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Official Report

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Thursday 2 June 2011

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Scottish Parliament

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[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 09:15*]

Green Energy

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good morning. The first item of business is a debate on motion S4M-00169, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on faster and further to secure Scotland's place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe.

09:15

The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing): In 1865, in Cleveland, Ohio, Maurice Clark met his business partner at an auction at which one partner would buy the business from the other. The bidding stopped at \$72,500, at which point Mr Clark announced to his partner that he could afford no more and sold him his half-share in the business. A cheque was offered but they settled on a handshake. The partner's name was John D Rockefeller and the business became the Standard Oil Company. Little did either of them know that the business would go on to become the biggest in the world and would subsequently be split to form Exxon Mobil, Chevron, Amoco, Conoco and other companies that dominate the oil industry today.

There was no way that either man could have known in 1865 that petroleum would become the biggest business in the world. Today, however, we all know that fossil fuels are finite resources. We cannot say exactly when they will run out but we know with absolute certainty that we must find replacements. We also know that Scotland has a unique natural endowment, with a quarter of Europe's offshore wind and tidal resource and a tenth of its wave energy potential, and that as a result it has an opportunity to be among the pioneers of the 21st century energy revolution. Our opportunity is to be at the forefront of the global low-carbon economy.

In 1865 John Rockefeller could have predicted neither the success nor the size of the oil industry. However, today, we can foresee and predict with near certainty that renewables will become massive businesses employing millions of people all over the globe. The Scottish Government has therefore pledged to move further and faster to secure Scotland's place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe. We must aim high or be left behind.

Our commitment to generating 100 per cent of Scotland's electricity demand from renewable

sources by 2020 sends a clear signal that Scotland has the political will as well as the natural resources, the technical expertise and the industrial capacity. Indeed, there are already 60,000 low-carbon jobs in Scotland. We estimate that by 2020 there will be 130,000 such jobs in Scotland—an additional 70,000 in just a few short years. In the next few weeks, we will publish our Scottish renewables road map, which will set out a clear route to achieving our renewables targets for electricity, heat and transport.

Let me be clear: by 2020, Scotland will be sourcing at least 11 per cent of its heat demand from renewable sources, including biomass, heat pumps and solar thermal; will be generating 100 per cent of electricity consumption from renewables; and will double its electricity generation equivalent to 200 per cent of our consumption. In other words, by 2020, Scotland will be producing all the electricity that it needs, just over half from renewable sources and just under half from other sources. Plainly we will then be in a position to be an energy exporter.

The additional electricity will be generated by thermal plants that are progressively fitted with carbon capture and storage facilities to achieve full decarbonisation by 2030. Substantial grid upgrades and investment in electricity storage and demand management will result in a responsive and flexible grid that effectively balances renewables generation. Scotland will continue to export substantial amounts of electricity throughout the year, which will become lower and lower carbon. That will help the United Kingdom and the European Union to meet their renewables and climate change targets.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): The minister has mentioned ambitious targets and significant technologies that have yet to be fully proven, but he has not mentioned district heating or combined heat and power. Will he comment on the role that that might play in the projection and road map that he is describing?

Fergus Ewing: Combined heat and power has many advantages in using biomass to provide electricity, and it will certainly have a role to play.

Our energy efficiency action plan, which was published last year, heralds energy efficiency as

"the simplest and most cost-effective way to reduce emissions whilst seeking to maximise the productivity of our renewable resources"

and provide a positive effect on energy bills. That will, in turn, reduce fuel poverty and allow householders and businesses to spend in other parts of the economy the money that they save.

We want affordable housing with affordable warmth. Our target to reduce total final energy consumption in Scotland over the period to 2020

stands at 12 per cent. Meeting that target and reducing our energy requirements will not only help us to meet our 2020 emissions reduction target but make our renewables targets more easily achievable. That is simply common sense. Patrick Harvie, who is, I see, about to make an intervention—perhaps I provoked that—has argued that for many years.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): How could I resist making an intervention as soon as the minister caught my eye?

It seems to me that the minister has implied several times in his speech that increasing renewable energy generation will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, but that is not true, of course. Renewable energy generation gives us energy without additional emissions. Reducing our emissions fundamentally means burning less fossil fuel. Will the minister commit the Government to opposing any attempt to begin shale gas extraction in Scotland? That would only add to the stock of available fossil fuels, which, if burned, is already more than enough to make our climate change targets meaningless.

Fergus Ewing: I am, of course, glad that I caught Patrick Harvie's eye. We have set a number of clear-cut targets. I understand that there is considerable controversy about the role of energy from shale and the complexities that are involved. It is important that appropriate environmental safeguards are put in place if such an approach is to be used anywhere in the world. Mr Harvie would argue that such safeguards are not possible, but others argue that they are. We need to study those matters carefully or else we will come to premature conclusions, but I am happy to work with Mr Harvie on that and all other issues as time progresses.

Renewable energy in Scotland has come a long way. Our hydro legacy together with the growth of onshore wind since devolution mean that renewables now deliver almost a third of our annual electricity demand. In the past four years, there has been a significant increase in the rate of deployment, with ministers consenting to 42 renewables projects. That is more than double the number for the previous four years. Hydro will continue to provide electricity in Scotland long into the future. There are opportunities for new hydro schemes, and we will need more pumped storage to help to balance electricity supply and demand. I would like to set a challenge to developers to come up with more hydro schemes that are in harmony with the local environment. The hydro revolution is not just a memory from the 1940s and 1950s and the days of Tom Johnston; it can be relevant now as well.

Scottish Water is a public sector success story, but it also uses around 1 per cent of the electricity

that is consumed in Scotland each year. It already generates around 5 per cent of its own energy needs, but under a new plan, it could generate enough from renewables to cover all its own needs and make a significant contribution towards our targets.

Onshore wind will continue to play a role in meeting our targets and in attracting investment in grid upgrades and helping to finance the development of emerging technologies. We will continue to address deployment issues in areas such as aviation, where work to develop solutions is beginning to pay off, and we will drive best environmental practice in community engagement so that good, responsible applications with a strong chance of being realised come through. It is of course in onshore wind and hydro that the greatest short to medium-term opportunities lie for communities to generate revenue from renewables.

Marine renewables have a huge part to play in our sustainable low-carbon and industrial future. In the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney, we have a world leader in the field. No doubt Liam McArthur will talk about that in more detail later. Through our grant funding, which has seen more than £25 million awarded since 2007, we have supported domestic pioneers such as Pelamis Wave Power, Wavegen and Aquamarine Power. We have introduced the £10 million saltire prize and enhanced levels of return for wave and tidal generation under the renewables obligation. We have also created a one-stop shop for all marine licence applications in Scottish seas to help address the challenges of developing offshore renewables. We are determined to respect all the marine interests, most notably those of our fishermen and fishing communities. The award of commercial leases to 11 projects in the Pentland Firth and Orkney waters—a world first—remains a powerful signal of both the capability of the technology developers involved and the will and intent of their utility and industrial partners.

The offshore wind industry could support almost 50,000 direct and indirect jobs in Scotland in 2020, generating more than £7,000 million for our economy. I became more personally aware of the opportunities last week, when I visited Babcock at Rosyth and learned that it has engineered down the cost of offshore weather stations from £7 million to £3 million. Those who question the commercial viability and affordability of such techniques should be aware that massive progress is being made by Scottish companies finding engineering solutions. The potential from existing leasing rounds alone amounts to almost 10GW of capacity in Scottish waters. Our plan for offshore wind in Scottish territorial waters has identified a further 25 sites for exploration in the medium term. The industry is attracting major

investment to Scotland. Companies such as Doosan, Gamesa and Mitsubishi have already announced plans to locate in Scotland and develop their offshore wind interests here.

This is not in my script, but a headline in the *Glasgow Herald* today states “Glasgow named as first Scots ‘super city’ of green energy”. The article points out that HSBC has said that one reason to come to Glasgow is that we are taking a lead in the green energy revolution.

Our national renewables infrastructure plan and the related £70 million fund will ensure that our port and harbour facilities are ready to meet the sector’s needs and exploit the huge economic benefits that it offers.

Renewable energy can provide a tremendous source of income for local communities. Scotland leads the way in supporting local ownership, with at least 800 community-owned renewables schemes operating throughout Scotland, thanks to Government support over a number of years. Sarah Boyack has done a lot of work in the area and we support the same broad objectives in that regard.

I commend the work of the Forestry Commission Scotland in negotiating a £5,000 per megawatt rate for the new commercial wind and hydro schemes on the national forestry estate, which has given a lead to private sector developments on the appropriate benchmark.

We are determined that Scotland will play a significant role in the renewable heat sector. We are working with the UK Government to ensure that Scottish interests are reflected in the design of the renewable heat incentive.

As my time is nearly up, I will dispense with various sheets of prepared text and draw my remarks to a close. We are on the verge of perhaps the most tremendous economic and environmental opportunity that Scotland has had in our history. The Government’s aim is to ensure that we take full advantage of that revolution, working with everybody in the Parliament. I believe that that is exactly what we will do.

I move,

That the Parliament supports the Scottish Government’s pledge to move faster and further to secure Scotland’s place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe; agrees that the investment and job opportunities presented by the low-carbon economy represent Scotland’s greatest economic opportunity; welcomes the target to generate the equivalent of 100% of Scotland’s electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020; supports the Scottish Government’s aim to maximise the benefits for communities from renewable energy and to transform the level of opportunity for local ownership; supports demands for the release of Scotland’s Fossil Fuel Levy surplus for investment in renewable energy in Scotland; supports the campaign to locate the Green Investment Bank in

Edinburgh; supports the Scottish Government’s plans for Scottish Water to become a renewable energy generator; calls on the UK Government to accept the case for the Scottish Ministers to have a greater say in the design of the Electricity Market Reform mechanisms and to subsequently outline greater powers over energy policy in the UK Energy Bill for the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament, and supports the devolution of the Crown Estate to the Scottish Parliament to ensure that Scotland’s natural assets are managed in Scotland for the benefit of all of Scotland’s people.

09:30

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): We in the Labour Party agree that renewable energy is vital to the future of Scotland, the UK and Europe. We are proud of the lead that we took on renewables developments in Scotland when the Parliament was established in 1999. The first target that I set then was seen as highly ambitious and very bold, but it was based on the use of existing technologies and followed the lead taken in other countries. It was one of the landmark changes that we delivered in the early years of our new Parliament. It laid the framework for early action and much of the development that Fergus Ewing talked about in his opening remarks.

There are huge opportunities for Scotland in the development of renewables, but saying that we support renewables is not the same as providing the infrastructure and policy support for renewables, particularly given that the technology is still being invented and tested. Our marine renewables industry in particular is coming up with exciting developments, but it needs the right support and it needs time. I very much welcome the minister’s announcement that a route map is to be produced. I hope that he will bring it to the Parliament, so that we can interrogate it and add our own ideas. I take him at his word, given that in yesterday’s debate he gave Opposition parties the opportunity to come forward with proposals, which he might take on board. I will certainly outline one or two proposals in my speech.

One of the things that I ask the minister to consider as he draws up the renewables plan is whether now is the right time to say what proportion of contributions we expect to see from different types of renewables. It is interesting that in his speech the minister concentrated on large-scale renewables. There is a real danger that we will underplay the contribution of small-scale renewables at household level. The work done by the Department of Trade and Industry shows that there could be a massive contribution from that area, and we would do well not to ignore it.

Over the years the work that Labour has done in this Parliament, such as setting planning guidelines to support the principles of renewables development and our amendment to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 on community-scale

and household-scale renewables, shows that we have been committed to renewables for the past 12 years. We believe that more must be done to secure the maximum direct benefits to communities from renewables developments, whether such developments are run by communities or whether communities get a fair share from the big renewables opportunities that are brought by private developers.

We support a variety of ownership and management tools, including co-operative actions, which we think will help communities buy into and have a stake in renewables developments, rather than seeing such developments as being done to their communities. That is why the planning process is crucial.

All that will not happen by assertion, however. The one thing that I say to the minister as he takes on his new, exciting portfolio is that the recent tender for the Forestry Commission Scotland contracts was potentially a missed opportunity for community renewables. When he comes to look at designing contracts and the tender process for Scottish Water and other Scottish Government land, I hope that he will bear that experience in mind.

If Labour had been elected, or had been in the position to exercise control over the Government, we would have wanted to promote renewables to deliver new jobs and, crucially, to deliver cheaper energy for consumers and communities, with a particular focus on people on low incomes, who are suffering under the current raft of gas and electricity price rises.

There has to be a win, win, win for Scotland. We have to ensure that it is about not just expanding the industry but looking at the benefit that is secured, and not just by communities but by householders. There is a potential bonanza throughout Scotland. We very much agree with the minister on that issue. There are a raft of potential careers in the renewables industry, in building new grid infrastructure; in designing the new smart grid that needs to be developed in Scotland; in manufacturing and building the new kit, whether it is going to be onshore or offshore; in installing household and community-scale renewables; and in designing better and newer types of renewables, particularly in our marine environment.

Last week's warning by the International Energy Agency about the continuing growth of CO₂ emissions means that we absolutely must step up the link between our renewables and our energy-efficiency targets. We need to ensure that we step up the level of investment in green, low-carbon and zero-carbon industries across the board. That is why our amendment suggests a range of actions that the Government needs to take on

board, particularly to decarbonise our housing and transport sectors, which is vital.

We need to link the opportunities for renewables, energy efficiency, zero carbon and jobs. That is key if we are to come out of the recession creating new jobs.

The policy mechanisms need to be in place. We welcome the new route map that the minister mentioned, which is vital to making the Government's ambitious targets at all achievable. Those targets rest on the development of new industries and new technologies.

We need to look for the early actions that will deliver the jobs bonanza. Where will the regional training centres that the Scottish National Party manifesto mentioned be established and how soon will that happen? What will the Scottish Government do to speed up the granting of planning consents? Will the minister act on the renewables industry's concern that the marine licensing system and the onshore planning system do not have enough resources to deliver fast enough the action that we need? That is coming through loud and clear from the industry. What is happening to ensure that the contribution of the skills in the offshore oil and gas industry continues and to plug those skills into the new offshore renewables world?

I will describe another area in which we need to take ambitious action. The Government's action will be tested by what it delivers. In comparison with the ambition on renewables, there is nowhere near enough ambition on energy efficiency. The Government must take that on board.

An energy efficiency action plan was produced in the previous parliamentary session, but the Association for the Conservation of Energy points out that the budget for domestic action was slashed by 30 per cent. A link exists between energy efficiency and domestic price rises. That is why we want more practical action to be taken early in the Government's term. We want more use of council tax and business rate incentives for people to install energy efficiency measures.

The new report "The Power of Scotland Secured" by GL Garrad Hassan highlights the important role of energy efficiency. Reducing electricity demand—particularly peak demand—is by far the cheapest way to contribute to the security of supply and to emissions reductions. We need an energy and renewables strategy that links completely into energy efficiency.

That is why we would like much faster action on community-scale and householder developments. In the green new deal in our manifesto, we proposed early action at local and community levels. Until we have a mass market in Scotland, we will not have the reduced costs that result from

greater competition. We will not have investment from companies in something that is not seen as a Government priority.

A huge opportunity has been missed to deliver jobs and tackle fuel poverty. The new feed-in tariff and the renewable heat incentive that the minister mentioned transform the economics for local and householder renewables, but we must seize the day. When I announced that we would deliver 10,000 local developments for housing—whether in council housing or the housing association sector—Alex Neil dismissed me in the Parliament as delivering a tiddlywinks policy. However, the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism has not set out the Scottish Government's policy.

What I have described is the big policy suggestion that I put on the table today. Will the minister consider that suggestion? The policy is happening in Birmingham city now and there is no reason why we cannot adopt it in Scotland. If the Scottish Government worked with local authorities and housing associations, that would produce a local jobs bonanza and benefits, particularly for people who live on low incomes and who suffer from fuel poverty.

Such a policy would make a dramatic difference to people. It would also deliver new manufacturing and installation jobs. We estimated that 10,000 developments in the initial years would deliver 10,000 training places. It would be a practical contribution to renewables that focused on energy efficiency and delivered local jobs, and, crucially, it would deliver in the early years. All the ambition on renewables and climate change looks to 2020, but we must look to the next four to five years. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity, but we must also drive down our emissions now.

The SNP did not do enough on other matters in its past four years in government. Opportunities were missed in public procurement, which I hope will be covered by the Government's new route map for renewables. I am interested in hearing from the cabinet secretary whether the Government still has a policy of having renewables in every school. We lobbied the Government hard on that in the previous session, but little progress was made. Where is that policy? Has it been sidelined or is it still active?

In Edinburgh, the reality has been deeply disappointing. Renewables were removed from the previous schools programme and I heard this month that school students who had won a prize for new renewables were not allowed to get those renewables in their schools. I hope that the SNP Government acts on such barriers to progress. The Government needs to put its money where its mouth is and ensure that renewables and energy efficiency are built into procurement and school design from the start.

There are other areas in which we need rapid progress. What is happening with the development of the Beaully to Denny grid? The SNP has swanned through two elections promising all things to all people. Local people need to know what is happening.

We will support the Government when it negotiates and works constructively with the UK Government on the fossil fuel levy, the green investment bank and the Crown Estate. The results of the consultation on the Crown Estate urgently need to be brought to Parliament. Parliament needs to be brought on board and it needs to see what the options are. We need to see action throughout the country so that we get the renewables bonanza that the minister talked about in his opening remarks. Less time should be spent on new powers, and more time should be spent on using the powers that we have now.

I move amendment S4M-00169.1 to leave out from first "supports" to end and insert:

"believes that Scotland's renewable energy resources present an important opportunity to develop a sustainable, low-carbon economy and considers that the social and community opportunities in terms of ownership and investment need to be maximised and calls on the Scottish Government to now deliver its renewable targets by setting out a plan that includes supporting policies and finance, planning issues, procurement, training, grid development and management, and measures to deliver community and cooperative ownership and management opportunities; believes that the promotion of green energy should go hand in hand with ambitious energy efficiency targets and calls on the Scottish Government to work with local authorities, social housing providers and Scottish companies to deliver a sustained programme of home energy efficiency and community and householder renewables installations, to work to deliver the best deal for Scottish consumers, communities and businesses, to set out its ambitions for delivering on housing efficiency in order to maximise the use of householder and community renewable heat and power schemes and to prepare a transition plan for transport to drive forward the infrastructure to enable the expansion of low-carbon and electric vehicles in use and calls on the Scottish Government to work with the UK Government to support the establishment of the Green Investment Bank in Edinburgh, to get the best deal for Scotland in relation to the release of Fuel Fossil Levy monies and the development of the UK energy market so that it meets Scotland's needs in terms of both exports and imports, and calls on the Scottish Government to bring forward as a matter of urgency the results of its consultation on the Crown Estates Commission so that they may be considered by the Parliament."

09:41

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con): I begin by welcoming the minister to his new responsibility. I am only in temporary residence as spokesperson this morning.

To be perfectly honest, I rise to speak to the amendment in my name in forlorn hope rather than in genuine expectation that it will sweep the

chamber. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose, they say. However, while Parliament may look the same it is undoubtedly a very different place from the one we left before the election. Although the balance was fine then concerning the role that nuclear might play in our future energy provision, in this session it clearly is not. I accept that although I will be promoting the case for a role for nuclear, it is now very much a minority case in Parliament.

I welcome the debate. I was much happier with its title than I was with the motion. I hope that I do not disappoint the minister when I say that I agreed with much of what he said. I would expect nothing less than the commonsense approach of a former Belmont House boy that Mr Ewing was able to bring to his contribution. However, I had not quite appreciated until I saw the motion that it was his intention personally to fertilise debates with incontinent motions. This is something of a bar-room brawl of a motion. I wondered whether, when amending it after every semi-colon, I might not just have added, "And another thing". In its scope the motion does not do justice to any particular aspect of the debate that we need to have. There are about 10 debates contained in the motion. In the time that we have, we will be unable to elaborate on them fully.

Our amendment supports the green investment bank coming to Scotland. However, it turns to the heart of the matter, which is the SNP legacy from the previous Parliament that renewables would be able to produce 100 per cent of our power requirements by 2020. The First Minister said last week:

"We know of our great comparative advantage in natural resources and the opportunities that exist in transforming to a low-carbon economy. In renewable energy, we have just one of many growth sectors, and through our renewable wealth we can and will reindustrialise our nation as we research, develop, export, engineer, fabricate, install and then service the new energy systems that will power this century."—[*Official Report*, 26 May 2011; c 73.]

I agree with that, although in her contribution my colleague Mary Scanlon will question whether, in order to achieve that objective, we will by definition be greenlighting every and any wind power scheme that is proposed, and riding rough-shod over any other consideration.

Like Labour, and like Sarah Boyack, I question whether the ambition is as yet met with a detailed plan to deliver. Sarah Boyack called it a route map. In something of an oxymoron, Mr Ewing called it a road map—I am sure that Mr Harvie would object to that. However, let us assume that a route map is coming. Given the technologies that we have now, offshore wind and carbon capture are things that we can develop, expand, research and export. However, in the context of where we are today, 30 per cent of our energy is

generated by nuclear. While we accept that new builds are by definition off the agenda, given the UK context, the Government nonetheless has a responsibility to meet Scotland's future energy requirements.

Last week, the First Minister talked about

"the family in Dumfries that wants to send their daughter to university ... the commuter in Dunfermline who travels daily across the Forth ... the family in Ayrshire"

who would have to choose different medicines and

"the pensioner in Inverness".—[*Official Report*, 26 May 2011; c 69.]

I assume that the family in Dumfries, the commuter in Dunfermline, the family in Ayrshire and the pensioner in Inverness also want the lights to come on when it is dark, to be warm when it is cold and to be able to go to places of employment that are properly and adequately powered.

How are those requirements to be met? Hunterston is currently producing about 27 per cent of our generation. As this parliamentary session comes to an end in 2016—in just five years' time—Hunterston is due to be decommissioned.

The SNP motion revives and echoes some of the now familiar refrains on additional powers. My question for the minister is this. Is he confirming beyond peradventure that he has the means, through the powers that he has at his disposal in the Parliament, to meet all Scotland's energy needs from renewable energy and non-nuclear generation by 2020—that is, with no nuclear capacity whatever? If, as the motion suggests, the minister needs additional powers—those that are not yet available or to hand—that surely has an impact on his ability to deliver the end result. If he has the means, then he must—as Sarah Boyack asked—detail in a route map exactly how and when that will be the case, so that the people of Scotland, not just the Parliament, can be assured that the powers will be there.

Many people in business and elsewhere believe, as we do, that there has to be nuclear provision. The minister flashed up *The Herald* earlier. He might also care to recall *The Herald's* editorial of 30 March, which said:

"Scotland is right to develop a new generation of renewables but the scale of the energy gap we face means nuclear must remain in the mix. The alternatives are black-outs or expensive imports from England or abroad."

The minister has our support as he exploits Scotland's natural renewable opportunities, but he carries a responsibility, for all those standard bearers to whom the First Minister referred and for all of Scotland, to ensure that there is no gap in our energy supply.

Germany has said—rather pathetically—that it will rely on French nuclear provision to meet its needs. Will Scotland, equally, have to rely on English nuclear supply in the future?

Last week, Iain Gray here and Baroness Hayman, at the Obama address at Westminster, quoted Mario Cuomo, who said:

“You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose.”

On renewable energy, the Government is in danger of both campaigning and governing in poetry. There should be ambition, yes, but not reckless ambition. There should be pragmatic progress—yes—and it demands an extension of our existing nuclear provision.

I move amendment S4M-00169.2, to leave out from “agrees” to end and insert:

“is concerned that the Scottish Government’s target of generating the equivalent of 100% of Scotland’s electricity demand from renewable sources within nine years is wholly unachievable; is further concerned that the Scottish Government’s refusal to replace existing nuclear facilities will lead to an excessive reliance on onshore wind farms and thereby jeopardise the security of Scotland’s energy supply; believes that a viable, low-carbon and secure energy capacity for the future requires investment in the full range of renewable sources, the life extension of existing nuclear facilities and the development of world-leading carbon capture technology; further believes that the UK Government’s Green Investment Bank should be located in Scotland, and calls on the Scottish Government to amend the national planning framework to designate the replacement of existing nuclear facilities as national developments and to introduce robust national strategic planning guidance to ensure that new wind farms are sited only in appropriate locations.”

The Presiding Officer: We now move to the open part of the debate. Speeches will be six minutes. As always, there is a tiny wee bit of time in hand. If members wish to take interventions, the Presiding Officers will try to compensate them for doing so.

09:47

Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): It is appropriate to quote this, following the previous speech:

“Some people are seriously underestimating what Scotland can achieve from renewable power and how quickly. Renewable capacity equivalent to 100% of gross demand is perfectly possible by 2020 as part of a wider energy mix.

This will mean thousands of jobs, particularly in marine energy. Achieving this target requires both determination and leadership”.

That was said by Jim McColl of Clyde Blowers, who is among the very people who will be leading the industrial effort to deliver and achieve the tasks that are required.

The scale of the task is indeed huge; as has been stated by everyone, the scale of the opportunity is also huge. As the member for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross, in the north of Scotland, part of my duty is to ensure that we gain benefits in our area from developments in this field. In the first instance, they will come from proven technology. I refer, for example, to the Moray Offshore Renewables project. Before 2020, 200 turbines will be producing energy equivalent to that of a nuclear power station. If we are talking about 1,500MW by 2020, we are talking about our country having the capacity to replace that amount of energy using proven technology within that timescale. That kind of opportunity is achievable, and it can bring huge amounts of work to areas close to where I live.

In order to achieve that, we need a stable market. Germany is saying to its utilities—E.ON, RWE and so on—“You have renewables arms, which have to be stepped up.” That is the signal that I take from Germany. Such arms will back up our efforts to make changes in Scotland and those technologies are adding to our native wit and our ability to do the job that I laid out. The utilities can help to create a stable market, because we need the finance so that we can get into renewables—members mentioned the green investment bank and other members will do so. We are talking about a huge amount of money, but the important point is that if it is directed in the right fashion, there will be opportunities—for example, from the development of the deepwater offshore wind farms—to sell the technology on in the world. Indeed, the east of the United States and the east of Brazil are waiting for such work to be proven.

There are two turbines, 12 miles off the Caithness coast, which I have seen throughout the time that I have represented the Highlands and Islands region and now my constituency. They have been proven to work. There will be 200 such turbines in the first phase. That is a huge undertaking, of course, but it is no more difficult to achieve than building a nuclear power station in the same time would be, and it is far more sustainable. The route map or road map—whatever name we adopt—will include such proven technology.

We have to deal with regulators that are run from London—the Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets, in particular. Ofgem says:

“Our principal duty is to protect the interests of existing and future consumers.”

That is exactly what the Scottish Government’s policy is about. It is about ensuring that we have the electricity to be able to support people in the poorest conditions, in industry and so on. Ofgem says that its aims are about

“promoting security of supply, promoting sustainable development”,

and dealing with the problems of “vulnerable consumers”. That is exactly what the Scottish Government’s ambition is about, so we must ensure that we get Ofgem on our side so that we can achieve those things.

We also need Ofgem to change its approach to renewables obligations. Will the minister comment, if possible, on how renewables obligation certificates are used in relation to power stations that burn timber? That is not renewable energy—although the timber is replaceable. A practice that is currently being supported is having a serious effect on our country’s forests and timber supply, and we need to consider the issue carefully.

I am taking on a new role in the Parliament’s Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee and it is obvious that issues to do with the balance between how we generate electricity and how we conserve it will be important to us. We will also have the annual round of work on the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

I have much sympathy with the Association for the Conservation of Energy, which says that

“Improved demand reduction will require a lower surcharge on electricity bills”

and is calling for a 12 per cent reduction in electricity demand by 2020, in line with the Government’s overall energy demand reduction target, so that we can have much more resilient homes. We must put in place smart metering, so that individuals and families can think about how they use electricity and decide to use it more efficiently. I look forward to opportunities cropping up in that regard.

The report, “The Power of Scotland Secured”, summed up the issue very well when it said that its conclusions

“depend on only moderate efficiency and conservation achievements, below the targets set by the Scottish Government. More ambitious energy demand reductions across all sectors would make system security and emissions reductions far easier and cheaper to deliver, and would reduce household fuel bills.”

The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee will carefully consider all the aspects. As Jim McColl said,

“it is time for bravehearts not fainthearts.”

09:54

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): The motion, the amendments and the debate are characterised by common themes: a shared ambition to create a sustainable future; a determination to secure the maximum return on our investment and our resources; and a sense of

expectancy—indeed, excitement—at what can be achieved to grow our economy and create the sustainable jobs of the future, to the benefit of all communities in Scotland.

No one can doubt Scotland’s massive renewables potential in offshore wind and tidal resources or the positive impact that that industry could have on the Scottish economy by increasing our energy supply; providing speedy access to significant investment; and creating tens of thousands of jobs—as the minister confirmed—in constructing the turbines, barges and jackets that we need and in maintaining the operational infrastructure. It is necessary to realise that potential, but competition is fierce throughout Europe and, indeed, within the UK. That is our ambition, but we must realise that ambition.

At this point, I should apologise in advance because, in the previous session of Parliament, some of my colleagues heard my gins and complaints about Inverclyde’s position in that new market. However, that is my job and, with a new minister in place, I will not miss the opportunity to make the case.

In the face of the difficult competition that I mentioned, we worked to bring about the national renewables infrastructure plan, which was commissioned by the Scottish energy advisory board. The group was chaired by the First Minister, no less. The work was heavily influenced by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and supported by Scottish Enterprise.

The report’s task was to identify sites in Scotland that offered the greatest opportunities for development for use as construction sites. A matrix and weighting were applied to a number of sites in the process of selection for investment, but it is significant that little weighting was given to population. Is it really sensible, sustainable and cost effective to recreate the labour camps that we had with the offshore industry, which involved massive shifts of population and skills from the central belt? People travelled the length of Scotland, created such camps, left them and came back again. Why was no weighting given to population and skills capacity?

Is it really competitive to spend £20 million or £30 million to bring some sites to the market when we can achieve that objective for around £5 million with a site such as Inchgreen dry dock in Greenock?

We must also recognise that the matrix included a 25 per cent weighting for proximity and geography. That is surprising. Things have moved on and there are sites up and running on the east coast of Scotland. They are competing in the market and doing work for the west coast of Ireland, so there is no competitive disadvantage. I

wonder why that 25 per cent weighting was added to the matrix.

Those points are not insignificant for my area and constituency, because they lost out very narrowly indeed to those that made the list of preferred sites. The Clyde area, with its population, skills base, deepwater docks and infrastructure, stands to lose out given that it did not make the list. It is difficult to understand why, when the country came together to ensure that the UK Ministry of Defence contract resulted in jobs for the shipyards on the Clyde, a misguided plan proceeded that will diminish the opportunity that those Clyde facilities will have to take part in the renewables manufacturing industry in the future.

The significant potential of the renewables industry is surely an opportunity for the whole of Scotland. I hope that the Scottish Government will re-examine the matrix and weighting that were applied for the national renewables infrastructure plan to ensure that access to those significant opportunities is not hindered in any way.

In conclusion, I ask the minister to accept that we need to spread the gain, wealth potential and opportunity across Scotland. We must look again at the national renewables infrastructure plan to ensure that we are promoting effectively and aggressively the best of our physical resources and skills so that we can bring those green jobs to Scotland.

10:00

Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD): I start by adding my welcome to Fergus Ewing in his new post and by recording my thanks to his predecessor, Jim Mather, for the role that he played during the past four years in taking forward the vision—one that we shared—of realising Scotland's potential as a global green energy powerhouse. I do not expect the new minister to treat us to the same level of mind mapping that we became used to in the past four years, but in keeping with tradition, and as he gets to grips with his new brief, I hope that he will keep the chamber updated on his extensive reading list.

I welcome the fact that, notwithstanding Jackson Carlaw's legitimate criticism, the Government has taken the early opportunity of bringing these issues and this debate to Parliament. As well as its new-found claim of being the most southerly bastion of liberal democracy in Scotland, the constituency that I am proud to have been re-elected to represent enjoys a long-standing reputation as the centre for the development of marine renewables in this country and worldwide. If Scotland is to achieve its ambitions, it will rely heavily on Orkney being able to deliver its full potential during the coming years.

There is every reason for confidence. As Scottish and Southern Energy makes clear in its briefing, Scotland is

“blessed with an abundance of clean energy, and it is technically feasible to harness it, not only to meet the equivalent of Scotland's entire electricity needs, but as part of a wider electricity system, to export significant volumes to other countries.”

That view is backed by the Garrad Hassan report, “The Power of Scotland Renewed” so, as the motion states, we are right to be looking to move faster and further in delivering our green energy ambitions for Scotland.

The minister will recall that our parties shared the 100 per cent target at the election. The act of setting targets has attracted criticism in the past, as I am sure Sarah Boyack will testify, but the track record in this area and in energy efficiency demonstrates the value of such targets in providing a clear focus and a signal of political intent.

As ACE points out, while the 100 per cent by 2020 target is achievable, improved demand reduction will inevitably make our renewables target easier to achieve. As the lowest cost of energy is the unit not used, it also brings benefits for tackling the scourge of fuel poverty. It is unfortunate that, unlike Sarah Boyack's amendment, the motion does not reflect the importance of demand reduction, although the minister did reflect it in his opening remarks. As Sarah Boyack and Rob Gibson said, we cannot underestimate the need for ambition in that particular sphere.

The motion is absolutely correct in recognising the significant wealth and job creation opportunities that will come from a move to a low-carbon economy, including in the decarbonisation of our heat and transport sectors. While that process is a necessary response to climate change and the need to manage our finite resources more sustainably, we should be bold in declaring our ambitions for mobilising the low-carbon army in Scotland. That will need further investment in skills, with Government and its agencies working hand in glove with industry and the further and higher education sectors. Again, it would be helpful to hear details from the minister about what is planned in that respect.

Likewise, while much attention is focused on technology development, the lion's share of the jobs and wealth is likely to be generated through the supply chain. That is patchy and we need to find ways of supporting the provision and maintenance of, for example, vessels to the sector from the North Sea, and of incentivising local investment in vessels. That is one way of capturing for Scotland as much as possible of the value of this fledgling industry.

At a more local level, capturing and retaining job and economic opportunities are equally important. I welcome the motion's recognition of the benefits that can be secured through maximising scope for local ownership, for example. That might not be appropriate in every case, but I know from experience in Orkney that many communities have the skills and the appetite to take on more responsibility and control over developments in their communities. It is right that we support that, given the wider benefits that it delivers in enhancing self-sufficiency, promoting economic development and maintaining population in some of our more remote areas.

That brings me on to the motion's reference to the Crown estate. Like many others, I believe that the current arrangements are not sustainable and that change is desirable and inevitable. For example, there is potential conflict inherent in the Crown Estate's regulatory and licensing roles and that needs to be addressed. However, it is also right that we should look at how the benefits from the development of the renewables industry can be harnessed to support our island and coastal communities. That is where the Government's demand for the devolution of the Crown estate is unsatisfactorily vague. Andy Wightman argues that the SNP's game plan is hard to determine and that it needs a plan B or C.

Greater accountability for what the Crown Estate does in Scotland is absolutely necessary, but locking up revenues in Edinburgh is little better than the present arrangement. In that regard, I would be interested to know whether the minister is inclined to support the idea of an islands and coastal communities fund.

There is undoubtedly a large degree of political consensus on the issues that we are debating. In the past, John Swinney has generously acknowledged the extent to which, over the past four years, he has been able to build on the solid platform that was laid by Jim Wallace and, later, Nicol Stephen. More recently, thanks to the leadership that Chris Huhne has shown, we have had a series of announcements that have demonstrated a real commitment to making the transition to the low-carbon economy. Ofgem's remit is being reviewed, while project transmit offers genuine hope that a charging regime will be put in place that reflects the needs and realities of our energy system in the future rather than those of the past.

Chris Huhne has also taken the lead on the massive investment in the grid, ports and other infrastructure that is needed to make the transition possible. Not only have his plans for a green investment bank been widely supported, but they have given rise to a broad-based campaign to

have it located in Scotland, which I very much welcome.

On the fossil fuel levy surplus, after years of inaction, progress has finally been made to unlock those vital funds. I understand the industry's impatience for that investment to be deployed as quickly as possible, and I hope that progress can be made in the near future. Such progress is certainly more likely now that some of the First Minister's more hysterical rhetoric has been replaced by more measured and conciliatory tones.

Although the Government's motion expresses much that I entirely agree with, I do not feel able to give it my support, for the reasons that I have outlined. That said, I remain committed to working with the minister and the Government to realise the overall and shared objective of moving faster and further to secure our future as a green energy powerhouse. In the meantime, I look forward to the remainder of the debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): I call Marco Biagi, who will make his first speech in our Parliament. He will be followed by Kenny Gibson.

10:06

Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP): It is a pleasure and an honour—and, indeed, the best kind of duty—to speak for the first time in the Parliament on behalf of the voters of Edinburgh Central who sent me here. I thanked them on the morning of 6 May, and I will be thanking them for the next five years, but let me again record my thanks to them.

During the campaign that led up to that, as members might expect from the tenor of that campaign, I found myself, as a Scottish National Party candidate, talking about our 100 per cent clean energy target until I was green in the face. In doing so, I realised that there is something quintessentially Scottish about renewable energy. If he feels that I am moving from prose into poetry, I advise Mr Carlaw to remember that that is what the Scottish people desired 14 years ago.

Renewable energy is not the most tartan and shortbread of topics, but it brings out two very important, and conflicting, aspects of the Scottish national psyche, if such a thing can be said to exist. First, there is the high esteem in which we hold engineering and manufacturing, science and innovation, which has run through everything that has been said. When I was sworn in, I paid homage to the Italian side of my background but today, as we move into the territory of offshore and marine renewables, I pay greater tribute to the Scottish side—the shipbuilding Jamiesons who worked in Denny's of Dumbarton. I know that it is

traditional to go straight into talking about one's constituency but, the last time that I checked, there were no shipyards in Lochrin basin, so I will work with what I have.

Denny's was part of a national industry. Sadly, it closed a great many years ago, in 1963. That gives the lie to the suggestion that it was only under Mrs Thatcher's Government that Scotland's industry was allowed to decline. Denny's firsts included its making of the first all-steel merchant ship, the first commercial turbine steamer and the first all-welded ship. Regrettably, it has been too many years since Scotland has been able to drum out such a hammer beat of industrial firsts, but I think that that time may be coming again.

If the value that we attach to engineering is among the better angels of our nature, our nation's often chronic lack of self-belief sits on the other shoulder, constantly whispering doubts in our ear. Those who would talk us down have always been on hand to help. During the campaign, at my final hustings, I was accused by the Labour Party candidate of offering "pie in the sky". It was no person present here who said that—just to explain, there is a community council that straddles two constituencies. It was one of those awkward moments when it is easy to feel the nervous shuffle of feet in a room even though everyone is sitting down. For a country that has been taught to talk itself down, standing up and standing out as one of the world's leaders in renewable energy does not come easily. It is uncomfortably like that dreaded trait—showing off.

In Scotland, we now have a spring in our step. The remaining challenge for we MSPs is to keep showing how the goal relates to lives. That means jobs, primarily, to the constituents that I represent. The target of having 100 per cent renewable energy is a great symbol that offers a warming sense of ambition. However, on its own, it does not offer comfort to the 17-year-old school leaver in Dalry.

Finding and moving to clean energy is not just our responsibility, it is also an opportunity for people from all walks of life: the welder in the yard building the offshore turbine; the business people in meeting rooms in foreign countries securing deals to export our expertise; or the young Edinburgh university graduate engineer at her desk, on a team designing the next big thing in tidal power; and all the jobs that depend on those people. I hope that the renewables route map, or road map—whatever we want to call it—will mainstream such opportunities, as today's motion suggests.

If we talk of green energy in the same terms as oil was spoken of in the 1970s, it is because it is on at least the same scale. We should not be afraid to accept that. Last year's offshore valuation

study estimated that eventual income from direct sales of North Sea electricity would reach £14 billion. That is just from the electricity; it ignores the expertise, skills and all the linkages that happen in any economy. That wealth must not be frittered away like the wealth before it. It must be used wisely and it must be shared. In that respect, we have two more good Scottish values to commend.

The capital, Edinburgh, is near the front of any queue for economic benefit. Right now, however, there is one pressing issue for the city, which is whether we will provide the location for the UK's green investment bank. Next week, I will host the first member's debate of the session on the subject, which is a privilege for any member, but particularly for a new member. The value of the green investment bank will not be measured by the size of its payroll or the extent of its capital. It is true that there are issues about how it will be funded and in what it might invest, but we can have our disagreements on those points later. What we can do now is come together and back the excellent campaign being run by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce in the interests of the city. We can agree that locating the green investment bank in Edinburgh would be a vote of confidence in Scotland and a message to the world that on renewable energy, instead of looking to London, Paris, Frankfurt or Zurich, it should look first to Edinburgh. Scotland has been called Europe's geographic periphery; now, instead, we can be the new frontier.

10:13

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): I am absolutely delighted to follow such a thoughtful speech from my new colleague, Marco Biagi. He is a welcome addition to our benches. I also welcome you, Presiding Officer, to your new post.

Throughout the election, parties across the political divide rightly spoke about their desire to create jobs and grow the Scottish economy to offer our young people meaningful and skilled employment opportunities, boost manufacturing and exports, and ensure that Scotland becomes a low-carbon economy and a responsible nation with a determination to produce clean energy and to cut emissions. Through the research, design, testing, manufacturing and maintenance of renewable energy technology, we can fulfil our ambitions to reindustrialise Scotland and provide Scots with the well-paid and skilled jobs that they deserve and require.

The SNP has set out an admittedly ambitious vision to make Scotland the powerhouse at the centre of Europe's renewable energy revolution. We make no apology for the scale of that

ambition. Producing 100 per cent of Scotland's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020 will not be easy, but it can be achieved. The sheer scale of Scotland's renewable potential gives us the optimism and belief to set such targets.

Last month, Professor Stephen Salter, who has been called the father of renewable energy, and seven leading businessmen publicly backed SNP plans to supply all of Scotland's electricity needs through renewables by 2020. Earlier this year, Professor Salter was awarded the inaugural Saltire prize medal in recognition of his outstanding role in the development of marine renewables. His endorsement comes on the back of the support from industry leaders and environmental groups that the 100 per cent renewables target received.

Professor Salter said that the SNP

"is right to say that Scotland can generate more electricity from renewable energy than it uses. We can also produce enough electricity to drive plant to synthesise liquid fuels and gas. We have vast renewable resources in Scotland, especially around our shores. Coupled with decades of engineering excellence and a strong industrial base, Scotland will become a clean green energy hub.

There have always been those who doubted our capacity for generating our electricity needs from renewables. I find that lack of ambition depressing and even a threat to this massive opportunity."

Jackson Carlaw should take note of that. Professor Salter went on to say:

"Meeting the target by 2020 ... will depend on many factors, not least political leadership but they are achievable and exactly the kind of targets our Government should set."

However, the targets will never be achieved unless somebody with sufficient determination sets them. Alex Salmond has that determination. Professor Salter continued:

"We are only starting to tap into the vast potential of our seas such as offshore wind, wave and tidal energy and should absolutely aim for the equivalent of 100% by 2020."

Jackson Carlaw: The SNP has the ambition, but if it fails to achieve its aims, what is plan B?

Kenneth Gibson: We are planning for success, Mr Carlaw. We are not planning for failure.

Niall Stuart, the chief executive of Scottish Renewables, added:

"We welcome the SNP's ambition and continued commitment to maximising renewable investment in Scotland. This pledge gives investors certainty and will help attract more developers and manufacturers to Scotland. It's ambitious but can be achieved with the right market framework, investment in grid infrastructure and skills, and the right balance in the planning system."

There was a further boost to the SNP's renewables policies when Ignacio Galán, the

chairman and chief executive of Iberdrola, whose company owns ScottishPower Renewables, said:

"Scotland is at the forefront of the renewable revolution ... it is entirely credible to see Scotland producing 100% of its own electricity requirements from renewables by 2020 as well as continuing to produce power from a range of other sources. Iberdrola are keen to be a key part of the investment required to bring that power into production."

Other parties show little ambition or leadership. Mr Carlaw has again given evidence of that. If it was left to them, Scotland would find itself left behind in the renewables revolution sweeping Europe. We cannot let them cost Scotland jobs and investment.

Our vision to reindustrialise Scotland and North Ayrshire will bring tens of thousands of jobs to communities across the country. North Ayrshire will not be left behind and we will not let this opportunity pass Scotland by.

Two days ago, I met representatives of SSE Renewables, and we discussed a proposal from my constituency, showing how things can work locally. There are plans to produce an offshore turbine testing station, which it is hoped will be in operation by as early as February next year. The station will test turbines to ensure that all faults—or any problems with gearboxes, for example—are resolved in true, sea-type conditions before the turbines are taken out to sea. Eighteen sites across Scotland were considered, and SSE Renewables made it clear that Hunterston was far and away the best. One hundred and thirty-eight turbines will be established 8 miles from Islay, which will create 690MW of electricity capacity. There will be a spin-off to the local community, with tender valuation criteria ensuring that local companies are able to get some of the work. There will also be a gain for the community because of the leap in the number of local apprenticeships. Over the next two or three years, it is hoped and expected that research and development facilities, and manufacturing facilities, will be established at Hunterston.

Duncan McNeil: I am interested in Hunterston—we built a power station not far from my constituency. Eleven sites have been identified, of which Hunterston is one. There is a total requirement of £223 million; Hunterston alone requires £65 million. The sites need to be up and running by 2013-14, so is Mr Gibson not concerned that we are running out of time for Hunterston? Does he not agree that the minister will need to reconsider the renewables infrastructure plan?

Kenneth Gibson: I think that the minister continues to review the infrastructure plan. I spoke to people at Hunterston on Tuesday, and they seemed perfectly happy with the timescale. They seemed to think that by 2014 there will, indeed, be

manufacturing at that location, and that there would be developments offshore. There are technical issues, but the intention is to resolve them. I have quoted Niall Stuart and made the point that the people who will be investing the money and creating the industries believe that the SNP's ambition in this area will help to set the market conditions that will ensure that what we want to achieve is deliverable.

10:20

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I am delighted to speak in this debate on a subject that is close to my heart. As we have heard, it is close to the hearts of many other members across the chamber, which is very exciting. I also acknowledge the significant contribution that was made by Karen Gillon in changing people's lives during her 12-year term as Clydesdale's MSP.

It seems more than three weeks ago that I was working with pupils as an eco-schools co-ordinator in a rural Clydesdale primary school. I commend that programme and others, such as WWF Scotland's one planet schools and the Dumfries Crichton Carbon Centre's carbon busters project. Thanks to the pupil eco-committee at Braehead primary school, the new school has underfloor heating from a ground-source heat pump and light pipes, both of which save electricity. One primary 7 pupil always had to sit under a light pipe and bask in the natural light because he felt that he was the one who had got that into his school. Sustainable school buildings must be standard throughout Scotland—I hope that the minister will take note of that and act on it. Here is a generation who understand how to live sustainably and who keep their parents up to the mark.

I ask the Scottish Government to ensure that those programmes continue. Scotland will have not only young people who are eager to be our solar roof fitters and our marine tech inventors, but citizens who contribute strongly to transition communities. I also ask the Scottish Government to prioritise training for those who are already in the energy sector, liaising with the unions so that Scotland benefits from the transferable skills of those working in oil, gas and nuclear as we move forward and the renewables industries grow.

Having been central to establishing the first renewables targets with Scottish Labour, I commend the Scottish Government on its challenging target of generating 100 per cent of energy from renewables—the boldness will be judged by the delivery. I also welcome the route map. However, I emphasise that if Scotland is not just to become the green powerhouse of Europe but to move faster and further in a fair way, there are issues that the minister must address. Large developments, whether marine or onshore, are

frequently controversial. Local authority guidance must ensure that communities have a real involvement in the process. Where the applications go ahead, communities must have the power in all senses of the word, whether that involves ownership of a turbine or the opportunity to give pensioners free electricity.

The motion and the amendments show that the Scots whom we represent want change and to be part of that change—it is not being driven just by eco-school warriors. Across the south of Scotland, urban and rural communities, individual households and businesses are starting to make the transition and need support. I spent an evening with Tweedgreen, in Peebles, listening to residents planning their sustainable future. They ask that the climate challenge fund be retained. Wiston Lodge, in Clydesdale, aims to conserve and develop buildings on the old estate, leading to energy efficiency and the reduction of energy use. Cream o' Galloway, a sustainable business with the best whisky ice cream in the south of Scotland, is asking for a carbon-cutting mentoring scheme and an adequately funded loan investment scheme with a higher upper limit. I seek assurances from the minister that he will support those communities, expand and increase the community and renewable energy scheme and ensure that the funding for community renewables schemes does not run out, as it often has in the past.

As a member of the Scottish Co-op group of MSPs, I intend to promote that model both as a structure through which communities can take power into their own hands, on and off grid, and as a model for the manufacture of renewable energy, the technology for which will bring jobs to Scotland and can be exported throughout the world. We must ensure that Co-operative Development Scotland has the expertise to advise and the funds to support.

Most important of all, I am certain that we have a responsibility to ensure that those households that are on low incomes or benefits are not left out of our new powerhouse. In that context, it is a great cause for concern that the fuel poverty budget was cut by a third in February, and I ask the minister to give us some reassurance on this issue, which relates closely to our amendment.

On a more positive note, I want to highlight the work of the Energy Agency in Hadyard Hill in Ayrshire, in the region that I represent. It is blazing a trail in universal, area-based energy efficiency schemes. Given that, in 2050, at least 80 per cent of our building stock will be the same as it is now, we must consider retrofitting, and schemes such as the one that I am talking about will help to tackle fuel poverty and reduce fuel demand across the communities, which is essential if we are to

meet our carbon reduction targets. Energy efficiency is just as much part of our new vision across the chamber as renewable energy itself.

As a candidate in the south of Scotland, I was asked many questions about climate justice. We can work across the Scottish Parliament on many of those issues, along with the environmental non-governmental agencies and the communities.

I have a vision—which I know that many of us share—of communities living in warm homes that are heated and lit by their own power. The people whom I represent want that. Although I know that it is too late now, I suggest that we need another word in the title of this debate. That word, which I ask the minister to consider throughout his deliberations, is “fairer”, because we need the future to be fairer as well.

10:26

Derek Mackay (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP): Presiding Officer, I am honoured to be standing before you as the member for Renfrewshire North and West. This new constituency brings together much of what were previously the Paisley North and the West Renfrewshire seats, so I would like to say a few words about Wendy Alexander and Trish Godman.

Wendy Alexander had considerable political clout and profile. She is probably a workaholic, which is a common trait in many politicians, but I know that she has a deep affection for her children and has chosen to spend more time with her family. I wish her well.

Trish Godman was, of course, a respected Deputy Presiding Officer and carried out her duties with great dignity. I am sure that I speak for everyone when I say that efforts to intimidate members of this Parliament are repugnant and will serve only to unite us, not divide us.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my Conservative opponent in the election, Annabel Goldie. Annabel is a formidable force and is widely respected. I recall that, at the count, Annabel declared that she would be keeping an eye on me. Little did I know that she would have more time to do so over the next few years.

I would like to mention a special constituent of mine from Kilmacolm, whom I was honoured to visit as her constituency MSP. My constituent is none other than the minister's mother, Madame Ecosse, Winnie Ewing, who reconvened the Parliament in 1999 and is an inspiration to all in the SNP.

On the final day of the previous parliamentary session, the First Minister was in Renfrew, my home town, to welcome the news of a massive investment in the renewables sector, with a

renewables centre of excellence at the Westway site, coupled with Steel Engineering creating a further jobs and apprenticeships boost. My grandfather, John Tierney, worked in the Babcock site in Renfrew, as did thousands of other men. It is part of our industrial past, so it is with great pride that we give a future to this site as a dynamo in the renewables economy. The rivers Cart and Clyde, a proud part of Scotland's industrial revolution, will be brought back into use by such companies to transport products in specially designed vessels.

The manufacturing of systems and structures, such as the Pelamis wave power machine, have created much excitement in the industry and I look forward to the outcome of the pilot scheme. This industry is all about potential, and we have the opportunity to turn potential into reality, plugging Scotland into a sustainable future, creating jobs, making Scotland greener and revitalising our economy—a true public-private partnership, encouraging Scotland's entrepreneurial spirit.

The SNP Government has outlined challenging plans, and it was this Parliament that set the most ambitious climate change targets in the world. It is, therefore, hardly unreasonable that the Parliament that set the most ambitious targets in the world should have the same powers and the same economic levers as other places in order to ensure that we can access our immense wealth.

In these early days of the session, I have heard Opposition members ask why we want new powers, which is a fair question. For the renewables industry—particularly offshore renewables—to flourish, unnecessary barriers must be removed. We want the fossil fuel levy, as our share will allow us to invest £200 million in the renewables industry now. We want the administration of the Crown estate to be transferred, because as quickly as we develop ways to unleash our clean energy potential, the Crown Estate Commissioners find a way to tax them. For the record, despite being titled the Crown estate, the coastline and seas of Scotland belong to the people, not to a monarch.

While the SNP Government strengthens ports and manufacturing facilities, the UK Government levies taxes on progress. While the SNP Government offers incentives for innovation, the UK withholds investment. We cannot be the greenest country in the world with one hand tied behind our back. We have an abundance of natural wealth: it is not just another cash cow for the London chancellor.

Scotland. We have all the energy, now give us the power. One does not need to be a nationalist to believe in equipping this Parliament with the means of delivery. Those who say that our targets are too ambitious or unnecessary often have an

interest in seeing the renewables sector fail. Scotland does not need or want nuclear, and we will not let it become the UK's nuclear waste dump. The UK's obsession with nuclear has stunted its thinking on renewables, which has resulted in an appalling performance. A UK Government may well decide that it desires or requires nuclear, but we have no need for that in Scotland. As our sites are gradually decommissioned and replaced with safer alternatives, talk of the lights going off is simplistic and misguided. Expert opinion shows that we have the potential to meet—and indeed to exceed—the 100 per cent target for 2020. That will allow us to export energy that is derived from renewables and ensure that we are always able to meet our needs, even at times of lower output.

The Parliament has set a radical course: it should be about not just growth, but conservation and the reduction of energy waste. Scotland is sometimes regarded as the periphery of Europe, but when it comes to renewables, we are ideally located. North, south, east and west, it is truly a national industry. From Orkney to Castle Douglas and Islay to Edinburgh, the industry can touch every part of the country, not least my constituency.

In putting the heart back into manufacturing, locating world-leading research and design in Scotland, boosting our economic performance and transforming our environmental record, the Government deserves our whole-hearted support.

10:32

Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP):

Returning members will know that I generally enjoy speaking rather late in a debate: I try to resist the temptation to repeat what has already been said and instead fill in one or two of the holes.

I wish to thank on the record the good voters of Angus North and Mearns for returning me as their constituency MSP; I trust that I will do them proud over the next five years. I will return to a constituency issue later, because it is pretty much *de rigueur* in this type of engagement.

I begin by reflecting on what is known as the hierarchy of energy. Pretty much every document makes the point that if we do not use the energy in the first place, we do not have to create and transmit it. What we do not waste, we do not have to produce. I join others—notably Claudia Beamish—in pressing that point on the Government.

In that context, there are three major uses of energy in our society. The first is all the electricity stuff, including the lights that we are working under

at the moment, the second is transport and the third is heating.

It is much easier for us to talk about and get our minds around electricity generation than to worry too much about transport and, in particular, heating. However, we ignore heating at our peril. Global warming may be with us, but we are talking about fractions of a degree. We know what a cold building feels like, and those who are concerned about fuel poverty know that we are really talking about living in a building that is cold. We know that that is very bad for our health, never mind our psychology. We must be prepared to address that issue in the future, but I have not heard very much about it today.

One solution to all our problems is microrenewables. Any wind turbine or solar panel on a roof that generates electricity will heat that building or power anything else, which is obviously a very good thing.

I should in passing declare an interest as a director of the Construction Licensing Executive, which tries to help tradesmen in this area to get qualified, although I receive no benefit from that completely unremunerated position. The CLE has realised that there is a considerable barrier to the microgeneration that will be essential if we are to meet our 2020 targets. A colleague of mine has informed me that we need 20,000 microgeneration installations in order to do so; frankly, it does not matter whether that figure is out by a long way. It is already very big and we need to get on with those installations.

The issues that have been flagged up are consumer awareness of the options, the difficulty of finding the money to install equipment and certain technical matters, in particular consistency with regard to requirements for building warrants for solar panels on roofs. One might regard such matters as almost trivial, but they get in the way of people being able to install these things. Either no one knows what the rules are, or different installers give different answers because they work in different parts of the country where the local authority seems to have a different set of rules. We need to sort those things out.

The third issue that I want to address—wind power from the North Sea—brings me back to my constituency. I am told by the many people who are working on the issue that the challenges posed by wind turbines are in many respects quite different from those that face the oil industry. Of course there are certain similarities—for example, the need to deal with deep sea and bad weather—but the approach to maintaining these offshore facilities will be different to that taken by the oil industry to its facilities. For a start, wind turbines will be unmanned and, secondly, it will take a good deal longer to travel out to them. As a result, those

involved in operations and maintenance will either have to spend a lot of time on the water—after all, they will not be able to use helicopters—or live out there on some kind of floating hotel. People skilled in the art are already working on such matters but I think that, given the need to minimise the time taken in boats to get to and do something to these installations, there will be greater scope for having more ports.

The basic message, therefore, to places such as Montrose, which is the port in my constituency, is that, if they are the closest to any of these North Sea installations, they will have a role in maintaining and operating them. I suggest to all members around our shores that if a port in their region or constituency sits closest to an offshore wind turbine there will quite clearly be opportunities with regard to its management.

Finally, I welcome Derek Mackay to the chamber and thank him for his excellent speech; I should also mention Marco Biagi's contribution. I also point out that if members finish early, as Mr Mackay did, they will get brownie points from the Presiding Officer.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you very much for finishing exactly on time, Mr Don.

10:38

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): This is the first time that I have spoken in a renewable energy debate, despite the fact that my son is a project manager on a wind farm that is being built between Keith and Dufftown.

In his statement on taking Scotland forward, the First Minister said that renewable energy was a growth sector. As Fergus Ewing made clear this morning, that is undoubtedly true. The Scottish Conservatives, too, would like Scotland to lead the world in onshore and offshore renewable energy and to make much needed progress on marine energy. However, although there is no doubt that renewable energy will create wealth and jobs, our current and future projections will have to be realistic.

Various speakers in the debate have referred to turbine manufacturers and other manufacturers setting up in Scotland. However, the truth is that about 70 per cent of the money for wind farms goes abroad for the manufacture of turbines and towers. For an average £50 million wind farm, £35 million goes out of Scotland and the remaining 30 per cent is used for civil engineering, electrical work and cables. When the Government talks about multimillion pound wind farms, we should be mindful that at the present time 70 per cent of the value of those multimillion pound projects goes out of the country. For that reason, I very much

welcome Kenny Gibson and others talking about the setting up of production facilities in Scotland.

My second point is that the First Minister and others constantly remind us of the jobs to be created. Yes, there are probably about 40 to 50 jobs for about two years in an average 50MW wind farm project. However, when all the contractors have moved off site, about two or three full-time staff are left long term, and technicians are called in for maintenance or breakdowns. There is therefore a lot of employment in the short term but not long-term jobs. Wind farms certainly generate energy, but they are not huge generators of long-term jobs.

My third point relates to the grid connections. Many years ago when we were up the road in the old Parliament building, I met representatives from Scottish and Southern Energy, as I am sure John Swinney and others did, to be briefed on the proposed Beaulieu to Denny transmission line upgrade. Over a decade later, following a year-long public inquiry, it seems that very little has changed. The people around Beaulieu still come to my surgeries and ask whether there is any chance of undergrounding the cable and why, although there is undergrounding of cables in Perthshire, the visual impact did not seem to be taken into account in the Highlands.

Further upgrades are required from the north of Scotland to Beaulieu to maximise the opportunities for tidal and marine power in the Pentland Firth. I say to ministers that I hope that some of the lessons from the Beaulieu to Denny upgrade have been learned. I hope, too, that communities will be better informed and consulted to ensure that developers can get the grid connection that they need and that Scotland can be the success that we want it to be in renewables.

Fergus Ewing: In the construction of the northern section of the Beaulieu to Denny line, consent for which my predecessor granted, much of the work will in fact benefit Scottish companies and employees.

Mary Scanlon: I am aware of that, but little cognisance was taken of the community's desire to underground the cable, despite the area being a huge tourist attraction.

Much has been said about the SNP Government's ambition to produce 100 per cent of energy through renewables. However, in the area that I represent in the Highlands and Islands, the Government's determination to deliver that target is causing serious concern in local communities—another e-mail came in on that today—who now fear that every application that goes to the Scottish Government will be approved in order to meet ambitious goals and that there will be scant, if any, regard to the views of local communities.

Among the communities in the Highlands and Islands that have spoken loudly in this regard is Shetland. Over 3,000 Shetlanders signed a petition about the proposed Viking wind farm for Shetland. The petitioner, Billy Fox, also won a 30 per cent share of the vote in Shetland on 6 May. It is difficult for people to make their voice heard in Shetland when the council owns the land and is the wind farm developer and the planning authority. I congratulate Billy Fox on standing up for the views of the people in Shetland.

On other problems that local groups face in this regard, I received an e-mail today that refers to another wind farm application in the Highlands that had an environmental statement that ran to 2,100 pages. Local people had 28 days to read it, understand it and object to or support the application. Statutory consultees such as Highland Council and Scottish Natural Heritage had four months to study the statement. The document was available for viewing by appointment only at Highland Council offices. If that was not convenient, people could buy a copy for £850. That is not the best in consultation.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wind up now, please.

Mary Scanlon: I am positive about renewables, but let us treat people and communities with the respect that they deserve in the drive towards meeting the target.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Dennis Robertson. This is his first speech in our Parliament.

10:45

Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I congratulate you on your appointment.

As the constituency member for Aberdeenshire West, about 70 per cent of which is made up of the former West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency, I pay tribute to Mike Rumbles, who served as the MSP for that constituency. Mike was a hard-working constituency MSP. He challenged the Government on many occasions, but I believe that he did that to the benefit of his constituents. I take the opportunity to thank all the people in Aberdeenshire West who voted for me. It is a great privilege to be in the Parliament and I sincerely hope that I will be able to serve them in the manner that they hope I shall in the next five years.

Much has been said in the debate about our natural resources. The natural resource on which I would like to focus has been mentioned, but just in the passing—it is the people of Scotland and the expertise and talent that we have here. In

Aberdeenshire West, which probably has the second-largest number of people employed in the oil and gas industry, we have expertise, knowledge and talent that are easily transferable to the renewables sector. At a meeting that I had with Oil & Gas UK not long after the bombshell of the announcement of the tax increase that has undermined the sector's confidence for future development, its representatives told me that they are looking forward to the renewable energy sector coming on board. Companies in the oil and gas sector are starting to invest in renewable energy and are looking forward to transferring the skills from their sector into that area.

We have the ability in Scotland, and certainly in the north-east, to take advantage of the opportunity. I sincerely hope that companies in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire West and the north-east will consider promoting students in our universities and sponsoring graduates to enter the world of renewables. The sector is an important one that at present is worth about £8.8 billion. By 2015, it should, we hope, be worth about £15 billion.

Aberdeenshire West is a rural constituency. To refer again to the people, I would like to focus on the smaller industries and agencies that will probably support the infrastructure for renewable energy. I look forward to working with the Federation of Small Businesses in the north-east, because it has great ambitions for the area. The Government has pledged to continue with the small business bonus scheme. I look forward to working with small businesses in meeting the challenge of seeing where they fit in with the renewable sector.

I was interested in Sarah Boyack's points about communities and community projects. I certainly became aware of those issues during the election campaign. I also became aware of the issues of wind farms. I might at some point hear from Mary Scanlon's son, given that he is in my constituency. Some people like wind farms and some do not. Some people think that they are a blight on the landscape and some people do not. The issue is certainly contentious, but it can be addressed. We need to be a listening Government and take on board our communities' concerns about planning applications. The minister has said that his door is open on the issue. I look forward to engaging with him in reviewing and reforming planning. I hope that the planning process will take cognisance of communities, certainly when we consider future onshore wind farms.

It is a great privilege to be in the Parliament and to be speaking in the debate. I am conscious that we need to embrace the talent that we have.

Within our education structure, we need to look forward and educate our children about renewables for the future. The oil and gas industry

still has a very important part to play and we should not underestimate it, but, as the minister said, oil and gas are finite resources that will be coming to an end. There are different projections on when they will come to an end, but at the moment the industry is a very important part of our economy and we should still support it as much as we can and encourage it to take its talents and resources to the renewables sector, too.

I have heard from the minister and various other ministers that their door will always be open for debates. My challenge is to find out where that open door is, but with Mr Q at my side, I am sure that I will do so.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you very much, and congratulations on your speech.

10:50

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): I declare an interest as a member of Aberdeen City Council. I will make no apology for mentioning the council throughout my speech. However, I should probably apologise to my colleague Mark McDonald, who has heard me refer in many speeches to the wonders of Aberdeen's 1952 local plan. He probably thought that he would not hear very much about that again. However, the minister prompted me to go on about it, because he mentioned the great secretary of state, Tom Johnston, who wrote the foreword to the 1952 plan, in which he talks about—I paraphrase here—the red weevils of bureaucracy holding up progress. In renewables, it is not the red weevils of bureaucracy that are holding up progress but a lack of political will, not in this place but elsewhere.

In a document from the Public Accounts Committee at Westminster, Margaret Hodge criticises the Westminster Government—in particular, the current Labour leader, Ed Miliband—for the lack of progress that has been made in the UK and the fact that we are failing to meet the targets that were set.

Mr McArthur talked about the progress that had been made since Chris Huhne took over as the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. I am sorry, but I cannot see the progress that Mr McArthur is talking about.

Liam McArthur: I paraphrase what they said, but on various occasions both the First Minister and the cabinet secretary have acknowledged the constructive relationship that they have enjoyed with Mr Huhne over the past 12 to 15 months.

Kevin Stewart: That does not really signify progress. As far as I am concerned, progress would be for the Scottish Government to get the fossil fuel levy that we deserve in order to invest in renewables here in this country. Quite frankly, if

we do not get on with that investment, we will be left behind.

Just recently in Aberdeen, we saw the all-energy conference, which is the UK's largest renewables conference, where countries from across the world had displays. If we do not invest, we will not make progress; other countries will make the running in this sector when it should be us making the running.

I will be slightly parochial and talk about Aberdeen. I am sure that I will be accused of being parochial on a number of occasions in this chamber. Jeremy Cresswell, who is the chair of the Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group, said that Aberdeen's phenomenal concentration of renewable energy expertise is critical to the success of the renewables revolution—which not just Aberdeen but the whole of Scotland will go through.

I am pleased that Mr Cresswell heads up an organisation that has gained €40 million from the European economic recovery plan for the proposed European offshore wind deployment centre, which will be in Aberdeen bay. I hope that that facility will create jobs and economic benefit for our area and will attract scientists, researchers, engineers and supply-chain companies. Dennis Robertson was right to highlight the part that small businesses should play.

Lewis Macdonald questioned the minister on district heating. I was really pleased that the previous Government invested £1 million in Aberdeen Heat and Power, which is expanding its operation, particularly in the Seaton area of my constituency—long may that continue. Aberdeen Heat and Power has an amazing champion—a formidable lady called Janice Lyon. I hope that the minister will have the opportunity to meet Mrs Lyon soon; I am sure that he will find that quite an experience. I hope that combined heat and power will be expanded in Aberdeen and elsewhere, because it is one measure on which we should concentrate.

Duncan McNeil says that competition is fierce. That is the case in the sector, which is why I do not apologise for returning to the point that we must invest now, because it might be too late to do so in five or 10 years' time. The Westminster Government must ensure that we get the moneys that we deserve so that we can invest in the future. Let us reap the opportunities for Scotland from the renewables sector.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): I call Mark Griffin to make his first speech in the Parliament.

10:56

Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I add my congratulations to you on your new elected position. I also congratulate the minister on his new appointment and wish him all the best in his new role. I look forward to working with him under his declared open-door policy for members across the Parliament.

It is a great honour to be elected to the Parliament, although it was a slight surprise, as I probably worked hardest not to be elected. I campaigned in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth for Cathie Craigie and I pay tribute to her for her 12 years' service to her community in the Scottish Parliament and for her many years' service as a councillor before that. On a personal note, I thank her for the tremendous advice and support that she has given me in the past few years.

The Scottish Government has tabled ambitious plans that have split the opinions of many in the energy sector. I support much that the Government has proposed and I think that most people in the Parliament support the principle of meeting all our electricity needs from green sources, but I must ask whether that aim can be achieved, especially in the timescale that the minister has proposed.

I have several concerns about the cost and sustainability of the Government's plans. The Government's "Draft Electricity Generation Policy Statement 2010" makes it clear that a low-carbon energy supply that has no reliance on nuclear power is the preferred way forward. If the Government wants to reduce the current reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear power—I take it that the Government means that in its entirety and that we would not import nuclear-produced energy from other countries—it will have to invest heavily in wind, wave and tidal power.

According to the Government's figures, investment in offshore and onshore wind farms will increase, but is the minister aware of the concerns that senior meteorologists have raised about the sustainability of wind energy? Official UK Government figures show that the average wind speed in 2010 was down by 20 per cent on 2008. Professor Michael Lockwood from the University of Reading is on record as saying:

"The probability is that decline will continue for the next 40 years."

Another expert, Dr David Brayshaw, has expressed his concerns and pretty much stated the obvious:

"If wind speed lowers, we can expect to generate less electricity from turbines".

The wind speed figures and expert opinion concern me and must concern the minister in relation to the sustainability and viability of wind farms.

The Government's plans rely heavily on private sector investors, who will not be willing to put capital into schemes if wind speeds and electricity generation continue to drop, which will result in a lower return for their investment. I urge the Scottish Government to display a degree of caution to ensure that if deeper problems arise with the wind energy industry, it has plans in place to utilise all forms of renewables to their full potential only while it remains cost effective.

I want to talk about fuel poverty, which is a subject sadly missing from the motion. I thank Nigel Don for raising the subject earlier. Fuel poverty affects a greater number of people with every passing winter. Energy Action Scotland has stated that one in three Scottish households is affected by fuel poverty—that number is increasing year on year and will continue to rise as conventional fossil fuel and nuclear power plants close and supply is switched to more expensive renewable electricity.

While the Government is right to aim for all new fossil-fuelled power plants to be equipped, and existing plants to be adapted, for carbon capture and storage, we should be more ambitious. We should push for those plants to become cogenerating, to get away from the current situation, in which, according to Scottish Government figures, only 35 per cent of fossil fuel is converted to electricity and 65 per cent of the energy is lost as waste heat.

A cogenerating plant, in which electricity is generated and the heat that is normally wasted is pumped into neighbouring communities as hot water, can operate at levels of efficiency close to 90 per cent. That increased efficiency would go a long way towards achieving the Government target of a 12 per cent reduction in energy consumption; at the same time, it would lift thousands of families out of fuel poverty in surrounding communities, allowing the Government to concentrate resources in other areas.

We all recognise that the Government's plans are ambitious, but unless the minister utilises all forms of renewables to their utmost and reduces the levels of waste heat being discharged from our power stations, the Government's goal will be unachievable.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Mark McDonald, who is making his first speech.

11:01

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer. Having congratulated you privately on your elevation to the role, I do so publicly today.

Like Kezia Dugdale last week, Mark Griffin spoke today about his unexpected election to Parliament. I share that feeling, although they probably at least turned up to the count in appropriate attire. Nonetheless, I am delighted to be elected, and I am grateful to the 140,000 people who voted SNP in the list in North East Scotland and returned me as a list member.

Having been born in Inverurie, raised in Aberdeen and attended university in Dundee, I have spent my entire life in the North East region. It is a wonderful corner of the world, and it is a great honour and privilege to represent the area. I hope that I will do the people who sent me here justice by representing them to the best of my ability.

I welcome the inclusion of local ownership in the motion and in the Labour amendment. Sadly, it is missing from the Tory amendment, but then so is ambition. Sarah Boyack spoke about energy efficiency in relation to housing. My colleague Kevin Stewart rightly pointed out the success of Aberdeen Heat and Power. As a member of Aberdeen City Council, I had the privilege of opening two Tenants First Housing Co-operative properties that use a model of housing from Canada known as Super E housing, which is an extremely energy-efficient form of housing that significantly reduces household heating bills. I spoke to Alex Neil about that when he was the Minister for Housing and Communities, and I fully intend to raise with Keith Brown, the new Minister for Housing and Transport, the issue whether that housing model could be considered for future new build in the social and private sectors in Scotland.

On Tuesday, along with a number of other members, I attended a thought-provoking and robust discussion event that was organised by Friends of the Earth Scotland at the Holyrood hotel. At that event, I met two gentlemen from Udney Community Wind Turbine Company, Brian McDougall and Mike MacDonald. For those who are unfamiliar with the community of Udney, the parish of Udney lies 15 miles north-west of Aberdeen and consists mainly of the villages of Pitmedden and Udney Green and surrounding rural properties. It has a population of roughly 2,000.

In 2006, the idea of a wind turbine to provide a sustainable, long-term income for the community was promoted at a community council meeting and taken forward by a small group of individuals. They investigated and selected a site, and they engaged with the community, including the

schools. The schools in the area were brought in to develop models for a “planning for real” event, and the enthusiasm of the community was captured—so much so that a ballot on whether to proceed with a community wind turbine showed 91 per cent support for the project.

The decision was made to sell the electricity generated by the turbine to the National Grid and to form a community trust company, which would disburse the funds generated by the sale. It is estimated that, over the next 20 years, the project could raise as much as £4 million to £5 million for that small community. That is a fantastic opportunity for the people of Udney, and I very much hope that they will realise it. The likelihood is that the turbine will go live later this month. It has required five years of hard work and dedication by the people of that community, and they deserve significant commendation for their work.

But—and there are always buts—there have been some concerns, not directly with the Scottish Government, necessarily, but in areas that we might need to raise with others if we are to encourage more communities to develop projects in the future and if we are to make it easier for them to do so.

The first of those areas is how communities deal with HM Revenue and Customs. A request was made by the community that I have highlighted—a fairly sensible request, I thought—to engage in monthly accounting, which would make things easier for the community in paying invoices and dealing with VAT. That request was refused, and the people were told that they had to proceed on a quarterly basis. I find that a little bit obstructive, and not in the spirit of encouraging such projects.

The second area involves lending. The loan that the community took out to develop the project comes from the Triodos Bank, in the Netherlands. There were only three banks that the community could look to for finance. One was the Clydesdale, which, unfortunately, was not able to take on the project at the time. The other was the Co-operative Bank, which was unable to do so either. The Triodos Bank, for which the community had nothing but the highest praise, took on the project. It would be beneficial, however, to retain the money within the Scottish economy. Perhaps the minister can see what he can do to encourage other banks to lend to such projects.

In 2006, the people of Udney showed vision and ambition. After five years of hard work and dedication, their community is set to reap significant rewards. In 2011, Scotland showed that it has vision and ambition by re-electing the SNP to government on the back of our ambitious targets for renewable energy generation. Let us all work together in the Parliament to ensure that, in

five years' time, the people and communities of Scotland are the ones who reap the rewards.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Rhoda Grant, who has six minutes.

11:07

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I welcome you to your new post, Presiding Officer. I also welcome the minister to his post, and I congratulate all the new members who have made their first speeches today, with such thoughtful contributions.

There are many issues to debate regarding green energy, as our amendment shows. I will concentrate on wave and tidal energy. As the minister said, we are currently world leaders in research and development for wave and tidal energy, but we have some way to go before we can harness that power to make it contribute to our energy needs in the future. Although some people overestimate the potential production, it is clear that it can make a significant contribution to energy production. Tidal power is not weather dependent, which is one of the main concerns that has been expressed regarding wind power.

We must renew our commitment to those technologies and their development. Much of the investment can come from the private sector, but we need to create the conditions and the infrastructure that keep the companies involved working in Scotland.

I recently visited the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney and was fascinated by what is being done there. EMEC, which is the first centre of its kind in the world, offers developers the opportunity to test prototypes in a range of wave and tidal conditions, from sheltered nursery sites through to fully worked-up, grid-connected open-water sites.

I was struck by the facilities that are already in place, but it became clear that in order for the centre to be a focal point for research and development, further investment in infrastructure is needed. Companies tend to do their research and development elsewhere and to take their prototypes to Orkney for testing. It appears that we are missing an opportunity. If there were facilities in Orkney in which companies could work locally, companies could continue to develop their technologies on site. The approach would have the added benefit of creating an atmosphere of collaboration, which would speed up development. Companies might not want to move north in their entirety, but if facilities were available in the area there would be an opportunity for companies to base some of their work there.

Companies also need to ensure that they have access to policy and planning expertise. The Government could lead the way in that regard. The minister talked about a one-stop shop for developers of renewable energy; it would be good if such an organisation could be based in Orkney, so that companies that are developing in the field could access it immediately.

In the past, our investment in research and development, for example in oil and gas, has paid dividends. We need to ensure that we remain world leaders in tidal power. It would be unforgivable to lose that expertise and the inward investment that it will bring. We are importing technologies in which we failed to invest in the past—wind power is a recent example.

We need to consider community benefit in the context of offshore generation. In the past, communities that have rights over land have been able to benefit financially from wind power, by becoming joint developers or by taking a percentage dividend because of the loss of amenity in their area. The issue is much more complex in relation to offshore energy. There are obvious benefits to the public purse, which will be gained through taxation, but those benefits will bypass local communities. We have seen that happen in communities that gained nothing from onshore wind farms in their locality, which created very little by way of local jobs and community benefit.

When people were investing in oil and gas, Shetland set up an oil fund, which continues to benefit the communities. Shetland also gained the jobs and inward investment that developments in oil and gas brought. The wider community will continue to benefit from the oil fund. Mary Scanlon was critical of Viking Energy, which is partly owned by the fund, but the company will consider investing in renewables, which will secure the community benefit for future generations, so we need to consider the situation.

Mary Scanlon: I appreciate Rhoda Grant giving way to me. I was critical not of Viking Energy but of its lack of engagement and openness in responding to the local community's concerns.

Rhoda Grant: I concur with Mary Scanlon that anyone who is developing onshore or offshore energy needs to work with the local community. My point is that communities need to benefit from developments in their locality.

We cannot generate electricity without having a grid that is capable of transporting the energy to population centres. There is an argument for basing onshore wind power generation near population centres, but that does not apply to wave and tidal power, which is always generated in our most remote areas. I have been told that the

west coast of Lewis is probably one of the most productive sites for wave and tidal power, but the interconnector there is already at full capacity. The matter needs to be dealt with now, and I ask the minister to update us on progress on the interconnector when he sums up.

Renewables technology will continue to be expensive for some time, as is always the case when research and development are required. However, it will help to reduce our carbon footprint, so as a society we must be prepared to invest. As Mark Griffin said, we must take seriously the challenges of fuel poverty. Microrenewables are affordable for people who have money to invest; people who suffer from fuel poverty and would benefit from microrenewables do not have money to invest. We need to ensure that the Government deals with the issue and sets up the structures that will allow people who suffer from fuel poverty to invest in renewable technologies.

11:14

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):

As ever, this has been an interesting debate. It is important that I congratulate the members who gave their maiden speeches. We heard from Marco Biagi, Claudia Beamish, Derek Mackay, Dennis Robertson, Mark Griffin and Mark McDonald. It is always nice to hear people giving their first speeches in the Scottish Parliament. They are always wonderfully optimistic and full of the joys. Perhaps, in three or four years, they will become as cynical as I am and we will enjoy that.

On the subject of cynicism, I must say that I was genuinely surprised at the amicable nature of the speech that Kenny Gibson made. That bodes well for the future, but let us not hold our breath.

The debate is characterised by the fact that we have been discussing the subject for a long time. Although progress is slow in relative terms, we have come a very long way in developing green energy during the 12 years that the Scottish Parliament has been in existence.

There are some who have suggested—meanly, I think—that because we Conservatives do not agree with the bulk of the policies that the SNP proposes, it somehow automatically means that we do not believe in progressing green energy. Nothing could be further from the truth, but we would fail in our responsibility if we, as an Opposition party, did not point out some of the weaknesses in those policies. Such weaknesses exist, and I need to emphasise our points on them.

We heard from Fergus Ewing that we can predict with near certainty that renewables will be a success. We also heard once again the

commitment to 100 per cent of our electricity being generated by renewable means by 2020. However, as ever, he briskly skipped over some of the disadvantages. An ambition that requires that change to happen in only nine years will, by its nature, require us to depend on the existing technology, which will force us to develop onshore wind and, it is to be hoped, offshore wind within that short timescale. However, the timescale is too short for effective implementation of marine options. Consequently, it will take investment away from longer-term priorities. That is why I would like the Government to take a broader attitude to encouraging investment over time.

Another point that the Government has failed to take into account and which a number of members mentioned is the need for grid upgrade. The grid in Scotland was designed to take power out from central generation capacity to the far reaches of the country. We now need a grid that will do exactly the opposite. To some extent, in the initial years, the existing grid will have that effect as we reverse the net flow. The problem is that we need a grid that is designed to take large capacity from peripheral areas and bring it to our centres of population.

We can, of course, engineer the grid as required, but the example of the Beaulieu to Denny line indicates that any major grid upgrade could involve years of public inquiries, could involve massive public protest and, as we know for certain, will require massive investment. No indication has been given today of whether that can be achieved in the nine years ahead.

We heard from the minister a good old-fashioned, motherhood-and-apple-pie speech. Green energy is good—yes, we can all agree on that. We heard a bit of the Government blowing its own trumpet because, yes, it achieved a great deal in the past four years and will, no doubt, achieve more in the next five. However, it again forgets key elements of the problems that it faces.

Renewable energy has expanded largely because, if somebody can generate it, they get paid more for it than they do for other types of electricity. That means that, as we move towards greener, more renewable energy sources in Scotland, the average cost of our energy will go up too.

The Government has, of course, turned its back on the idea of extending nuclear capacity in Scotland. Its alternative to renewable energy is to push forward with carbon capture. The Conservatives want that technology to be developed, but we must consider the cost again. Applying carbon capture to our coal power stations will take the cost of energy up.

One or two members spoke about fuel poverty. I always like to mention fuel poverty because, whatever we do, it is essential that energy be available and affordable in the long term. The Government's commitment to renewable energy and carbon capture as its only two strategies for generating electricity in the long term will take the cost of energy up, and it appears to have no strategy to avoid the problems.

A number of other issues were raised during the debate, one of which was planning. I feel that I am talking about something that goes back eight to 10 years to when we Conservatives asked the Government of the day to provide strategic planning guidance for local authorities for the implementation of planning applications, particularly for wind energy. I remember being supported by SNP members in opposition when we were making that call, but after four years of an SNP Government, I still have not seen what we wanted at that time. It is still the case that applications are largely called in and dealt with by central Government anyway. We should see stronger guidance on how planning applications should be handled by local authorities, particularly to protect local authorities from victimisation when a local authority that is willing to deal with the issues finds itself inundated with applications.

Green energy is the future. We will support it in principle, but I want to hear the Government answer those questions.

11:21

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):

This has been a good debate, and it is right that we should be debating ambitious targets for renewable energy production, because it is an opportunity that Scotland must seize for the future, and we should all embrace that ambition. Like Alex Johnstone, I congratulate all those members who have made their maiden speeches today. From the Labour Party, we had excellent first speeches from Claudia Beamish and Mark Griffin, and we also heard excellent maiden speeches from members of the governing party. Having been fortunate enough to contribute in all the debates that have been held in Parliament since our return, I can say that in each one we have heard excellent maiden speeches from members of all parties, which bodes well for the quality of debate.

Of course, we have also enjoyed the contributions of our more experienced members. Fellow old-stagers have included Duncan McNeil and his well-argued grrn for Inverclyde, which ministers will ignore at their peril.

I also welcome Mr Ewing to his new brief. We did not always see eye to eye on justice matters in

the previous session, but he always had an open door and was ready to discuss with me why, in his opinion, I was wrong. We welcome that open door and his willingness to work with members from other parties.

The rewards for Scotland in becoming a world leader in renewable energy are clear, in terms of creating a sustainable and successful economy, cutting carbon emissions and reaping the rewards of our involvement in a fast-growing industry. We are keen to support ministers in achieving that goal.

As a member for North East Scotland, I am well aware of Scotland's potential to be the green powerhouse of Europe through our natural resources and the skills of our people. We are already the energy powerhouse of Europe through our successful oil and gas sector. The skills and technology that have been developed through our key role in that industry are being deployed in the renewables sector. I agree with what Dennis Robertson said about the skills of our people in Scotland and how they give us a significant advantage for the future.

We can agree with and support much of what the minister said, such as the ambition for 130,000 jobs in the renewables sector by 2020. We look forward to the publication of the renewables road map and hope that the minister will take on board some of the points that Duncan McNeil and Mary Scanlon made, such as on ensuring that we benefit from constructing the infrastructure. We hope that a range of the points that members have made will be taken on board.

We applaud the ambition to develop marine renewables. I visited EMEC in 2005 after it first received Government support. We welcome the plans for offshore wind farms across Scotland, including those that will be off the coast of my region. There is tremendous potential there, and, as Rob Gibson said, we should not underestimate the scale of our potential to succeed in the renewables industry and to have ambitious targets for the future. We believe that we should be looking to make the maximum possible contribution to the UK's and Europe's renewable energy targets. We look forward to working with the Scottish Government on all those areas.

As Sarah Boyack said, we hope that the minister will follow through on his offer to take seriously other parties' ideas, and we are keen to discuss with him the plans that we have put forward for a green new deal to create new jobs and to provide low-carbon electricity for 10,000 homes, which Sarah Boyack mentioned. We are also keen for there to be greater co-operation between Government and local authorities to make best use of the feed-in tariff and the renewable heat incentive—which, I point out to

Kevin Stewart, were initiated by Ed Miliband—and to look at supporting other initiatives around the country, including the work that is being done on combined heat and power in Aberdeen, to which Lewis Macdonald referred.

A number of members mentioned other important goals. We need further and speedier action on energy efficiency, not least to tackle fuel poverty—Nigel Don, Mark Griffin and Mark McDonald all talked about the importance of that. As Claudia Beamish said, we should be investing in a sustainable schools infrastructure and in the ability of our young people to contribute in future to making Scotland a leader in renewable energy. We think that those are all important ambitions.

We recognise that, when it comes to renewable energy, the Administration has shown no shortage of ambition, but given that, at the end of 2010, around 25 per cent of our electricity was generated from renewables, ministers must be clear not just to MSPs but to the wider public, businesses and taxpayers about how its plans will be delivered. Jackson Carlaw asked whether that would depend on the Government having new powers, but the understanding must be that the commitment was made under the powers that are in place, and we expect ministers to provide details of how they will achieve it under the existing settlement.

As I said in yesterday's debate, when ministers put forward the case for new powers, it is reasonable for us to ask what they will be used for and how they will benefit Scotland: other members agreed with me on that. Jackson Carlaw identified a general thread in the Government's motion, which is as much about giving powers to ministers as it is about power for the grid. All we ask is that, on the areas that are outlined in the motion, ministers provide further details on the scope of the new powers that they want, as well as on how they will be used.

We need a fair deal for Scottish renewables, a fair price for the electricity that we will want to import and, of course, the best deal for Scottish consumers, communities and businesses. As Sarah Boyack said, we support moves to ensure that there is a fair resolution to the issue of the fossil fuel levy moneys. We believe that it is fair to ask that Parliament can see the results of the Scottish Government's consultation on the Crown estate so that we can consider the best way forward. We agree that we want the green investment bank to come to Edinburgh, as that would benefit Scotland; indeed, I am sure that that is an issue on which all parties agree and will be able to collaborate.

We stand ready to work with the Scottish Government to develop our renewables industry for the good of our economy and our environment,

and we welcome the scale of ministers' ambition, but we want to see details of how that ambition will be achieved. The targets for 2020 are impressive but, if they are to be realistic, ministers need to be clear about what they will achieve in the current session of Parliament, so that we seize the opportunity that we have to ensure that Scotland becomes Europe's green energy powerhouse. We all share that goal, but it is for ministers to set out a clear strategy for how they will achieve it.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call John Swinney to wind up the debate.

11:29

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney): Thank you very much, Presiding Officer. I warmly welcome you to your post.

It has been an excellent debate—or, should I say, one of the two debates that have been going on this morning has been excellent: the largely positive debate that has involved the Labour Party, the Liberals and SNP members. We have also had a rather gloomy debate involving Conservative Party members, which I hope does not mark the tone of the Conservative Party for the next five years. The common assessment is that the Conservative Party made a constructive contribution to proceedings over the past four years, so I hope that we have not seen the start of a departure from that route.

The issue at the heart of the debate is ambition. It was most appropriately characterised by my colleague Marco Biagi, who set out in what was a magnificent first speech to the Parliament the dilemma that often underpins debates of this sort. The dilemma is that our country's ambition, which could be fuelled by our tremendous engineering history, invention and creativity, is undermined by the self doubts that have so often characterised this country's view of itself. If we needed to hear any puncturing of that ambition, we got it from the Conservative Party in this morning's debate. I commend Marco Biagi on an excellent speech, which set out properly that we have to be ambitious in this policy area. I welcome very much the approach taken by the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats in sharing that ambition and in encouraging and requiring the Government to bring forward the details to substantiate our ambition, which ministers will be delighted to do.

We heard a number of other first speeches today, on which I will comment. Claudia Beamish made a powerful point about younger people in our society and spoke about many of our pupils who are involved in the eco schools project. I think that we have all had the privilege of seeing the absolute focus and determination of those young

people to change the world as they know it. Such programmes have been successful in winning over minds to the arguments that Claudia Beamish set out powerfully. I assure her of the Government's commitment that such work will be carried on.

Derek Mackay cited his experience of seeing the first signs of re-industrialisation in the Renfrewshire North and West constituency, which has a proud engineering history. The area is developing the investment that has been approved and committed by Doosan Babcock. To see that being realised in the west of Scotland is a tremendous experience.

Mark Griffin made a substantial point about the importance of private investment in supporting the renewables revolution. The Government is determined to give the policy the certainty that will enable private investors to evaluate project opportunities and commit to them. Mark Griffin's point about the importance of private investment echoes my point in yesterday's economy debate that for our economy to truly achieve its potential, it must be motivated by investment from the private sector. Although we might invest in infrastructure, skills development and other factors that assist the renewables industry, ultimately we require private investment. Policy certainty is a crucial part of that exercise.

My friend Dennis Robertson made a strong argument for how the existing skills in the North Sea oil and gas sector can be transferred to the renewables sector. That gives us great confidence in the opportunities for the North Sea oil and gas sector to continue working on current production and exploration activities in the North Sea as well as to export those skills from the petroleum sector to other parts of the world and diversify into renewables.

The final member who spoke for the first time was Mark McDonald, who raised a number of practical points about taking forward community renewables developments. Ministers will look carefully at his points to ensure that there are no impediments in the way of community renewables, which remain at the heart of the Government's ambitions.

I have poked a little fun at Mr Carlaw and the Conservative Party this morning, but that is just par for the course on a Thursday morning. Mr Carlaw made the point that 25 per cent of generation in Scotland is nuclear. I simply make the point to Mr Carlaw that Scotland also exported 25 per cent of its generation, so the idea that there is a connection with Mr Carlaw's point about the lights going out without nuclear is unsubstantiated.

Alex Johnstone: Will the minister acknowledge that that is perhaps a disingenuous presentation of figures, given that we are required to maintain a

supply of electricity to Northern Ireland through the Northern Ireland connector and consequently will always require to generate more than we require for our own capacity?

John Swinney: I do not think that there is anything disingenuous in a statement of the facts that underpin some aspects of current energy production.

I would never have thought that Mr McNeil gins in this Parliament. I say to him that ministers have asked Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to continue to consider the contents of the national renewables infrastructure plan, and the Government takes very seriously his points about the involvement of and opportunities for the Inverclyde area. As was evidenced by the contributions from Mr Mackay and Mr Gibson, areas that are not terribly far from Mr McNeil's constituency are already benefiting from the renewables revolution, and we want that to be extended into the bargain.

Sarah Boyack continued her consistent campaign on energy efficiency. We acknowledge the importance of reducing energy consumption, and we are committed to securing a reduction in final energy consumption so that, by 2020, the figure is 12 per cent below the 2007 figure. A number of different measures are in place, including measures to maximise carbon emissions reduction target investment by energy suppliers in Scotland, the work of the energy saving Scotland advice network, or the boiler scrappage scheme, which I took forward in a previous budget on Sarah Boyack's suggestion. All of those measures are substantial in assisting us to reduce energy consumption, which remains an important part of the process.

Sarah Boyack: Will the cabinet secretary confirm that he is interested in talking to us about the principles of building in householder renewables alongside the energy efficiency programme and about our suggestion that we should be much more ambitious, particularly with council and housing association properties where people are in very difficult financial circumstances? Will he work with us on bringing forward more radical proposals?

John Swinney: We would be delighted to have those discussions with the Labour Party. They would be appropriately timed, because we are working our way through the formulation of a microgeneration strategy. The point of dialogue is now, and Mr Ewing will take forward that discussion.

The issue also flows into some of the points that Lewis Macdonald raised in an intervention on Mr Ewing on district heating systems, which we also acknowledge to be an opportunity. We have

already introduced the district heating loan fund this year to stimulate activity in the sector, and we want to see further growth through the renewable heat incentive, which will open in the course of this summer. I am delighted to confirm the Government's willingness to discuss such issues with the Labour Party to make concrete progress in advancing many of the opportunities.

Mr McArthur made a point about the fossil fuel levy, which was also picked up by a number of my colleagues, including Kevin Stewart and Mr Gibson. I have looked at the issue in tremendous detail over the years, and I say to Mr McArthur that there is a world of a difference between having an accessible mechanism to release the £200 million of resources that are currently held in the fossil fuel levy and the proposition that has been put forward by Her Majesty's Government thus far. We continue to discuss with Her Majesty's Government how we can take forward the fossil fuel levy resources in a meaningful way that can add real impetus to the investment in the renewables sector, which is a clear objective of this Government and one which—it is clear from this debate—is widely shared across the parliamentary chamber and the political spectrum.

My final point is that there is a significant issue that is material to the Government's agenda: the approach to the Crown estate. The Government will set out its further thinking on that question as we continue to press the United Kingdom Government to change its direction on the Crown estate and to create the mechanisms whereby the people of Scotland can benefit from the development of offshore renewables, in contrast to the way in which they have not directly benefited from the development and taxation of North Sea oil and gas.

Scottish Executive Question Time

General Questions

11:40

Crown Estate

1. Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what progress has been made regarding the transfer of powers from the Crown Estate commission to the Scottish Parliament. (S4O-00001)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): The transferring of responsibility for the administration of the Crown estate and control of the revenues to the Scottish Parliament is a priority for the Scottish Government. It is our firm belief that we must reform the outdated and outmoded arrangements for management of the Crown estate to help Scotland to realise the massive potential of our enormous offshore renewable energy resources and our sea bed.

Rob Gibson: In the light of rumours that the Crown Estate intends to base its administration of marine and tidal developments in London, not Scotland, and the consensus in Parliament that we should return those powers here, how does the cabinet secretary view the negative response from the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Liberal member who has said no?

Richard Lochhead: On the member's point about the location of that post, I agree that it would be absurd if the post relating to our offshore renewables were to be based in London and not in the north of Scotland, where many of the resources are. That highlights a lack of transparency and the Scottish Parliament's lack of control over the Crown Estate's activities. I hope that the Crown Estate makes the right decision—I know that it is being lobbied hard by interests from the north of Scotland, the member's constituents and the member himself.

On Michael Moore's handling of the Scottish Parliament's call for the devolution of the Crown estate, it would be seen as a breach of faith if he did not support an issue that his party has been campaigning for north of the border. The Parliament and Scotland will be aware that intense negotiations are going on between the First Minister and the United Kingdom Government in which the top priority is devolution of the Crown estate, so that this country and no one else will benefit from the exploitation of the natural resources on our doorstep.

Waste Incinerators (Planning Regulations)

2. Michael McMahon (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to review planning regulations regarding waste incinerators. (S4O-00002)

The Minister for Local Government and Planning (Aileen Campbell): There are no current plans to review planning regulations regarding waste incinerators. Modernisation of the planning system includes Scottish planning policy and the Scottish Government's zero waste plan, which provide a waste and planning policy framework that includes restrictions on inputs to energy-from-waste facilities.

Michael McMahon: I welcome the minister to her new post. I did so in her absence yesterday, but I take the opportunity again today.

I ask the minister to confirm whether the Government supports the production of energy from incineration and considers such technology to be desirable. Will she confirm that the Scottish Government has accepted South Lanarkshire Council's decision to approve the incinerator at Dovesdale and will not call in that planning application? Can she explain why the Government of which she is a member has accepted the reporter's judgment and overturned North Lanarkshire Council's decision to reject a similar plant in Coatbridge when she was opposed to the plans for one in her own area? I ask the minister to instigate a consultation on a new national framework relating to the production of energy from waste so that all concerned will know what contribution the Government wants that technology to make and that the imposition of such plants on communities against their wishes will be prevented.

Aileen Campbell: The Government is committed to recycling, reusing and preventing waste. The production of energy from waste is part of that. As the member knows, each planning case is considered on its merits and at a local level. The appeal decision on the Carnbroe application is final, subject to the right of any party to appeal to the Court of Session within six weeks of the date of notice, therefore it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the merits of that development at this stage. As the member knows, I made representations relating to Dovesdale in my previous role as an MSP for the South of Scotland. However, in my new position as the Minister for Local Government and Planning, it would not be wise for me to comment further on that issue.

Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP): The minister will be aware that I have already communicated with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth regarding Dovesdale, which is

in the Stonehouse area of my constituency. Does the minister agree that the creation of national guidance on dealing with planning applications for waste incinerators and waste-to-energy plants would help local planning authorities that are facing decisions about proposed developments and the communities that would be affected by them—there are 25,000 objectors in my constituency alone—to be apprised of the full range of issues involved? Will the Scottish Government actively consider my request that the development of such guidance be sought?

Aileen Campbell: National guidance already exists in the shape of the national planning framework, Scottish planning policy and the zero waste plan, and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency provides a level of scrutiny and regulatory functions. There is a commitment to provide further planning guidance on waste management, but there are no plans at present to develop further policy guidance.

Elaine Smith (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab): With regard to the proposed pyrolysis incinerator in Coatbridge that was—astonishingly—granted planning permission on appeal by the Scottish Government reporter despite massive community objection, will the minister consider recommending a review and a possible fresh application, given that the inquiry was interrupted due to a sudden change of Government planning policy, which resulted in presubmitted precognitions having to be rewritten overnight?

Aileen Campbell: In relation to Carnbroe, as I have already said to Mr McMahon, the decision is subject to the right of any party to appeal to the Court of Session, and unfortunately I cannot comment on the merits of the development at this stage.

Affordable Housing

3. Fiona McLeod (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what funding it is making available for the development of new affordable housing. (S4O-00003)

The Minister for Housing and Transport (Keith Brown): In 2011-12, we are providing £50 million for the new innovation and investment fund, £8 million for the new supply shared equity with developers scheme and around £188 million to fund commitments from developments that were approved in previous years. In addition, we are providing £98 million to the City of Edinburgh Council and Glasgow City Council for affordable housing.

Fiona McLeod: I am sure that everyone in the chamber will welcome those figures.

My constituency, Strathkelvin and Bearsden, faces a particular pressure in that it has the fastest-growing elderly population in the country. I know that the Scottish National Party manifesto made a commitment to consider the issue of housing for older people. Will the minister consider a request by an all-party group of councillors in East Dunbartonshire to meet and review the situation?

Keith Brown: The member might be aware that we are developing the strategy for housing for older people, and the Government will be consulting on it over the summer. Given that that is the case, I will be delighted to take the chance to meet representatives from East Dunbartonshire, as she suggests, and to discuss the affordable housing needs of that area.

Gourock to Dunoon Ferry Service (Tender)

4. David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what progress has been made on the Gourock to Dunoon ferry tender. (S4O-00004)

The Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment (Alex Neil): On Wednesday 25 May, we announced that the preferred bidder for the Gourock to Dunoon ferry service tender is Argyll Ferries, a subsidiary of David MacBrayne. Subject to a statutory standstill period, the contract to run the service is due to be signed on 7 June. The new passenger ferry service will then start by 30 June.

David Stewart: The Gourock to Dunoon ferry tender has had more twists and turns than a trip over the Rest and be thankful. The minister does not need to take my word for that; he need only read the letters page of any edition of the *Dunoon Observer and Argyllshire Standard* over the past 12 months. Does the minister accept that the route from McInroy's point to Hunter's Quay on the Clyde is eligible to be treated as a public service route under the European Union's maritime cabotage regulations of 1992, should Scottish ministers deem it appropriate? Will the minister support my call to refer the matter to the Office of Fair Trading for a full, comprehensive and independent inquiry?

Alex Neil: Not everyone agrees with David Stewart's assessment, including those who write to the local newspaper. Indeed, before I came into the chamber this morning, I received an unsolicited letter from a member of the public in Argyll—

Members: Mike Russell!

Alex Neil: The letter said:

"I was delighted to read that the Dunoon - Gourock Ferry saga has reached conclusion. It is a decision which I am

certain will be welcomed by the vast majority of ferry travellers on the Cowal peninsula."

I am sure that that sentiment is shared by the local member, as well as many others.

I recognise that there is a need in general terms to consider the issues of competition and the co-ordination of ferry services. As I indicated when I announced the outcome of this contract award, we are seriously considering the possibility of establishing a ferry regulator.

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab): Just last week, the First Minister delivered his promise of no public service compulsory redundancies, while his new minister for broken promises, Alex Neil, was announcing such redundancies for CalMac Ferries workers on the existing vehicle route between Gourock and Dunoon. Will the cabinet secretary explain why CalMac workers are not covered by the First Minister's promise to the public sector of no compulsory redundancies?

Alex Neil: The origin of the contract and tender was essentially the European Commission. The Scottish Government had no option other than to tender the service. We had to take decisions on the basis of the tenders that were returned, and we took the option that involved the absolute minimum number of redundancies. Had we taken any other option, the number of redundancies involved would have multiplied by four. I take it that all members in the chamber will welcome the Government's policy of minimising redundancies in such situations.

Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP): I have a personal interest in the matter as my wife is currently a CalMac employee on the Gourock to Dunoon route. Does the cabinet secretary think that the proposed new working hours and shift patterns are sustainable, especially given that no part-time opportunities are available on the route? In addition, there will be only one person to do the pier work, which particularly concerns me with regard to late-night travellers on Fridays and Saturdays.

Alex Neil: In awarding the contract, two considerations arose that are relevant to the question. First, we wanted to ensure that there was adequate staffing. We are absolutely satisfied that under the successful contract bid adequate staffing will be made available on the service at all times.

Secondly, one of the welcome aspects of the service is that the hours will be extended substantially. On the weekends it will run from 5.40 in the morning through to 1 am the following morning, and the regularity will be every half hour. No one has provided that range and quality of service on the Gourock to Dunoon route in living

memory, and it is a huge improvement on what has gone before.

National Forestry Treasures

5. Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive what steps it is taking to ensure the safeguarding of national forestry treasures as set out in the Scottish forestry strategy. (S4O-00005)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): As we stated in our manifesto, we will keep the Forestry Commission as a publicly owned body and our forestry estate as an asset for the nation.

Jim Hume: The minister may be aware of a recent *Sunday Times* article in which a land agent who works closely with the Forestry Commission in Scotland was quoted as saying:

"There are forests run by the commission in which nobody has set foot for years."

I imagine that the minister will be concerned to hear that areas of our £1 billion forest estate are allegedly being neglected. It has even been suggested that the lack of attention given to the Glen Shira estate, which was sold off by the Government, led to 2,500 acres of wind-blown and stunted trees, which may have cost the taxpayer £5 million in lost revenue from that forest alone.

Does the minister agree that an audit of our forestry estate—

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Order, Mr Hume. It is a question, not a statement.

Jim Hume: Okay. Does the minister agree that an audit of our forestry estate is required as soon as possible to determine whether there are other areas of neglected forest that are devaluing the Scottish people's £1 billion estate?

Richard Lochhead: I am aware of the case in Jim Hume's region, although I tell him not to believe everything that he reads in the papers. Wind blow in Scotland's forests is of course nothing new; we are one of the windiest countries in the world and the forestry sector deals with that on an on-going basis. Although I respect the fact that the handsome majority that the SNP achieved at the election gives us a mandate to deal with a range of matters, even this Government cannot stop the wind blowing in Scotland.

Grade-separated Junction (Laurencekirk)

6. Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to build a grade-separated junction on the A90 at Laurencekirk. (S4O-00006)

The Minister for Housing and Transport (Keith Brown): On 25 January, I announced a

cost refinement exercise to identify the potential level of cost that is likely to be involved in constructing a grade-separated junction at Laurencekirk.

That study will result in a more informed preliminary estimate of the scale of investment that may be required and will be completed later this summer. That will provide the opportunity for a general discussion of options and costs in taking the matter forward.

Alison McInnes: I had been hoping for an unequivocal answer.

I remind the minister that there have been four fatalities and many serious accidents at this junction. With Jill Campbell at the helm and very ably assisted by Mike Rumbles, the MSP for the area in the last parliamentary session, local people have been campaigning for this road safety measure for many years and action is long overdue. The new local member for Angus North and Mearns, Nigel Don, was quick to align himself with the campaign during the election, promising that it would be a priority. Will the minister honour that pledge and commit to taking urgent action to prevent further loss of life at this junction?

Keith Brown: If the member thinks back to the discussion that we had with her, Mike Rumbles, Nigel Don and others, she will remember that what not only members but petitioners wanted were more definite costings, and I have responded to that by announcing the cost refinement exercise. There is no point in committing to a grade-separated junction in advance of that exercise if that is not what comes out of it. My answer is not equivocal—I am unequivocally saying that we have announced the cost refinement exercise. We will await the results of that exercise and take decisions when it is complete.

Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP): I am grateful to the minister for reiterating what I think we all knew. Does he agree that we need to find some way of ensuring that something is built here? If so, will he agree to meet me and Transport Scotland to explore the options, which might include not a grade-separated junction but merely a bridge, and to explore with the local council funding arrangements for whatever is done? After all, I am aware that we might need to get funds from more than one source to make it happen.

Keith Brown: The member has identified the different elements at play, including the council's local plan and, following on from that, the possibility of a public inquiry that might apportion responsibilities and costs or give direction in that respect. As part of the debate that I mentioned in response to Alison McInnes, I am more than

happy to discuss with the member other options that might help to improve safety at this junction.

Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 (Regulation)

7. Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it plans to introduce secondary legislation under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and, if so, what regulation it is considering. (S4O-00007)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): Existing animal welfare legislation is under consideration and the Government will announce its intentions about whether to replace some of the older animal welfare acts and make new regulations under the 2006 act later in the year.

Elaine Murray: The cabinet secretary will be aware of the disappointment in the last session that expected secondary legislation did not materialise. Is he considering the regulation of animal sanctuaries and livery stables, the protection of racing greyhounds and a ban on the use of wild animals in circuses and electric canine collars?

Richard Lochhead: As I have indicated, we are considering our next steps for promoting animal welfare in Scotland. The member has raised a number of important issues and I am open to representations from her, other colleagues and, indeed, outside organisations. Of course, many of the issues that she has raised are not as clear-cut as one might think on first impression; for instance, evidence on the treatment of wild animals in circuses is, as she will be aware, inconclusive. However, we are paying close attention to what is happening south of the border, as it might have implications for what happens north of the border. I guarantee to the member that we have an open mind on these matters.

Local Authorities (Duty of Care and Responsibility)

8. James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government whether it considers that local authorities have a duty of care and responsibility to the most vulnerable in society. (S4O-00008)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy (Nicola Sturgeon): Local authorities are required through a range of legislative duties and powers to ensure that the most vulnerable people in our society are cared for and protected. Those duties and responsibilities exist in respect of child protection, mental health, adult support and protection and social work legislation.

James Dornan: Does the cabinet secretary share my disappointment at Glasgow City Council's decision to scrap the concessionary rent scheme, which has benefited hundreds of charities across the city? The move leaves many of them facing the possibility of closure. Will she join me in urging the council to put a moratorium on the decision until its own grants integration scheme comes into force next year to give these charities, which deal with the most needy in our society, a chance to put in place an alternative funding mechanism to ensure their survival?

Nicola Sturgeon: I very much share James Dornan's concern and agree with the thrust of his question. I am sure that all members recognise and value the hugely important work that is done across a whole range of areas by charities in Scotland, without which statutory agencies, including local authorities, would find their job much more difficult and expensive to do.

Obviously, the rent concession scheme in Glasgow has played an important part in allowing a number of charities to operate sustainably and I hope that Glasgow City Council will engage with the affected charities to come to a solution that allows them to continue to do their good work. Perhaps it would be in the best interests of everyone concerned if some time were taken to consider alternative solutions.

First Minister's Question Time

12:00

Engagements

1. Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): In a conversation with me and Miss Goldie last night, the First Minister mentioned rediscovering the joys of watching television after the election. I rather suspect that some of us have more time for that than others. I am just relieved to be back on Thursday daytime television rather than watching it at home.

I saw on television this week the “Panorama” documentary that showed the appalling abuse of residents in a private hospital in England. Yesterday, four staff who were involved were arrested. The programme highlighted the failing of the care regulator—the Care Quality Commission. The Scottish equivalent of that commission is, of course, Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland—SCSWIS—which is a newly formed body from the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care and other bodies. What assurances can the First Minister give us about the new regulator's capacity to ensure standards of care in Scotland?

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): With permission, Presiding Officer, I will answer the question about my engagements and then the question that Iain Gray asked. I know that that was inadvertent.

Later today, I will meet the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth to discuss the uptake in modern apprenticeship opportunities. The latest figures show that, of the 25,000 modern apprenticeship places that the Government promised for this year, which is an unprecedented number, Skills Development Scotland has now contracted for 24,300 with training providers. I am sure that all members will wish to welcome the significant progress that has been made on that vital jobs initiative only two months into the financial year. [*Applause.*] I shall keep members updated as those youngsters move into employment in their training opportunities.

I saw the commentary on the documentary that Iain Gray mentioned, which raised matters of great concern. SCSWIS will review the current position of the three registered services that are run in Scotland to ensure that it is satisfied that there are no areas of key concern. That is clearly an important work of investigation. It is a matter for the authorities in Scotland to ensure that the Scottish position is up to scratch in all respects.

Iain Gray: My apologies for my lack of practice at doing this, Presiding Officer. [*Laughter.*]

We can practically see the Elsie Inglis care home from the Parliament; it is just down the road. Two residents of that home have died in recent weeks and six more have been hospitalised. The conditions are so bad that the rest of the residents have been evacuated.

I asked about the capacity of the new care regulator in Scotland. It is a fact that the care regulator has had its budget cut by 25 per cent, 55 staff have gone and another 50 might go in the year ahead. Those are the very staff who are meant to inspect homes such as the Elsie Inglis care home. Should not we consider what happened at Elsie Inglis and cancel that cut?

The First Minister: Perhaps I can reassure Iain Gray both on the generality and on the specifics at Elsie Inglis.

On 31 May this year—that is, in the past few days—there were, in total, 1,333 care homes for adults. During 2011-12, we will inspect a minimum of 961 of those care homes. At least 1,549 inspections will be carried out—some care homes will be inspected more than once because of the risk-based evidence that is held on the service.

Specifically on Elsie Inglis, a complaint about the standards of care there was received on 25 March and the regulator undertook a full inspection in April. During that period, the City of Edinburgh Council and Lothian NHS Board put their own staff into the home. That was done by 12 May. By 26 May, all 46 residents had been moved to suitable settings, where their needs are currently being met.

Members will agree that unsatisfactory conditions existed, but it is clear from that timetable that the relevant authorities acted quickly to rectify the situation and, as we must all agree, had the position and wellbeing of the residents as their primary concern.

Iain Gray: I did not criticise the response of SCSWIS to the situation at the Elsie Inglis home; my question was about the inspectorate's continuing capacity to carry out such work. We are moving from a statutory requirement for six-monthly inspections to a risk-assessment model that will mean fewer inspections. Further, the number of staff who carry out those inspections has been cut and will be cut in the two or three years ahead. However, concerns have been expressed not only about the regulator. Audit Scotland has today condemned the community health partnerships, which are supposed to plan and manage social care, and doctors say that those partnerships have “spectacularly failed”.

Southern Cross Healthcare, which runs 98 care homes in Scotland, is on the verge of collapse after financial speculation on the beds in which our older people are cared for.

So, the inspectorate is being cut, the social care system has been declared not fit for purpose and the biggest provider of residential care in Scotland is on the verge of collapse. This week, the First Minister held an emergency Cabinet summit on the United Kingdom Supreme Court. Does he not think that a summit on the crisis in care is more urgent than that?

The First Minister: There were a number of points in that. Just as a point of fact, I did not have an emergency Cabinet summit—the issue was discussed at the Cabinet, as was Southern Cross. I have given the figures on the inspection regime for social care homes in Scotland. Perhaps Iain Gray and the Labour Party did not want to hear those figures, but they indicate an impressive level of inspection. One crucial point that I did not make is that all care home inspections are now unannounced. That is a crucial part of ensuring that care homes in Scotland are at the best possible standard. I also mentioned the response to the situation at Elsie Inglis, and Iain Gray seemed to agree that it had been an effective response to a difficult situation.

He has now taken us on to Southern Cross. The Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy is dealing with that issue daily in conjunction with the UK Department of Health and in constant communication with all others who are involved in that serious issue. It is true that Southern Cross, which has more than 3,000 residents in Scotland of a total of about 98,000 across the UK, is on the brink of administration. The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Scottish Care and the relevant local authorities are ready to ensure continuity of care for the residents concerned if Southern Cross moves into administration.

There is one cautionary note that we should take from the Southern Cross situation. Southern Cross is an example of a private company that is involved in social care. Some people seem to think that that model should be applied across the health service in England. Indeed, in the past, the Labour Party wanted to introduce private companies into mainstream health services in Scotland. Given the difficulties that arise when a private company is on the brink of administration and given the position in which that leaves vulnerable people in social care or the health service, the current situation should be a cautionary note for those who seem to think that private intervention is a solution in the health service or in the social care service.

Iain Gray: A cautionary note to the First Minister: I think that he will find that the Scottish National Party council in Fife is currently transferring its publicly owned care homes to the private sector. We should not try to score points

on the issue; we should try to move forward. We have done that before in the Parliament. In the first session of Parliament, when the First Minister and I were both members, we introduced the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, the learning disability strategy and then free personal care, although I think that Mr Salmond was not a member by that time.

Only last week, the First Minister said:

“This Parliament speaks for the people of Scotland, and the people's voice should be heard.”—[*Official Report*, 26 May 2011; c 67.]

I agree with him. It is too late for Lynn Beveridge from Elsie Inglis to be heard, but we need to hear the voices of the elderly, the disabled and the vulnerable in the Parliament. They are not talking about the things about which we have heard so much—the constitutional issues, the Supreme Court, corporation tax or the Crown estate—important as those may be. No, those voices are asking what we are going to do to improve and secure the care that they need. Our job is to do that together. What are we going to do to improve the situation?

The First Minister: Iain Gray referred to community health partnerships. He also referred to the importance of the Parliament acting together and of not making party-political points. Community health partnerships were established in 2004. Today's Audit Scotland report, like last year's independent inspection report, has indicated that there are serious problems—not failing across Scotland—in some areas, with a lack of integration of health and social care. That is exactly why the Government has established such integration as a priority.

If I were to take a non-political look at the establishment of community health partnerships, I might say that we have learned from experience something that may not have been evident when the relevant legislation was introduced. The legislation left the co-ordination of health and community care as a voluntary aspect of the 36 partnerships in Scotland. Why is that important? Today's Audit Scotland report did not indicate that the system was failing across Scotland. On the contrary, one of its key findings was that there was co-sharing of services in 20 of the partnerships. That begs the question, why has it not happened in the other 16 partnerships? I suggest that it was a flaw in the Parliament's legislation that those of us who were in the Parliament in 2004—neither Iain Gray nor I were—did not realise that the co-ordination that was hoped for had to be made compulsory and that integration had to happen and should not be left to individual health boards and local authorities across Scotland. That is why the Government has made making such integration happen a priority.

In the spirit of not looking to score party-political points about whose legislation was best and of not saying that the system is failing across the country, we should recognise that, for example, delayed discharges have not been increasing in community health partnerships. In April 2004, there were more than 1,000 delayed discharges; two days ago, the recorded figure was 12. Twelve may be too many—there is no room for complacency, given the pressure on local authorities and the health service from budget cuts from Westminster—but it would be wrong not to regard the improvement that has been made as significant. To get a sense of perspective, we should take what is good and proper about the change and the aspects of it that have worked, and should ensure—as is the Government's priority—that health and community care are integrated as a service across Scotland.

Prime Minister (Meetings)

2. Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister. (S4F-00001)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): I have no plans to do so in the near future.

Annabel Goldie: The Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, disparagingly alleged that the majority of Supreme Court judges

"do not know Scots law",

except what they may have picked up on a trip to the Edinburgh festival. Does the First Minister endorse Kenny MacAskill's remarks?

The First Minister: I fully endorse the Cabinet Secretary for Justice in all aspects of his excellent work.

Annabel Goldie should look at the issue, because it is extremely serious. I have been looking through the *Official Report* of the debates on the Scotland Bill back in 1997 and 1998, in which I was involved, to see who foresaw what for most people were unforeseen consequences of the way in which the legislation was drafted. Foremost among the people who identified that there might be a serious difficulty in the legislation were Scots Tory peers. Foremost among them was John Mackay, who asked in the House of Lords for an assurance that we would not arrive at a situation in which the High Court of Justiciary was not the final court of appeal for Scots criminal matters. He was given that assurance, which any fair-minded person would say has not proven to be anything like copper bottomed.

The late John Mackay made his comments in the days when a person could be a Scottish Conservative and defend Scots law's independence. Would that the Scottish

Conservatives now defended Scots law as vehemently as he did back in 1998.

Annabel Goldie: If the First Minister had been a little more thorough in his research, he would have found that, when this Parliament considered the creation of the Supreme Court, I expressed reservations. My reservations were based on constitutional structure and function and on the basic fact that if something is not broken, why fix it? As everyone knows, the First Minister's objection to the Supreme Court is that it sits in London. His trenchant dislike of and hostility to the concept of a British court is evident by his little Scotlander approach and his and Mr MacAskill's ill-advised and provocative rhetoric.

The First Minister has denigrated the Supreme Court as causing delays, sitting in another country and not having a majority of judges who are expert in Scots law, so will he explain why he considers a court that sits in Strasbourg with a huge backlog of cases and no permanent Scottish judge to be a better option?

The First Minister: I have never understood the apparent inability of the Scottish Conservatives now to defend Scots criminal law as John Mackay did back in 1998. I have also never understood Conservatives' antipathy to the European convention on human rights. After all, the convention's principal author was a Scot—Sir David Maxwell Fyfe—who was, incidentally, a Conservative politician.

The Strasbourg court has 40 jurisdictions in its remit. Those 40 countries all manage to rub along with the Strasbourg court on human rights because, unlike the Supreme Court, the Strasbourg court does not quash convictions and does not unlock prison cells—that is not its role. It is unfortunate that Annabel Goldie seems unable to distinguish between the Supreme Court's actions and the Strasbourg court's remit.

A point was made about my objection to the situation. That concern is shared by such notable figures as Paul McBride QC, who is not unknown to Annabel Goldie as a legal adviser; Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, a former Conservative Lord Advocate; Elish Angiolini, whom the Labour Party appointed as Lord Advocate and who was a terrific Lord Advocate; and, of course, the Scottish judiciary in its submission to the Advocate General for Scotland's review of devolution issues last year.

I will tell members something. I have looked again through the record. Someone pinpointed the difficulties of the assumption of British law—was that how Annabel Goldie put it? Somebody—a senior figure in Scottish judicial circles, I understand—with a great far-seeing and

perceptive nature wrote in *The Herald* of 3 December 2003:

"The problem I think is that if you describe the court as a supreme court of the United Kingdom that tends to suggest there is a body of United Kingdom law ... Scots may well feel that that would introduce a drift away from their system of law into an English system."

The author of those wise words? Lord Hope.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): John Scott has a constituency question.

John Scott (Ayr) (Con): The First Minister will be aware of the proposed closure of the industrial injuries disablement benefit centre in Ayr, with the loss of 42 jobs. The centre is apparently the most efficient of five centres in the UK that deal with industrial injuries disablement benefit, so does he agree that the centre should be retained instead of closed and that it should be expanded to protect and develop jobs in Ayr? Will he make reasonable representations to the UK Government to that effect?

The First Minister: I shall be delighted, on a constituency matter, to join John Scott in making representations to the United Kingdom Government on one of many policies covering that area, which look to me as if they are deeply mistaken. John Scott would be the first to agree that those policies are deeply mistaken, not just in his constituency but in just about every other constituency in the country.

Spending Plans

3. Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD): To ask the First Minister when the Scottish Government will set out its detailed spending plans for this session of the Parliament to allow its commitments to be met. (S4F-00022)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): The Scottish Government will publish detailed spending plans in September, which will draw on the conclusions of and be informed by the commission on the future delivery of public services.

Willie Rennie: I am interested in what those figures will show for the justice budget. Annabel Goldie is right. I am astonished that a Government minister—and now, apparently, the First Minister—has attacked senior judges in that way. I am surprised that the First Minister has not taken action to seek the withdrawal of those remarks. Was Kenny MacAskill speaking for the whole Government when he said that he would stop the budget for the Supreme Court on the principle that "He who pays the piper ... calls the tune"?

Did he seek the First Minister's approval for that proposal?

The First Minister: The budgetary issue that is the subject of Willie Rennie's question is a matter of serious concern. The funding of the Supreme Court is only one aspect of that. Of much more concern is the cost of having that further tier of justice.

Let us take as an example the Somerville ruling by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council—the forerunner of the Supreme Court. It was a civil case, in which the total cost of the representations—which I know, because we have had it compiled—was more than £3 million. Incidentally, the great wrong that was being righted in that case was not something that happened with Kenny MacAskill, but something that happened when Lord Wallace was justice minister because of his action—or, more likely, his inaction—in forgetting to get the prison estate into proper condition. It cost us £8 million because a series of lawyers, following on from that decision, wanted to pursue claims not just for the past year but all the way back to 1999. The potential bill for Lord Wallace's inaction, way back in 2002, could have run to £100 million if it had not been for the actions of this Government in introducing emergency legislation to limit that exposure.

I say, in case Willie Rennie thinks that those matters are not important in budgetary terms, that it is enormously expensive to plead cases before the Supreme Court. The implications of the decisions can cost tens—indeed hundreds—of millions of pounds, which many of us believe could properly be spent on police services, courts and the law-abiding citizens of this country.

Willie Rennie: It would be helpful if the First Minister answered my question. Is it really the First Minister's policy to cut funding for the courts that dare to disagree with him? As well as the budget implications, did the First Minister discuss with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice his attack on the judges? That was my question. Let me go over it again. The cabinet secretary called one of the most senior independent judges in Scotland an ambulance chaser. That is not the language of Government ministers; it is the language of the football terraces. Did the First Minister give approval for those tawdry remarks?

The First Minister: That was not the nature of the remarks. As Willie Rennie may or may not know, the term "ambulance chaser" is generally used to describe some—and it is only a few—members of the legal profession who see, in loopholes in the law, opportunities to pursue cases right back. The example that I gave Mr Rennie is an interesting one. The one-year time bar on human rights cases is, I think, shared by every other jurisdiction in Europe, but the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council said that in the case of Scotland, and Scotland alone, it might

have to go back to 1999 because of a deficiency in the Scotland Act 1998.

Willie Rennie may think that it is perfectly acceptable for people to pursue compensation cases over that period. He might think that it is perfectly acceptable for us to have imperfections in our legal system—unintended consequences of legislation, or major constitutional changes, as it was put to Lord Wallace's review last year in the judicial submission. I do not think that that is acceptable, because I do not think that it is right and proper for the citizens of this country to feel that their justice system is being second-guessed because of imperfections in legislation.

What is right and proper is to proceed in the way that the Cabinet agreed on Tuesday, which is to have a review group. The group will present proposals to this Parliament, which can then reach conclusions on behalf of the people of Scotland.

High Court of Justiciary

4. Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP): To ask the First Minister whether the Scottish Government considers that the High Court of Justiciary should be the final arbiter of criminal cases in Scotland. (S4F-00009)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): Yes. It is our firm view that the final appeal court for any Scottish criminal case should be in Scotland, as it was always meant to be. The Scottish Cabinet discussed the issue on Tuesday at its normal session—not in emergency session—and agreed to establish an expert review to examine how best to achieve that.

Nigel Don: I put it on record—I am sure that the First Minister will wish to confirm this—that there is international law, European law, English law, which happens also to run in Wales, and Scots law; there is no British law.

David McLetchie (Lothian) (Con): Yes, there is. There is employment law—

Nigel Don: Can the First Minister confirm what I suspect to be the case: that an appeal from the High Court of Justiciary, the highest Scottish criminal court, can run to the Supreme Court without leave from the Scottish court, whereas there would be no appeal to the Supreme Court in England without leave from the Court of Appeal there?

The First Minister: I was trying to listen to Mr Don despite Mr McLetchie heckling from the sidelines—

David McLetchie: Telling the First Minister that there is such a thing as British law.

The First Minister: And doing so in a way that no court in the land would find acceptable, incidentally.

Nigel Don makes a highly important point, and it is worth reflecting on the matter, for those in the chamber who do not believe that there is a difficulty. The current situation is that the Court of Appeal in England, in a criminal case, would have to give leave to appeal to the Supreme Court, with the possibility of the Court of Appeal's decisions being overturned, whereas the Supreme Court can take a criminal case that has been heard in the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland, even if the High Court does not give leave to appeal, with the Supreme Court acting as another court of appeal.

I make that point in response to people who have said in the past few days that we should all be equal under the United Kingdom. In the present situation, it seems that some courts are more equal than others. Either those who argue that the present position is perfect should suggest that the Court of Appeal in England reverse its procedures or, more likely, we should go back to what was always the case: that our appeal court is in Scotland. Those of us who have faith in the Scottish courts and in our ability properly to protect human rights, and those of us who are not frightened of the European convention on human rights—as we have faith in our system's ability to accommodate that convention—might wish for Scottish justice to be brought home, where it was always meant to be: with the courts of Scotland.

Older People (Standards of Care)

5. Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): To ask the First Minister what measures the Scottish Government will take to ensure the highest possible standards of care are in place for older people. (S4F-00015)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): As Jackie Baillie knows, and as has been alluded to earlier, the Scottish Government has reformed the inspection regime for social care so that, from 1 April this year, it focuses on those services and homes where there are concerns about the welfare of people using the service.

Even in these challenging times, we have invested an additional £70 million to improve the quality of health and social care services, and that shows how we all value our older people in Scotland.

Jackie Baillie: The First Minister will be aware that this is an extremely anxious time for families and older people in homes run by Southern Cross Healthcare, which is the largest private sector provider of care in Scotland. I know that the Government's position is to monitor the situation,

but essentially to leave planning to local authorities.

Is the First Minister aware that planning in West Lothian includes removing respite beds, ceasing to deal with hospital discharge and even utilising hospital beds? Such measures take us back decades and, as has been said, will release only a small amount of capacity. Does the First Minister believe that that is acceptable at any level? If not, will he intervene to ensure that we plan for the care of our older people across Scotland?

The First Minister: We are doing that. The care of vulnerable residents in Southern Cross homes will not be compromised as a result of Southern Cross's business model being in trouble at the moment.

There are 96 care homes in operation in Scotland, which care for more than 4,700 vulnerable people. Of those 96 homes, only a handful are under threat of closure, but we will ensure that there is continuity of care. We will do that by working with the local authorities.

I said that aspects of the matter should cause us to pause for thought. The Southern Cross model that is under such pressure is the model of a private company in social care. I would have thought that there is a reasonable point to make—and I hope that this view is shared widely across the Parliament—that given the difficulties of Southern Cross, which will be dealt with effectively by the Government in conjunction with our local authorities, and given the difficulties of a business model in areas as vital as care, the last thing that we should be doing is anticipating the introduction of such business models into the general national health service. I hope that the Parliament can be largely united at least on that point.

I hope that Jackie Baillie accepts that we will ensure that there is continuity of care for the elderly residents who are affected by the situation and, perhaps, that that objective and assurance are of rather more importance than is the generality of politicking at First Minister's question time.

The Presiding Officer: We started late, so I intend to take question 6.

Berry Farmers

6. Murdo Fraser (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): To ask the First Minister what support is being provided to berry farmers whose crops and infrastructure were badly damaged by the recent severe weather. (S4F-00005)

The First Minister (Alex Salmond): As Murdo Fraser will be first to acknowledge, the soft fruit sector is one of Scotland's success stories. Its output has grown by 30 per cent over the period of

the previous Administration in the Scottish Parliament.

The Scottish Government recognises the challenge that many businesses in the sector face as a result of the recent severe weather. Richard Lochhead visited soft fruit growers yesterday to see the consequences of the storms at first hand. What we have heard is clear: the sector remains open for business and Scottish soft fruit will continue to be available on shop shelves.

However, the severe weather has heightened concerns in the sector that possible changes to tax rules for their equipment could compound the difficulties that they face in the aftermath of storm damage, when many facilities require to be replaced. That is why Mr Lochhead has written to HM Revenue and Customs, urging it to protect Scottish soft fruit farmers by not making the changes that are envisaged.

Murdo Fraser: The First Minister is right to acknowledge the sector's importance and the damage that has been caused. In Perthshire alone, the cost of the damage runs into many millions and the losses are not insurable.

The First Minister referred to calls from the sector for changes. Some of the issues are reserved, but there is one devolved issue on which the First Minister could take action, and that is to abolish the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board, which, given that the equivalent English body is being scrapped, potentially puts Scottish fruit farmers, who employ large numbers of migrant workers, at a competitive disadvantage. Will the First Minister take that action to help our fruit farmers?

The First Minister: In making what I think is a valid point of concern about the implications of storm damage for soft fruit farmers, Murdo Fraser rather spoiled his case by going on to make a point that will be widely regarded by many people, not least across the Parliament, as yet another attempt by the Conservative Party to see the situation as an opportunity to depress wages.

I honestly think that the vast majority of soft fruit farmers in Scotland want to see continuing help, like—

Murdo Fraser: What I asked about is what the farmers have asked for—

The First Minister: I can identify many things, if Murdo Fraser wants me to do so, in relation to support, research and other help for soft fruit in Scotland, which have led to the success of the past four years. I would have thought that this is the very last moment for the Conservative Party to revert to type. Let us unite to defend soft fruit growers in Scotland, rather than make another Fraser attempt to persecute the workers.

12:34

Meeting suspended.

14:30

On resuming—

Sport

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): Good afternoon. The first item of business this afternoon is a debate on motion S4M-00168, in the name of Shona Robison, on the contribution of sport to Scotland.

14:30

The Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport (Shona Robison): I very much welcome the opportunity to debate the contribution that sport makes to our nation. I think we can all agree that sport really does transcend boundaries. For many, it is an abiding passion that generates a strong sense of loyalty and pride. For others, it is a welcome distraction and a source of release from the pressures and stresses of our modern everyday lives.

Whatever sport means to us, its impact can be far-reaching. For the nation, our economy, cultural heritage, international standing and reputation are all influenced by sport. For the individual, sport can prolong life, improve physical strength and protect mental wellbeing.

My appointment as Scotland's first Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport is a tremendous honour. It brings significant opportunities and also a number of key challenges. I look forward to engaging with the Parliament on a regular basis as I take forward the Government's agenda in this area. I make it clear at the start of the debate that, where there are good ideas or suggestions that I think will help to deliver the best possible outcomes for sport and physical activity in Scotland, I am certainly willing to engage with and listen to colleagues on those matters.

I turn to the focus of our debate. The contribution of sport to Scotland is, in my view, vastly underestimated. Quite often our attention rests briefly on individual sports or events without our considering the totality of the benefits that they bring to the nation.

Direct sports-related consumer spending alone amounts to more than £1.8 billion a year and accounts for more than 51,000 jobs in Scotland. Major sporting events have an annual net impact on Scotland of £25 million—not including the domestic spend associated with those events.

Even without the anticipated income stream from the Commonwealth games, EventScotland forecasts that the net impact from sporting events over the next 10 years will be in the region of £560 million—and that is a conservative estimate.

Added to that, there are savings to the national health service from a more physically active population, which run into millions of pounds. For example, a 1 per cent increase in sport and physical activity would yield £3.5 million savings each year from coronary heart disease, stroke and colon cancer alone.

In Scotland we are uniquely placed to reap considerable benefits from sport and physical activity. Not only will 2014 see us host two of the world's greatest sporting events in the Commonwealth games and the Ryder cup; it will of course also be our year of homecoming.

Before then, Scotland will play host to a number of events including the international children's games in Lanarkshire, the mountain bike world cup in Fort William and the British women's open at Carnoustie. Looking further ahead, we have the open championship and the world gymnastics championships coming up—and there will be more to come.

Of course, even greater income could be generated for sports if more broadcasting of the major events took place. As some members will be aware, the call for more rugby broadcasting was debated in the last parliamentary session and received widespread support. Today we have had a further call from Scottish Rugby for that to happen. The Scottish Government fully supports that call. I will say more about that in my closing remarks.

Hosting the Commonwealth games will place Scotland under intense worldwide scrutiny. My responsibility will be to deliver the games on time and on budget and to provide a showcase for Scotland at its best. It is around the games that our vision for a sporting nation will crystallise—a vision of Scots helped to become more active, physical activity embedded in our culture and, of course, our athletes excelling.

We are already seeing tangible results from our investment in the games, through not only infrastructure improvements and the creation of state-of-the-art facilities, but the award of contracts with a combined total of £227 million to Scottish companies. We are laying the foundations of a lasting legacy from the games and I am committed to making that legacy relevant and tangible for all Scots. I will return to the Parliament later in the year to debate that aspect of the games in greater depth.

Major sporting events can stir our passions and rally a sense of nationhood, but the maximum benefits of sport have been realised for the people of Scotland at the community level. Community engagement and development lie at the heart of our manifesto commitments on sport. That is why we will increase our investment in and support of

the 150,000 adults who volunteer regularly to deliver sport in their communities week in and week out.

We will build on the success of the first 56 community sports hubs, which are being delivered in 12 local authority areas, by creating at least 100 new hubs by 2014. Sportscotland is taking that work forward. Community sports hubs have at their heart local sports participation, local engagement and local leadership. They are a catalyst for local partners, groups and individuals to work together for sport. They address the community's needs by offering clubs and groups easier access to sports facilities and by providing community volunteers with opportunities to play a bigger part in leading sport in their area.

I want to do more to encourage greater community engagement in sport. I want to offer help where facilities can be reinvigorated by communities that seek to take on the responsibility of management or ownership. That is why I announce today our intention to create a new fund to encourage community ownership and management of sports facilities. The fund will provide seedcorn funding for communities and groups to get the right advice about sourcing funds, constructing robust business plans and ultimately achieving success when a compelling case exists. The new fund will make all the difference by providing modest amounts of financial help to get things off the ground.

In recent years, the numbers and types of sports and physical activities that are on offer to children and young people have undergone a remarkable transformation. The activities are perhaps very different from the sports that we played and the physical education that we undertook when we were children. The secret to our success in achieving our long-term goals will be to motivate more children to participate in sport and physical activity. Studies show that school-based sport and PE can build confidence, self-esteem and social skills, as well as embedding a lifelong love of sport and physical activity.

That is why we are absolutely committed to delivering two hours of PE for every primary school child and at least two periods of PE for every secondary pupil in secondary 1 to S4. Good progress has been made—from the 5 per cent attainment level before 2007 that we inherited, 55 per cent of primary school children now benefit from at least two hours of PE and 60 per cent of secondary schools now deliver at least two periods of PE across S1 to S4—but we need to do more. With the Minister for Local Government and Planning and the Minister for Learning and Skills, we will begin discussions with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities on how we can ensure

the delivery of those important commitments by 2014.

It is not just PE that is important in the school setting. The active schools network has achieved remarkable success in recent years. More than 2,500 schools take part in the programme and, in the past year, it generated 5 million opportunities for young people to participate in more than 70 different activities that were delivered by more than 10,000 volunteers, made up of teachers, parents, senior pupils and coaches. That is not all about traditional and well-loved school sports, important as they are. Increasingly, outdoor activities such as mountain biking, surfing, skiing, canoeing and even highland games sports are being offered through the programme. That is a good thing.

That success deserves to be rewarded and encouraged, which is why we are committed to continuing to provide up to £13 million of annual investment in the active schools programme. In the current financial climate, that sum is not insignificant. It recognises the considerable achievements to date and the expectation of more to come. However, I intend to go further. I want to reward excellence in school sport and physical activity. Many schools have gone the extra mile to provide first-class resources and opportunities for pupils to excel in sports. Perth academy is one example that springs to mind; there are many others. However, despite their achievements, often those schools do not get tangible recognition of their success. I want to change that. That is why, inspired by the Scottish Sports Association, we will introduce a new schools sports award programme that will give proper recognition and reward to individual schools that embed sport and physical activity in their culture and strive to achieve excellence. The national award scheme will visibly demonstrate schools' commitment to and achievement in sport and physical activity and will act as a catalyst for more integrated community links. I am happy to keep members informed of the development of those plans.

Local schools lie at the heart of our communities. I am keen to explore further the potential for their greater use to promote sports and physical activity. I will seek early discussions with COSLA on how we can take that forward and further open up the school estate.

Sportscotland, as our national delivery body for sport, is key to the success of making the improvements that we all want. The organisation is in good hands, with an excellent chair in Louise Martin. Sportscotland has been instrumental in reforming the accountability mechanisms for our sports governing bodies, which are also key to successful delivery. The sports governing bodies encompass the full span of activity, from

increasing participation to supporting elite athletes to perform on the national and international stage. During 2011-12, sportscotland will invest £14.9 million in governing bodies. In my closing remarks, I will say more about what that investment will deliver.

It would be remiss of me to end my opening speech without reference to our national game: football. The events of recent months have brought to the fore some of the game's less pleasant aspects, which have tarnished football's image. However, under the First Minister's leadership we are beginning to tackle some of those deep-seated problems. Last week, there was Cabinet agreement to introduce legislation to tackle unacceptable behaviour at football matches and to crack down on those who make threats of serious harm to others, whether displayed on banners, sent in the mail or posted on the internet. Sectarianism and bigotry have no place anywhere in Scotland and are not welcome in our national game.

A partnership approach is essential if we are to tackle the problem successfully. That is why we are working closely with football clubs, football authorities and the police as part of the joint action group to deliver on the eight-point plan that was agreed at the football summit in March. The JAG is focused on driving real and lasting change in Scottish football and will report with its recommendations before the start of the next football season in July.

In his second report on football reforms, former First Minister Henry McLeish set out significant proposals for reform of the Scottish Football Association's governance structures. His view was that, without those fundamental reforms, progress on wider issues affecting the game would not bear fruit. I am glad to be able to inform members that the SFA, under the leadership of Stewart Regan, has taken the recommendations to heart. At its annual general meeting next week, member clubs will be asked to endorse the SFA board's support for a radical overhaul of the organisation's governance, disciplinary and accountability structures. Both the First Minister and I fully support those proposals and encourage their adoption at next week's meeting. Working with the SFA, we will review the successful youth action plan to ensure that our support for the youth game in developing grass-roots football across local communities continues.

Given the importance of football to Scotland, it was right for us to give a commitment in our manifesto to use funding from the young Scots fund to provide a new national indoor football centre and associated national football academy. Delivery of that key commitment is an exciting

prospect. I look forward to updating members on it as our plans develop.

Sport has a significant contribution to make to the nation and to us as individuals. Under this Government, our commitment to maximising the benefits to be derived from sport is guaranteed.

I move,

That the Parliament recognises the important contribution that sport makes to Scotland's economy, culture and international standing; welcomes the government's commitment to increase participation in sport and physical activity, thereby creating a lasting legacy for the 2014 Commonwealth Games; notes the benefits to the physical and mental wellbeing of the Scottish people through participation in sport; acknowledges the priority given to increasing physical education in primary and secondary schools, and notes the progress being made in improving community access to sporting facilities.

14:44

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife (Lab)): I welcome Shona Robison to her new post. I look forward to supporting her and the Government in those areas where we can agree and to providing some constructive suggestions, and—dare I say it—even some criticism where that is appropriate. The appointment of a minister specifically for sport and the Commonwealth games is certainly a clear statement of intent, but it will be how the minister works together with the games committee and Glasgow City Council—which won the bid with the support of the Parliament—that will demonstrate whether the new role works in practice.

The concept of creating a lasting legacy is welcome, but it will be very challenging. Apart from the physical assets, there have been no Commonwealth or Olympic games that have left much in the way of an enduring health legacy—and not much even in the way of a sporting legacy.

My first question to the minister is whether she will confirm that the sole instrument that she has devised to measure any health legacy is the Scottish health survey. It is expected to show improvements in physical activity and wellbeing and improved attitudes to physical activity, but will that be based against previous trends, or will there simply be an increase? A very small increase is pretty meaningless. I look forward to her giving us more detail on that, either in her winding-up speech later today or in the proposed debate that she mentioned in her opening speech.

I am old enough to have attended the Commonwealth games at Meadowbank. That was a joyous occasion, marred only by financial problems. I am glad that Glasgow City Council, the games committee and the Government have said

clearly that the games are on target and on budget, which is important.

Labour was keen to establish Commonwealth legacy schools if it got into power, so as to focus on the new emerging talent, to be matched by creating Commonwealth champions. My colleagues Drew Smith and Patricia Ferguson will say a bit more on that later.

In its evidence to the Health and Sport Committee in session 3, the Government listed the intended legacy targets. That list was modest and vague, however, and I hope that the minister will publish more details sooner rather than later—for example, about the baseline against which the legacy will be measured and about what will constitute an acceptable increase in the numbers of sports and physical activity clubs and groups, and in their active membership and numbers of volunteers. Unless we have the baselines against which to measure the legacy, as well as some idea of what constitutes a reasonable and acceptable increase as a legacy, we cannot measure it.

We also need detail on how

“an increase in ... quality, affordable local facilities”

will be measured—and I emphasise the terms “quality” and “affordable” as used in the evidence that was presented to the Health and Sport Committee. My colleagues Mary Fee and Siobhan McMahon will outline some of what is happening in their regions already, which contradicts the clear hope and aspiration of the Government and of the Parliament. I look forward to seeing how the Government will take those issues forward.

Amid the excitement of the games, we must not forget the underlying problems. The SNP made some progress on the provision of two hours of physical education per week, although the baseline of its own choosing was 2005, not 2007, interestingly. The commitment that Keith Brown outlined—hoping to achieve that goal in 2011—has now been put back to 2014. The question that remains is how it is to be delivered in these times of austerity. It is the councils that will deliver it, not the Government, unless the Government adopts a new approach to ensuring that it is delivered. Discussions—which the minister has mentioned today—are welcome, but surely there should have been discussions already and, surely, an outline of how to achieve the aim should have been in place already. More needs to be done.

I welcome the fact that the Government has agreed to maintain funding for the active schools programme, but will it also commit to maintaining the number of active schools co-ordinators? The Health and Sport Committee's pathways into sport inquiry found that many of them were working on short-term contracts. Will the Government support

those contracts being made permanent, as has happened in some local authority areas? They should be permanent, or at least the contract should last the lifetime of this parliamentary session.

The number of PE teachers is important. We have already learned of a cut in intake at the University of Edinburgh, following several years when it has been increasing. The Scottish Parliament information centre gave me information today from the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, showing that the only reduction in teacher intakes was in that area. I find that difficult to accept, as I think that the number of teachers is going down generally, but in any case there has been a cut of 18 per cent or thereby in the intake of PE students.

Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind): Is the member aware of the number of PE students who have managed to get full-time posts in Edinburgh and the Lothians? If not, I can tell him that it is zilch.

Dr Simpson: Margo MacDonald's intervention was helpful. There is a major problem in many sectors. In future debates we will come back to workforce planning. Will the Government publish a workforce planning report? Before Margo MacDonald mentioned the situation in the Lothians I was about to make the more general point that many graduates are finding it difficult to get jobs.

It continues to worry me that there has been a fall in the number of PE teachers year on year since 2007. Will the Government maintain the number of primary teacher places on the training modules? Alongside the work of PE teachers, primary teachers' confidence in their ability to deliver is important.

The Health and Sport Committee was keen on the concept of a physical literacy report—I am talking about not just the reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education on individual schools, but assessments for each pupil, so that parents are aware of whether their child can do the basics of running, jumping, catching and throwing.

I want to move on from schools and staffing to consider the wider community. Under Labour, voluntary organisations were helped with disclosures. Will the Government ensure that free disclosures are made available to volunteers in sport and that the new streamlining of disclosures is effective in supporting the 150,000 volunteer coaches who are the life-blood of sport in Scotland?

The Scottish National Party has modified a number of commitments that it made in its 2007 manifesto, and I hope that the minister will clarify the Government's intentions. First, the 2007 manifesto promised free access to council

swimming pools. Labour wanted all primary pupils to have free swimming lessons. However, the SNP now refers only to seven-year-olds. Why does it specify an age? Seven is too old for some and too young for others. Surely what matters is not the age but the opportunity for every pupil to receive free swimming lessons. Will the Government fund the policy or does it expect councils to do so in a time of austerity? Secondly, the 2007 SNP manifesto contained bold proposals for five days of outdoor education, but the commitment appears to have been dropped altogether.

I will address the final part of the motion, which my amendment seeks to amend. Physical assets are important and I welcome the Government's aspiration to secure greater community access to sporting facilities. I welcome the minister's announcement on a social enterprise fund, because community control can be helpful, and I hope that she will give us an indication of the amount of money in the fund when she sums up the debate.

I also welcome the specific commitment to a target of 100 hubs, but will the minister say where the hubs are likely to be? Will she indicate—or place in SPICe—the principles that underlie the strategy that will lead to their placement?

There are already problems with the maintenance and upgrading of facilities in some of the smaller local authorities. Local authorities always cut maintenance in times of austerity. How will we ensure that facilities will be maintained? I mention three areas in that regard. First, ice rinks remain a problem, as the committee noted in its report on pathways into sport and physical activity. Curling should be one of our national sports.

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Dr Simpson: I do not have time, I am afraid. I do apologise for that, but I must try to get through my speech.

The European Union regulation on R22—a chlorofluorocarbon used in ice rinks—is a big problem. Will the minister comment on that?

Secondly, investment in expensive new artificial pitches is great, but if such pitches are not maintained they do not have a long lifespan. Some form of inspection is important.

Thirdly, I give an example from my area. Alva swimming pool has been scheduled for closure. As a result, Clackmannanshire will have only a leisure pool and no swimming pool. The Olympic pool at Stirling is oversubscribed, as is the facility at the Peak in Stirling, and the pool at the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan, which was a possible alternative, is to close. There is a waiting list for swimming lessons at the leisure pool, so not just

talented swimmers but people who want to learn to swim cannot go swimming. I hope that the minister will agree to meet me, the local authority and the local member—if he wishes to meet—to discuss a way forward. The issue ties in with the point that I made about ownership, which is important.

I wanted to talk about the cashback for communities scheme, but I do not have time. The scheme should be focused on communities where there are problems of deprivation and drug use and where intelligence has led to confiscation. Cash should be ploughed into activities for the local youth in such communities.

I wish the minister well in her endeavours and I promise her support from my party in making the Commonwealth games a success that benefits Scotland's sport and Scotland's health and wellbeing.

I move amendment S4M-00168.1, to leave out from "acknowledges" to end and insert:

"notes that the commitment to deliver two hours of PE has been extended to 2014 and that Active School Coordinators can play an important part in delivery of this pledge, and notes the intention to make progress in community access to sports facilities."

14:54

Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con): I begin by giving Dr Nanette Milne's apologies. She was due to open the debate for the Conservatives. I am obviously now doing that, so my role will be taken by my new colleague Ruth Davidson, who will make her maiden speech summing up—I do not think that that is a usual occurrence. If members see some musical chairs in a minute as we switch round, it is because her console is not working.

I very much welcome Shona Robison's appointment. The idea that there is a minister in charge of sport speaks volumes about the Government's intention. That is good news.

Many members will have seen the recent reports of the heroic efforts of Major Phil Packer and several of his colleagues who, over the past few years, suffered very serious injuries in Afghanistan. Together, they have succeeded in some extraordinary sporting achievements that would be considered remarkable for able-bodied persons, never mind for those who have returned without one or, in some cases, two of their limbs.

Whether rowing across the Atlantic, finishing the London marathon or climbing El Capitan in Yosemite park, those former servicemen have demonstrated with extraordinary courage and conviction that sport can have an enormously powerful effect when it comes to transforming people's lives. Although theirs might be a special

case, the values about which they speak are often held up as those that define much of what is good in sport: self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, the building of self-esteem and confidence, and the sheer enjoyment of taking part in something that can bring wider social and health benefits to the individuals concerned.

The many Scottish sports stars—men and women from many different parts of the country and from many different backgrounds—all tell us that sport has given them much. They also share the belief that grass-roots support when somebody is just starting out on the journey is important. That support is as important as anything in sport and we need to do far more in Scotland to ensure that we broaden the grass-roots support that is available, whether in the form of more qualified coaches, greater use of the nation's sporting facilities, the provision of more equipment, help with transport costs or more supervision of our young people.

It does not matter whether somebody aspires to be an Olympic champion or simply to enjoy a little sport for occasional relaxation and leisure, the importance of grass-roots support in setting people out on the right track must not be underestimated. That is especially true for young children.

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):

Does Liz Smith share my concern at the shortage of new referees coming into grass-roots football? Will she welcome the work that the Government and the SFA are doing on discipline? The professionals who hound and harass referees in games set a bad example and put people off going into refereeing at the grass-roots level.

Liz Smith: Mark McDonald makes a first-class point. I concur with what he says. It is important that we address the matter.

It does not matter whether we ask Chris Hoy, Andy Murray, Mark Beaumont or Rhona Martin: they will all tell us that they would be nowhere without the grass-roots support that they received. Some people would say that too many of our sports stars in the past had to go elsewhere to complete their training but, as the minister said, a wonderful opportunity is presented to us by the forthcoming Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup, the open championship and, of course, the Olympic games in London with all the capital developments and the economic and social spin-offs that will come from those events.

It is good to hear that the planning for those events appears to be within budget and on time. We must continue to monitor that carefully as time goes on because other countries know to their cost what happens if contracts are not properly scrutinised and if there is mismanagement in the

strategic planning of such events. If ensuring that the events go to plan is a difficult exercise, so too is the effort that is required to build a lasting legacy. That legacy will require a change in attitude and culture if it is to transform more than just a few sections of society.

That is why the Scottish Conservatives have worked intensively with Gavin Hastings to establish a grass-roots sports trust—an independent charitable trust run on the basis of supporting communities by making available more opportunities for youngsters in areas where there has been too little activity. I hear what the Government says and I applaud it for some new initiatives, but we must do much more—particularly in an age when, as Dr Simpson said, councils are struggling with their finances—to ensure that we truly value PE staff, outdoor education specialists, swimming pool attendants and any other support staff as people who can set youngsters on the first road. Another important aspect of our trust fund idea is the facility for businesses, philanthropists and other groups to have the opportunity to put something back into their communities and to do what they can to inspire greater physical activity among all people in that community.

Be in no doubt about the effort that is required to engage more fully with these youngsters. The SNP has made some progress on the target of two hours of quality PE, but progress is still fairly short of the target set out in 2007, which is demonstrated by the shifting of the target to 2014. That shows the extent of what we have to do. It remains the case that many schools hide behind excuses for why they are unable to deliver better opportunities. Perhaps there will be improvements as a result of HMIE inspections, the curriculum for excellence and some of the initiatives that the minister has set out. I yet again plead that we must look to provide five days of residential outdoor education for all pupils, because it is my fundamental belief that that experience gives them so much.

I will always be grateful for the sporting opportunities that I have enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, as a participant at every level of sport. I have played many sports and I am perhaps most inspired when, as a coach, I see what happens to youngsters when they get that spark of inspiration. That is what we need to do as a Parliament.

I move amendment S4M-00168.2, to leave out from “acknowledges” to end and insert:

“and recognises that far more priority must be given to increasing and improving physical education in primary and secondary schools, to delivering opportunities in outdoor education for all pupils and to improving grassroots support in clubs and schools and community access to sporting facilities across the country.”

15:01

Humza Yousaf (Glasgow) (SNP): It is a matter of great pride and honour to be standing here as a representative of the great city of Glasgow, the city that I was born and grew up in and where I received my education.

This is a position that comes with heavy responsibility but, like my colleagues, I will not shirk that responsibility and will endeavour to do what I can to improve the lives of the people of Glasgow.

As is customary for new members in their maiden speech, I will mention a couple of people who are no longer in this chamber and who deserve recognition for their hard work and commitment to Glasgow.

Many of the debates that we are engaged in centre around the theme of opportunity and realising Scotland's potential. Nobody embodied that spirit of opportunity more than the late Bashir Ahmad, who, during his lifetime, went from being a humble bus driver to being a humble politician. His contribution to and love for Scotland and for Glasgow can never be fully articulated, but it is understood and appreciated by those who knew him well. I personally owe him a debt of gratitude for engaging me in the political process from a young age. I will leave it to other members to judge whether or not that was a wise decision on his behalf.

I put on record my appreciation for the enormous hard work done by Anne McLaughlin in the previous session of this Parliament. I have no doubt that, whatever role she pursues next in life, she will continue to fight for justice and compassion with the same vigour that she displayed day in, day out during her time as an MSP.

I turn my focus to the 2014 Commonwealth games. A consensus has formed that if we do not build a fruitful and lasting legacy we will have failed to gain the true benefits of hosting a major sporting event, regardless of the economic advantages that the games will bring. Credit must go to all the partnership organisations that are working so closely together to create that meaningful legacy—in particular Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government.

There may well come times in the next 12 months in particular when Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government do not necessarily see eye to eye. However, I have no doubt that their collective commitment to delivering a world-class Commonwealth games for Glasgow and Scotland is unshakeable.

Members have mentioned the obvious health benefits that come with playing sport, but I will

take some time to touch on the other benefits—the social benefits—that are perhaps not so widely discussed.

One of the many successes of the previous Government was the cashback for communities programme. More than £40 million was seized from criminals and used to benefit more than 500,000 young people across Scotland, and Glasgow has been a huge beneficiary.

The main purpose of the midnight football or late night basketball was not necessarily to encourage local youths to shed a few pounds. Initiatives such as cashback for communities play a vital role not just as diversionary tools, but in bringing together groups that might previously have been hostile to one another. Far too often—we have been guilty of this recently—we focus on the minority who use sport as an excuse for their own narrow-minded prejudices and hatred but, more often than not, sport is a social activity. It is a tool that should be used to break down barriers between groups that often have very little in common. People may come from different cultures or speak different languages, but everyone understands that the ball hitting the back of the net is cause for unadulterated joy or, as is the case for most of us members of the tartan army, the thud of dismal reality that our team is behind again.

In addition to providing the social benefits that I have mentioned, the Commonwealth games promise to be a national celebration with an almost carnival-like atmosphere, as 71 nations of the world descend on Glasgow. We are already a diverse nation of immigrants and emigrants. It was the famous Scots author Willie McIlvaney who said that Scotland truly is a mongrel nation. Just a casual glance around the chamber when it is full reflects how diverse our tartan has become and how far we have come as a nation: Italian Scots such as Marco Biagi and Linda Fabiani and Irish Scots such as Michael and Siobhan McMahon are, of course, joined by me and my good friend Hanzala Malik, who are very proud to be—if I can speak for both of us—Pakistani Weegie Scots.

The participation in the games of 6,500 athletes and officials from across the world will only enrich our heritage, add to our cultural diversity and reinforce Glasgow's image as a cosmopolitan city that is equipped to compete with any of the world's major cities.

With the world artistic gymnastic championships coming to Glasgow in 2015 and the Ryder cup and the Commonwealth games coming Scotland's way in 2014, the contribution of sport to Scotland's economy will be significant and will amount to hundreds, if not billions, of pounds. Although that will be vital for our economic recovery, what excites me more is the self-belief that is evidently being instilled in Scots across the country. As we

approach those historic sporting events, a wave of optimism is building and an understanding or a belief is forming that although we may be a small country in geographical terms, our ambition is vast and limitless.

However, if we are to realise our ambitions fully, we must embrace a new style of politics. In his first speech of the session, Patrick Harvie said that the Opposition would have to be positive and constructive and that the Government would have to be willing to listen. He very eloquently said that if that were to happen, the Parliament as a whole

“may be greater than the sum of its parts, and our achievements together may be more lasting.”—[*Official Report*, 26 May 2011; c 29.]

I could not agree more, and I believe that there is a lesson there for us all. Regardless of where we sit in the chamber, let us agree to cast aside the tribalism that has so often held us back and the bickering that turns people further away from our democratic process.

Surely there can be no better place to start than by ensuring that we work towards a successful games and a legacy that is inclusive and which can be accessed by all—in particular, by the most vulnerable in our society, including the 660,000 carers in Scotland and the thousands who live in relative poverty—and not just by the most privileged in our society.

15:08

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn): I rise to support the amendment in the name of my colleague Dr Richard Simpson and, in doing so, I congratulate Humza Yousaf on his maiden speech, which was an extremely thoughtful contribution to the debate—I hope that that does not get him into trouble on his own benches.

It is my belief and the Labour Party's conviction that sport is central to the wellbeing and vitality of our nation. The health and social benefits to be gained from active lifestyles are enormous; Government's job is to ensure that opportunities for everyone to participate in sport are readily available. Government must also do better in getting across the message that sport matters.

Sport matters for so many reasons. At the highest level, it can be a force that unites and inspires the nation. The success of our elite spokespeople—sorry, sportspeople—can and does galvanise our population; our spokespeople do not do that very often. In communities, sport can be a beacon, bringing people together and breaking down barriers in the pursuit of improved health and wellbeing, as well as in social activities. It can transform the lives of individuals across all ages, areas and social groups. Sport and physical

activity improve health, strengthen communities, reduce inequalities, underpin educational attainment and support lifelong learning. That is why Scottish Labour will support radical action to develop and deliver a national plan for sport.

Labour agrees that we must use the 2012 Olympics—and, more important, the 2014 Commonwealth games in Glasgow—as a launch pad for a sporting vision that will enrich our entire nation. That is why we worked so hard in government to win the games and why we will continue to strongly support them in opposition. The Commonwealth games are key to a healthier, more active Scotland. We must employ the period in the run-up to the games to emphasise the urgent need for Scotland to become more active. Nearly 2,500 people die prematurely each year in this country simply because they are inactive. That is a distressing statistic. Scottish Labour believes that a new attitude to sport and physical activity can change that appalling situation for the better. Such a change would represent the most significant legacy that the games can offer. It might not be immediate, but it will be lasting.

Another disturbing fact is that 150,000 Scottish children are now classed as obese. I firmly believe that, through sport and the Commonwealth legacy, we can ensure that the current generation of schoolchildren is not condemned to a life of obesity and illness. Sport can help to reverse those damning trends, but only if we parliamentarians recognise its importance and place it at the forefront of our national agenda.

It is my view and that of Scottish Labour that activity in schools is absolutely vital to the establishment of a lifetime of healthy living. We need to renew and reinvigorate the two-hour target of quality PE in our schools. Admittedly some progress has been made, but it is still the case that only 55 per cent of primary schools are meeting that target, while levels remain even lower in secondary schools. As a Parliament, we need to do more. We can do that by championing physical activity in schools so that it is no longer thought of as some extra or peripheral subject.

Margo MacDonald: The member talked about physical activity, sport and physical education. All three are different. It might be that, in an effort to do well, we have got them out of kilter. Does the member agree that instead of a target of having two hours of quality PE a week—whatever that means—every child in every school should have a period of physical activity every day? That might take account of the expertise of teachers who are not PE qualified and inadequate facilities.

Patricia Ferguson: I am delighted to hear Mrs MacDonald say that and I agree entirely. I have a funny feeling that we debated that very matter a

couple of years ago in a members' business debate—

Margo MacDonald: Ten years ago.

Patricia Ferguson: Mrs MacDonald had a slightly different attitude to the matter then, so I am delighted that she has come round to my way of thinking for a change.

We need to work together with all the interested parties to implement a best practice programme and to encourage schools to adopt creative, modern approaches to engaging our young people. That will mean embracing a wide range of activities. Physical activity does not have to mean solely a diet of exercises in the gym, but can include cheerleading or dance, which are particularly good ways of encouraging young women to be active. We know that inactivity is a particular problem with young women: up to the age of 12, they are as active as young men, but at the age of 12, their activity level falls to one that men do not reach until they are 40.

Central to that approach will be the active schools co-ordinators. We need to see their numbers grow to meet the two-hour PE or activity target. Active schools co-ordinators help to create opportunities to exercise. One way that they do that is by working with individuals and organisations outside school to help link young people with sports clubs in the community so that their activity does not end when they leave school.

I realise that I am running out of time rather more quickly than I thought, so I will move towards the end of my speech.

As we all know, swimming at a young age can be a catalyst for long-term activity. It is a sound starting point from which pathways into other sports branch off. Scottish Labour's idea of a Commonwealth swimming fund has merit. Such a fund would ensure that every primary pupil in the country was entitled to free school swimming lessons, paving the way for a lifetime of activity.

I will take up the consensual approach of the minister and Mr Yousaf with my second suggestion, which is that sport in schools should be fun. If children enjoy activities, they will catch the sporting bug and be active for life. To encourage that, the Government should consider introducing a Commonwealth legacy schools programme. Across Scotland, primary pupils would work towards Commonwealth legacy status by pushing for common sporting goals. I will not go into the examples that I might have given otherwise but I will say that children would lead the grass-roots revolution in the same way as in many of our communities they now lead in environmental issues through the eco-schools programme. We would welcome the opportunity to

discuss those ideas with the minister in more detail.

Scottish Labour believes in sport as a vehicle for positive change that can enrich our country and improve lives. Sport is for everyone, from the young baby learning to swim to our athletes winning gold medals, and from the supporter who owns part of her football club to the pensioner who takes part in the sole mates walking groups in my constituency. The reality is that 2014 provides our nation with a golden opportunity. We must strive for the prize because in the fight against ill health and obesity losing just cannot be contemplated.

15:16

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): One of the delights of being relieved of some other responsibilities is the opportunity to speak on areas that have always interested me but on which I have not had the chance to contribute before.

I begin by congratulating Shona Robison on her elevation to her position in representing sport in its entirety by herself. I seem to remember the aforementioned Scottish Sports Association making that case to us all during the election campaign, and I see that the Government has met that election commitment. I am sure that Ms Robison will go on to tell me how many more it will meet in the coming years, but I certainly welcome this one now.

I should also pay tribute to Liz Smith, Patricia Ferguson as a previous sports minister and Margo MacDonald, who have spoken in sports debates with considerable eloquence and ability over the past few years—albeit that I have read the *Official Reports* of the debates rather than noted them in person.

To Humza Yousaf I say: “If that is the standard of your first speech, I cannot wait for the next one, the next one and the next one.” The mark of a good first speech in this place is the ability to hold members’ attention, not just because they feel that they have to pay attention because someone is making their first speech but because the member is saying something serious, responsible and important about the future of Scotland. If I may say so, Humza Yousaf did that today.

I will pick up a number of points that the minister made in her opening speech. I agreed with her—or, at least, with what I think she was going to say—on broadcasting. I have sought to propose an amendment to the same effect and, while I may have caught the minister’s eye in what I want to say on that issue, I was not so fortunate with the Presiding Officer. I also take the minister’s point on school awards, and I look forward to the detail that I am sure she will place in the public domain on that.

From my many discussions with headteachers the length and breadth of Scotland—I am sure the minister has had similar discussions, as Liz Smith and colleagues on other benches have—I know that the issue depends so much on leadership and the leadership that headteachers of both genders provide. It is through that leadership that progress will be made in schools. We can do what we can in Parliament, the Government and local authorities, but unless the process is led by able men and women it will not happen. My own limited sporting success would certainly accord with that.

I took, too, the minister’s points on sectarianism, which is probably the most serious element of her job. In my view, it is certainly the most serious element of what her Government will have to deal with in the coming five years. A sustained, firm and consistent political approach needs to be taken to the issue. Getting the approach right is one of the great, shining challenges of our politics and of our time, and to make progress on sectarianism and achieve something for Scotland will be well worth doing.

The Scottish sports alliance, which includes the Scottish Sports Association, asked us all during the recent election campaign to be champions for sport and to endorse the vote for sport campaign. I believe that we all did that to a greater or lesser extent, although I was a bit taken aback to find out that, following the elections, we have apparently all pledged to become Scottish sporting champions. I look forward to the minister challenging us all—we will perhaps challenge her—on quite how we will do that. For my part, it involves playing a bit of five-a-side football on Wednesday night, which is something I have not been able to do for the past three years, and a great return to Scotland’s greatest golf courses—sometimes with colleagues in the chamber, although the less said about that on the record the better.

I will make two points that are vaguely connected to my constituency of Shetland. One is on widening participation, which the minister and others rightly talked about.

For someone such as me, who represents a rural constituency—in my case, the islands—widening participation is about how we get the best, brightest and most able kids to sporting events in the first place. We can compete ably against Orkney. My good friend and colleague, Liam McArthur, is not here so I will not embarrass him by saying how frequently we beat Orkney at swimming and athletics, and, as we will next week, football. I have an ulterior motive in saying that, as my son will play in central midfield in that game. However, apart from that, when our impressive young men and women want to compete nationally, they face challenges of distance,

money and the need to take their mum or dad with them to those sporting events, whether they are held in Glasgow or in other parts of Scotland.

Just the other day, Amy Harper from Gulberwick, a district of Shetland, took part in the east district open at the Tollcross leisure centre in Glasgow and won a variety of swimming events—notably the 50m freestyle, which she won in a time that qualified her to travel to Sheffield to take part in the ASA national championships. That is a pretty serious and notable achievement for a young Shetlander. Similarly, the other week, triathlete Lynsey Henderson took part in the British championships down in Leicestershire, which was a qualifier event for the 2011 world championships in Beijing and the 2012 European championships in Israel. We also have three fencers from Shetland in the top 50 in Britain. That is to name but a few.

Members throughout the chamber will have constituents who would make the same case. All that I ask of the minister is that she consider how we can best ensure that young athletes of whatever sporting discipline can compete. I have had that discussion with sportscotland and some of the governing bodies, but the minister has more power than I have to ask those bodies to give those young people the chance to compete and become the Olympic or Commonwealth athletes that we want them to become.

I finish with the point that the minister made about rugby. There is a strong case for BBC Scotland taking rugby more seriously and broadcasting it. The Welsh Rugby Union receives £4 million from BBC Wales. I am sure that the minister has had the same discussion that I have had with the Scottish Rugby Union at Murrayfield about the importance of that support. Given that STV does its bit, there is an onus on BBC Scotland to do its bit, too. The other morning, on “Good Morning Scotland”, was there any coverage of the rugby sevens at Murrayfield? No—no coverage at all. BBC Scotland needs to do a bit more, given what STV already does.

15:22

James Dornan (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP): It will come as no surprise that, as the member for Glasgow Cathcart, the home of Scottish football, I am delighted to speak in this debate on the contribution of sport to Scotland. Not only does Glasgow have a fantastic sporting history; we are, as members have said, privileged to have ahead of us a magnificent sporting future with the Commonwealth games coming to my home city in 2014. That is a huge opportunity to showcase what Glasgow and Scotland have to offer. More important, it is a great chance for us to persuade young people up and down the country to get

involved in one of the biggest sporting events in the world. This could be the optimum time to take massive steps towards combating our appalling health record and the ever-growing problem of obesity among our young people and to sell the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle to those youngsters who think that social activity consists of playing with their Xboxes or sitting in front of the television. It is a chance to persuade them to participate in sports, with all the social and health benefits that that can bring.

Over the past few months, we have heard a lot about the nasty side to the game of football. However, like my colleague, Humza Yousaf, I want to say a few words about the positive side of football and sport as a whole—about its ability to unite people from all communities, backgrounds and walks of life.

I am delighted to be the MSP for the constituency where the first ethnic minority footballer in Scotland made his career. Born in Demerara, which was part of British Guiana, in 1857—no, I did not see him play in person—Andrew Watson was a successful player at Queen's Park Football Club, the top Scottish team of the day, whose home ground is, as we all know, Hampden Park. He represented Scotland three times and was the first black captain of an international team when Scotland played England in 1881 and—wait for it—Scotland won 6-1. Glory days. He was also the first black player to win a major competition, the Scottish cup, also in 1881. He is an example of what sport has the potential to be. Sport can help to blur perceived differences, unite us behind a common cause and bind us as a society.

South Africa is a good example of that. Under apartheid, black South Africans were not allowed to compete for their country. That is one of the things that exposed the nature of apartheid to the wider world and became a focal point for opposition, through the sporting boycott. After apartheid, South Africa hosted the rugby world cup and, as we all know, Mandela's endorsement of the national rugby team, although it still had only one black player, meant that for the first time ever black South Africans felt able to support their national team at any sport. That world cup became a powerful symbol of the new, democratic rainbow nation and of Mandela's ambition to bring South Africans of all nations together.

The Commonwealth games give Glasgow and Scotland the opportunity to make a huge difference in 2014, if the country unites and works together to make this event all that it can be. The games can boost participation in sport and promote healthier lifestyles, they can create huge employment opportunities to tackle the problem of poverty in many parts of the country, particularly in

Glasgow, and they can challenge head on some of the huge health inequalities that face the nation. That is why I welcome the moves that the Government has made to make the games a success.

In the new Government, Scotland has for the first time a dedicated sports minister. Shona Robison, who did a great job in the previous Government, will take charge of ensuring that Scotland is fully prepared to deliver a world-class Commonwealth games and—more importantly, for me—that we have the lasting legacy that I mentioned earlier. I am sure that all members will join me in welcoming the fact that the 2011-12 budget allocation for sport is now at £66.5 million, which is twice the amount that was allocated to sport before the SNP came into government in 2007.

It is the mark of an aspirational society that we create the opportunities for our young people to release their potential and realise their dreams. That is why I also welcome the £50 million that has been allocated to the young Scots fund, a project that will focus on sport, creativity and enterprise. Our young people can be sure that this Government will do all that it can to protect their future. That money represents an investment of confidence in them and I am confident that they will not let us down.

I am sure that the chamber will also welcome the Government's commitment to community sports hubs. Indeed, our manifesto recognised that community sports hubs are a key legacy component for a healthier and more active Scotland. Only by making participation in physical activity more accessible for everyone will we succeed in our ambition to have a more active and healthier population. I am delighted that the Government has delivered 35 community sports hubs in eight local authorities and aims to deliver 100 of them across all of Scotland's 32 local authority areas by 2014.

I was delighted to hear the minister touch on the field of traditional Scottish sports earlier. I was honoured to be asked to be the chieftain at the Carmunnock highland games last Sunday—I assure members that that would not have happened before May. I was struck by the wide variety of ages and nationalities of the people who were taking part in the various events and was delighted that, at the end, after seeing off challenges from England, Iceland and Poland, the overall champion was Gregor Edmonds, a local young man with an outstanding record in traditional Scottish sports. He has been world, European and Scottish highland games champion and a world's strongest man finalist and has twice been a runner-up for the British title. He is a credit to sport and should be held up as an example of

what can be achieved through hard work and dedication. Of course, he also comes from a family of athletes, and one of his forebears was one of that gallant band of nationalists who plotted to bring home the stone of destiny, so naturally I am biased. However, for me, it was clear that this is an area of sport that should be encouraged in our children from all parts of the country and, I hope, included or adapted to the school physical education curriculum.

It is well recognised that Scotland has a number of serious social and lifestyle issues that we must continue to tackle head on. The Commonwealth games give us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to move on from those decades-old problems and give our young people and our future generations a chance to live in a fit and healthy Scotland. That is something that we all desire, and we must work together to ensure that Scotland's legacy is that those future generations of kids from Castlemilk, Shettleston and other areas of our dear green place have the same life expectancy as those from the leafier suburbs of Scotland.

What sets this Government apart from its predecessors are the concrete steps that it has taken to make that happen. I applaud its determination, aspiration and vision for the people of Scotland—old, young and those yet to be born—and I am proud to support the motion to take Scotland forward.

15:29

George Adam (Paisley) (SNP): I thank Humza Yousaf for stealing the beginning of my speech and James Dornan for stealing the content of my speech. My office will be locked from now on, as soon as I get the keys.

I stand before the chamber a proud Paisley buddie, the grandson of a mill lassie from Ferguslie. There has been a lot of talk about legacies. In Paisley, because the mill lassies were always paid the most money, they held the purse strings and were charged with decision making, so we ended up with a legacy of very strong-willed women, one of whom I married. She met Prince Charles last night, and I will be sending an apology to the palace as soon as I can.

Paisley is my home town, and it is an honour to be the first member in this Parliament to represent the town in its entirety. My mother-in-law has often said that I am unique. I thought that she was being less than complimentary, but it turns out that she was right.

It is important to remember some of the politicians who have represented my town in the past. Hugh Henry and Wendy Alexander have represented various parts of Paisley since the reconvening of Parliament, but I will also take time

to mention a Paisley buddie who represented the town and always fought its corner: Councillor Jim Mitchell, who died earlier this year. He was a father figure to me and a major influence in my life and my political life. He was also very involved in Derek Mackay's political life. He dedicated his life to the people of Paisley, both as a local activist and during 30 years as a councillor, and he never lost his passion for Scottish independence. I mention that because Jimmy's ghost will be sitting there saying, "You didn't get independence into your speech." He is missed every day, and I will endeavour to represent Paisley in a manner of which he would be proud. However, I am quite glad that he is not here today, because he would be telling me everything that I have done wrong and how I could have made my speech a lot better.

On my way in here today, people said, "You're talking about sport, George. When are you going to mention your passion for St Mirren?" Well, here it is.

I will mention some other people who have represented the great town of Paisley, this time in its sporting endeavours. In 1959, David Lapsley lifted the Scottish cup. I was not there—I was born in 1969, although I may look a wee bit older. I had the honour of naming a street after Mr Lapsley. Although he was not born in Paisley, he adopted the town and represented it well over the years. In 1987, Billy Abercromby—who had his own problems with alcohol and everything else after he left football, although thankfully he is getting beyond that—represented the town very well.

Those points are important, because they show how sport can make a difference in a community or town such as Paisley. On both those occasions, everyone in the community put aside their differences and supported their local football team. Regardless of which football team they actually supported, they supported their town. We even got to the stage in 1959 when Mr Lapsley was pronounced the king of Paisley.

Sporting success can make a difference in our communities, but it is not all about winning trophies. As the motion quite rightly states, it is about access to sport. It is good that the Scottish Government is providing most of the investment for the Glasgow Commonwealth games, which will bring financial benefit for all of Scotland and the west in particular. As everyone knows, Glasgow airport is in fact in Paisley, and in Renfrewshire we are saying that we are the gateway to the games.

The SNP-led council administration has been investing in sports for the future. There has been investment of £7 million in Seedhill and Ralston playing fields to provide 3G pitches and better changing facilities. The administration has been working with St Mirren at Allanton playing fields to

provide a new training centre for our Scottish Premier League team. Regardless of which team you support, it is a benefit for any town like Paisley to have an SPL football team. We are also currently investing £92 million in an education and leisure capital expenditure programme that will upgrade many of our sporting facilities. All of that has been done during times of financial constraint: it is all about priorities, and sport is one of our priorities in Renfrewshire.

The Lagoon leisure centre in Paisley will have £7 million-worth of refurbishment. The on-going development of the community sporting hubs in Paisley recently received more funding from both the local area committees. That will ensure that sporting clubs can join together, and it will offer them hope that they can still endeavour to do their best in their sport and encourage them to become part of the community hub network.

I am looking for further funding for tennis courts in Brodie park, where there is an old red ash court that is only used for one week after Wimbledon. It is not just about football; it is about other sports, too. I have been looking for that funding for some time. We need to get some people who are involved in tennis to take control and get some investment, as well as getting community activists involved.

In the same area we had a play park for pensioners, which the media found quite interesting. For £20,000 we got a gym for people to use in the public park. That is not a new idea, and it is not rocket science. It was laughed at initially, but it has been very successful. It provides access for people of all ages and ensures that everyone can mix in the park, which is how it was meant to be used.

Renfrewshire also has its award-winning diversionary street stuff project, which involves the council, the police, St Mirren, a local bus company and various other partners. We have street football, a gym bus and a youth bus, which encourage young people not to be antisocial and to have healthy lifestyles.

I am a great believer in getting involved in those programmes, rather than just seeing what happens. I once met a young boy who said, "I didn't know the football was here, big man"—which seems to be what I get called when I am out and about—"but if I had known I wouldn't have had these four cans of lager. I like a lager." "So do I," I said, "but the difference is that I'm 40 and you're 14." At the end of the day, all such young men want to be footballers, and if they can access football through those means we will be able to address that 5 per cent of young people who might end up getting involved in antisocial behaviour.

Sport is about making a difference to people's lives. In Shona Robison—

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): You should be closing now.

George Adam: I am just doing so, Presiding Officer.

In Shona Robison, we have a dedicated sports minister who will take up the challenge of tackling Scotland's issues with weight and obesity and encouraging participation in sport. I have not been to the gym since I was elected, but I hope to start going again and be ready for the Paisley 10K. It is important that our young people are provided with information about sustaining a healthy lifestyle.

Just in case the spirit of Jim Mitchell is hovering in the chamber, I will end by saying that although I want to live in an independent Scotland, I also want to live in a fit, healthy and fulfilled Scotland.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Drew Smith. This is Mr Smith's first speech in the Parliament.

15:36

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab): Thank you, Presiding Officer. I am honoured to make my maiden speech in this our Scottish Parliament, as a member for Glasgow region.

As with others on these benches, my feelings on being elected to this place were tempered by sadness at the loss of some good representatives from the city of Glasgow. As I was most closely involved with the campaign in Glasgow Kelvin, I hope that members and other Glasgow candidates who are not with us will forgive me if I take a moment to say a particular word about Pauline McNeill. Committed to Scottish home rule, not only was she a champion of my city, its people and its causes, but she had other international interests, particularly the cause of the Palestinian people. She is a loss to my party and to this Parliament.

Like other colleagues, I want to congratulate the SNP on winning the election so decisively and welcome Shona Robison to her place as minister. She might not recall, but in a previous life working in health promotion I had much pleasure in arranging for her a health walk with a Paths for All volunteer scheme in Fife. In her tenure as Minister for Public Health and Sport, she showed real commitment to health-enhancing physical activity, and I hope that in her new role she will continue to promote a more physically active Scotland as well as a successful sporting Scotland.

I also hope that the minister agrees that protecting the number of active sport co-ordinators in local communities and ensuring that it does not decline is key to encouraging Scots to become

more rather than less physically active, and that she will give priority to the issue of expedited disclosures for coaches and others and, indeed, the question whether in some cases such disclosures are needed at all. For example, it cannot be right that some volunteer leaders are having their criminal records checked simply to lead a health walk. The role of the Scottish Government, local councils, health boards and other organisations in this field should be to open up pathways to sport activity and better health, not to block them.

When I was young I swam competitively, and like Richard Simpson and Patricia Ferguson I ask the minister to consider the role that free swimming lessons for all primary-age children can play. I am not talking just about access to council pools for those who are already using them or about bringing in swimming lessons at some arbitrary age, such as seven. Sport and physical activity should be part of growing up for all our children, and maintaining healthy activity levels should be part of life for all grown-ups.

Glasgow is a city that loves sport. I know that because I live in the shadow of one of the world's great football teams: Partick Thistle Football Club. Given that football is our national game, I ask the minister to provide real and proactive assistance to supporters who wish to play a role in governing or owning their clubs. In that respect, I highlight Bill Butler's work with the supporters trust on this issue in the last session.

Be it in international competitions or in local youth clubs, sport has the potential to make us better people. In sport, we learn the rules of fairness, strive for individual success and often learn how to be part of a team. From climbing walls and outdoor sports to swimming at Tollcross and bowling at Kelvingrove, Glasgow is one of the world's great sporting cities. That is why the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth games are so important both to the city and to Scotland. In my first speech in this chamber and on this subject, I pay tribute to Glasgow City Council, the Commonwealth Games Council for Scotland and everyone, including the Scottish Government, who was involved in winning the games for Glasgow and getting us to where we are.

The Glasgow games, which are on time and within budget, are on schedule to be the great success that Glasgow needs them to be. They are vital for the regeneration of the east end. As Richard Simpson highlighted, they are the first major international sporting competition to put a health promotion legacy at the heart of their planning. If that health legacy is to be meaningful, it is essential that the minister publishes baselines from which we can measure the success or otherwise of that ambition.

Glasgow 2014 has massive potential, not only to transform the city's infrastructure but to improve Glaswegians' life chances. Many young people will benefit from Glasgow City Council's Commonwealth apprentices programme, which builds further on the excellent work that we are already doing in Glasgow. Glasgow City Council has put Labour's politics into policy, given opportunities to our young people and ensured that the fight against youth unemployment is at the front and centre of everything that my party does. As I am a former chair of the Scottish Trades Union Congress young workers committee and a past member of the STUC general council, those issues matter to me, and I will make youth employment, decent jobs for all and fairness in the workplace my priorities in the Parliament.

In the period since the election, there has been speculation in the media about who is running Glasgow 2014: Glasgow City Council or the Scottish Government. I say gently to the Scottish Government that putting next year's local elections in Glasgow ahead of the success of the games would be very bad sportsmanship. Supporting the organising committee and all the partners to deliver the best games yet, delivering for Glasgow's east end, improving Glasgow's health and increasing levels of physical activity are my goals for the 20th Commonwealth games, and I hope that the minister shares them.

Presiding Officer, I support the amendment in Richard Simpson's name, and I am grateful for the time that you have given me. I look forward to the challenges ahead of me as a new member. I will put the interests of the people of Glasgow first in the Scottish Parliament, and I will strive to do my best for the people I am proud and humble to represent.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Clare Adamson to be followed by Alison Johnstone. This is Clare Adamson's first speech in the Scottish Parliament.

15:41

Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP): I am delighted to be making my first speech in the chamber alongside Drew Smith, Humza Yousaf and George Adam. I thank those chaps for setting the bar so high for those of us who are following them.

The closure of Ravenscraig brought me to the cause of Scottish independence. I knew that my home area would be devastated by its loss, and my community is still bearing the burden of unemployment and poverty.

Since I learned that Motherwell was the constituency that first returned an SNP member of Parliament—Dr McIntyre—in 1945, I have always

been proud of the part that my home town has played in our party's history. It was therefore poignant for me to witness the returns for the SNP in the Ravenscraig regional sports centre. The constituents of Central Scotland voted overwhelmingly in support of the SNP, and in doing so changed the political map of Scotland. I am humbled by their faith in me and my party, and of course I look forward to representing the constituents of the region to the best of my ability.

North Lanarkshire Council, Ravenscraig Ltd and sportscotland funded the spectacular £34 million regional sports facility that heralded a new era for Ravenscraig. I am glad that the cabinet secretary for finance approved the tax increment financing model that will secure the future of the Ravenscraig site and bring new hope and prosperity for the first time in 20 years.

I hope that I am not being too parochial as a new member, but I want to speak about what is in my ken as a local Wishaw councillor. In 2007, I was invited to be a member of the international children's games organising committee, which is a joint venture that involves North Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire Council. Together, those councils cover seven of the nine constituencies in the Central Scotland region. The international children's games are the world's biggest youth sporting event. In August this year, Lanarkshire will play host to 1,500 competitors aged between 12 and 15. We have worked with our schools and sports clubs in establishing development squads, and youngsters from throughout Lanarkshire have been given an opportunity to participate in expert coaching sessions. All our squad have completed the cardiac screening programme at Hampden Park, which helps to identify those who are at risk from rare sudden cardiac death. That programme is vital for young athletes.

For the 80 or so athletes who are selected to compete in the games, it will be a unique and life-changing opportunity. The athletes will be able to take to an international sporting stage, and in doing so will experience new friendships and cultural diversity. I assure my Edinburgh colleagues that Lanarkshire will offer the warmest of welcomes to their city's team, as we will to the teams from Daegu, Macau, Baghdad, Nairobi and the other teams from the 71 cities that are taking part.

The games have provided a wealth of resource for the curriculum for excellence throughout North and South Lanarkshire. The local authorities have run design competitions for ICG calendars and cards, a competition to compose a song or tune to celebrate the games and a competition to design the torch. They have also developed an ICG-themed Scots language project. Such is the vision

of both councils that, for the first time, and in parallel with the games, we are running a health and wellbeing conference to celebrate the way in which sport and physical activity can enhance young people's lives. The conference is supported by a plethora of partners, including the International Sport and Culture Association, NHS Lanarkshire and Glasgow Science Centre. It is hoped that the conference will be taken up as part of future ICG events and will be part of the legacy of the Lanarkshire games.

Ravenscraig regional sports centre will feature in the games as one of the eight venues, hosting the badminton and judo. The centre, which has played its part in securing the 2011 European city of sport award for North Lanarkshire, is run by North Lanarkshire Leisure. As a board member of that trust, I welcomed the publication of the independent social impact evaluation that was conducted by Baker Tilly, which concluded that, for the £10 million that was invested in the trust, the economic impact in the surrounding area was £41 million, with the NHS being the greatest beneficiary. I am sure that those figures will be of interest not just to our sports minister but to the cabinet secretaries for finance and health.

I will finish by highlighting the ethos of the international children's games, which are the concept of physical education teacher Professor Metod Klemenc, a Yugoslavian who suffered enormously as a youngster during the second world war. He did not want that suffering for future generations. He knew that by breaking down cultural and geographic barriers and by nurturing mutual respect and understanding, he would go some way to tackling the problems that blighted his life. The children's games motto is "Together, all friends". How very like those Scottish values that Robert Burns expressed:

"That Man to Man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."

The first games were held in 1968 in Slovenia, which was then part of Yugoslavia. I trust that it will not be too long before Scotland takes her place alongside Slovenia as a small independent European nation.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Alison Johnstone. This is Alison's first speech in our Parliament.

15:48

Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green): I begin by saying how privileged I feel to follow in the footsteps of Robin Harper, the UK's first and longest-serving Green parliamentarian. Robin is totally irreplaceable and his is a big scarf to fill, but I will do my best in representing the people of Lothian.

It is heartening to hear such positive contributions and a commitment to sport from across the chamber. There is obviously agreement that we want to be part of an active and healthy nation. I really do welcome the chance to speak in the chamber on this motion, as sport has been and continues to be an important part of my life, as it is for many Scots. The debate so far has highlighted the opportunities that we have and the challenges that we face in ensuring that Scotland becomes the healthy and active nation that we all know it can be. Our Commonwealth games bid was entitled "People, Place, Passion", and its success was due in no small part to the recognition of Scots' extraordinary passion for sport. The challenge that we have now is to transform that passion into a nation of physically active individuals.

Many sports associations and countless volunteer coaches are looking for the support that will enable them to best help their sportspeople to fulfil their potential. I welcome the fact that that responsibility is acknowledged. Governing bodies are working hard to provide an increased number of coaching training programmes. Waiting lists do exist in clubs. At Edinburgh Athletic Club we have a group of young children who are desperate to get started, which demonstrates desire to be involved. We must ensure that we have the coaches we need, so that young people have the earliest possible access to involvement in the sport of their choice.

Margo MacDonald: From the member's experience, can she explain why coaches are in short supply?

Alison Johnstone: I think it is partly because people get involved when their children are young, but when their children have passed through the system they lose interest. We are seeing more professional coaching programmes, and there is a real sense of attainment for coaches, which I hope will address that shortage in the future.

In order to make the most of the opportunity that the two great games that are coming to the UK give us in terms of a lasting legacy, we need to ensure that the fostering of active, fit, healthy and ready-for-sport young people is at the heart of national and local decision making. Progress towards that aim can be increased by creating a national culture of walking and cycling to school, which we can achieve by investing in attractive, safe, well-maintained walkways and cycleways, with schools and other local facilities as the community hubs for a wide range of activities. I welcome the minister's commitment to such hubs and to community involvement and engagement.

We need to ensure that green spaces for free and informal activities are within easy reach of homes and that they are afforded the protection

that they deserve in planning legislation. In cities such as Edinburgh, local parkland is increasingly attractive to developers and community sports facilities are threatened. Access to local spaces where children can kick a ball about, climb a tree and run around enables them to develop the basic skills and fitness that are needed for more structured activities and increases their physical literacy.

Of course, we need action in association with local authorities to deliver at least two hours of physical education a week to pupils. That runs alongside active schools. We need to ensure that active schools include families who might find even the minimal fees that are charged to be a barrier to participation for their young people.

I agree that obesity and its many associated health risks can be addressed by embracing the opportunities that we have within the next few years. The fact that the United Kingdom is hosting two world games in such a short period provides a unique platform to push towards a healthy Scotland. Those global events will have very local consequences for space and place, and not simply in terms of new facilities. The capacity of international sporting events to aid social cohesion and promote a positive message and a positive lifestyle is well documented.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to tackle social exclusion through promoting sport and encouraging more people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to participate. We must ensure that there are enough suitable sporting venues, whether pools, halls, courts or pitches, to enable local sporting participation by those who are inspired by the great global events that are coming to the UK.

The minister noted that spending on sport reduces spending on physical and mental poor health. It does indeed: it increases our national wellbeing and our individual self-esteem.

We have many talented elite sportsmen and women who are exciting role models and who inspire our young people—although it is still too unusual to find coverage of talented sportswomen in the sports pages of our newspapers. We must strive to develop an active sporting Scotland, where grassroots sport and community participation form the bedrock of national success and good health and where all our talented people, regardless of background or gender, are given the chance to shine through sport. Sport is the great leveller and, as the Scottish Sports Association reminds us, our greatest social movement.

15:54

Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): The speeches by new members from across the chamber have been excellent. To be honest, we would never know that they had just joined the Parliament, which augurs well for the future.

The benefits of participating in sport are immeasurable. I am not sure what is more important—self-esteem, health, peer group interaction or team building—as all the benefits are vital in building people's confidence. The benefits are not age related. No matter what sport someone plays or what their age is, all those features play a part.

For some people, sport is about being the very best. For others, it is about participation, recreation, fitness or just having a bit of fun. On being the best, we know that we are looking for the best tomorrow from our own superstar, Andy Murray. What I will say is not peculiar to him; I am certain that the same applies to other people who play at his level—such as his opponents Federer, Nadal and Djokovic—and their families. It is about not just the individuals but the family commitment. Andy Murray's mother, Judy, and his brother have given up much in their lives for participation at the highest level. We should consider that commitment when a player of such quality plays. He is my own superstar, but of course sportspeople at that level in all sports dedicate their lives to their activity.

For other people, participating for recreation in activities such as golf, bowls, running and football is also competitive, although it is not at the same level as that of the Andy Murrys of the world. I used to climb, but I am afraid that I have given up because of my age. Now, I snowboard—I am commonly called the oldest snowboarder in town. Of course, when I have on my helmet, my goggles and my gear, nothing gives me away, except the creaky bones. I must tell members that I have been asked to join the Scottish snowboarding team—to drive the van.

When I was young, I had fun playing rounders and five-a-side football and going in for a quick dip. I did not know that I was participating in sport; I was just doing what I really liked to do. However, what we are talking about has a serious side. For example, a bowling club in East Dunbartonshire pays £1,000 a week to rent a property from the council. For the *Official Report*, I repeat that the club pays £1,000 a week for that privilege. The bowlers are not all senior people—the age profile includes quite a lot of young people, but quite a lot of the bowlers are elderly.

A question mark hangs over the sports centre involved. A decision might be taken to build a new

centre, but the council does not have enough money to provide for that. If the sports centre closed and the elderly bowlers had no place to go, what would be the cost and who would pay it? The council certainly would not pay—the health service would pick up the tab, because if elderly people are not engaged or out and about doing what makes them happy, their health deteriorates and the health board has to pay money to keep people who deteriorate much earlier than normal.

It is not all about investment and money; as I said earlier, it is about how families engage. It is about the encouragement that families give and about parents spending the necessary time with their children. I have a 10-year-old, so I know what it is like. She is involved in gymnastics at the sports centre that I mentioned. There is always a wobble—a time when she says that she wants to play on her Nintendo, to watch TV or to play computer games, and really does not want to go to gymnastics three nights a week and on Saturday to hone her skills. We must be strong and say, “No, that is what you have to do.” We must encourage her. Unfortunately, at present, families too often listen to children instead of guiding them.

It is not the Parliament’s responsibility to ensure that children are always engaged, it is parents’ responsibility. Parents must not leave it to schools to ensure that that happens. It is a rounded equation. It is about our engaging with families and children and encouraging them to continue. That is vital for their wellbeing in the long run.

16:01

Mary Fee (West Scotland) (Lab): I thank the people of West Scotland for giving me the great privilege of representing the area for the next five years. I pay tribute to the devoted MSPs whom the Parliament lost at the previous election; I was looking forward to working with many of them. However, that lost talent has been replaced by many new faces, of which I am one.

I also pay tribute to Stuart Clark, the Labour candidate for Renfrewshire North and West, who was a terrific candidate and would have been a great representative of the people of the constituency. Stuart worked extremely hard in the nine months leading up to the election. Unfortunately, he does not sit beside me on these benches, but the Labour Party owes a great deal to him and to his wife, Jennifer, for the manner in which they ran their campaign. Iain Gray can testify to that.

Like many members of the Parliament, I have worked hard for my community as a councillor—in my case, for Renfrew South and Gallowhill. In the past four years in Renfrewshire Council, I have witnessed attack after attack by the SNP-Lib Dem

administration: attacks on education, which were shamefully defended by the First Minister only a few months ago; attacks on services such as community centres and libraries, which are vital to small communities such as Bridge of Weir; and attacks on sports clubs and sports grounds, such as those affecting Erskine youth football club and Parkmoor boys club.

The SNP-led council has increased the hire for game and training facilities by 275 per cent. It plans to downgrade the pitch at Park Mains high school and to replace it with a red-ash surface, meaning that football in the community will suffer. One single mother to whom I spoke informed me that she now had to decide which one of her three children would be able to continue attending the football club. How are we to encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyles and to be proactive about physical activity when they do not have the opportunity to do so?

In 2007, the SNP promised in its manifesto to guarantee that every child received two hours of physical education in our schools. In 2011, the facts show that that is not the case. Almost half of all primary schools do not meet the target. Only 23 per cent of S1 to S4 pupils are provided with two hours of physical education. Those figures speak for themselves and continue to show a depressing picture of the future of Scotland’s health and wellbeing, as only 8 per cent of S5 and 5 per cent of S6 pupils undertake two hours of PE.

It is simply not acceptable to say that the blame lies with teachers or schools. The Health and Sport Committee found that the facilities in primary schools are not adequate and that primary teachers do not feel competent enough to deliver PE classes. Although some effort has been made through postgraduate courses at universities in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the number of active schools co-ordinators has been slimmed down by almost a third. Provision of specially trained PE teachers has not been implemented in the more appropriate areas, where health issues such as heart disease, addiction and mental health problems are greater.

I am proud to say that we on the education board of Renfrewshire Council achieved success, in that all secondary schools provide two hours of physical education a week. The neighbouring council, East Renfrewshire, has achieved great success in providing all primary and secondary pupils with the promised two hours. That council is a shining light and a great example for all other local authorities to follow.

East Renfrewshire placed a great deal of emphasis on working closely with sportscotland and on integrating the active schools programme into its wider sports strategy by hiring full-time co-

ordinators. The council also created a high level of co-operation between schools and local clubs.

However, it should be noted that East Renfrewshire benefits from more favourable socioeconomic factors, unlike the council ward that I represent, Renfrew South and Gallowhill, where the heart disease rate is higher than the national average and where alcohol and drug addiction plague families and communities. There are worrying levels of obesity there compared with in East Renfrewshire.

The Scottish Government expects that, by 2050, almost 60 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women will be obese. The Scottish Government must act more quickly and more efficiently to deal with the obesity epidemic that Scotland faces, particularly in childhood. It has the answers but it cannot implement them due to budget cuts to local councils and the subsequent increase in costs that local clubs face.

It is well known that promoting healthier lifestyles and physical activity at a younger age will benefit the child through his or her life, but only if the funding and resources are made available—and that is especially relevant when the child enters year 5 or year 6 of secondary school.

If physical literacy is introduced at an early age, a child can have the focus and drive to continue with physical activity and sport, and the recommendation by the Health and Sport Committee that all children in P6 should take part in a physical literacy test, to help determine what help they need heading into secondary school, should be implemented by the Scottish Government. The skills that children learn through physical education benefit them mentally, physically and socially, and they also benefit society in general for generations to follow.

In the coming years, Scotland will be in the global spotlight as hosts of the Commonwealth games in Glasgow, the Ryder cup at Gleneagles and the Davis cup in Braehead. There is much talk about the legacy that will be left after the Commonwealth games, and I look forward to working with every member in the chamber to ensure that the legacy lasts longer than the fortnight of the games.

Over the next five years, I hope to work closely with every member in the Parliament to improve the roles of sport and education in Scotland, to encourage children to become more active in sport, to address the issue of female participation in physical education and to work towards a healthier Scotland.

Being from the west of Scotland, I must mention a football team close to my heart: Cherrie youth football club. The Cherrie boys are based in my home town of Renfrew and are made up of 140

children aged between five and 16. The club has been successful in starting a summer school for children aged five and six, and has been encouraging healthy lifestyles by offering nutritional advice and banning all players from using caffeine-filled energy drinks. I wish the Cherrie boys under-13 team good luck in the league cup final on 11 June. I will be there cheering them on.

16:08

Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):

Having made my maiden speech this morning, I begin this speech by congratulating my colleagues from across the chamber on making their maiden speeches this afternoon. I echo the comments of other members who have commented on the high standard of speeches. I might not always agree with the content, but the standard of the speeches that have been given is exemplary.

I begin by referring to something that Dr Simpson said. He referred to curling, and I recommend that he visit the fantastic, state-of-the-art Curl Aberdeen facility. The European curling championships were recently hosted in Aberdeen, and compliments were given by competitors on the standard of the facility.

I must sound a slightly down note, however: on coming into power on Aberdeen City Council, the SNP had to invest £1 million in the Linx ice arena in order to hold those championships and to bring the arena up to the required standard. That was due to an unfortunate legacy of neglect and underinvestment under previous Labour, Lib Dem and Tory administrations.

During the election campaign, I had the great privilege of visiting the Granite City amateur boxing club in Aberdeen, which is the home of the Aberdeen assassin, Lee McAllister, a world and Commonwealth boxing champion.

The club's work in providing a focus for young people is excellent. It is about not only developing potentially elite athletes for the future but providing diversionary activity of the sort that members mentioned. Boxing is one of the sports that take children from poorer backgrounds, in particular, who might otherwise find themselves going down the wrong path, and help to give them a constructive outlet for their energies.

The club is searching for funding to try to develop new facilities so that it can encourage more female members to join the club, because there has been an uptake in interest in female boxing. I look forward to working with the club and other colleagues in the north-east to try to secure that funding.

I am pleased that the minister talked about action on youth football, which is close to my heart. Before I was elected, I worked as a football coach for a youth team in Aberdeen. When I intervened during Liz Smith's speech, I mentioned the acute problem that there is in attracting new people to referee in football, because the problems that are often seen in the professional game put people off. I very much welcome the minister's comments about looking at disciplinary structures at the SFA and the work in which the Scottish Government and the SFA have been engaged, which will help to remove some of the problems in getting people involved in refereeing.

Summer football needs to be considered in the context of how the youth game goes forward. The previous chief executive of the SFA, Gordon Smith, was keen on a shift to summer football in Scotland, as has happened in Ireland and many Scandinavian nations. Summer football has been piloted in the women's game and should be looked at for the youth game. From my youth coaching experience, I can say that it is difficult to teach kids the basics of passing, moving and so on in December, January and February, when the weather is bad and pitches are of a poor standard and do not lend themselves to the development of key skills.

There is also a need to look at youth development by professional clubs. The Public Petitions Committee considered the issue during the previous session of the Parliament and the minister has taken an interest in the matter. I spoke recently to the president of Dyce Boys Club FC, where I used to coach, about a fact-finding mission to Sweden by one of the club's coaches. The coach had looked at the system at IFK Gothenburg, where if a child joins at the age of 11 or 12 they are given a firm commitment and a guarantee that they will be at the club until they are 16.

For too many young players who go to professional clubs in Scotland, the guarantee lasts only until the next game. Very often, players are released mid season or at the end of the season. That is not always a problem in and of itself, given that we accept that football is a difficult profession in which to succeed; the problem is to do with getting a link back to the grass-roots club. If a player who has gone to a professional club is released, there needs to be some form of interaction between the professional club and the grass-roots level, to encourage the player back into the game at grass-roots level and get them picked up by another club. When clubs let players go, we must ensure that the players do not fall too far and land too hard.

There is hope for young players in the example of Paul Coutts. He did not initially make it as a

professional but went to play in the Highland Football League, for Cove Rangers FC, in the south of Aberdeen. He was spotted by scouts from a number of English football clubs and was signed by Peterborough United FC—by Darren Ferguson, the son of Sir Alex. When Darren Ferguson became manager of Preston North End FC, he took Paul Coutts with him—Paul is still at Preston North End and has won a number of under-21 caps for Scotland. There is hope for a lot of young players who do not make the cut the first time round. They should not be afraid to go to the junior or Highland league clubs, because there are professional clubs out there who look at the young players in those leagues and try to get them back into the professional game.

I very much welcome the support that the Government has provided for grass-roots sport via the cashback for communities scheme and the young Scots fund. Let us rightly celebrate our top sportspeople, but let us also welcome the Government's moves to invest in the development of the elite sportspeople through grass-roots sport.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

I call Graeme Dey, who will make his first speech in the Scottish Parliament.

16:14

Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP): I pay tribute to my predecessor, Andrew Welsh. Eighty per cent of Angus South is drawn from the Angus seat that he represented in this Parliament for 12 years. Prior to that, he represented the county for many years in another place.

Andrew never tired of telling people how proud and honoured he felt to have been elected by the people of Angus to represent their interests and those of Scotland in the Parliament. I now know how he felt and I acknowledge what a hard act I have to follow.

Sport and sporting success are hugely important to Scotland—30 years spent working as a sports journalist taught me that. During my journalistic career, I was fortunate enough to cover a football world cup and two European championship finals, and to witness my team, Aberdeen FC, lift the cup winners' cup. Sadly, I fear that it may be some time before Scotland and the Dons scale those heights again, but I live in hope.

It is not only at the top level that sporting success of whatever nature excites and inspires. The sense of pride and achievement that youngsters and their families in particular take in even modest success is tangible. Indeed, during my time in journalism, one of the biggest challenges that I faced was placating relatives who believed that their youngster's triumph was worthy

of far greater coverage in the newspaper than it had been granted.

However, that sometime lack of proportion does not detract from the many success stories that there have been and continue to be throughout Tayside, Fife, Perthshire and, in particular, Angus South, the constituency that I am privileged to represent. Several years spent on the judging panel of the Angus sports council awards brought home to me just how blessed we are with emerging and established sporting talent in our part of Scotland and how fortunate we are to have the volunteers and coaches who nurture that talent. I am sure that the same holds true throughout the rest of the country.

Sport not only helps to shape a healthier nation; it builds confidence, lifts the spirit and instils a sense of pride. I say in passing that, in Angus South, we could not be prouder of our only senior football club, Arbroath FC, which during the season that just ended lifted the first major honour in its 133-year history. I look forward to watching the red lichties fly the flag for Angus South in the second division.

On a perhaps grander scale, the next few years promise to enhance greatly Scotland's standing in the sporting world. In the short term, I look forward to the women's open coming to Carnoustie, my home town.

Our friends and neighbours south of the border once boasted, "Football's coming home." Golf—in the shape of arguably the greatest golfing spectacle that exists—is coming home in 2014, when Gleneagles will host the Ryder cup. It will be the first time since 1973 that the event has been staged in Scotland. With 250,000 golf fans expected to descend on Perthshire and a global television audience of several hundred million tuning in, the country really will be in the sporting spotlight.

As we have heard throughout the debate, 2014 promises to be truly special, with the Commonwealth games heading for Glasgow. I reported on the games back in 1986, when Edinburgh was the host city. Despite the boycott and the financial troubles that marred the lead-up, it was a truly memorable event—in a domestic context, it was memorable most notably for the achievement of one of my constituents, Liz McColgan, who literally ran away with the inaugural women's 10,000m.

With Shona Robison overseeing the games, I am certain that there will be no repeat of the problems of 25 years ago and that, just as the people of Edinburgh got behind the event then, so the good folk of Glasgow will in 2014. Indeed, I am sure that the whole of Scotland will get behind the games and the Ryder cup and that those events

will provide a huge boost to our sense of national pride and confidence.

Former First Minister Jack McConnell, in a fine speech on the final day of the third session of the Parliament, said that, after 12 years of devolution,

"more Scots walk a little taller, cringe a little less and occasionally have ideas above their station."—[*Official Report*, 22 March 2011; c 34788.]

I believe that, come late 2014, Scotland—its confidence swelled by successfully hosting the Ryder cup and the Commonwealth games—will stand upright, the Caledonian cringe will be a thing of the past and, with the indisputable case having been made, we will be ready to take our place among the independent nations of the world.

For that and many other reasons that previous speakers have articulated, I support the motion.

16:19

Siobhan McMahon (Central Scotland) (Lab): I am delighted to be able to make my maiden speech in such an important debate.

I place on record my thanks to the former constituency members of Central Scotland for their support and friendship, not only in the past few weeks but for the past 12 years. I also pay tribute to Bill Butler and Frank McAveety for the fantastic contribution that they made to the debate on sport in the past few years. I hope that my speech today will not let them down.

As Clare Adamson said, the international children's games—or the mini-Olympics—will be hosted by North and South Lanarkshire in August this year. That great event involves more than 2,000 children from more than 70 cities from throughout the world participating in sports that range from judo to sailing and to track and field.

The people of Lanarkshire are looking forward to the event being held in our area, so much so that the deadline for applications to be a volunteer had to be brought forward because of the high number of people applying. This is the first time that the event will be hosted in Scotland and I hope that as many members as possible will attend to show their support for the event and for the participants.

Sport is something that brings people together, no matter their background, because everyone has the same goal and vision: to succeed and be the best they can be. That is why it is essential that we do everything that we can to open up access to sport whenever possible. In this economic climate, parents cannot afford to send their children to football practice or dance class, which is why PE in our schools is vital.

PE is not only about the fitness of the next generation. That is important, of course, but we must remember that sport is fun; most of us get enjoyment from it, we can share it with our friends and family and we can use it as a release from the day-to-day pressures that we all feel. PE for our children is no different, which is why it is essential that the Government meets its target of two hours a week of PE in our schools as soon as possible. It is not acceptable that that commitment has been put back until 2014. That pledge should be a priority for the Government if it is serious about sport and fitness.

Another option that the Government should look at is the provision of free swimming lessons for, in particular, primary school children. One in four children in Scotland is still unable to swim. That is an extremely worrying statistic, because swimming is not just a sport or a means to get fit; it is a life skill that everyone should have the opportunity to learn. For far too many families, the price of swimming lessons is often too high, therefore the Government has to offer help. Free access to council swimming pools is a great initiative that is run throughout the school holidays in Lanarkshire, but free swimming lessons should be introduced to get the real benefits of that programme.

The price of sport can be a barrier for many. Many football clubs in my area find it hard to raise the funds that are needed to hire football pitches for training. How can we say that we are serious about sport and about football when we cannot provide affordable facilities? The options in my area for football clubs are to play on red-ash pitches or to pay the high fees to hire a suitable venue for 40 minutes. We have to look at a way of getting more and fairer access to state-of-the-art facilities. It is all very well having the new 3G synthetic pitches installed at sports clubs, but when football and rugby clubs cannot afford to use them they cannot be fit for purpose.

As I mentioned, access to sport is crucial. That is why the work that is done by organisations such as Sportworx, which works with 15 to 20-year-olds from deprived communities across South Lanarkshire, is vital. Sportworx recognises the good in young people by highlighting their achievements, abilities and potential. The organisation gives young people the opportunity to become sport and dance coaches, which helps with their self-esteem, confidence and life skills. Such organisations are vital if sport is to continue to be at the heart of Scottish culture.

One of my greatest achievements in my relatively short life is, of course, being elected to Parliament, but another of those achievements has to be being the only girl on the school football team. I was not there to make up the numbers—they did not give me the nickname of Shevchenko

for nothing! I tell the chamber that because I take pride in it; I was proud to be part of that team and to make the friends that I did along the way. If we do not open up access to sport in this country, many young people will not get the opportunity to feel the way that I did. We have to encourage rather than discourage; we have to motivate parents and teachers to become involved in children's sporting activities; and we have to provide the right support and training whenever and wherever possible.

To conclude, I wish to use the words of another member, who stated in their maiden speech in 1999 that

"It is only right that the first aim of this Parliament is the creation of prosperity for this country. However, if we do not work to ensure that nobody is in any way excluded from access to that prosperity, we will undoubtedly fail the people."—[*Official Report*, 16 June 1999; c 438.]

Those are, of course, the words of Michael McMahon. They are as true to this debate today as they were to his in 1999.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Jamie Hepburn.

16:24

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer. Having congratulated John Scott last week on his success in becoming a Deputy Presiding Officer, I now offer Elaine Smith similar congratulations.

I congratulate Siobhan McMahon on her maiden speech. I think that it was Billy Connolly who once remarked, upon returning to Glasgow to perform in front of the native citizens of his city, that he was a little nervous performing in front of his relatives. That was literally the case for Siobhan McMahon; I am not quite sure how she felt about it, but I thought that she made a very good speech indeed and one that reflected the good quality across the board of the maiden speeches that we have heard today. I am loth to remark on any of them specifically, but Drew Smith's cannot go unremarked, given his extremely sensible comments about Partick Thistle. I hope to hear more of those over the coming years.

Like Tavish Scott, I was a little surprised to find myself branded as a sporting champion. I thought that that might have been because I was one of the Parliament's most finely honed athletes—I entirely accept that that is a comparative rather than an absolute measure—but I was disappointed to find out that it was because I had signed a pledge during the recent election campaign. That demonstrates the importance of sport, politically.

Before I come on to the substance of my speech, I should declare an interest as a member

of the Jags Trust—I think that I have made my footballing allegiances fairly clear. Humza Yousaf talked of the pain of being a member of the tartan army. As a supporter of Partick Thistle and the national team, I can testify to having experienced twice the pain and double the agony.

It is good that we are having a debate on sport, because there is a tendency in some quarters to denigrate sport. Sport plays an important part in our wider civic society. Sporting success is important for our national psyche, and the minister's point about how it affects our pride and prestige was well made. It is important for the individual, as well. We know that physically active people have a 20 to 30 per cent reduced risk of premature death and a 50 per cent reduced risk of contracting major chronic disease; making those remarks has reminded me that I should probably be more active. As well as demonstrating the health benefits for the individual, those statistics highlight the important benefits that sport has for our NHS, which Gil Paterson correctly pointed out.

I want to spend the rest of my allocated time talking about the importance of sport in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth area that I am privileged to represent in the Parliament. It is important at grass-roots level and beyond, but I will begin with the grass roots. I was pleased by the support for grass-roots football that the Scottish Government provided recently through the cashback for communities scheme that Humza Yousaf and Mark McDonald mentioned. Cumbernauld Colts Football Club, which is an excellent institution with 500 members that provides training and diversionary activity for youngsters across Cumbernauld, was given one of the largest awards in recent times for a new dedicated facility in the town. During the election campaign, I was delighted to meet the chairman of Cumbernauld Colts to hear about the club's plans for that money and the new facility, and about the potential that exists for joint working with Cumbernauld Rugby Football Club to create a great sports hub for the area. In the event that that is created, I am sure that the Colts and the rugby club, if it is involved, would not mind me inviting the minister to come along and see it. That facility will be possible only as a result of the cashback for communities initiative.

I realise that this is not an area that falls entirely within the minister's responsibility, but it is one on which I hope that some movement is possible. I know that the amount of money that can be raised by the cashback for communities scheme is limited, and that any excess goes back to the Treasury, but I hope that we can see some movement on that. Rather than moneys that have been seized as the proceeds of crime going down the plughole at HM Treasury, we would all rather

see them being spent in our communities to benefit sports and other clubs.

Another grass-roots sports club in my area, members of which I was pleased to meet during the recent election campaign, is the Cumbernauld BMX Club. I met them at a sports club fair at St Maurice's high school, which demonstrated the variety of great sports clubs that we have in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth. It has been many a year since I have been on a BMX. The club wants to create a dedicated track in the Westfield area of Cumbernauld, which, as well as benefiting local youngsters and others from a physical activity point of view, could attract events to the area and provide it with an economic boost. Sport is important not only for physical activity, but for economic reasons.

Unlike James Dornan, I cannot lay claim to representing the home of Scottish football—although the supporters of Clyde Football Club might disagree with that. Clyde are the only senior club in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth area, although there are two junior clubs. Perhaps I should have lodged a motion offering my congratulations to Kilsyth Rangers on winning their division this year.

I do not have much time left, but I want to talk about the situation of Clyde Football Club. I support Partick Thistle, who are considered Clyde's great rivals, but I represent the area in which Clyde play. The club has great concerns about its lease with the North Lanarkshire Leisure trust for the use of the Broadwood stadium, because it cannot generate the revenue required. I should perhaps discuss the issue with Clare Adamson, who said that she was a member of the trust. I do not suppose that I can ask the Scottish Government for direct intervention, or to comment on this area too much—I am sure that the minister will be glad that I am not asking her for that—but I wonder whether she will consider how councils support senior sporting institutions such as Clyde Football Club and other football clubs in the area. Although Clyde are not in the SPL like St Mirren—the club mentioned by George Adam—they are still important to the area.

I see that I have no time left, so I thank the Presiding Officer for the time that she made available, and I look forward to hearing what the minister says at the end of the debate.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I call Margo MacDonald. I am afraid that I can give you only five minutes.

16:31

Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind): You are more generous than your predecessor—thank you.

I congratulate Shona Robison, and I would like to say how glad I was that she was appointed as the minister responsible for sport. She knows that I did a fair amount of earbashing, and I should tell the minister that the cross-party group on sport—which reconvened this afternoon—also sends her its best wishes. The group will be looking for lots of things from her.

Before I go on, I want to explain why I will be supporting the Conservative amendment this afternoon. The minister's motion is a blank canvas; the Conservative amendment fills in some of the detail and, by now, we should be getting down to detail. But before I do, I must remark on George Adam's fantastic speech. He talked about the time—I think that it was 1959—when St Mirren won the cup. Jim Rodger, who I think scored the winning goal, was my maths teacher.

Patricia Ferguson—to whom I pay tribute for the work that she did in the role that the present minister now occupies—said that physical activity is embedded in our culture. We wish. Deep-fried Mars bars are more likely to be embedded in our culture. However, attempts are being made all round the chamber to change that.

A point that I made during an earlier intervention could be taken on board by the minister. We know that we cannot achieve—for all sorts of different reasons—the two hours of physical education in different schools in different parts of the country. However, in order to embed the idea of physical activity and sport eventually, it would be good to consider having a period every day for every schoolchild during which they get their sports kit on and perhaps sweat a wee bit. Zumba dancing and all sorts of other things can be done in a small space with the help of teachers who may not have the confidence to tackle other kinds of PE.

I want to commend the minister on the schools national award scheme; I am anxious to hear much more about it, and I hope that she can tell us something when she sums up. That is the sort of direction towards which I think we should be heading.

I make a plea about the football legislation that the Government is considering just now: do not rush into it. The issue is much more complex than simply saying that Rangers and Celtic are to blame for sectarianism, and it is much more complex than simply saying that all we have to do is fix the issue with refereeing. There is no need to rush into this. Things have been as they are for a long time and I think that a bit of thoughtfulness now would improve the legislation that will come out at the other end.

When they go into schools, footballers could be much better role models than they are at the moment on a Saturday afternoon. Of course, I

exclude Hibs from that comment—I say that only because I hold a season ticket. However, we could use the current crop of footballers much more: they could go into schools and explain to young people why they should not behave towards referees in the way that the players behave on a Saturday.

There was a mention made of golf. It may be that there are some terrific golf courses and golf clubs in Scotland, but most golf clubs are suffering. They are finding that, instead of having waiting lists for memberships, they are having to creak people in the door. We should look at golf before it goes beyond us, because that is where sport integrates with our economy. Golf is a very important sport for us.

I wonder whether, when we talk about sport, it is borne in mind that we do not get elite athletes unless we have wide community participation in sport. The way into that is definitely through the PE teacher. Far too many PE teachers have qualified but have no chance of getting a job given the cutbacks over the next few years. I ask the minister to consider putting it to her education colleagues that we should have a moratorium for two or three years on churning out even more PE teachers. If they cannot get work, they will drift away from the profession, and all the investment and expertise are lost.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will the member conclude, please?

Margo MacDonald: I will.

I do not know why we were arguing about free swimming at seven or eight years of age—I was in my school team when I was seven. However, the minister is bang on with the free school swimming.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We turn to closing speeches. I call Ruth Davidson, who is making her first speech.

16:36

Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con): It gives me great pleasure to close this debate for the Conservatives. Frankly, it is an honour just to be speaking in this chamber and to be following the representatives from Glasgow who have gone before me. In particular, I would like to mention the member from my own party, Bill Aitken, who represented the city he loves for 12 years in this chamber. He gave many more years of selfless service at council level. I wish him well in his well-earned retirement. Given all Bill's past associations and his continued vocal support, along with other members of the chamber, for Partick Thistle, it seems somewhat fitting to follow him in my first outing by talking about sport.

The motion this afternoon is wide ranging in its remit, and the quality of debate has been high, particularly in the contributions from new members—I will try desperately hard to keep up.

Health outcomes is one of the big issues that have been raised today, and I agree with Dr Richard Simpson on the need to ensure that the qualitative measurement of outcomes is up to scratch as we go forward. We heard too from Tavish Scott on the importance of leadership in schools, from Humza Yousaf and Alison Johnstone on the social dividend of sport, and from James Dornan on sport's cultural impact.

I would like to add a few comments of my own, as I believe that sport is part of our culture. It shapes and describes us as a nation every bit as much as art or music, literature or theatre. It affects the country's consciousness and is part of who we are, whether that is on the march with Ally's army in 1978—for some of the elder members of this chamber—or willing on Chris Hoy in 2008 for some of the younger ones. It is that glimpse of Murray mania at Wimbledon every year, the desolation when our team is put out of the cup, and the disgust and shame that we have all felt when a football match has spilled over into sectarianism, violence and hate.

Sport has a power and influence. It captures the imagination, inflames passion and ignites ambition unlike any other pursuit. We must concentrate on making it a force for good.

In Scotland we are blessed with a landscape that spoils us and a climate that does not—hence the point about the need for summer football, with which I agree. From first-class ice climbing in Kinlochleven to world-class mountain biking in Innerleithen, we have the building blocks to encourage excellence. Tavish Scott, George Adam, Clare Adamson and Jamie Hepburn all spoke of individual opportunities in their own area, and I would like to talk about my patch in Glasgow.

From champions league football to world team badminton and table tennis, title fight boxing, indoor athletics and artistic gymnastics, Glasgow is and has been proud to welcome the world. We will do so again in 2014 for the Commonwealth games. I echo the words of Drew Smith when he highlights the importance of the good governance of the games and acknowledges that the current preparations are progressing on time and on budget. We need strong oversight to ensure that that continues.

As such, like Dr Richard Simpson and others I welcome the appointment of Shona Robison as minister for the new portfolio of Commonwealth games and sport. I was heartened to hear that her door will be open to those from all parties who have an interest in seeing the games succeed.

The crux of the debate is about increasing participation, which, as many contributors have stated, must be done at grass-roots and school levels. Liz Smith has ably set out Conservative plans for a sports trust to help the expansion of community sports throughout Scotland, and I support the amendment in her name, which calls for the Government to make more urgent progress on targets for PE provision in schools. All of us, across the chamber, want that to happen and we are concerned about the time slippage on that goal. I also inquire about the £1 million for outdoor education that was promised by John Swinney to Derek Brownlee in the 2009 budget negotiations. I hope that, in her closing remarks, the minister will clarify when that money will be forthcoming.

As I stand here next to Liz Smith, it is pretty clear which one of us has been an international athlete—it is not me. I am a club player at best, taking the occasional hill walk or exercise class, and that is about my limit. Yet, despite those limitations, my life has been immeasurably improved and altered by sport. At all levels, sport has the power to improve mental and physical health. It imparts a valuable lesson about how to be gracious in defeat as well as in victory. It teaches teamwork, discipline and a selflessness in front of goal. It cements friendships and it makes the spirit soar. The lessons of sport truly are the lessons of life, which is why grass-roots and community provision is so important.

Whether one is testing oneself against an opponent or trying to beat one's own best efforts, sport is about the struggle for improvement, attainment and pride. It is about our striving to be the best that we can be. I urge the Government to help us to reach our collective best, making good on its promises of PE provision, outdoor education and making the Commonwealth games in Glasgow a legacy for all of Scotland that is measured not just in money, buildings or jobs—important as those are—but in the ambition, belief, opportunity and motivation of individual Scots to go out and compete at their own level, whether that is on a five-a-side pitch in the middle of a city or above the snow line up a mountain range. The work needs to start at grass-roots level now for us to build ourselves a healthier, happier and more ambitious nation.

16:42

Dr Simpson: I congratulate the many first-time speakers in the chamber today. The quality of the speeches and the evident commitment to individual communities that has come through in almost every speech have been extremely welcome and bodes well for the chamber in this session of Parliament and for sport. Sometimes, sport does not get the priority it should. My job has

been made more difficult by Ruth Davidson's eloquent summing up—it is the first time that I have heard a member sum up for their party in their first speech.

Where to start? We are all agreed that the Commonwealth games are important. Many members have alluded to the contribution of the city, the committee and the Government to making the games a success and achieving a legacy for Scotland.

Patricia Ferguson referred to the premature deaths that are associated with a lack of activity and to the growing epidemic of obesity. Those things cannot be tackled overnight, or by targets at 2014; the work must begin now and continue throughout the coming years to ensure that people get active.

Liz Smith referred to veterans, but the participation of all people with disabilities in sport is important. Various games now have disabled games alongside them, which allows those people to have aspirations along with the rest of the community. I refer briefly to the Scottish Association for Mental Health's get active programme. Many people with serious mental health problems are the least active in our communities yet benefit the most from activity, as people's mental health and general wellbeing can be improved by becoming active.

Members have referred to female participation in sport and the fact that girls participate equally with boys up to the age of 12 but not beyond that age. That is a particular challenge that I am sure the minister will make a great attempt to meet.

Many specific sports have been mentioned. Mark McDonald invited me to go to Aberdeen. I say to Mark—sorry, to Mr McDonald; we are not allowed to use first names, as I should know—that I do not need to go as far as Aberdeen; Stirling has a new curling rink, which has been very successful. I learned at an event I attended that 70 youngsters are participating in early training in the sport. Some of them use devices to throw the stones. They are obviously enjoying the activity a great deal. I believe that there is to be a new centre at Kinross, as well. The establishment of new centres reflects an important development, but the trouble is that ice rinks are declining, and there are serious problems with curling. The Health and Sport Committee heard evidence in that regard from various people.

A lot of members have spoken about swimming lessons. I hope that the minister will consider the issue of lessons not being age related. The fact that one in three children cannot swim needs to be considered.

Margo MacDonald referred to the fact that many golf clubs are in trouble. Audit Scotland predicted

that 35 per cent of golf clubs will cease functioning because of financial difficulties. That is a challenge for us in relation to a sport in which we have a long and proud history. Graeme Dey referred to the women's open and the Ryder cup, which present us with opportunities to encourage more youngsters to participate. I know that the Government has done something in that respect, which I welcome. A lot of youngsters are now involved in the sport. We heard about the club in Newton Mearns that allows youngsters to try the sport out. Trying sports out is important.

Tavish Scott and the minister referred to the deficit in broadcasting. We invented the sevens, yet the BBC chose not to broadcast the event. I was there on Sunday and it was a great and joyous occasion in which many countries participated. Scotland did not win; we were beaten by Kenya in the final of the bowl. Nevertheless, it was a great day out and one that should have been celebrated by our broadcasters. If our rugby is not broadcast, it will not improve. The Government has done its bit by providing cashback funding and development officers that are increasing the number of basic players, but unless we get the participation of the BBC there will be problems. I join the Government and the Liberal Democrats in saying that the BBC must broadcast our rugby.

Sectarianism in football has been mentioned, but we know that it is present in other areas. My son, who works in addiction services in Glasgow, says that he cannot go into work wearing either a green shirt or a blue shirt because he knows that he will be abused by people in the clinic if he does. Sectarianism is extremely difficult to tackle. We will support the Government's efforts in renewing the commitment to tackling sectarianism, and I hope that we will be successful.

We talked about the target for PE in schools. I reiterate the difficulties of delivering it when the Government is not directly responsible, but it must take some responsibility for the delay. I would like to hear how it will go beyond discussions, which is all that was mentioned in the minister's opening speech.

We heard about PE teachers not getting places. I can say to Margo MacDonald that the intake has already been cut. There are problems with workforce planning that need to be considered.

We need to maintain the number of active school co-ordinators. I know that because there are more full-time active school co-ordinators the number has fallen but, as I said in my opening speech, we need to ensure that they have contracts of a length and permanence that enable them to participate to as great a degree as possible.

I welcome the money that is being given to the active schools project and the fact that active schools are to be encouraged. I hope that the combination of my party's concept of the Commonwealth legacy schools and the minister's announcement of a national award system can be in some way combined to provide an effective encouragement to schools that are participating.

Mary Fee and Siobhan McMahon introduced a dose of reality into our discussions. We all feel warm about sport and are keen to encourage it, but the reality is that councils are faced with serious financial difficulties that are already being reflected in increased charges. If charges are increased, the poorest in our communities will have the most difficulty accessing facilities. That will be a challenge for the Government as well as councils, and I hope that the Government will be able to meet it.

The Government announced its 100 hubs today. I hope that it will tell us where they are and the basis on which they will be developed. I welcome the hubs that have been developed so far, but we must also ensure that those pitches are properly maintained.

George Adam emphasised the importance of the hubs and the contribution that has already been made in his constituency. Alison Johnstone talked about safe walkways and cycleways; I do not think that anyone else mentioned cycling, which is another important area in which general participation can be improved and increased.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Wind up, please, Dr Simpson.

Dr Simpson: Yes—I have 10 seconds left. The cashback scheme is clearly important, and James Dornan and Humza Yousaf referred to the social integration it fosters through the sports it helps to provide.

I am sorry if I have not been able to mention all the first-time speakers, but I will end where I began, by saying that their contributions were truly excellent and that I hope they will continue to enjoy their time in the Parliament.

16:50

Shona Robison: I am grateful for the way in which members have responded to the debate. Like others, I praise the excellent maiden speeches that we have heard this afternoon from members on all sides of the chamber.

I said in my opening remarks that I would come back to a couple of issues. I turn first to sportscotland and the reforms that are aimed at bolstering the accountability of the Scottish sports governing bodies. All investments made by sportscotland are now linked strategically to

agreed outcomes that reiterate the key priorities for funding. That is important because it links directly to targets for increasing participation, which means a focus on getting children and young people into sport. Also involved are requirements for volunteers and coaching and elite performance, which is important as we look towards raising the bar from Delhi and increasing our medal take. Real progress has been made with regard to how resources were given out previously.

I also mentioned broadcasting in my opening remarks—as have others during the debate. I share the view expressed by Scottish Rugby that we need to increase the level of rugby coverage on terrestrial and satellite television, but I would go further and say that we need to increase the level of broadcasting across a range of sports. I know that other members support that view.

As the First Minister said in his statement to Parliament last week, many of our leading cultural figures have backed the call for a Scottish digital channel. In the previous parliamentary session, as we know, the call for a Scottish digital channel was unanimous across the chamber. I believe that such a channel would provide a unique platform for Scotland to showcase the full range of sporting events that take place throughout the nation, and I urge members to support us in that cause.

I stressed in my opening remarks the important role of schools in instilling in their pupils a lifelong passion for sports and physical activity. Our new school sports award programme will give that due recognition, but we should remember the excellent work that is already under way in promoting school sports. Events such as the Bank of Scotland national school sports week, which I will launch next week, play an important part in maintaining our children's motivation and enthusiasm for sport. More than 175,000 pupils participated in last year's event, and this year's event is destined to be even more popular. Our proposals will complement rather than replace the important role that the private sector plays in promoting sports and physical activity.

I will now consider some of the issues that members have raised; I apologise if I do not manage to get round them all. I will attempt to write to members who have raised specific questions if I do not manage to answer them.

Richard Simpson asked in his opening and closing speeches where the community sports hubs are and where they will be. Well, they are everywhere and they are going to be everywhere. The aim is to have at least 100 community sports hubs in all 32 local authorities. I am happy to provide members with a list—although I will not do so just now—of those hubs that have been approved so far.

Richard Simpson asked about the community ownership and management fund that we have announced today. There will be an initial budget of £500,000 to get that off the ground.

Richard Simpson also asked about the legacy of the Commonwealth games, how successful they will be and whether their success will just be measured by the Scottish health survey. It will not. There will be other measurements, such as what the community sports hubs and active schools deliver in the way of increased participation, and of volunteers and their activities. I will be able to lay all that out in more detail in a debate about the Commonwealth games that is to be held later this year.

Several members mentioned swimming. I remind members that sportscotland has encouraged the swimming governing body with an investment of a significant amount of money during the past few years. We also invested a significant amount of money in the swimming top-up programme, to ensure that every child can swim before they leave primary school. That is the right focus because it targets those who are unable to swim. There is an equalities agenda around that situation and it is important to focus on it.

Richard Simpson raised the issue of Alva pool, which Keith Brown, the constituency member, has already brought to me. I have encouraged sportscotland to engage with the community organisation about the pool. Running a swimming pool is not an easy thing for a community organisation to do but sportscotland will continue to provide the help and advice that it is currently providing.

Humza Yousaf made another great maiden speech; he talked about the self-belief and optimism running through Scotland's veins as we look forward to the major events that are coming our way. I could not agree more.

Patricia Ferguson talked about a national plan for sport, which we already have to some degree, although aspects of it might sit in different places. There is an issue about bringing that plan together as a cross-Government initiative to look at the value of sport. I will consider that.

The school sports awards are exactly what Patricia Ferguson was talking about when she mentioned a sport version of the eco-schools model. The awards reward excellence in sport. They should not end with the Commonwealth games and we want to ensure that they do not.

Tavish Scott's point about leadership is very important. If we could bottle the leadership that is shown in many schools and transport it to all our schools, we would solve a lot of the problems that we face with participation in PE, sport and other

physical activity. We therefore need to look closely at leadership and how we encourage it.

James Dornan, who represents the home of Scottish football, talked about the halcyon days of times gone by. Perhaps we can rekindle that spirit. His point about traditional Scottish games is important and one on which we should perhaps reflect.

George Adam made another great maiden speech and paid tribute to Jim Mitchell. He also talked about St Mirren. I had the great experience of visiting St Mirren. I was impressed with the facilities and with the example of what a community club can achieve. They see themselves very much as a community club.

Drew Smith made another very good maiden speech. I remember the walk in Fife; it was a beautiful day. His point about supporters' involvement in football is one that we take seriously. We also take seriously our partnership with Glasgow City Council for the delivery of the Commonwealth games and I assure members that that partnership will continue.

Clare Adamson pointed to the international children's games and Siobhan McMahon mentioned the volunteer interest that we have. That is something we could capture for the Commonwealth games, which will need 15,000 volunteers. Perhaps we will come back to that.

I correct Mary Fee on an important point. There has not been a reduction in the number of active school co-ordinators. The full-time equivalent hours are as they were but those who were in part-time appointments are now in full-time appointments, which is a point that Mary Fee praised during her speech. I hope that she can be advised on that point.

I thank Margo MacDonald and the cross-party group on sport for their kind comments. I have some sympathy with the suggestion that we need to pull together physical education, physical activity and sport. We should not see them in isolation; rather, we should see them as things that come together as an offer to children. We can consider that.

I will provide more details about the school national awards scheme in due course. The clubgolf effort is providing a lot of new junior members for golf clubs, and we should not underestimate its importance.

Ruth Davidson made a good point. The Scottish Government invested money in outdoor education linked to the curriculum for excellence in 2009-10 and 2010-11. I can provide more details about that.

The debate has been very positive. My door is open. We do not have all the good ideas, although

we have many. I look forward to working with members across the chamber in the next few years.

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business.

I remind members that, in relation to the debate on green energy, if amendment S4M-00169.1, in the name of Sarah Boyack, is agreed to, amendment S4M-00169.2, in the name of Jackson Carlaw, will fall, and that, in relation to the debate on sport, if amendment S4M-00168.1, in the name of Richard Simpson, is agreed to, amendment S4M-00168.2, in the name of Liz Smith, will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-00169.1, in the name of Sarah Boyack, which seeks to amend motion S4M-00169, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on faster and further to secure Scotland's place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Against

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 39, Against 74, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-00169.2, in the name of Jackson Carlaw, which seeks to amend motion S4M-00169, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on faster and further to secure Scotland's place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Against

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 11, Against 102, Abstentions 0.

Amendment disagreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-00169, in the name of Fergus Ewing, on faster and further to secure Scotland's place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)

Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

Abstentions

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 11, Abstentions 39.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament supports the Scottish Government's pledge to move faster and further to secure Scotland's place as the green energy powerhouse of Europe; agrees

that the investment and job opportunities presented by the low-carbon economy represent Scotland's greatest economic opportunity; welcomes the target to generate the equivalent of 100% of Scotland's electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020; supports the Scottish Government's aim to maximise the benefits for communities from renewable energy and to transform the level of opportunity for local ownership; supports demands for the release of Scotland's Fossil Fuel Levy surplus for investment in renewable energy in Scotland; supports the campaign to locate the Green Investment Bank in Edinburgh; supports the Scottish Government's plans for Scottish Water to become a renewable energy generator; calls on the UK Government to accept the case for the Scottish Ministers to have a greater say in the design of the Electricity Market Reform mechanisms and to subsequently outline greater powers over energy policy in the UK Energy Bill for the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament, and supports the devolution of the Crown Estate to the Scottish Parliament to ensure that Scotland's natural assets are managed in Scotland for the benefit of all of Scotland's people.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-00168.1, in the name of Dr Richard Simpson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-00168, in the name of Shona Robison, on the contribution of sport to Scotland, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, Brian (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Crawford, Bruce (Stirling) (SNP)
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)

Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)
 Henry, Hugh (Renfrewshire South) (Lab)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Macintosh, Ken (Eastwood) (Lab)
 Mackay, Derek (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Mackenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Malik, Hanzala (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDonald, Mark (North East Scotland) (SNP)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)
 McLeod, Fiona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Park, John (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)
 Rennie, Willie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (SNP)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)

Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 MacDonald, Margo (Lothian) (Ind)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 102, Against 12, Abstentions 0.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: That means that amendment S4M-00168.2, in the name of Liz Smith, is pre-empted.

The next question is, that motion S4M-00168, in the name of Shona Robison, on the contribution of sport to Scotland, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament recognises the important contribution that sport makes to Scotland's economy, culture and international standing; welcomes the government's commitment to increase participation in sport and physical activity, thereby creating a lasting legacy for the 2014 Commonwealth Games; notes the benefits to the physical and mental wellbeing of the Scottish people through participation in sport; notes that the commitment to deliver two hours of PE has been extended to 2014 and that Active Schools Coordinators can play an important part in delivery of this pledge, and notes the intention to make progress in community access to sports facilities.

Meeting closed at 17:07.

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