long as the Executive is in place, we will oppose measures that run counter to that and support those that will help to achieve the progress that it is vital for Scotland to make in our contribution to tackling climate change.

11:18

Jim Hume (South of Scotland) (LD): I welcome the opportunity to sum up on behalf of the Liberal Democrats in today's Green party debate. The SNP has pledged to

"offset the carbon impact of major government projects, including much needed improvements to Scotland's road network."

I do not know how many trees will have to be planted to make up for the shelving of vital public projects such as the Edinburgh trams or the

Borders railway, but Mr Stevenson may soon need to look out his spade to plant a few trees. The SNP member Nigel Don complained about being stuck in his car—perhaps he will follow my lead and bring a motorbike to Holyrood every morning.

I am glad that the Greens have raised the issue, because my party believes that carbon offsetting has a role in reducing carbon emissions. However, I make it clear that offsetting is not a suitable substitute for reducing emissions at source, although it can sometimes be the next best solution. There should be no complacency when considering carbon offsetting schemes. The bottom line is that carbon offsetting will not tackle the problems of the current Administration's anti-public transport agenda. We need systematic social change if the Executive is to deal with climate change effectively.

A recent *Financial Times* survey concluded that instances of people and organisations buying worthless credits that yield no reductions in carbon emissions are widespread and that many brokers provide services of questionable or no value. It also found a shortage of verification, which makes it difficult for buyers to assess the true value of carbon credits. If Scotland is to pursue a policy of carbon offsetting, offset schemes, as well as infrastructure schemes, should be assessed independently for carbon emissions. There must be transparency, so that consumers can see what they are buying and how it works.

We must see the results of carbon offsetting immediately. For example, if an individual takes an international flight, the 5 tonnes of carbon dioxide that need to be offset are emitted within a matter of days. However, if they pay into a tree-planting scheme, the project may undertake to offset the emissions only over the next 100 years. That is far from ideal and, although it may provide people with a sense of social responsibility, it will not provide immediate reductions in carbon emissions. Another problem is that large-scale tree plantations can decrease biodiversity, displace people and cause social disruption. Doubts have recently been cast on the contribution to reducing carbon dioxide levels of planting trees outside the tropics, especially when trees are planted in peat-based soils, because of the carbon release from the peat.

Alex Johnstone: Does the member agree that the Scottish Executive has a huge opportunity to extend the use of money that is gathered through carbon offsetting to underpin the Scottish forestry industry in years to come?

Jim Hume: Of course I agree.

Although the Liberal Democrats welcome a carbon offset scheme, it must be introduced only if it complements a large range of effective carbon-

reducing measures and then only if the environmental impact is assessed. As has been said, the Liberal Democrats, as part of the previous Executive, set the first-ever Scottish climate change target, to exceed our share of the UK carbon savings by an additional 1 million tonnes in 2010. The new Administration needs to step up and provide firm targets that can be shown to be achieved and that have real and clearly detailed objectives, rather than socially favourable schemes that some might see as a token effort in dealing with carbon emissions and climate change, rather than a serious and workable commitment.

11:22

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):

As we all know, climate change is a serious issue for the world and we must all play our part in trying to reduce carbon emissions, which are resulting in the temperature rise that threatens our planet as we know it. The best and most important way in which to achieve that is to change our behaviour so that we reduce our carbon footprint by whatever means we can, for example, by going back to eating local produce whenever we can, by using public transport rather than cars more often, by keeping air travel to a minimum and by cutting the amount of gas and electricity that we use. We all know what needs doing to cut carbon emissions, but we do not live a utopian existence and inevitably will continue to produce the pollutants that contribute to global warming, albeit, I hope, on a lesser scale. Of course, that applies to businesses and Government as well as to individuals.

Carbon offsetting is a reasonable way in which to help compensate for our lifestyles and contribute to the battle against climate change. However, although it undoubtedly has a part to play, it should not be at the expense of the required change in behaviour. From what has been said, no one here disagrees with that. We understand the concerns about the viability of many of the offsetting schemes that are in operation. Serious issues arise about the environmental credibility of many of the available carbon credit schemes, with allegations that consumers are being ripped off by paying for projects that already exist or that make no contribution to reducing carbon emissions. It is difficult to verify the real value of most offsetting schemes but, as the motion suggests, we need rigorous independent assessment of each project's direct and indirect carbon impact and its associated offset. Our amendment is important too, because it is only right that the taxpayer should know just what the Government spends on such schemes.

Because of the serious concerns about the worth of some offsetting projects, we support the proposed gold standard that is being developed south of the border by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. However, as Alex Johnstone said, we feel that the criteria should be broadened to include voluntary schemes that are not Kyoto-approved projects, which are the only ones that DEFRA will currently agree to include, despite the fact that some of the voluntary schemes save more carbon than the Kyoto-registered ones. Because deforestation contributes 20 per cent of worldwide carbon emissions, which is more than transport contributes, we want avoided deforestation credits to be adopted in the Kyoto process, to acknowledge the importance of preserving existing trees and forests, which absorb more carbon than new forests do.

The gold-standard code of practice that is being developed at Westminster may or may not cover all of the UK. We would like to know whether the SNP Government wishes to adopt that standard or would rather develop a separate scheme for Scotland.

We would also like to know which offset scheme the SNP intends to use in fulfilling its manifesto pledge to offset Government-induced emissions. Whichever scheme it selects should have the highest proven carbon reductions, even if they come from a voluntary project rather than a Kyoto-registered one.

Finally, we think it hugely important that, before it considers offsetting, the Government commits to emissions reductions—for example, by investing in better energy efficiency and in renewable energy in publicly owned buildings.

This has by and large been a consensual debate on an important issue. We have no argument with the Green party's motion, other than with the non-inclusion of the cost to the taxpayer. We hope to gain support across the chamber for our amendment to that effect.

11:25

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): This has been an interesting debate with some effective contributions. I may be a little less positive about offsetting than others. The consideration of offsetting is a result of increasing awareness among the general public of climate change, and that is a good thing. However, offsetting has also become fashionable as a means of salving people's consciences when it comes to the use of unsustainable means of transport or sources of energy. If we are to address climate change, we will all have to change our behaviour and adapt. That will not be achieved

by merely making a financial contribution towards some kind of environmental activity. Unless we reduce direct and indirect carbon use, offsetting is purely a veil for our consciences.

That is not to say that offsetting is always a bad thing. For individuals—provided that offsetting schemes are properly validated and there is genuine environmental benefit—offsetting is better than not offsetting. However, it is not a substitute for individuals changing their behaviour in the first place—for example, by reducing the number of flights taken, by reducing the number of unnecessary journeys made, or by using public rather than private transport. Sarah Boyack mentioned many such issues in her speech.

Two or three of the arguments in our amendment are different from the arguments in the Greens' motion. We mention the need to take into account indirect as well as direct emissions. We stress that carbon offsetting has to be additional to other measures rather than a substitute for them. We also focus on affordability. I would like to respond to Alex Johnstone's point. We are very interested that public transport should be affordable to users. A problem in recent years has been that the price of public transport has risen much more than the price of private transport. We have to address that problem. I accept Alex's point that we have to ensure that public transport projects and roads projects are affordable. The Government will have to be responsible for managing the costs of such projects.

There will have to be a wide debate on these issues and a separate debate on private offsetting—the schemes that apply to individuals. Governments have responsibility for managing, controlling and reducing carbon emissions, but if they started talking about offsetting schemes, I would worry that they were moving away from the direction that they should be going in. We will examine the climate change bill and any offsetting proposals within it to ensure that they are not a substitute for, or a distraction from, the control and reduction of direct and indirect emissions. We will have to bear that in mind.

11:29

Stewart Stevenson: Like others, I am pleased to have been part of this interesting and valuable debate, which has helped to highlight some of the complexities that should be considered in any decisions on using carbon offsetting as a response to climate change.

I will refer to some of the contributions made, starting with that of Mrs McInnes. She stressed that we should not wait for a climate change bill before introducing initiatives, and I agree

absolutely. We will continue to take every opportunity to make progress. At official level, we have been discussing energy efficiency with the UK Government and considering how we can jointly make improvements. Such issues will form part of my discussions with David Miliband when I meet him in London on Monday.

Bill Wilson mentioned Peterhead. As a number of members may know, my colleague Jim Mather today provided section 36 consent, under the Electricity Act 1989, for energy generation of 550MW from decarbonised fuel at Peterhead. That is but one part of a project that would have faced substantial hurdles had we denied that consent.

I was delighted to hear from John Park that sales of clothes-pegs have increased fourteenfold.

James Kelly: It was not John Park.

Stewart Stevenson: Not John Park? I beg members' pardon.

James Kelly: It was James Kelly.

Stewart Stevenson: I beg James's pardon. I grovel before him. I hope that the clothes-pegs in question were wooden ones made from renewable sources rather than plastic ones made from fuel oil.

I can advise Mr Hume that my wife has planted 46 trees in the past 18 months. We are making as much progress as we can as individuals.

Nanette Milne spoke about energy-efficient buildings. I have been involved in discussions on building standards and I think that we will bring some good news on the contribution to energy efficiency that will result from the next updating of the standards, which will be in the not-too-distant future.

Des McNulty rightly focused on the need for changes to individuals' behaviour. Being made the minister with responsibility for tackling climate change has caused me to think about the issues in a new way. I hope that the climate change bill will have a similar effect on us all.

Since becoming minister, I have reduced my top speed in the car by 5mph. Interestingly, that has resulted in a reduction of only 2mph in my average speed, but a reduction of slightly over 10 per cent in the amount of fuel that I use. The challenge now is to travel less distance and to use more sustainable means of doing so. Quite simple things that we can do as individuals can start to make a difference. The Government wants to encourage people to do those simple things.

Offsetting has a value, but suppose that we did nothing directly but reduced our net carbon impact by exporting all our carbon use through offsetting alone. That would not be helpful, and it would not be possible either. Offsetting is a palliative in the

short term; it raises awareness and helps us to engage with the issue, but in the long term it really is not the answer.

We want to work with other Administrations and, as I have indicated, with other parties. The tenor of the debate bodes well for engagement on the climate change bill. I repeat: our climate change targets are challenging and long term. They cover many Parliaments and will transcend many Administrations. Offsetting should be viewed as a small part of a hierarchy of actions, but the most effective way to avoid or reduce emissions will be by changing behaviours. Developing and adopting new low-carbon technologies will play a part in reducing emissions. When it is not possible to avoid or reduce emissions, cost-effective offsetting, providing auditable carbon reductions, can have a role. That is why the Executive sees value in properly auditable initiatives and why we will consider whether offsetting can play a role in our future plans.

11:35

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): We initiated the debate as the beginning of a discussion about this complex issue and I am grateful to all members who have engaged constructively in that conversation, not least Nigel Don. I am sorry that he has just left the chamber, because he made a thought-provoking speech that I was glad to hear.

There is general global debate about what role market-based mechanisms can have in tackling climate change. For Governments, emissions trading is the main expression of that idea. Among many individuals and businesses, to whom such trading mechanisms do not directly apply, the idea of voluntary offsetting has gained some popularity. They want to do the right thing. That is, of course, to be welcomed, but the question is whether the Government should not only endorse that approach, but initiate its own offsetting policies.

I echo Des McNulty's comments on that. If we accept the concept of offsetting—as many politicians from a number parties do—there can only be a case for using it in relation to so-called housekeeping emissions to offset or attempt to offset a particular journey or the total emissions from running a conference or major event. The arguments about offsetting infrastructure projects are very different from those on offsetting housekeeping emissions.

Robin Harper compared commercial offsetting to papal indulgences or even fig-leaves. He talked about good reasons for many international development measures and domestic tree planting but made it clear that such measures cannot, in themselves, simply be totted up and offset against polluting practices and policies or used as an

excuse for continuing such practices and policies elsewhere. Jim Hume also spelled out the difference between burning ancient carbon—the carbon cycle of which is on a timescale of geological time—and replacing it with tree planting, which is on a short carbon cycle.

Stewart Stevenson was one of many members who talked about the importance of climate change as an issue that faces the world. I welcome the commitment to the climate change bill. I look forward to the statement next week and to seeing the contents of the bill when it arrives, but I question the stated intention of attempting to offset transport infrastructure projects. I hope that my questions are constructive and I look forward to receiving the answers to them, because the intention to offset is an implicit acceptance that those infrastructure projects are not sustainable.

I also express a little disappointment that Stewart Stevenson stated that he would have to take a domestic flight. I do not accept that there is a case for flying on this small island in any except life or death circumstances and for essential island connections, which are the only option for some people. I regret that his visit to see Mr Miliband will leave him in a position comparable to Nicol Stephen's after his urgent and necessary trip to the British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards last year.

I also echo a lot of what Sarah Boyack said. She laid out a clear case for a truly sustainable transport policy and advanced many arguments with which I agree, not least on the Edinburgh tram system and the Glasgow crossrail.

Richard Baker mentioned the Aberdeen crossrail. I reassure him that I am no more nervous about criticising the unsustainable transport policies of my SNP colleagues than I am about criticising those of the Labour Party, not least the Edinburgh airport rail link. We are critical of that project because we regard its business case as being predicated on a further dramatic expansion of aviation and because it will have to compete for passengers with the trams, which risks undermining the case for not only building but completing the tram network, which would serve the whole city, not only airport passengers.

We also disagree with all the other parties on major road building projects. I find myself unable to support either the Labour Party or the Liberal Democrat amendments. Those parties have supported projects such as the M74 extension and have simply pointed to a few green-thread policies as an excuse for pursuing unsustainable transport policies. For them to use phrases such as "sustainable transport" is the political equivalent of offsetting. They have their green threads so that they can carry on with business as usual.

Alex Johnstone mentioned Mr Cameron's offsetting habit. I cannot agree with that, but I am glad that Alex Johnstone entered into the debate properly and acknowledged the concerns that many people have about offsetting. His amendment detracts nothing and adds a little, so we can support it.

Alison McInnes said that climate change needs a much wider debate. I agree and hope that she agrees that this debate takes nothing away from that. We need to debate offsetting in advance of the Government introducing its climate change bill and proposals on offsetting—if that is what happens—not least because of the limitations that she mentioned in relation to offsetting. We initiated the debate not because we are overly concerned about the text of a motion or an amendment, but because we have a general concern about the concept of offsetting.

I recommend that members look at the website cheatneutral.com, which urges people who feel the need to be unfaithful to their partners to fund somebody else to be faithful as a way of offsetting the amount of pain and unhappiness that they are generating in the world. It urges people to think about how to reduce their unfaithfulness to sustainable levels first. It is satire, of course, but it makes the point about what offsetting really is.

Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

General Questions

11:41

Carers

1. Bashir Ahmad (Glasgow) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to help address the needs of carers. (S3O-207)

The Minister for Public Health (Shona Robison): I thank Bashir Ahmad for raising the issue during carers week.

We recognise the crucial role that Scotland's thousands of unpaid carers play and the importance of ensuring that they can access the support that they need. The Scottish Government is committed to intensifying efforts to take forward the conclusions of the care 21 report. Specific initiatives to improve support to carers will be considered in the forthcoming spending review.

However, as a signal of our intent, I announced earlier today an additional £400,000 over the next two years to help to address two of the care 21 recommendations: we will establish a young carer forum to help give young carers a greater voice in Scottish public life and we will work with the national carer organisations to extend their piloting of carer training, helping carers—particularly new carers—to gain the knowledge and skills that they need to cope more effectively with their caring role.

Bashir Ahmad: I welcome the Executive's commitment to carers throughout Scotland. For too long, ethnic origin and language have been unacceptable barriers to ethnic minority carers receiving much-needed support. Will the minister carefully consider more support for ethnic minority carers?

Shona Robison: Public bodies, including local authorities and health boards, are responsible for ensuring that their services meet the needs of the ethnic minority carers. Indeed, they have a legal duty to do so. Guidelines on carer assessments highlight the need for assessments to be culturally sensitive and to offer interpreting support where needed. National health service carer information strategies, which are just coming into effect, are specifically required to address the identification and information needs of carers from ethnic minority groups. In addition, I will ensure that the additional piloting of carer training that I announced earlier today includes work on training for carers from ethnic minority communities.

Integrated Care (Vale of Leven Hospital)

2. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what analysis of the 7,000 patients presenting at the Vale of Leven hospital integrated care project has been carried out by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. (S3O-211)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Nicola Sturgeon): That is a matter for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde but, as the member is aware, no decisions have been taken on proposals for service change at the Vale of Leven hospital. However, I have been clear that all future proposals for significant service change will be subject to rigorous independent scrutiny before public consultation. That will ensure that all information that health boards present is factual and evidence based and that the choice that is presented to the public is fair and genuine. I will make a further announcement soon about the form that such independent scrutiny will take.

If, following public consultation, national health service boards make proposals for significant service change, those proposals will come to me for a final decision. In considering them, I will operate a presumption against centralisation of services. That does not mean no change in any circumstances, but it means that any proposals will have to be robust, that all possible alternatives will have to be properly considered and that due weight must be given to public opinion.

I look forward to meeting the member in just over an hour's time to discuss the issue in more detail.

Jackie Baillie: I thank the minister for her response and welcome the meeting that she has afforded me, which we will have in due course.

I understand from those involved in integrated care that little if any of the data underwent qualitative analysis by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde in advance of its proposal to remove integrated care from the Vale of Leven hospital. Will the minister reaffirm that decisions on health service changes must be evidence based? Does she agree that if we are to take "Delivering for Health" from theory to implementation, pilots such as the integrated care model are critical? Will she therefore instruct a full analysis of integrated care at the Vale of Leven hospital, which is a model that might have resonance for other general hospitals in Scotland?

Nicola Sturgeon: I hope that Jackie Baillie is reassured when I say that my decision to insist on independent scrutiny is designed to address the kind of concerns that she raises. Of course, the purpose of independent scrutiny is to ensure that any proposals coming from any health board are based on sound evidence. In the case of the Vale

of Leven hospital, that will entail considering anything that the board says about the sustainability or otherwise of current arrangements. The whole purpose of independent scrutiny is to ensure that when the public are consulted on proposals, they know that they are based on sound evidence and present a fair and reasonable choice. I look forward to discussing those issues with the member in more detail very shortly.

Gil Paterson (West of Scotland) (SNP): The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing will know that Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board is considering the removal of services from the Vale of Leven hospital. Given that those services are vital to the people served by the hospital, I encourage her to use her influence to ensure that no further services are lost to the vale.

Nicola Sturgeon: No proposals have yet come forward from Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board. When they do, I will insist—as I just said to Jackie Baillie—that they are subjected to rigorous independent scrutiny. They will then be subjected to full and meaningful public consultation. When final proposals are shaped thereafter, they will come to me for a final decision, which I have said that I will base on certain factors. I will shortly have a meeting with Jackie Baillie and other local representatives, including the new SNP leader of the council in that area, at which I look forward to discussing these issues in more depth.

Footballing Organisations (Meetings)

3. Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive which footballing organisations and representatives ministers have met since May 2007. (S3O-233)

The Minister for Communities and Sport (Stewart Maxwell): Since May 2007, ministers have not met formally any footballing organisations or their representatives. However, since May 2007 ministers have attended three football events at the invitation of footballing organisations, which has provided them with the opportunity to meet footballing organisations and representatives on an informal basis. In addition, I met informally representatives of Spartans.

Johann Lamont: I attend football matches regularly, but I have never seen them as an opportunity for an informal meeting—that is perhaps a significant difference. In the minister's informal discussions—which did not involve comment on the qualities of any of the players—did any of the organisations or representatives raise with him their wish for Scotland to make a Scotland-only bid for the European football championships in 2016? Will the minister commit to resisting the temptation—which, unsurprisingly and spectacularly, the First Minister did not resist

in his unthinking and half-baked observations on a Scottish Olympic team and a Scotland-only bid for the European football championships—to use sport as a proxy debate for independence? Scottish sport and sportspeople and our young people deserve better.

Stewart Maxwell: I welcome the high ambition that Johann Lamont shows for our country. The First Minister showed that this Government has great ambitions not only for our country but for our sporting bodies and sporting stars.

In our manifesto we made the clear commitment to launch a feasibility study on the possibility of Scotland bidding for the 2016 European football championships. We intend to speak to the new chief executive officer of the Scottish Football Association, Gordon Smith, but we will give him a chance to get his feet under the table as he has only just been appointed. When we speak to Gordon and the rest of the SFA, we will consider their views on taking forward a bid.

The best thing for Scotland is for us to be at the top table in every sport and every area of our life. The lack of ambition from the Labour Party is really quite astonishing.

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Martyn Hunter, the finance director of Elgin City Football Club, has raised the issue of increased expenditure incurred by clubs such as Elgin, which have risen from the Highland league to the national leagues. He highlighted the extra funding needed for health and safety measures for stadiums and the huge expense of travel for 125 youth players who are now attached to Elgin. Is the minister discussing such issues with smaller football clubs such as Elgin, which are expanding?

Stewart Maxwell: Over the next few weeks and, in particular, over the summer, I intend to meet as many of the smaller clubs, community-based organisations and junior clubs as I can. I appreciate the point that Jamie McGrigor makes about the increased expenditure that comes with success, but I do not think that we would want anything other than for the clubs to achieve such success. If there are particular problems with Elgin, I would welcome receiving a letter with the details, which I would consider in due course.

Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab): Does the minister agree that the role of Supporters Direct in Scotland and organisations such as the football trusts in clubs such as Kilmarnock Football Club and its local rival, Ayr United Football Club, is vital in taking forward work in the community? Will he give me a commitment that, when he has the opportunity to meet the various footballing organisations, he will meet Supporters Direct in Scotland and that he will look to ensure that it continues to enjoy the

funding that was provided by the previous Executive?

Stewart Maxwell: All funding arrangements will be considered as part of the overall spending review, so I will make no commitment at this stage. I am more than happy to agree with the member's opinion of the good work that Supporters Direct in Scotland and the football trusts do. There is a fundamental and principled role for such organisations in the world of football, which is to ensure that ordinary supporters have their voices heard. If Supporters Direct in Scotland wishes to write to me, I am sure that I can find a slot in my diary to meet its representatives as soon as possible.

Margo MacDonald (Lothians) (Ind): Did the minister discuss the question of the complaint of racism made by Spartans Football Club against another local player or did he discuss its footballing academy? I am just interested.

Stewart Maxwell: We did not discuss the issue of the alleged racist incident but we discussed the proposed community facilities and academy near Ferry Road in Edinburgh, which Spartans and I hope will get the go-ahead, because I certainly believe that it would be an excellent facility for the people of that area.

National Waste Strategy

4. Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how it intends to implement the national waste strategy. (S3O-213)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): We are committed to moving towards a zero waste Scotland, which would include higher levels of recycling, greater emphasis on waste prevention and learning from other countries that have successfully moved in that direction.

Claire Baker: I am sure that the minister appreciates the scale of the problem, with a typical household in Fife alone producing more than 1 tonne of waste every year. I am sure that he appreciates the need for clarity for local authorities on how they progress with their waste plans. Does the position set out to local authorities in March 2007 on the funding of waste treatment infrastructure still prevail or is it under review? If it is under review, what is the timescale for completion?

Richard Lochhead: I am currently looking at the position. My thinking will of course be influenced by the forthcoming spending review, which will be very influential in this context. The local authorities in the member's region have an excellent record in household recycling. The national average is 25 per cent, but Fife Council has managed to recycle and compost 29.7 per

cent of waste, Perth and Kinross Council has managed 33.3 per cent, Stirling Council has managed 32.5 per cent and Clackmannanshire Council has managed 40.2 per cent. I am sure that we all want to pay tribute to the member's local authorities, which are doing an extremely good job in the current circumstances.

Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): The cabinet secretary will be aware that many councils do not collect the full range of recyclables from our homes and our rural communities. Does he agree that there could be further dramatic increases in recycling rates if all homes that are served by public roads had household collections for all recyclables?

Richard Lochhead: I agree that reaching that position would greatly help our recycling rates. We are committed to undertaking trials in the collection of food waste from households. Many local authorities in Scotland do not collect plastics. We must examine all such issues to identify how we can intervene to help councils make progress in that area.

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): We move on to question 6, which is from Bob Doris. *[Interruption.]* I apologise. The next question is Bill Butler's question 5; I was getting a little ahead of myself.

National Health Service

5. Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what its vision is for the national health service in Scotland. (S3O-216)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Nicola Sturgeon): I deprecate any attempts to overlook Bill Butler.

Our vision is of an NHS that supports and sustains healthy lifestyles, particularly in our most disadvantaged communities, and which delivers care that is faster, more flexible and closer to home. We supported the Kerr report at the time of its launch and we continue to support the principles that were set out in it. By the end of the year, we will publish an action plan that will demonstrate how we intend to take forward those principles and will provide a clear timetable for action over the next few years.

Bill Butler: I welcome the cabinet secretary to her post and hope that the Executive's vision includes the democratisation of health boards.

However, I turn to another issue. In opposition, Ms Sturgeon said:

"The Scottish Executive is considering diverting cash from some of the more affluent parts of Scotland to help Glasgow back to health ... I am 100% behind that. It'll cause uproar in some other Scots towns and cities, for sure, but that's tough."

In opposition, her Cabinet colleague Richard Lochhead said:

"Grampian's pockets of deprivation ... indicate just as great a need for NHS funds as Glasgow's deprivation levels."

Now that the Scottish National Party is in government, who is correct—Nicola Sturgeon or Richard Lochhead?

Nicola Sturgeon: Bill Butler knows from our manifesto that we strongly favour elected health boards and I look forward to working constructively with him on that issue.

As the member might be aware, a review of resource allocation in the health service is continuing and I will consider carefully its outcome. It is a priority of this Scottish Government to tackle health inequalities. I pay tribute to the previous Administration for much of the work that it did in improving health across the population but, as health has improved across the population, health inequalities have grown. It is a priority of our Government to close that gap and I look forward to receiving support from all parties as we try to do so.

Free Nutritious School Meals (Pilot)

6. Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what progress has been made towards finalising plans for its £5 million pilot scheme to provide free nutritious school meals. (S3O-258)

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Fiona Hyslop): We are currently considering various options to trial the extension of free nutritious school meals. We will set out details of our plans in due course. As the First Minister said last week, we hope that our plans will be supported by all members of the Parliament.

We want Scotland to be healthier and, by targeting our youngest pupils, we hope to make a big difference. That will bring benefits not only in terms of health and nutrition, but in terms of the social skills that come with sitting down to eat with friends.

Bob Doris: I know that the cabinet secretary agrees that the pilot scheme should eventually be rolled out across Scotland, starting in the most deprived areas. With that in mind, I ask her to examine closely the deprivation figures for Glasgow in general and for north Glasgow in particular. In north Glasgow, only 8 per cent of people consume the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, whereas the figure for Glasgow as a whole is 34 per cent.

Fiona Hyslop: When we consider which areas to include in the pilot, we will of course take into

account a number of factors, not least deprivation. Although I cannot speak for local authorities such as Glasgow City Council—I must seek their agreement to hold the pilot—the highly concerning deprivation indicators that Bob Doris mentioned make a strong case for the inclusion in the scheme of the area to which he refers. I cannot yet specify where the trials will be held, but we will listen with interest to representatives of the areas that want to take part in them.

First Minister's Question Time

11:59

Engagements

1. Jack McConnell (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab): Perhaps appropriately, given the question I have to ask, I regret the fact that I am not at an engagement this morning: I refer to the funeral of Lord Ewing. He was one of the leaders of the constitutional convention, and a decent and honest man, who played a part in creating this institution. I wish that I was at his funeral, but I am sure that all members will join me in sending condolences. [*Applause.*]

To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S3F-50)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): I join Jack McConnell in paying tribute to the late Harry Ewing. In addition to what Jack McConnell said, I can tell him that Harry Ewing was a doughty and formidable opponent in debate, but always fair minded and always constructive. Across the political spectrum, we will miss him very much indeed.

I have a number of engagements planned, including picking up the phone to the head of the Glasgow 2014 bid team, following the Commonwealth games committee's validation of the bid as "truly impressive". As Jack McConnell knows more than anyone, there is still a long way to go in the process, but I think that all in the chamber should welcome the technical excellence of the Glasgow bid, and pay tribute to everybody connected with it.

Jack McConnell: I strongly endorse those comments.

There is a report today from the investigation into the Kerelaw secure unit in Ayrshire. Many of the young people who went through that secure unit will have joined those not in education, employment or training. Is the reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training still a national priority for the Scottish Government?

The First Minister: Indeed it is a national priority for the Scottish Government. As the debate in the chamber last week indicated, it is a key priority for this Administration. We may differ from Jack McConnell on how to bring about that reduction, but let there be no doubt—and I think this crosses the parties in the chamber—that it is a key priority in politics in Scotland.

Jack McConnell: I welcome that assurance. Young people who are in that position need skills.

Scottish employment reached another record level yesterday, and Scottish Enterprise has today identified skills as a national priority for our people and for our economy. My party was committed to 50,000 modern apprenticeships and a target for degree or level 4 qualifications for the Scottish population. Will the First Minister commit to a target for degree-level qualifications? Specifically, will he commit to a target for modern apprenticeships?

The First Minister: As we indicated in that debate last week, within our first 100 days in office we will introduce our skills strategy for Scotland.

The skills strategy is extremely important, as indeed is access to education. As the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning indicated yesterday, we should be aware that over the past three to four years, the participation index of our youngsters going to university has been falling for the first time in recorded educational history in Scotland. That is why we addressed the issue in the decision we took yesterday to abolish back-end fees in Scottish universities.

I offer Jack McConnell this information, which I believe will be announced today by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills—some areas of employment are reserved issues, on which we co-operate with the Government in London. Last week, I agreed to the appointment of the chairman of the commission for employment and skills; I am not at liberty to say who it is, but it is somebody of high character and of great experience. That will be announced today as an indication of areas in which this Government is determined to co-operate with the Government in London.

Jack McConnell: I will take that as a no. There are no targets for modern apprenticeships and there are no targets for degree-level qualifications. It is a matter of serious regret that the first action of the new Government has been not to help those who do not have degrees, but to help those who have them and have already found work.

People who are not in education, employment or training often face homelessness, too. In 2003, the Parliament committed to the target of ending homelessness by 2012. Will the First Minister commit to that target here today? If so, will he explain why his first act in housing policy will be to help those who can already afford to buy a home by giving them a £2,000 grant, which will inflate housing prices, rather than to build more affordable homes, which would help those who are not in education, employment or training?

The First Minister: Yes, I can commit to that target, and we will outline that in the housing debate next week.

There is a substantial difficulty with Jack McConnell's position. I agree that we have to do

far more on skills training for all our youngsters. The fall in the number of children who go to university, as shown in the age participation index, is a real problem in Scottish society. I agree that we have to do far more on social housing and that is exactly what the Administration intends to do. If we had a former First Minister's question time, the question would be, "Why didn't he do any of that in the past six years?"

Jack McConnell: The First Minister misses the—

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Fiona Hyslop): Answer.

Jack McConnell: This is First Minister's question time. I am happy to ask the questions and demand answers.

As Mr Salmond said, this is about decisions. It is about young people who are not in education, employment or training being a national priority and it is about skills being a national priority. It is not about splitting skills from economic development and it is certainly not about helping those who are already in work and have degrees. It is about tackling homelessness and building affordable homes. It is not about inflating house prices by giving grants to those who can already afford to buy houses.

In those and other areas, the First Minister is concentrating on short-term bribes rather than long-term strategies for Scotland. Will the First Minister stop governing for the SNP and start governing for Scotland? When will he announce to the Parliament his strategy for tackling young people who are not in education, employment or training and giving them a better chance in life?

The First Minister: I have heard of people not taking no for an answer, but it is extraordinary not to take yes for an answer to the question on housing targets. To describe the abolition of fees and barriers to universities in Scotland as a short-term bribe is foolish. Politicians who took advantage of free education, such as me and Jack McConnell, should be careful about pulling up the ladder from the next generations.

Where we disagree is on the best way in which to bring forward a skills strategy. As Jack McConnell has said in a number of debates, the Labour Party believes in national skills academies. That is the Labour Party's policy. We believe that we are fortunate in Scotland in that our college system already addresses, and is acceptable and responsive to, employers' needs.

Jack McConnell has told me on a number of occasions to pay attention to the Parliament and its verdicts. I remind him that when he put his policy to the Parliament last week he was defeated by 64 votes to 63; I am paying attention to the

Parliament. Another person who has been telling me to do that is Tavish Scott. Unfortunately, he did not turn up last week to tell me to pay attention to the Parliament.

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): As Kerelaw school has been mentioned, I call the constituency member involved, Irene Oldfather.

Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): Is the First Minister aware that provisional placing on the disqualified from working with children list, which happened to a number of former Kerelaw staff, does not disqualify a person per se from working in a child care position? Does the First Minister agree that, in the interests both of protecting children and of staff who have been placed on the list without a criminal conviction, it is essential that referral cases from provisional to permanent status are dealt with as quickly as possible? When the full report is published, will he ensure that speedy action is taken on the matter?

The First Minister: That is an important question. For the benefit of those in the chamber, I point out that Jack McConnell, as First Minister, made a public apology in the Parliament to the adult survivors of abuse that was committed while they were in care. Following that apology, the previous Executive announced a raft of measures, which are continuing, including the establishment of an independent systemic review of the history of in-care abuse during the period 1950 to 1995. The review will be complete in September. Its purpose is to identify exactly the nature of the question, the systems that were in place to protect children and the shortcomings. The final report should help to identify how in-care abuse happened and why the systems failed to prevent it.

The report that Glasgow City Council published today shows that a number of individuals have been referred to the disqualified from working with children list. I am sure that Irene Oldfather understands that I cannot say anything specific about that, but I can confirm that the report shows that a number of people have been referred to the list.

Chancellor of the Exchequer (Meetings)

2. Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con): I, too, read with shock, anger and deep concern the press coverage of the report into the alleged abuse at Kerelaw residential school in Ayrshire. People will be filled with horror that Kerelaw, instead of being an environment for the provision of care, seems to have become an environment breeding a culture of abuse.

The First Minister might have partially answered my question in his reply to Mrs Oldfather, but does he agree that the first priority is to take immediate steps to trace those individuals referred to in the

report who apparently could still be working with young people and to ensure that they are suspended from working with young people or other vulnerable individuals pending the conclusion of any investigations or court proceedings?

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): Annabel Goldie is correct, and I thank her for her question. Glasgow City Council's report indicates that it has taken action by referring several individuals to the DWCL. As a point of explanation, 167 individuals are fully listed on the DWCL at the moment and a further 60 are provisionally listed. I am quite certain that the previous Executive's independent review, which is due to report in September, will consider many of the points that Annabel Goldie raises.

I think that Annabel Goldie meant to ask me about my meeting or otherwise with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have spoken to him on the phone and I hope to meet him soon in one capacity or another.

Annabel Goldie: Edmund Burke said:

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

Does the First Minister agree that it is deeply troubling that it would appear that, according to the report, there were people at Kerelaw who had

"knowledge and information about abuse and potential abuse and were unwilling or unable to address this abuse"?

Is the First Minister satisfied that procedures now exist in Scotland to ensure that people will be able to come forward safely and in confidence to report any such fears in the future? Will he investigate the reasons why those individuals felt that they could not speak out?

The First Minister: I am certain that that will be one of the issues to be considered carefully by the independent review. The whole chamber will share Annabel Goldie's concern about this matter, which certainly goes beyond party concerns. However, having established the independent review to ascertain the lessons that we must learn so that we can prevent such an outrage from happening again, we should allow the review to take its course and, as a Parliament, carefully, effectively and quickly deal with its recommendations.

Cabinet (Meetings)

3. Nicol Stephen (Aberdeen South) (LD): To ask the First Minister what issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet. (S3F-52)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): The next meeting of the Cabinet will discuss a range of issues of importance to Scotland and the Scottish people.

Nicol Stephen: I heard the First Minister's answer to the question about the referral system relating to Kerelaw. Is the Executive satisfied that it knows the names of all the staff about whom Glasgow City Council is concerned and which have been thrown up by its inquiry into the Kerelaw residential unit? Are any of those staff currently working with children in Scotland or elsewhere in the United Kingdom?

The First Minister: A confidential process on such matters is used between the referring organisation, the individual and the Government. I have already indicated that Glasgow City Council, following its report, took action by referring a number of individuals to the DWCL. I am sure that Nicol Stephen, given his legal background, will understand why I cannot go into further specifics; I have strong advice on that. However, I can assure him that when the independent review reports and makes general policy recommendations, the Government will speedily and effectively implement them.

Nicol Stephen: I understand the difficult circumstances, and it seems that the findings in Glasgow City Council's report are grim. The First Minister's answer offers some reassurance, and I thank him for what he has been able to say.

The children in question have had bad starts in life, which have been made worse by the way in which the state has looked after them. Too often, our most vulnerable children are the ones who are let down the most. What steps will the First Minister take to examine the serious failings that are being identified? What commitments can he make to ensure that the lessons of the report are learned by everyone with responsibility for looked-after children across Scotland? What efforts will he make to ensure that this never happens again and that nobody who is implicated in these incidents can find a legal loophole that will allow them to continue to work with children in any part of the United Kingdom?

From what we know, it seems clear that the seriousness of the findings in the report requires action to be taken immediately rather than simply waiting until September or October.

The First Minister: I asked for a report on this matter this morning. There is a part of the process just now that allows referred individuals who have jobs at the time of the referral to continue to work, even during the provisional listing stage. I am asking to look at that aspect, because it seems to be anomalous and not equivalent to what happens in other organisations. For example, teachers are often suspended from duty in such circumstances.

As the former Deputy First Minister knows, I have to be extremely careful not to make policy on the hoof. However, I think that the independent

review group that the previous First Minister established must be allowed to do its work. We should not try to second-guess its findings or interfere by making decisions now that might be crossed over by its report in September.

Given the details in the newspaper reports today, I understand why people think it is urgent that immediate action be taken. I will look, in particular, at the point that I have stressed. However, I ask everyone in the chamber to let the independent review group that has been established get on with its work and then speedily—as parliamentarians—to implement its recommendations.

The Presiding Officer: We have a constituency question from Duncan McNeil.

Mr Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): The First Minister will be aware of the announcement today by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde that, following concerns over the assessment and diagnosis of possible breast cancer symptoms at Inverclyde royal hospital, the cases of 1,600 women have had to be reviewed and that, of those, nearly 200 patients must now be re-examined.

Although, of course, the first priority will be to reassure every woman involved as quickly as possible—I am assured that every ounce of capacity in the entire NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area is being focused on that—will the First Minister instruct the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, as a matter of urgency, to initiate a full inquiry into what has gone wrong and how a reoccurrence will be prevented? Will he assure me and my constituents that any solution will be based on improving the quality of the services at Inverclyde royal hospital and not on removing them?

The First Minister: Duncan McNeil is correct to say that 200 patients have been asked to attend specifically arranged clinics for further checks. Nicola Sturgeon has today asked NHS Quality Improvement Scotland to accelerate the completion of the current review of clinical standards for breast cancer services.

All of us were hugely concerned to learn that patients attending clinics at Inverclyde royal hospital have not received the highest standards of care that are available to women in other parts of Scotland. I welcome the urgent action that has already been taken by the board and I am sure that everyone in the chamber will welcome the action that has been taken today by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing.

The Presiding Officer: We have a further constituency question from Roseanna Cunningham.

Roseanna Cunningham (Perth) (SNP): What will be the Government's response to the decision in Perth sheriff court on Tuesday 13 June, approving an exemption from the right to roam that is enshrined in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003? I appreciate that the First Minister is unlikely to have read the entire judgment, but given that he, like me, represents an area that contains many large estates, does he share my concern that, if the judgment is sound and similar decisions follow, the 2003 act might need to be revisited?

The First Minister: I have not read the full sheriff's opinion but I have read a summary of it, which all members in the chamber should have a look at. As Roseanna Cunningham knows, at the moment we have a sheriff's opinion. There is an indication from the council that it will take the matter to appeal, in which case we will get a determination. Another case in Stirling sheriff court relates to the same issues.

I suggest that we should at least wait until the case reaches the court of appeal and consider whether the judgment points to serious deficiencies in the structure of the 2003 act. If it does, and case evidence builds up, only then should the Parliament consider whether any legislative changes are required to repair deficiencies that may exist in an act that was passed under the previous Administration.

"FSB Scotland Index of Success 2007"

4. Bill Wilson (West of Scotland) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's position is on the Federation of Small Businesses' recently published annual index of wealth and the comparison with other small countries, particularly in respect of health and life expectancy. (S3F-71)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): The results are disappointing. They reflect what some of us have been saying for some time: on a range of indicators, Scotland has been underperforming.

The index is particularly valuable in comparing Scotland with countries such as Norway, Iceland and Ireland, whose success on that index and across a range of economic and social indicators is an example of what we should aspire to in Scotland.

Bill Wilson: Does the First Minister acknowledge that, in developed countries, relative poverty rather than absolute poverty explains the health differences between countries? That is why small, independent Scandinavian countries with a more equitable wealth distribution significantly outperform Scotland—not an independent nation—in the life expectancy of their citizens and the index of wealth.

Will the council of economic advisers that was announced by the First Minister be charged with considering every proposal to boost Scotland's economy in the light of its potential impact on not just absolute poverty, but relative poverty?

The First Minister: Yes it will, because one of our objectives is not just increased economic growth, which is important, but economic growth that touches every part and section of the community of Scotland.

The index was compiled by John McLaren, who should be taken seriously because he is a former special adviser to Donald Dewar and Henry McLeish. He is, therefore, a good economist who cannot be accused of feeding lines to Bill Wilson for political purposes.

I was amazed to hear the Secretary of State for Scotland, Douglas Alexander, on Tuesday in the House of Commons, seeming to regard the findings of the index as some form of success. I remind members that, on the index, we are 10th out of 10 in the small countries compared and that our position has been declining.

The index does two things. First, it tells this Administration what the starting point is as we embark on a period of government. Secondly, it should convince everybody that the opinion of the Secretary of State for Scotland—that the index shows some sort of deferred success—is not good enough for the new Scotland.

Liam McArthur (Orkney) (LD): The FSB's index of success report has established itself as a valuable contribution to the debate on Scotland's economy, particularly on the importance of health and well-being to economic performance. However, does the First Minister agree that headlines such as "The worst small country in the world" are not only untrue, but are unhelpful to Scotland's reputation overseas and in attracting inward investment? What is his position on those who seek to talk down Scotland's economic performance?

The First Minister: I agree with that point. In defence of the press—I am always anxious to rush to its defence at every opportunity—I think that the headline was a parody of the slogan, "The best small country in the world." It is a bit foolish to have such a slogan unless we can convince people on the evidence that it is justified by the economy and social indicators. Perhaps a better slogan would be that we aspire to be the best-performing economy and social system in the world.

Universities (Funding)

5. George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what action is being taken to ensure that funding for Scottish universities does

not fall further behind that of those in other parts of the United Kingdom. (S3F-53)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): As was said yesterday, that issue will be considered in detail during the forthcoming comprehensive spending review. It is clear that the international competitiveness of Scottish higher education is a critical issue for Scotland. We will take into account developments elsewhere in the United Kingdom and internationally and work on developing a robust evidence base ahead of the spending review. I am delighted that Universities Scotland has said that it is keen to work with the Executive on that.

George Foulkes: The annual budget of the University of Edinburgh is £450 million, that of the University of Manchester is £600 million and that of the University of Cambridge is £900 million. How can we ever compete in teaching and research if the Scottish Executive does not face up to the direct funding of universities—which is the real problem in higher education—as the United Kingdom Government has done south of the border?

The First Minister: George Foulkes says that universities should not fall further behind, but his question is something of an indictment of his colleagues who were in the previous Administration. I understand that the position of Jack McConnell and Nicol Stephen is that Scottish universities were and are properly funded.

It was said yesterday that a huge issue is coming up—namely, whether we will be able to sustain our relative position in the light of the funding that could go to universities south of the border when the cap comes off top-up fees. That issue was, of course, debated strongly in the Westminster Parliament. A large number of Labour Party members of Parliament—72—rebelled against the Government's proposal, which was passed by only five votes. I have with me the division list relating to that vote. The then rector of the University of Edinburgh, Tam Dalyell, was among the rebels; George Foulkes, who was then the MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, was among the Government's supporters. The Government will take action to protect the position of Scottish universities, but there is one person in the chamber with an individual responsibility for the threat that looms over our university systems—Lord George Foulkes.

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): Yesterday, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning said in response to a question that Scottish universities are "well funded". That statement will have raised eyebrows in the university sector, which is worried about its competitive position. Does the First Minister agree that it is time for an independent review of higher

education funding and student support in Scotland that is modelled on the Cubie committee review, so that we can try to safeguard universities, which are important institutions?

The First Minister: The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning said yesterday that universities are properly funded and that the potential looming threat was the cap on top-up fees being removed south of the border. To be fair, the member's colleagues have argued that that presents a serious danger. Working on robust evidence-based analysis during the spending review is important. Universities Scotland is pleased with that process, and the Government intends to work in that way.

United Kingdom Government

6. Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD): To ask the First Minister whether he intends to work constructively with the United Kingdom Government on issues of mutual concern. (S3F-69)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): Yes, I do. I gave an example of such constructive work earlier when I mentioned that I had approved the appointment of the new chairman of the commission for employment and skills, and Robert Brown will have noticed that over the past week, Linda Fabiani and Richard Lochhead have worked extremely constructively with their Westminster counterparts on the approach to the European Council and on fisheries.

Robert Brown: I thank the First Minister for his assurance. He has rightly drawn attention to the fact that the joint working arrangements with the UK Government need to be reinvigorated. Now that the lines of communication with Westminster appear to be opening, will he discuss that matter with his new pal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer? In the interests of transparency, will he agree to publish regularly a note of all ministerial meetings with UK ministers and their subject matter? Does he support the Steel commission's suggestion that there should be a joint Scottish Parliament and Westminster Parliament committee to reflect the parliamentary dimension of those vital UK relationships?

The First Minister: I am attracted to the idea of the publication of the minutes. Of course, that would require the agreement of the United Kingdom ministers, and traditionally United Kingdom ministers have not been happy with the publication of the minutes of ministerial meetings. Nevertheless, I shall pursue that point and get back to Robert Brown.

There is a lot of concern, not just in the chamber and in the Government, about the way in which the joint ministerial meetings—apart from those on

Europe—effectively fell into disuse over the past few years. There is concern about that in the Northern Ireland Assembly and in the National Assembly for Wales. A lot of people share my concern that we need to reinvigorate the formal structures so that matters can be properly operated on.

I hear what Robert Brown says about communications. I can tell the chamber that communications have been restored. I have received a letter from the Prime Minister.

Members: Is it signed?

The First Minister: Yes, it is signed. It tells me that Her Majesty the Queen has graciously asked me to join the Privy Council. I am delighted to accept. So, here we have it: after 28 days, I have received a letter—by royal command.

12:31

Meeting suspended until 14:15.

14:15

On resuming—

Question Time

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Finance and Sustainable Growth

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):

Question 1 was withdrawn by Michael Matheson. He and his wife have just had a baby and, on behalf of the chamber, I congratulate him.

Transport Projects Review (Audit Scotland)

2. Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what terms of reference, timescale and resources will be required for Audit Scotland to carry out a full review of the procedures used to forecast the costs of the Edinburgh tram and Edinburgh airport rail link projects; how the reporting date of 20 June 2007 was agreed; to whom Audit Scotland will report at the end of the review; and what the implications of the review are for the independence of Audit Scotland. (S3O-205)

The Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change (Stewart Stevenson): The Auditor General for Scotland has determined the terms of reference, resources and timescale for Audit Scotland's review, in accordance with his statutory powers. Audit Scotland has published the terms of reference on its website at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk. The Auditor General agreed the reporting date of 20 June in discussion with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth on 4 June. The Auditor General will report by presenting the findings of the review to Parliament on 20 June. There are no implications for the independence of Audit Scotland.

Margaret Smith: Given that the minister has used overruns on other projects to justify reviewing the trams project and EARL, will he explain how the review can look at the process for estimating project costs and management arrangements, but cannot, in the words of Audit Scotland,

“provide assurance on the accuracy of the cost estimates”?

Is that because to do so would compromise the independence of Audit Scotland in the on-going review of major projects?

Will the minister also inform us whether the review's findings will be made public through the whole Parliament or through the Audit Committee, which asked the Auditor General and Audit Scotland to undertake the only review of this kind when the committee was considering the Holyrood building project?

Stewart Stevenson: It will be for the Auditor General to publish the results and present them to Parliament. I expect that the results will also be available on the Audit Scotland website.

The member asked how we can address the accuracy of estimates and pointed to overruns on other projects. She is right that we have serious concerns about such overruns and that that gave us the impetus to look at the largest projects in our portfolio. However, the Auditor General brought forward in the schedule work that he had planned to do—it is not in itself new work. We expect that that work will inform decision making on key projects and that it will give us a solid foundation for accepting that good processes and management practices are in place in key projects.

Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab): When the review is completed and, as was agreed last week, a motion is put to the Parliament, will the Scottish Government accept the Parliament's decision?

Stewart Stevenson: Well, let us not run ahead of ourselves in relation to what the report will say. We are committed to having a debate and to bringing to Parliament before the summer recess our views on the major projects that we are considering. Rather than expect difficulties, the member should wait for the appropriate steps to be taken and see what outcome we reach.

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): The minister said "overruns on other projects"—I wrote that down carefully. Will he tell members what those other projects are?

Stewart Stevenson: Mr Scott will be aware that the figures that were brought to Parliament for the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine project were in the range of £65 million to £70 million. We are advised that the expected completion price will be in the order of £83 million. That is a substantial overrun, which causes us to seek assurances that we have adequate management control over even larger projects and that estimates have been derived professionally. It is perfectly natural for us to do that; if we did not, I am sure that we would attract considerable criticism.

Des McNulty (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab): I am still not clear about how value for money can be addressed by an Audit Scotland inquiry that does not look at the accuracy and reliability of cost estimates. Mr Swinney said in the debate on the matter that he would address value for money. Will the minister tell us how Mr Swinney will address value for money as a separate exercise from the one that Audit Scotland is undertaking? Will the minister confirm that before the recess there will be a debate on the issue, following which members will have the

opportunity to vote on whether the trams and EARL projects go ahead?

Stewart Stevenson: I am surprised that the member has not twigged that there will be a debate—it has been a theme—before the recess.

I return to the subject of the Auditor General's independence. He has brought forward work so that we as ministers can make our determinations about value for money. He will inform us whether there is a robust process that has been gone through effectively in the calculation of estimates and whether there are management processes to carry the projects forward. That is his role, and he will report to Parliament on those matters. Based on that work and on other considerations, as ministers, we must assess whether certain projects deliver value for money. We will report to Parliament as we have promised.

Regulations

3. Derek Brownlee (South of Scotland) (Con):

To ask the Scottish Executive on what date it plans to introduce the Better Regulation Commission's one in, one out rule in relation to new regulations. (S3O-172)

The Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism (Jim Mather): With immediate effect, this Scottish Government will ensure that there is no gold plating and no early unnecessary introduction of European Union regulations. Further, any new regulations that are introduced should start from the premise that they will not increase the administrative burden on business. Next week, I will meet the chair of the industry-led regulatory review group to ensure that those principles impact positively on business in Scotland. We will encourage departments to undertake regulatory impact assessments of acts of the Scottish Parliament or Scottish statutory instruments that have a significant impact on business. We will seek assistance from the regulatory review group, business stakeholder groups and business generally to help us prioritise those regulatory impact assessments.

Derek Brownlee: That all sounds good, but the Scottish National Party manifesto made a commitment to introduce a one in, one out rule. If the minister is worried about getting such a rule through Parliament, I am sure that we would be happy to support him on it.

Will the minister consider whether the Executive can publish annually an assessment of the cumulative net cost to business and to the public sector of the regulations that have been introduced?

Jim Mather: The member has accurately understood our direction of travel. We will make

progress when we meet Professor Russell Griggs next week

There has been considerable bean counting in this Scotland of ours and I am concerned that Mr Brownlee's suggestion would add to that burden. We need a reinvention of trust and a progressive realignment of regulations. I detect, from the nature of his question, that there will be good will for that approach. I will certainly seek to mirror that good will and to achieve the end that the regulatory review group has set out.

Ms Wendy Alexander (Paisley North) (Lab): We are still looking for the start date for the one in, one out policy. The proposal was in not only the SNP manifesto but our manifesto and the Conservative manifesto, so I confirm that, as soon as the Government gets around to determining the start date, we will all be delighted to join the minister.

I know that the minister is genuinely fond of appropriate targets. Small business has asked us to reduce the administrative burden associated with targets, as well as to introduce the one in, one out policy. Will he enlighten us as to whether he intends to reduce the administrative burden that faces small businesses and whether annual targets will be introduced on that basis? Perhaps once he has had the opportunity to consider the matter—following his discussions with Professor Griggs—he could write to me about the merits of setting such targets.

Jim Mather: We guarantee that we will get on with doing the work. I have given the direction of travel.

The view is fairly jaundiced on arbitrary numeric targets, which formed the landscape of the previous Administration. Arbitrary numeric targets are famous for the key reason that they tend to divert resources to meeting targets while other things fall apart. Considering what we can do to make Scotland more competitive and to achieve a higher level of sustainable growth is a much more worthy objective. I see better regulation as a key component of that.

Credit Unions

4. Angela Constance (Livingston) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it will support the work undertaken by credit unions to address financial exclusion. (S3O-259)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): We are committed to continuing support for the credit union movement and to encouraging it to develop new and innovative services. Credit unions do invaluable work in addressing financial exclusion. Their traditional role is to promote saving and provide affordable credit to people who cannot

access mainstream borrowing. However, many now offer an increasing range of services, such as current accounts, savings accounts, budgeting accounts, flexible credit, insurance, foreign currency at competitive rates and other relevant packages.

Angela Constance: As the good work that credit unions do spans the work of more than one Government department, will the minister please commit to working together with his ministerial colleagues and others to support vital anti-poverty projects such as debt redemption schemes? Will he ensure that service of general economic interest funds that have been allocated to organisations such as Livingston Credit Union for the financial year 2008-09 but which have not previously been guaranteed will be made available? That would enable an organisation such as Livingston Credit Union to continue for the third year running a debt redemption scheme and to deliver a huge increase of 100 per cent in the number of loans that are made available under the scheme.

John Swinney: As I said, the Government is very supportive of credit unions' work and wants to ensure that that continues effectively. Decisions about the spending period beyond April 2008 have yet to be made and the Government will produce in due course its budget proposals in that respect. However, I make those comments against the backdrop of a sympathetic view of credit unions' work.

I assure Angela Constance that in the new and smaller Cabinet, it is easy to have conversations between colleagues and to agree on subjects for which the boundaries are not clear. I will work with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing on the issue that the member raises.

I was delighted to hear that Angela Constance has invited a founding member of Livingston Credit Union, Nancy MacGillivray, to be her nominated local hero at the parliamentary event on 30 June. I hope that Ms MacGillivray has an enjoyable day.

Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab): I am pleased to hear Mr Swinney's endorsement of the credit union movement. However, he will be aware, because I have written to him, of the increasing concerns of my local credit union, Cumnock and Doon Valley Credit Union, which does an excellent job of providing financial services, particularly in the aftermath of the Farepak situation. That credit union has expressed concern about the impact that the new Executive's policy of abolishing Communities Scotland will have on the funding and support that the credit union movement receives. Will the minister give me a guarantee that credit unions will continue to be fully funded

and supported, and will he explain how that will be done if Communities Scotland no longer exists?

John Swinney: I have said clearly in two previous answers that the Government is enormously supportive of the credit union movement and acknowledges the important work that it does. I put on record the Government's appreciation for the work of Cumnock and Doon Valley Credit Union, which I am sure helps people, particularly those who in recent months have been involved in the acute Farepak situation.

The Government supports and has objectives for programmes that are intended to ensure that, through the delivery of policy, we make a difference in people's lives. We must move on from the debate about structures and focus on how we deliver programmes to individuals. That will underpin the Government's approach to the organisation of Government business among agencies, to ensure that we make a big impact on people's lives.

Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab): Will the minister follow the lead of Westminster ministers and actively promote credit unions to those who are considering at this time how they should start their saving for Christmas, especially in the light of the Farepak disaster, which my colleague Cathy Jamieson mentioned? How does he think any such promotion might be carried out?

John Swinney: There are a variety of ways in which the Government can offer support to credit unions, through the general advisory packages that we offer at local level to assist people in managing their finances. Many local authorities are involved in those schemes, which are supported by grant-aided expenditure that the Scottish Executive provides. There is an opportunity for constructive, positive collaboration between us and the Westminster Government in this area. I assure Mary Mulligan that my officials and I will work together closely to ensure that that is delivered in due course.

Carers

5. Cathy Peattie (Falkirk East) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive how it will engage with the voluntary sector in order to support carers in employment and seeking employment. (S3O-248)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): The Scottish Government acknowledges that unpaid carers often face significant barriers in accessing employment. We recognise the role that the voluntary sector can play in supporting carers in employment and seeking employment, both as an employer and as a provider of support. Carers Scotland's recently published national framework for carers and employment sets out valuable

messages on the role of flexible employment policies and social care services in helping carers to balance work and caring. I want to ensure that we build that into our thinking as carers policy develops. We must continue to work with voluntary organisations on that important effort.

Cathy Peattie: Will the minister join me in congratulating Carers Scotland on its excellent booklet "Carers and their Rights", which was launched today and which will be a vital tool for every carer in Scotland? Does he agree that, for carers to stay in or to seek work, flexible working, respite care, time to take up training and all the issues around getting into employment are vital? How will he work to support the discussion that needs to happen in the workplace to enable carers to take up or to stay in employment?

John Swinney: I am happy to congratulate Carers Scotland on the publication of the booklet "Carers and their Rights". I take this opportunity to say how pleased I was to hear that Cathy Peattie has been elected convener of the cross-party group on carers. The issue was dear to my heart in the previous session and I assure her that it will remain dear to my heart in this session.

The Government's policies will assist carers in a number of ways. As we set out in our manifesto, we are determined to tackle issues relating to flexible working, which will not only help carers but have a positive impact on a wide variety of policy areas. We are developing proposals on respite care and further training opportunities. In our joined-up Government, I was delighted this morning to read that the Minister for Public Health has announced support for a national festival for young carers that will take place as a result of a new funding package from the Executive. The festival will provide young carers with the opportunity to meet decision makers, including MSPs, and to have a say on the issues that matter to them. Carers' training, which is a key issue, is one of the priorities of the programme.

Economy

6. Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive how it will grow the economy of all parts of Scotland. (S3O-204)

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): In the parliamentary debate on 30 May, I set out the approach that the Government will take to achieve higher sustainable economic growth in Scotland. Further work will be published in the autumn, and there will be appropriate dialogue and consultation before that. The Government wants to ensure that we grow the economy in all parts of Scotland.

Jeremy Purvis: The cabinet secretary will be aware that the Borders rail link and international connectivity direct to Edinburgh airport are crucial to the economy of the Borders. In the joined-up Government to which he referred, he will have seen the answer to my parliamentary question about the cost of the Edinburgh airport rail link scheme. In that answer, which I received on Tuesday, the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change said that the cost of the scheme was between £550 million and £650 million. Is it the case, as the SNP in the south of Scotland has said, that the scheme will, in fact, cost £1 billion and that, if it goes ahead, no money will be left for the Borders railway? Can the minister confirm that the Borders railway is not subject to the financial review of transport schemes that is under way?

John Swinney: The Government has an obligation to look at every single project, whether it is a transport project or any other project, to ensure that the project is financially robust and can be delivered within the commitments that have been made to Parliament. If any project cannot be delivered within those commitments, we have to come back to Parliament and advise Parliament about what the appropriate figures are. That exercise is under way. Earlier, Mr Stevenson made it clear that the Government will come back to Parliament with information in relation to the work that we are undertaking on the review of those projects.

That is an entirely natural process for the Government to undertake. We are a new Government and have inherited a programme list from the previous Administration. We would be failing in our duty if we did not try to satisfy ourselves about all those projects, including the range of projects that are being developed by Transport Scotland.

The Borders rail link is one of the projects that we are looking at very closely to ensure that all the financial assumptions are robust. We have to do that; if we did not, we would be failing in our duty.

Justice and Law Officers

Criminal Justice Bill

1. John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive when it intends to bring forward a criminal justice bill. (S3O-246)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): Last week, as the member might recall, I set out our priorities for a safer, stronger Scotland. We are considering in more detail what legislation is needed to deliver those priorities and we will bring forward proposals in due course.

John Park: I welcome the minister to his new role—this is the first opportunity that I have had to do so.

The minister will be aware that there is significant cross-party support for the introduction of corporate homicide legislation. I understand that, due to a number of complex factors, there was insufficient parliamentary time in session 2 to deal with Karen Gillon's member's bill on the subject.

Given that, in 2005, when he was in opposition, the minister stated that

"Legislation on corporate homicide is not only supported in principle across Parliament and throughout the country, but is urgently needed now",

can he advise the chamber today whether the new Administration intends to bring forward such legislation?

Kenny MacAskill: As the member might recall, I and the Scottish National Party fully supported Karen Gillon's bill. However, unfortunately, the previous Administration decided that a different route should be taken in terms of how we co-operated and interacted with the legislation that was introduced south of the border. Certainly, our position is that action needs to be taken. With us in the chamber today is the Solicitor General for Scotland, Frank Mulholland, who was pivotal in pursuing the Transco case that was, perhaps, the genesis of Karen Gillon's interest in these matters.

We wish to ensure that adequate legislation is available, and we undertake to determine whether what was brought in by the previous Administration is adequate and fit for purpose. If it is not, we will need to review it.

Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con): Leaving aside the issue of corporate homicide, does the cabinet secretary agree that, bearing in mind the plethora of criminal justice legislation that we have seen in the past eight years—much of which was of dubious value—we might be as well leaving things as they are until a full assessment is carried out of the effectiveness of some of the acts that we have already passed?

Kenny MacAskill: This Government is conscious that legislation alone is insufficient, particularly in the area of justice. We have had a restored Scottish Parliament for only eight years but, clearly, our independent legal system—whether the constabulary or the offices of the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General—served us well in the centuries prior to the Scottish Parliament being restored. It is quite clear that we have to ensure that legislation adds value to the institutions that have served us well. There is a role for legislation, and I have no doubt that it will be required, whether it originates from this Government or, indeed, elsewhere—we will be

happy to take on legislation from the Justice Committee or Opposition parties.

Although the point is well made that we need to allow legislation that relates to institutions that deliver front line justice and law services to have some opportunity to bed in, we will not hesitate to legislate where it is necessary to do so. However, I agree that there is some wisdom in the adage that those who legislate in haste repent at leisure.

Antisocial Behaviour

2. Nigel Don (North East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans the Cabinet Secretary for Justice has to strengthen the legislation on antisocial behaviour. (S3O-257)

The Minister for Community Safety (Fergus Ewing): The Government plans to take a fresh look at our antisocial behaviour strategy to see where it can be strengthened and improved and how we can ensure greater community involvement. We will feed the results of on-going evaluations of antisocial behaviour orders and dispersal powers into that wider review.

Nigel Don: Does the minister agree that it takes far too long to remove offenders whose behaviour is loutish, persistent and protracted? Does he agree that we should be able to speed up the processes of dealing with those who knowingly and willingly act in defiance of the reasonable expectations of those who live around them?

Fergus Ewing: To ensure that the public are protected from the unacceptable behaviour of a minority of society in Scotland, interim antisocial behaviour orders can be obtained within 72 hours. The procedure to obtain a full ASBO requires 21 days' notice.

The Government is taking a fresh look at the antisocial behaviour strategy, to ensure that it is strengthened and improved, and we expect to report back in due course, after we have had further examinations and meetings.

Margaret Curran (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab): I listened with great interest to Fergus Ewing's first reply. I hope that, in taking forward that fresh look, he will not weaken antisocial behaviour legislation. Given that the Scottish National Party abstained in votes on dispersal powers in the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004, does that mean that the SNP does not fully support the use of dispersal powers or, given their successful use in various parts of Scotland, has the SNP changed its mind?

Fergus Ewing: The review will, of course, consider what is working, what is not working and what is not working well. We have supported the use of enforcement measures in the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004. That is now

three years old, so it is appropriate to have a review.

I say to Margaret Curran and the many other members who are rightly concerned about antisocial behaviour that the Executive's approach will focus not solely on tackling antisocial behaviour but on promoting good behaviour and providing opportunities for young people that show them a better life in the first instance. We will work towards promoting that good behaviour as firmly and determinedly as we will tackle antisocial behaviour after it has occurred.

John Lamont (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): What will the minister do to ensure the greater use of parenting orders, given that not one has been issued to date?

Fergus Ewing: Plainly, parenting orders have not been particularly successful thus far. In the course of the review, we will examine the enforcement measure to which Mr Lamont draws attention.

I hope that the Conservatives will continue to work with us in tackling antisocial behaviour, in promoting good behaviour and on emphasising the inculcation of a sense of personal responsibility in Scotland. In that respect, it is worth noting that the cabinet secretary recently visited a project in Govan where youngsters are provided the opportunity to play football. Evaluation showed that youth disorder fell by 76 per cent. Surely we can agree across the parties that that is exactly the sort of scheme that we want to be replicated throughout Scotland.

Efficiency Savings (Justice and Communities)

3. Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what consideration it has given to efficiency savings in the justice and communities budget. (S3O-228)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): The Government is committed to delivering efficiencies across the public sector in Scotland. I will consider justice expenditure closely, as part of the spending review, to ensure that public money is spent as efficiently and effectively as possible and to generate efficiencies that can be fed back into providing more and better services. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth announced on 24 May that we will establish our efficiency programme for 2008 to 2011 during the spending review.

Iain Gray: The minister's colleague, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, has made much of the Howat report in discussing the more efficient use of public money. He has refused to rule out the recommendations in that report, with the exception of the one regarding Scottish Water.

One recommendation is that the fire college at Gullane in my constituency should be merged with the police college in Tulliallan, with the Gullane site being sold off. The college at Gullane has trained firefighters for 50 years. I think that the fire service will have concerns about the potential loss of its specialist training facility, and I am sure that my constituents in Gullane will be worried by the prospect of the disposal of a large site in the heart of their community. Will the minister allay those worries by assuring us that he will not pursue that recommendation?

Kenny MacAskill: Most members will be aware of the excellent service and facilities in Gullane. Obviously, the Government is reviewing fire service and police issues, therefore it would be wrong of me to make a specific commitment. However, we recognise the excellent service that the fire and rescue services have provided and continue to provide in Scotland. We seek to build on and enhance that solid foundation.

Police (Recruitment)

4. Gavin Brown (Lothians) (Con): To ask the Scottish Executive what steps it has taken in implementing the commitment to provide 1,000 extra police officers. (S3O-179)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): Delivering additional policing capacity will require a co-ordinated, carefully planned and innovative approach. We are developing our plans to deliver the commitment, and we intend to publish them in due course.

Gavin Brown: I have a simple additional question: is 1,000 extra police officers enough?

Kenny MacAskill: Perhaps the member should discuss that with Mr Carlaw, who, in a debate last week, wondered why the figure of 1,500 was mentioned in the Conservatives' manifesto.

Scotland requires a visible police presence, and the Government is committed to increasing policing capacity. A visible police presence not only reassures communities, it deters criminals. We must ensure not only that our officers—who do a fantastic job—continue to work hard, but that we work smarter to free up resources. We will seek to recruit and retain police officers. The Administration understands that, as well as bringing in more new officers to add to the officers that we have, we must ensure that we stop haemorrhaging officers—many of whom have a great deal of knowledge and wisdom to contribute—as a result of ill health or retiral.

Legal Aid (Shetland)

5. Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to improve access to legal aid in Shetland. (S3O-202)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): Access to advice on civil matters will be improved by the development of a network of civil legal assistance offices, which will provide advice on matters of civil law. In the north of Scotland, the network will build on the existing part V project, which is based in Inverness. A new Public Defence Solicitors Office has been opened in Kirkwall, which will provide free legal assistance on criminal matters to eligible individuals in Shetland and Orkney.

Tavish Scott: Those measures, which were initiated under the previous Administration, are welcome.

Will the cabinet secretary look into the cost to legal practices of actions relating to family matters, such as divorce and child protection cases, that are defended in court hearings? I understand that such cases account for most of the time and dedication of legal practices. Is the cabinet secretary aware that only one legal practice in Lerwick undertakes civil legal aid work? Will he look into that and find out what can be done to assist?

Finally, does the cabinet secretary understand that access to legal aid is an absolute right for many of my constituents but that, as a result of the geography, they find it difficult to access local solicitors, which clearly does not help them? Often, my constituents must travel to Aberdeen or further afield to instruct solicitors and seek advice.

Kenny MacAskill: The member is right to raise such a significant problem, which my predecessor as minister with responsibility for justice, Cathy Jamieson, recognised. The matter has arisen partly because of changes in society, in who is joining the legal profession and in how that profession is operating. It is clear that there are issues.

On family issues, it is clear that huge swathes of the community are facing a crisis, which is why the part V project was introduced and why the Government is reviewing civil legal aid payments in family law cases. We are aware of the problem.

There are civil law matters other than matrimonial matters that we must consider. We must examine how assistance is provided and how account can be taken of the difficulties that are faced by remote jurisdictions and jurisdictions that are peripheral to the central belt and the capital city, where legal establishments tend to be based, to ensure that there is parity and equality of service, to which all our citizens are entitled, irrespective of where they reside.

Victim Support Scotland (Meetings)

6. Irene Oldfather (Cunninghame South) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive when it

intends to meet representatives of Victim Support Scotland. (S3O-245)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): I am keen to meet representatives of Victim Support Scotland and of other voluntary organisations that work in the justice system as soon as is practicable.

Irene Oldfather: Is the minister aware of the sense of abandonment and frustration that victims of sexual abuse feel when Crown cases are deserted for reasons other than lack of evidence? First, will he undertake, with the Lord Advocate, to review the circumstances under which such cases have been deserted, to determine whether any lessons can be learned? Secondly, will he consider whether, when there is no option but to desert a case, automatic referral to the children's reporter might provide both a community safety net and a sense to victims who come forward—often under difficult circumstances—that their voice is being heard?

Kenny MacAskill: It is a difficult area, but a great deal of progress has been made on how we deal with the victims of sexual offences. That progress was begun under the previous Executive, and particular credit must be given to the current Lord Advocate. For far too long, victims were treated simply as part of the legal process, and not with the sympathy and dignity to which they were entitled. Although a considerable distance has been travelled, progress must still be made, and the Government intends to continue to build on what has been done.

I am not aware of particular problems, but I am happy to consider any representations that the member makes. There are difficulties for the Crown when, unfortunately, it is impossible to proceed in the public interest, even though a victim feels aggrieved. That can be the case for a variety of reasons, whether because victims or witnesses are not in a position to give evidence or because there are matters that it may be inappropriate to discuss with the wider public. Nevertheless, I am aware of the member's interest in the matter, the progress that the previous Executive made and the endeavours of the current Lord Advocate, on which the Government will seek to continue to build.

Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): Some weeks ago, a pensioner came to my surgery who had been the victim of a street robbery and had lost two weeks' pension money as a result. Despite his best efforts, he had been unable to recover any of that money, and he felt that he had not been kept informed of progress in his case. That is not an isolated incident, by any means. The previous Executive made progress on conveying information to the victims of major crime. Does the minister have any plans to make it

easier for victims of crime to get compensation and information about their cases as they go through the justice system?

Kenny MacAskill: We are required to keep such matters constantly under review. As the member may be aware, some of the issues relate to the way in which the Crown Office interacts with victims and some relate to individual police matters. It would be inappropriate of me to interfere with the operational independence of chief constables. However, it is my experience as a constituency member and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice that, in the main, the police try to keep members of the public and victims of crime informed. There may be times when, because of pressure of work or for a variety of other reasons, matters slip through the net. The Government will seek to monitor that and ensure that best practice is adhered to.

From the lowest constable to the highest chief constable in the land, the police service has served us well and will continue to do so. Mistakes may be made, but I am sure that they will be rectified. It is a matter of trying to ensure that the best service is provided to our communities and to the victims of crime, in particular.

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab): The minister mentioned the role of the police service and the importance of the independence of chief constables throughout Scotland. Can he therefore advise us why, in his statement to *The Courier*, he said that the Executive will seek to place police officers in our communities? Is the minister going to introduce new legislation that will give him the power of ministerial direction to place such requirements on our local police authorities?

Kenny MacAskill: No, it is not the intention of the Government to usurp the role of the chief constables. We will, however, provide the chief constables with the additional officers to do with what they want. I know from my discussions with chief constables that they share the Government's desire to have a visible police presence in their communities.

It is not for the cabinet secretary to specify where individuals should serve; it is for this Government to try to ensure that sufficient police officers are available to allow chief constables to deliver what their communities want, which is a visible police presence that reassures communities and deters criminals in our towns and cities.

Underage Sales of Cigarettes (Prosecutions)

7. Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive how many retailers were prosecuted in 2006-07 for selling cigarettes to people under the age of 16. (S3O-201)

The Solicitor General for Scotland (Frank Mulholland): In 2006-07, 11 people were subject to court proceedings. Prosecution is, of course, the ultimate sanction in respect of illegal sales of tobacco, but it is not in itself a measure of the effectiveness of local authority enforcement programmes.

Ross Finnie: I thank the Solicitor General for Scotland for his response and I welcome his appointment to that high office. I also welcome him to his first themed question time.

Surveys conducted by people who are interested in the prevention of ill health indicate that 19 per cent of 15-year-olds and 6 per cent of 13-year-olds smoke at least one cigarette per week, and that smoking among girls is more prevalent than it is among boys. Given our failure to enforce the current legal age for purchasing cigarettes, and in light of the number of prosecutions that the Solicitor General has revealed and the number of underage smokers, does the Solicitor General agree that enforcement is probably more important than raising the legal age at which a person can buy cigarettes?

The Solicitor General for Scotland: I am grateful to Mr Finnie for his kind words of welcome.

Prosecution is the ultimate sanction, of course, but it is part of a range of measures to deal with the mischief of smoking among Scotland's youth, which include enforcement by trading standards officers, the production of guidance material, visits and inspections, publicity following test purchases, intelligence-led targeting of premises, and the use of proof-of-age cards, which allows retailers to operate a no-proof, no-sale policy.

It is interesting that an evaluation of a similar test-purchase scheme on the sale of alcohol to underage persons in Fife revealed that, in respect of repeat test purchases, retailers requested proof of age in 97 per cent of cases. I agree that prosecution is important, but it is part of a range of measures. Procurators fiscal are well aware of the importance of their role in ensuring that there is a range of effective measures to deal with youth smoking.

Free Personal Care

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Alasdair Morgan): The next item of business is a debate on free personal care. Before I invite Nicola Sturgeon to open the debate, I ask members to be aware that there are still active court proceedings in relation to an issue to do with free personal care in Argyll and Bute. Members should not refer to the details of that particular case.

14:58

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Nicola Sturgeon): I welcome the opportunity to open this debate and I make clear from the outset that the new Government supports the policy of free personal care. The debate provides us with an important opportunity at the start of a new session of the Parliament to reflect on the policy's aims and to consider carefully the action that we must take to ensure its fair, consistent and sustainable implementation throughout Scotland.

I commend the previous Administration and local authorities for the action that they took—and that local authorities are still taking—to shape and deliver the policy. Free personal care is a policy that was born out of strong cross-party support and that sets Scotland firmly in the vanguard of social care development. We have an obligation to ensure that the policy is built to last.

Is the policy working? Broadly speaking, the answer is yes, but the detailed answer too often depends on where someone stays. In addition to the wealth of anecdotal evidence—I dare say that we will hear much anecdotal evidence in this debate—two main studies support that point of view. The first is the Health Committee's care inquiry report on the implementation of free personal care. That report, which was published in June last year, strongly supported the policy, as does the Parliament, but it identified a number of problems that need to be fixed.

The second study is a substantial independent evaluation that was published at the end of February. It found that the vast majority of people involved receive their payments for personal care services without undue delay or complication. I very much welcome that and fully recognise the important role that local authorities have played in delivering it, but the report also found that there are variations in local practice and, like the Health Committee's report, identified specific issues that need to be addressed.

The evaluation report made a number of recommendations to ensure that implementation of the policy is further improved. The previous Executive accepted those recommendations, and

discussions about their implementation have begun with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Although we support and will continue with that work, it needs to be stepped up a gear if real progress is to be made.

More than 50,000 older vulnerable people currently benefit from the policy of free personal care, but action is required to enhance delivery and to ensure that everyone who is entitled to free personal care gets it, without undue delay.

It is worth noting that some people—not inside, but outside, the chamber—have always wanted to see the policy fail. They claimed from the outset that the policy was unaffordable and unworkable and that it was not sustainable in the long-term. I assure them that, under this Scottish Government, not only will the policy be enhanced, it will be secured for many years to come.

As we pledged in our manifesto, we will establish an independent review to investigate the level and the distribution of resources to local authorities. We stand by that commitment. I can announce today that the review will be chaired by Lord Sutherland, who chaired the royal commission that paved the way for the introduction of free personal care. On behalf of everybody in the chamber, I put on record our thanks to Lord Sutherland for the continuing commitment that he demonstrates to the long-term success of this policy.

Local authority input to the review will, of course, be crucial. I envisage that the review will begin in the summer and should conclude by March. I have, however, asked Lord Sutherland for an interim report by September. It is possible that the review could identify a need for extra financial provision. If that is the case, the initial findings will be fed into the spending review as appropriate.

The members of the review group and their precise terms of reference will be announced shortly, but I want to confirm today that I have asked them to look at the level and distribution of resources and at the longstanding imbalance between Scotland's and the United Kingdom's finances, going back to when the policy was introduced—namely, the issue of attendance allowance. In parallel with that, my officials will open discussions with officials in the Department for Work and Pensions to explore the possibility of an agreed and amicable settlement to that issue.

The issues surrounding the implementation of the policy are not just to do with the funding available to local authorities and its distribution among them. The evaluation report also identified various practical issues that need to be addressed. We made a commitment in our manifesto to ensure that free personal and nursing care will be implemented properly across the

country and we will deliver on that commitment. To ensure that the policy is implemented consistently and equitably, I have asked officials to engage with local authorities to develop proposals jointly with them.

A number of policy strands need to be clarified. They include food preparation, assistance with medication, waiting lists and a more balanced approach to eligibility criteria. I recognise that resolution of the food preparation issue and, indeed, many of the other issues that I have mentioned might require legislation. I also acknowledge that some people, particularly in local authorities, believe that some of the difficulties are due to flaws in the original legislation. I want to make it clear that I am willing, if necessary, to go down the route of legislation if that is deemed the best and most appropriate way of fixing this problem.

I believe that positive engagement with local authorities will lead to an approach to implementing the policy that is more consistent than the approach we might have seen in the past. That will result in better outcomes for our older people—which, after all, is the most important issue.

Local authorities have signalled that they are keen to work with the Scottish Government to resolve what are in many cases tricky areas. I warmly welcome that response, and my colleagues and I look forward to constructive engagement with local authority leaders.

The third main area that we need to tackle is payments for personal and nursing care to self-funders in care homes, which, since the policy was introduced in 2002, have remained static at £145 per week for personal care and £65 per week for nursing care. In the meantime, the cost of a care home place for a self-funder has increased. As a result, the value of free personal and nursing care payments to those who receive them has been eroded. That situation is unacceptable, and must be resolved.

There have of course been consistent calls in and outwith the chamber to increase the payment levels to reflect better the cost of providing these services. In line with another of our manifesto commitments, I can announce that, from April 2008, we will increase the payment for personal and nursing care in care homes in line with inflation. I think that that is right and fair, I know that it is affordable, and I believe that it is in the best interests of older people throughout Scotland.

Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD): I very much welcome that announcement, but I wonder whether the cabinet secretary will clarify whether the increase next April will be based on inflation over the six years

from the introduction of the policy, or on inflation over one 12-month period.

Nicola Sturgeon: We will increase the payments in line with inflation from next April for the future. That important commitment will be welcomed not only by care homes and local authorities but, crucially, by older people who rely on those payments to get the care that they need and deserve. I am very proud indeed to be able to honour that manifesto commitment today.

In conclusion, I reiterate that, as long-term advocates of the policy of free personal care, we as Scotland's new Government are absolutely committed to the policy's success now and in the future. It provides help and gives peace of mind to thousands of people at a time of their lives when they need them most. As I have said, the steps that I have outlined today fulfil another important manifesto commitment. Much more important, they put free personal care—a policy that in Scotland we were right and proud to pioneer—on a stable and sustainable footing for the long term.

I hope that, in taking this action, the new Scottish Government will enjoy the support of all sides of the chamber.

15:08

Lewis Macdonald (Aberdeen Central) (Lab): I am pleased to take my first formal opportunity to welcome the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and the Minister for Public Health to their new roles. Over the past couple of years, Shona Robison and I have had some full and frank exchanges in the Health Committee, of which I will say more in a moment. I look forward to such constructive, if robust, exchanges continuing in the Health and Sport Committee this time round.

I welcome the cabinet secretary's recognition of the success of free personal care and acknowledge the importance of resolving some of the difficult issues to which she referred. I welcome some of the announcements she has made although, given the substance of some of them, it is perhaps a pity that she did not bring them to Parliament in the form of a statement rather than simply set them out as pieces of information in a subject debate.

The cabinet secretary's deputy was a member of the Health Committee that undertook post-legislative scrutiny of free personal care and published its inquiry report a year ago this week, so ministers will be familiar with the response of the then Executive to that inquiry—indeed, Nicola Sturgeon referred to it. They will also be familiar with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report on free personal care in Scotland, which was published last year. Shona Robison will recall scrutinising "Evaluation of the Operation and

Impact of Free Personal Care", which was commissioned by the former Administration in response to the Health Committee's report and published in March this year.

As Nicola Sturgeon has confirmed, ministers are aware of all those reports and evaluations from the past year or so, as well as of the steps that have been taken and the measures that have been set in train to respond to them. We look to ministers to do more than simply set up another inquiry; we look to them to act to resolve some of the difficult issues. The cabinet secretary has indicated how she intends to do that in one or two cases, but there are other areas that give me some cause for concern.

Nicola Sturgeon: I remind Lewis Macdonald—he will have picked this up from my speech—that the recommendations of the evaluation are being taken forward without further inquiry. They are work in progress. The independent review, which is to be chaired by Lord Sutherland, will look into a separate important matter: the level and distribution of resources. Will the member welcome that?

Lewis Macdonald: I am happy so to do. I welcome the clarification that the forthcoming Sutherland inquiry will be about those resource issues alone.

I have no doubt that, in her speech, Nicola Sturgeon—

Nicola Sturgeon: This was covered in my speech.

Lewis Macdonald: It is a shame that a statement was not made available prior to Nicola Sturgeon making her speech—all members could have benefited from knowing the content of what she had to announce today.

I was pleased to listen to Nicola Sturgeon's speech, and I noted some of its content, although I also noted one or two things that were not there. She acknowledged, as did the Rowntree Foundation report and the Health Committee, that free personal care has been very successful in supporting, in particular,

"People with conditions such as dementia and people of modest means".

It has not resulted in

"a reduction in informal care".

Furthermore,

"Free personal care may have supported increases in care at home."

That is all in line with wider health and care policy objectives, and the policy might also have helped to reduce delayed discharges from hospitals. I

welcome the confirmation of the new Administration's support for that broad approach.

The previous session's Health Committee raised several issues and made a number of recommendations. In the context of what Nicola Sturgeon has said today, one of those stands out: the recommendation that

"The Scottish Executive should undertake a thorough review ... of the resources required by local authorities ... to ... finance free personal care. This may require an increase in funding, or more equitable distribution amongst local authorities."

I remind Nicola Sturgeon that ministers in the previous Administration accepted that recommendation. Although her review is welcome, it is in the context of delivering on something that we undertook to do—to follow the recommendation of the Health Committee and review the working of free personal care. As Nicola Sturgeon knows, we undertook to work, with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, to address funding and other implementation issues. I welcome her confirmation that that work is continuing.

As Nicola Sturgeon is setting up an inquiry that, she tells us, will take almost a year to consider the issue of resources, it is worth saying—as was set out in the papers that the minister and her colleagues would have seen in preparation for the Health Committee meeting of 6 March this year—that the work that we had undertaken on resources was carried forward to the point where it could be made available to committee members. The outcome of that work was not kept secret; it was included in the Executive's evidence to the Health Committee, which the committee considered on 6 March.

For the removal of doubt, I will remind ministers what the review of funding showed. In the first full year of funding the new policy, 2003-04, local authorities spent £197 million on free personal and nursing care, and they were allocated upwards of £219 million. In 2004-05, expenditure was of the order of £222 million, and grant-aided expenditure was upward of £229 million. Total GAE, between existing support for free personal care at home and new funding provided under the policy for free personal and nursing care, went up from £219 million in the first full year to £254 million in 2006-07, which is an increase of £35 million, or 16 per cent, over four years. The comments that the cabinet secretary made about the need to keep individual payments up to the level of inflation should be set in the context of those figures.

I detail those figures for the record, and to demonstrate that some of the work of the review of funding for free personal care has already been done or was under way during the previous session of Parliament. If ministers are serious

about improving and strengthening the policy, they will focus on the issues on which a need for further progress has been identified, rather than go back over old ground.

There are some pretty clear pointers about what needs to be done on funding, including some from the work that the previous Executive undertook. Funding for free personal care has risen above the rate of inflation in the past four years, but the level of demand has risen rapidly as well. Ministers do not need an inquiry to tell them that local councils will have a strong case for increased allocations in the forthcoming spending review. I certainly approve of the cabinet secretary's aspiration that, for the spending review, there should be as many accurate statistical data as possible on which to base decisions on future funding.

Mike Rumbles: The member mentioned that the previous Executive gave more money to councils, but it did not give more money to individuals. The previous Administration did nothing to increase that money, nor has the present Administration. In the past five years, including the announcement that we have just had, nothing has been done to address that issue.

Lewis Macdonald: I understand Mike Rumbles's point entirely—his intervention is timely. Shona Robison will be aware that, in an exchange that she and I had in the Health Committee on 6 March, it became apparent that, at that time, work was in hand to examine whether the payments made to care home residents of £145 per week for personal care and £65 for nursing care were enough to meet the needs that they were intended to address. I told Shona Robison that

"the element for personal care has perhaps been greater than the actual spend ... and the element for nursing care has perhaps been less than actual spend."—[*Official Report, Health Committee*, 6 March 2007; c 3458.]

I said that the two elements together were fairly close to balancing out. Mike Rumbles has paid close attention to those matters over the years, so I am sure that he will be aware of that.

Perhaps the minister will tell us in her closing speech whether that earlier work has continued and whether the emerging findings to which I referred in the Health Committee have been borne out in the continuing work. Perhaps she will also say whether she agrees with the previous Administration that the right time at which to consider whether to uprate those elements is the forthcoming spending review. The cabinet secretary announced an intention to uprate, although Mike Rumbles challenged her on whether that will acknowledge any possible potential for underresourcing in the previous period. My view is that there has been no such underresourcing, but work was being undertaken

in the Health Department to examine the matter during the previous session of Parliament, so I am interested in hearing whether that work has been completed.

I commend to ministers the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation to which Nicola Sturgeon referred. As she acknowledged, it made recommendations on issues such as funding, waiting and assistance with the preparation of food. I am pleased that that work is continuing. I hope that ministers, in seeking to strengthen free personal care, will do so by building on the solid foundations of the work that has already been done. I hope that they will do so in partnership with local government, as Nicola Sturgeon said, but also using the expertise of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and voluntary organisations such as Age Concern Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland. I hope that ministers will acknowledge that it makes no sense to separate implementation issues from funding ones or to postpone reform of or improvements to the detail of the policy to a time beyond the conclusions of the spending review. It is critical that the implementation and financial issues are joined up.

I hope that the debate will not focus on external funding that might be attracted from funding streams that are reserved to Whitehall departments. In the cabinet secretary's opening remarks, we heard no new argument or evidence about reopening those issues that seems likely to be persuasive. Instead, I hope that the debate will focus on what the Scottish ministers, the Scottish Parliament, Scottish local authorities and other stakeholders can do to improve the delivery of free personal care in Scotland.

15:19

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):

I, too, welcome Nicola Sturgeon to her post as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing. I thank her for her first meeting with the Tory team last night, which I attended once I found where the ministerial offices are. I wish her all success in her crucial post. I also thank Nicola Sturgeon for the advance copy of her speech in today's *Daily Mail*, *Times* and other publications, as well as for the opportunity to hear it on the radio. I remind Mike Rumbles that his party was in the previous Government—it may not have felt like it at times, but he needs reminding of that.

Although I spoke in Des McNulty's members' business debate last week, this is my first speech in a debate in the chamber after a year out. I have therefore resumed maiden status.

I want to echo the views and the approach of my party and its leader. We will work positively and

constructively with the minority Government, and with all other parties, to make this Parliament work better for the people of Scotland. On no issue will that be more important than on health. We welcome the new challenges.

The transformation of the nationalists from abrasive and confrontational in opposition to fountains of charm in government is quite difficult to believe—especially if, like me, members have recent experience of them in their former guise. Our approach to the new minority Government is in stark contrast to the previous approach of the nationalists, who never called, never wrote. In fact, they went as far as passing a motion of non-cooperation at their conference nearly 20 years ago, confirming that they would never call, never write, never work with the Tories, never liaise with us and never be partners to any agreements with us. However, in the new, reprogrammed, nationalist politics, I trust that the First Minister, a man who recognises an act of unpardonable folly when he sees it, will now persuade the nationalists to embrace the new politics and—who knows—even the Conservatives. The First Minister may wish to call this “Mary's clause”, given the high profile he gives me at his conferences.

The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 was the flagship piece of legislation in the first session of the Scottish Parliament, so why—as the cabinet secretary asked—five years down the line, are we still wrangling in councils, in courts and with COSLA over the interpretation of the act? Why is Highland Council spending more than £11 million on free personal and nursing care when it receives only £6.5 million from the Executive?

The issuing of guidance that contradicts the act has undoubtedly led to much confusion, and the legal rights of people to free personal care are still somewhat uncertain. Margaret Smith was the convener of the Health and Community Care Committee at the time, and Richard Simpson and Malcolm Chisholm were members of it. The committee worked on the bill and I would argue that the legislation was not flawed; it was the guidance that was flawed. The guidance contradicted the legislation. I stand by the legislation. It was not ambiguous.

At all stages of the committee's proceedings, members were told that all care homes would be integrated care homes with nursing provision. We were assured that, as an elderly person's condition deteriorated and more nursing care was needed, they would not be moved from a residential home to a nursing home. We were assured that one integrated care home would provide the appropriate level of care at all stages.

Somewhere between the passing of the act and its implementation, something went wrong. In Scotland, we have three categories of care home:

residential care homes, nursing care homes and integrated care homes. All are funded differently, depending on the level of care provided. What happens is that a person is assessed and placed in a residential care home, but as their condition deteriorates, they continue to stay in that home, even though it cannot provide the more complex care that is needed. The spirit and intention of the bill was quite different from what has been implemented under the act.

The SNP states that it will provide an additional £6 million each year for care home places. Would that money not be better used to bring some equity into the system, which would ensure that many care homes remain financially viable, open and available for placements? It is likely that there would not be such a shortage of care home places if they were all funded at the same level. I realise that that might require a memorandum of understanding with Westminster, but I do not think that that will be impossible. The basis of this issue lies in a Westminster act of Parliament.

With no exceptions, all who gave evidence to the Health and Community Care Committee stated that there should be a single budget for health and social work.

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): Will Mary take an intervention?

Mary Scanlon: It is my maiden speech dear. *[Laughter.]*

Conservatives have called for such a single budget for eight years now, and I hope that the new nationalist Government will take it up.

I will address the uptake of direct payments. I know that the previous Government, including Mr Rumbles, supported them, but I am not sure that it did quite enough. Uptake has been slow; it is still less than 2,000 for the whole of Scotland. Surely carers and the cared-for need to know that they can manage the budget, choose the care provider, monitor the care received and ensure that it is in line with the assessed need. Direct payments put them in control of that care, and we all have a responsibility to promote them.

That brings me to waiting lists. More than half of all local authorities operate waiting lists for free personal care, but there is another, hidden, waiting list—the long wait for assessment. That back-door method of managing the waiting list is unacceptable and, given the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing's promise to rid us of hidden waiting lists, I trust that she will now examine the waiting list to get on to the waiting list.

When the 2002 act was passed, we were told that anyone who was assessed as in need of free personal care would get it, but if they have to wait

to be assessed, that delays their inclusion in the waiting list. It also helps councils save money, but it does not fulfil the promise and intention of the act.

For the third time, NHS Highland has pulled back from proceeding with the new build at Migdale hospital. The hospital predominantly cares for the elderly in Sutherland, which has the highest increase in older people in Scotland. The existing hospital building is seriously deteriorating, leading to the possibility of closure, and the land that is currently allocated for the new hospital could be sold. The lack of decision is increasing uncertainty and community anxiety.

I look forward to working with Malcolm Chisholm, Lewis Macdonald, Ross Finnie, Karen Gillon and others on the Health and Sport Committee, convened by my old friend, the feisty Christine Grahame.

15:27

Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD): I am fairly well aware of the normal parliamentary protocol for following a maiden speech. However, Presiding Officer, I may require your guidance on dealing with the position in which someone has returned to maiden status, particularly when the maiden appears to be suffering from a severe deprivation of telephone callers and people writing to her.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I am not sufficiently experienced to rule on that.

Ross Finnie: We can all have some sympathy with that, although we expect the Presiding Officers to be the fount of all knowledge on parliamentary procedure.

I congratulate Mary Scanlon on her maiden speech. I am glad that she is keen to work with a small, select band of us over the next few weeks and months. We look forward to that.

The publication of the Sutherland report, "With Respect to Old Age: Long Term Care—Rights and Responsibilities", in 1999 was a seminal moment in the long-running debate in this country and the United Kingdom as a whole on how our society deals with personal care for the elderly. Although Sutherland's recommendations might, in some cases, have been regarded simply as common sense, they pointed to a new and different line. In particular, the report examined different definitions and considered splitting long-term care into living costs, housing costs and personal care.

My only reservation is that it was perhaps unfortunate that the political parties—and, indeed, those involved in wider communication—adopted the phrase "free personal care", which was often misunderstood as suggesting that all the elements

that Sutherland identified—living costs, housing costs and personal care—would somehow become free. That has given rise to a deal of confusion.

The Scottish Liberal Democrats did not just welcome the report warmly, but adopted it in our 1999 manifesto, in which we made a commitment to achieve the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care for the Elderly. We were delighted to be part of the Government that introduced the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002, which implemented that policy.

After a policy has been in place for a number of years, it is right and proper to see whether it is as effective as was originally intended and whether there are aspects of it that we rue. However, there is a danger that, in reviewing it, we will lose sight of the fact that there is good cause to rejoice in the major success of the introduction of free personal care, as defined.

The cabinet secretary mentioned the numbers. It is good to pause to consider those 50,000 people. Nine thousand self-funders have been helped in meeting their care-home costs, of whom 6,000 have been helped with running care. More than 42,000 people receive personal care services at home without charge. Of course, we have gone beyond that, because the introduction of the policy has had the additional benefit of reducing delayed discharge and providing support for carers. As the cabinet secretary said, the independent report made it clear that people have received their payments for personal care services without undue delay or complication. We should celebrate all that.

It would be time, five years on, to look at any policy, but I say to the cabinet secretary that we must be careful in our language. I do not think that the policy of free personal care, as based on the Sutherland report, requires to be reinvented. I question whether we require yet another inquiry and I certainly hope that we will not be distracted by the question of attendance allowances. That might be a perfectly legitimate political argument that the Scottish National Party Government wishes to pursue—it has raised it before—but I hope that it is not the central issue in considering whether we go forward with the development of free personal care as a policy, because it could be considered separately. That is entirely up to the SNP Government.

The cabinet secretary has announced her intention to apply inflation to the rates starting from April 2008. It would be churlish not to acknowledge that, if she believes that that can be funded, it will make a difference to individuals in the years ahead. However, as Lewis Macdonald pointed out, we must distinguish between the rate

that is applied to the individual and the real levels of funding provided by the previous Administration. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities raised concerns about the level of that funding in 2002 but, after the announcements that the previous Administration made in 2004-05 and 2006-07, it acknowledged that the policy, in its own terms, was being funded properly.

Keith Brown (Ochil) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Ross Finnie: I think that I will run out of time quite shortly.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I will allow you to take the intervention if you wish.

Ross Finnie: You are very gracious. Thank you.

Keith Brown: I thank Ross Finnie for taking the intervention, with some encouragement.

On the point about the funding being adequate, will the member explain why the previous Executive allowed Labour authorities—such as Clackmannanshire Council—to charge illegally for the preparation of meals over a number of years before dealing with the matter? Surely local authorities would not have had to charge had the funding been right in the first place. The previous Executive did nothing.

Ross Finnie: That is certainly not true. A number of local authorities chose to interpret the intention of the statute in different ways. That is, and has been, reprehensible. I accept that that is a major problem, but the previous Executive certainly did not approve of it. I will also touch on how local authorities dealt with the time for assessment and the time for which care could be available, and invented their own waiting lists.

The cabinet secretary referred to the emergence of different types of waiting time and the different interpretations of what is meant by assistance with the preparation of food and assistance with medication. However, we have now had three reports on those matters, including those of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the previous Health Committee. I confess that I did not hear a compelling reason in the cabinet secretary's speech for requiring a further report. The Government should use the evidence from the previous reports to identify the problems and to propose ways of addressing them. There is an issue about there being different levels of distribution of the resource, but the cabinet secretary has evidence on that from the COSLA pilot studies. The only new element to be handed to the proposed inquiry is that of attendance allowances. I hope that, in her winding-up speech, the Minister for Public Health can give us a compelling reason for holding an inquiry rather than simply getting on with addressing what are

real problems—we do not suggest that they do not exist. I do not understand why, given that three previous reports have identified the problems, we require a separate report; nor do I understand why the cabinet secretary cannot say how she will deal with the problems.

The free personal care policy is important to the people of Scotland, particularly because of our demographics, and it is essential that the policy is sustainable. We welcome the cabinet secretary's commitment to the general funding of free personal care and to funding improved access to it. I hope that there will be no protracted inquiry and that practical steps towards making the policy more workable will emerge sooner rather than later. We generally support the Government's attempts to make the policy more sustainable.

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

15:37

Dave Thompson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): As I have not yet spoken in a debate led by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, I congratulate her on her recent appointment. I welcome her earlier announcement of increased funding for free personal care. I also congratulate the Minister for Public Health on her appointment. I wish them both well as they tackle the difficult issues that will confront them over the next four years.

I have never spoken in the chamber before and it gives me great pleasure to stand here today and make my maiden speech. I have dreamed of this since I was 16—although the chamber did not exist then. What did exist was the dream of many people such as me of a Parliament for Scotland. Now we have that Parliament and it is growing and developing. Now, I dream of making a speech in a fully independent, grown-up Scottish Parliament. I know that my dream will come true.

I have the great honour of representing the Highlands and Islands, which includes Moray, where I was born and brought up—although Moravians dinna really see themselves as Highlanders. As a Lossie loon who has lived and worked in the Highlands for 24 years and who has also lived and worked in Na h-Eileanan an Iar—the Western Isles—for 10 years, I hope that I have learned a little about the challenges that we face in this most beautiful and diverse region.

We have much going for us in the Highlands and Islands in terms of our natural resources. We have fishing, farming, forestry, rocks and gravel, water, oil, gas, aquaculture and renewables coming out of our ears. We also of course have whisky. However, all is not well. Many of our young folk still leave, which is why we have 10,000 missing

16 to 29-year-olds and low wages. Much of our work is seasonal and part-time. We educate our young for export, which is why our unemployment rate is low. Many of those who stay have little hope of a bright future and virtually no hope of a home of their own.

We also have an increasingly elderly population because we are all living longer and because many choose to retire to the Highlands and Islands. That brings its own problems. There is an increasing demand for more care in the community to allow our older folk to stay in their own homes for as long as possible—if only to stop the state getting its hands on that prized asset. It is right to help people to maintain their independence for as long as possible, but we must also ensure that adequate residential care is available in their local communities for those who need it.

The Government is committed to delivering free personal and nursing care for the elderly, but it must be available to all, equally, including those in rural and remote areas. The right to such care in all communities is important. The elderly must have the comfort and confidence of knowing that their needs will be catered for in their locality, even after they are no longer able to stay in their own home and have to enter a residential care home. For many, that will not be a problem, as there will be plenty of choice in their local community, either in the private sector or in local authority facilities. That is not the case for everyone, however, as rural and remote areas with sparse populations will not attract the private sector. Public sector residential care homes are so important because they will be the only choice. That is why I am so pleased that Highland Council, which is run by an SNP and independent administration, has decided to look again at the privatisation of a number of care homes across the region with a view to keeping them in-house.

It is great that the new council has moved so quickly on the privatisation of care homes. I hope that it will also reconsider the decision by the previous administration to close Graham House, a residential care home in Dornie on the west coast, and replace it with a facility that will have no residential or respite care capability. Should that go ahead, there will be no residential care facility in Lochalsh—public or private—for local elderly folk who need such care. That is not acceptable. If the closure goes ahead, it will mean that many of the elderly who need residential care may be placed in Broadford hospital on Skye, when they need not be there, or may be placed many miles from their home, their friends and their family. I ask members to imagine that they were born, brought up and spent their whole life in Lochalsh and were told in their 80s that they were to be sent nearly 100 miles away to Invergordon, on the

other side of the country, to live in a residential home where they know no one and where their friends and family would find it impossible to visit them regularly. They would end their days far from all that they know and love, in lonely isolation. Is that how we want to treat our old folk? How does that square with our equal opportunities obligations? Homes such as Graham House must be kept open. There is a proven need for Graham House, as there are six elderly people currently in residence, a further six who have already been sent elsewhere and another 12 coming to the age when they will need residential care. What we need to do in Lochalsh is to replace Graham House with a larger and better residential home as our population gradually ages.

Of course, Graham House also provides valuable respite care, so that carers can get a short break from the stress and strain of caring. Carers do a wonderful job. They save the country a fortune and they deserve all the help that we can give them. At lunch time today I attended the launch of the carers guide and the cross-party group on carers. I look forward to working in that group over the coming years.

Of course, keeping homes such as Graham House open comes at a cost, but if we are to live up to our promise that health care is provided as locally as possible, we must support councils such as Highland Council that have problems in providing such facilities in rural and remote areas. At the end of the day, it is all about equality. The elderly in Lochalsh deserve treatment equal to that of the elderly anywhere else in Scotland. As the cabinet secretary said, it should not depend on where someone stays: personal care must be available everywhere in Scotland. The closure of Graham House will be a disaster for the community in Lochalsh. I am pressing Highland Council to reconsider its decision. I also hope that the cabinet secretary and the minister will respond sympathetically to the needs of councils such as Highland Council in their efforts to provide local residential care in rural and remote areas in the absence of the private sector.

15:44

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I declare an interest as a consultant psychiatrist and a ceased interest in a nursing home, albeit one that is in England.

I am pleased to be back speaking in a main debate, but I cannot claim maiden status for my speech, as I have already spoken in a members' business debate. I welcome Mary Scanlon, who lost none of her touch in her year out, and I congratulate Dave Thompson on his first speech and on his clear and stark references to his

constituency. Rural communities require a different solution and one size does not fit all.

Without going into too great detail, I will make a couple of comments about the history of free personal care. We took a different route from that of the other nations of the UK. The Parliament was pretty united on that route and that was entirely appropriate.

The Conservative Government in the 1980s was wrong to change policy suddenly so that citizens who had based lifelong plans on existing policies were deprived of long-stay national health service units for the elderly, which were at that time the main place to which people who needed nursing care went. That Government provided no alternative and thereby created over 20 years the need to introduce free personal care, which was introduced following the Sutherland report.

I supported free personal care, but not all members of my party did, as they felt—correctly—that the poorest people were already looked after. Those who are wealthiest have never bothered with a system or required support, so the situation did not affect them, either. However, I was concerned about the people whom I called wise virgins—hard-working people who had perhaps been encouraged to buy their council houses, who had some savings over the £18,000 capital allowance and who faced the distress of going into care that would require money and for which they had not planned.

My other reason for supporting free personal care was that the system discriminated against people with dementia. People who had cancer or a degenerative physical disease might be looked after in hospitals, hospices—which were increasingly supported from the 1970s onwards—or at home. All that was supported by good-quality NHS nursing care. However, someone who suffered from dementia was liable to end up in private care or local authority care for which they would have to pay. Such discrimination was inappropriate.

I agree that, as the cabinet secretary said, the Parliament can be proud of the policy. However, when we introduced it, we acknowledged that there was considerable debate about what the costs might be, which was uncertain. The question was whether the policy would be sustainable. Given that, the new Administration's commitment to ensure long-term sustainability is welcome. The previous Administration tried to achieve the same thing.

We must acknowledge that, by 2030, the number of over-75s will have increased by 75 per cent. I hope that the proportion who are disabled and who require care will continue to reduce by between 0.3 and 1 per cent per annum but,

nevertheless, the number who will require free personal care will increase substantially, so I say to the cabinet secretary that sustainability is not about today or tomorrow, but about the long term. I am sure that the cabinet secretary recognises that.

When the policy was introduced, the other problem was attendance allowance. We were slightly wrong-footed on that by not calling things by names that might have allowed us to retain the attendance allowance, so I for one welcome Sutherland's reconsideration of that. However, that ship has probably sailed and is unlikely to return to harbour.

Having spent four years out of Parliament, I will adopt throughout the session the theme that the Government and the Parliament have good ideas that they wish to implement for the benefit of all Scots and which often attract wide cross-party agreement. Legislation that has good intentions is passed but, as Mary Scanlon suggested, guidance is often less good and more flawed. That is understandable when we are trying to implement the intricate changes that are needed as a result of much of our legislation, but it results in implementation by our local institutions of various sorts that is often patchy, bureaucratic and subject to misinterpretation. That applies not just to free personal care, but to a wide range of issues that I have experienced in the four years in which I have been out of Parliament. I will return to that theme in several debates over time.

We need to look carefully at the implementation of the scheme. The Executive must review the matter constantly, and it is entirely appropriate that we have had the Audit Commission and the responsible committee examine it. However, I wonder why some measures have not been introduced timeously. For example, different local authorities have different eligibility criteria. Why, when we implement policies, do we invite each local authority to interpret the guidance in its own way? Why do we not ask one authority—not necessarily COSLA—to set up a working party to determine the specific eligibility criteria, which can then be adopted by all authorities? Alternatively, we could invite COSLA to enter into an agreement with us on the precise eligibility criteria.

In 1999 I visited Aberdeenshire to examine the implementation of the care needs assessment package—single shared assessment. The package has still not been implemented throughout Scotland, despite marked efforts by the previous Executive to do that. Six or seven years on, Carenap is only just being implemented across the country. A single shared assessment system could produce a much more even approach to eligibility and to needs and priority assessment.

There are other issues that need to be addressed, and the various reports that have been published have been important in that regard. Keith Brown raised the issue of meals, and it is good that that has largely been dealt with. Assistance with medication, which was mentioned in the evaluation report, is another important issue that must be examined. Many elderly people have to take a multiplicity of medications; if they suffer from early dementia or have memory problems, it is difficult for them to manage that. Assistance with medication that does not involve nursing care is an important issue.

I will end with some questions to the minister. Will the Executive continue to develop the important care and repair programme, to which £10 million was committed in 2007-08? Will it require local authorities to collect and analyse data on unmet need, especially for home care, respite care and day care? Will it promote carers' awareness of their important right to assessment? Will it try to ensure that the perverse incentives to authorities to delay introduction of free personal care are removed, as they were in England and Wales, leading to a much more rapid reduction in delayed discharges? Will it also do more to promote direct payments, which is important? Although the number of such payments has increased substantially, the level is still half that in England. Finally, will the cabinet secretary place the terms of reference of the new inquiry in the Scottish Parliament information centre as soon as possible, so that we can examine them in appropriate detail?

15:53

Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP): I, too, offer my congratulations to the maiden speakers in the debate. Mary Scanlon's sabbatical has certainly recharged her batteries. I beg her not to take another one, as I am not strong enough for that. When I look round the chamber at the colleagues who will be members of the Health and Sport Committee—some of them are not here—I see a robust and interesting committee ahead of us.

I welcome the speech by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing. We need a rigorous appraisal of the delivery of free personal care. This is not a party-political issue, as everyone's heart was in it from the start. The policy was a wonderful statement in favour of elderly people in Scotland, but its delivery has not been what any of us anticipated. I welcome especially the independent review of the policy's implementation by Lord Sutherland. In 1999, as a fresh MSP, rather like Dave Thompson today, I went to meet Sir Stewart Sutherland, as he was then, because I had read "With Respect to Old Age: Long Term Care—

Rights and Responsibilities". I asked him about help with heating food and dressing, and he made the issue seem straightforward to me—how wrong can one be? He said that help with heating food could include using a tin-opener or potato peeler for a person who could not use them, and that help with dressing might mean doing up the buttons on their jacket or tying their shoelaces. It should not be beyond the wit of anybody to put those things into guidance in a way that would ensure that provision was uniform throughout all our local authorities. I will come to guidance and the role that committees have to play shortly.

During stage 1 of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Bill, Malcolm Chisholm said, quite rightly:

"Equity and fairness are the final two principles on which the bill is built."—[*Official Report*, 28 November 2001; c 4221.]

However, as we know, that is not what has been happening.

Richard Simpson mentioned medical treatment. The schedules to the act say that

"If the person requires medical treatment, assisting with medication, as for example by—

- (a) applying creams or lotions;
- (b) administering eye drops",

they should not be charged for that care. Those are just two examples. The point is, people were supposed to get help if they are on multiple medication. The same thing applies to the section on feeding. The schedules talk about

"assisting with the preparation of food".

Again, we are back to the tin-opener test. If someone needs help to open a tin of baked beans so that they can put them on their toast, that counts as assistance with the preparation of food. Similarly, the schedules talk about "assisting with getting dressed". If someone needs help to do the zip up on their dress or do up the buttons on their coat, that is assistance with getting dressed and it is for the professionals who visit someone to make an assessment of whether an elderly person needs that assistance.

Most elderly people are extremely proud. They are not going to stand there asking for assistance with the preparation of food or with getting dressed if they are capable of doing those things for themselves. Everyone in the chamber who is fighting against the vagaries of age that stop us doing more and more things knows that people do not give in when that happens. It is a huge issue that some local authorities have been hiding behind a fig leaf in order to save funds. I am being consensual, but I am also being honest—that has been an issue.

A letter from Lewis Macdonald to Shona Robison that was written on 13 June 2006 and has been placed in the Scottish Parliament information centre talks about the extraordinary number of people—nearly 1,600—who were waiting for home assessments in Edinburgh at that time. Someone who is waiting for an assessment is not getting better; they are getting worse. They are getting worse not only because of the lack of an assessment but because of the emotional stress and damage that can be done to someone when nothing is being done for them and they do not know when something is going to happen.

The situation is perhaps even worse when people who are assessed in hospital go home and find that there is no one in the social care sector who can pick up the work that needs to be done to ensure that the person's home receives aids and adaptations and that social workers and health visitors are provided. Those people sit in their homes until they have to be reassessed and, at that point, it is discovered that they have not improved and that, instead, they have become more institutionalised and their care needs have risen.

Somebody talked about joint budgets. There are huge arguments between social work departments and health boards about whose budget the money is supposed to come out of. In that regard, I point out that it is all our money. The personal care is not free—those people have paid for it through their taxes and national insurance contributions. Let us have a budget that works in the interest of the people who require help.

The previous Health Committee—whose record I hope the next one can live up to—produced an extensive report into the delivery of free personal care. The committee asked local authorities how much they received in 2005-06 for free personal care and how much they thought they had spent on free personal care. We have already heard the extraordinary figure from Aberdeen City Council, which said that it got £6 million and spent £12 million. Moray Council got £2.5 million and spent nearly £6 million. North Lanarkshire Council got nearly £6 million and spent £15 million. Those are huge gaps. The figures might be unrealistic, of course—I do not know; that is something that the inquiry must consider—but the issue is certainly an important one across Scotland.

When we delivered free personal care, it was a fine moment in the Parliament. That is what makes the current situation more galling and disappointing and makes it more urgent that we do what we said we would do and ensure that the act delivers what it said it would deliver and what we all thought it would deliver when it was passed.

16:00

David McLetchie (Edinburgh Pentlands)

(Con): My contribution will focus on the sorry saga of assistance with meal preparation as an aspect of free personal care, a point that was raised by Keith Brown in an intervention and one that, I am sorry to advise Richard Simpson, has largely not been dealt with in the past four years. It is very much a live issue.

The failure to implement that aspect of the free personal care policy on a consistent basis across Scotland over the past few years is little short of disgraceful. Although COSLA's approach is far from blameless, there is no doubt that the primary responsibility lies with the former Scottish Executive and the morass of contradictory and confusing guidance that it issued to councils over that period.

The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 that was passed by the Parliament stated that

"assisting with the preparation of food"

should not be charged for. There were no ifs, buts or qualifications to that. All the ifs, buts and qualifications came in the Scottish Executive guidance that was published in 2002 and 2003, which was supposedly clarified by further guidance in 2004 but which was most certainly not clarified. Astonishingly, there was yet another failure to clear up the confusion in May 2006. We had double negatives mixed with double entendres, as a result of which we have the patchwork of provision throughout Scotland that we see today.

Calls by individual members and by the Health Committee for the Executive to sort out the matter either fell on deaf ears or were subjected to the usual Executive delaying tactic of announcing another review. I note that that policy remains in vogue notwithstanding the change in Administration.

In short, we have created a postcode lottery. If we fail to provide equal access to a service that Parliament has said should be a universal entitlement, that is a denial of equal opportunities to our citizens. Now that the Equal Opportunities Committee is to be convened for the first time by a Conservative, I hope that it will take the opportunity to examine free personal care and other services in which what someone gets is determined by where they live and not what they need.

Few emerge with any credit from the saga, but I pay tribute to the councils in Edinburgh, West Lothian and Dumfries and Galloway. Spurred on by the constituency cases that were raised by members such as me, Bristow Muldoon—who is

no longer with us—and the current Presiding Officer, Alex Fergusson, those councils did the right thing by the older people who live in their communities. Not only did the councils cease charging for assisting with meal preparation, they instituted reviews of cases in which people were wrongly charged in the past and made refunds to them. I pay tribute to the councillors of all parties in those authorities who took the decisions and to their staff who have worked hard and are still working hard to put the matter right.

In Edinburgh, more than 500 people have been assessed as being entitled to refunds averaging some £1,800 each. Other cases are still being examined. To date, that has cost the City of Edinburgh Council about £1 million. I understand that West Lothian Council has refunded nearly £400,000.

If those councils have been models of good sense and practice, it is regrettable that they have failed to persuade other COSLA member councils to act likewise. COSLA has done little more than blame the Scottish Executive. It failed to seek a legal opinion on behalf of all its member councils, notwithstanding the fact that exactly the same legal issue arose in every part of Scotland. It also talked about seeking a judicial review but then failed to follow that through on the basis that, apparently, it could not find five individual cases on which to found an application for review to the courts. If COSLA had bothered to ask any MSP, it would have found no shortage of candidates from among our constituents who were prepared to protest about how the policy was being implemented.

The rub of the whole matter is money, as it almost invariably is. While Edinburgh and West Lothian have made refunds to people who have been wrongly charged, other authorities have hidden behind the protective shield of the Scottish Executive because they were concerned about the financial implications for their budgets. That course of action was not brave or right, but perhaps it was understandable, given the inadequacy of the overall funding provision for free personal care.

In the previous session, I called on the Executive to make a special funding allocation to councils to finance refunds for everyone who had been wrongly charged since July 2002 for the aspect of the personal care policy that I have mentioned. I repeat that call today. In addition, I ask the cabinet secretary for an assurance that the Executive will, in determining its funding allocation to councils for personal care services in the future, ensure that costs that are attributable to assisting with the preparation of meals are fully covered by the overall allocation. We should resolve from now on that no older person in Scotland who receives

care services in their home will be charged for assistance with the preparation of meals and that everyone who has been wrongly charged as a result of the chaotic implementation of the policy will receive the refund to which they are entitled. The previous Executive dithered and delayed on that for the whole four-year session. If the current Executive takes action to sort out the problem, it will deserve credit for doing so and will receive our full support.

16:06

Jim Tolson (Dunfermline West) (LD): I welcome Nicola Sturgeon and Shona Robison to their new posts. I am sure that they will find their tasks tough, but they are brave to take them on and I wish them well.

As members know, the previous Labour-Lib Dem Government brought into being free personal care with the aim of providing it to those aged over 65 who need help to meet their basic needs, such as dressing and toileting. In fact, if it had not been for the Liberal Democrats, the matter would not have seen the light of day, far less be taken successfully through Parliament.

Many of my constituents in Dunfermline West have benefited from free personal care. Even more wanted it but did not qualify for it. Let me be clear: people who receive free personal care do not want it for the sake of it; they would much rather be healthy enough not to need it. However, it is our duty to ensure that the needs of those who are not healthy enough to take care of their personal needs can get the help that they deserve.

The implementation of the free personal care legislation, like that of many new pieces of legislation, has not always been smooth. There has been confusion about what services are and are not included. I am sure that local authorities would welcome further Executive guidance on that. Furthermore, we must get to the bottom of why some local authorities operated waiting lists and why services cost more in some areas than in others.

However, those are teething problems that should not detract from the overall success of the free personal care policy. Many local authorities have had difficulties with it, but the previous Administration provided an additional £153 million to address the issues that arose and to cover the extra costs.

I am glad that the Government wants to enhance the service, but it must do more than talk the talk. Like the Liberal Democrats before it, it must deliver.

16:08

Stuart McMillan (West of Scotland) (SNP): I, too, welcome Nicola Sturgeon and Shona Robison to their jobs as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and Minister for Public Health. I am sure that they will do a tremendous job.

I also welcome the debate and Nicola Sturgeon's announcements on the review of the free personal care policy and the increase in payments for personal and nursing care in care homes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman): Will you lift your microphone a bit, Mr McMillan? I cannot hear you.

Stuart McMillan: Okay. I am sorry.

The health of the nation, including that of our senior citizens, is of paramount importance. I am sure that Nicola Sturgeon's announcements will have a longer-term positive effect on delivering the key policy of free personal care, which was backed by every party that is represented in the chamber. I am delighted that the SNP Government is again delivering on its manifesto pledges—as we all know, quite a few manifesto pledges have been dealt with in recent weeks.

I am sure that all members want the free personal care policy to be a success and that they have been concerned by reports in the media in recent years about poor-quality care and a lack of funding. I am also sure that they will want to address the varying interpretations of “care” by local authorities that have been reported. I sincerely hope that any review of free personal care establishes recommendations that are workable and can be implemented.

Free personal care is about more than just providing a level of health care to people. For those who live in the community, it is about allowing senior citizens to have independence and freedom. It is about preserving dignity and providing assistance in equal measure. For those who live in care homes, it is about ensuring that the care that they receive meets their needs and enables them to live a comfortable and happy life. I, for one, believe that our senior citizens deserve the dignity and respect that the introduction of free personal care was meant to safeguard. It is important to ask why there has been a continual struggle by senior citizens to have their rights highlighted and brought into the public eye. They do not feel that they have been listened to or taken seriously.

Many activities have taken place that have helped our senior citizens, and those should be welcomed. However, providing pre-election gimmicks only exacerbates a delicate situation. The introduction of free personal care was lauded

as a positive step towards reducing pensioner poverty, which is a reality in Scotland. Free personal care was never going to eradicate that problem, but it was seen as a major step in helping our senior citizens. We must ask ourselves what has gone wrong with the policy and how it can be fixed.

Every member will have received a policy briefing from Help the Aged, in which major concerns are highlighted. The use of waiting lists by local authorities is an issue that struck me. If local authorities have used waiting lists as has been reported, it is imperative that that is investigated. It must be examined whether not enough funding was given to local authorities; whether it was underestimated how many people would require free personal care; or whether money for free personal care was directed to other services by local authorities.

A further point that needs clarity is the charges for the preparation of food. I spoke to a couple of experienced SNP councillors about today's debate and asked them about the experiences that had been highlighted to them. Their main point concerned the preparation of food, which Keith Brown and David McLetchie have spoken about, and they stressed the need for clarification of the rules. Up to half of Scotland's local authorities have charged for that service, although some local authorities refunded the money that they had charged after they were challenged. That highlights to me the fact that there is a major problem with, and a lack of clarity about, the current rules.

I do not believe that local authorities have been duplicitous. I do not believe that any local authority wants to be classed as operating against the spirit of the legislation. I am sure that every local authority would welcome a clarification of the rules and further legislation if that is required.

A further issue that should be highlighted is the withdrawal of the attendance allowance. After the introduction of free personal care, £30 million to £40 million was withheld by Westminster. It is important that that issue is redressed. Devolution was established to allow the Scottish people and the Scottish Parliament to introduce domestic policies for Scottish issues. The introduction of free personal care was such a policy. I think it unfair, therefore, that people who receive free personal care have been punished because the Parliament introduced a policy with such a fine objective. I am sure that the current Westminster Government will be a bit prickly when the Scottish Government raises the matter with it.

I welcome the announcement of the review, which will be chaired by Lord Sutherland. I also welcome the increased payments for personal and nursing care in care homes from April 2008. We

cannot allow the policy to continue under a cloud and expect the problems to go away. The decision by the SNP Government to review the policy will, I am sure, be welcomed by every member and every party.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I remind members—yet again—that all mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be switched off when they are in the chamber.

16:14

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): I hesitate to interrupt the love-in that was going on between the Tories and the SNP. Mary Scanlon's presence in the chamber is, as ever, entertaining. While she was speaking, I was reflecting on the fact that the collective age of the Health and Sport Committee is in the region of 400 years. Its members include Malcolm Chisholm, Christine Grahame, Ian McKee, Mary Scanlon and Ross Finnie as well as one or two of our younger—perhaps I should say less experienced, as the Presiding Officer is glaring at me—members. Given all their experience, I am sure that the policy of free personal care will be safe in their hands.

I welcome the comments of the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and her announcement of the Executive's independent inquiry into free personal care. I also associate myself with Lewis Macdonald's comments about the inquiry and I welcome the cabinet secretary's clarification. Existing data sources and work streams can provide some answers on how personal care should develop, and such information should be harnessed immediately, so that progress can be made and the experiences of older people in communities throughout Scotland can improve sooner rather than later.

I invite the cabinet secretary to consider Argyll and Bute Council, because solutions for the council's area need not await the inquiry's outcome. In highlighting the key concern to older people in my area, I will talk carefully about matters that are in the public domain. Presiding Officer, I am sure that you will guide me if I unintentionally stray into areas that I should not cover.

I focus on the reality of being old in the Argyll and Bute Council area. My mailbag is full of stories about waiting lists for free personal care, lack of services, services that have been withdrawn, carers who are unable to cope and older people who have ended up in hospital because they were not given the right care at the right time. It would be understandable for us to conclude that there are insufficient funds to go round and that the stories in my mailbag reflect a national problem. However, that is not at all the case. I could count

on the fingers of one hand the complaints that are made about West Dunbartonshire Council, compared with the sackloads of complaints that emanate from the Argyll and Bute Council area. The problem was clearly made entirely in Argyll and Bute.

It took some time for me to consider the issue—

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

Jackie Baillie: I ask the member to give me time to develop my point.

In a nutshell, Argyll and Bute Council is not spending the money that the Executive gives it each year for the care of older people. Under a budget heading of “home care/personal care for older people”, the Executive provides £12 million each year as grant-aided expenditure. Most local authorities spend more, because they accord older people’s services a high priority. How much of that £12 million does the cabinet secretary think that Argyll and Bute Council spends? The answer is half of it—£6 million. The Executive says that the council needs £12 million to cope with older people’s needs, but the council ignores the Executive and diverts the money elsewhere. Where is the missing money? I implore the cabinet secretary to investigate the matter. Two years ago, underspend on social work services was £3 million, but underspend under one heading alone is now £6 million, despite the smoke and mirrors from the local authority and the one-off addition of £1 million to its budget last year. The lack of finance is reflected in the lack of capacity in the levels of management staff.

Concern about the matter was such that the Social Work Inspection Agency was sent in to make a full inspection of services for older people in Argyll and Bute Council. I look forward to the publication of SWIA’s report and I understand that informal feedback to the council fully justifies my concerns. I hope that the cabinet secretary will use the report’s publication to encourage the new Argyll and Bute Council—a coalition of independents and the Scottish National Party—to take positive action to restore the budgets at least to the level that the Executive provides and to restore the quality of the service to the standard that we should expect for our older people. There are very good staff in Argyll and Bute, but they do not have the support or the resources to do their jobs. In the absence of a rigorous improvement plan from the council, will the cabinet secretary consider using her powers of intervention to direct the local authority, in the interests of older people in Argyll and Bute?

A case on free personal care in Argyll and Bute is awaiting a decision from the court—I will be careful about how I refer to the case, Presiding

Officer. The case was considered initially by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, whose decision went against the council. The council then appealed to the Court of Session. As we await the court’s judgment, it would not be appropriate for me to discuss the details of the case. I reflect instead on two matters. First, let us consider the resources that have been used by many public agencies—the council, the ombudsman’s office and the courts. The internal costs and the costs of legal council and court time amount to at least £250,000. Would it not have been better and perhaps much more cost effective to make personal care available? Secondly, I pay tribute to the family that brought the case. Their father passed away during the consideration of his case, which is regrettable, but they have courageously pursued the matter.

I was brought up to believe that the mark of a civilised society is how we treat our older and most vulnerable people. I ask the cabinet secretary to ensure that older people in Argyll and Bute are part of a civilised society.

16:20

Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP): First, I declare an interest: as one of the few members in the chamber who is over the age of 65, I might well need some free personal care myself.

I congratulate Dave Thompson on his excellent maiden speech and Mary Scanlon on accomplishing the remarkable achievement of being a born-again maiden. I look forward to serving with Mary Scanlon on the Health and Sport Committee. With her and Christine Grahame as members of the committee, my education as a new MSP will proceed in leaps and bounds.

In my many years in medical practice, the advent of free personal care for the elderly was one of the major advances. The Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 is undoubtedly one of the most important pieces of legislation that the Scottish Parliament has passed. I pay tribute to the Government of the time for introducing the measure, which gained widespread support. In particular, I pay tribute to Malcolm Chisholm, who led the parliamentary care development group, which added flesh to the bare bones of the early recommendations.

The days when health workers and social workers argued about whether bathing someone was a therapeutic or a social exercise are now gone, or at least they should be. The sad fact is that up to half of Scotland’s local authorities are, in effect, rationing free personal care by using waiting lists. As we have an ageing population, things will get much worse unless something is done to make progress.

Free personal care is not simply an issue of helping old folk, although that is a compelling cause. Such care helps them to stay at home and avoids or delays the need for expensive long-term residential care. It allows them to return home sooner from hospital, which frees up much-needed hospital beds and consequently helps to reduce hospital waiting lists. Carers get some respite from their duties, which might enable them to carry on for longer than they would otherwise. I have seen carers become so worn down—both physically and mentally—that they had to throw in the towel. A little extra help when it is needed can make all the difference and enable the carer to soldier on. Free personal care actually saves money, which is freed up to be used in other fields.

Why do some local authorities operate waiting lists? Why do some elderly people have to wait months before they are even assessed? Why do some local authorities charge for the preparation of food while others do not? We urgently need answers. For the reasons that we heard, we need an inquiry, and I was delighted to hear that Lord Sutherland of Houndwood, whom we all admire immensely, has agreed not only to advise but to chair the committee that will be set up to investigate and report back. I welcome that news from the cabinet secretary. However, I draw her attention to the fact that, in Scotland, there are between 1,350 and 1,650 people with dementia who are aged under 65. Should not those people, whose needs are just as great, also be eligible for free personal care? I would be grateful if the Minister for Public Health would consider that idea in her response.

I await with eagerness the outcome of the Government's endeavour to have repatriated to Scotland the money that was previously dispensed in the form of attendance allowance benefits. That endeavour has been falsely portrayed in some quarters as an attempt by the SNP Government to pick a fight with Westminster; I think that that was the subtext of some of Ross Finnie's remarks. However, that glib characterisation ignores the support for repatriation from many different sectors in Scottish society. Only this month, Help the Aged characterised the UK Government's withholding of attendance support money as unjustified and unfair.

As First Minister, Henry McLeish said in a statement in September 2001 that such a transfer of funds should take place and that he was confident that it would happen. Alas, his confidence was misplaced. I hope that members who accepted his leadership then, such as Ross Finnie, will follow the logic of their position and support such a move now. Richard Simpson said that the ship has left the harbour and that it is too late to call it back, but the people of Scotland elected the SNP as the major party in the

Parliament to call back the ship and make the case for Scotland to get its money back.

Too often, free personal care has been undermined by a variety of arguments and inadequate guidance. It is time to address the important issues to ensure that the elderly in our society receive the care and attention that they deserve.

16:25

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): I will dwell briefly on the points that have been made by each member in a most interesting and informative debate.

I thank the cabinet secretary for her magnanimous support of the previous Administration's work. She made a number of interesting points, including the fact that 50,000 older people now benefit from this policy. She also announced Lord Sutherland's forthcoming interim report, which, if I understood her correctly, will be fed into the spending review.

Lewis Macdonald welcomed the broad approach that was being taken, and the cabinet secretary's intervention was useful in clarifying what the Sutherland review will do.

Mary Scanlon's speech was unusual, and it has certainly broadened my idea of what a maiden speech should be. However, it was witty and amusing, and the joke about unpardonable folly was both well made and well received.

A major theme that was raised by Mary Scanlon and firmed up by other members during the debate is that there seems to have been some confusion over the guidance and that different authorities have interpreted it differently. Ms Scanlon also drew attention to the three categories of nursing home—residential, nursing and integrated—and the rather regrettable fact that there is a lack of co-ordination in the approach to all three.

I sought to intervene on Mary Scanlon to highlight the issue of Migdale hospital in my constituency, which I raised with the cabinet secretary this morning. Work on that project, which will also deliver provision for the elderly, has been delayed yet again. On the back of Dave Thompson's remarks, I should also point out that there are concerns about services at two other facilities for the elderly—Caladh Sona and the Assynt centre; provision at Assynt has already been reduced from seven to five days a week. Some weeks ago, I wrote to the Highland Council to ask that it reverse its decision; I await its reply, and sincerely hope that it will do so. As Dave Thompson pointed out, the issue is the local delivery of services. I believe that he mentioned

that people in Lochaber have to travel to Invergordon for care. Such distances are impossible for elderly people who, after all, expect to remain in familiar surroundings with those whom they know and love.

As my colleague Ross Finnie made clear, we should remember that the title of free personal care that was adopted for the policy has been misleading and has, indeed, led to some confusion. In his intervention on Mr Finnie, Keith Brown mentioned that Clackmannanshire Council charged illegally for the preparation of meals, and his point was picked up by many other members.

I have referred to Dave Thompson's speech twice already, but I must thank him for his courteous and thoughtful maiden speech.

Richard Simpson gave a nice, precise and useful explanation of where—in his opinion and in the opinion of many others—free personal care was being targeted. As he rightly pointed out, it was targeted not at the poorest or at the richest, but at those who, for example, might have bought their council house and had been able to save a little money.

Christine Grahame said that, to save their budgets, some local authorities had used what I believe she termed a fig leaf. I think that that is true and, indeed, Jackie Baillie raised the same issue in her speech on the situation in Argyll and Bute. Ms Grahame also made the important point that the joint working between social work departments and the NHS is nowhere near as co-ordinated as it should be. To return to the constituency issue that I mentioned, I hope that, in considering the situation at Migdale hospital, Caladh Sona and the Assynt centre, ministers will also examine whether the co-ordination has been not exactly as it should be. I do not want to make unnecessary accusations, but I think that that might well be the case.

David McLetchie and others drew our attention to meal preparation and Jim Tolson, in his brief speech, made the entirely accurate point that one might be able to talk the talk but, at the end of the day, we need delivery. The SNP Administration has made a good start and we have listened to what it has said. However, we will keep an eye on delivery and on whether its proposals are making a difference for people not only in my constituency, but all over Scotland.

Mary Scanlon and others have spoken in the past about the delivery of frozen meals to the elderly. I believe that there is evidence that that is not always the most suitable system for some elderly people, and that there could be food hygiene consequences.

Jackie Baillie raised the considerable issues around Argyll and Bute Council. If the figures that

she cited are correct, the situation is pretty damnable. Despite the Administration's best intentions—and whatever its colour—it is too bad if funds are channelled but do not come out the other end to the intended recipients.

Ian McKee spoke about waiting lists and food preparation. It is always nice to hear fresh thinking in the chamber, and he also made a particularly important point about dementia sufferers, some of whom are below the age of 65. We might have missed a category in the past. There is food for thought there.

In the spirit of the new politics, I say that the Scottish National Party Government has made a good start. However, we await the outcomes. To echo what Ross Finnie said, we hear what the SNP says about an attendance allowance inquiry, but I ask ministers not to let that distract them from what is already a Rolls-Royce service. Perhaps the wheels need attending to, but let us not take our eye off the ball when it comes to what we are really trying to do.

16:31

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands)
(Con): I congratulate Mary Scanlon on a beautiful iron maiden speech. I also congratulate my fellow Highlands and Islands MSP, David Thompson, on his maiden speech. He made some good points about care homes, in particular in relation to Graham House. It seems that we all share the aim of having our elderly and vulnerable citizens cared for in circumstances that are most appropriate to them, with those citizens and their families having as much say as possible over the type of care that they receive.

I have seen at first hand how elderly people's quality of life at home can be vastly improved when they get support and help. I have also seen the opposite scenario, as described by Jackie Baillie in relation to Argyll and Bute, with elderly patients languishing in hospital beds, often in pain, because they could not get referred to a nursing home or could not get the home care packages to which they were entitled. They could not have cared less whether that was the fault of the council or of the Executive; they just felt cheated, ignored, abused and betrayed. The doctors and hospital staff felt frustrated and let down, because they saw at first hand the awful result that the political blame game had had on the welfare of their patients.

The minister will be aware that I recently lodged an oral question:

"To ask the Scottish Executive what discussions it has had with the independent elderly care home sector about increasing care home places in the Highlands and Islands."—[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 7 June 2007; S3O-86.]

A number of points arise from the written answer that I received and from concerns that have been raised with me. Does the minister recognise that many independent care home providers feel that they are not working on a level playing field in competing with council care homes, as some other members, including Mary Scanlon, have mentioned? Does the minister address those concerns? Does she recognise that the independent care home sector has a crucial role to play in providing the extra care home places that are needed, especially in my region, the Highlands and Islands? Does she recognise that that is all the more important now that free personal care is with us?

In recent years, the fees that have been paid to independent care homes have been restricted. Referrals have been reduced, and local authorities have used care in the community policy to reduce their spend on independent care homes. In Highland and Argyll and Bute, council-run care homes cost at least twice as much to run per person per week as what is paid to independent homes—whether private or voluntary—and they are generally full. Why are councils not making more use of the independent sector? It makes no sense—it would be cheaper for them to do so.

I understand that Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council are market testing their direct services. As I have just said, those direct services cost well in excess of the sums that are paid to the independent sector for the same service. Local authorities have hidden behind COSLA guidelines in setting the fees that are to be paid to independent providers.

Mr Stone: Will the member give way?

Jamie McGrigor: In a minute.

That led, in 2005-06, to Argyll and Bute Council increasing the cost of its homes by 30 per cent, while restricting the increase for independent homes to 2.7 per cent, in line with the national guideline from COSLA—so much for local autonomy, which seems to work only in one direction. The situation has led to closures in the independent sector, which are the last thing that we want, as future demand for care home places will only increase now that we have free personal care.

David McLetchie dealt ably with the issue of charges for food preparation. The problem was created by the Liberal-Labour Executive, which gave contradictory and confusing advice to councils on what was and was not chargeable, which has resulted in a postcode lottery. In Argyll and Bute, the council charges for meal preparation. Further, I heard only yesterday from a constituent—Mr Duncan McIntyre, a senior citizen from Strone, near Dunoon—who has 10 hours of

care, including help to make breakfast and tea, for which he was charged £36 a week, which, he told me, has risen suddenly to £100. In the past, his £41 attendance allowance covered the payment, but it now falls far short. That 140 per cent rise is even backdated from 26 May. He also has to pay £50 for messages and cleaning if he wishes to remain independent. He asked me why people in other parts of Scotland pay nothing for the same services. That does not seem a fair, equitable, inclusive Scotland, does it, minister? I very much hope that the free personal care system in Argyll and Bute, which was dire, will improve.

The Scottish Conservatives acknowledge that every elderly person, once assessed as needing care, is entitled by law to receive it. Waiting lists must be tackled as a priority and ended at the earliest possible opportunity. We believe that all Scottish councils should refund people who have been charged wrongly. As the fault lies firmly with the Scottish Executive, it should make a special grant allocation to councils to cover the cost of refunds. If the Executive does not do that, current council services could be affected, which would be grossly unfair.

The cabinet secretary seems to accept that, because the level of payments has not risen for the past six years, there has been an erosion of the benefit. Therefore, increasing the level in line with inflation from next April will do nothing to reverse the erosion of the past six years, so the damage will go on being there. Can she not do something about the damage that she talked about?

16:38

Lewis Macdonald: I add my congratulations to those members who have made their maiden speeches, whether for the first or the second time. We have had a lively and full debate in which we have heard about the benefits of free personal care and the ways in which it supports people at an age and stage in life when they are particularly vulnerable. The policy removes financial pressures and concerns from them and their families when there are other matters that need their attention and, importantly, it supports the integration of health and social care services while putting the service user at the centre. For all those reasons, all the parties in the Parliament are committed to making free personal care work.

We have heard about the problems of implementing the policy in ways that benefit vulnerable older people as and when they need personal and nursing care services. The decision to implement the policy in partnership with local councils had broad support in the Parliament. The principle of local discretion in delivering services should not be set aside lightly. Nonetheless, the

policy is a national one that should, broadly, deliver benefits equitably throughout Scotland. It is entirely appropriate to consider evidence and to act to put right any problems that local delivery partners have in making that happen. Equally, it is perfectly in order to review the financial mechanisms and funding formulas that are used to allow councils to deliver free personal care, and it makes good sense to do so in the context of preparing for a spending review.

Members on the Labour benches have no difficulty with the proposition of a review of how best to deliver personal care. We welcome such a review in principle. However, how will that review be conducted? When will it be completed? What will it seek to achieve? We and other stakeholders want to hear the answers to those questions.

It is a pity that Nicola Sturgeon did not make a statement to Parliament today; indeed, her intervention during my opening speech bore out that point. There is a reason why ministers should make new policy announcements in the form of a statement, and there are good reasons for the convention of sharing that statement with other parties an hour before the statement is made. That was the approach taken by previous Administrations and I hope that this Administration will return to that approach in future—not to place ministers at a disadvantage, but to allow for detailed questions and answers and informed examination of what is proposed.

Christine Grahame: Does Lewis Macdonald agree that we all had a greater opportunity than usual today to contribute to the debate? When there have been ministerial statements, very few members get an opportunity to comment. What happened today allowed us to debate and develop the issues.

Lewis Macdonald: That is a fair point, and it was entirely open to the Executive to use its time to provide both a statement and a debate if it considered the issue a priority and important to the people of Scotland. The Administration may wish to find another opportunity to allow us to address these matters.

When the minister closes the debate, I ask her to tell us a little more about the proposed review, given the amount of work that the Scottish Executive Health Department had already done to assess costs and address implementation issues. We need to hear more about what value will be added by the additional inquiry that is proposed. What other evidence does the minister believe remains to be found? When will she reveal who will serve on the review? Who will represent the interests of older people and carers? Which representative organisations of service users will be consulted in finalising the review's remit?

The cabinet secretary's announcement was trailed very well in the press, as members know. However, what was not trailed was the length of time that she intends the inquiry to take. As has been said, it should now be possible to resolve issues that have already been examined in detail. Members will know that the previous Administration had undertaken to seek to resolve those issues in the context of the forthcoming spending review. The cabinet secretary said that she expected an interim report in September but did not expect a fuller report until next year. She also said that the focus of the work would be exclusively on resources. How will the findings of the Sutherland review be included in the wider consideration of the spending review? Why does the cabinet secretary believe that it will take nine months to review the issues when so much work has already been done?

I have already said that resolution of these important and complex issues should not be postponed or delayed and that implementation issues should be considered alongside funding issues rather than being considered separately. The cabinet secretary expects her inquiry to report to ministers in two stages. It is important that she takes the opportunity to come to Parliament before the summer recess to allow a debate and a vote. If she has the time, I invite her to do so; she will want to tell members about the inquiry's remit and about the people whom she intends to be on the inquiry team. That might offer the opportunity for the debate that Christine Grahame rightly suggested we should have—a debate during which members could express views on the remit and on the cabinet secretary's proposals.

I hope that the minister will be able to confirm today that the review of these serious issues will not get bogged down in endless debate over the reserved issue of attendance allowances for people in care homes. Members who are accustomed to negotiating difficult issues will know that reopening a closed negotiation usually requires new evidence, a new argument or a new offer. I hope that ministers really have something new and substantial to discuss with the Department for Work and Pensions. I would like to hear what that might be. It would be wrong to open such discussions if there were no prospect of making progress. It would be even more wrong to fail to make progress on the critical issues involved in free personal care just because of failure to make progress on relatively marginal issues.

I remind the ministers that £23 million a year is less than 10 per cent of the total cost of the policy. From the beginning, that £23 million—or the equivalent sum—was fully funded from the Scottish Executive's own budget. In view of the budgetary provision that has been made since the

introduction of free personal care, and in view of the very significant increase in the total funding for the Scottish Executive, I would be astonished if this Administration were saying that it could not manage to fund free personal care from its own resources, as has been done in the past.

If new funding formulas are to be agreed, if changes in the law are required to resolve outstanding issues—we have heard about some of those this afternoon—and if more resources are to be found, those matters should go forward together in the interests of service users, carers and older people in Scotland. That should happen in the context of the spending review because separating the financial and implementation issues will simply not do.

16:45

The Minister for Public Health (Shona Robison): This has been a helpful debate. A number of important points have been made; we will reflect on those and take them forward.

There has been a large degree of consensus that the policy of free personal and nursing care has been a success and that the people of Scotland have welcomed it. It currently touches and improves the lives of more than 50,000 older vulnerable people. Like many members, we regard it as a positive policy that provides an appropriate basis for the long-term care of the elderly in Scotland and delivers the desired outcomes effectively. People are receiving for free the care that many would previously have had to pay for. That, in turn, encourages people to live in their own homes for longer and enhances their physical and mental well-being.

Overall, it is fair to assess the policy as having been good for older people, but there are a number of well-documented problems that need to be fixed. Christine Grahame and others highlighted those in the debate. We all recognise those problems, which is why we are engaging actively with local authorities to make sure that we develop the policy to best effect, adding real value and clarity where they are needed.

Together, we and our local authority colleagues must build on the strong foundations that exist. We must ensure that we are equipped to deliver an equitable and reliable quality of service to our older people, regardless of where they stay. Therefore, we have formed two working groups with Executive and COSLA officials. Key stakeholders will be brought on board as necessary. The implementation group will consider issues arising from the implementation of the policy—including the eligibility criteria to which Richard Simpson referred—and will identify best practice to improve consistency of delivery across

Scotland. The joint improvement team is reporting to COSLA on a peer review of free personal care that it has conducted. That will be a valuable source of information. The strategic group will consider strategic issues that might need legislation or some other high-level intervention to solve them.

We need to raise the bar in terms of delivery and to ensure that a consistent approach to implementation of the policy is adopted. I want good practice to be shared among local authorities to enable us jointly to improve quality of life for many older people. We owe them that.

I appreciate that some aspects of the policy are clouded; we will replace that uncertainty with clarity. Different interpretations of certain aspects of the policy have led to some councils charging for services while neighbouring local authorities provide the same service for free. That is not right and it is not fair. David McLetchie, Stuart McMillan, Keith Brown and others referred to food preparation as an illustration of that problem, and I remind them all that the cabinet secretary made it clear that she is considering a legislative solution to it.

Executive officials will work closely with local authorities and other stakeholders to move forward on all the issues, and I want differences to be resolved quickly. We need to be sure that we are directing sufficient resources at those who deliver the service. It simply would not make sense for us to ask local authorities to deliver a very important piece of policy if they were financially ill equipped to do so.

Mary Scanlon: Why is the Executive proposing further legislation when the legislation that was passed was crystal clear, as David McLetchie and others have said? The problem was with the guidance that the previous Government issued, which contradicted the legislation, which was further contradicted by more guidance. The legislation was clear and unambiguous.

Shona Robison: Part of the problem is that the legislation was not clear; that is why we have debates about it. Different people have interpreted it differently, which is why the cabinet secretary said that she will consider legislating to ensure that there are no differing interpretations.

Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab): Is the policy the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing? I ask that because I have received a written answer from her indicating that she has not yet met COSLA. The ministers seem to be giving COSLA a key role in their approach, yet it appears that they have made that announcement without discussing it with COSLA.

Shona Robison: I assure the member that officials have been in constant contact with

COSLA, which I will meet in the very near future. We have joint responsibility for taking forward the policy. It is important that Johann Lamont, Lewis Macdonald and others acknowledge that work is already going on; there are things that we want to take forward immediately, and that is what we will do.

The emerging findings on resources will be considered as part of the spending review, but there is a wider issue around Lord Sutherland's review, which will specifically look at the level of resources and their distribution to local authorities. That has not been done comprehensively. There are immediate issues that can be taken forward, but we will take a wider look at the long-term sustainability of the policy. Everyone should welcome the greater transparency around the funding that will result from that.

Lewis Macdonald: Am I to understand that the minister is not working with COSLA on the level of resources and their distribution to local authorities?

Shona Robison: COSLA will be involved in the long-term review that Lord Sutherland is taking forward. We are in constant negotiation and discussion with COSLA about the immediate issues that we are taking forward. As I said, some immediate issues have to be, and will be, taken forward, but the long-term sustainability of the policy also needs to be clarified. Members have mentioned sustainability in relation to how we will pay for the policy over 10, 15 or 20 years, given the demographics, which, of course, need to be looked at.

It would be unfair to local authorities and older people if we were to use a distribution formula that failed to hit the mark in meeting people's needs. The review will inform us about whether change is needed in that area.

I think that it was Lewis Macdonald who asked for the terms of reference for the inquiry to be placed in the Scottish Parliament information centre. The cabinet secretary is happy to make them available in SPICe once they are finalised.

I acknowledge fully the significant role that local authorities have to play. After all, free personal and nursing care is delivered by local authorities in Scotland and I warmly welcome their positive contribution.

Jamie McGrigor: The minister mentioned councils delivering free personal care. What will she do in the areas where they are not doing so?

Shona Robison: Of course we want to ensure consistency in the delivery of free personal care, which is what this is all about—that is why we are here this afternoon. This Government will ensure that care is delivered consistently throughout

Scotland. The financing of that has to be looked at to ensure that it is equitable and that the distribution is right. Those issues were raised in the previous Health Committee's report, as the member is probably aware. The committee wanted a more in-depth review of the policy, which is what we will deliver.

We know that delivery of the policy has not been easy, given the complexities of the legislation. Nevertheless, the policy has, largely, been delivered to good effect, although in certain areas there are real problems, which we need to resolve. I look forward to working closely with local authorities to do that.

We should all want the very best for our older people, who are the most vulnerable in our society. Our aim is clear: we want to improve the quality of their life and their physical and mental well-being. I believe that the strategy outlined today will do that and put beyond all doubt what we want to achieve. We want cohesive services, clarity, early interventions and efficient delivery of services. Taken together, our actions will benefit many older people now and in the years to come.

I want to deal specifically with a couple of issues that members raised in the debate that I have not yet touched on. Mary Scanlon and Jamie McGrigor both referred to the independent care home sector. We believe that that sector has an important role to play, but we also want to ensure that people are retained in their own home for as long as possible. If people require a care home, we want to ensure that places are available in the right locations. We recognise that we must ensure that care home places are where they need to be.

Ross Finnie and Jackie Baillie referred to getting on with things. As I said, we will do that. Stewart Sutherland's independent review will look into the wider issues of the level and distribution of resources and their long-term sustainability. The attendance allowance is an important issue, but it is only one of many that the review will have to consider.

Over the next few months, the Government will do a number of things, the first of which will be to establish an independent review to investigate the level of resources and their distribution to local authorities. [*Interruption.*]

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): Order. An awful lot of chatter is going on.

Shona Robison: As the cabinet secretary said, Lord Sutherland will chair the review.

We will ensure that free personal and nursing care for the elderly is implemented properly across the country. We will increase the payments for personal and nursing care in line with inflation from April 2008 and we will reopen with

Westminster the issue of the attendance allowance. We believe that around £30 million needs to be transferred to the Scottish block for subsequent reinvestment in Scotland. I would be extremely concerned if anyone in the chamber disagreed with that.

Let me reassure older people, their families and their carers. Free personal care is safe in our hands and we are determined that it will continue on a strong and sustainable footing. It is a positive policy that has received all-party support, and I hope that that support will continue. Since the legislation was passed in 2002, it has assisted many thousands of vulnerable older people. I believe that, with the list of actions outlined today, older people will be better served. The Scottish Government will not only enhance free personal care provision, but secure its place at the heart of our social care agenda for many years to come.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

16:57

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): The next item of business is consideration of one Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Bruce Crawford to move motion S3M-179, on substitution on committees.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following nominated committee substitutes, as permitted under Rule 6.3A—

Scottish National Party

Audit Committee	Sandra White
Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee	Nigel Don
Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee	Stefan Tymkewycz
Equal Opportunities Committee	Jamie Hepburn
European and External Relations Committee	Keith Brown
Finance Committee	Roseanna Cunningham
Health and Sport Committee	Joe FitzPatrick
Justice Committee	Aileen Campbell
Local Government and Communities Committee	Tricia Marwick
Procedures Committee	Alasdair Morgan
Public Petitions Committee	John Wilson
Rural Affairs and Environment Committee	Bill Kidd
Standards and Public Appointments Committee	Bob Doris
Subordinate Legislation Committee	Christopher Harvie
Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee	Alasdair Allan—[Bruce Crawford.]

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time. I am afraid that I now have no choice other than to suspend the meeting.

Point of Order

16:57

Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson): Well done, Mr Fraser.

Murdo Fraser: Thank you, Presiding Officer.

During First Minister's question time today I asked the First Minister about comments made in the chamber yesterday by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Fiona Hyslop. I told the First Minister that, in response to a question on higher education funding, the cabinet secretary said that Scotland's universities were currently well funded. In his response, the First Minister corrected me and said that what the cabinet secretary in fact said was that they were properly funded.

I have now had an opportunity to consult the *Official Report* of yesterday's meeting, and I see that Fiona Hyslop said:

"I think that our universities are well funded."—[*Official Report*, 13 June 2007; c 639.]

I am sure that the First Minister did not knowingly intend to mislead Parliament, but nevertheless that is what has happened.

Presiding Officer, can you advise me how, under standing orders, the record may be put straight?

The Presiding Officer: I thank the member for reading out his point of order very slowly. I hope that he does not mind if I give an equally slow and deliberate response.

Seriously, I am grateful to him for giving notice of his point of order. Like him, I have checked the *Official Report* and I simply say to him that his correction is now a matter of record, as it will be in the *Official Report*.

I still have to suspend the meeting until five o'clock.

16:59

Meeting suspended.

17:00

On resuming—

Decision Time

The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):

There are potentially 10 questions to be put as a result of today's business.

In relation to this morning's debate on Trident, I point out that if the amendment in the name of Michael McMahon is agreed to, amendments in the name of Murdo Fraser and Mike Rumbles will fall. If the amendment in the name of Murdo Fraser is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Mike Rumbles will fall.

In relation to this morning's debate on carbon offsetting, if the amendment in the name of Sarah Boyack is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Alex Johnstone will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S3M-169.3, in the name of Michael McMahon, which seeks to amend motion S3M-169, in the name of Patrick Harvie, on Trident, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)

Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)

Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 60, Against 66, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S3M-169.1, in the name of Murdo Fraser, which seeks to amend motion S3M-169, in the name of Patrick Harvie, on Trident, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)

Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)

Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 16, Against 68, Abstentions 42.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S3M-169.4, in the name of Mike Rumbles, which seeks to amend motion S3M-169, in the name of Patrick Harvie, on Trident, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)

Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 18, Abstentions 43.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S3M-169, in the name of Patrick Harvie, on Trident, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

ABSTENTIONS

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 71, Against 16, Abstentions 39.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament congratulates the majority of Scottish MPs for voting on 14 March 2007 to reject the replacement of Trident, recognises that decisions on matters of defence are matters within the responsibility of the UK Government and Parliament and calls on the UK Government not to go ahead at this time with the proposal in the White Paper, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S3M-173.4, in the name of Stewart Stevenson, which seeks to amend motion S3M-173, in the name of Robin Harper, on carbon offsetting, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)

Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McGregor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)

Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 60, Abstentions 1.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S3M-173.1, in the name of Sarah Boyack, which seeks to amend motion S3M-173, in the name of Robin Harper, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)

Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McGregor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 44, Against 81, Abstentions 1.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S3M-173.2, in the name of Alex Johnstone, which seeks to amend motion S3M-173, in the name of Robin Harper, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

ABSTENTIONS

MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 65, Against 60, Abstentions 1.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S3M-173.3, in the name of Alison McInnes, which seeks to amend motion S3M-173, in the name of Robin Harper, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)

AGAINST

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marilyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

ABSTENTIONS

MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 16, Against 109, Abstentions 1.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S3M-173, in the name of Robin Harper, on carbon offsetting, as amended, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

FOR

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)
 Ahmad, Bashir (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothians) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Ochil) (SNP)
 Brownlee, Derek (South of Scotland) (Con)
 Campbell, Aileen (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Livingston) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perth) (SNP)
 Don, Nigel (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber) (SNP)
 Fabiani, Linda (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee West) (SNP)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West of Scotland) (Con)
 Grahame, Christine (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Harper, Robin (Lothians) (Green)
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Lothians) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Lamont, John (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothians) (Ind)
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKee, Ian (Lothians) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Edinburgh Pentlands) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Morgan, Alasdair (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (South of Scotland) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Gordon) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Elizabeth (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banff and Buchan) (SNP)

Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Govan) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (North Tayside) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Tymkewycz, Stefan (Lothians) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 Welsh, Andrew (Angus) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Wilson, Bill (West of Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)

AGAINST

Alexander, Ms Wendy (Paisley North) (Lab)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)
 Brankin, Rhona (Midlothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Robert (Glasgow) (LD)
 Butler, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh North and Leith) (Lab)
 Craigie, Cathie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)
 Finnie, Ross (West of Scotland) (LD)
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (Lab)
 Gillon, Karen (Clydesdale) (Lab)
 Glen, Marlyn (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Godman, Trish (West Renfrewshire) (Lab)
 Gordon, Charlie (Glasgow Cathcart) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Paisley South) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South of Scotland) (LD)
 Jamieson, Cathy (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab)
 Kelly, James (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Kerr, Andy (East Kilbride) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Livingstone, Marilyn (Kirkcaldy) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (Aberdeen Central) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney) (LD)
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (Lab)
 McConnell, Jack (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Hamilton North and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow Kelvin) (Lab)
 McNulty, Des (Clydebank and Milngavie) (Lab)
 Mulligan, Mary (Linlithgow) (Lab)
 Munro, John Farquhar (Ross, Skye and Inverness West) (LD)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfries) (Lab)
 O'Donnell, Hugh (Central Scotland) (LD)
 Oldfather, Irene (Cunninghame South) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Peacock, Peter (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Peattie, Cathy (Falkirk East) (Lab)
 Pringle, Mike (Edinburgh South) (LD)
 Purvis, Jeremy (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD)
 Rumbles, Mike (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Iain (North East Fife) (LD)
 Smith, Margaret (Edinburgh West) (LD)
 Stephen, Nicol (Aberdeen South) (LD)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stone, Mr Jamie (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)
 Tolson, Jim (Dunfermline West) (LD)

Whitefield, Karen (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)
Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 66, Against 60, Abstentions 0.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Parliament notes the growing popularity of carbon offsetting among individuals and private companies; believes that actions by polluters to reduce carbon emissions elsewhere, or to mitigate the effects of climate change, can play a useful role in supplementing sound environmental policy by government; considers however that carbon offsetting cannot substitute for policies that reduce carbon emissions directly and that any role for offsetting should only be transitional; notes the widely held concerns about many commercial offsetting schemes and the difficulty in verifying the true value of most offsetting schemes; notes the Scottish Government's intention to introduce carbon offsetting in respect of transport infrastructure projects, and calls on the Scottish Government, before introducing such proposals, to consider issues such as the need for rigorous independent assessments of the full direct and indirect carbon impact of each project and its associated offset and the related cost to the taxpayer of such schemes, continuous updating of data for the lifetime of the infrastructure to establish any changes required to the annual offset funding, compliance with the internationally-recognised Gold Standard and the need to ensure that overall policy, including transport policy, leads to direct emissions reductions.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S3M-179, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on substitution on committees, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

That the Parliament agrees the following nominated committee substitutes, as permitted under Rule 6.3A—

Scottish National Party

Audit Committee	Sandra White
Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee	Nigel Don
Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee	Stefan Tymkewycz
Equal Opportunities Committee	Jamie Hepburn
European and External Relations Committee	Keith Brown
Finance Committee	Roseanna Cunningham
Health and Sport Committee	Joe FitzPatrick
Justice Committee	Aileen Campbell
Local Government and Communities Committee	Tricia Marwick
Procedures Committee	Alasdair Morgan
Public Petitions Committee	John Wilson
Rural Affairs and Environment Committee	Bill Kidd
Standards and Public	

Appointments Committee	Bob Doris
Subordinate Legislation Committee	Christopher Harvie
Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee	Alasdair Allan

Scottish-Norwegian Commercial Co-operation

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Alasdair Morgan): The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S3M-12, in the name of Rob Gibson, on Scottish-Norwegian commercial co-operation. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament notes that Norway celebrates the 102nd anniversary of its independence on 17 May 2007; welcomes growing economic co-operation between Scotland and Norway to make the most of our sustainable marine hydrocarbon and renewable energy resources, our proximity across the North Sea and ongoing civic and cultural collaborations; in particular welcomes the announcement of a new partnership between Statoil and Scottish Power which aims to produce a commercially viable tidal energy device for a full-scale trial to be run within two years; considers that the Scottish Executive should work with the Norwegian government to create a North Sea electricity supergrid to serve continental markets with secure supplies of clean power, and also believes that the prospects for creating a direct sea route for freight and passengers to link our two nations should be pursued with vigour.

17:13

Rob Gibson (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): As Norway celebrated the 102nd anniversary of its independence on 17 May 2007, many Scots joined in, as each year students in Edinburgh do and many folk from Orkney, with Norwegian twinning visitors, do in their Kirkwall march, the tog. Many others have worked with Norwegians in the oil industry, which our nations share on our sea frontier. Having listened to Norwegian oil workers, several people have remarked to me on the better working conditions in the Norwegian sector. A combination of income is derived from oil work, with the development of small businesses in workers' home areas underpinning an enviable quality of life.

Norway deserves our congratulations on its second from top place in the recently published Federation of Small Businesses Scotland/*Sunday Herald* index of success for small developed countries. That compares with Scotland's 10th place, so we have much to learn. The measurements that the index employs compare gross national product, education, health and equality of opportunity—factors that underpin the quality of life that I mentioned—in all 31 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development nations.

Civic and cultural collaboration between our nations is increasing. A couple of months ago, I attended a seminar in Assynt on community land ownership and management issues in Norway and

Scotland. Experience in issues relating to the environment and local government, as well as land, was fruitfully shared. As near neighbours, we also share cutting-edge technical knowledge, honed by decades of development of renewable energy and the oil industry. I welcome the growing economic co-operation between Scotland and Norway in making the most of our sustainable marine hydrocarbons and renewable energy resources.

In particular, I welcome the recent announcement of the new partnership between Strøm AS of Hammerfest, which is partly a subsidiary of Statoil, the national Norwegian oil corporation, and Scottish Power, which is now a part of Iberdrola. Both those parent companies are world leaders in renewable energy. The new partnership aims to produce a commercially viable tidal energy device based on a model that has been developed and run in the north of Norway for three years. The design and installation costs of scaling up to a 1MW prototype will be shared between the two firms. It is hoped that the expertise of the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney and the huge power of the Pentland Firth will provide the base for a full-scale trial to be run within two years.

The successful development of the project will be aided by our new marine renewable obligation certificates to ensure that a successful road to commercialisation will help the Scottish operation to have global technology rights, with future units manufactured here and exported to other countries, which will ensure that the benefits stay in Scotland and Norway.

I welcome today's news of another development in the suite of marine renewable energy developments. AWS Ocean Energy—which is based in Alness in the region that I represent—has announced that it has built a demonstration version of its Archimedes wave swing, which is being installed by EMEC in Orkney in the next year or so.

Such developments highlight the need to maintain confidence in the renewables sector so that onshore and offshore wind, wave and tidal power will benefit. The Scottish National Party supports the deployment of onshore and offshore renewable energy technologies, with the valuable addition of the proven Norwegian tidal machinery.

In order to distribute the clean power that will be generated around Scotland, Norway and, possibly, Iceland, we will need a new supergrid. My colleague, Alyn Smith MEP, is working on such a collaboration from the perspective of the European Parliament. Our small, innovative nations along the northern arc of prosperity need markets for our secure, clean power. That is why I look forward to the Scottish Government building on the early

talks that were established by Alex Salmond, before he became First Minister, with the Norwegian Government and the European Commission on ways of taking forward proposals for an electricity interconnector linking renewable generation off Scottish and Norwegian shores with energy-hungry markets in mainland Europe.

It is our ambition that Scotland and Norway, in partnership, can take the lead in tidal power technologies and undersea transmission, just as Denmark was able to become, in the past decade, the lead nation in the area of onshore wind power.

The promotion of Scotland's tourism industry is a key priority for the SNP in government. Within the enterprise structure, the reformed VisitScotland will treat Scottish tourism as the major industry and employer that it is and as a key driver for economic development. I hope that the rebranding will soon announce a "welcome to Scotland" logo and deliver a far stronger marketing strategy that decentralises tourism information and services. That must lead to an increase in the promotion of a number of access points to Scotland that are further afield than the two central belt airports that seem to be VisitScotland's focus. That is why I believe that the prospects for creating a direct sea route for freight and passengers, to link our two nations, should be pursued with vigour.

What better way to illustrate our contacts and commerce with our old friends across the North Sea than to celebrate the planned arrival at Scrabster of the new north Atlantic ferry, the 36,000 tonne Norrøna, on the evening of 18 June. That sailing will inaugurate the Faroese Smyril line's weekly summer sailing that will link the Scottish mainland, Shetland, the Faroes, Iceland, Denmark and Norway. Well done, Scrabster harbour, for preparing to dock such a large vessel. I agree with the Scrabster Harbour Trust that Scotland Transerve, our roads authority in the north, must be ordered to fix as soon as possible the landslip problem that narrows to one lane the A9 trunk road access to Scrabster harbour, which has traffic lights that have been there since last October's storms. I am sure that the new Government will take heed of the difficulties that have been caused by that problem, which became apparent in 2004.

What better way to show the increasing potential of the northern European market than to see the 164m vessel, which carries about 1,500 passengers and 600 cars, getting full use? Let us remind Scots that the Scandinavian high pressure zone offers far more reliable summer weather than we experience here, and in return let us induce Scandinavian visitors to sample Scotland's produce, scenery, cities, cultures and so on by taking a trip here.

I am glad to make this speech in the presence of the consul general of Norway, Øystein Hovdtkinn. I am delighted that we can fruitfully explore the prospects of Scotland and Norway as commercial partners, and we have much to gain from that friendly collaboration. Scotland hopes to play her full part.

17:20

Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): I congratulate Mr Gibson on securing the debate.

No one who has examined a map can deny that the geography of Scotland and Norway suggests that there must be great scope for co-operation. Indeed, if there is any weakness in Mr Gibson's motion, it is perhaps that it does not acknowledge the extent of existing co-operation with Norway, although in fairness he referred to that in his speech.

In a previous role, I spent some days last year in Stavanger during the offshore northern seas conference. It is clear that those who work in the North Sea oil and gas industry move seamlessly between that city and Aberdeen. The two cities are twinned, but their relationship is rather more real and profound, even workaday, than most twinning relationships that I have come across. In fact, I am tempted to say that if people moved as readily between Edinburgh and Glasgow, whether for the day or for periods of their careers, as they do between Aberdeen and Stavanger, it would be a good thing for Scotland.

That relationship is aided considerably by a relatively new direct air route from Aberdeen to Stavanger. It is one of more than 30 facilitated by the route development fund, which, if I can be forgiven a moment of self-congratulation, I recall launching as Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning back in 2002 to 2003.

The relationship is also helped by excellent existing co-operation between the Norwegian and United Kingdom Governments, which was most recently codified in the 2005 framework agreement. The agreement covers transboundary oil and gas projects and cross-boundary developments, many of which previously needed a new treaty each time a project was proposed. The co-operation also led to the groundbreaking agreement on the supply of wet gas to Britain from Norway, specifically benefiting Mossmorran and St Fergus. The agreement's added value to us was certainly recognised in Norway, where it provoked some controversy at the time.

The agreement was groundbreaking in another way. Looking back at the press coverage at the time, I see that the MP for Banff and Buchan, whose constituency covers St Fergus, put out a press release praising both former Labour minister

Brian Wilson and Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown. That certainly is an unusual occurrence.

The constant contact and collaboration between energy companies based in both countries is a great driver of innovation, and Mr Gibson is right to single out the Scottish Power-Hammerfest project to harness tidal resources. He was right, too, that it is another testament to the test and development facility at EMEC, where the kit will be developed and improved to the 1MW level.

In passing, I noticed Mr Gibson's reference to a renewable obligation weighted towards marine, which I support. I am not sure whether the minister was quite as clear on that in his recent statements, but perhaps he will say something about it tonight.

We should not forget opportunities for reducing carbon emissions from more conventional energy sources, and I commend to the minister current discussions between the UK and Norwegian Governments on infrastructure and regulation for capturing and storing carbon under the North Sea.

The proposal for a North Sea supergrid is interesting, and I hope that the minister will provide more detail of Scottish National Party thinking on it. I understand that the First Minister had already had discussions with Norwegian ministers about it prior to the election.

From this side of the chamber, we hope for a fair wind and favourable tide for greater co-operation with Norway, with the gentle caveat that we should not parallel Norway-UK collaboration but build on it for added value, which, like Mr Gibson, I believe that we can bring to the relationship.

17:24

Ted Brocklebank (Mid Scotland and Fife)

(Con): I, too, congratulate Rob Gibson on securing a debate on his motion, although there is a slight groundhog day feel about it, possibly because, on 8 June 2005, we debated a not dissimilar motion of his, on commemorating the 100th anniversary of Norwegian independence.

Rob Gibson is right: Scotland has long and enduring links with Norway. We have done business of one kind or another—not always willingly—with Norsemen for centuries. As a frequent visitor to Norway and possibly—I am looking around—the only member here who has profited from successful economic co-operation with a Norwegian partner, I am keen to see such arrangements continue.

Scotland and the UK have excellent economic links with Norway, many of which, as we have heard, relate to the offshore oil and gas industries. There are also co-operative arrangements through the European Union, on fishing, for example.

There is every reason why Scotland should, with UK support, build on those economic links where appropriate within the devolved settlement.

Scotland and Norway share geographical characteristics and have the same kind of resources. Of course, but for a few generations in between, Norway's national composer, Edvard Grieg, might well have been Scotland's national composer. I am sure that Scotland can benefit from many joint schemes with Norway, including schemes in the renewables sector, which Rob Gibson mentioned. There are sound arguments for creating a direct sea route for freight and passengers.

The Norwegians are a resourceful and energetic people. They are robust business partners and competitors. Let no one think that economic co-operation with the Norwegians is necessarily always on an equal basis: it is no coincidence that the Norwegians now virtually own the Scottish salmon farming business.

Of course, Norwegians do not see independence within Europe as the future of their country, as do some parties—indeed, the reverse is the case. In referendums in 1972 and 1994, Norway rejected joining the EU and chose to remain in the European Economic Area. The reasons are not hard to find. By any measurable terms, it is one of the richest countries in the world. Only Saudi Arabia and Russia export more oil than it does. Its oil and gas reserves have always been considerably greater than those that the UK has enjoyed. In addition, it produces huge quantities of electricity from its own hydropower schemes. It has iron ore, copper, lead, zinc, titanium, nickel and huge supplies of timber for export and biomass production. It has some of the richest fishing grounds in the northern hemisphere, which it manages far more efficiently than the EU manages its stocks under the common fisheries policy. Therefore, while it seeks international trade and joint ventures, it brings to the table an extremely strong bargaining position.

What makes Norway's position all the more enviable and unlike that of another so-called tiger economy—Ireland—is that it does not need EU funding. Indeed, unlike Ireland, its prosperity is unlikely to suffer as a result of EU enlargement. I say to Rob Gibson that perhaps few lessons can be drawn about a possible future independent Scotland being as economically successful as Norway. Norway is uniquely gifted with resources on land and in the sea, and it makes its decisions about its future in Oslo. Unless I have missed something, any future independent Scottish Government would take its place in the Brussels queue for EU funding with Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and other similarly sized

recipient member countries. I am sure that my Norwegian friends have not failed to notice that.

17:28

Tavish Scott (Shetland) (LD): I welcome Rob Gibson to the front bench. I see that Mr Mather's surprise is nearly as great as mine, but I am pleased to see him there.

I want to make several observations about Scottish and Norwegian commercial co-operation in general, but will first reflect on my ministerial experience of Norway, which was principally coloured by a powerful visit to Bergen a couple of years ago to mark the 50th commemorations of the Shetland bus links between my constituency and the west coast of Norway in particular. We visited the small town of Telavåg, which was cleared by the Nazis during the war as a reprisal for sheltering British commandos and Norwegian resistance fighters. For me, one of the most important and powerful moments during that visit was when I spoke to veterans who were small boys in that village during the war. They were cleared with their mothers to another part of Norway and never saw their fathers again. There is a local museum there, which I encourage Rob Gibson and the minister to go and see when they visit Norway. It gives a powerful view of our contemporary history. During my visit I also went to see the Hitra, which was one of the motor torpedo boats that sailed through the winter months between Scalloway, in Shetland, and the Norwegian coast, taking British troops and Norwegians back to the mainland of Scotland.

Her Majesty Queen Sonja of Norway was in Shetland on 31 May to take part in the opening of a new museum and archives in Lerwick. We Shetlanders were very taken with the attention that she paid to that important part of our history. I share the sentiments behind Rob Gibson's central point in his opening remarks about the historical ties between our countries and the importance of their enduring over many years to come.

When she was in Shetland, Queen Sonja also spoke movingly about the loss of the Bourbon Dolphin and the support that Shetland showed to the many Norwegian families who were tragically affected by that. I thank the Norwegian consul general and the Norwegian ambassador, who were in Shetland on that occasion, not only for being there and for being good friends of my constituency, but for attending the party that we held that night to celebrate the opening of the museum and archives. The less said about that, the better.

I wish to take up two issues with the minister. The first is the possibility of a Shetland to mid-Norway to Rosyth ferry link, which is being

investigated by several agencies in my constituency, principally the Møregruppen company. That is potentially an important development for tourism and in commercial terms. Instead of heavy goods vehicles piling all the way down through Norway to the greater Oslo area, as was described to me the other day, there is the potential for them to go by sea to Rosyth and, subsequently, on the Zeebrugge ferry to mainland Europe. I have written to Mr Swinney about the matter, but I ask whether the minister can update me tonight—or in the future—on what he can do with Fife Enterprise and other agencies, such as VisitScotland, in respect of that proposal.

Secondly, Mr Gibson and Mr Gray spoke about the idea of a supergrid. I share Mr Gray's enthusiasm for that project, particularly in respect of the potential for renewables in my constituency. The recent report from The Northern Energy Initiative, which was commissioned by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, considered the Norway-Scotland connections for power transfer. As I am sure Mr Gibson is aware, the green certificates to which he referred have less value in Norway than they do here. I ask the minister to consider that. I also support Mr Gray's central point that, parallel to the work that the minister might undertake with Norwegian ministers and the work that is continuing at official level, strong work should be undertaken with the UK Government to make progress on these matters.

I hope that Mr Mather will be able to provide responses to those general points.

17:33

Christina McKelvie (Central Scotland) (SNP): I thank Rob Gibson for bringing the motion to Parliament. The motion and the debate that it creates should help to inform opinion on the necessity for Scotland to rebuild its trading links across the North Sea. Scotland cannot afford to have a fortress mentality and to cut itself off from the world. We are a medium-sized country and we need to build and maintain our links, especially our trading links, with other countries in order to maintain and improve the living standards of our people. Rob Gibson mentioned the new service that is taking in the northern arc, including the Faroes and Caithness. I will talk about another project that offers many benefits for Scotland.

A proposed ferry service is being promoted by local government and the private sector in mid-Norway. They are joined, in Scotland, by the Shetland Development Trust and are supported by Tavish Scott in his constituency role—a fact that he has just confirmed. The project needs ministerial approval to be able to apply for support from the new EU trans-European network for transport motorways of the sea programme, for

which the proposed service has already been positively pre-checked with European Commission officials in the directorate-general for energy and transport.

I hope that the minister will be prepared to give this important transnational proposal his full support so that the relevant agencies involved can promote the opportunity immediately as an EU TEN-T motorways of the sea transport project of common interest. That would allow the service to apply for start-up support through the EU TEN-T motorways of the sea programme during the forthcoming call for proposals, which is expected before the end of 2007.

The proposed service could become a strategic link for Scotland's economy, especially as the freight cargo would be likely to comprise high-value products such as engineering components and parts, as well as fish and materials for the oil supply sector. The four counties of mid-Norway comprise the second-largest export region in the country, so the trade possibilities are extensive.

If Scotland is to look outwards and towards a better future, we should look to Norway and other Scandinavian countries, and the proposed ferry link would offer us easy passage into those markets. The link could allow trade into Sweden and Finland through Kristiansund—I hope I said that properly—and it would open up markets. Scotland could be the gateway for trade with Norway, not only for the rest of the UK but for other parts of the EU, because there is the possibility of using the Rosyth to Zeebrugge route for onward freight. The Rosyth to Zeebrugge service might be increased and a daily ferry service could perhaps be restored.

I hope that the minister will move quickly, because the promoters of the link are considering a link to Newcastle. I sailed from Newcastle to Norway; it took 22 hours and it was horrific. It would be a shame if Scotland lost out on the link for the want of speedy action.

The Norwegians cannot understand why the initiative has received so little support or interest from Scotland. Of course, the current Government is not to blame for that. We might have thought that VisitScotland would be interested in a new way of bringing visitors to Scotland, or that Scottish Enterprise would be interested in the business opportunities that the link would offer. We might have expected the previous Administration in Scotland to encourage the development of the ferry route. But none of that has happened. I hope that the minister will tell us that he is carefully considering the project and the help that he can give it.

17:36

Liam McArthur (Orkney) (LD): I congratulate Rob Gibson on securing the debate and acknowledge his longstanding interest in the issue, which probably constitutes a passion for him—such passions are much to be encouraged in all politicians.

Closer ties with Norway are close to the hearts of many of my constituents. Orkney's historic links with Norway alone could provide material for a members' business debate. We might have a chance to debate those links during the next four years—who knows—but I am glad that Rob Gibson has secured this debate so early in the new session of the Parliament.

I will highlight excellent opportunities for further co-operation between Scotland—Orkney in particular—and Norway, but first I will question part of the motion. Although I am new to the Parliament I am acutely aware that even orally proposing an amendment to a motion in a members' business debate is akin to swearing in church, but I understand that 17 May is Norway's constitution day—on that day in 1814, in the post-Napoleonic period, Denmark ceded control over Norway and Sweden. It was not until 7 June 1905 that Norway and Sweden agreed to go their separate ways. Having said that, I acknowledge the significance of the 17 May anniversary, which was celebrated in my constituency in colourful fashion. The focus of the celebrations was on children and families, and the commemoration of the people who died serving their country was both poignant and uplifting.

There is another landmark date this week: the 24th anniversary of the twinning of Orkney and Hordaland, which has built up valuable cultural links. It is probably fair to say that the links between Orkney and Norway are now more cultural than economic, perhaps as a result of the many similarities between Orkney and Norway. However, we can perhaps do more to foster links that will have economic benefits—I note in passing that Highland Park is now sourced by the Norwegian wine monopoly. The twinning arrangement has resulted in more tourists coming from Hordaland to Orkney and to the rest of Scotland. The development of Orkney's marina facilities has certainly encouraged more yachts from Norway and elsewhere, and I hope that that trend continues.

The motion refers to direct sea routes. Tavish Scott set out the benefits of the existing Shetland service. The service has benefited Orcadians, but I part company with Tavish Scott to agree with Rob Gibson that the planned Scrabster to Bergen route will provide more opportunities for Orcadians to visit Norway and for Norwegians to visit Orkney. In the light of that, I would welcome the minister's

views on what might be done by using the previous Executive's air route development fund—I happily acknowledge Iain Gray's role in the fund's introduction—to support the re-establishment of a seasonal air link between Orkney and Norway. Of course, such a link would need proper marketing support in Norway if it was to be viable.

The motion mentions the potential for links to help harness the sources of clean power that are available to both countries. I whole heartedly agree that such potential exists. We have rich wave and tidal resources, which are not far from being commercially viable, thanks to the pioneering testing and development work of the European Marine Energy Centre in Stromness. As Tavish Scott, Iain Gray and Rob Gibson said, we cannot underestimate the importance of the supergrid in allowing renewable energy potential to be harnessed.

I believe that there are more opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation between our two countries in shipping. The natural harbour at Scapa Flow already offers ship-to-ship transfer opportunities to Statoil of Norway, but I want those opportunities to be extended. Ports all the way along the Norwegian coast will be able to benefit from the major container transshipment hub that is planned for Lyness in Scapa Flow.

I am grateful to Rob Gibson for allowing me to break my duck in members' business debates and to do so on a subject of some significance to my constituency.

17:40

Christopher Harvie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):

"To Norrøway, to Norrøway,
To Norrøway over the faem.
The King's daughter o' Norrøway
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

We have a long cultural connection with Norway. It has not always been the happiest one, as the fate of Sir Patrick Spens proved, but as Scots we had a great role in the formation of modern Norway. William Christie, who came from a Scots merchant family of Bergen, was an architect of the 1814 constitution. Colin Archer was one of the creators of the Norwegian shipbuilding industry. He was a pioneer of diesel engine design in that country and the constructor of Nansen's ship, the *Fram*, which was used to explore the polar region.

We heard from Ted Brocklebank about the national composer Grieg, who came from a Scots family. The great Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen always wanted to be Scots, although he never was. His great champion in Britain and the Anglophone world was Colin Archer's cousin

William Archer, who publicised him and got Bernard Shaw interested.

However, we have to be careful. Despite the great bond that we have with Norway, we misplayed our hand in negotiations across the North Sea in various periods. I move forward to 1965. In negotiations on dividing the subsea resources of the North Sea, the UK Government lost interest and allowed the Norwegians to extend their zone of the sea to the point of equidistance rather than terminating it at the 600m-deep trench, which is far closer to Norway. During those negotiations, Scotland was perhaps deprived of the Frigg, Statfjord and Ekofisk fields. That defeat, had we known it at the time, was probably worse than Culloden.

In 1900, Norway had a population of 2.3 million. Today, its population is 4.5 million. If Scotland had followed Norway's pattern of moderate social democracy, the creation of a welfare state and a flexible specialist manufacturing centre, our population today would be nearly 10 million. Baden-Württemberg and Sweden, whose populations were the same as Scotland's in 1900, now have populations well north of 10 million. A country can be a small country, successful or not, if it forgets and stops trying to be something bigger.

More setbacks were ahead. From the beginning of the oil discoveries, Norway had a low depletion policy like the one that was urged on the Scottish Office by Dr Gavin McCrone in 1973. Scotland did not get such a policy. Neither was the creation of an oil fund, which was promised by all parties in the second 1974 election, followed up. Instead, Scotland was put on the drip feed of the Barnett formula. What happened to the Norwegian oil fund? It is now worth £73 billion, or £15,000 per Norwegian. British private debt alone amounts to £1.3 trillion, or £22,000 per Briton.

What should we do in the future? We should reach a deal with our Norwegian neighbours; create a North Sea version of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries; and keep the price of oil up in the era of peak oil, because we are probably quite close to \$100 per barrel. We should use the income as collateral to obtain high-tech equipment and training and to obtain some funds from that marvellous bounty of Norway.

Lying empty in Kirkcaldy in the middle of my large constituency is the merchant's house, which was expensively restructured about four years ago but is still looking for a tenant. When we have a hovercraft across the Forth, I hope that the Parliament will think of the building as a headquarters for further negotiations across the North Sea.

17:44

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD): I, too, congratulate Rob Gibson on securing this debate on a subject that he has strenuously and very commendably pursued over the years.

I do not wish to steal our colleague Stewart Stevenson's clothes, but I should point out that I have worked in Scandinavia. As members will recall from debates in the previous parliamentary session, I once worked in a fish factory in the Faroes. More important, I also worked for a Norwegian drilling company that was part of the JO Odfjell group. My cultural legacy from these periods of employment is made up of certain words and phrases such as "Jeg snakker ikke Norsk", which means "I can't speak Norwegian", and "Jeg elsker deg", which means "I love you". As Tavish Scott said to me, the less said about that, the better.

As Tavish Scott and Liam McArthur have pointed out, their constituencies have huge links with Norway. The same is true of Caithness. If we work north from Dingwall and Tain into Caithness, we find that all the place names are Nordic in origin. For example, Thurso derives from the Old Norse for "Thor's river" and the name Wick comes from "vik", which means "an inlet". Moreover, Earl Sigurd the Powerful plays a major part in the history of the far north; indeed, I am told by Norse experts that the name of Ciderhall, which is near Dornoch, derives from his name.

As Rob Gibson said, we should welcome the advent this coming Monday of the new ferry service from the Faroes to Scrabster, Bergen and other locations. After all, we should remember that the cost of living in many, if not all, Scandinavian countries is somewhat higher than that in Scotland. I am sure that Rob Gibson will argue that that reflects the economic success of those countries; nevertheless, the fact that our cost of living is lower makes the north Highlands a very attractive tourist destination to Scandinavians. In that respect, I am delighted that the Norwegian state wine monopoly is buying in Highland Park whisky, but I look forward to the day when substantial quantities of whisky distilled on the mainland are bought in and sold in the same fashion.

My first message to the minister is that it would be useful if, among the many roles that he has to play, he could ensure that the tourism and enterprise networks are able to accommodate our very welcome Norwegian friends when they start to arrive each week from next Monday onwards. Considering the opportunity that we are being offered, I think that it would be a downright tragedy if we got the tourism side of this whole enterprise wrong.

Secondly, I should point out to the minister that Norway's success is partly due to the peculiar drive of its people. As I saw for myself when I worked for the Odfjell group, they always take an opportunity and run with it. Members have already referred to the oil and salmon industries, both of which stand as clear examples of where the Norwegians stole a march on us.

Liam McArthur has highlighted various economic opportunities that are afforded by energy, and I believe that many of us feel that, as far as tidal energy is concerned, the Pentland Firth might well turn out to be our Saudi Arabia. However, if we do not grab the opportunity, we could miss the boat again. I am not saying that that will happen, but Mr Mather and his colleagues in the Scottish Government will have to keep an eye on the matter. After all, we cannot lose a huge opportunity that might turn both my part of the world and Liam McArthur's part of the world into a huge net energy exporter.

I again congratulate Rob Gibson on securing this most interesting debate, which is particularly relevant to the northern isles and to my constituency of Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross.

17:48

The Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism (Jim Mather): I congratulate Rob Gibson on securing this debate two years after the members' business debate on Norway's centenary celebrations. It is also a pleasure to be able to respond to so many positive speeches from fellow MSPs.

I am particularly pleased that the debate is being held so close to 17 May, when Norway celebrates the anniversary of its constitutional Government and its independence, and so soon after the opening by Queen Sonja of the Shetland museum, which commemorates the many links that have been—and continue to be—forged between our countries. However, I am sure that Tavish Scott is grateful that Jamie Stone and his Norwegian phrases were not let loose at the subsequent party.

I am also pleased to recognise and welcome to the Parliament the Norwegian consul general, Øystein Hovdkinn. His presence this evening is greatly appreciated.

I have always found it worth while to reflect on the ancient links that have bound our two nations together over the centuries and to affirm the Parliament's commitment to strengthening our civic, cultural and commercial ties with Norway and its people. Our shared history, which goes back to the eighth century, is celebrated in style at the Up-Helly-Aa fire festival in Shetland, in which,

as the Parliament knows, Tavish Scott participated earlier this year. In his speech, Mr Scott made the daring exploits of the Shetland bus in world war two resonate even more potently as a symbol of our friendship with Norway across the seas and over the years. That friendship is also symbolised by the twinning of a number of Scottish communities with partners in Norway and by traditions such as the Norwegian Christmas tree that is annually gifted to, and appreciated by, Edinburgh.

Scotland's links with Norway continue to be strengthened through our universities and the arts. This year, events will mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Edvard Grieg, Norway's most famous composer. As we all know, he had forebears from the north-east of Scotland. I comfort myself with the fact that Grieg lived for two years in an independent Norway, which has flourished materially in the intervening 100 years. Now, in 2007, we look to refresh the connection, and we will consider all the options for strengthening our civic and cultural links with Norway and other Nordic countries, including through the Nordic Council.

We will do the same for business links. In recent decades, our common commercial interests have centred on North Sea oil and gas. We have worked with Government industry in Norway through programmes such as the pilot UK-Norway initiative. That led to a mentoring programme, which enabled UK companies—the majority of which were Scottish—to be mentored by leading Norwegian companies such as Statoil, Norsk Hydro and Norske Shell. Last year, Scottish Development International assisted more than 40 Scottish energy companies, primarily in the oil and gas sector, to get into the Norwegian market. SDI also helped to facilitate a visit and discussion forum involving five Norwegian organisations and key Scottish marine biotech experts at the European Centre for Marine Biotechnology at Dunstaffnage, near Oban, in my constituency. The good news is that a follow-up visit is planned for later this year.

A number of Scottish companies have set up organisations in Norway, many with the assistance of SDI representatives in Aberdeen's twin city of Stavanger. The offshore northern seas exhibition, which is held biannually in Stavanger, is one of the world's leading oil and gas conferences. It attracts a number of Scottish firms, as I believe will continue to be the case.

Economic and social co-operation between Norway and Scotland has been pursued for many years. That has been aided, from the Scottish perspective, by EU-funded programmes. There are opportunities for Scotland to pursue further projects under the new Interreg initiative. Draft

programmes for the northern periphery and North Sea areas are currently with the Commission, and I hope that they will allow Scottish firms to build on previous successes.

As for renewables, I spoke on behalf of the Scottish Government at the all-energy exhibition and conference in Aberdeen last month. The event is the largest of its kind in the UK. This year, it attracted record numbers, reflecting Scotland's growing reputation as a renewable energy capital. Many Norwegian companies are interested in establishing themselves in the sector, and some are looking for local partners and customers here in Scotland.

I was particularly pleased that some companies presented themselves at a special Norwegian session at the all-energy conference. That was significant enough to attract the presence of the Norwegian ambassador to the UK.

Tavish Scott: When Mr Mather was at the all-energy conference, did he take the view that I have heard from the oil and gas industries, that part of the potential of the supergrid proposal, which he knows much about, lies with oil and gas installations in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea? Could Mr Mather update the Parliament on how that proposal is developing?

Jim Mather: I will—I plan to come to that. The member makes a valid point.

In considering Norway as a partner, we must recognise that it is a country that already has a great story to tell. It meets all its electricity needs through hydro power and a significant proportion of its overall energy needs from renewable sources. It is perhaps supergrid hungry. There is no doubt that we can strengthen our commercial co-operation with Norway, to our mutual advantage, in the development of new low-carbon energy technologies.

The Scottish Power-Hammerfest Strøm development has been mentioned in connection with the deployment of new tidal energy systems in Scottish waters. That is supported by Amec Infrastructure Services. I share Rob Gibson's ambition for that development. Let there be no doubt as far as marine support is concerned. We are adamant about supporting marine energy. The only concern at the moment is about the quality and extent of support from the UK Government.

On the matter of the supergrid, we are committed in as much as Scotland is committed to developing the potential for renewables. We must take the strategic view that Tavish Scott called for. In the longer term, we seek to take advantage of changing patterns in energy generation and use. Such planning should also address the role of Europe in any interconnected supergrid network that might evolve over time.

It is clear that Scotland's resources can play a major role in any European energy network of the future, which is one reason why the First Minister has made early discussions with colleagues in Norway a priority. Equally, there is the issue of tourism, commercial traffic and transport. Members should be aware that the Scottish Government is engaged with key partners to develop proposals on those issues.

I agree absolutely with Jamie Stone that we can learn about constancy of purpose from our Norwegian friends. Ted Brocklebank mentioned Norway's influence in the salmon sector here, which is a result of Norway pursuing its national self-interest. We are committed to empowering Scotland to follow that end of national self-interest, but that needs more powers and a full seat at the table in Europe.

Christopher Harvie warmed the cockles of my heart in talking about the OPEC of the North Sea and his vision of how we could have been the same size and had the same scope as Norway. That is still latent potential—we can overcome the broken promise of an oil fund and move forward to a better place. I very much want to do that and to emulate our friends in Norway.

Meeting closed at 17:55.

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