

# **MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT**

Wednesday 19 November 2008

Session 3

£5.00

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2008.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Licensing Division,  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ  
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate  
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by RR  
Donnelley.

---

## CONTENTS

Wednesday 19 November 2008

### Debates

Col.

<b>TIME FOR REFLECTION</b> .....	12481
<b>FUEL POVERTY</b> .....	12483
<i>Statement—[Nicola Sturgeon].</i>	
The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Nicola Sturgeon) .....	12483
<b>IDENTITY CARDS</b> .....	12499
<i>Motion moved—[Fergus Ewing].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Robert Brown].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Bill Aitken].</i>	
The Minister for Community Safety (Fergus Ewing) .....	12499
Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD) .....	12503
Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con) .....	12507
Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab) .....	12509
Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP) .....	12511
George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab) .....	12513
Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD) .....	12516
Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP) .....	12518
Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green) .....	12520
Bashir Ahmad (Glasgow) (SNP) .....	12522
Hugh O'Donnell (Central Scotland) (LD) .....	12523
John Lamont (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con) .....	12525
Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab) .....	12527
Fergus Ewing .....	12530
<b>BUSINESS MOTIONS</b> .....	12535
<i>Motions moved—[Bruce Crawford]—and agreed to.</i>	
<b>PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS</b> .....	12538
<i>Motions moved—[Bruce Crawford].</i>	
<b>DECISION TIME</b> .....	12539
<b>PARKINSON'S DISEASE</b> .....	12546
<i>Motion debated—[James Kelly].</i>	
James Kelly (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab) .....	12546
Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP) .....	12548
Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab) .....	12550
Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con) .....	12551
Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab) .....	12553
The Minister for Public Health (Shona Robison) .....	12554

---



## Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 19 November 2008

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

### Time for Reflection

**The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):** Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is time for reflection. Our time for reflection leader today is Pete Chirnside of Tearfund Scotland.

**Pete Chirnside (Tearfund Scotland):** I am a Christian. When someone speaks, you learn something about the speaker. You will learn more by watching what they do than by listening to what they say. It is our actions that speak loudest. I try to stand up for my beliefs, although that is not always easy. The media have often given an inaccurate representation of Christians. Some people are opposed to my views and my values and have a distorted impression of what Christians are like, but it is what I do that counts.

Today is world toilet day. Today, there are still 2.5 billion people who have to go to the toilet out in the open, in a field or on shrub land. Their dignity is removed and they are vulnerable. It is a disgrace that we in the developed world allow that to continue. I want to change the world and so I campaign.

December 1 is world AIDS day. Stigma, discrimination, isolation and fear are common among HIV-positive people. Belihna, a mother of three boys, was isolated and friendless, living in a small mud hut in rural Mozambique. Church-trained volunteers found her and Belihna's response was, "God has not abandoned me." The volunteers bathed her, cooked her food, prayed with her and took her for life-saving drug treatment but, sadly, it was too late. She died on 31 August, leaving three orphaned sons.

I want to change the world, so I give money to train and equip church volunteers. The climate is changing and the people who are most affected by it are the poorest people of the world, who have contributed least to emissions of greenhouse gases. God created the world and put us, as human beings, in charge. I want to look after the world. I pray that God, as he did 200 years ago with Wilberforce, will inspire and enable today's leaders to change the world for good. Our beliefs are the foundations for our actions. I am glad that my foundations are in the word of God.

I am reminded of the great parliamentarian Edmund Burke, who said:

"No-one made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he thought he could do so little."

So I campaign, I speak out, I give, I pray.

Let us pray.

Our loving father in heaven, we come before you acknowledging you as the king of kings and lord of lords. We ask that today we might know your guidance, your strength and your wisdom in the decisions we make, that we might build your kingdom here on earth and that our lives might be consistent with our beliefs and our values.

Amen.

## Fuel Poverty

**The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):** The next item of business is a statement by Nicola Sturgeon on fuel poverty. The cabinet secretary will take questions at the end of her statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

14:34

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Nicola Sturgeon):** Today, I reiterate the Scottish Government's continued commitment to tackling fuel poverty and to meeting the 2016 target, which is to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that no one is living in fuel poverty by 2016. I also want to respond to the recommendations of the Scottish fuel poverty forum.

Our six-point plan for the Scottish economy includes help for households that are experiencing difficulties in the current economic climate. We are determined to improve energy efficiency in homes, to do more to tackle fuel poverty and to offer better financial advice to vulnerable households.

The review of fuel poverty in Scotland that was published in May made for sobering reading. It reported that fuel poverty is on the increase despite huge investment in programmes across Scotland and improved energy efficiency in our homes. It also reported that rural communities are struggling and are not well served by existing programmes, and that key stakeholders such as Energy Action Scotland are calling for urgent reform.

I therefore re-established the Scottish fuel poverty forum last May to bring in expert stakeholder advice to get our fuel poverty policy back on track and to shape it for the future. I am sincerely grateful to the forum and its chair, the Rev Graham Blount, for all their work and for reaching their conclusions within the tight timetable that I set. I am pleased to announce today that, having carefully considered the forum's report, I have decided to take forward its key recommendation of replacing the central heating and warm deal programmes with a new comprehensive energy assistance package from next April.

The new package will present a holistic solution. It will tackle all aspects of fuel poverty—not only energy efficiency. Alongside measures to improve the home, it will include access to energy audits, energy tariff advice and advice on income maximisation. Just as tackling fuel poverty is part of our wider agenda for tackling poverty and building a Scotland where everyone can flourish, the energy assistance package will be a key part

of the tackling poverty framework that I will launch next week.

The energy assistance package will improve on the existing fuel poverty programmes by reaching more people, by providing a wider range of support in one integrated package, and by beginning to tackle rural fuel poverty much more effectively than has been the case thus far. As we all know, tackling fuel poverty requires that a three-pronged approach be taken: we must improve energy efficiency; we must maximise household incomes; and we must ensure that people pay a competitive price for energy. The new energy assistance package will deliver action on all three of those requirements.

The new package will have four stages. At stage 1, all callers to a freephone number will be given advice on energy savings and a free energy audit. At stage 2, all low-income households that are at risk of fuel poverty will be offered an energy tariff check to ensure that they can take up social tariffs and use cheaper payment methods. A good quality benefits and tax credits check will also be offered as an integral part of the package at stage 2. At stage 3, through a partnership with carbon emissions reduction target providers, all households in the CERT priority group—which is all those who receive income-related benefits or who are aged over 70—will be offered free insulation measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation.

At stage 4, as recommended by the forum, enhanced energy efficiency measures, including central heating, will be provided to households that are most vulnerable to fuel poverty, and to those who live in homes with very poor energy efficiency. That will go much further than the current fuel poverty programmes by offering tailor-made solutions and by fuel poverty proofing the Scottish housing stock for the future. For the first time, the measures that are included in the package will make a real difference to rural fuel poverty.

Today, I am publishing the findings of our renewables pilot, copies of which are available at the back of the chamber. I apologise for the fact that, owing to an administrative error, copies of the report were not provided to spokespersons in advance of the statement.

In response to the report's recommendations, the package that I am announcing today will include renewables heating systems for the first time. As an alternative to expensive measures such as oil-fired central heating, the measures that will be available at stage 4 will include air-source heat pumps for homes that are off the gas grid. It will also include solutions for insulating homes that have solid walls.

The enhanced measures at stage 4 will focus on households that are most affected by fuel poverty: those who live in homes that have very poor energy efficiency that are not only expensive to heat but are likely to have a higher carbon footprint. Addressing those homes and allowing more innovative measures such as air-source heat pumps and solid-wall insulation will meet both our fuel poverty and climate change objectives.

From next April, in enabling that part of the package to happen, I will increase the maximum grant cap from the £3,500 that is allowed under the existing central heating programme to a new cap of £4,000 for most homes under the energy assistance package. I will also allow up to £6,500 for homes that cannot be sufficiently improved under the lower cap. That is an increase of £1,000 on the central heating programme upper cap of £5,500 and it will benefit many rural fuel-poor homes.

As recommended by the forum, the new energy assistance package will help more households overall and it will focus enhanced measures on the least energy efficient homes, which are lived in by the most fuel-poor households. As I signalled last month, from next April—for the first time ever—enhanced energy efficiency measures will, through a range of measures to improve energy efficiency, including central heating where appropriate, help low-income families that have children under five or disabled children under 16.

We know that rising fuel prices are a real source of worry for our older people, so pensioners who live in private sector homes that are below average energy efficiency will continue to benefit from enhanced measures—including central heating, where appropriate—if they receive the guarantee element of pension credit or are aged over 75. We have kept our promise to ensure that all people aged over 60 in private sector households that have no central heating will continue to be eligible for free central heating without condition.

The 2016 target is challenging. As the review highlighted, it is important that available resources be put to good use. I am grateful to the forum for making recommendations for an energy assistance package that will ensure value for money within existing resource levels, but I am mindful of its conclusion that more resources are needed, in the face of high fuel prices. Last month I announced that we would allocate an extra £10 million to the central heating programme in this financial year to help thousands more pensioners this winter. From next year, we will join up funding across the Government and the private sector to ensure that the energy assistance package provides a one-stop shop for householders who are worried about high fuel bills, as well as helping

to meet our climate change and wider energy objectives. In the spirit of that holistic package, and to maximise value for money, resources from across Government for energy efficiency advice to households, income maximisation for individuals, fuel poverty and household renewables will be pooled in one package.

The package will operate in a seamless manner for the consumer and will provide us with the flexibility that we need to meet fuel poverty and our wider poverty, climate change and energy objectives. It will be supported by funding worth £55.8 million per annum—20 per cent more than existing fuel poverty budgets. We will also make better use of Government resources by funding only those elements that energy companies are unable to fund under CERT. As we announced in September, we are working with the six main energy supply companies, through the CERT strategy group, to ensure that Scotland gets its fair share of CERT funding. Let us be clear—a fair share for Scotland would generate around £100 million a year for energy efficiency measures. We have secured agreement with the energy companies that they will, through the energy assistance package, provide standard insulation measures, such as cavity wall and loft insulation. That will free up Government resources for the more innovative and expensive enhanced measures.

As the forum recommended, we will deliver the new energy assistance package through our energy saving Scotland advice centre network. The network's regional centres already provide advice on energy efficiency. We will build on that, to have them act as the first point of call for fuel-poor customers. The centres will provide advice, carry out energy audits and refer customers to CERT providers for standard insulation measures. In partnership with existing advice providers, they will arrange for benefits and tariff checks to be carried out and they will assess eligibility for enhanced measures, such as central heating and solid wall insulation, which will be delivered by a managing agent. To ensure a smooth transition, I have extended Scottish Gas's managing agent contract by a year, so the company will arrange for installation of the enhanced measures until March 2010. A tender exercise for the contract will be carried out beyond that date.

To meet the 2016 target, we need collaborative working. We will continue to work with a range of partners, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, individual local authorities, stakeholders and the voluntary sector, in order to meet our shared objective.

The fuel poverty forum's role has in my view been invaluable, and it is my intention that it will continue to operate with the Rev Graham Blount

as its independent chair. Its first item of business will be to review its membership and structure, and to build links with the English fuel poverty advisory group to ensure that Scottish interests are fed into the reserved areas that impact on fuel poverty.

The Government welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement on 11 September on the enhancement of the carbon emissions reduction target and the new community energy-saving programme that is being developed. My officials are participating in that work as it proceeds. With Scotland having three times the rate of fuel poverty of England, I am keen—I am sure that we all are—for Scotland to get its fair share from the initiatives.

So far, I have addressed the central recommendation of the fuel poverty forum, but the forum also made a number of other recommendations that are worthy of further consideration. We will work with partners to explore the forum's suggestions of bulk purchasing for the fuel poor, and developing a loan scheme for people who are more able to pay for energy efficiency measures themselves.

There were a number of recommendations for the United Kingdom Government, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets and the energy companies, which I would commend to all of them. We intend to continue to press the UK Government to ensure that the most vulnerable customers benefit from mandatory social tariffs, and that those on prepayment meters are given a fair deal.

We expect Westminster to take action—as we have done—this winter. That is why the Scottish National Party's Treasury spokesman, Stewart Hosie, has written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for a package of support for fuel-poor people in next week's pre-budget report. We need a VAT holiday on all household energy bills, a cut in VAT on all energy efficiency measures and a one-off additional payment of £100 to all pensioners this winter.

We also need the Treasury to relax its inflexible accounting rules so that we in Scotland can access the £120 million of Scottish fossil-fuel levy payments that are currently held by Ofgem but which are inaccessible to the Scottish Government. It is simply unacceptable in my view, and, I hope, in the view of every member of the Parliament, that in an energy-rich country such as Scotland, so many people are in fuel poverty and are worrying about their fuel bills.

The Government is determined to live up to its responsibilities to right that wrong, and we call on others to do likewise. I commend this statement to Parliament.

**The Presiding Officer:** The cabinet secretary will now take questions on the issues that were raised in her statement, for which we have about 30 minutes. I call Mary Mulligan. *[Interruption.]*

I beg your pardon—I was not correctly informed. I call Cathy Jamieson, to be followed by Mary Scanlon.

**Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab):** I apologise, Presiding Officer. I will look into why you were not correctly informed.

I thank the cabinet secretary for her statement and for her apology for the associated documents not having reached us in advance. I am sure that our spokespeople will have the opportunity to read them and to return with comments later.

I welcome the establishment—or re-establishment—of the Scottish fuel poverty forum and the Rev Graham Blount's work on it. We want many of the measures that have been announced to be implemented and will support them, where we believe that it is the right thing to do.

I do not think that anyone would argue that advice and information and income maximisation are not important elements of any strategy, but the danger is that the warm words do not translate into warm homes. It is vital that speedy action be taken to move people through the four stages and to ensure that the most vulnerable people get the assistance that they need under the energy assistance package.

Can the cabinet secretary say how many more people she believes will benefit from the new scheme that she is putting in place? On the £10 million that has been allocated to help more pensioners this winter, how will the money be targeted quickly and effectively to ensure that pensioners who are currently on waiting lists are not left waiting until the winter is over?

I draw the cabinet secretary's attention to recommendation 28 of the forum's report. The recommendation is aimed at energy companies, but it also merits the Scottish Government's attention. With central heating schemes and so on going into homes, it is important for the Government to protect its investment. Can the cabinet secretary assure me that, rather than wait for the energy companies to do it, she will herself ensure that maintenance contracts, with some kind of insurance for new heating systems, are part of the overall package that families get?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I thank Cathy Jamieson for her comments and questions, which I will deal with in order. First, I want to correct slightly what I said in my statement about the renewables pilot report: I have just been informed that it is available from the Scottish Parliament information centre, but is



not yet available at the back of the chamber. I can only repeat my apology for the fact that the report has not been available so far. I will be more than happy to take any questions from spokespeople once they have had a chance to read the report; I will answer either in writing or through meetings.

I thank Cathy Jamieson for what I will take as a reasonably warm welcome for my statement—if members will pardon the pun. I was glad to hear her welcome the work of the fuel poverty forum and many of the measures that have been announced today. She is absolutely right to say that the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. It is absolutely essential that, to use her phrase,

“warm words ... translate into warm homes.”

Getting people through the various stages of the energy assistance package, as appropriate, will be absolutely important because the key weakness of the programmes that we are replacing is that although significant amounts of money were being spent on central heating—I am not for a minute knocking the benefits that that delivered to people—fuel poverty was still increasing. The money was not being spent effectively to tackle fuel poverty, which is what we definitely want to tackle now.

Cathy Jamieson asked how many people we expect will benefit at each stage. If members read the report of the fuel poverty forum, they will see that it is anticipated that perhaps 15 per cent of the population—115,000 people—could be helped at stage 1, and that perhaps 5 per cent could be helped at stage 3. It is my intention that the enhanced measures that will be available at stage 4 will help about the same number as have benefited from the central heating programme.

Cathy Jamieson asked about the additional investment in this financial year. That process is in train. As members are aware, we installed a record number of central heating systems in the private sector last year. At this stage, we have installed more systems than was the case at the corresponding time last year. My firm intention is to ensure that we install at least the same number as we did last year. That is particularly important, given that people are struggling this winter with the effects of sky-high hikes in fuel bills.

On Cathy Jamieson's last point, I am more than happy to look at recommendation 28 in the fuel poverty forum's report from the perspective of the Government, rather than the perspective of the fuel companies.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):**

I also welcome the more comprehensive energy assistance package, which replaces—or, should we say, extends—the current central heating and warm deal programmes. However, we also

acknowledge that it will take some time to go through the detail.

Given that I represent the Highlands and Islands, I welcome the emphasis on tackling rural fuel poverty. I welcome, for example, air-source heat pumps for homes that are off the grid, particularly given that I understand that one in three homes is off the gas grid. We would also welcome solutions for insulating homes that have solid walls, which is a huge issue in rural areas.

My colleagues at Westminster are committed to addressing the prepayment meter charges and the issue of requiring energy companies to offer social tariffs to vulnerable households—to which the cabinet secretary referred—and advice on how to switch to the cheapest tariff. I appreciate that some of the issues are reserved, but has the Scottish Government had any meetings with energy companies here in Scotland about the prepayment meter charges and, if so, were any agreements reached?

When the cabinet secretary used the phrase “without condition”, did she mean that persons aged over 60 will not have to live in a house without central heating for a year before they are eligible for the free central heating programme?

Many people in Scotland today are facing unemployment and hardship and many others simply want to reduce their carbon footprints. What is in this Government package of measures for them?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I thank Mary Scanlon for her constructive response to my announcements. She raises important points about the measures that I have announced and their ability to help, for example, people who live off the gas grid.

People in rural communities will benefit greatly from the redesigned package through two aspects in particular: first, the inclusion of renewables in the package for the first time; and secondly—in order to make the first possible—the increase in the cap on the grant levels, which will make more possible some approaches to tackling fuel poverty that were previously outside the scope of the programme. Both moves are extremely positive.

Stewart Maxwell has recently met energy companies, as has John Swinney, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth. We raised a range of issues in those meetings. Mary Scanlon rightly spoke about the considerable anxieties that people have about 40 or 50 per cent increases in gas and electricity prices this winter.

We have also put in place an agreement with the energy companies to work together to ensure that Scotland gets its fair share of the CERT moneys. We have established the CERT strategy group under Stewart Maxwell's convenership. It

will publish its strategy shortly. That commitment is important in expanding the resources that are available in Scotland to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency.

Let me stress that, under our new system, anybody over 60 who does not have central heating will be eligible for free central heating on the same basis as under the previous system. There will be no means testing—we gave that important commitment, and we will ensure that that continues.

Mary Scanlon's final question was on what the package offers people who want to reduce their carbon footprints, live more efficiently and place less of a toll on the planet. The package offers benefits and advantages to the large number of people in that category. Stage 1 of the energy assistance package is open to everybody. During it, a free energy audit and advice on saving energy and energy efficiency are available to everybody, and I am sure that many people will take up those opportunities.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney) (LD):** I thank the cabinet secretary for an advance copy of her statement. I welcome the publication of the Scottish renewables heating pilot which, I know from her ministerial colleagues, has perhaps enjoyed a difficult birth.

Liberal Democrats led the debate in March on the fuel poverty forum's being re-established, so I welcome its report and recommendations, and the confirmation that the Government intends to implement its central recommendations and to keep the forum in place. Perhaps less welcome and a little more questionable was the cabinet secretary's reference to the activities of her MP colleagues in Westminster.

Does the cabinet secretary accept that the Government's cuts in the eligibility criteria for the central heating programme announced in May, followed by the benevolent reinstatement of entitlement to coincide with the SNP conference in October, created some confusion, particularly among pensioners, many of whom may have been put off applying? What has the take-up for the scheme been since May, and is she still confident that Scottish Gas has had the requisite number of applicants to meet its targets?

The cabinet secretary referred to the 20 per cent increase in the package that has been announced today. That seems to relate to the £10 million over and above the budget that was announced at the SNP conference last month. However, will she explain where the £7 million that was announced last November and earmarked to help eligible pensioners fits in with the budget?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I thank Liam McArthur for a warm and constructive welcome for the measures,

although I am sorry that he disagrees with the references to my MP colleague Stewart Hosie—he is brave to do so in the presence of Stewart Hosie's wife. If Liam McArthur disagrees with the suggestion to call on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to introduce a VAT holiday for pensioners this winter and to increase the winter fuel payment by £100 for all pensioners, I am more than happy to have that debate with him. I suspect that I know which side of the debate most pensioners in Scotland would be on.

The substantive part of Liam McArthur's question was on the changes to the eligibility criteria that I announced on 22 May. I do not think that they created confusion—it was the right thing to do. The changes allowed us to bring back under control a fuel poverty programme that was out of control. He should remember that a range of stakeholders who really know what they are talking about called for the reforms, which allowed us to make drastic reductions in the waiting list and, more crucially, to ensure that the money that we were spending on installing central heating was being spent on the people who were most likely to be in fuel poverty. That is the right way to proceed and to ensure that we get value for taxpayers' money.

Liam McArthur asked about the number of systems that have been installed so far this financial year. It is almost 9,000—I can provide him with the precise number—which is more than had been installed in the corresponding period in the previous financial year. As I said in response to Cathy Jamieson, our intention is to ensure that, through the additional £10 million that we have invested this financial year, we at least equal the record numbers that we achieved last year.

The £7 million that Liam McArthur asked about was allocated and spent in the previous financial year. It allowed us to install a record number of central heating systems in that financial year. The £10 million this financial year is completely separate from, and additional to, that sum.

**The Presiding Officer:** We come to open questions. We are fairly tight for time and I have no time available to take out of the next debate; if members are short and sharp, we will manage to get everybody in.

**Alex Neil (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I give a general welcome to the energy assistance package but ask the cabinet secretary to examine some of the criteria and rules in the programmes. For example, whether a central heating system is working is apparently defined by whether it heats two or more rooms. I have a case in which two bedrooms are heated but the main living area—

**The Presiding Officer:** Short and sharp, Mr Neil, please.

**Alex Neil:** It seems that that applies to back benchers but not front benchers, with all due respect, Presiding Officer.

**The Presiding Officer:** Short and sharp, please, Mr Neil.

**Alex Neil:** I ask the cabinet secretary to review the rules and criteria to make them more flexible in such cases.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I thank Alex Neil for his question and his welcome for the announcement. I hope that our redesign of the system will address the point that he raised, because eligibility for the enhanced measures at stage 4 will be driven in part by the energy efficiency rating of an applicant's house rather than an assessment of their central heating system per se. If their house had a below-average energy efficiency rating—which could be caused by a central heating system not working effectively—that would make them eligible for the enhanced measures, if the other criteria were also fulfilled. I hope that, by moving away from the old definitions to new ones that are, in my view, more sensible, the point that Alex Neil raises will be addressed.

**Mary Mulligan (Linlithgow) (Lab):** I, too, welcome the cabinet secretary's announcement, which builds on the successful central heating and warm deal programmes. I ask her to clarify how much of the funding that she announced will be allocated to local authorities. Why are local companies such as McSence in Midlothian seriously considering laying off workers because a local authority has not yet been able to allocate funds to warm deal work that has already been surveyed? That is only one example that I have. Does she accept that that affects not only people who are at risk of fuel poverty, but jobs?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I am more than happy to discuss the detail of the individual cases that Mary Mulligan raises. That might be more productive than trying to second-guess their circumstances.

The £55.8 million for the fuel poverty programmes that I mentioned in my statement is largely routed through the managing agent to pay for the installation of central heating under previous arrangements and, in the future, central heating and other enhanced measures. Therefore, I am not sure what the member's local authority point refers to, but I am more than happy to discuss it with her in more detail.

I will make a general point about the benefits of the programme that I announced, not only for people who live in fuel poverty but for the economy more generally and small businesses in particular. Not only have we announced an additional £10 million that is to be spent on installing central heating in this financial year, but we are increasing the money that is available in

the next financial year by pooling budgets across Government. Through the CERT strategy group, we might access up to £100 million to install energy efficiency measures. All that work must be done by companies—mainly small companies—so the announcement is good news for the economy as well as for people who live in fuel poverty.

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** I welcome the statement. As the cabinet secretary knows, concern has been expressed that people who live in remote and island communities have not benefited as they should have from previous schemes to cut fuel poverty. How will the new energy assistance package redress the balance to ensure that people who live in such communities maximise the support that is available to them?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I repeat that one weakness of the previous system was that it served people who live in rural communities badly relative to people who live in other parts of Scotland. Mary Scanlon touched on some reasons for that.

Two linked aspects of my statement will particularly benefit people who live in rural communities. One is the inclusion of renewable heating systems in the package for the first time. I mentioned air-source heat pumps, which have enormous potential. The second aspect is that more innovative measures will be made possible by the increase in the cap. Taken together, those elements will mean that our new programme can tackle fuel poverty in rural areas much more effectively than the programmes that it replaces.

**Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab):** I welcome the announcement that renewable heat can be included in the central heating programme in rural areas. Given that, will the cabinet secretary encourage housing associations and local authorities to include renewables in their new build and refurbishment programmes? Housing associations are being told that Government funding does not provide for renewables.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I am more than happy to look into the detail of Sarah Boyack's question and to write to her with a full answer. In general, I hope that she will take it from the tenor and the thrust of my statement that the inclusion of renewable heat systems is important not just for environmental reasons, although those are extremely important, but for the fact—which emerges strongly from the renewables pilot report—that renewable systems can play a big part in helping people to heat their homes more efficiently and more cheaply, which will tackle fuel poverty. I hope that she takes encouragement from those remarks.

**Jim Hume (South of Scotland) (LD):** I, too, welcome the cabinet secretary's announcement. Of course, prevention is better than cure in energy use. The SNP said in its manifesto that it would

tighten building regulations on insulation in new builds, but that was not mentioned today. In an answer to a parliamentary question, Stewart Stevenson said that the Government intended

“to consult ... with a view to introducing revisions”,—  
[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 25 August 2008; S3W-15098.]

but intentions and views will not keep homes warm.

**The Presiding Officer:** A question, please, Mr Hume.

**Jim Hume:** Will anything be done to tighten building regulations on insulation in the near future?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I am sure that Jim Hume is familiar with the Sullivan report, which was on building standards. We have given a commitment to consult on those important issues. As I am sure Jim Hume recognises, we need to consider serious practical and financial questions properly before determining how to proceed.

I could not agree more strongly with Jim Hume's central point that prevention is better than cure. That is why the holistic nature of the package that I have announced is important. Through a range of measures, it will help people to heat their homes as efficiently and cheaply as possible. Energy audits, tariff checks and benefit checks to ensure that people maximise their income are all incredibly important. I hope that they will prevent people from getting into fuel poverty as well as lift them out of it.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I welcome the cabinet secretary's statement and her acknowledgement that more resources are needed to deal with fuel poverty. Does she agree that taking a universal approach by providing free energy audits to all households removes an important barrier to uptake? Is she working with her colleague Mr Swinney on proposals for the current draft budget so that we can take the same universal approach to physical measures such as energy efficiency initiatives and renewable heat systems? That would be in keeping with the Government's support for my amendment that was discussed at last week's energy efficiency debate.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I assure Patrick Harvie that I often speak to and work closely with Mr Swinney on these issues. I am very aware of the Greens' views on the need for universal, area-based approaches—there is much merit in that approach—and we look forward to discussing further with Patrick Harvie how we might develop those ideas.

As Patrick Harvie mentioned, there is a universal element in stage 1 of the package that I announced, which is access to free energy audits.

That is important, for the reasons that I gave Mary Scanlon and for the reasons that Patrick Harvie gave. I look forward to continuing to work with members of all parties, and in particular with the Greens, to ensure that we continue to develop our policy so that we do everything that we can to achieve our shared objectives.

**Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP):** I thank the cabinet secretary for her welcome announcement that families with a disabled child will receive help with central heating where appropriate, as I have a number of constituency queries about that. Will families who will be eligible be able to register their interests immediately with Scottish Gas so that, when the package comes on stream, Scottish Gas will be able to contact those families straight away?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Stages 1 and 2 of the energy assistance package will be up and running very quickly because the essential infrastructure to deliver those aspects is available through the advice centre network to which I referred. The more advanced measures, especially those at stage 4, will come on stream as of April next year. It may be possible—at the risk of using another pun—to get a pipeline going before then.

I am glad that Sandra White referred to the extension of eligibility for the enhanced measures, which are to be made available to low-income families with children under five or disabled children under 16. Although all the measures that I have announced are significant, if I had to single out the most significant, I would highlight that measure because it will deliver great benefits to some of our most vulnerable families, who I am sure will welcome it as a result.

**Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** I, too, welcome today's ministerial statement. I was interested to learn of the cabinet secretary's support for universal measures at UK level, despite her introduction of means tests and targeting here in Scotland. Will she confirm what savings will accrue to the Scottish Government as a result of excluding from the free central heating programme those pensioners who are not in receipt of pension credit? Finally, in these difficult times, how does she justify asking pensioners on a fixed income to pay for the investment that she announced today?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Duncan McNeil should possibly have listened to his front-bench colleagues before deciding what questions he would ask. The Scottish National Party Government has not introduced means testing. In fact, the concept of means testing was introduced into the central heating programme by the previous Labour Government. We gave a commitment that everyone over 60 who does not have a central heating system would continue to

be eligible for a free system without any means testing. I have reiterated that commitment today.

For the avoidance of doubt, I advise Duncan McNeil that today's announcement is not about making savings. We are not making any savings in the programme; on the contrary, we are investing more money in order to tackle fuel poverty through such programmes. We are also ensuring that the money that we spend is targeted properly to those people who are most in fuel poverty. I would have thought that someone who professed to care about social justice would welcome that approach.

Given that Duncan McNeil could not welcome our approach, it is perhaps appropriate for me to quote the director of Help the Aged in Scotland. She said:

"Help the Aged ... is pleased to see the Forum's ... recommendations adopted by the Scottish Government. The new ... package will offer more effective help for the most vulnerable ... households than the current programme".

I think that most people in Scotland will be more interested in that view than in the rather grudging position of Duncan McNeil.

**Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** I welcome the cabinet secretary's statement, and I regard it as a move on from previous, well-intentioned attempts to tackle fuel poverty, and a move towards attempts that are strategic and well organised, unlike the previous attempts.

I welcome the significant 20 per cent increase in funding from the Scottish Government. How are negotiations going with energy companies to achieve Scotland's fair share of £100 million per annum for CERT money?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I may disagree with the Opposition—the previous Administration—in many areas, and I may question its motivation in many areas, but I do not question the motivation behind the central heating programme. I agree with Bob Doris that it was well intentioned. It delivered benefits. Unfortunately, a reduction in fuel poverty was not among those benefits. That is why many stakeholder organisations called for the programme to be reformed, and it is why we are right to deliver reform in our announcement today. I am delighted that there has been such cross-party support for it.

Discussions with the energy companies on ensuring that we receive a fair share of CERT money are on-going and are progressing well. The next meeting is in January, and the strategy of the CERT strategy group will be published shortly after. If we succeed, as I am determined that we will, the prize for Scotland will be an additional £100 million that we can spend on ensuring better energy efficiency and better success in lifting people out of fuel poverty.

**The Presiding Officer:** That concludes questions on the cabinet secretary's statement on fuel poverty.

**Alex Neil:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Two weeks ago, when you made a ruling about brevity, you quite rightly made no distinction between back benchers and front benchers. However, in the 30 minutes allowed for questions on this statement, the first three questioners got 14 minutes between them, with the back benchers yet again squeezed into the balance. I ask you to review the situation in the light of your own ruling, and ensure that back benchers are treated more fairly in the future than they have been to date.

**The Presiding Officer:** As Mr Neil well knows, it is entirely for the Presiding Officer to determine how a debate will be conducted. The front-bench questioners stuck within the time limits that were given to them. I remind the member that time is taken up by answers as well as by questions, but I will consider the point that he has raised before the next occasion on which a ministerial statement is made.

**Jeremy Purvis (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale) (LD):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I seek guidance on ministerial statements. I am fully aware that you are not responsible for the content of such statements, but the copy of the statement that we received earlier included the lines:

"We expect Westminster to take action this winter. That is why SNP Treasury spokesman Stewart Hosie has written to the Chancellor".

Whether that is a good or bad thing, this Parliament is not able to hold Westminster members of Parliament to account.

Are you, as Presiding Officer, able to say that the content of ministerial statements should focus on the responsibilities of the Scottish Government, rather than on the responsibilities of its parliamentary party colleagues at Westminster, whose work we cannot scrutinise?

**The Presiding Officer:** I will take your point away and reflect on it, Mr Purvis.

**Kenneth Gibson:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Is it appropriate for a member who was not even here to listen to the statement to come in at the end, after the questions on the statement, and raise a point of order about the content of the statement?

**The Presiding Officer:** It is every bit as appropriate for that to happen as for somebody to come in halfway through the statement and ask a question on it.

## Identity Cards

**The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S3M-2906, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on identity cards.

15:18

**The Minister for Community Safety (Fergus Ewing):** I welcome today's debate. It allows us to discuss the United Kingdom Government's plans on ID cards, and it enables me to make quite clear where the Scottish Government stands on the issue. The debate is timely because, earlier this month, the Home Office announced how it will start to implement its plans for ID cards. It also released its latest cost projections for its ID scheme. The Scottish Government is extremely concerned about the costs of the scheme. In the current financial climate, the UK Government should have better use for the vast sums of money being spent on the scheme.

**Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):** Will the minister take an intervention?

**Fergus Ewing:** Not just yet, thank you—but I will take an intervention later.

**Richard Baker:** Thanks.

**Fergus Ewing:** Millions have already been spent and projected costs have been rising. In 2004, the UK Government estimated projected costs to deliver the scheme at £3,100 million. The latest figures show that that amount has now risen by almost £2,000 million to around £5,000 million.

**Richard Baker:** Over 10 years. Does the minister not accept that 72 per cent of those costs will be required to be paid anyway to implement biometric passports—which I understand that the Scottish National Party supports?

**Fergus Ewing:** No, I do not accept that. Even if that were true—

**George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab):** It is true.

**Fergus Ewing:** Mr Foulkes will perhaps have his chance to speak from a non-sedentary position later.

**George Foulkes:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Alasdair Morgan):** I will not take debating points dressed up as points of order.

**George Foulkes:** I want to follow up the point that Jeremy Purvis made at the end of the statement about matters concerning the United Kingdom Government being discussed. We are now debating a matter that is entirely reserved.

The minister clearly does not know the facts because he does not have officials who are able to give them to him—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order. I have heard enough. That is not a point of order. The Presiding Officer has accepted the matter for debate.

**Fergus Ewing:** The scheme will cost £5,000 million. Even if Mr Baker and the Home Office are correct in saying that some of that money may have to be spent anyway because of the need for a Euro-ID biometric system, that would still—according to the Home Office's figures—leave around 30 per cent of that cost to be paid, which is more than £1,500 million. Even if the cost were that amount, we would argue that it would be a waste of money at this time.

Previously, the Home Office made it clear that, for an individual,

"the charge for a stand-alone ID card, valid for 10 years, will be £30."

**George Foulkes:** Will the minister give way?

**Fergus Ewing:** No. However, citizens now face two separate fees: the statutory fee of £30 and the enrolment fee. In addition, just as the overall costs to the taxpayer are very much estimates, citizens have been told that only for 2009-10—when very few people will have to get a card anyway—has the application fee been set at £30.

**George Foulkes:** Will the minister take an intervention?

**Fergus Ewing:** No. You have had your chance, Lord Foulkes. I am not giving way to you.

**George Foulkes:** I have not had any chance.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order. The member has said that he is not giving way.

**George Foulkes:** Because he does not want to know the facts.

**Fergus Ewing:** I hope that the level of debate in the House of Lords is of a higher order than we have heard this afternoon.

What someone will have to pay the "open market organisation" for collecting their biometric data—the second fee—is anyone's guess. Using private sector organisations for enrolment may be a way of keeping the figures down in the official cost reports, but it ignores the fact that the public are extremely uncomfortable about giving their personal data to the private sector.

I turn to issues of terrorism. Not only is the scheme extremely costly; ID cards will not make us more secure, whatever Lord Foulkes says from a sedentary position. The well-respected human rights organisation, Privacy International,

undertook an international study of the supposed link between ID cards and the prevention of terrorism. It found that ID cards, with or without biometrics, do not deter terrorist activity and that the vast majority of terrorists operate under their true identities. In Spain, where ID cards are compulsory and must be carried by all, those who were responsible for the 2004 Madrid bombings used at least one genuine ID document.

All of us in the chamber are totally opposed to terrorism. However, it is not only legitimate, but essential that this Government points out that, in our view, with support from others in the chamber, this vastly expensive scheme will not significantly—if at all—contribute to the successful combating of terrorism.

With regard to large databases, the national identity register could increase the risk of fraud rather than reduce it. Jerry Fishenden, Microsoft's lead technology adviser for the UK and a member of our privacy expert group, mentioned the ID card scheme in relation to his warning that

"significant additional problems could arise if yet more of our personal information is acquired and stored in new central databases."

He explained that

"the more databases set up and the more information exchanged from one place to another, the greater the risk of things going wrong."

Further, he said:

"Put simply, holding huge collections of personal data brings significant risks."

In Germany, the use of unique ID numbers and the storage of personal data on a central register are prohibited. In France, the national commission for data protection has reservations about plans for a national database ahead of the introduction of biometric passports, and has forced its Government to rethink its proposals.

The Scottish Government's eCare framework, our multi-agency information sharing service, is finding ways to share personal data securely and with the strictest controls, without creating a large centralised database. Further, the local authorities' citizen's accounts initiative, which started under the previous Administration, has recently been independently reviewed and will report shortly.

However, the Scottish Government is not complacent. It is up to all of us to take care to protect data and confidential information, and to avoid data leakage.

The United Kingdom Government's abysmal record on data security is reason enough to cancel the ID scheme. How can we trust the UK Government with our personal data when its track record has gone from bad to worse? Not only did it lose 25 million child benefit records but, since

then, the number of data breaches reported to the information commissioner has soared.

I am also concerned about the recent failures in security clearances at the Security Industry Authority, a public body sponsored by the Home Office. The authority has responsibility for regulating the private security industry across Britain. I was dismayed to learn that the authority itself employed agency staff without appropriate security clearance.

**Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab):**

Have there been any instances when the Scottish Government has lost personal data—yes or no?

**Fergus Ewing:** As I said earlier, we are absolutely not complacent. That is why I specifically said that. We must constantly be vigilant.

On the UK Government's record, since Paul Martin raised it, I can say that in December 2007, 3 million learner drivers' details went missing; in January 2008, the loss of a laptop resulted in the details of 600,000 military recruits being made public and hundreds of Department for Work and Pensions documents went missing; in June 2008, a senior intelligence officer from the Cabinet Office left a top-secret file on the seat of a train; in August 2008, information was leaked about 84,000 prisoners in England and Wales; and in October 2008, a computer hard drive containing the details of approximately 100,000 armed forces members was lost. Perhaps the UK Government should focus on the issue of looking after the data that it has, rather than creating a new, complicated system for new data.

We are also concerned about the potential impact on community relations. Ethnic minority communities are worried that the introduction of ID cards will strain relations with the police. The Commission for Racial Equality said that ethnic minorities' fear of discrimination is neither misconceived nor exaggerated, as latest Ministry of Justice statistics on the stop-and-search policy show that black people are seven times and Asian people two times more likely to be stopped than white people.

The first group of UK citizens who will be required to enrol in the identity register and have ID cards are airside workers. To begin with, from October 2009, this will affect airside workers at two airports: Manchester and London City. Trade unions and airlines have criticised those plans, pointing out that their members and employees are already subject to stringent security checks—as one would expect. Those workers now face an ultimatum: get an identity card or get a new job.

The general secretary of the British Airline Pilots Association—an organisation that should know

something about airside security—said that airside ID cards

“will do nothing to improve aviation security”

and called on the Government to stop playing Big Brother and concentrate on sorting out existing problems.

The Scottish National Party has opposed ID cards from the outset. The scheme will not achieve its primary stated objective of making people safer and reducing the terrorist threat, and it poses an unacceptable threat to citizens’ privacy and civil liberties. It is also a colossal waste of money that would have been better spent supporting the front-line services, such as police and prisons, that actually make a difference to the people of Scotland.

The Scottish Government has made its position clear to the UK Government on several occasions. I look forward to hearing members’ views on those important issues.

I move,

That the Parliament notes that the UK Government’s proposals for an ID card scheme are presently estimated by it to cost the public purse around £5 billion and considers that the scheme as proposed will not increase security, nor deter crime, and will have serious implications for the civil liberties of ordinary citizens.

15:31

**Robert Brown (Glasgow) (LD):** This debate arises from the whole philosophy and attitude of the Labour Government that has made this proposal, which threatens to define our society for many years to come. That Government has experienced disaster after disaster in all its big projects: the failure of the Child Support Agency and the various big information technology projects, and the huge losses of database information in many areas of government. Looming behind that has been the approach to terror and the shadow of the Iraq war.

**George Foulkes:** Will the member give way?

**Robert Brown:** I will get started, if the member does not mind.

Since 1945, we have dealt with the cold war, communist spies, Irish Republican Army terrorists and the protection of nuclear submarines, all without recourse to ID cards. As will no doubt be mentioned—it always is—the people who blew up the twin towers had valid identity card documents, as did the Madrid bombers in 2004. In neither case did the use of ID cards prevent the atrocity.

In light of that, it is no wonder that the UK information commissioner, Richard Thomas, recently said:

“We still have uncertainties about what the primary purpose of the ID card is. Is it to improve policing, to fight terrorism, to improve public services, to avoid identity theft?”

That is the big challenge for the Labour Government, which underlies the steady move in public opinion polls away from support for identity cards since the idea was first suggested. What are ID cards for? What increase in public security justifies the enormous cost? What huge advantage offsets the risk of British citizens being forced to suffer through a hapless Government official leaving key information about someone on a memory stick in a commuter train or a pub car park?

As the Minister for Community Safety said, the first biometric cards are being issued from next Tuesday.

**George Foulkes:** I wish that I could correct all the mis-statements. Can Robert Brown specify precisely which key information about me he is worried about?

**Robert Brown:** We are talking about the linkages to the databases, and the growth of storage of significant data under the current UK Government. It has more information about the individual citizen than any Government in the known civilised world.

**George Foulkes rose—**

**Robert Brown:** I will proceed if I may; I am sure that the member will get his say later. The first biometric cards are being issued next Tuesday to students from outside the European Union and marriage visa holders. The scheme goes under the rather unpleasant name of identity cards for foreign nationals, with all the nasty innuendo that the recipients are aliens or other people from far-off countries that we know nothing about, and who are probably terrorists anyway.

The Home Office, in its usual spin-doctorish way, says that the

“national identity scheme gives people for the first time the ability to prove who they are”.

That is not normally a problem—most people know who they are. It might as well say, “Next year we will allow you, too, to pre-register your interest in having an identity card, which will be available from 2012 to you as a bounty from a beneficent Government to a grateful people.”

Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, says that people regularly come up to her and say that they do not want to wait till 2012. I can say only that Home Secretaries must attract a different class of person wanting to talk to them. Who are those people who are demanding identity cards? Why would anybody want an identity card? Are members of some hitherto unknown religious cult



going about the place demanding ID cards, performing the equivalent of mortification of the flesh for medieval penitents? I can conclude only that they must be Labour Party researchers who are trying to curry favour with Government ministers.

The Labour Government backed away from introducing the ID card scheme before the general election because it knows that the scheme has laminated-poll-tax-type fiasco written all over it. Liberal Democrats, not surprisingly, have been at the forefront of the fight against ID cards and have been joined by the Conservatives—after an initial flip-flop, I think—and the SNP.

I ask the Cabinet Secretary for Justice or the Minister for Community Safety to spell out the SNP Government's position on its responsibilities. The Liberal Democrats' position in government was to refuse to allow the proposed ID card to be used to access devolved services. Is that the SNP Government's position? Will whichever minister sums up the debate take the opportunity to distance himself from his colleagues in the SNP's Morningside and Merchiston branch, who propose a national health service ID card with similar information to that which is required for the ID card? Does that proposal have anything to do with the SNP Government's policy for the future?

Liberal Democrats believe that we are in classic civil liberties territory. Identity cards are objectionable because they are a gross intrusion on personal liberty; because, as the minister said, they will help not one whit in the fight against terrorists or criminals; and because they cost a bomb, if members will excuse the pun. It is rarely a problem for the police to identify the people whom they arrest. The problem is catching people in the first place.

ID cards are also objectionable because of their cost. The minister told us about the rising costs. The London School of Economics estimates that the cost will be as high as £18 billion over 10 years and that the issue cost will be £300 a person. Our past experience, be it with information technology projects, the dome, or the Scottish Parliament building, suggests that the cost of such projects runs far beyond the estimates.

The Labour Government is massaging the figures. Its briefing claims—this was touched on in an intervention earlier—that 72 per cent of the costs would be spent on passports anyway. However, current passports, which are more difficult to forge than plastic ID cards, so I am told, already meet the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization. In addition, scandalously, the Government has transferred the costs of the centralised collection and retention of biometrics, which is a central feature of the ID card scheme, to the passport budget. Indeed, I have

heard it suggested that the cutbacks and job losses at the Glasgow passport office are a direct result of the need to cut costs to pay for that.

The final and most vital reason why the identity card scheme is a bad thing is simply that Governments—whether Labour in London, the SNP in Edinburgh, or even a Liberal Democrat Government—cannot be trusted to handle sensitive data. The scheme is the most ambitious public sector IT project that has ever been undertaken. What is the history of Government data scandals? In the past 12 months alone, there have been no less than 10 major disasters with data that are held by the UK Government and several lesser ones involving Scottish Government agencies. I will not detail them all, because the minister mentioned many of them, but they include data held by the Ministry of Defence, child benefit records, data from the Scottish Ambulance Service, data on NHS workers, and data on prisoners in England and Wales.

It does not take an Einstein to recognise that a would-be terrorist is not exactly presented with a foolproof system if he wants to access private information on British citizens. The paradox is that the entire justification—such as it is—for the ID card scheme is shot down in flames by those horrendous security breaches. Just as it is probably safer these days to leave your life savings in a sock under the bed than in the bank, no one in their right minds would entrust their personal data to the Government.

Of course, all sorts of data are held in IT systems by the Government, local authorities, commercial companies and individuals, including health records, information on criminal convictions, the sex offenders register, and various things of a more personal nature. Some of those systems exist for our convenience or to give access to discounts. There is usually no problem with that. However, when such information is held by Governments, by big monopolies, or as part of a single central database, that is something else again.

The UK already has the largest DNA database in the world. Incidentally, it contains 44 per cent of the male black population compared with only 6 per cent of the white population. More than half a million names on the database are said to be false, misspelt or incorrect. That is bad enough, but how much worse is it for such information to be joined together, kept in such a way that it can be accessed centrally, and made available to an increasingly authoritarian and inept Government? That is the ultimate problem with identity cards.

The Scottish Parliament can send a powerful message, which the Liberal Democrat amendment would strengthen, that the ID card scheme is an expensive white elephant, which was invented by

a paranoid Government, has no mandate from public opinion and has serious implications for the civil liberties of ordinary citizens. Liberal Democrats will have none of it, and neither, I believe, will the Parliament.

I move amendment S3M-2906.2, to insert at end:

“; recognises that the UK Government has repeatedly shown itself to be incapable of keeping personal data securely and therefore cannot be trusted with what would be the most powerful, most expensive and most intrusive database in the world; further recognises the large-scale public and political opposition to the imposition of the ID card scheme; believes that the money for ID cards could more usefully be spent elsewhere, and therefore calls on the UK Government to heed public opinion and cancel this wasteful government folly.”

15:40

**Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con):** Identity cards have been debated before and there is a degree of groundhog-day inevitability to today's debate. Lord George Foulkes, the Labour Party's self-appointed Rottweiler, was quite correct to highlight that ID cards are not a matter for the Scottish Parliament to deal with. However, there are still some points that it is worth while making.

When the minister said that the cost of the scheme is £5 billion, he demonstrated an unusual prescience or was guilty of slight hyperbole. It is not; at the last count, it was £4.78 billion. As the cost has gone up by £120 million since we last debated the subject, if we are to hold such debates annually, Fergus Ewing will not have much longer to wait until he is spot on. It is well worth making that point.

**Robert Brown:** The briefing from the Home Office's identity and passport service says that on top of that, the scheme will cost another £326 million for foreign nationals.

**Bill Aitken:** I am grateful to Robert Brown for adding to the strength of my argument.

Let me be serious. There is every justification for any Government to take action to safeguard the security of this country. I would not criticise the Government in that respect, but the cost of its scheme is enormous. How much will it cost in the end, albeit that it will be paid for over a 10-year period? One estimate from the London School of Economics, a body of people beloved of the Labour Party, suggests that the final cost will be £20 billion. If that is what Labour's friends are saying, what chance is there that those who are prepared to consider the issue reasonably will arrive at an accurate conclusion?

An identity card scheme would be acceptable if it worked, but the basic fact is that it simply will not. As the minister and Robert Brown have said,

there have been terrible terrorist outrages in countries in which ID cards are compulsory, but they have made not a whit of difference. All the people who were involved in the 9/11 outrage in the United States in 2001 had valid identification. In Spain, where I understand that ID cards have been compulsory for many years, everyone who was convicted of involvement in the Madrid bombings had a valid identity card.

If people from overseas decided to come to this country to do a hit on public transport, which is the obvious key target, under the Government's scheme they would not be required to have an identity card for three months. It would not be beyond people who have shown such dedication to committing foul deeds to plan such an attack within three months so, even if the scheme goes ahead, it will leave the door wide open. In seeking to restrict people in the manner proposed, the Westminster Government is exhibiting a degree of hypocrisy, given that its open-door asylum policies have caused so many problems.

I return to the point that the scheme just will not work. The minister was quite correct to quote Microsoft's national technology officer. It is worth repeating his considered view that the scheme would trigger a crisis of “massive identity fraud”. Those are his words, not mine.

On privacy, Government should know as little about people as is consistent with the proper governance of the country. Lord George Foulkes asked what information the Government might have about Robert Brown that he might be concerned about. With the greatest respect to Lord George, I suggest that he should be more concerned about what the Government might know about him.

**George Foulkes:** Indeed I am. That is why I am relieved that nothing that would be included on an identity card or on the register would cause me any concern whatsoever. The minister and Robert Brown have not propounded the truth. They implied that a great deal more would be included on the cards or the register than there will be.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Robert Brown has one minute. I am sorry. Bill Aitken has one minute.

**Bill Aitken:** I may not have an identity card, but it appears that, for the second time in a week, I have an identity crisis.

The control freaks opposite want simply to have information about as many people as possible, but it is a fact that we cannot trust the Government—indeed, the Scottish Government has a little bit of previous on the matter. None of us can be relaxed in thinking that information in the hands of Government at any level is being treated with the necessary care. I will not go through the litany of

failures that the minister went through, but all members will be concerned about that.

Why should any member have to carry an identity card every day when they walk the streets of Edinburgh or Glasgow? If anybody who knows who we are wants to do something, every one of us carries plenty of documentation in our wallet. Every one of us has a bank card, George Foulkes will have a pension card, and many members have other means of identification. The ID card scheme is an unnecessary measure, which the Government should scrap.

I move amendment S3M-2906.2.1, to insert after "elsewhere":

“, such as on improving border security or policing”.

15:46

**Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):** Why are we having a debate on identity cards and a motion that is entirely on a reserved matter? I do not dispute that ID cards are of great public interest, but their introduction throughout the UK is not a matter for Scottish ministers, and this is a debate in Scottish Government time. Why are we debating a matter that is outwith the Scottish Government's control when our prisons are bursting at the seams, the Government is cutting corners in training to try to make its police recruitment targets, and crimes of dishonesty have increased in our capital city? Having heard the speeches so far, I fear that there are further increases in such crimes in the chamber, where myths are being perpetuated about costs, police powers and supposed civil liberties infringements in relation to ID cards.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** How many Labour members got to their feet when the previous Administration secured debates on international aid for Malawi or the fresh talent initiative, or when it responded positively to debates on the treatment of asylum seekers? Those are reserved issues. Surely we have got over what the member is saying by now.

**Richard Baker:** It was entirely proper for action to be taken on Malawi, for example. However, we know what the tenor of today's debate will be, because the Liberal Democrats secured a debate on ID cards only last December. I did not agree with many things that were said in that debate, but it was interesting and the issues were well aired. I may not agree with the conclusion that the Parliament reached, but it is a fact that there was a debate and nothing has changed significantly since then. Bill Aitken was right. This is a parliamentary groundhog day. It is time that we debated issues that are within the competence of Scottish ministers, such as that is.

In contrast, the Government at Westminster is proposing a series of measures to enhance national security and public safety. ID cards are part of those measures. Many members of the general public will not understand the depth of opposition to ID cards in the other parties that are represented in the chamber, as opinion polls consistently show that a majority of people are in favour of them. That is contrary to what the Liberal Democrat amendment says. The fears that have been expressed in the chamber are not shared by people throughout the continent either. Twenty-four of the 27 European Union member states already have ID cards, so there is nothing extreme or unusual about introducing ID cards or about the kind of data that will be on them here.

**Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Richard Baker:** I am sorry, but I do not have enough time.

Of course, there is also the introduction of biometric passports, which I understand the other main parties support. Biometric passports will be required in order to meet international obligations. Their introduction is relevant to what the motion says about the cost of ID cards over 10 years because, in any event, approximately 72 per cent of the costs for UK citizens will need to be spent simply on implementing secure biometric passports. As with passports, the operational costs of issuing ID cards will be recovered from fees. Therefore, the Conservative party's amendment is, frankly, redundant.

On the issue of securing our nation's borders, the Conservative party would do better to return to its previous position of support for ID cards, because the scheme will not only help with an efficient immigration system but make it more difficult for terrorists to conceal their identity or create multiple identities, which will make it harder for them to operate here. The UK Government has never claimed that the national identity scheme can prevent terrorism but, in the 18 months up to June this year, 67 terrorists were convicted in the UK courts and it is almost certain that 90 per cent of them had multiple identities. ID cards will play an important role in tackling that.

**Mike Rumbles:** I have a single point. Will Richard Baker tell the Parliament what he believes the purpose of ID cards is?

**Richard Baker:** Robert Brown mentioned almost all the purposes. We will get a range of benefits from ID cards. I will point out another one. As was mentioned in our previous debate on civil liberties, the Association of Chief Police Officers has stated:

"a national ID card scheme could deliver considerable benefits. Many areas of policing would benefit, not least the ability of the police to better protect and serve the public."

That is one benefit of the scheme.

The Government's proposals balance the objective with individual rights. It is important to acknowledge that the Identity Cards Bill would have imposed no legal obligation on individuals to carry an ID card and that it included a prohibition on the requirement to produce one. The Liberal Democrats raise the issue of storage of data, which of course has been an issue for the Scottish Government as well as for the UK Government. The minister did not remember the loss of students' data here. The fact is that data are stored at present not only by the Government but by a host of other organisations, including banks. Identity cards will help to address fraudulent use of personal data and the unnecessary proliferation of forms of ID. People will find that to be of great benefit.

I say to Mr Brown that Jacqui Smith is right. I can assure him that Mr Martin and I look forward to applying for our ID cards next year—they cannot come quickly enough. Like it or not, ID cards are a popular proposal, because they will be of real benefit to individuals. They can help to make our society safer and will not threaten civil liberties. What threatens progress on tackling crime in our country is a failure of leadership in providing the resources and tools that we need in Scotland to build on the previous Executive's progress on making our communities safer.

The Scottish ministers are stalling on tackling antisocial behaviour, failing to address the prisons crisis and creating a real-terms cut of £35 million in the budget for tackling crime—no wonder they want to debate ID cards. The fact that we are debating a motion on ID cards and not matters on which the ministers have authority smacks of them smarting from an election defeat in Glenrothes and failing to provide the leadership that we need on tackling crime in this country. On that, whether they like it or not, we will hold them to account.

15:52

**Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP):** It is a delight to follow a rant—I am glad that the member got very excited.

I oppose compulsory ID cards in principle. Their purpose, apparently, is to allow Lord George Foulkes to prove who he is. Unfortunately, we know who he is. The scheme will lead to an infringement of free movement in Scotland of civilians who are not engaged in criminal activity but who are just going peaceably about their business. People could be asked to produce an ID card on demand and failure to do so would be a

criminal offence. I share the minister's concerns that certain ethnic groups would be more vulnerable to challenge than others, as would people with learning difficulties, who might not understand. Aside from the principle, the scheme would be socially disruptive.

I wrote a little inventory of the information that the state already holds on me. It is a sad list: national insurance number, which was given at birth, tax code number, passport data, council tax code, road tax data, television licence, car licence, electoral database, census information and even my pensioner's pass. That is not a complete list. The state knows plenty about me already. I am delighted to tell members that, in all those matters, I have complied with the law. However, a database of compulsory ID cards is a step too far.

When we talk about safeguards and security, one interesting point that no member has made yet is that the Government at Westminster proposes to spend £12 billion on a database to monitor and store the internet browsing habits and e-mail and telephone records of everyone in Britain. Government Communications Headquarters, the Government's eavesdropping centre, has already been given up to £1 billion to finance the first stage of the project. Hundreds of clandestine probes will be installed to provide monitoring in real time of customers on two of the country's biggest internet and mobile phone providers, which it is thought will be Vodaphone and BT, which already has 5 million internet customers. Last year, 57 billion text messages were sent in the United Kingdom. All such messages are to be collected and monitored and yet people do not know that. My goodness, has Big Brother not arrived and raised all that money—£12 billion—to do all that? It is quite a list.

**George Foulkes:** Will the member give way?

**Christine Grahame:** No.

I provide data voluntarily by way of my bank card, various credit cards, AA card—I hasten to say that that is my Automobile Association card—and organ donor card. Although all those data are on record somewhere, the input was made voluntarily. If all of that is put together with the data that are collected from my Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda and other supermarket cards, somebody somewhere in the world knows what I eat and drink, what my cats eat and drink, the amount that I spend, when I do it and so on.

In fact, some of those data are not secure. I am not sure whether members are aware that the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency regularly sells data on them to private security and car parking companies without their knowledge. People who have been served with huge charges by security companies wonder how those

companies come to have that personal information from the DVLA. Data collection has already gone a step too far—to distort and corrupt a well-known phrase: never has so much been known by so many about me.

Let us turn to security breaches, a number of which the minister listed in his speech. What caused the loss of the data that were stored on those memory sticks and disks? The answer is not that someone hacked into the system—no clever technology clogs was involved—but human error. As Stewart James, a partner in law firm DLA Piper's technology, media and commercial group, said,

"All of the data loss scandals have been caused by human error and not by the technology itself".

Andrew Maloney, the internationally respected information security expert, underlined the seriousness of the situation when he said:

"In the past we worried about the perimeter of our organization and securing that against criminals trying to hack in. In reality, the bigger threat for most organizations is good guys doing dumb things."

It is people who are at fault and we cannot legislate against human error.

I will conclude with some interesting words from a previous debate on ID cards in another place:

"Those who support the introduction of such a card would reduce every man, woman and child in this country to a number to be programmed at will. The idea that every individual would have his or her life story on a little metal strip on a little plastic card is objectionable. The universal personal indicator—that is what some people call such numbers—on a card could include an individual's medical history, work progress, financial status, what he did, where he did it, and where he was stopped. All that information could be revealed by passing a card through a computer terminal. That is a great step, and I should be reluctant to take it."—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 10 February 1989; c 1310.]

I endorse those words, which were spoken by Alistair Darling in a debate in the House of Commons some years ago. He should have kept to that.

15:58

**George Foulkes (Lothians) (Lab):** The speech that we have just heard is a perfect illustration of why we should not be debating this matter. The speech was so full of inaccuracies and irrelevancies it was unbelievable. ID cards will hold nothing on what someone's cat eats and drinks, nor will they hold details of AA or RAC membership. It is astonishing that a trained lawyer such as Christine Grahame can make so many mistakes in just six minutes. She said that our life story will be included on the cards. Nothing could be further from the truth.

**Christine Grahame:** Will the member take an intervention?

**George Foulkes:** No. You did not give way to me. You perpetrated so many myths today that they need to be dispelled.

Unrelated personal information, such as someone's religious or political beliefs, ethnicity, occupation, or their criminal, tax or medical records, will not be included on their ID card. Pension, driving licence, tax and health records will be held, but they will be held separately, as they are at the moment.

**Patrick Harvie:** Will the member give way?

**George Foulkes:** No.

The only things that will be included on the card—and I ask any member to say whether they are worried about their inclusion—are your picture—

**Members:** Yes.

**George Foulkes:** Your name—

**Members:** Yes.

**George Foulkes:** Oh, don't. I will not ask, because it is not worth it. The card will include people's picture, name, gender, place and date of birth, an issue date, an expiry date, a unique national identity register number, people's nationality and immigration status, and two fingerprints—that is all. If anyone is worried about that information being on a card, they must have something to hide.

I turn to some of the other myths that Christine Grahame mentioned. She said that the card will have to be carried, that it will be demanded, and that ethnic minorities will suffer. There will be no requirement to carry the card at all times—the Identity Cards Act 2006 specifically prohibits making the carrying of an ID card compulsory. Yet again, a trained lawyer has got it completely wrong, because she believes something and will not allow the facts to influence her thinking.

**Christine Grahame:** So people will not have to produce the card.

**George Foulkes:** Of course not. You—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Trish Godman):** Can we have a speech, rather than a conversation, please?

**George Foulkes:** Instead of the member shouting from a sedentary position, why does she not go home quietly and access—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Foulkes, I am not going home.

**George Foulkes:** I am sorry, I did not mean you. Why does she not go home—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You mean Christine Grahame.

**George Foulkes:** Why does Christine Grahame not go home and access the Home Office website, where she might find out some facts?

My colleague Richard Baker has already dealt with costs. Seventy per cent of the costs are covered by biometric passports; the rest relate to ID cards. ID cards will not cost the taxpayer £5 billion, as has been suggested.

The claim that ID cards breach human rights is a myth perpetuated by people such as Robert Brown—another member who has not taken the time to consider the facts. Twenty-four out of 27 European Union countries already have identity cards; all are signatories to the European convention on human rights.

**Robert Brown** *rose*—

**George Foulkes:** I will not give way to the member—he did not give way to me. He should listen, for a change. I ask the members who say that ID cards breach human rights—others will speak in favour of that proposition—to spell out exactly which part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the European convention on human rights they breach. I bet that none of them will be able to tell us.

Mike Rumbles asked a perfectly legitimate question—what is the purpose of the scheme, if it will not eliminate terrorism? It will help to combat terrorism because, as Richard Baker said, terrorists have multiple identities. Robert Brown said that all terrorists work under their own name, but nothing could be further from the truth.

**Robert Brown:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. Lord Foulkes should quote members' statements correctly. I said nothing of the sort. I said that there had been terrorist incidents involving people who had ID cards—I made no general statement about the matter. I wish that Lord Foulkes would stick to the facts.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is not a point of order, Mr Brown.

**George Foulkes:** I say to Mr Rumbles that identity theft and fraud are real problems that the ID scheme will help to tackle. People ask how many illegal immigrants are in the country—ID cards will help to address that issue. I wish that Kenny MacAskill were in the chamber, because ID cards are important as a way of establishing proof of age, especially for younger people who are trying to access services in shops and elsewhere. Another benefit has not been mentioned—ID cards prevent electoral fraud, because they allow voter identification at the point of voting. The scheme has all sorts of positive elements.

It is a travesty that this debate has included so much misinformation from members who are opposed to ID cards. It is a perfect illustration of how, in its desperation to pick fights with Westminster, the SNP Government will take hold of any issue, distort the facts, attack and mislead. It is a great pity that so much misleading information has been put forward this afternoon.

16:05

**Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD):** In Britain, we have a long tradition of democracy and personal freedoms—something that George Foulkes does not seem to rate. I never thought that I would hear anybody say in this chamber—and I wrote it down—that only people who have something to hide should be worried about ID cards. How chilling. It has always been fundamental to the liberty and freedoms of citizens that they are able to go about their normal business without undue let or hindrance from the state.

However, at times in our history those freedoms have had to be curtailed. During the second world war, ID cards were issued by the state to help protect the nation from what were considered to be real threats from Nazi fifth columnists. That was supported by the general population. When the war ended, the new Labour Government of 1945 did not return us to the status quo ante—the approach is the same now. That Government did not abolish ID cards or the legal obligation to carry them. It was left to Winston Churchill's Government of 1951 to do the right thing and return us to the position that had always prevailed in the United Kingdom. I point out to Bill Aitken that Churchill abolished ID cards not because they cost a lot of money—which they did—but because they were wrong in principle.

Labour Governments have never been particularly concerned with protecting individual freedoms where the state is concerned, which is highlighted by the current Administration's fixation with labelling people and wanting to identify everyone. The UK Labour Government seems increasingly intent on building up ever larger amounts of personal information on our citizens. Where will it end?

The protection of individual freedoms and privacy has never been more under threat than it is today. It took Christine Grahame to point out the threat of computer systems. That protection is under threat not because of any outside cause, but because of an ever more authoritarian approach by the Labour Government.

UK ministers are forever changing their reasons for advocating ID cards, hence my question to Richard Baker, which he could not answer. Are ID

cards to be used for combating terrorism, for combating identity theft, for combating benefit fraud, for combating illegal immigration or, indeed, for accessing Government services?

**Richard Baker:** Yes—all those things.

**Mike Rumbles:** “All those things,” I hear him say. One reason why the UK Government keeps changing its mind on its reasons for advocating ID cards is that none of them holds up to detailed scrutiny. In fact, the issuing of ID cards would make identity theft, benefit fraud and even illegal immigration easier—listen to that word, please; easier—not more difficult.

**George Foulkes:** Why?

**Mike Rumbles:** Because the cards can be so easily forged, Mr Foulkes. I know that Governments feel that they can help to kick-start new businesses, but what a kick-start the Government will give to criminal gangs if it proceeds down the route of ID cards. At a time when the UK Government ought to be careful not to waste taxpayers’ money, and at the very time of the credit crunch and the recession, what utter folly it is even to consider spending so much on measures that attack our fundamental freedoms and simply will not work.

It seems likely that, at decision time, the Parliament will unite in sending a clear message to the UK Government that Scotland does not want ID cards for our citizens. Everyone except the Labour Party is united on that. The Labour Party covers its disunity on the subject by abstention, on the ground that the issue is reserved to our Westminster Parliament. As has been pointed out, Labour members did not object when the previous First Minister initiated debate on Malawi, did they?

Of course the issue is reserved, but it is worth while for the UK Government to be well aware of the clear opposition in Scotland to the issuing of ID cards by the state. This is an opportunity to send the UK Government such a message. The fact that the Labour Government will probably not listen to us should not deter us from making our views known as a Parliament.

I would have more respect for the Labour Party’s argument that we should leave the matter to our MPs in Westminster if we had MPs who were elected to represent us by a fair electoral system. The fact is that Scotland is not well represented in the House of Commons, due to what I call the corrupt electoral system, whereby the vast majority of our MPs are elected on a minority of the votes. The Scottish Parliament more accurately reflects public opinion in Scotland because of the nature of the electoral system that we use.

We need to send the UK Government the clear message—even though it might not listen—that Scotland does not need or want ID cards, because they threaten our long-established personal freedoms to go about our business without undue interference from the state and because they would be an obscene waste of taxpayers’ money.

I urge MSPs throughout the chamber to unite and support the motion and both amendments.

16:10

**Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP):** I welcome the opportunity to speak in this important debate. I thank some members for their worthwhile contributions. I will give the members whom I have not thanked some facts and figures. I say to those who argue that this subject has nothing to do with Scotland that the ID plan will cost Scotland more than £600 million over the next 10 years. That is far too high a cost for something that is not guaranteed to work. We could spend that money on more beneficial things for Scotland, such as more police on the beat and more teachers.

There is a continuing failure to produce correct estimates of the cost of the UK identity card scheme. As Robert Brown said, the staffing costs were underestimated by £460 million over the 10 years.

As far as I am concerned, Scotland and Scottish people are affected. ID cards are a complete infringement of civil liberties.

**George Foulkes:** Will the member give way?

**Sandra White:** No, sorry.

The idea of biometrics goes too far. What do they do with the pictures that they take of us at airports? Do they destroy them? We do not get them back. Only last week at Heathrow airport I had to have a biometric picture taken of me. They put it on my passport and then said that they had destroyed it. I do not know what they have done with it. That is highly questionable, and it should not happen.

More important, the UK Government does not have the best track record. Child benefit claimants and naval recruits have been mentioned. I do not want to go through the same scenario. What happens with the data? We cannot trust the Government.

I disagree with the Labour Party’s stance on ID cards. I really would have thought that Labour members would have the humility to acknowledge the errors and agree that one of the functions of the Scottish Parliament is to represent the views of the Scottish people. As their elected representatives, it is our duty to represent their views. We know that public opinion in Scotland is

dead set against the introduction of identity cards. Given that the Labour Party knows that, I had hoped that it would stand up for Scotland and the Scottish people. The Labour Party should stop timidly accepting the dictates of the UK Government. It is sad that Labour has put itself in that position.

Of course, it seems that Labour members do have opinions on ID cards, however childish they may be. Richard Baker—who I see is not in the chamber—showed in his opening remarks how childish he can be. His remarks were taken straight from the Labour Party's ridiculous press release.

If Labour members have opinions, they should bring them to the chamber. I might not agree with them, but it is up to them to bring their opinions here. They should have the courage of their convictions and argue their position. They should lodge an amendment, which we could then debate. Labour lodged an amendment to Patrick Harvie's motion on ID cards in 2005. Some Labour members expressed concerns. I will name one Labour member whom I spoke to about this: Pauline McNeill, who is to be commended for her defence of human rights. She stated:

"The benefits of an ID card scheme are overstated."—  
[*Official Report*, 24 February 2005; c 14722.]

She hit the nail on the head.

Christine Grahame mentioned all the information that they have on us already. They do not need any more information. That is one of the fundamental reasons why we need to have an open debate in this Parliament. The ID card scheme affects Scottish people; it affects our constituents; it affects all of us. We should be able to debate things that affect our daily lives, which ID cards will do if they are introduced. They will be mandatory, not voluntary, and people should not think that we will not be stopped at every turn to present our ID cards.

**Richard Baker:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Sandra White:** No.

I live in a democratic society, and I want to be treated as a democratic citizen. If ID cards are introduced, we will not have a democratic society.

I have already quoted various figures. The public have been misled on the benefits—what benefits? They have been misled on the cost—it is extortionate. They have been misled on security—it is astounding how information can be lost by the Westminster Government. Most important, they have been misled about the purpose of ID cards. The public have been told that ID cards will stop terrorism and illegal immigrants. As Robert Brown and others have said, the cards can be forged.

What will be done with our information if ID cards are introduced? Committees in the House of Lords—which George Foulkes will be familiar with—and the House of Commons and joint all-party committees have criticised the Identity Cards Bill. I would have thought that Mr Foulkes would realise that. One committee warned that the stated aims of the ID scheme do not justify the huge invasion of privacy. It did not even mention the cost, just the huge invasion of privacy. Despite that, a contemptuous UK Government in Westminster—not for the first time, and probably not for the last, unless it is no longer there—has chosen to ignore those findings and drive through ill-thought-out and illiberal legislation. I for one will not support the introduction of ID cards either here or down south. However, we can only say what we want for this country: no compulsory ID cards at all.

16:16

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** I am genuinely disappointed with the tone and content of Labour members' contributions to the debate. I thought that, as the Parliament was maturing, all political parties were becoming more comfortable with the principle that we can debate anything we choose, rather than retreat into some sort of Foulkesian pact with Westminster that we should be prohibited from debating anything that the Labour Party disagrees with or anything on which we disagree with the UK Government.

The previous Administration rightly brought debates of its own on reserved issues, and for years councils all over Scotland have debated international development, nuclear weapons and a host of other issues. There is no reason why we should not have this debate. Richard Baker was quoted in the media yesterday as describing the debate as demonstrating a lack of leadership from the Scottish Government. I think that it demonstrates that the current Government understands that people want government and not mere administration from this institution.

Aside from that principle, the ID card policy clearly affects devolved responsibilities, including policing, the promotion of racial equality, public services, voting—if Lord Foulkes has his way—and the recruitment of overseas students. There are clear reasons why we should debate ID cards in this chamber.

**Richard Baker:** Another pertinent point is that the debate has already been had in this Parliament. The public would rather that far more pressing issues were debated in this chamber, such as the prisons crisis.

**Patrick Harvie:** As a member who is represented on the Parliamentary Bureau, Richard



Baker should take up that point with his business manager. I am not represented on the bureau. I can have the conversation with him informally if he wants. He is right that there have been debates on ID cards in this chamber, and I have been pleased to take part in them and lodge motions. However, even since those debates, the case against ID cards has grown stronger, month by month and year by year.

Even if the ID card system were free, I would still oppose it. I would still argue and campaign against it, and I would be willing to take part in civil disobedience to help prevent it from functioning, because it is a threat to civil liberties. For George Foulkes's reference, civil liberties are not the same as human rights. Human rights are set out in legislation that determines the rights that we can seek to have enforced by a court. Civil liberties are much broader and are concerned with the defence of the individual against the misuse of power by the state. That is why we call them civil liberties.

**George Foulkes:** I accept that absolutely, and Patrick Harvie is a good exponent of both human rights and civil liberties. Will he tell me precisely which civil liberty will be infringed by the ID cards proposal—not the fanciful ideas that people think will be introduced?

**Patrick Harvie:** The fear of how the system might be used in the future is relevant. However, we have argued all along that it would be used disproportionately against minority ethnic groups and have predicted that the civil liberty of people's right to be treated equally regardless of their ethnicity would be undermined. The fact that overseas students are among the first groups that are being targeted by the surveillance system demonstrates that we were right.

I am opposed to ID cards not only on principle but for practical reasons. The Government's record on data handling is so dismal that many people understand that the case against ID cards is increasingly strong.

I hope that members know that I am supportive and/or critical of the SNP Government as I see fit, whatever the debate happens to be. I say with no hesitation that I was very pleased when the Government announced the creation of a privacy working group to examine the place of privacy in this technological world—even if the organisation that is responsible for bringing us that bastion of privacy Outlook Express was invited on to the working group, which was a slightly questionable decision.

The creation of the group was necessary, but I challenge the restriction of its remit. I understand from written answers that it will not be able to examine the operation of citizens accounts and entitlement cards. Those are not the same as the

UK identity surveillance system, but they bear some resemblance to it. Those concerns can be addressed. All I ask is that the minister allow the privacy working group to examine those systems and their boundaries in the interest of transparency. Often, those of us who argue for civil liberties seek not the abandonment of such technological systems but merely a clear set of boundaries within which they can operate. Entitlement cards and citizens accounts can be put back in their box within clear, well-understood boundaries before they grow incrementally into something for which the Parliament would never vote. I hope that the minister will respond on that point.

My amendment was not selected for debate, but I would be happy to continue to debate the defence of civil liberties year after year. Until we are able to put Government back in its box—until it understands that it is the servant, not the master, in our society—it will always be necessary to return to the debate.

16:22

**Bashir Ahmad (Glasgow) (SNP):** I am delighted that the Scottish Parliament is debating ID cards. Even though we do not have direct control over the matter, it will eventually affect all of us who live in Scotland, so it is only correct that we, as the people's Parliament, have a say on this important issue and represent our constituents' views.

There are a number of reasons why ID cards should be rejected. All the evidence points in one direction: the UK Government has simply not made the case for them.

There are many issues that are above party politics, and the protection of our civil liberties is one. Privacy is a fundamental right in our society and it comes under serious threat with the introduction of ID cards. The UK Government has tried to convince us that those magic bits of plastic will help in the fight against terrorism. Unfortunately, that is using the same politics of fear that cost us many lives in the invasion of Iraq.

The ex-head of MI5, Dame Stella Rimington, has stated that ID cards will not make us any safer. She has also said:

"I don't think that anybody in the intelligence services, particularly in my former service, would be pressing for ID cards."

If that is the view of a security expert who knows more than any minister does about the issue, why is the Government pushing ahead with ID cards? It is clear that countries all over the world that have ID cards are not immune from terrorist activity. Former Home Secretary Charles Clarke admitted

that ID cards would not have stopped the 7/7 London bombings.

In addition to countering terrorism, we have been told that ID cards will help the fight against benefit fraud. That is a poor justification when the Government's figures show that 95 per cent of benefit fraud arises from a person lying about financial circumstances and not from ID fraud.

It is only right that, when deciding on any issue, we weigh the benefits against the costs. As I have said, the benefits seem limited, whereas the costs would be extremely high. First, we have the financial cost to consider. The ID cards scheme is estimated to cost between £5 billion and £6 billion. In a time of financial turmoil, when families are struggling to make ends meet and unemployment looks as if it will rise, surely that money can be much better used.

In addition to the financial burden that the scheme might place on families, we must consider the risk of information getting into the wrong hands. The Westminster Government does not have a particularly good record of handling personal data. Last year alone, it lost more than 25 million child benefit claimants' records. In the aftermath of that, a poll by *The Times* found that 73 per cent of the population did not trust the Government with their personal data.

The ID card will store a person's personal records, such as their name, address and biometric data. If that information were lost or fell into the wrong hands, the consequences would not bear thinking about. We should not be willing to take such a risk.

In dangerous times such as ours, when national security is under threat, our leaders should protect our rights and liberties. I hope that the Parliament will join together to send that message loud and clear to Westminster.

16:29

**Hugh O'Donnell (Central Scotland) (LD):** It is generally clear from today's debate that there is no majority in support of ID cards in Scotland. Before highlighting a couple of issues, let me make two points.

First, the whole premise of the Labour Party's argument is that ID cards will be used for benign purposes. That reveals a degree of either naivety or arrogance, because it presumes that Labour will continue as a benign Government in Westminster for all time. That may not necessarily be the case. A national identity scheme and its data would be at the hands of any Government—

**Richard Baker:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Hugh O'Donnell:** I have just started, Mr Baker.

The reality is that we do not know the nature of future Governments and how they might put that information to use. In such circumstances, we cannot afford to have such a system at the behest of Government.

Secondly, like Sandra White, I have just returned from Gaza, which is a country—or part of a country—that is regarded as terrorist. I walked into Gaza, and walked out of it and returned to these shores, with my ordinary wooden British passport. If an ordinary passport is sufficient for arriving in a place such as Gaza, why—goodness me—should such a system not be sufficient in Scotland?

Interestingly, although I have been involved in this Parliament in one way or another since 1999, I do not remember any other debate here on which a Westminster Government department saw fit to send us a briefing. Of course, I might be wrong. Perhaps, like so much other stuff that the Government moves around the country, the information is lying on a roundabout somewhere, keeping company with a variety of other personal data. However, we should all be pretty relaxed about that, as I am sure that Lord Lucan and Shergar are looking after it.

As Mike Rumbles said, there is no hard evidence that any of the reasons that are given in support of ID cards—such as terrorism, fraud, immigration control or access to services—stands up to close scrutiny. The Government has moved the goalposts since the idea was first proposed. The timeframe has slipped, the costs have soared and the supposed benefits have been challenged and disproved at every stage. The whole idea is discredited. The public in Scotland do not support it and the public in Scotland do not want it.

Mike Rumbles highlighted the fact that ID cards were last used in the UK between 1939 and 1952. They were introduced during a state of war—

**Richard Baker:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. If this is such an important debate for the Government, why is no minister currently in the chamber?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is not a point of order.

**Hugh O'Donnell:** I guess that some members of the Labour Party are a little bit agitated, but there we go.

To return to my point, between 1939 and 1951 the police had the powers to demand to see a person's identity card. If a person failed to show an ID card, they were required, on pain of a criminal offence, to turn up at a police station to show the ID card within two days. As Mike Rumbles said, it was not until Churchill took the

step of repealing identity cards that they were done away with.

Let me conclude—laying aside the entertainment value provided by Lord Foulkes, who I see has moved to the empty Government front bench—by quoting from Lord Goddard's decision of 26 June 1951, in the case of *Willcock v Muckle*, which is the case that led to Churchill's decision to repeal the National Registration Act 1939. On the police's right to challenge people, Lord Goddard said:

"Of course, if they are looking for a stolen car or have reason to believe that a particular motorist is engaged in committing a crime, that is one thing, but to demand a national registration identity card from all and sundry, for instance, from a lady who may leave her car outside a shop longer than she should, or some trivial matter of that sort, is wholly unreasonable."

That is the danger that we faced. He continued:

"This Act was passed for security purposes, and not for the purposes for which, apparently, it is now sought to be used. To use Acts of Parliament, passed for particular purposes during war"—

I hope that the Labour Party is not telling us that we are at war—

"in times when the war is past"

is not appropriate. He went on:

"Further, in this country we have always prided ourselves on the good feeling that exists between the police and the public and such action tends to make the people resentful of the acts of the police and inclines them to obstruct the police instead of to assist them".

Those words were true in 1952; they would be equally true today. We must not accept these identity cards.

16:35

**John Lamont (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con):** The debate has been useful in reminding us all what a complete waste of time and money ID cards will be. It has also shown us, from the way in which he has carried on this afternoon, the contempt in which Lord George Foulkes holds this Parliament.

The national identity card scheme will do nothing to provide real help in Scotland as we face the economic crisis. The scheme will create a system that results in excessive amounts of information on British citizens being held. The whole scheme distracts from the important issues that we should be discussing. That is not the fault of the Scottish Parliament; it is the fault of the Labour Government at Westminster.

With the Westminster Government's recent backtracking on the plan, it is clear that, even within the Labour Party, support is wavering. If the UK Government shifts policy and remains hesitant

on its own proposals, why should the people of Scotland be convinced that the policy is the right one to follow?

I want to focus on a couple of aspects of the proposals that have been discussed during the debate by a number of members—their cost, and their ability to keep our country safe. There is no doubt that ID cards would come at a great cost to the entire country. The Identity Cards Act 2006 requires that the UK Government update Parliament at least every six months on the estimated public expenditure likely to be incurred to introduce the ID cards. As the minister pointed out, the latest cost estimates have been published by the UK Government. In the publication, it was revealed that the cost had risen by millions of pounds. That increase was combined with another substantial increase in providing ID cards to foreign nationals, making the total increase £60 million over the past six months. Those figures are startling. The taxpayer will forfeit huge sums of money to finance a scheme of questionable value.

As Bill Aitken said, a study that was carried out independently by the London School of Economics found that, although the UK Government estimated a £4.8 billion cost for ID cards, a more accurate figure would be something closer to £20 billion. With discrepancies such as those, it is understandable why many people are worried about the implementation of such a plan. Who knows how much the cost will really be?

Why pursue such an expensive scheme? Well, the UK Government is implementing its plans in the hope of creating better security for the British people against the threats of terrorism. However, the creation of ID cards will not prevent terrorist attacks—several public figures have acknowledged that fact. In an article by a consultant at GCHQ, claims that ID cards would help the fight against terrorism were completely dismissed. Even the former Home Secretary, Charles Clarke MP, admitted that the ID card scheme would not have prevented the bombings on 7 July 2005 in London. He said:

"I doubt if it would have made a difference."

We witnessed that in Spain, where ID cards are compulsory but did not stop the Madrid bombings in March 2004.

The proposals by the UK Government will not prevent the work of terrorists. Regardless, the UK Government—with the help of Lord George Foulkes, it seems—continues with its praise and support of ID cards, despite the evidence to the contrary. Although the scheme would give the UK Government massive amounts of control over our personal information, the Government has admitted that it cannot be trusted with our data, making a security breach all the more likely with ID

cards. What is more, the agency that is to be responsible for running the ID card scheme has had its own security breached four times already. With a track record such as that, it is no wonder that people are sceptical about giving the Government even more access to such information.

What is more, ID cards will not prevent identity fraud or human trafficking. In fact, it has been suggested that ID cards could

“trigger massive identity fraud on a scale beyond anything we have seen before.”

If the purpose of ID cards is to help the British population, they certainly are far from doing their job. In fact, they increase the susceptibility of UK citizens. Furthermore, the ID cards will not prevent human trafficking, because nothing can substitute for having a proper border police force and proper checks on people entering and leaving the country.

These ID cards are—put simply—an invasion of privacy. The UK Government could have almost 30 separate pieces of information on every citizen, all of which will be stored on a massive Home Office ID card database called the national register. The creation of such a register will allow anyone who can break into the system to obtain our personal information; it will also allow the Government to monitor us as it pleases.

The Scottish Conservatives know that these ID cards will do nothing to improve the security of our country and that they could make it worse. The costs that would be incurred by the Scottish people are outrageous and unnecessary, and it is ludicrous of the UK Government to think that the people should pay such a ridiculous amount of money. Instead of using taxpayers' money to finance a defective scheme, the UK Government should direct the funding at more worthwhile endeavours. We would scrap the UK Government's proposals and instead call for extra police and the creation of a new border police force. Those simple measures would provide much more for the people of Scotland than anything that an ID cards scheme could possibly achieve.

We are happy to support the amendment in Robert Brown's name and the amendment in Bill Aitken's name.

16:40

**Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab):** If the Calman commission needed evidence of a Government that showed little interest in its existing powers and more interest in the powers that it did not have, it need look no further than the current SNP Government, which enjoys the

trappings of power but does little when it comes to taking responsibility for government.

Patrick Harvie has done a disservice to the links that we have formed with Malawi. The Parliament has close bonds with Malawi and I have welcomed residents of Malawi to my constituency. To say that we should not have debated Malawi in the way that we did—*[Interruption.]* I ask members to excuse me while I clarify the point. I did not say that we should not have done so. The way in which we debated Malawi was by ensuring that we used the powers that are available to the Scottish Parliament to take forward our effective relationship with Malawi.

**Patrick Harvie:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. The member has clearly accused me of saying that we should not have debated Malawi in the way that we did. The whole chamber, apart from Mr Martin, knows that I said no such thing. Will the member withdraw his accusation?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That is not a point of order.

**Paul Martin:** May I clarify the point? I listened intently to what Mr Harvie said. Mr Harvie said that the Parliament debated Malawi. The Parliament debated Malawi in respect of the powers that we have available to us—we did not encroach on the powers that are available to Westminster. I reiterate that point for Mr Harvie.

The key point for Labour members is that the national identity scheme will allow people to prove their identity more easily. It will be harder for their identity to be stolen or misused because it will be protected by biometrics, and we believe that the scheme can prevent criminals from using false or multiple identities. We have said that on a number of occasions.

A serious point that every member of the Opposition parties has ignored is the fact that identity fraud is a problem. That problem, which is also being ignored by the Government, costs the public more than £1.7 billion a year on the latest estimates.

We must acknowledge that we have a responsibility to provide extra protection to those high-profile targets that terrorists have targeted in the past, particularly airports. I am delighted that the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, has shown real leadership in introducing new measures using identity cards for baggage handlers, check-in staff, aircraft engineers and immigration and customs officials.

**Robert Brown:** Can Paul Martin cite any evidence from countries that have ID card schemes to show that their levels of identity fraud are any different? That information may or may not be available—I do not know. Does he know?

**Paul Martin:** The debating points that we make here sometimes use examples from other countries. In this country, I did not expect the terrorist attack that took place in June last year, and I am afraid that we have had to react to that incident. I did not expect that to happen in this country.

We believe that those new measures will deliver a strengthened identity assurance regime, making pre-employment and security checks much easier for airside workers. We believe that that is the way forward.

Another area in which identity cards can be a success is employment. We cannot ignore the fact that there are employers out there, in our communities, who would willingly employ illegal workers and pay them well under the minimum wage. Not only does that have a negative impact on the local economy, but it is grossly unfair to those employees and employers who go about their business in a legitimate manner. The introduction of ID cards will provide an opportunity for technology to be used to prevent such practices from taking place and will leave unscrupulous employers in no doubt that their activities will be detected and, possibly, prevented.

A number of members have been extremely exercised about the information that will be held on the ID cards. Mr Rumbles is concerned that we would hold a picture of him on the card. It is not often that politicians do not want their pictures taken—I do not recall Mr Rumbles being concerned previously about pictures being taken in this chamber or outside this chamber. Indeed, I am sure that, on Mr Rumbles's website, there are a number of press releases that include photographs of him.

**Mike Rumbles:** Perhaps Paul Martin does not realise how shy I am, but I never include photographs on press releases.

**Paul Martin:** I am sure that we will check that statement for accuracy later.

The only information that is not provided on my photocard driving licence but which will be provided on the ID card is two fingerprints, which will be encrypted in the card. There is not much difference between the ID card and the photocard driving licence or any of the other cards that members of this chamber possess.

The issue of public support has been raised by a number of members. Independently conducted polls consistently show strong support for the principle of ID cards—recent research shows that support to be as high as 59 per cent. I take on board the point that Robert Brown made, which is that public support has reduced as a result of the loss of data throughout the period. However, I am clear that the agencies that are responsible for the

holding of such data need to show greater care when they are handling and holding that data.

I do not think that Mr Ewing responded to my earlier question about information that has been lost by the Scottish Government over the past 18 months. An uncontested press release from Richard Simpson confirms that Nicola Sturgeon has presided over the largest loss of confidential files in Scottish history. More than 1 million confidential files have been lost by the SNP Government—that is the piece of information that Mr Ewing was unable to provide the Parliament with. I will not take lectures on this matter from this Government.

I remind Christine Grahame that she described previous incidents involving the loss of national health service files as “extremely alarming”. I am sure that she is also alarmed that her party's Government has managed to lose more than 1 million confidential health files.

Once again, I protest about the way in which the Government treats this chamber like a debating society. When our prisons are bulging, our councils are facing massive cuts and our communities are living in fear, it would be better if the Government debated the issues that our communities face instead of taking every possible opportunity to pick a fight with Westminster.

We oppose the Government's motion and the Opposition parties' amendments.

16:48

**Fergus Ewing:** This has been an interesting debate—I am not sure that it was at all times a constructive debate, but it was certainly heated. Several aspects stood out. The first involved the timing of the debate. This is exactly the right time to have this debate. Labour said that we should not have debated ID cards—it was the only party to oppose the debate; all other parties welcomed it. The Labour line would have been a bit more convincing if the party had actively opposed the debate in the Parliamentary Bureau. For Labour to give us a lecture in the chamber today was just a waste of our time.

On the substance of the issue of timing, it is axiomatic that the time to debate an issue is the time when something can be done about that issue. There would be no use in our debating the issue in 2020, when £5 billion—or, if the London School of Economics is correct, £18 billion—has been spent on the scheme. It is far better to debate the matter before the majority of that money has been spent, and to send out a clear signal from most of the parties in Scotland that we do not think that this is the right time to spend such a huge amount of money for so little—if any—benefit.

I bow to no one in arguing that this is the right time to debate ID cards, because minds can be changed. The UK Government has changed its mind on issues such as the length of time for which someone can be detained without charge—*[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Minister, please speak into your microphone.

**Fergus Ewing:** I am sorry, Presiding Officer.

The UK Government has changed its mind when it has been forced to do so by public opinion. Public opinion in Scotland on the issue of ID cards may well be mixed—it is not monolithic. However, I suspect that once the public are aware of the huge cost of the scheme—whether it is £5,000 million or three times that amount—they will conclude that that is far, far too much.

Since we debated ID cards last December, the world economy has begun to face the biggest recession for nearly 100 years. It therefore behoves those of us in public life to say, “Let’s rethink all our discretionary expenditure”. No expenditure could be more discretionary than the £5,000 million of discretionary expenditure on the ID card scheme. This is exactly the right time to decide whether to go ahead with such a massive commitment of public money, given that every member—even Labour members—can come up with ideas for how that money could be spent more effectively.

The Liberals and the Conservatives have suggested a greater number of police—or border police. Such ideas are well worth exploring, and we will support both amendments to the motion in an act of unity that involves all but one party in the Parliament. This is the right time for us to send a message from Scotland that that money should not be wasted on the scheme; instead, it should be devoted to more worthy aims. I am proud that we are sending that message tonight.

**Richard Baker:** The cost is not the point. Does the minister accept that 72 per cent of the expenditure would be required anyway for the move to biometric passports? Is he saying that the SNP does not now support the move to biometric passports?

**Fergus Ewing:** By 2012, which is three years away, there may be moves that would require us to have biometric data on a European level. By taking the lead on the issue of ID cards, the UK Government might incur entirely unnecessary expenditure. It has already wasted a lot of time and money by changing the identifier in the original plans, which involved the iris—it scrapped those plans, as it has changed so many other aspects of its so-called plans.

It is by no means clear that savings would be made, as the Home Office has alleged. Moreover, the Home Office has repeatedly refused to say exactly how the £5,000 million is broken down, on various grounds such as commercial confidentiality, potential breaches of procurement law or potential prejudice to procurement operations. Those grounds may be valid to some extent, but the fact remains that we have not had a proper breakdown. How, in the depths of a recession, can the Government propose spending £5,000 million of taxpayers’ money without saying how it will be broken down? That is disgraceful. If any member thinks that this debate is a waste of time, they protest too much. They know very well that once the public realise what an incredible amount of money will be wasted on a scheme that may well serve no purpose at all, public opinion will certainly change.

**Paul Martin:** The minister raises the issue of the economic decline that we currently face. Is he also concerned about the money that has been spent on the national conversation?

**Fergus Ewing:** I would have thought that the member could do better than that. I do not know whether we are spending £5,000, or even £50,000, on the national conversation. To say that we should not have a conversation about the future government of our country is a pretty weak argument, and there is no comparison with this debate, which is about whether we should spend £5,000 million at a time when the economy is facing real problems.

In the past 24 hours, I have spoken to two employers in my constituency that are likely to issue redundancy consultations. I am sure that members throughout the chamber have had similar conversations. Day in, day out, we hear that people are losing their jobs, but then we hear that the UK Government is going to spend £5,000 million on something that is not necessary. Most of us have a passport and credit cards, and in any event everybody’s identity has to be checked by lawyers, under money-laundering regulations, and in umpteen other circumstances. The proposal is ridiculous.

**Jackson Carlaw (West of Scotland) (Con):** At the weekend, we were treated to the news that a former Labour Party candidate and former close confidante of many of Lord George Foulkes’s colleagues in the House of Commons was for many years a Czech spy. That individual was a UK citizen. Had identity cards existed, rather than just being a Labour activist and a Czech spy, would they not have been a Labour activist and a Czech spy with a UK identity card that contributed not one iota to the security of the realm?

**Fergus Ewing:** Not for the first time, Mr Carlaw makes a point that had not occurred to me. There

is certainly a problem with Lord Foulkes's identity: it is not that we do not know who he is, but that we know far too much about him.

Another argument is that identity cards will contribute to the reduction in fraud. What complete and utter nonsense. If fraud is reducing, it is because, belatedly perhaps, the banks that issue credit cards have introduced a chip-and-pin system and now have several identifiers to verify people's identity. It is difficult for people to remember all the passwords—never mind their grandmother's maiden name and the rest—that they have to come up with when they are trying to sort things out. The idea that ID cards will sort out fraud is simply hokum.

I was touched by the Labour ranks' slavish loyalty to their London lords and masters. Sandra White appositely pointed out that, in a previous debate on ID cards, there were some slight hints of rebellion and suggestions that the orders from the chateau were not being implemented in the trenches. She was right to mention Pauline McNeill in dispatches. However, the rebellion was entirely snuffed out today. There was not a rebel in sight. Everybody was absolutely loyal to General Darling.

When General Darling was a mere private back in 1989, he made a speech about national identity cards in which he said:

"Identity cards ... will not assist ... the detection of those suspected of having committed offences."

That is a good argument. The now chancellor also said:

"The scheme would create a vast bureaucracy—an industry of identity."

Many industries in Scotland are going down the plughole, but at least we know that new Labour is committed to a new industry—the identity card industry.

**The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):** Could you wind up now, please, minister?

**Fergus Ewing:** Alistair Darling continued:

"Does the House seriously imagine that someone seeking to bring heroin or cocaine into the country or intending to blow up property or individuals would make the mistake of coming here without identification?"

Private Darling had a good point there, but he kept his best point until the end of his speech, when he said:

"if £350 million were available to set up this scheme the money would be better spent employing police officers to go out on the streets".—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 10 February 1989; Vol 146, c 1310, 1314-1315.]

**Members:** Hooray!

**Fergus Ewing:** Let us hear it for Private Darling. What on earth happened in the intervening years,

other than the price going up from £350 million to £5,000 million?

**The Presiding Officer:** Could you come to a conclusion now, minister?

**Fergus Ewing:** The best speech of the afternoon was from Bashir Ahmad. In answer to the proposition from the Labour benches that we should not be debating ID cards, he said that every person in Scotland will be affected, so of course we should debate the matter. He was quite right. I look forward to a united message on the matter from everyone—except General Darling's army.

## Business Motions

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S3M-2914, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revised business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following revision to the programme of business for Thursday 20 November 2008—  
after

2.55 pm                      Scottish Government Debate: A Fresh Start for Scottish Aquaculture

insert

*followed by*                Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body Motion: Expenses Scheme—  
[Bruce Crawford.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S3M-2928, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme. I draw members' attention to the fact that they should make sure that have the correct motion in front of them. Business motion S3M-2928, which was issued this afternoon, replaces business motion S3M-2915, which appeared in this morning's *Business Bulletin*, but which has been withdrawn. Copies of the motion are available at the back of the chamber, but it was e-mailed to members earlier.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) the following programme of business—

Wednesday 26 November 2008

2.00 pm                      Time for Reflection

*followed by*                Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by*                Ministerial Statement: Scottish Government's Response to the Pre-budget Report

*followed by*                Stage 1 Debate: Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Bill

*followed by*                Financial Resolution: Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Bill

*followed by*                Business Motion

*followed by*                Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm                      Decision Time

*followed by*                Members' Business

Thursday 27 November 2008

9.15 am                      Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by*

Ministerial Statement: A Framework for Science in Scotland

*followed by*

Scottish Government Debate: Sea Fisheries

11.40 am

General Question Time

12 noon

First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm

Themed Question Time  
Education and Lifelong Learning;  
Europe, External Affairs and Culture

2.55 pm

Scottish Government Debate: St Andrew's Day

*followed by*

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm

Decision Time

*followed by*

Members' Business

Wednesday 3 December 2008

2.30 pm

Time for Reflection

*followed by*

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by*

Scottish Government Business

*followed by*

Business Motion

*followed by*

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm

Decision Time

*followed by*

Members' Business

Thursday 4 December 2008

9.15 am

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by*

Scottish Government Business

11.40 am

General Question Time

12 noon

First Minister's Question Time

2.15 pm

Themed Question Time  
Health and Wellbeing

2.55 pm

Scottish Government Business

*followed by*

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm

Decision Time

*followed by*

Members' Business

(b) that the period for members to submit their names for selection for Question Times on 8 January 2009 ends at 12 noon on Tuesday 16 December 2008;

(c) that the deadline for lodging questions for Question Times on 8 January 2009 shall be 12 noon on Tuesday 23 December 2008;

(d) that the period for members to submit their names for selection for Question Times on 15 January 2009 ends at 12 noon on Thursday 18 December 2008.—[Bruce Crawford.]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S3M-2916, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a timetable for stage 2 of the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill.



*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill at Stage 2 be completed by 5 December 2008.—[Bruce Crawford.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):** The next item of business is consideration of a Parliamentary Bureau motion. I ask Bruce Crawford to move motion S3M-2917, on the office of the clerk.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Office of the Clerk be closed on 29, 30 and 31 December 2008.—[Bruce Crawford.]

**The Presiding Officer:** The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Bruce Crawford to move motion S3M-2918 and S3M-2919, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Scheme of Assistance) Regulations 2008 be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008 be approved.—[Bruce Crawford.]

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

## Decision Time

17:02

### The Presiding Officer (Alex Fergusson):

There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S3M-2906.2.1, in the name of Bill Aitken, which seeks to amend amendment S3M-2906.2, in the name of Robert Brown, on identity cards, 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, 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)  
 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)  
 Harvie, Christopher (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 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)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 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)  
 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)

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)  
 Stone, 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)  
 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

Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)

### ABSTENTIONS

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)  
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (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)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (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)  
 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)  
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 68, Against 1, Abstentions 38.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S3M-2906.2, in the name of Robert Brown, as amended, which seeks to amend motion S3M-2906, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on ID cards, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members: No.**

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

**For**

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen North) (SNP)  
 Aitken, Bill (Glasgow) (Con)  
 Allan, Alasdair (Western Isles) (SNP)  
 Brocklebank, Ted (Mid Scotland and Fife) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Stone, 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)  
 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**

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)  
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (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)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (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)  
 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)  
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 68, Against 0, Abstentions 38.

*Amendment, as amended, agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S3M-2906, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on ID cards, 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, 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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh East and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Marwick, Tricia (Central Fife) (SNP)  
 Mather, Jim (Argyll and Bute) (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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 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)  
 Stone, 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)  
 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

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)  
 Curran, Margaret (Glasgow Baillieston) (Lab)  
 Eadie, Helen (Dunfermline East) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill) (Lab)  
 Foulkes, George (Lothians) (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)  
 McAveety, Mr Frank (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)  
 McCabe, Tom (Hamilton South) (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)  
 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)  
 Whitton, David (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 69, Against 0, Abstentions 38.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the Parliament notes that the UK Government's proposals for an ID card scheme are presently estimated by it to cost the public purse around £5 billion and considers that the scheme as proposed will not increase security, nor deter crime, and will have serious implications for the civil liberties of ordinary citizens; recognises that the UK Government has repeatedly shown itself to be incapable of keeping personal data securely and therefore cannot be trusted with what would be the most powerful, most expensive and most intrusive database in the world; further recognises the large-scale public and political opposition to the imposition of the ID card scheme; believes that the money for ID cards could more usefully be spent elsewhere, such as on improving border security or policing, and therefore calls on the UK Government to heed public opinion and cancel this wasteful government folly.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S3M-2917, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on the office of the clerk, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the Office of the Clerk be closed on 29, 30 and 31 December 2008.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S3M-2918, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on approval of a Scottish statutory instrument, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Scheme of Assistance) Regulations 2008 be approved.

**The Presiding Officer:** The final question is, that motion S3M-2919, in the name of Bruce Crawford, on approval of an SSI, be agreed to.

*Motion agreed to.*

That the Parliament agrees that the draft Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008 be approved.

## Parkinson's Disease

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Alasdair Morgan):** The final item of business today is a members' business debate on motion S3M-2529, in the name of James Kelly, on the Parkinson's Disease Society's get it on time campaign. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament congratulates the Parkinson's Disease Society on its award-winning Get it on Time campaign highlighting the problems faced by people with Parkinson's in hospital, with materials aimed at patients, health professionals and NHS managers; notes that there are about 10,000 people with Parkinson's in Scotland, including in Rutherglen and Cambuslang, and that more than a quarter of them will be admitted to hospital at least once each year; is concerned that many people with Parkinson's are unable to follow their medication regime in hospital; recognises that if people with Parkinson's do not get their medication on time they can suffer serious and distressing problems, including being unable to move, speak or swallow and that extended hospital stays are needed to restore effective symptom control; believes that many of the barriers to receiving medication on time can be addressed through straightforward measures, including policies enabling people who wish to self-medicate to do so, involvement from a Parkinson's disease nurse specialist or pharmacist on admission, education for hospital staff, listening to people with Parkinson's, their carers and families and wider availability of anti-Parkinsonian drugs in hospital pharmacies, and believes that measures should be taken to ensure that people with Parkinson's get their medication on time, every time.

17:07

**James Kelly (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab):** It gives me great pleasure to speak to the motion. I thank members across the chamber who have supported and signed it, and welcome the many members of the Parkinson's Disease Society who have joined us in the gallery following a successful event this afternoon, which showed the Scottish Parliament at its best. Many members of the society were at the event in committee room 1, and I think that more than 50 MSPs attended the event to listen to the society's concerns and meet constituents. The event was positive and is to be welcomed.

I pay tribute to the work of the Mansionhouse Parkinson's support group, which covers the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area in my constituency. In particular, I pay tribute to Harry Hay, who is a stalwart of that group. Harry was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease five years ago at the age of 53, but has not let it get him down. He has campaigned steadily and raised many funds for the society. He cannot be here today, as he is at a farmers club in Stonehouse, which has agreed to contribute £500 to the society. That in itself tells a story. The club has six members with

Parkinson's disease, which shows how the disease impacts on many families throughout Scotland.

There are 10,000 Parkinson's disease sufferers in Scotland. That equates to around 130 sufferers in the Rutherglen and Cambuslang area. There is a considerable human impact not only on those who have the disease, but on their families and carers as they look after those who are near and dear to them. The importance of getting the correct medication on time is crucial in order to stabilise and minimise the disease's effects. In that context, the Parkinson's Disease Society must be congratulated on its get it on time campaign, which has won awards.

There is no doubt that the effects of not getting medication on time can be detrimental. There can be physical impacts on people—they can be unable to move, speak, eat or swallow. In addition, there can be cost implications, because additional interventions can be required to stabilise patients. Admission to hospital may be required and higher levels of nursing and medical support can be associated with extended hospital stays.

The profile of the issues has been raised through the get it on time campaign. Other measures that can be taken to alleviate the problems, include self-administration policies and practical measures such as the use of pill timers and alarm clocks to remind Parkinson's sufferers when to take their medication. Hospital audits to ensure that hospitals use the correct procedures could be positive. The Parkinson's Disease Society has been active in issuing materials, including wash bags, to those who are admitted to hospital. It also has a best practice guide so that people can follow the correct procedures.

Overall, it is important to raise awareness of the issues so that we can try to alleviate the effects of Parkinson's for sufferers. An increase in the number of Parkinson's disease nurse specialists would also help. I pay tribute to Jacqui Kerr in my constituency, who is a Parkinson's disease nurse specialist in the Glasgow area. The nurse specialists are expert in specialist care and in ensuring that patients get their medication on time. There is no doubt that there is a shortage of such nurses, as there is only one to cover every 500 Parkinson's sufferers in Scotland. We really need more. It would certainly be advantageous to get the number down to one nurse for every 300 sufferers. I ask the minister to say what actions have been taken to ensure that health boards recruit more Parkinson's disease nurse specialists to address the issues.

I congratulate the Parkinson's Disease Society on the success of its get it on time campaign. I urge the Government to provide more resources and more Parkinson's disease nurse specialists.

Politics is about making a difference. Therefore, we should all get behind the measures that are set out in the motion so that we can make a difference for people with Parkinson's.

17:13

**Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):**

I congratulate James Kelly on securing this important debate, and the Parkinson's Disease Society on the energetic and informative way in which it has lobbied members. It is important that all staff who work in hospitals and care homes have a better understanding of Parkinson's and of why the timing of drugs is crucial. In response to parliamentary questions that I asked earlier this year, the Scottish Government provided an estimate that between 5,100 and 15,350 people in Scotland may live with Parkinson's disease—about 10,000 is the likely figure.

As yet, there is no cure for the disease. Those who live with it can only hope to control the symptoms through medication or therapy. Although the cause of Parkinson's is still unknown, we know that the degeneration of nerve cells in people with the disease contributes to a lack of dopamine, which is an essential hormone and neurotransmitter in the brain. The medication that Parkinson's sufferers take stimulates the production of dopamine, enabling the brain to connect the body's movements and carry out other functions. Because of the need for a fairly consistent level of dopamine in the brain, it is necessary for medication to be taken regularly. If medication is late, the brain may not have enough dopamine to carry out basic functions such as controlled movement, speaking or eating. The severity of the symptoms that arise from not taking or receiving medication on time depends on how advanced the disease is in the particular patient.

Parkinson's is unlike other diseases with which there is the flexibility to take medication within a window of time. With Parkinson's, medication needs to be taken in a precise dose at a precise time. It is essential that people with Parkinson's who have to go into hospital can continue their strict treatment regime during that time even if they are suffering from concomitant illnesses. If nursing staff cannot provide Parkinson's patients with medication on a time schedule that is suited to the patient's needs, the hospital must make provision for patients to self-medicate. Parkinson's can be managed only if medications are taken consistently.

Parkinson's affects the brain, which leads to symptoms that are individual in presentation. Given the variety of symptoms that may be exhibited, people with the disease require different treatment regimes. As the Parkinson's Disease Society has made clear in its get it on time

campaign, it is essential that Parkinson's sufferers receive care that is specifically gauged to their individual treatment regime. Some people with Parkinson's are afraid to go into hospital when they are ill because of fears that their medication may not be provided or that they may not receive it properly.

As Mr Kelly touched on, Parkinson's disease nurse specialists are the main source of support for people with Parkinson's. Nurse specialists provide clinical monitoring and can adjust prescriptions as Parkinson's progresses. However, Scotland does not have enough nurse specialists to enable those who live with Parkinson's to have one closely scrutinising their care. With the support of such a nurse specialist, people with Parkinson's have a guarantee that, if they are hospitalised, they will be given the proper medication, on time. They can rely on that if they have such specialist care.

Unfortunately, my health board—NHS Ayrshire and Arran—has only one Parkinson's nurse specialist, Paula Hewat, who I understand does a sterling job. However, in the main, she works in the south of the county and not in my constituency of Cunninghame North. She cannot possibly cover all of the up to 700 patients in the health board area, not least because of the area's geography.

Another specialist colleague is urgently required to meet the Parkinson's Disease Society's optimum ratio of 300 patients per specialist. Mr Kelly mentioned that in his speech. Unfortunately, Parkinson's disease nurse specialist Hewat's two-year contract is due to expire on 31 March 2009. If the patients in her care are not to suffer unnecessarily, her contract must be extended.

Nurse specialists work with hospital staff to ensure that the needs of patients with Parkinson's disease are not overlooked. It is imperative that provisions to allow Parkinson's patients to self-medicate while they are in hospital are implemented and that efforts are made urgently to provide more Parkinson's disease nurse specialists.

In its get it on time campaign, the Parkinson's Disease Society is promoting education on the potentially severe consequences that result if people with Parkinson's do not receive their medication on time. As Mr Kelly said, the campaign also offers practical suggestions that range from pill timers and alarm clocks to more effective systems for hospital patients to use to alert staff.

Parkinson's disease nurse specialists can be helpful in educating local hospitals and other nurses on the need for on-time medication. They can also provide the necessary follow-up to ensure that Parkinson's sufferers get the care that they need and deserve. *[Applause.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There should be no applause from the gallery, please.

17:18

**Cathy Jamieson (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (Lab):** I, too, congratulate James Kelly on bringing this important debate to the chamber. Somewhat unusually, I support the calls that were made by my colleague from Ayrshire, Kenny Gibson. It is a rare occasion that finds both of us calling for the same thing. Perhaps people will take heed of what we are saying.

I also congratulate the Parkinson's Disease Society's Ayrshire branch on the sterling job that it does in raising awareness of Parkinson's disease. As Kenny Gibson pointed out, Ayrshire has one Parkinson's disease nurse specialist, albeit that she is based primarily in the south Ayrshire area. As he said, that one post is simply not enough to cover the case load in the NHS Ayrshire and Arran area. NHS Ayrshire and Arran told me that the nurse specialist runs a number of clinics alongside her consultant colleague and

"a telephone support clinic and has a case load of approximately 190 patients."

I am aware of the nurse-led clinics that she runs in parts of my constituency, but even with all that work, it is clear that there is unmet need.

It is important to recognise that, although NHS Ayrshire and Arran also told me that it is

"pleased to be offering this pilot post to evaluate its overall effectiveness",

the recipients of the service say that it is effective and that they want it to continue. Indeed, people want to see more opportunities on the ground for that type of support.

I understand that the Parkinson's Disease Society is keen to pump prime Parkinson's disease nurse specialist posts to ensure the continuation of these services. However, it needs health boards to provide letters of intent to continue support when the pilots have ended. If the minister can hurry those letters along, that would be welcome.

Kenny Gibson and James Kelly mentioned the get it on time campaign. When reading the briefing that was provided to us on the experiences of people in hospital, and when talking to patients in my area, I was struck by how important the campaign is. I was pleased to hear that at Ayr hospital there have been moves to ensure that people are able to manage their medication, because some of the comments in the briefing were horrific. People are worried about going into hospital; it is suggested that in some instances they must smuggle in their own drugs. That is not hospitals taking account of the needs of patients in

their care, and I hope that the issue will be looked at.

I pay tribute to the Ayrshire branch of the Parkinson's Disease Society for the work that it is doing on social and other support activities. The issue is not simply about medication and the medical care that people receive; for many people, it is also about coming to terms with the impact of Parkinson's on their family life. I am pleased that my local branch of the society is considering extending the support that it offers through a range of activities and initiatives and is keen to publicise those. Because of its work, there have been a number of successful fundraising initiatives in my area. A significant sum of money has been raised, including from shoppers at our local Tesco in Auchinleck and at the New Cumnock Sunday school. A range of people who did not know about Parkinson's before are now aware of the issue.

I congratulate James Kelly on bringing this matter to the chamber. I thank everyone who has come along today for briefing us and listening to the debate from the public gallery. I trust that the minister will have some warm words to say to them at the end of the debate in response to the points that have been made.

17:22

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):**

I, too, congratulate James Kelly on securing the debate. As he said, it is estimated that there are about 10,000 people with Parkinson's in Scotland. Although most people who are diagnosed with the disease are over 60, one in 20 are under 40, which poses a greater problem when it comes to prescribing medicines. Although drugs cannot cure Parkinson's, they can do much to relieve its symptoms—the aim, as Kenny Gibson said, is to replace missing dopamine.

As James Kelly's motion states, delayed medication can lead to serious problems for patients—the inability to move, speak or swallow, uncontrolled movements and distressing psychotic symptoms. I was pleased to attend today's event in Parliament, arranged by the Parkinson's Disease Society, at which James Kelly was also present. There, I met a lady from Buckie who explained the issue to me in a way that has enabled me to understand it much better than I could have from reading material.

Although I am delighted to contribute to the debate, I also feel some anger and frustration. I am sure that that is no more than patients feel, but I find it incredible that in this century patients can go into hospital but are not given the medication that they need when they need it. People worry a great deal about going into hospital and about

facing distressing symptoms that can lead to confusion, extended stays and so on.

The get it on time campaign is excellent, but I am frustrated by the fact that staff are not responding to patients' needs. That is why the campaign is so important. It was launched in 2006 to help and support the work of nursing staff in stabilising people who are suffering from Parkinson's. A survey of Parkinson's disease nurse specialists in 2006 found that nine out of 10 nurses believed

“that patients with this disease experienced clinical problems or an extended hospital stay because of ... late administration of medicine.”

It is a problem of communication as much as anything.

Much of the problem seems to stem from the fact that patients are admitted to hospital for conditions other than Parkinson's such as falls, urinary disorders and heart and lung problems. They are admitted to busy general wards, where nurses are obviously unaware of the importance of the timing of medication for Parkinson's. Hospitals may do four drug-dispensing runs a day, but those do not necessarily coincide with patients' timings. I asked a lady today at what time she takes her drugs. She told me, “I take them when I know my body needs them.” That is why self-medication and respect for the patient are so important.

Another worrying issue, which was highlighted in a report on hospital audits of medicines management for people with Parkinson's, is that

“there was prescribing of contraindicated drugs.”

Patients are being given drugs that can have side-effects when taken with the drugs that they are smuggling in under their nighties. That is a very serious issue. It is not just the problems that are associated with the disease that are exacerbated by patients receiving medicine at the wrong times; extended stays in hospital and the potential for hospital-acquired infections should also be considered. As we know, those bring additional costs to the national health service.

I understand that there are 13 Parkinson's nurses working in Scotland. They provide valuable care to people. I know, representing the Highlands and Islands, that it would be almost impossible for a Parkinson's nurse regularly to visit every person with Parkinson's in the area, but I have discussed the matter with my colleague, Dr Nanette Milne, and we both visited the Scottish Centre for Telehealth in Aberdeen last week. We wonder whether more support could be provided through telehealth to cut down on travel times for people with Parkinson's as well as for nurses and doctors.



17:26

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife (Lab)):** I join other members in congratulating James Kelly on securing the debate. I congratulate the Parkinson's Disease Society on holding an excellent meeting this afternoon, when I met constituents from Perthshire and elsewhere in Tayside, from the Forth valley and from Fife. It was very interesting to listen to and talk with them.

Kenny Gibson referred to some of the symptoms of the condition, which are highly variable although it is a progressive condition. They include tremor, bradykinesia—difficulty in initiating and completing movement—rigidity and loss of balance. There are also lots of secondary symptoms, which I will not go into as we do not have time.

Parkinson's is a difficult condition, but the most important thing about it is that it varies greatly among patients. It is not a simple and straightforward condition, so one needs to examine the patient very carefully and work with them. Of all the diseases that I worked with in general practice, Parkinson's could almost be said to be the one for which the concept of partnership between the patient and the professionals who are involved in their treatment is most vital. That partnership must be equal.

In the hospital setting, treatment of Parkinson's is about empowerment of patients and recognising that patients are not done to, but worked with. That is fundamental to the attitude that we need to inculcate in hospitals. It exists among the best staff, but among other staff there can still be problematic timetabling of medicines, as other members have mentioned.

As Mary Scanlon mentioned, Parkinson's is a condition for which the patient is often the best judge of when they need the next dose of treatment. I appeal to the minister to examine carefully the guidance that is currently issued on administering medication in hospital for Parkinson's and other conditions. The time has come for us to stop the process whereby people come into hospital and have their medicines confiscated. I found too often that patients whom I had got on to a reasonably stable dose of levodopa, in various forms of slow and quick release and in various types, went into hospital only to have their medication taken from them and be given a different set of medications, ostensibly to do the same job. That, however, created absolute havoc with their condition.

The time has come for respect to be paid to primary care. If the condition is being managed by the network that supports patients with Parkinson's and if the medication is balanced, that medication should continue in the hospital. If possible, it should be self-administered. I realise

that that is not always possible—in the late stages of Parkinson's, there might be issues to do with the patient's capacity, and there might also be issues around people being able to take and swallow the medicines themselves. Despite such issues, the general guidance should be for patients to self-administer.

The vertically integrated network concept that I am talking about includes the neurologist, the physician, the specialist nurse, the occupational therapist, the physiotherapist, the speech and language therapist and the primary care doctor. That is the group that should be working with the patient, on a care-plan basis. I have said before that such patients should have care plans that they understand. When they go into hospital, they can present their care plans and say what drugs they will self-administer and when.

There are concerns about specialist nurses. In a discussion about neurology nurses, the minister undertook to try to keep up the pressure on boards to ensure an adequate supply of neurology-trained nurses to support patients with Parkinson's and other conditions. I would like to hear in the minister's summing up what has happened in that regard. I hope that the minister will examine the arrangements and guidance for the administration of medicines, and that she will review how far we have got in ensuring the adequacy of specialist nurses across the board in Scotland.

I apologise to members: I am due to chair a meeting on stroke this evening, so I will have to leave just before quarter to 6.

17:30

**The Minister for Public Health (Shona Robison):** I, too, congratulate James Kelly on securing a debate on this very important topic. I am impressed by the number of people with Parkinson's disease who have come along to listen to the debate; the turnout in the public gallery is one of the biggest I have seen for a members' business debate for quite some time—it is a clear indication of how much the issue means to those people and their families. It is also good to hear that there was such a good turnout of MSPs at the event earlier today.

I welcome the support that the Parkinson's Disease Society provides for people with the condition and their families and carers. "Better Health, Better Care" signalled our wish to work more closely with the voluntary sector. Our work on long-term conditions emphasises the importance of signposting people to the information and support that organisations such as the Parkinson's Disease Society can offer.

The motion mentions that there are about 10,000 people in Scotland with Parkinson's

disease. There has been some discussion with the society about the number involved. We are advised on these issues by the information services division of NHS National Services Scotland. I am pleased that the ISD and the society have reached agreement on a figure of around 10,000 people. I shall answer a parliamentary question from Kenneth Gibson on that point shortly, which will provide another opportunity to put the figure on the record.

The main issue that the motion raises is the problems experienced by people with Parkinson's who are unable to follow their medication regime after they have been admitted to hospital, either because they are not allowed to administer their own medicines or because they are not given their medicines at the right time. As James Kelly and others have made clear, disruption to the medication that people with Parkinson's need can cause serious and distressing problems. I agree fully with the part of the motion that says that that problem must be addressed. It is unacceptable that anyone with Parkinson's should feel scared of going into hospital.

Several pieces of work will tackle the problem. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guideline 35 on Parkinson's disease, which was published in June 2006, highlights the importance of timely medication in hospital, including self-medication. Of course we expect healthcare professionals in Scotland to be aware of such guidelines and to implement them.

Both the NICE guideline and the guideline that the Scottish intercollegiate guidelines network is developing on Parkinson's will form part of the evidence base that underpins the clinical standards on Parkinson's disease, on which NHS Quality Improvement Scotland is working. A draft of those will be published next week. An essential principle of those standards is that they should focus on the issues of importance for those for whom services are provided.

I have no doubt that, through the work of the Parkinson's Disease Society, the standards will emphasise medication in hospital. We need to ensure that the standards are followed. Similarly, I am sure that the standards will highlight the important role that Parkinson's disease nurse specialists can play, such as helping hospital staff, especially those in general wards, to understand how important it is that people with Parkinson's get their medication on time. We should expect health boards to follow those standards. I undertake to ensure that how that is taken forward is monitored.

Another way of ensuring that the issue is addressed is through the development of managed clinical networks for Parkinson's disease. That would give a strong voice to patients and the voluntary sector in the delivery of services.

We have recently received a proposal for the development of such an MCN in the west of Scotland. One of its specific aims is the resolution of areas of current concern, and the application explicitly refers to the hospital management of anti-Parkinson's medication. We strongly support the proposal in principle as it is consistent with the priority that "Better Health, Better Care" gives to the development of MCNs for neurological conditions, and we are considering how best to take the application forward.

There are other pieces of work that have a bearing on the problem. With the backing of the then Scottish Executive, the national pharmaceutical forum and the Scottish Medical and Scientific Advisory Committee issued a report in 2006 called "Patients and their medicines in hospital". It emphasised the need to support patients and encourage them to take responsibility for their medication, including, when appropriate, self-administration.

The national pharmacy strategy, "The Right Medicine", issued in 2002, recommends the involvement of pharmacy staff in pre-admission clinics and on admission wards so that any medication issues are identified and addressed as soon as possible after the patient enters hospital. National health service boards should ensure that those initiatives are being implemented in their areas. We can follow up on that.

We are also undertaking a review of the role of the charge nurse. An important element of the work is to empower charge nurses to ensure that each clinical area responds effectively to the needs of patients so that people have a better experience in hospital. That includes supporting self-medication for individual patients when appropriate.

I hope that it is clear from what I have said that the Scottish Government fully supports the principle that patients should, whenever possible, be able to self-administer their medicines while in hospital. It is also essential that they receive their medication when they need it, in line with their prescription and individual care plan. Naturally, hospital staff will have genuine concerns about safety and the need to ensure that powerful medications are stored securely, but local policies should be able to address those concerns.

Self-medication is a good example of the self-management that lies at the heart of our long-term conditions work and informs the national strategy for self-management, "Gaun Yersell!", which was developed by the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland. The core of that strategy are the beliefs that people with long-term conditions are the leading partners in their own care and that, in managing their condition, the professionals should recognise the expertise that, as Richard Simpson

outlined, they and their carers have. I am in no doubt about the shift in culture that such an approach requires but, as the motion points out, people with Parkinson's, their families and their carers must be listened to. We must ensure that their voices are heard, and I can give a commitment that, as minister, I will play my part in ensuring that that happens and that boards play their part in delivering change on the ground.

*Meeting closed at 17:38.*



Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the archive edition should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

**Wednesday 26 November 2008**

#### PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

##### OFFICIAL REPORT daily editions

*Single copies: £5.00*

*Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £350.00*

The archive edition of the *Official Report* of meetings of the Parliament, written answers and public meetings of committees will be published on CD-ROM.

##### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

*Single copies: £3.75*

*Annual subscriptions: £150.00*

Standing orders will be accepted at Document Supply.

Published in Edinburgh by RR Donnelley and available from:

#### **Blackwell's Bookshop**

**53 South Bridge  
Edinburgh EH1 1YS  
0131 622 8222**

**Blackwell's Bookshops:**  
243-244 High Holborn  
London WC1 7DZ  
Tel 020 7831 9501

All trade orders for Scottish Parliament documents should be placed through Blackwell's Edinburgh.

**Blackwell's Scottish Parliament Documentation**  
Helpline may be able to assist with additional information on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament, their availability and cost:

**Telephone orders and inquiries**  
**0131 622 8283 or**  
**0131 622 8258**

**Fax orders**  
**0131 557 8149**

**E-mail orders**  
**business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk**

**Subscriptions & Standing Orders**  
**business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk**

#### **Scottish Parliament**

**RNID Typetalk calls welcome on**  
**18001 0131 348 5000**  
**Textphone 0845 270 0152**

sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

All documents are available on the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

**Accredited Agents**  
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers