



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Official Report

MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 19 September 2012

Session 4

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - www.scottish.parliament.uk or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

Wednesday 19 September 2012

CONTENTS

	Col.
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT QUESTION TIME	11585
JUSTICE AND LAW OFFICERS	11585
Strathclyde Police (Meetings)	11585
Administrative Justice	11586
Drink-driving (Young Drivers)	11586
Cashback for Communities (Funding Priorities)	11588
Crimes of Aggression	11589
Domestic Abuse	11590
Speeding Offences (A9)	11592
Civil Legal Aid (Impact of Welfare Reform)	11592
Police (Attendance at Court)	11593
RURAL AFFAIRS AND THE ENVIRONMENT	11594
Egg Producers (Support)	11594
Fly Infestation (Grangemouth)	11595
Arable Sector (Weather Conditions)	11595
Climate Change	11597
Climate Change Targets	11598
Agricultural Sector (Stakeholder Engagement)	11599
Recycling Targets	11600
Waste Water Treatment Works (Seafield)	11601
RAIL	11603
<i>Motion moved—[Elaine Murray].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Keith Brown].</i>	
Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)	11603
The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown)	11607
Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con)	11612
Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)	11613
Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab)	11615
John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)	11617
Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD)	11619
Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)	11621
Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)	11622
Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)	11624
Alex Johnstone	11626
Keith Brown	11627
Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab)	11630
PATIENT CARE	11634
<i>Motion moved—[Jackie Baillie].</i>	
<i>Amendment moved—[Michael Matheson].</i>	
Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)	11634
The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson)	11637
Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con)	11640
Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP)	11642
Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)	11644
Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)	11645
Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)	11647
Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)	11648
Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con)	11650
The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil)	11652
Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)	11654
BUSINESS MOTION	11658
<i>Motion moved—[Joe FitzPatrick]—and agreed to.</i>	
PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU MOTIONS	11660
<i>Motions moved—[Joe FitzPatrick].</i>	

DECISION TIME	11661
GREAT POLISH MAP OF SCOTLAND	11671
<i>Motion debated—[Christine Grahame].</i>	
Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)	11671
Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab)	11673
Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)	11674
Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP)	11676
Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con)	11677
Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)	11678
Nigel Don (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)	11680
Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP)	11681
The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop)	11682
CORRECTION	11686

Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 19 September 2012

[The Deputy Presiding Officer opened the meeting at 14:00]

Scottish Government Question Time

Justice and Law Officers

Strathclyde Police (Meetings)

1. John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government when the Cabinet Secretary for Justice last met the chief constable of Strathclyde Police and what issues were discussed. (S4O-01286)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): I have regular meetings with all the chief constables to discuss a range of matters. I recently met Chief Constable House at the serious organised crime task force meeting on Monday 10 September 2012.

John Wilson: Have there been any discussions about the possibility of locating the headquarters of the new Scottish police service next to the Scottish crime campus at Gartcosh, which is well serviced by rail and road networks?

Kenny MacAskill: I am aware of the outstanding facility that exists at Gartcosh. I know from the only discussions that I have had that the temporary HQ will be based at Tulliallan. Longer-term decisions about the location of the HQ and of other parts of the police service—whether they are located on one site or are dispersed around the country, as some people seek—will be for the chief constable to take. I can confirm that, in principle, the Scottish crime campus would provide a purpose-built national facility for the police service of Scotland and its partner agencies.

David McLetchie (Lothian) (Con): Did the cabinet secretary read the report on Strathclyde police authority, in which the auditor highlighted the inadequate level of engagement on the part of authority members?

Kenny MacAskill: I met police board conveners earlier today and Philip Braat, the new convener of Strathclyde police authority, was there. Matters do come to light, which is why we carry out reviews and investigations. Mr Braat and the other conveners were very proactive on what they seek to do as we move towards a single service. As with all aspects of policing and, indeed, of administration at local government or national Government level, there is always room for

improvement and there are always lessons to be learned, but Philip Braat and his colleagues are seeking to do what they can to continue to provide an outstanding police service in Strathclyde.

Administrative Justice

2. Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to improve administrative justice. (S4O-01287)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): Work has started on developing a Scottish strategy for administrative justice, and I will keep Parliament updated as that work progresses.

Jim Hume: The cabinet secretary will be well aware of the recent report by the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council on administrative justice in public bodies, which outlined five recommendations. Will he confirm that he will implement the recommendation to establish a housing tribunal as part of the Scottish civil courts review?

Kenny MacAskill: Some of that will be a matter for discussion with my colleague the Minister for Housing and Welfare. We are in regular discussion with a variety of bodies as we move towards devolution of powers over administrative justice. As I and others have said, people in Scotland are more likely to interact with a tribunal than they are with the court system, so the devolution of those powers is significant.

We must work with a variety of agencies, the Lord President and the Scottish Court Service on the issue. I have recently been in communication with Richard Henderson, who is the chair of the Scottish Committee of the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, so I can assure the member that we are on the case. It is a complex area, given that some matters are reserved, some are devolved and others are of a hybrid nature. We think that the principle is good. I am sure that my colleague will be supportive of and sympathetic towards the suggestion that the member makes about housing.

Drink-driving (Young Drivers)

3. Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how it plans to address trends in drink-driving among young drivers. (S4O-01288)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): On 6 September, we launched a consultation on reducing the drink-driving limit in Scotland. We believe that a lower limit will help to make our roads safer for all drivers, including young and newly qualified drivers, who can often be hampered by a lack of driving experience and

an inaccurate assessment of their level of competence.

Those factors can only be made worse by the effects of alcohol. We wanted to explore the possibility of introducing a lower limit for young and newly qualified drivers as part of our drink-driving consultation, but unfortunately the United Kingdom Government rejected our request to devolve the power to do so in the Scotland Act 2012.

We intend to approach the UK Government again to seek further powers on drink-driving, such as the ability to prescribe different drink-driving limits for different types of drivers.

Mark McDonald: Recent meetings that I have had with Grampian Police suggest that there is a trend towards younger drivers being more likely to be found to be under the influence of alcohol when stopped. Does the cabinet secretary agree that as well as the welcome measures that are being taken by the Government, we need to do more to reinforce the social unacceptability and dangers of drink-driving to young people, particularly those who are newly qualified drivers?

Kenny MacAskill: Absolutely—I concur with Mark McDonald on that. Members are all aware that there are far too many road tragedies in Scotland, whether in rural or urban areas. I know that Grampian suffers significantly in that respect. We believe that a legislative change could provide some help, to which we can add the reduction in the drink-driving limit, although we wish to consider going further with regard to a variety of other road traffic matters.

Mr McDonald makes a valid point. This is a cultural issue. Two particular categories of drink-drivers are causing us problems at the moment. One category is a hard core of recidivists who seem to think that the law does not apply to them. We would have preferred to have random stop-and-search powers devolved to us from the UK Government, but we were not given those powers. Recidivists have to realise that the law applies to them, that their drink-driving will be addressed by the police and that they will face the severe consequences that follow.

We also need to try to caution young drivers and to recognise that perhaps some of the effects of advertising on a whole variety of matters—advertising that brought the issue to the attention of people of my generation and led to a cultural change—are perhaps diminishing.

We need to work with all agencies—the fire and rescue service, the police and education authorities—to ensure not only that we enforce the law and that the law is appropriate, but that we change the culture and remind young drivers that

driving under the influence of alcohol is likely to cost them their lives and others their lives.

Cashback for Communities (Funding Priorities)

4. Sandra White (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its priorities are for the next tranche of funding from the cashback for communities programme. (S4O-01289)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): The priority for our highly successful cashback for communities programme is to invest the proceeds of crime back into communities to benefit all Scotland's young people. Since its inception, more than £46 million has been invested throughout Scotland, directly benefiting more than 600,000 young people and generating more than 11,000 young person volunteers, who are putting something back into their communities.

All cashback funding that is received through proceeds of crime has already been invested in or committed to projects, through to 2014-15, for young people and communities that have been hit by crime. That includes almost £27 million on sporting activities and facilities projects; £8.5 million on grant schemes that support small, diversionary youth work projects throughout the country; more than £3.5 million on cultural activities including arts, music and dance; and £2.25 million on a community assets programme, which aims to help support communities to find solutions to their own problems.

Sandra White: It is excellent news that so many young people and communities are benefiting from the initiative. However, will the cabinet secretary confirm that the amounts that have been raised under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 are still capped, with any excess going to the London Treasury—something that I think everyone will find simply unacceptable and outrageous?

Does the cabinet secretary believe that we can achieve cross-party consensus in the Parliament to put pressure on the United Kingdom Government on the issue in order to ensure that any moneys taken from criminals in Scotland benefit the communities blighted by those criminals?

Kenny MacAskill: I hope that we can achieve cross-party consensus on that. It is an issue that has been raised before—it is not just Sandra White who has raised it. I remember Lord George Foulkes—as the First Minister refers to him—raising it, and I agree with him.

Proceeds of crime are currently capped at £30 million, with all other money being remitted to the Treasury. Although we have not breached the cap, the endeavours of the Lord Advocate and his colleagues are taking us towards a situation in which we may do so—that may occur at some

time in the future. It seems appropriate that proceeds of crime that are recovered by the authorities in this country should be returned to our communities. I hope that members across the chamber agree that such matters should be dealt with here, that there should not be any cap at all, and that money should certainly not be going to the Treasury when it could be reinvested to improve and secure our communities.

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): The cabinet secretary knows of my concern that those communities that are most blighted by crime should receive a proportionate amount of money from the cashback scheme. Will he give details today of how the Scottish Government measures that that is happening? If it is not happening, what action will the Government take to ensure that it does?

Kenny MacAskill: We try to provide extra to those areas that require most by putting money back into areas that suffer from the blight of crime.

We accept that there is a rural-urban divide. The cost of allowing kids to participate in, for example, art, dance or football can be greater in rural areas because we require to pay for buses and so on. We take into account a variety of factors. Those areas that suffer disproportionately should be rewarded, and that is what we do. Those areas that have a problem because of rurality and peripherality must also be supported. I am happy to assure the member that we provide for those areas that suffer disproportionately, but I make it clear that there will be no postcode lottery. Every child should be given the opportunity to be all that they can be, irrespective of where they reside.

Crimes of Aggression

5. Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the introduction of legislation to allow for the prosecution of crimes of aggression under international law. (S4O-01290)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): Our position is that action to introduce the crime of aggression into Scots criminal law at this time is likely to fall outwith the competence of the Parliament by virtue of the foreign relations reservation in the Scotland Act 1998.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is the treaty that established the International Criminal Court. Following the agreement that was reached at the Kampala conference in 2010, member states that are party to the treaty, including the United Kingdom, have until 2017 to decide whether to ratify the amendments that were agreed at Kampala on the crime of aggression. We understand that the UK

Government has not yet reached a decision on what it will do.

Until we know whether the UK Government is going to ratify the Rome statute amendment relating to the crime of aggression, action to legislate would fall outwith the competence of the Scottish Parliament.

Jim Eadie: While acknowledging the possible barriers to incorporating the crime of aggression into Scots law, does the cabinet secretary agree that, as a matter of fundamental principle, the Government and the Parliament should be doing everything in their power to support the rule of international criminal law and the bringing to trial of those who have been accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and, indeed, the crime of aggression, regardless of who they are and any official status that they might have attained?

Kenny MacAskill: Absolutely. Anyone who perpetrates heinous offences such as genocide and crimes against humanity should be brought to account. The Government is clear that it supports empowering the International Criminal Court to bring justice to those who are actively involved in the planning, preparation, initiation and execution of illegal wars, whoever they are and whatever position they might hold. I hope that the UK Government will listen to the views offered in the Scottish Parliament and hear the strength of feeling on the issue, and that it will support the ratification of the amendments to the treaty. The Scottish Government will then be in a position to act.

Domestic Abuse

6. Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what it is doing to tackle domestic abuse. (S4O-01291)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): The Scottish Government continues to work with key partners, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland and voluntary organisations, to tackle domestic abuse.

We have allocated funding of £34.5 million over the next three years to tackle violence against women, including domestic abuse. That funding demonstrates our strong commitment to the area at a time of unprecedented financial constraint. It enables us to support a wide variety of projects and organisations, such as Scottish Women's Aid, which focus on supporting victims.

We also support the Caledonian system, which addresses men's offending behaviour.

Maureen Watt: Will the cabinet secretary join me in congratulating Grampian Police's domestic abuse unit on giving protected adult status to people who are victims of domestic abuse and who continue to be at risk, thus giving them direct access to police help? Does he believe that the legal profession should be aware of that status in relation to related criminal and civil cases?

Kenny MacAskill: Absolutely: the legal profession should be aware of that. I am aware of the outstanding work that is being done by Grampian Police's domestic abuse unit, to which I pay tribute. I am reminded of the view of John Carnochan from Strathclyde Police's violence reduction unit that violence against women is a men's issue.

We require to provide for and support those who are victims, but fundamentally we also have to change the culture of violence and the attitude among men who seem to think that women are fair game. Whether it is Grampian Police, John Carnochan at the violence reduction unit, the legal profession, parliamentarians or indeed citizens, we all have a role to play, and those of us who are male have a particular role to ensure that we address the subject. That is not true simply in relation to domestic abuse, as it is also driven home in the campaign that was launched recently to tackle sexual offences and the crime of rape—a campaign that I, the Lord Advocate, Sandy Brindley from Rape Crisis Scotland and the police have participated in.

Lewis Macdonald (North East Scotland) (Lab): I echo the comments about Grampian Police's domestic abuse service. Will the cabinet secretary comment on the fact that, with the 9 per cent increase in the domestic abuse figures across Scotland that was reported last week, the biggest increase was in the area of Northern Constabulary? Does he agree that the domestic abuse court in Glasgow has been very successful and that that approach can play a role in addressing the issue in other parts of Scotland, too?

Kenny MacAskill: Views on that issue have been canvassed in the chamber on many occasions. The domestic abuse court in Glasgow has done outstanding work, and the initiative that has taken place in the city of Edinburgh is also outstanding. However, there are difficulties in some areas. As I have mentioned before, it is simply not credible to set up a domestic abuse court in Lochmaddy, nor indeed in Stornoway, Lerwick or other places.

There is a significant cause for concern in the area of Northern Constabulary. Equally, I am sure that the police and the courts are on top of matters there. We seek to work with the courts, the legal

profession and the judiciary to ensure that we tackle and address that.

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith): I am afraid that I must now ask for brevity in questions and answers.

Speeding Offences (A9)

7. John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the recent 10-day enforcement period on the A9 Inverness-Perth road where 687 motorists were charged with speeding offences, whether it plans to repeat the exercise. (S4O-01292)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): The decision to conduct and co-ordinate such activity is part of operational police planning and is subject to a number of variable factors. No specific plans have been announced to repeat that joint, high-profile enforcement initiative. However, I assure the member that if the chief constable, the divisional commander or whoever decides, in conjunction with the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, for example, to do so, they will have my full support.

John Finnie: In light of the level of fatal road collisions on the A9, is the Scottish Government considering installing average speed detection cameras?

Kenny MacAskill: The outcome of the 25 July meeting of the A9 safety group is that it will consider a series of actions. One of those is for the group to investigate the case for an average speed system between Dunblane and Inverness. The member might wish to communicate with that group.

Civil Legal Aid (Impact of Welfare Reform)

8. Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what undertakings it has received from the United Kingdom Government to meet any increased demand on the Scottish civil legal aid budget as a result of UK welfare reform. (S4O-01293)

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill): The United Kingdom Government has not provided concrete assurances to cover any monetary impact as a result of increased demand on the civil legal aid budget through welfare reform. We continue to seek clarity on the issue, most recently through the joint ministerial committee and regular discussions with Department for Work and Pensions ministers.

Annabelle Ewing: It is disappointing but not surprising to hear that the UK Government plans to do absolutely nothing to meet any potential increased demand on the civil legal aid budget as a result of its dismantling of the welfare system.

Surely the cabinet secretary must recognise that the only way in which to end the on-going dilemma of reserved policies impacting on what are clearly devolved matters—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Will you put a question quickly, please?

Annabelle Ewing: Surely the only way to end the dilemma will be to vote yes in the 2014 referendum on independence.

Kenny MacAskill: Well, yes. We have problems here and it would be much better if we were able to provide the solutions.

Police (Attendance at Court)

9. Bill Kidd (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that court attendance by police officers does not affect front-line policing in their area. (S4O-01294)

The Lord Advocate (Frank Mulholland): The evidence that police officers give in court is often necessary to secure criminal convictions, and police officers are also required to execute orders of the court and apprehend those who fail to appear. The Crown will always take measures to avoid the unnecessary attendance of witnesses at court, including by agreeing evidence where possible and by scheduling cases to cause the least possible inconvenience and disruption to police officers. Where police witnesses are cited, the Procurator Fiscal Service has put in place police witness scheduler and standby arrangements to allow officers to carry out their duties while waiting to be called to give evidence.

Bill Kidd: Does the Lord Advocate agree that it would be efficient to allow officers to continue in their own patrol areas in Glasgow until around an hour before the time that they are due in court, given that nowhere in Glasgow is more than an hour from the city courts?

The Lord Advocate: I agree in principle. The results of the standby arrangements at Glasgow sheriff court since March of this year show that

“Over 2,000 police officers have been placed on standby arrangements which allows those police officers on such arrangements to carry out other police duties whilst they are waiting to give evidence in court.”

Police officers have a duty to give evidence in court as and when required. We need flexible arrangements to ensure both that there is not a huge imposition on the policing of Glasgow and that police officers are available to give evidence at the time required.

Rural Affairs and the Environment

Egg Producers (Support)

1. Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what support it is giving to egg producers. (S4O-01296)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): The Scottish Government has provided support to egg producers through the Scotland rural development programme, including through the food processing, marketing and co-operation grants scheme. The latest rounds, announced on Sunday 16 September 2012, include a grant for almost half a million pounds to egg producers A J Duncan in Turriff, for building upgrades and the purchase of grading, packing and other equipment.

Joan McAlpine: I thank the cabinet secretary for his reply. He will be aware that eggs produced in Scotland are produced to higher welfare standards than those in other parts of the United Kingdom and that we have our own ISO country identifier on each egg. What action can the Scottish Government take to help promote this fact in supermarkets?

Richard Lochhead: Joan McAlpine raises a good point. It is certainly the case that Scotland meets some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world. That is something that we should perhaps shout about more. The pig industry has done so with some success, in conjunction with the RSPCA, in recent times. A number of organisations are speaking about making the most of the opportunities. I will happily give the matter some more thought and update the member.

Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab): I refer to the success of the UK-wide SOS dairy campaign. I note the cabinet secretary attended that important meeting at Lanark.

What will he do to work alongside colleagues in the UK Government and other devolved Administrations and appropriate organisations to see that a fair price is paid to free-range egg producers?

Richard Lochhead: I will do whatever it takes to ensure that our primary producers in Scotland receive a fair price. Hopefully, the Scottish Government demonstrated its commitment during the recent dairy crisis, when our dairy farmers, quite rightly, were shouting about the fact that they were getting a very raw deal on their share of every pound spent on milk in the supermarkets and elsewhere. If that applies to other products, I would be right behind any campaign to ensure that there is fair trade for Scottish producers. If there is

any evidence that that is not the case at the moment, I will want to hear about it.

Fly Infestation (Grangemouth)

2. Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP):

To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Falkirk Council and other agencies regarding the fly infestation at Abbotsinch, Grangemouth. (S4O-01297)

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): Regulation of waste facilities such as the Abbotsinch recycling centre is a matter for the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. SEPA and the Scottish Government have had contact with Grangemouth community council about nuisance caused by flies believed to be coming from the recycling centre. SEPA has taken enforcement action to require the operator to improve the controls at the site. I understand that the site is now operating in compliance with its licence and that the number of flies is expected to reduce.

Clare Adamson: I thank the minister for that very detailed response. There is no doubt that this matter is of some concern to the local residents whose enjoyment of their houses and gardens has been blighted by the infestation. I commend the work of my colleague, Angus MacDonald, the constituency MSP, who has established a problem-solving partnership with local residents and stakeholders. Will the minister undertake to keep the partnership fully informed of developments regarding this infestation?

Paul Wheelhouse: I commend both Angus MacDonald and SEPA for their proactive engagement with local residents and other stakeholders on this issue and other similar issues in the local area. I whole-heartedly encourage that productive engagement to continue in pursuit of an outcome that is satisfactory to all. I look forward to hearing further outcomes of such partnership working in due course.

Arable Sector (Weather Conditions)

3. Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the impact on the arable sector of recent weather conditions. (S4O-01298)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): This year's weather conditions have been challenging for some Scottish farmers in the arable sector due to localised flooding resulting in some crop losses. Overall, yields are lower in many cases, with reports suggesting a reduction of 10 to 20 per cent. However, cereal prices are up by around 20 per cent on last year.

We will have a clearer picture of the financial and market effects on this year's crops following our annual crop report meeting with key stakeholders, which will take place on 8 October. We will publish yield estimates shortly thereafter.

Iain Gray: The cabinet secretary agreed today to visit East Lothian Produce Ltd in my constituency, which is Scotland's main producer of cabbage and a significant supplier of potatoes. His willingness to come and see what is happening is welcome and does him credit, but when he goes there, he will find that the company faces losses of as much as 40 per cent in its key crops because of the exceptional rainfall. Arable farmers who suffer those difficult circumstances really need to know whether he will be able to offer them any support or succour.

Richard Lochhead: I thank Iain Gray for his supplementary question and the constructive way in which he presented it. I also thank him for bringing to my attention the circumstances that face East Lothian Produce. I am sorry to hear about those circumstances, which is why I am keen to meet the company first hand to hear about its experiences. I hope that the member is able to make it along to that meeting.

Governments do not provide, and have never provided, financial support to industries in Scotland for the impact of severe weather conditions. However, if there are other ways in which we could help the industry, we are keen to hear about them. We will do all that we can. We acknowledge the challenging circumstances that face many businesses. Of course, potato growers in Scotland—as well as vegetable growers such as East Lothian Produce—face particular difficulties.

I look forward to the meeting and to hearing any constructive ideas about how the Government might be able to help.

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Can ministers give any support to livestock producers, including pig producers, who face large increases in the cost of feedstuffs, partly as a result of the circumstances about which we have heard?

Richard Lochhead: We are doing our utmost to promote the consumption of Scottish food produce in Scotland and beyond because, if more and more people enjoyed fantastic Scottish pork and other products, that would be the best way in which to help producers. I know that all members of the Parliament support that approach, particularly given that, at the weekend, Scottish food and drink fortnight—when we made a particular effort to promote Scottish food and drink—drew to an end.

I am in regular contact with pig producers in Scotland about a range of issues. We are discussing some initiatives that may be of assistance in future. However, it is too early to determine which will be the best ones in light of rising food prices, which are a global issue—not particularly a Scottish one—that affects producers everywhere.

Climate Change

4. Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government how it will use the findings of the *Report on Proposals and Policies* to implement its climate change policy. (S4O-01299)

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): In March 2011, the Scottish Government published “Low Carbon Scotland: Meeting the Emissions Reductions Targets 2010–2022: The Report on Proposals and Policies”, the statutory report on proposals and policies—RPP—which set the strategic direction to take us to our 42 per cent emissions reduction target for 2020.

Subsequently, in October 2011, a second batch of annual targets was set for 2023 to 2027. We are currently working on a second RPP, which will consider how those targets can be achieved. That report will also assess the progress that has been made towards implementing the measures that were contained in the first RPP. Ministers may make adjustments to those measures if they consider it appropriate to do so.

Jenny Marra: Has the Scottish Government considered the recommendation by the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee to ensure that the forthcoming RPP is aligned with the Scottish budget?

Paul Wheelhouse: We are certainly working on the revised RPP. I am aware that there are issues with the timing of the report, but we aim to lay it before the end of the year. It is a complex, wide-ranging project and work continues to ensure that the final report is robust enough to remain relevant for at least the next five years, by which time we will need to introduce RPP3.

If Jenny Marra wishes to raise any specific issues with me, I would be more than happy to meet her.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): The RPP will clearly be of any use only if it is fully funded in the Scottish Government's budgets. Will the minister ensure that parliamentary committees have adequate time to consider the two documents together, as he recommended last year when he signed off the Finance Committee's recommendations on that year's budget?

Paul Wheelhouse: As the member is aware, I was a member of the Finance Committee and I recognise the recommendations to which he refers. We have to wait for the revised budget from John Swinney, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth. I hope that once the revised budget is published, we can engage in more dialogue on the issues that the member raises.

Climate Change Targets

5. Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab):

To ask the Scottish Government, in light of its not meeting its first climate change target, how it plans to ensure that subsequent targets are achieved. (S4O-01300)

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): As I said in response to his colleague, Jenny Marra, and as the member will be aware, the Government is almost two thirds of the way—it is certainly over halfway—towards meeting its initial target of a 42 per cent reduction. Like all members, I am disappointed with the performance on the 2010 emissions reduction target. As Stewart Stevenson explained when the data was published in July, the extreme cold weather at the start and end of 2010 was a significant factor, as it resulted in an additional 2.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide being emitted by residential heating. *[Paul Wheelhouse has corrected this contribution. See end of report.]*

The Scottish Government remains fully committed to delivering the emissions cuts needed to meet our ambitious and world-leading climate change targets. Last year's spending review contained details of more than £650 million of climate change spending, and we have been able to announce a further £34 million of additional funding this year.

As I said to Patrick Harvie, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth's revised budget for this year will seek to ensure that there is additional money for climate change purposes whenever there are opportunities to do so. However, it is not just about central Government money. Action throughout the wider public sector, investment by the private sector and steps taken by households and individuals will all be important in meeting our emissions targets.

Graeme Pearson: Given the comment about cold weather conditions in 2010 that his predecessor, Stewart Stevenson, made, will the minister put wishes for better weather in the coming winters alongside his warm words and commitment?

Paul Wheelhouse: The indication for 2011 from United Kingdom data, which have yet to feed out, is that there has been a 25 per cent reduction in household production of CO₂ through gas consumption. It is important for Opposition members to recognise that if we were to have a more favourable budget from the Westminster Government, we could achieve far more in addressing our carbon reduction targets.

Agricultural Sector (Stakeholder Engagement)

6. John Park (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what recent engagement it has had with key organisations in the agricultural sector. (S4O-01301)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): The Scottish Government has an intensive and on-going engagement programme with key agricultural organisations across a wide range of policy areas.

John Park: I ask the cabinet secretary about the engagement that he has had with organisations on employment in the agriculture sector. I know that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has done a bit of work on the issue and that the Scottish Government has been looking at certain work around the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board. In addition, the citizens advice bureau in Perth has raised concerns with me about some employment issues that have come up over the summer. Is the issue on the cabinet secretary's radar? What steps has the Scottish Government taken to address the issues?

Richard Lochhead: I assure the member that the issue is certainly on the Government's radar. Indeed, only last week the Scottish Government hosted a new entrants summit for the agriculture sector, at which a range of ideas came forward from the—thankfully—quite young new entrants who were there and want to build a career in agriculture. I will certainly take some of those initiatives forward.

Given that he has raised the subject, I tell the member and the chamber that Angela Constance, the Minister for Youth Employment, and I hope to host a rural skills summit soon, because we recognise that there is a demand among many in rural sectors to attract the next generation into them. We want to discuss the skills gaps so that we can encourage more young people, more apprentices and so on to, I hope, build a career in our rural sectors.

Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): What recent engagement has the Scottish Government had with key organisations in the crofting sector?

Richard Lochhead: We have had a range of engagement and have discussed a range of issues.

Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD): In his discussions, has the cabinet secretary been aware of the growing concern about the manner in which the eligible land penalties are being applied to crofters and farmers? Is he aware that 23 more crofters and farmers in Shetland will be inspected this year and that 1,000 more units across Scotland will be a part of his department's work in that area? Does he recognise that the European Union has not changed the underlying basis for the regime but that, between 2008 and 2012, his department changed how inspections are done?

Will the cabinet secretary undertake to look into that regime and see whether there is any way whatever in which it could be made fairer? Most crofters and farmers think that the current mechanisms by which they are being penalised are grotesquely unfair.

Richard Lochhead: The member raises a concern for many farmers and crofters. He will be aware of the disallowance by the European Union, which meant that we recently had to pay tens of millions of pounds. The auditors wanted more stringent application of the regulations in Scotland, to ensure that money from the public purse is spent correctly. It is therefore unfair simply to lay the responsibility at Scottish officials' door. We are doing the work because it is in the wider interest of Scotland and of farmers to ensure that future payments are available.

I agree with the sentiment of what the member says in that we are disappointed that the European Commission is not saying more in the current common agricultural policy negotiations about changing the cross-compliance regime and the penalties regime in particular, which is a sledgehammer to crack a nut in many cases. We are still making the case to the Commission for making that regime more proportionate and reasonable.

Recycling Targets

7. Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what support it gives to local authorities to ensure that recycling targets are met. (S4O-01302)

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead): Continuing to help local authorities to meet recycling targets is a priority for me and for zero waste Scotland. That is why we announced in the previous budget that we would invest almost £80 million over the next three years in an effort to reduce waste and recycle more.

This year, zero waste Scotland is making £5 million available to help local authorities to roll out household food waste collections. Funding is also available to help councils to roll out recycling services to tenements and for the recycling on the go initiative, communication and engagement work, service improvements and staff training.

Gil Paterson: A number of residents of high-rise flats in my constituency have particular problems with the provision of recycling bins at home. Will the Government assist local authorities in sharing ideas about their best practice on providing recycling bins, so that the residents of high-rise flats can manage the number of bins that are required?

Richard Lochhead: The member raises the important issue that different local authorities in different parts of Scotland face different challenges in rolling out kerbside recycling. As Gil Paterson was right to point out, tenements face particular challenges. In relation to that, Glasgow City Council and other local authorities have tried new and innovative methods in recent years.

We will shortly publish kerbside best practice guidance that will provide councils with detailed information and examples of best practice from across the country on the design, implementation and delivery of waste services, including services to flats and tenements. We recognise that we must roll out those important services across Scotland.

Waste Water Treatment Works (Seafield)

8. Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what action it and its agencies will take to address the environmental issues at the Seafield waste water treatment works. (S4O-01303)

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse): In line with the relevant code of practice, it is for regulators to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to minimise the emission of malodour from Seafield waste water treatment works. I recognise the member's long interest in the issue. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency is the regulator for the waste-handling parts of the site and the City of Edinburgh Council is the regulator for all the other parts. Scottish Water is committed to working closely with both regulators.

Malcolm Chisholm: Is the minister aware that, despite some investment by Scottish Water in Seafield, there are still frequent odour emissions that are completely unacceptable to the local community? Is he further aware that the City of Edinburgh Council's transport, infrastructure and environment committee resolved at its meeting last week to make representations to Scottish Water about investment and action to deal with the

continuing problems? Will he raise the matter with Scottish Water, as I will at a meeting this Friday?

Paul Wheelhouse: In the 2006 to 2010 regulatory period, we invested £20 million to tackle malodour at Seafield. Any further investment would need to be proposed by the relevant regulators, based clearly on evidence and be a proportionate response to the problem that has been identified. That is not to diminish the issue that the member raises, which I recognise is a serious problem and has been so for some 10 years.

I would be more than happy to meet the member following his meeting, which he mentioned, with Mr MacAskill and Scottish Water.

Rail

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-04165, in the name of Elaine Murray, on rail.

14:40

Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab): The Scottish Government often repeats its assertion that it must hold the independence referendum in the second half of this parliamentary session because it made a commitment in that regard to the Scottish people before the election.

I am therefore interested in what the Scottish National Party said in its manifesto—the manifesto on which it was so substantially elected in May last year—about the Edinburgh to Glasgow improvement programme:

“And through Network Rail’s Regulated Asset Base (RAB) we will also take forward the important Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement programme which will see the electrification of much of the central Scotland rail network and more-frequent and faster journeys between Edinburgh and Glasgow, including services of just over half an hour.”

EGIP was a £1 billion investment in electrifying 200 miles of track. It was an infrastructure programme of major economic significance. Now its budget has been slashed by more than a third and only half the track that was planned for electrification will be electrified between 2014 and 2019.

On 21 June the Minister for Transport and Veterans made a statement to Parliament on the rail 2014 franchise, in which he announced investment of £5 billion in rail infrastructure and said:

“We will announce further progress on EGIP shortly.”—
[*Official Report*, 21 June 2012; c 10419.]

Surely a significant change to a major infrastructure project should have been announced to Parliament. It was not. Instead, the announcement was made on 4 July, six days into the summer recess, via a press release from Transport Scotland entitled, “Full steam ahead for Rail Project”, which boasted of cutting 10 minutes off the journey time between Edinburgh and Glasgow but made no mention of the parts of the project that were being delayed without time limit.

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):

The member mentioned steam. I am just old enough to remember steam on the railways. I also remember when the low level at Glasgow Queen Street station was electrified. Now we have the electrification of the high level, from Queen Street station to Edinburgh. Is not that fantastic news?

Elaine Murray: It is not quite the fantastic news that we were promised in the SNP manifesto, is it?

In the press release from Transport Scotland, the minister was quoted as saying:

“I am very excited to be announcing the details of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme, which will take train journeys on Scotland’s busiest commuter route into the next generation.”

He was not so excited that he felt the need to share the details with the Scottish Parliament, perhaps because the programme was a shadow of its former self.

For some time after the announcement, Transport Scotland’s website displayed the original scheme. The website has now been amended and mentions only Cumbernauld, Springburn, Haymarket, Edinburgh gateway, and route clearance. It includes the helpful information that the Cumbernauld electrification is “Coming Soon”—that sounds like some of our trains—despite the minister’s assurances to Patricia Ferguson that the electrification of the Cumbernauld line will be completed in time for the Commonwealth games.

Transform Scotland has analysed what has been left out. In addition to the electrification of the Stirling-Dunblane-Alloa line, more than a dozen elements of the original scheme are missing. Plans for six electric trains per hour between Edinburgh and Glasgow have been downgraded to four diesel trains, apparently as a result of a review by engineering consultants Jacobs Consulting, which so far is unavailable for public scrutiny.

The manifesto commitment was to more frequent and faster services between Edinburgh and Glasgow, including journeys of just half an hour. The current service offers four trains an hour and journey times of between 50 and 55 minutes. Ten minutes off the fastest of those journeys is still 33 per cent more than half an hour. Therefore, there are two commitments not delivered.

The Minister for Transport and Veterans and Transport Scotland have both stated that nothing has been cut from EGIP, but that elements are being phased in. If that is the case, why is there reluctance in answering parliamentary questions from me and my colleague Margaret McCulloch to indicate when those parts of the programme might be implemented?

It is somewhat worrying that the fate of the projects that are not included in phase 1 of EGIP now seems to be linked to the development of high-speed rail. On 21 June, Mr Brown said:

“Organisations across Scotland have come together to make the case for high-speed rail. We will continue to drive forward work on that while ensuring that EGIP and the other network improvements are compatible with our approach.”

He also said:

"On EGIP, it is right for us to take into account the possible implications of high-speed rail. We have to ensure that we have a credible and worked-out proposal to make to the UK Government"

and that he would

"take some time and come back with a fuller explanation of what we are doing with EGIP."—[*Official Report*, 21 June 2012; c 10419, 10426.]

"Some time" turned out to be 13 days, and the fuller explanation of what the Government was doing was that it was cutting EGIP.

The minister also advised my colleague Mark Griffin in an answer to a written question that

"Further elements of EGIP including the Croy turnback, the electrification of Stirling, Dunblane and Alloa services ... can be delivered in future phases."

The phrase that was used was "can be", not "will be". He also said:

"The timing and specification of future phases will be dependent on other considerations including High Speed Rail".—[*Official Report, Written Answers*, 20 August 2012; S4W-08927.]

The United Kingdom Government's plan for high-speed rail is for the connection to the west midlands to be opened by 2026 and the lines to Manchester and Leeds to be opened by 2032-33. That is hardly an optimistic timetable for the rest of EGIP if it is connected to high-speed rail. Incidentally, if Scotland became an independent country, I do not think that the rest of the UK would be particularly interested in investing up to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): Will the member give way? [*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Jamie Hepburn: My constituents in Cumbernauld are absolutely delighted to see that the line to their town will be electrified.

The member suggests that it is impossible for rail connections between sovereign states to exist. Why then do we see such rail connections across Europe?

Elaine Murray: The rails will still continue to exist, but why would the UK Government invest in a rail service that benefits another country?

According to a written answer that was supplied to me, senior officers in both Network Rail and ScotRail were aware that Transport Scotland was undertaking a review, but there seems to have been no consultation with other partners, such as Stirling Council, which had already invested significantly in planning for the necessary infrastructure. Officers from Stirling Council had met Network Rail only the day before the announcement of the reduced programme. It is clear that neither organisation was advised that it

was wasting its time. If the chief executive of Network Rail, Dave Higgins, had been, as was said, "aware" of Transport Scotland's review and had been involved in reviewing its findings, he did not seem to have passed that information on to others in the organisation.

The Jacobs report has not yet been published, but I have been informed that it will be "published in due course". Damien Henderson, a journalist for *The Herald*, was told in answer to a freedom of information request that the report is still in draft form. An important decision was apparently made on the basis of a draft report that cannot yet be published.

Questions that I have asked about how the savings were calculated have not been answered on the basis that the information is commercially sensitive. Therefore, we cannot even know why cutting the programme in half has saved only one third of the budget. I wonder whether the revised programme has been subject to a Scottish transport appraisal guidance—STAG—appraisal.

The Scottish Government will doubtless blame Westminster cuts, but the financing of EGIP was to have been via a 30-year low-interest-rate loan from Network Rail against its asset base. If the schemes that are not included in the phase in question are to go ahead later, I presume that another loan will have to be negotiated at a higher price.

Iain McMillan of the Confederation of British Industry stated to *Rail* magazine that, as the original project would have improved journey times and environmental performance, he would have expected the CBI to be consulted if major changes were planned, but it was not. Liz Cameron of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce expressed her concern that EGIP's potential to be transformational may fail to be realised, and the SCC has added its voice to those of Transform Scotland and the regional transport partnerships calling for a rethink.

The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown): The member seems to have neglected two particular statements that have been made. The leader of Glasgow City Council said:

"this announcement is good news for the city."

The transport convener of the City of Edinburgh Council said:

"We welcome this investment in public transport which will greatly improve the journey from Glasgow to Edinburgh".

The member did not mention those statements.

Elaine Murray: I checked with my council colleagues, who provided statements, but nobody had shown them the entire press release or

explained to them that half of the project was being cut.

Some questions need to be answered. Transport Scotland published the Scottish ministers' high-level output specification on 21 June. At that time, ministers had a statement of funds available. Did they know that EGIP was going to be cut and, if so, why was no statement made to Parliament in advance of recess? What is the Government's current timescale for the Stirling-Alloa-Dunblane electrification programme and the extension northwards to Perth and Aberdeenshire? Is there any connection between the Office of Rail Regulation turning down a request for a delay in loan repayment and the cuts to the EGIP programme? Did the Government overpromise on the EGIP programme? Perhaps the minister will enlighten us in his contribution to this debate.

I move,

That the Parliament notes the announcement on 4 July 2012 by the Minister for Transport and Veterans of a revised Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP); believes that this announcement should have been made first to the Parliament rather than via a press release during the summer recess; believes that this reflects the lack of consultation and information available on the revised EGIP; understands that, among the changes, vital elements have been lost, including the cancellation or reduction of the planned electrification of various sections of railway lines, which would have improved journey times and lessened the environmental impact, as part of an overall cut of £350 million; calls on the Scottish Government to confirm who took the final decision to reduce EGIP's budget and explain the rationale behind the changes to the original plans; recognises the concerns that have been expressed by trade unions and the business community regarding the cuts to EGIP and believes that this decision runs counter to the Scottish Government's stated aim of investing in infrastructure to stimulate the economy and to the SNP's 2011 manifesto commitment on EGIP, and expresses concern that, as a result of these changes, businesses, passengers and areas will lose out.

14:51

The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown): Since the funding of rail was devolved to the Scottish ministers in 2006, there has been major investment in the rail network and its services. The Government has presided over the opening of two new lines, seven new stations and the procurement of 38 new trains.

New powers have also brought new investment, and people across Scotland have seen the benefit, with new rail services providing access to jobs, education and leisure. Performance has also increased to record levels. The past four weeks have seen the best levels of punctuality and reliability on the Scottish network since 2005. Journey times are improving across the network and ScotRail passenger satisfaction rates are consistently well above the average in Great

Britain, although it would be the first to say that more is to be done.

Good performance and record investment since 2007 have also stimulated a resurgence in rail travel in Scotland over the past few years. Indeed, passenger numbers have increased by 30 per cent since the start of the ScotRail franchise. That is good news for the economy, the environment and the travelling public. However, sustained improvement and growth need sustained investment in the future. As I announced in June in the chamber, we will be investing £5 billion in rail between 2014 and 2019 to support the franchise passenger services and to enable Network Rail to operate, maintain and enhance the network.

Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab): Will the minister take an intervention?

Keith Brown: No, not just now.

In that statement to the chamber, I committed to continuing the delivery of EGIP and ensuring that it and other network improvements are compatible with our approach to high-speed rail, and I said that further progress on EGIP would be announced shortly. In fact, EGIP has already delivered key infrastructure improvements at Haymarket tunnel and new services on the Edinburgh to Glasgow via Shotts line.

Sarah Boyack (Lothian) (Lab): Will the member give way on that point?

Keith Brown: Earlier this year, Network Rail began advanced route-clearance works and the redevelopment of Haymarket station in readiness for increased passenger numbers and full-route electrification.

Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab): Will the minister take an intervention, or will he just keep talking?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Keith Brown: In December 2012, new Edinburgh to Glasgow via Carstairs services will be introduced. Delivered a year earlier than expected, the new services respond to local demand for new links between Edinburgh and Glasgow from Carstairs and Carlisle, and they will deliver a step change in passenger capacity on that important route between our two major cities, with improved connectivity opportunities to the south and west of Glasgow.

On 4 July, I announced that we will electrify the core Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk line, deliver the new Edinburgh gateway station with connection to Fife line services, and deliver the electrification of the Cumbernauld lines in time for the Commonwealth games. That represents a £650 million package of investment in Scotland's railway infrastructure, rolling stock and service provision, which will enable hundreds of new jobs

to be created and provide a major boost to the wealth of Scotland and to its long-term economic sustainability.

Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab): Will the member give way?

Keith Brown: I will give way to Patricia Ferguson, but perhaps she could say where the £350 million that the Labour Party says that it intends to reinstate would come from.

Patricia Ferguson: The minister knows of my long-standing interest in this project. I recently had occasion to write to Network Rail about its consultation process on EGIP. It promised me that it would have consultation events in my constituency in the summer, and then it promised that it would have them in the autumn. However, neither of those things has happened.

The letter that I have received from Network Rail notes the announcements by the minister and says:

"in partnership with Transport Scotland, Network Rail is working through the detail of what this will mean to the scope of works and associated timescales that we had previously consulted on.

This work is now underway and will take a number of months to conclude."

Can the minister tell us what the up-to-date timescale for that work is?

Keith Brown: There was no answer to the question about where the £350 million would come from. I note the member's previous intervention in relation to this—[*Interruption.*]

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Keith Brown: Her previous contribution was to propagate scare stories about Glasgow station closures that never happened.

On the point about the EGIP timetable—

Drew Smith: Will the minister take an intervention on that point?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The minister has made it clear that he is not taking an intervention at the moment.

Keith Brown: On the point that I have just mentioned, we have already started progress towards EGIP and will continue that progress according to the previous timetable of trying to achieve all the improvements by 2016.

Patricia Ferguson: Will the minister take an intervention?

Keith Brown: No. I have taken one from the member already.

The Jacobs review identified a new opportunity to deliver increased capacity by lengthening

platforms as part of the Queen Street station redevelopment. Transport Scotland is now working in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Network Rail and Buchanan Partnership to make that a reality. As well as delivering faster, better electrified services for passengers, that opportunity will also bring considerable savings, which we need to identify, and will meet passenger demand well into the next decade.

We are determined to ensure that the rail programme is affordable and that we continue to drive the best value out of every pound that we invest. We must, therefore, take advantage of every opportunity to maximise the investment in any way that we can. I remind Parliament that, in my June statement, which has been mentioned, I committed the Government to sustained increases in rail investment until the end of the decade. Any savings that are made will, of course, increase opportunities for investment elsewhere in the rail network.

The Jacobs report, on which these developments are based, was published today and copies are available in the Scottish Parliament information centre. [*Interruption.*] I am sure that Labour members will welcome that when they speak subsequently. I hope that the report will put to rest any concerns or speculation over the future of EGIP.

Neil Findlay: In the past few days, I have been contacted by a large number of constituents from Winchburgh who are concerned that the new project there, which is to create several hundred jobs, will be scuppered because the railway station is no longer to be opened. Can the minister tell me when Winchburgh station will open?

Keith Brown: I am not sure whether the member is saying that Winchburgh railway station is not going to open or whether he is asking when it will open. If he talked to his local council—in particular, the deputy leader of the council, with whom I am in correspondence—

Neil Findlay: When will it open?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Order.

Keith Brown: Perhaps if he did so, he would get a better idea of the fact that that proposal will come forward from the council. We have said to it consistently—

Neil Findlay: When will it open?

Keith Brown: Well, it depends on when the proposal comes forward from the council. Perhaps the member should talk to his Labour colleagues on the council.

The timing and specification of future activities will be dependent on other considerations, including high-speed rail. It is only natural that we

will take into account possible developments for high-speed rail—it would be foolish of us not to do that. That is important to the EGIP programme and it also relates to wider capacity and affordability issues.

The Government is also committed to a continuing programme of electrification of the Scottish rail network following EGIP. Mention has been made of the Stirling, Dunblane and Alloa services.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): Will the minister take an intervention?

Keith Brown: No, I must make some progress and I do not have much time left. I am in my last minute.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The minister has 30 seconds left.

Keith Brown: I have mentioned that we will progress 100km of electrification every year for the next five years over and above that to which we have committed within EGIP. My officials are currently exploring the delivery of options including the electrification of the Dunblane and Alloa services.

Our record of investment stands comparison with anybody's. The Transform Scotland report, which was published this morning, says that progress is now being made in the United Kingdom at a greater rate than in Scotland. However, the figures show that we are investing £624 per head as compared with the UK, which is currently investing £324 per head. We also have £5 billion of investment planned over the next five years, including the Borders rail project, the Airdrie to Bathgate project and the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine project, which I was proud to initiate as the leader of the council and which, in its first year, attracted 400,000 new passengers. That is a record of which to be proud.

I move amendment S4M-04165.2, to leave out from "notes" to end and insert:

"welcomes the substantial increase in the number of people using rail; recognises that punctuality and reliability are currently at record levels; notes the record investment in rail since 2007, including new lines between Airdrie and Bathgate and Stirling and Kincardine; also welcomes the announcements of 21 June and 4 July 2012 by the Minister for Transport and Veterans of a £5 billion programme of future investment in rail, including the new Borders Railway, and details of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP); further recognises that EGIP will bring faster journeys, new trains, enhanced capacity, a new station at Edinburgh Gateway, improvements to Edinburgh Haymarket station and previously unplanned improvements to Glasgow Queen Street; further welcomes the commitment to future electrification of the network through EGIP and the High Level Output Specification, and believes that this announcement is fully consistent with the Scottish Government's stated aim of investing in infrastructure to

stimulate the economy and that, as a result, businesses, passengers and areas will benefit."

14:58

Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):

I thank the Labour Party for bringing this business to the chamber. When the Labour Party lodges a motion for debate, it is usually my job to find an amendment that will scupper it completely, but on this occasion its thinking is so close to mine that I can think of no option other than to support the motion. That judgment is based on the fact that there is so much information in the public domain that demonstrates the case for the motion that it is hard to think any other way.

After I had read the motion, the first thing that I did was look to see what has been published in the press over the past few years. I found an article on the website, *The Glaswegian*, which was published on 16 June 2011 and has the clear headline: "Train services between Glasgow & Edinburgh in line for billion pound transformation". The article states:

"A billion pound investment plan which could double the number of services between Glasgow and Edinburgh has been unveiled."

As there was no retraction by the minister, Keith Brown, I presume that the information must have been accurate.

Just over a year later, further announcements in the press appear to indicate that the Government has reconsidered the scale of its ambition. The minister's interview on the radio this morning was a good deal more enlightening than much of what has been said in recent press coverage. Keith Brown tells us consistently that we spend much more on rail services in Scotland than is spent in the rest of the UK. He told us that the Government plans to invest £632 per capita in Scotland, compared to £326 per capita in the rest of the UK. I congratulate him on that ambition, but it would be a good deal more consistent if he did not go on—as he did in that interview and as he has done at any other opportunity—to complain about the fact that the UK Government is causing him to scale back his plans.

The sad truth about the Government's modus operandi is that, consistently, on a series of issues, it raises expectations, announces projects and bathes in the glory, then slashes the budget, dashes the hopes and blames the Tories. That scheme has now been repeated so often that surely the people of Scotland are beginning to see through it. The promises that were made for the Edinburgh to Glasgow railway genuinely raised expectations and hopes that the kind of economic development that is associated with rail projects might be extended across a much greater area and that Scotland's economy as a whole would

benefit. Now, we have discovered that that is simply not the case.

In the brief time allowed to me, I will mention a number of points that have been raised so far so that we might find answers later in the debate.

The reference to high-speed rail as a key part of the investment strategy has always been a red herring. The timescales that are associated with delivering high-speed rail, should it progress, have always been vastly different from the timescales for the Scottish rail project. As a result, I will not believe anyone who suggests that one is dependent on the other.

Keith Brown: Will the member give way?

Alex Johnstone: The minister will get the chance to speak again later, I am sure.

The issue that has been raised regarding high-speed rail, which is rather obvious to me and to Labour members, is that, should Scotland become independent in the interim, the possibility of high-speed rail reaching Scotland will be vastly diminished. That is based on the simple assumption that if an independent English Government decided to bring high-speed rail to its northern cities of Manchester or Leeds, it would be the job of an independent Scottish Government to consider how it might connect to that rail network. As part of the United Kingdom, we have an opportunity to work as a single national unit and to make decisions that are based on what is best for the whole country. Never has there been a better example of why infrastructure investment is better handled on a UK-wide basis than it could ever be if we were two separate countries.

The Government and, in particular, the transport minister have been playing games on the issue. They have raised expectations in the hope that they might capitalise on the disappointment. I support the Labour Party motion and, although my reasons might be slightly different from theirs, my heart will be with the Labour members in the vote.

15:04

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): I welcome today's debate and thank the Labour Party at least for introducing the subject, although I must say that I do not recognise the picture that Labour members have painted.

I will come back to that in a second, but first I must say that it was interesting to hear from Alex Johnstone that the likely ambition of his party in government in England, whether through the prism of the UK or after independence, is that high-speed rail will only ever reach Leeds or Manchester. This might come as news to Mr Johnstone, but England actually extends much further than that. What about cities such as

Carlisle or Newcastle? It is interesting to hear that only Scotland would benefit from cross-border high-speed rail. What about the people of England who want to come to Scotland by high-speed rail? The project will benefit Scotland and England.

Alex Johnstone: Indeed, but surely the member must accept that, if he wishes to have direct influence over decisions that are made on what happens south of the border, the United Kingdom Government is the only medium to achieve that intervention.

Jamie Hepburn: It is amazing that a channel tunnel was built by the Governments of France and the United Kingdom. Cross-border relations will go on. It is almost as if the member is suggesting that the Scottish Government will not step up and pay for the construction of high-speed rail. Mr Johnstone should know that, even in a devolved context, it has already said that it is prepared to pay its share, so let us hear no more nonsense about high-speed rail.

EGIP is a project that has great potential to deliver for my Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency as there are three stations in that area on the lines that stand to be electrified. That will lead to vastly improved transport times to Scotland's two major cities. We will see the Cumbernauld line electrified by 2014—I do not know if that is soon enough for Dr Murray, but it is absolutely fantastic news for the people who I represent.

I was disappointed that Jim Hume's amendment was not taken for debate because he was trying to suggest somehow that only Edinburgh and Glasgow stand to benefit from the investment. I can tell him that the people in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth will benefit, too, so I do not recognise—and neither will my constituents—the picture of doom that has been painted about EGIP. It is good news.

Drew Smith: Will the member take an intervention?

Jamie Hepburn: Only if you are brief, Mr Smith.

Drew Smith: I will do my best, Mr Hepburn.

Given that good news, is the member not astonished that the Minister for Transport and Veterans did not take the opportunity to come to Parliament to announce the cuts, especially as he had hot-footed it to Parliament to make the announcement about the investment?

Jamie Hepburn: We always need some good news in the summer, Mr Smith.

I do not recognise the suggestion that the Government's announcement is somehow the cancellation of the Edinburgh to Glasgow improvement programme. The scheme was

designed to be implemented in phases—that was clearly set out in the infrastructure investment plan. The announcement is the first phase of EGIP.

Dr Murray picked up a point relating to a question that was answered by Keith Brown. The answer referred to the timing of further phases being predicated on wider capacity and affordability issues. That last point about affordability is important because, time and again, SNP members hear from all those around us in the chamber—although primarily from the Labour members—who demand extra additional expenditure without suggesting where that money should come from.

Elaine Murray: The SNP's manifesto set out where the money was coming from for the whole programme—a low-interest-rate loan from Network Rail against its asset base. That is what was going to fund it and what still could.

Jamie Hepburn: It still will—that is how the project is being funded.

There is no recognition whatsoever from the member that it is not only capital budgets that are being slashed by the Tory-Liberal Administration—and would have been slashed by the Scottish Labour Party—but revenue budgets. When someone takes out a loan, they have to pay that back. Where would that money have come from?

Neil Findlay rose—

Jamie Hepburn: Presiding Officer, can I give way to Mr Findlay?

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott): Jamie Hepburn is in his last seconds; he is closing now.

Jamie Hepburn: Mr Findlay, unfortunately I am unable to give way; I would have gladly done so.

The project has been welcomed across the board in central Scotland. People who live there do not recognise the picture that the Labour Party has painted.

15:08

Mark Griffin (Central Scotland) (Lab): I rise to support the Labour motion. I have to say from the outset that, as one of the members who were in the chamber to hear from the Minister for Transport and Veterans on the future of rail in Scotland on 21 June, I am disappointed that there was no mention of the reduced Edinburgh to Glasgow improvement programme. The minister was even asked directly by my colleague Patricia Ferguson whether the project was on track to be delivered by 2016. His answer was:

“we will take some time and come back with a fuller explanation of what we are doing with EGIP.”—[*Official Report*, 21 June 2012; c 10426.]

When the minister gave that answer, I do not think that anyone in the chamber expected that “taking some time” meant waiting 13 days until Parliament was in recess, and that the “fuller explanation” was a £350 million cut to the programme. The chamber was the right place to make that announcement, particularly given the minister's response to questions, and I am again disappointed that it has taken a Labour debate for the minister to come back to the chamber to answer questions on the project cuts.

We often hear the term shovel-ready project in the chamber. After extensive public consultation, and preparatory work such as design, compulsory purchase orders and bridge heightening, EGIP could have been described as a shovel-ready project. Why, then, when the Government has an opportunity to invest £1 billion in capital spending in Scotland without impacting on its own capital budget, has the minister decided to cut the project by more than a third? Let us not forget, as mentioned earlier, that the project is being funded by borrowing against Network Rail's regulated asset base—

Jamie Hepburn: We hear it again. Clearly, the money would not have come directly out of the capital budget, but it would have to come out of the revenue budget, which has been cut as well. Does the Labour Party not recognise that?

Mark Griffin: What Mr Hepburn fails to recognise is that before the election his Government had a full budget settlement and a fully costed manifesto. It promised EGIP to the people of Scotland and is failing to deliver.

That £1 billion of spending, from borrowing against the asset base, could have boosted the Scottish economy right now. Reports today ask whether EGIP is being cut because the level of debt accrued by the Government is becoming unmanageable.

How many jobs will the new scheme create compared with the previous scheme? Why should the people of Scotland accept reduced ambition after the Government has stated that its aim is to invest in infrastructure to stimulate the economy? The Scottish National Party was committed to EGIP in its 2011 manifesto and, in particular, to

“more-frequent and faster journeys between Edinburgh and Glasgow”.

The business community, trade unions and independent public transport commentators have all expressed concerns about the cutbacks. Regardless of the SNP's promises, the cutbacks continue.

I mentioned earlier that there has been extensive public consultation, the preparation of compulsory purchase orders, and station and bridge heightening design work, among other technical aspects. Stirling Council has commented publicly about the large amount of money and the hundreds of its staff hours that have been wasted by cutbacks to the programme that affect its area. Is the minister in a position today to tell the chamber the abortive cost of reducing the programme by £350 million?

I would like to talk about my area. The loss of electrification beyond Cumbernauld via the diversionary Falkirk Grahamston loop is of massive concern locally. I fail to understand who Mr Hepburn spoke to in Cumbernauld who commented positively on the cutbacks, because that is certainly not what I am hearing. The director of CBI Scotland, Iain McMillan, has criticised the failure to electrify beyond Cumbernauld as it means losing an alternative route for when there is a blockage on the main line.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I would be grateful if you would come to a close, Mr Griffin.

Mark Griffin: Cumbernauld commuters association has expressed its dismay at the cuts, which will impact negatively on the people and commuters of Cumbernauld.

15:13

John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP): I am positive about the improvements that are coming to the main Glasgow to Edinburgh line. We should remember that there are really four lines linking the two cities. Two of those are already electrified, including most recently the line via Airdrie and Bathgate. That line starts in Helensburgh or Milngavie and runs through Glasgow Queen Street low level and the east end of Glasgow, directly to Edinburgh. There are four trains an hour and it is not as busy as the Queen Street high-level trains. It is the route that I use every day and I am grateful to the Government for putting it in place. In fact, that improvement has been much welcomed throughout the east end of Glasgow. If members look at my Facebook page, they will see a photograph of me on the first train in 2010.

It is positive that Dalmarnock station is being given a major upgrade in preparation for the Commonwealth games; I come past it regularly and it is coming along very well. Longer term, it will leave a legacy, after the Commonwealth games, for getting to the velodrome, the indoor sports arena and Celtic park.

There are improvements on a much grander scale at Waverley station, which a number of us use regularly. Although those are taking some

time, we can already see a greatly improved station coming along.

Going back to Queen Street station, it is clear that the high-level link via Falkirk offers the fastest and most popular route to Edinburgh. Anyone who goes into Queen Street station can see that the major constraint is the shortness of the platforms in comparison with those in Glasgow Central, with any other major terminus in Scotland and probably with most rail stations throughout Europe. Queen Street station has incredibly short platforms. Rather than running more and more trains, it is clearly desirable to run longer trains with greater capacity, which is what happens in most European countries. I have sometimes wondered whether we could extend the platforms northwards into the hill, but I have always assumed that that would be horribly expensive and virtually impossible. It seems that a solution has now been found, which would involve demolishing part of the Millennium hotel extension and extending the platforms south towards George Square. If that solution is feasible, it is very much to be welcomed.

When it comes to expanding and improving the rail network, I can have as many dreams as the next person. There are still a few more speeches to come, and I am sure that many members will give us their wish lists of what they would like to do with the rail system in this country.

Mark Griffin: Was EGIP's inclusion in the SNP manifesto just a dream? Was it included as part of a "wish list"?

John Mason: Over the past four or five years, we have seen a higher proportion of the SNP's manifesto being delivered than we saw of the manifesto of the previous Administration under Labour.

We all have dreams, we all have visions and we all want things to happen. One of my visions is of a metro line under Glasgow that would link Glasgow royal infirmary, Queen Street station, Glasgow Central and the Southern general hospital. That would be a fantastic link for people, but such a line is a long, long way ahead.

We must live in the real world—Labour must learn to do that, too. Money is tight and we cannot spend as profligately as Gordon Brown did. We must be realistic about our money and our choices. Choices have to be made, and I completely accept that work should be done in phases. We want pretty much all of the Scottish rail network to be electrified—I hope that none of us will be satisfied until that happens—but it will not be done in one fell swoop.

If the minister would like one little suggestion from me on something that we could do on the rail network, it would be to electrify the 1.8 miles of line across central Glasgow that links the

electrified lines north and south of the Clyde. Currently, empty electric trains have to be shunted across the river, which I suspect is not a great idea.

Regardless of all the wish lists that members might have, none of that should detract from the tremendous good news that we are hearing. Electrification of the Glasgow to Edinburgh line has been a dream that many of us thought would never happen. It is tremendous that it is now coming.

15:17

Jim Hume (South Scotland) (LD): EGIP is—or was—probably the biggest rail investment programme in a generation, but the minister's announcement in July saw £350 million being diverted from those plans, which is deeply worrying for the rail industry and commuters alike. Indeed, senior figures in the industry are questioning the work that Jacobs Consultancy carried out. They claim that the consequences of the U-turn have not been properly thought out.

Jamie Hepburn mentioned that the EGIP project was not just about Edinburgh and Glasgow. The transport minister originally promised additional capacity for Fife and the north-east of Scotland, half-hourly services between Alloa and Glasgow, and reduced journey times between Dunblane and Edinburgh. The programme, which was cited by ministers as evidence of their capital investment-led economic growth strategy, was also intended to provide an additional two trains an hour on the main Glasgow to Edinburgh line and to electrify that route, along with lines to Stirling and Dunblane. The project was not just about Edinburgh, Glasgow and Cumbernauld. Those promises have been shelved, along with around half of the electrification programme.

Major projects such as the Dalmeny chord, which would allow Glasgow trains to switch on to Fife lines outside Edinburgh and would give access to a new tram interchange at Gogar, have been shelved, alongside the plans for grade-separated junctions at Winchburgh and Greenhill, as has been mentioned.

We hear that the Government has based its U-turn on the findings of the Jacobs report, which had not even been completed, let alone published, at the time of the announcement back in July. That report—which the Scottish Government has denied was about cost cutting—has become available to us only today. EGIP represented a major opportunity to improve the rail experience for people in wider central Scotland; instead, it has become an example of policy making on the hoof.

Just last week, a Transform Scotland report branded SNP transport priorities as being

“suited neither to tackle the environmental crisis nor the need for development of ‘sustainable economic growth’.”

That damning picture of sustainable transport in Scotland confirms what we feared: that the Government has done little to encourage people to use public transport and is still failing to create a cohesive and sustainable transport system across the whole of Scotland.

Keith Brown: If the member believes that our level of investment is failing to support public transport while it is at twice the level of investment in the rest of the United Kingdom, what does that say about the Liberal Democrat commitment to public transport in England and Wales?

Jim Hume: There are some great plans for England and Wales.

We are talking about the promises that were given by the Scottish Government—promises that are being broken. When the revised EGIP was announced in July—

Jamie Hepburn: Will the member give way?

Jim Hume: I am sorry. I do not have time; I only have a minute or so left.

The minister said that the revised EGIP was due to changed circumstances, which meant that the benefits of the project could still be delivered at a far lower cost. The minister will be in no doubt about the effect that mismanagement has had on the industry, with fears that the mix of diesel and electric services in the central belt will lead to worsening train delays on Scotland's busiest routes.

People who live outside Edinburgh and Glasgow deserve the same standards of rail provision. The minister must commit to delivering EGIP in full, or explain to Parliament why a decision of such strategic importance to the rail network in Scotland was made in a cloak-and-dagger style, with little or no consultation outside the ministerial towers.

EGIP was boldly hailed as being on time and on budget seven years before its scheduled completion in 2016. However, nearly three years later, confidence in the Scottish Government's ability to manage and deliver this important project must be called into question. The Scottish Government has made a pig's ear of it and it is utterly mind blowing that £350 million may be diverted from one of Scotland's biggest transport projects because of financial ineptitude.

This must be the final wake-up call for the Government. It must stop dithering and commit to a sustainable transport agenda that modernises our railways and boosts the standard and regularity of public transport. The SNP Government is stuck in the dark ages if it seriously believes that people simply want more roads.

15:21

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP): Although I welcome Labour's motion on rail investment, I am frankly surprised at its content. It appears, quite simply, to be inaccurate and misleading. Which part of the 2011 infrastructure development plan has not been understood? That plan estimated that the Edinburgh to Glasgow improvement programme would cost £1.1 billion, and specified that the programme would be delivered in phases. That seems to be perfectly clear to me. Why, then, is there astonishment when the current investments come in at £650 million? That forms part of a £5 billion programme of investment in Scotland's railways for 2014 to 2019.

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab): Is Colin Beattie saying that CBI Scotland, Transform Scotland and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce are all wrong in their interpretation of the cuts that have been made to the scheme?

Colin Beattie: I repeat that the 2011 infrastructure development plan was quite clear that the programme would be delivered in phases.

The SNP record on rail investment is one of which we can all be proud. Despite the savage budget cuts that were imposed by Westminster—even Labour would agree with us in condemning those cuts—the Government has invested £2.6 billion since 2007 and has funded 30,000 extra seats every day.

More people than ever are using the railways and punctuality and reliability are at record highs. Surely we can all celebrate the successful projects that have already been undertaken, such as the Airdrie to Bathgate rail link, which was delivered on time and on budget in 2011, and is the longest new rail line in Scotland in a century.

What about the Stirling-Alloa-Kinross line, which opened in 2008? Passenger levels are now at 400 per cent of the original estimates, with some 400,000 passengers. What about the seven new stations that have been completed since 2007? What about investment in 38 new electric trains, which add 7,500 passenger seats to the network each day? What about the Glasgow to Kilmarnock infrastructure improvements, which is a £28 million project that was delivered on time and within budget in 2009?

In 2012-13, the Government will invest more than £1 billion on public transport and other sustainable transport. We are focused on rail transport, but other initiatives complement that investment. Over the past two years, the Government has invested £8 million in electric vehicles and infrastructure, thereby allowing the public sector to purchase around 270 low-carbon vehicles. There is also the £50 million future

transport fund, which will support cycling infrastructure, electric vehicle infrastructure and continuation of the freight facilities grant.

Concessionary bus travel has been extended to disabled veterans. I state emphatically that the rumours that are spread periodically about abolition of concessionary bus travel are complete nonsense and cause unnecessary worry to our senior citizens.

In 2011, the Government awarded grants through the Scottish green bus fund that amounted to £4.4 million, which allowed five bus operators to purchase 48 new vehicles. In 2012, a further £1.8 million will allow the purchase of a further 26 new vehicles.

There are also the new projects that are coming along as part of rail 2014, including the £30 million station investment fund to build new stations and improve existing stations, £100 million to secure and develop the sleeper services, and £0.25 million for wi-fi on trains, primarily between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Jim Hume: Will the member give way?

Colin Beattie: Yes.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Be very brief, Mr Hume.

Jim Hume: Colin Beattie has mentioned many projects. What is his view on the EGIP project and the fact that it has been changed so drastically?

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Be very brief, please, Mr Beattie.

Colin Beattie: I do not recognise the changes that the member seems to think have occurred to the EGIP project. It is clearly being delivered in phases.

There is every proof that the Government is committed to public transport in general and to rail transport in particular.

15:26

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): The cancellation of EGIP beyond the central line is very unwelcome. Stirling and Alloa had an economic development plan that included that electrification as one of its pillars, and it would have led to new and increased service opportunities between Alloa, Dunblane and Glasgow by reducing journey times by up to 10 minutes, and would have reduced journey times by up to five minutes between Dunblane and Edinburgh. The economic aspect of the project was very important.

It is no wonder, in that case, that the minister announced the changes during the recess.

Jamie Hepburn: Will Dr Simpson take an intervention?

Dr Simpson: No. I must make some progress.

Jamie Hepburn: Yes, you must.

Dr Simpson: I know that Jamie Hepburn wants to tell me about Cumbernauld, but I am talking about Stirling and Alloa, which have been seriously affected by the cancellations, and which the minister's own constituents did not hear about until Parliament was in recess. That means that we had no opportunity to question him. At Westminster, the Speaker would have treated that as complete disrespect for Parliament—which is what it was.

We learn that the revisions have been made on the basis of a highly partial report. Were Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council even consulted about the proposed cuts to the programme? I know that Network Rail was not consulted, because I asked. There has been no consultation about an important report that has led to what some members are calling “phasing”, but which I am calling cuts.

What will be the consequences of the disinvestment decision? They are certainly not in the minister's press release, which was—as is usual for the Scottish National Party—overstated with the headline, “Full steam ahead for Rail Project”. It is not even a quarter steam ahead. I suppose that it could have been worse; the minister might have announced, “Minister's announcement electrifies Scots”. He did say that he was electrified, but my constituents are certainly not electrified.

There will also be an effect on the minister's constituents of prolonging the use of diesel trains, which idle for up to 40 minutes at Alloa station, not just in cold weather but at all times of the day and evening. Some of the minister's and my mutual constituents suffer from a combination of noise and diesel exhaust fumes from which they expected to get relief by 2016. That will not now happen. Does the minister have any proposals to alleviate the sufferings of those constituents? Is he even concerned?

As the minister knows, I continue to pursue the night coal trains issue. His abject failure to tackle that problem with any vigour is a complete mystery to me. He and I both made a mistake in accepting a false basis for the freight trains on the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine railway line, and the consequence for many households has been deep suffering. People such as the McIvers are in despair because they have to suffer levels of night noise of up to 85dB. That has been completely disregarded and the Government has held out no possibility of mitigation. The Government is also

using noise thresholds that bear no relationship to the World Health Organization guidelines.

However, let us look on the positive side. Bruce Crawford—who, I am sorry to see, has left the chamber—was able to tell his constituents that the cuts would mean an end to the Polmaise site for the stabling yard. Network Rail has confirmed that and it is good news for the residents of Pike Road in Stirling. Will the minister use his summing-up speech to confirm that that matter has been put to rest once and for all?

Bruce Crawford also made an interesting announcement in his press release: namely, that the electrification programme, when it is eventually phased—I think that that is the current word—will go up as far as Perth. Will the minister tell us whether Bruce Crawford was correct in reporting back from the Cabinet that that will happen? If the electrification is to go to Perth, care should be taken about the extensive and expensive refurbishment at Gleneagles station for the Ryder Cup. I hope that it will take the electrification into account.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: You should be drawing to a close, please.

Dr Simpson: As others have said, this is yet another massive retreat to add to the cancellation by the Government of the Glasgow airport rail link, the Edinburgh airport rail link and other projects. Up the hill, everything looks great, but then we are all taken down the hill to despair.

15:30

Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP): I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the debate.

A £1 billion investment in transport is already happening this year, and £5 billion-worth of investment is to come to the railways from 2014. That is a clear sign from the Scottish Government that we intend to continue our development of a modern railway service for Scotland.

Colleagues have already mentioned the range of developments that are being undertaken, and the minister's announcement has certainly been welcomed by the political administrations in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Why would they not welcome it? With the £650 million that will go into the Glasgow to Edinburgh service, journey times will be reduced by another 10 minutes, Queen Street station in Glasgow will be redeveloped, the Edinburgh gateway station will enable connections to services to Edinburgh airport, and passengers will be able to conduct their business on the trains using wi-fi technology.

Neil Findlay: If that is all such good news, where are the massed ranks of the SNP back

benchers? I have noticed during the debate that we have Mr Hepburn, Mr Mason and Mr Thompson in the chamber, and we have Mr Finnie and Ms Urquhart, who are sitting in the middle looking as though their puppy has just been run over. Is it not clear that the NATO rebels have been told to come in and defend the indefensible? That is what is happening today.

Willie Coffey: Mr Findlay has surpassed himself in his capacity for talking rubbish.

The investments will not just benefit the travelling public, but will provide secure employment for the many people in Scotland who will design, test, build and deliver the projects for us. Just about every trade that I can think of will be engaged in delivering the work for us. That is an example of how the Scottish Government is committed to helping Scotland's economy to get through these difficult times. I welcome the fact that billions are being spent as proactive investment in our transport infrastructure. The job creation that goes with that surely represents a far better way to help our economy to recover from recession.

As we have the minister's ear for the duration of the debate, I want to offer a few comments on how we might capitalise on the investment commitments that are being made in order to achieve step changes in passenger numbers on the railways in future years.

First, a key area for further action is to develop more park-and-ride facilities, particularly for our bigger traditional towns. Historically, established old towns such as Kilmarnock in my constituency have had little if anything in the way of park-and-ride facilities near their stations because they were just not thought of before the modern era. In order to make the important step change of getting more people out of their cars and on to the trains, I hope that we will think carefully about developing adjacent to them more park-and-ride facilities that can truly compete with the already excellent bus services from Kilmarnock to Glasgow and other towns.

Secondly, ticketing and pricing strategies could be simplified to make it easier for travellers to choose the train. I sometimes feel that the pricing policy, based on the peak and off-peak system on the trains, compared with the much simpler pricing for bus journeys, prevents people from using the trains. If we have more trains and more capacity on offer to the public, perhaps the need for overcomplicated peak and off-peak arrangements will diminish a little.

The minister's announcement of investment in Scotland's railways over the coming years is a clear indication that the Government is committed to a modern railway system that is fit for a

confident Scotland in the 21st century. We have an excellent track record of supporting Scotland's infrastructure, and the £5 billion that is coming down the line will help us to deliver that vision. I am happy to support the Government's amendment.

15:34

Alex Johnstone: It has been an interesting debate. I have to say that I was amazed to hear some of the contributions from SNP back benchers. It was suggested by some that we have imagined the whole thing: John Mason went to great lengths to tell us that we must live in the real world, but he went on to raise expectations with a series of things on his wish list and then encouraged every member in the chamber to come up with their own suggestions, as well.

John Mason also said that we are not talking about cuts, but about hopes for the future. I can tell him that reality bites. The Government party's back benchers have been wholly inconsistent in this debate. Some have backed the minister by suggesting that the cuts are Westminster cuts, some have gone to the opposite extreme and said that the project is turning out better than expected, while others have said that there is a squeeze on revenue budgets. Colin Beattie, in particular, suggested that since the work is being delivered in phases the money is actually being spent on other things in the meantime. The truth has come out in this debate.

Back in June, there was an opportunity for the minister to deliver the bad news about the project, but 13 days later it was announced in the press that the cuts would take place. The minister missed that opportunity and, in the view of many members, including me, showed a degree of disrespect to Parliament by failing to pass on that message and instead doing it so soon afterwards through the printed media.

In looking in greater detail at some of the claims that have been made, I say that Jamie Hepburn is absolutely right that even if the project was to be funded through the regulated asset base, that borrowing would result in a cost to service that borrowing, which would have an impact on the revenue budgets. However—tell me if I am wrong—interest on borrowing was not invented during the past year; it was possible for the Government to have guessed that it may have to pay for that borrowing. As far as I am aware, interest rates did not even go up in the intervening time. Once again, that was an example of this Government making a promise that it had no intention of keeping.

The Government has scaled back its ambition. It made promises that it broke, as Alex Salmond's

priorities changed and wandered. We have heard from so many members—most eloquently from Richard Simpson—about the impact of the changes on local plans and local development projects, which were predicated on the project going ahead and which had been announced a whole year previously. Across Scotland, there are plans that cannot be carried out because a promise made became a promise broken.

That is an example of what happens when a Government decides to buy popularity but has then to account for it. During the course of the debate, facts have been posited and questions have been put to the minister but, so far, we have heard very few answers. We have heard inconsistency in the excuses that have been given by the Government party back-bench speakers, and there has been a failure to deliver a true explanation for the decision-making process that, first, resulted in the decision and, secondly, resulted in its being announced in such a way that it could not be adequately questioned in Parliament at the time. There are questions to be answered, so I am glad that the minister still has to speak before the conclusion of the debate, because I remain hopeful that some of those questions will be answered.

15:38

Keith Brown: Much mention has been made during the debate—perhaps not surprisingly—of the issue of finances. Perhaps I should address that first.

As we have said, there has been a cut of around a third to the Government's capital budget—around £1 billion in resources. Obviously, such cuts have consequences across Government expenditure. One of the comments surprised me. Mark Griffin—I think—said that the Scottish Government was in danger of incurring unsustainable debt. We had a lecture from Ken Macintosh recently about the meaning of the word “irony”. Is there any irony more rich than the idea that the Westminster Government is worried about irresponsible debt on the part of the Scottish Government—every pound of whose debt is approved by the Westminster Government—when it is standing on a massive debt created by the previous Labour Government and sustained in current times by the coalition Government? That is irony at its worst.

It is worth remembering the departing words of the Labour Party as it left office. In the words of Liam Byrne, the chief secretary to the Treasury, “there's no money left.”

Richard Baker: Will the minister give way?

Keith Brown: Perhaps later, but not just now.

That was Labour's legacy. At the same time, Alistair Darling said he wanted to see cuts deeper than Margaret Thatcher's. That is what we have been left by the Labour Party. What is perhaps more surprising is Labour's eagerness to play the role of the alibi to the coalition Government when it imposed some of the cuts that were caused by Labour's economic legacy.

Obviously, cost is extremely important and we must try to be careful with the costs that we incur. We heard mention of some of the other improvements: £30 million for the Scottish stations investment fund; £100 million for the sleeper services; £60 million for other network improvements; and the Paisley canal line and Corkerhill depot being electrified over the next few months so that, from December 2012, the two-car diesel trains will be replaced by three-car electric trains, which will provide more seats for passengers. I announce that the Conon Bridge railway station will open by February 2013, in time to help mitigate major disruption from the planned resurfacing works on the A9 Kessock Bridge. There is substantial investment.

The Labour Party looks at this Government's £5 billion investment programme and what we have done on fares—which it criticises, although exactly the same rise of the retail prices index plus 1 per cent took place down south—and says that, if it had the chance, it would take similar decisions. It has to look for something else to criticise. It also tries to wish away the economic legacy that it bequeathed to us.

I will address one or two other points that were made. Richard Simpson made a point about my constituents asking questions about the investment plan. I have fewer constituents to deal with than he does, so perhaps I deal with mine more regularly. The question that I am asked is, “Why was £750 million spent on trams in Edinburgh? Could more not have been done on rail and bus services throughout Scotland with that money?” I get that question much more than the questions that he talked about.

Richard Simpson makes a fair point about the disruption that is caused by the night trains. However, I think he knows that it is unfair of him to comment that I have been involved with that from the start. Neither he nor I was party to the decision, but we have both been involved in trying to resolve it, and I have tried to treat his approaches in good faith and work with him. His comments on that were unfair.

It is clear that our approach on EGIP has been to sustain the bulk of the project. Most people would welcome £650 million as a positive investment in the railways. Members should not forget that that investment will create hundreds of jobs—major, well-paid jobs—in Scotland.

Richard Baker: How many more jobs would have been created by the £1 billion scheme?

Keith Brown: Let us go back to the £1 billion scheme. I asked where the Labour Party would find the other £350 million. I assume—*[Interruption.]* I assume that nobody in the Labour Party would take away anything else from the investment programme, because no Labour member has said that they would. If they would not fund that £350 million from the investment programme, I assume that they would fund it from fares. That would mean a 20 per cent increase in fares to everyone in Scotland if the Labour Party had its way. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Interventions from a sedentary position are not welcome.

Keith Brown: I am confident that we have made the right decision on EGIP.

The Jacobs Consulting report was mentioned. It is available for people to have a look at. They can check through its figures. As Network Rail will also say, it is right to analyse the future effectiveness of a project that has been talked about for many years. It has changed over the years, but of course it should be analysed and of course we should have an eye on value for money. The Government does that regularly; I only wish that the previous Conservative and Labour Governments down south had done the same thing.

On that point, why are we still talking about the electrification of the Edinburgh to Glasgow line? The unionists have had control of the chance to electrify that line and dual the A9. They could have anticipated many years ago that the Forth road crossing would reach capacity, but they did nothing. Nobody wants to start from that position. We have to pick up the consequences of the UK Government's decades of underinvestment in Scotland. That is why we have to take some difficult decisions, and we are making the right decisions.

One of the speakers mentioned wi-fi. It will be available on all trains on the Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk route by the end of 2013 and then between all Scottish cities by early 2014, after which it will be rolled out to other fleets. That shows substantial ambition for the railway in Scotland.

Mention was made of the CBI, a witness that the Labour Party regularly trails out during virtually every debate. That is surprising to some—although perhaps not nowadays. Mention was also made of the trade unions. I met the trade unions yesterday and questions were asked about EGIP. We had a fairly positive discussion—I think that the trade unions would say the same thing—but they were much more concerned about, for

example, the indemnification clause that Labour included in the previous franchise, which they find to be a standing affront to their rights.

Whether trade unions or the wider Scottish public, people see the benefits of the SNP's investment plans. As I mentioned, £5 billion has been committed going forward. The Airdrie to Bathgate line has been reopened, and the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine line has 400,000 passengers. That project was opposed by some Labour people in my constituency, but we worked that through. Those were substantial improvements—*[Interruption.]* The Labour Party voted against the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine line. Billy Calder voted against it.

We are making substantial improvements to the rail services and the public realise that. For that reason, I support the amendment in the Government's name.

15:44

Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):

This has been a good and important debate—important because there is broad, if not unanimous, agreement across the chamber that it is right to invest in infrastructure to boost our economy and for rail infrastructure to be a key part of that approach.

In July, Alex Salmond stated:

"The Scottish Government has consistently argued for the need for capital investment to boost, not just construction, but also the wider economy ... Announcements about rail investment in three years' time are no substitute for capital spending now."

There was an unintended irony in the First Minister's comment, because only a few weeks previously his Minister for Housing and Transport had announced that the Scottish Government's flagship rail infrastructure project—the Edinburgh to Glasgow improvement programme—had been cut by a third. As others have said, we would not have thought that from the press release that Mr Brown issued. As Dr Murray said, it proclaimed "full steam ahead" for EGIP but, in fact, it was more of a case of leaves on the line for the programme.

The press release made no reference to the significant cuts to the project—I presume that Mr Brown hoped no one would notice them—and just referred to £300 million of savings. However, as we have heard in the debate, the reality is that those are not savings but cuts to key aspects of the programme, which will reduce the benefits of the scheme to our rail network, to passengers and to our economy.

If it was simply a case of delivering the scheme more efficiently, Mr Brown would surely have had no problem in outlining the changes to the plans

for EGIP in this Parliament only the week before his news release, when our colleague Patricia Ferguson asked in the chamber about its future. Instead, he waited for recess to make the announcement, when he did not have to answer questions in the chamber. Dr Murray is, of course, absolutely right to say that it is not acceptable for the minister deliberately to avoid making an announcement of such significance in the chamber—the Scottish Government is developing a worrying amount of form on that.

The reason that the announcement was not made in the Parliament was, of course, that the £350 million reduction in the project represented not savings but cuts, which remove key aspects of the scheme; members have referred to them during the debate. They include electrification in a number of areas, including Stirling, Alloa and Dunblane—and looking to extend electrification northwards to Perthshire and Aberdeen—the Polmont to Greenhill line, the line from Edinburgh to Winchburgh and at Grangemouth. In addition, the cuts remove the proposed grade-separated junctions at Greenhill and Winchburgh; journey time improvements from Dunblane and Alloa to Glasgow and Edinburgh; the planned half-hourly service for Bishopbriggs, Lenzie and Croy; and improved connectivity from Fife to the west of Scotland and from Glasgow to Edinburgh airport. Of course, there will now be no increase from four to six trains per hour between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Many potential benefits across the rail network have been lost as a result of this misguided decision.

Keith Brown: Given what the member has just said, would he reinstate £350 million to the project? How would he fund that?

Richard Baker: I will come on to the funding issues. The minister is in an extremely weak position on the matter, given that the commitment that he made to the funding for the project was included in the SNP manifesto, when he had full awareness of his budget. If he thought that he could do the project, why could we or anybody else in the chamber not do it? [*Interruption.*] I think that I have answered the question, minister.

An article in *The Herald* this morning makes it clear that the changes were not about making the project more efficient but about reducing spending, pure and simple. It reveals that, last November, the Government approached the Office of Rail Regulation with a view to deferring its repayments in respect of Network Rail borrowing. It is clear that the decision was considered for some time, even if it was not consulted on at all.

We recognise that these are tough times for public spending across Scotland and the UK and we agree with ministers that the cuts in public spending are too deep and too fast and that that

affects the Scottish budget, too. Nevertheless—as Alex Johnstone said—for the Scottish Government to pretend that it can cut a scheme by a third and not impact on it significantly does a great injustice to proper discussion of its plans for rail services in this country. We also take issue with the UK Government's spending plans, but the fact is that the Scottish Government cannot simply palm off the blame for the decision to Westminster, because the investment was to come from Network Rail borrowing and is distinct from the wider issues of the capital budget.

Of course, as Elaine Murray said, EGIP was a manifesto commitment made by the SNP in 2011 in the full knowledge of the budget that it had this year. However, perhaps it was just, as John Mason indicated, a collective dream that the SNP had, from which it seems to have awoken like Bobby in Dallas—and thus will follow its dreams of breaking up the United Kingdom.

The cut was made in Scotland. Given the project's importance to the Scottish economy, the decision was exactly the wrong one to take when we need Scottish ministers to take a different approach from their UK counterparts. It is deeply concerning that the decision appears to have been taken with little consultation and after sight of only a draft version of the Jacobs Consulting report, which we hear has—helpfully—been produced today, on the same day as our debate, and which appears to have been commissioned to justify the cuts.

A broader assessment should have been made of the economic impact of the cuts to the project. There are serious questions about the impact on the Scottish Government's often-quoted ambitions for electrification across the country. There are also questions about the decision's impact on the climate change targets. Were those targets considered at all when the decision was being made?

For all those reasons, a number of prominent organisations, including trade unions, have voiced their disappointment about the Scottish Government's decision. Transform Scotland has called it “a major step backwards”. The Confederation of British Industry Scotland and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce have also expressed concern. Iain McMillan of the CBI has called the decision “sleekit” and, on “Good Morning Scotland” this morning, Garry Clark of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce said:

“We saw a huge amount of consultation going into this project over many years and yet a third of it has been abandoned by press release without any clarity at all.”

The decision could not have come at a worse time for the Scottish economy. The Government talks again and again about shovel-ready projects, but the scaling back of the EGIP scheme follows

the scrapping by ministers of other rail infrastructure plans, be they Aberdeen crossrail, GARL or EARL. No wonder Iain McMillan says that the Scottish Government has a case to answer on improving the railways.

The wrong decisions have been taken for passengers and for growth. Combined with cuts to college and housing budgets, they leave us with a situation in which the unemployment rate in Scotland is higher than the UK average.

No wonder the Government wanted to avoid scrutiny of the decision, as it wants to avoid scrutiny of its increasingly unpopular plans to break up the UK. The Parliament and the country deserve better than that and better than the disrespect to the Parliament, which is why we will continue to press ministers to be more transparent on their plans for our vital transport infrastructure, more ambitious for the rail services that our country needs—for which they were more ambitious only a few months ago, too—and more ambitious to deliver the infrastructure investment that our economy desperately needs but which the Government is failing to provide.

Patient Care

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):

The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-04161, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on patient care.

I remind members who wish to speak in the debate to line up their microphones, because they are directional microphones.

15:52

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab): There are undoubtedly real and pressing challenges in our national health service, which are starting to have a significant impact on patient care and patient safety. I make it clear at the outset that the work that our NHS staff do is exceptional. Whether they are doctors, nurses, our Scottish Ambulance Service staff, our technicians who work behind the scenes or our porters and cleaners, we are grateful to the entire NHS family. It is our responsibility to ensure that they are adequately resourced to do their job. We are joined in the public gallery by paramedics, by Ambulance Service staff and by Mick Conroy and Harry Donaldson from the GMB, all of whom I welcome.

Last week, the Scottish National Party rearranged the deckchairs with its ministerial reshuffle, which moved the Deputy First Minister away from health at a time of crisis for the NHS. I say with all due respect to Alex Neil that she is probably the SNP's most talented minister. Her move to run the referendum campaign shows the SNP Government's real priorities. Separation is its first, last and only priority.

The faces can be changed, but the feel and substance remain the same. The SNP is out of touch with people's concerns and is putting the NHS in Scotland on pause as it obsesses about the constitution. What is required is not new faces but a new focus, new ideas and a new direction.

However, I welcome the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing's announcement about the sick kids hospital in Edinburgh, although it is of course five years later than promised and it does nothing to tackle the £130 million repairs backlog or the £1 billion backlog across Scotland. The hospital estate is crumbling on the SNP's watch.

One thing is clear. The cabinet secretary needs to get a grip on his brief quickly, because while we are on pause, patient care continues to suffer, waiting times at accident and emergency departments continue to lengthen, nurses are losing their jobs and ambulance staff are expressing concern about patient safety.

If I was to construct a charge list for Alex Neil to tackle, here is what it would say: the NHS has

fewer staff than at any time since 2007; the SNP is presiding over cuts of more than 5,500 staff, almost 2,500 of whom are nurses and midwives; and nursing and midwifery numbers are at a seven-year low. We cannot strip so many people out of the NHS without there being an impact on patient care.

Despite promises to protect the health budget, the SNP is cutting it by £319 million in real terms. That is a fact. Add to that the fact that inflation in the health service runs higher and the fact that prescribing budgets are already overspent at this point in the year, and it is clear that there is real downward pressure on the budget.

Patients are going without basic provisions, such as blankets—shame on the SNP and the First Minister that it took two of my constituents coming to the Parliament for them to recognise the problem and take action. Hospital inspections have thrown up some examples recently. In one case, at Glasgow royal infirmary, there was only one working shower—with no shower curtain—shared between 15 patients; in another, an elderly man was found sitting naked on his bed, in his own urine and with no screens around him, during visiting hours. Where is the patient care and dignity in that, cabinet secretary?

Patients themselves say that wards are understaffed and that patients are being moved around the hospital. Senior NHS managers—for goodness sake—have been fiddling the waiting list figures to meet targets, and as a consequence, patients have gone without the treatment that they needed and deserved.

In the cabinet secretary's own backyard, NHS Lanarkshire has experienced huge and substantial difficulty in recruiting junior doctors, which has created problems at Monklands hospital, at Wishaw general hospital, in neonatal care and in general medicine. The problem has led to delays in assessing patients and reduced outpatient activity and has affected cover for patients who were booked in for elective procedures. The cabinet secretary cannot tell me that there is no impact on patient safety and patient care.

Local health services are increasingly under threat and closing, despite the SNP's promises. The mental health ward at the Vale of Leven hospital has closed. The children's ward at St John's hospital shut for the summer. The maternity unit at Inverclyde royal hospital is threatened with closure. There are plans to close the children's ward at the Royal Alexandra hospital in Paisley. The winds of change are coming. Health boards are having to reorganise services because they cannot run them on the current level of resources. Where in there is the concern for patient care?

Complaints about NHS Scotland are at a record high, but what do we expect, when the SNP cuts staffing, cuts nurses and cuts support to our hospitals? We cannot keep expecting the NHS to do more and more on less and less.

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): Ms Baillie must recognise that there are more nurses and midwives now than there were in nine out of 10 years when Labour was in government. Is that a fact, Ms Baillie?

Jackie Baillie: I am afraid that that is nonsense. The Royal College of Nursing says that the number of nurses and midwives has reduced by 2,500. It is at a seven-year low. Is the member saying that the RCN is not telling the truth? I am shocked, frankly.

Four years ago, Nicola Sturgeon promised that ambulances would be crewed by two staff, including a paramedic, in all but exceptional circumstances. However, single crewing is back, and in many cases it is almost routine. One paramedic told me that on Sunday and Monday mornings the relief shift is routinely single manned, because the staff who are coming off duty cannot safely go out again. That is not an isolated incident; there is evidence of single manning in Helensburgh, in Wick, in Dumfries, and in Glasgow—right across Scotland.

Ambulance shifts are being dropped entirely in St Andrews, Kirkcaldy, Glasgow, Paisley, Greenock, the Vale of Leven—virtually every part of Scotland. So that there is no doubt about that and so that members can appreciate the scale of the problem, let me give the numbers for the Vale of Leven. In the space of roughly a month from June, 29 shifts were dropped, six of which were urgent tier shifts, and a further 22 shifts were dropped last month. A whole paramedic response unit has been dropped for this entire week. The patient care of my constituents is not the priority. On a number of occasions, there have been two vehicles instead of three on the night shift. In Kirkintilloch, there was only one ambulance on over an entire weekend in August to cover an enormous geographical area. In addition, the use of private ambulances seems to be on the increase under the SNP.

The skills mix is being changed so that drivers—who do a valuable job—are replacing technicians. Drivers are even replacing paramedics in emergency vehicles. Patient care will suffer if skills are confused in that way. One paramedic said:

"The management are playing Russian roulette with people's lives. Over the past few months there have been numerous instances where ambulances have been single crewed. Core shifts have been dropped to save money."

Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind): Will the member give way?

Jackie Baillie: In a second.

Another paramedic described being alone with a child with a head injury and being unable to transport him to hospital because they were waiting for a back-up vehicle.

What about the additional staff that the Government promised? I understand that a number of people who failed their exams are out in ambulances in an attempt to teach them the necessary skills. There is nothing wrong with that, as people learn in real-life situations, but the Ambulance Service counting those unqualified staff in the numbers is wrong. In one case, a student who was not yet qualified was the only person manning the entire station at Girvan. There were no paramedics or technicians—there was not even a driver. It is clear that patient care in the Ambulance Service is being sacrificed on the altar of cost cutting.

Margo MacDonald rose—

Jackie Baillie: I am terribly sorry, but I cannot give way to Margo MacDonald, as I have very little time.

The picture is extremely worrying. The NHS is struggling—there is no doubt in my mind about that—and, despite the valiant efforts of dedicated staff, that is having a negative impact on patient care. The SNP simply pretends that that is not happening, and that is not good enough.

Tomorrow, when the budget for the coming year is revealed, the cabinet secretary will have an opportunity to put his money where his mouth is. Concern for patient care and safety must be at the top of the agenda, or the people of Scotland will judge him and the SNP and find them to be wanting.

I move,

That the Parliament believes that the Scottish Government's budget decisions are impacting negatively on patient care; notes with concern that the number of nurses and midwives is at its lowest since 2005, an assessment that is shared by the Royal College of Nursing; further notes with concern warnings from unions that cutbacks in the Scottish Ambulance Service are leading to ambulance staff attending emergency calls on their own and shifts not being covered; notes reports of patients going without basic provisions, such as blankets, and inspections that reveal significant failures in patient care; praises the hard work of NHS staff across Scotland, and calls on the newly-appointed Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing to support the efforts of NHS staff by making a clear commitment to prioritise patient care ahead of the campaign to separate Scotland from the rest of the UK.

16:03

The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson): It is often the case that facts do not feature heavily in Labour Party contributions in its health debates. No one should be in any doubt

about the Government's commitment to our NHS. It is worth keeping it in mind that the NHS belongs to no Government or political party; it belongs to the people of Scotland, and we as its custodians must ensure that we do the right thing to ensure that we have an NHS that serves the best interests of the people of Scotland.

I have no doubt that all members recognise the significant challenges that our public services in Scotland face as a result of the cuts that the UK Government is introducing, which have a direct impact on services such as our NHS in Scotland. The mark of a Government is how it responds to that type of challenge. Alistair Darling told us that the cuts would be tougher and deeper than Margaret Thatcher's, and they have proven to be that. How did we—an SNP Government—respond to them? We decided to protect the NHS budget. In making that decision, we decided on a record £11.6 billion of resources for health in Scotland in 2014-15. That is £826 million more than the 2011-12 budget.

Despite the difficult economic circumstances and the challenge that they place on capital spend, over three years there will be £1.5 billion of capital investment into our NHS, securing the delivery of major projects such as a new south Glasgow hospital, the Edinburgh Royal Victoria hospital building and the Aberdeen emergency care centre.

What was the Labour Party response to those unprecedented United Kingdom cuts—the cuts that are tougher and deeper than those of Margaret Thatcher, which started under the London Labour Government? I will quote the leader of the Labour Party before the previous election, Iain Gray, on the matter. When Jackie Baillie was Labour's health spokesperson, championing the cause of the NHS in Scotland, Iain Gray said in response to those unprecedented cuts:

"We wouldn't ring fence the health budget."

So, despite the huffing, the puffing, the crocodile tears and the demands for more money here and more money there—the Labour money tree—what do we get? A party that is not prepared to stand up and protect the NHS budget in Scotland.

Jackie Baillie: I have made clear on a number of occasions our absolute view that the NHS budget should be protected. I am disappointed that the minister still fails to understand that.

I find it incredibly hypocritical that a Government that is stripping 2,500 nurses and midwives from the NHS says that we are crying crocodile tears. It is dissembling.

Michael Matheson: Unfortunately, Jackie Baillie's problem is that her leader overruled her at

the time that we are talking about. On “Newsnight Scotland”, Iain Gray said:

“We wouldn’t ring fence the health budget.”

We will take no lectures from a party that was not committed to protecting the NHS budget when we were prepared to do so. There is no hypocrisy on the SNP side of the chamber, but it is certainly present on the Labour side of the chamber.

I have no doubt that members across the chamber hear concerns about the NHS from their constituents. As a constituency MSP, I hear those concerns. I recognise that the NHS does not always get it right, but the Government is committed to ensuring that we further improve our NHS in Scotland.

I heard Jackie Baillie talking about patient complaints and patient satisfaction. Let us look at some of the facts that are so often missing from Labour health debates. In 2011, 88 per cent of people said that they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with their local health service, which was up from the level of 81 per cent that we inherited from the Labour-Liberal Democrat Administration.

Jackie Baillie also talked about the issues that have been highlighted by the inspection regime in our NHS. Who introduced the inspection regime in order to drive forward the improvements that we need in our NHS and ensure that we start to get the improvements that are necessary in various areas? That is the type of positive progress that we have been making. We are taking forward policies to ensure that we drive forward further improvements.

Margo MacDonald: I would like to get this right. Does the Government allege that it is spending £800 million or so more on the health service than was spent on the health service in the last Labour budget? By how much does Labour allege that the SNP has reduced the spending? I do not know that yet, so I cannot make up my mind about who is crying the crocodile tears.

Michael Matheson: I can tell Margo MacDonald that, as I said, by 2014-15, we will have a record £11.6 billion going into our NHS, which is the highest amount that the NHS has ever received and is £826 million more than was devoted to the NHS in the 2011-12 budget.

I will tackle the issue of waiting times that is often raised by Labour. In June, 92.4 per cent of patients were seen and treated within 18 weeks of initial referral, against an expected standard of 90 per cent. Members might be interested to know that Labour-controlled Wales has a 26-week target and that, in June, only 81.9 per cent of patients were treated within that timescale.

I turn to the ambulance service. I have heard the concerns that have been raised by Jackie Baillie

and the trade unions. She is correct. The Government is very clear that we want the elimination of single-rostered emergency ambulance provision. We have pursued that with the Scottish Ambulance Service. In June 2012, the percentage of single-rostered crew members in Scotland was 0.7 per cent. That is a small number, but it is a number that we are determined to eliminate except in exceptional circumstances.

I do not think that such issues are helped by people like Jackie Baillie coming along and trying to give people the impression that the NHS is in some way on its knees. The NHS is not on its knees; it is facing up to the challenges that it must face and it has a Government behind it that is prepared to support it in meeting those challenges.

I move amendment S4M-04161.1, to leave out from “believes” to end and insert:

“shares the Scottish Government’s commitment to the NHS; recognises the benefits of the health budget being protected; commends NHS staff for their dedication and hard work, which has provided patients and families with high quality care, including the lowest waiting times on record, lowest infection rates and substantial improvements in patient safety; further recognises that the NHS workforce in Scotland has grown since 2006, including an increase in emergency services staff; notes the value of the inspection system brought in by the Scottish Government that both highlights high quality patient care and identifies where there are problems to be addressed, and welcomes the new Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing’s continued fundamental support for the efforts of NHS staff, including nurses, doctors and allied health professionals, and the Scottish Government’s clear and unbroken commitment to safe, sustainable and person-centred patient care.”

16:11

Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con): We are not here to debate Wales; we are not here to debate the national health service in England; and we are not even here any longer—after six years—to debate the record of the last Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition on health. We are here to debate the record of the Government that has been in office for the past six years with responsibility for health. I came to the debate minded to support the Government’s amendment, if carried, this afternoon. However, in view of the performances that I have heard from the SNP front bench and the intervention from Kevin Stewart that was, frankly, arrogant, smug and belligerent, we will now vote against the motion if it is amended.

I am not here to say that the record of the last Labour Government was wonderful. It is known that we felt that Nicola Sturgeon was an effective cabinet secretary—I still find it surprising that Nye Bevan should be removed from office, with all the challenges that the health service faces. We supported the decisions to reverse the accident and emergency department cuts that were

proposed and we believe that the previous health secretary was effective in a crisis. We have paid tribute to much of the work that the previous Government did, but that is not to endorse every action and every statist, Stalinist opposition to innovation in the health service.

When the minister waxes on about the additional funds that he has made available to the health service, it is important to say that the last Labour UK Government and the current Conservative UK Government have made sure that health has been protected at Westminster and that consequentials have come to the Scottish Government that have allowed that health spending to be sustained. It has not been some great virtuous act by the Scottish Government; it has been replicated across the whole UK and has led to the UK ensuring that Scotland has had additional funding.

The Scottish Government turned its back on ways within that budget to manage its finances efficiently. We regretted the decision to reject the findings of the pilot at Stracathro hospital that was led by the last Labour-Liberal Democrat Administration, which allowed the independent sector to release £2 million to reduce waiting times exclusively for the NHS, infection free, by undertaking operations more cheaply than would otherwise have been the case. What was the objection to finding an efficiency of that character within the health service to release funds that could be reinvested in patient care? It was an objection of dogma. We also opposed—we were alone in doing so, but for good reason—moving to free prescriptions. We did so not because we objected ultimately to the principle, but because we knew that every pound that was diverted to that priority had to come from a priority elsewhere in the health service.

I will not stand here and be accused of saying that everything that the SNP Government has done on health has been bad. I do not believe that. I do not believe that Mr Neil, Mr Matheson or Shona Robison—

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): Will the member take an intervention?

Jackson Carlaw: I will at the end of my sentence, if I may.

I do not believe for a moment that what they have been doing has been designed to undermine the NHS, but it smacks of raw complacency to deny that the NHS is under pressure and that it is fraying at the edges. Simply to shout belligerently back across the chamber to the Labour front bench about what Labour did back when dinosaurs ruled the earth is not a response to the challenge that the NHS faces today.

I give way to Jamie Hepburn.

Jamie Hepburn: I am not sure that the end of the sentence was worth waiting for—

Jackson Carlaw: In that case, I will move on without letting Mr Hepburn take the intervention any further.

The challenge to the NHS is considerable. We know that a demographic time bomb is coming towards us and that there will be considerable pressure on the national health service. There are fewer nurses, and there is no point in pretending otherwise. What happened 10 years ago does not matter; what matters is the record of falling numbers of nurses now. We know that people in accident and emergency units are not receiving treatment in the suggested time and that complaints are increasing.

Last week, a close family relative of mine was admitted to one of Scotland's and Glasgow's busiest accident and emergency departments. I telephoned to find out how my relative was doing and was then phoned back. I thought that I was going to be told how my relative was doing but, in fact, the person had phoned me because they had worked out who I was and they wanted to plead with me to say at the first available opportunity in the Parliament that the situation in that accident and emergency department is deteriorating by the day. The department does not have sufficient beds to admit the patients who present. The demographic time bomb is materialising now. At weekends, the department is unable to cope with the number of patients who present. The person told me that people there are in tears because they cannot do the best for the patients whom they are there to serve. We must put complacency aside and face that reality.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We move to the open debate, with speeches of four minutes, please.

16:16

Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP): I congratulate Alex Neil on his new role as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing and wish him well in taking on the portfolio. I know that, whatever colleagues in the Labour Party might say, the portfolio will receive his full and undivided attention and commitment, as it did his predecessor's. As a new member of the Health and Sport Committee, I look forward to working constructively with colleagues from across the Parliament, particularly Jackie Baillie, Drew Smith, Jackson Carlaw and Nanette Milne. I hope that there will be occasions on which we will find common ground in the interests of the NHS and the country.

I cannot let the opportunity pass without paying tribute to Nicola Sturgeon, the longest-serving

health secretary of any Scottish Executive or Government and, without question, the most successful. Nicola Sturgeon left the NHS portfolio with a reputation for absolute competence and trustworthiness, and members from across the Parliament recognise that our NHS was in safe hands.

That safe stewardship has generated a substantial track record. Accident and emergency departments have been saved; prescription charges have been abolished; and there has been investment in new infrastructure, including at the Southern General in Glasgow and the new Dumfries and Galloway royal infirmary. Waiting times are low and hospital-acquired infections are at an all-time low. All that achievement is set against increasingly draconian financial circumstances over which the Scottish Government has no control. Of course, none of that would have been possible without the dedication and professionalism of NHS staff. The praise for them is, to be frank, the only part of the Labour Party's motion that I support.

Anyone would be proud of that track record. To repeat what the minister said, in 2014-15, there will be a record £11.6 billion in resource funding for health in Scotland, which is £826 million more than in 2011-12. I contrast the situation in Scotland with that in England and Wales. We are only too well aware of the ideological dismantling of the NHS in England by the Conservatives and Lib Dems, but is anyone aware that Labour-governed Wales will cut health spending by 8.1 per cent in real terms in the next financial year?

Jackie Baillie: Will the member take an intervention?

Aileen McLeod: If I thought for one second that the Labour Party had anything positive or constructive to say in this debate, I would gladly take an intervention from Jackie Baillie but, given the constant negativity and scaremongering from the Labour benches, I do not see the point of taking an intervention, not least because I know that Scotland's health service and staff deserve better from their elected representatives.

The Government's amendment refers to

"safe, sustainable and person-centred patient care".

The integration of adult health and social care presents a significant opportunity to help us to achieve that. Having social services and our NHS working together in true collaboration, with their efforts concentrated on the needs of the individual, is a worthwhile prize. One way in which we can meet the challenges of future resource restrictions and increasing demand is by pooling our resources and working flexibly and collaboratively.

In Dumfries and Galloway, the region with which I am most familiar as a South Scotland list MSP, the council and the NHS are working on a positive and constructive model for integration. They have chosen to focus on how to enable care workers and council staff to work most effectively in partnership with health professionals at all levels, while improving local accountability and scrutiny. There is a real willingness on the part of councils and the NHS to make that important reform work.

Integration is one way in which we can protect the NHS and enable it to provide the best possible services for the future and continue the direction of travel that was set out by Nicola Sturgeon. It will, I have no doubt, be a key focus and priority for the Scottish Government. I support the Government's amendment.

16:20

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde (Lab): We have heard from colleagues who have touched on a number of areas where patient care has fallen below acceptable standards. In my brief speech, I will focus on the levels of care for elderly patients with dementia or cognitive impairment. Concerns were identified by Healthcare Improvement Scotland during its recent inspection of wards across the country and have been raised by Alzheimer Scotland—Action on Dementia and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

I have taken time to analyse some of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's reports and, although it is important to note that the inspection watchdog has often highlighted the positive interactions between staff and patients, unfortunately it has also underlined a number of areas where the health boards must and need to improve.

Ten inspection reports have been published so far, and I hope that the facts arising from them will not be disputed by the SNP front bench. Some concerns occur again and again. Patients are not being routinely assessed for dementia or cognitive impairment upon admission. Indeed, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh recently reinforced that concern by stating that almost half of elderly patients on wards have dementia but have not been diagnosed. Care plans are not always put in place; health records are often incomplete; the number of times a patient is moved from one ward to another is not monitored; and the environment in the wards is not suited to the needs of patients with dementia.

The result of those failures is that there will be elderly patients who, during their stay in hospital, will feel confused, frightened and isolated, which culminates in, as described earlier by Jackie Baillie, a loss of dignity to them as individuals, upset to their families and great reputational risk to

the national health service. Those patients will not only feel a sense of helplessness, but be put at risk. The Royal College of Physicians has warned that the 1,600 patients with dementia who are in Scotland's hospitals at any one time are "highly vulnerable" and at higher risk of death while in hospital.

Now that I have covered some of the issues and concerns that have been raised by the reports, I will say a few words about the role of the health boards and Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Health boards need to understand the reasons for the poor level of care that has been identified by HIS, to ensure that they develop action plans that fully address the problems. However, at this time, I do not have full confidence that that is happening. HIS recently confirmed to me that it does not ask the health boards to examine the reasons for the inappropriate care that has been identified. Furthermore, HIS does not appear to monitor the action plans produced by the health boards. Moreover, it does not have the power to enforce action if the boards are failing to meet their own standards. It also appears that HIS does not have to validate the claims in the health boards' self-assessments.

I could go on and on. The minister, in his opening remarks, said that we should judge a Government by its actions. The question is, in light of the evidence, why has there been so little response? Why is there even less action? Why are we waiting for action in what is a serious situation?

16:24

Jamie Hepburn (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP): Earlier this week, the Royal College of Nursing launched a campaign called "This is nursing", to challenge the negative publicity about patient neglect and poor conditions. One of the nurses featured in the campaign is Alan Cook, a registered nurse in the acute stroke department at Glasgow royal infirmary. He says:

"My motto is to look after someone the way I would look after my own mum or dad."

That is a magnificent synopsis of what nursing and the NHS should be about. RCN Scotland director Theresa Fyfe says that the campaign is to inform and educate the public and celebrate the outstanding work that nurses do daily, often in extremely difficult situations.

I am not suggesting that Jackie Baillie is not genuine when she says that she recognises that the work that NHS staff do is exceptional. However, although it is right to highlight issues of concern, I am concerned that by constantly highlighting issues we are undermining such praise. I place the debate—

Jackie Baillie: I have been in the chamber time after time when the SNP has essentially hidden behind the NHS staff. It is NHS staff who are coming to me with stories about the NHS fraying at the edges because the Government is cutting their numbers. We all support NHS staff. There are ambulance staff in the gallery and I invite the member to meet them afterwards and hear the real stories rather than the spin.

Jamie Hepburn: It may be a surprise to Jackie Baillie, but we all have constituents who work in the NHS and we all hear issues of concern, which we rightly take forward. Let us compare the record of this Administration to that of the previous Labour Administration. *[Interruption.]* I am not surprised that Mr Smith does not want to hear this, but he should sit there and listen.

Margo MacDonald: Rather than going into the records, because we will never agree on that, could we try to find agreement on why there should be a shortfall on the wards? I spent three months in an NHS hospital this year. I know what the shortfalls are and I will tell the member if he asks me.

Jamie Hepburn: I would be delighted, as always, to speak to Ms MacDonald. If she does not mind, though, I will decide on the content of my speech.

I heard Jackie Baillie say that this is not the case, but it is a fact that there are more nurses and midwives in post now than in nine of the 10 years when Labour was in government. I do not doubt that the NHS is under pressure now. We will turn to the Tory record in a minute, if Mr Carlaw does not mind, because I heard him say that he does not want that debated today either.

I found it astonishing to hear Miss Baillie say, from a sedentary position, that Iain Gray did not say what the minister said he said on "Newsnight Scotland". It beggars belief. We all heard him say that the Labour Party

"wouldn't ring fence the health budget."

The Labour Party cannot hide behind that fact either.

I tried to intervene on Mr Carlaw earlier. I did not know that he was such a wallflower these days, but it seems he was a little upset by my precursory remark. I am astonished to hear the Tories say today that the Scottish Government is diverting money away from the NHS front line through free prescriptions. Prescriptions are part of the NHS front line. A report has been published about what the Tories are doing south of the border. They want to funnel £20 billion in private profit away from the NHS. That is the real agenda of the Tories, supported by the Labour Party through the better together campaign.

16:28

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I will concentrate my remarks on the Scottish Ambulance Service and start by paying tribute to the excellent staff who operate our ambulances and our control rooms.

However, the Scottish Ambulance Service is an emergency service that covers only urban areas. Many areas in the Highlands and Islands receive no emergency service from the Scottish Ambulance Service and it is left to NHS boards to pick up the pieces. I have a couple of examples of that. We had a recent case in Ardnamurchan in which NHS Highland had provided an on-call nurse to tend to emergencies because the nearest Scottish Ambulance Service ambulance was based more than an hour away. When the postholder left, it was NHS Highland that was left to deal with the fallout regarding emergency provision. The best that the Scottish Ambulance Service could suggest was the use of first responders. In other words, it sought to rely on unpaid members of the community to do its job for it. Indeed, it asked volunteer firefighters whether they could take on the job.

My second example concerns Glenelg, where the community raised significant concerns when their GP was seconded, because that GP had provided emergency cover. The nearest ambulance station is in Kyle, which is probably about an hour away over difficult roads, on which the conditions are dangerous in winter. Worse still, when there are staff shortages, the station in Kyle is often covered by staff who are based in Broadford in Skye. It is surely wrong that the Scottish Ambulance Service reneges on its responsibility to those communities.

In the past, single manning of ambulances was commonplace in the Highlands and Islands. Indeed, I heard tales of situations in which two ambulances and an air ambulance tried to attend to one casualty, because the distances were so large and the ambulances were inadequately staffed. Nicola Sturgeon appeared to address that issue and promised the Parliament that that would happen only in exceptional circumstances.

However, staffing shortages mean that single crewing is again becoming commonplace. Alternatively, shifts are covered by people who live some distance apart. We hear stories of delays in responding to 999 calls while the ambulance waits for back-up to arrive from the nearest station. That can take a lot of time and put people's lives at risk. Such delays in responding to 999 calls are worse in areas in which geography means that response times are already far too long.

Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP): Will the member give way?

Rhoda Grant: I will not take an intervention, because time is very short and I have many points to make.

That is not the only issue that puts patients at risk; dropped shifts do that, too. Trade unions tell us that current practice is such that when a day shift is covered by overtime, there is a risk that the on-call shift will not be covered at all. That is because the Scottish Ambulance Service is not willing to pay extra for on-call cover when it has already paid overtime. In other words, it wants people to cover such shifts for free. The trade unions tell us that some staff will make themselves available for free, while others will not.

There are also stories of situations that breach employment legislation, in which staff are being asked to work more than seven hours without a meal break and then, instead of being given a meal break, are being told to go and deal with a 999 call. Those staff are being left to take the responsibility for life-and-death decisions.

We are moving towards a single service for police and fire services, and we need to ensure that the new services are accountable and do not follow the Scottish Ambulance Service model.

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): You need to bring your remarks to a close.

Rhoda Grant: We need to learn that Scotland-wide targets do not work for rural areas, because they hide a lack of service. We also need to build in accountability. We have not had a meeting with the Scottish Ambulance Service since 2008. Prior to that, such meetings were quarterly. The Government needs to take responsibility, as it is only to the Government that the service is responsible.

16:33

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP): I welcome Mr Neil to his new role and I am sure that he will do exceptionally well. I mean that most sincerely, unlike some other members who have said the same thing.

I turn first to Jackson Carlaw, who obviously does not want us to discuss certain things today. I find it quite ironic that he called me "arrogant, smug and belligerent", as he is a master of all three traits in the chamber on a daily basis. He does not want us to talk about facts or about what is happening elsewhere in the UK at the moment.

I want to provide some facts. As the minister rightly pointed out, we are about to see a record spend of £11.6 billion in Scotland's national health service. Scotland has more qualified nurses and midwives per 1,000 members of the population than anywhere else in the UK—7.9, compared with 5.9 in England and 7.2 in Wales. Overall,

there was an increase in the NHS workforce of 3,331.4 whole-time equivalents between September 2006 and June 2012, which amounts to a head count of 3,475.

Margo MacDonald: I have the greatest respect for Kevin Stewart and he has fairly boned up on his figures, but the reality for me was being in hospital during a night shift when there should have been four nurses under a sister but, instead, there were two nurses, one needing a hip replacement and the other needing a knee replacement. I was better able to lift the patients than they were. That was the reality.

Kevin Stewart: I know that similar situations occur quite often—we hear about that in our mail bags—but they are not the norm in hospitals in this country. We would all like to spend even more on our national health service, but the only way we will be able to do that is if we control our own affairs.

At the moment, we are constricted by a fixed budget. There may be a real decline in our NHS because of the effects of what is happening down south—I refer to a 227-page report that has just been published in England by the clinical advisory group for prescribed services. Dr Eoin Clarke, founder of the Labour think tank Labour Left, has defended Labour's introduction of commissioning at local level, based on the argument that Labour would not have allowed monopolies to happen at a national scale. Dr Clarke said in his blog "The Green Benches" that the report

"paves the way for centralised and accelerated sell off of specialist services within the NHS at a national level".

He adds:

"If these services (or 'products' as they refer to them on page 6) are to go ahead and be sold off it would represent the biggest brain drain in the history of the NHS."

The Presiding Officer: Mr Stewart, there is a point of order.

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): On a point of order, what has the peroration about the English health service got to do with the Scottish health service?

Kevin Stewart: I will tell the member exactly what it has got to do with the—

The Presiding Officer: Mr Stewart, sit down please.

I think that what Mr Stewart is doing is making a contrast. He is very briefly referring to the English health service and I would hope that he will move on from that quickly.

Kevin Stewart: The report and its consequences will inevitably lead to cuts south of the border, which means that the Barnett

consequential of health spending will be cut to this Parliament. That is a fact.

The Presiding Officer: The member needs to wind up.

Kevin Stewart: I want to see the health service protected. We are at great risk from what is happening elsewhere. The NHS is safe in this Government's hands, but let us keep an eye on what—

The Presiding Officer: We move to the closing speeches.

16:37

Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con): I, too, congratulate the cabinet secretary on his new role and wish him well as he comes to grips with a health service that is unrelentingly and increasingly under pressure as it tries to cope with the ever-rising demands of an ageing population at one extreme of life and a higher birth rate at the other.

I do not know whether the cabinet secretary expected his baptism of fire to be closing for the Government in a debate led by Jackie Baillie for Labour, but I look forward to his no doubt robust response to criticism of his Government's management of the NHS when he gets to his feet in a few minutes' time. However, notwithstanding the cut and thrust of political debate, I hope that none of us ever forgets that we are dealing with people's wellbeing and lives when we discuss the NHS. It is not enough, as the First Minister and others always do when put under pressure, to deflect the criticism either on to the Westminster Government, which has continued to protect the health budget, whatever they say, or on to the health boards, which are struggling to make ends meet—it is all part, no doubt, of the SNP's obsession with the separation agenda.

As the RCN has said to us, greater transparency and more publicly available information are needed on how the health budget is spent, so that we can properly scrutinise the impact on healthcare of decisions that are made by the Government centrally and by health boards locally. The Health and Sport Committee intends to look very carefully at the budget proposals to be announced tomorrow.

Sadly, no Government minister nowadays will admit to shortcomings in the system, but the story on the ground is often different—we have heard a number of examples of that today, from Jackie Baillie, whose speech on the Ambulance Service in particular was horrifying, from Jackson Carlaw about A and E services in Glasgow and from many others. Various issues were raised across the chamber.

The fall in nursing numbers particularly concerns me. I saw the pressures myself in the acute sector when I was in hospital last year for hip replacement surgery. Although that is a common procedure, it is major surgery and things can easily go wrong in the early days of recovery when skilled nursing is essential. I could not fault the care that I received from a dedicated and skilled team of nurses, but they were working under pressure and their morale was quite low. They knew who I was and came to me to ask me to raise the issue in Parliament because they were seriously worried about the pressure that they were under because of staff shortages.

There were adequate numbers of nurses during the day but, like Margo MacDonald, I found the situation at night to be quite concerning. During my stay in the ward, it was staffed at night by one charge nurse, who was a superb nurse, and one young auxiliary. The charge nurse told me that he was looking after six intravenous drips on the ward, there were several frail elderly patients who required help with toileting, and, of course, there were the usual drugs and breakfasts to be dispensed. Fortunately, no serious problems arose, but it would have taken just one emergency for that to change rapidly, and I know that the staffing shortage is a concern for nurses on the ground and for senior management.

My experience is just one small example, but it is not fair to put our nursing staff under such severe pressure. The Government needs to look at how that situation can be improved. As we have heard from members across the chamber today, all is not as rosy on the ground as the Government would appear to believe.

On spending on the NHS, after the interesting session that the Health and Sport Committee had this week on the vexed issue of access to drugs in the NHS, perhaps the Government should instigate a societal debate on the issue, and consider scrutinising other healthcare interventions as rigorously as the availability of drugs. In other words, should we have an equivalent of the Scottish Medicines Consortium to assess the range of procedures that are available to patients?

As pressures on resources increase, those are the sorts of difficult issues that we will have to face up to, but we should not start with cutting front-line services such as nursing. If we continue to do so, we will have to deal with the consequences. We are not criticising for criticism's sake; there is no doubt that the demographic time bomb is already here, and that services are finding it difficult to cope with the extra demands that are being made of them. I am part of that demographic time bomb, and I have a serious personal interest in the effective functioning of the NHS. It has never been

perfect, but it is currently under greater pressure than it has ever been under before, so serious thought must be given urgently to dealing with its problems or staff will become more disillusioned and simply leave its employment.

The debate has been lively. I hope that the cabinet secretary will reflect on the issues that have been raised and give his support to NHS staff who are doing their best in difficult circumstances to maintain high standards of patient care. He is not the only one with a clear commitment to the NHS; mine goes back more than 50 years.

16:42

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing (Alex Neil): As this is my first speech in my new role, I thank all those who have sent cards of congratulations and best wishes. They are much appreciated. Obviously, I have a hard act to follow, but I intend to do everything I can to rise to the task in front of me.

Every member has said this today, but it is not just lip service to pay tribute to everyone who works in the national health service, and, indeed, to the many people who are not employed by the health service but whose services are essential to its success.

The NHS in Scotland is facing four major challenges in the years ahead. The first and most obvious is the budget. The fact of life is that, despite our ring fencing of the NHS budget, resources are not going up as fast as the demands on the health service. We must face the reality that with fewer resources, relatively speaking, we have to meet greater demand across the country. That is a central challenge for every one of us.

The second challenge—the ageing of the population—has also been referred to many times. The challenge is not just the overall ageing of the population but the fact that we want to be healthy and fit as we live the extra years that we might have.

The third major challenge is the costs of new technologies and medicines. Clearly, those costs are rising quickly, but we need those new technologies and medicines in order to achieve our vision and everything that we want to do for our people.

The final big challenge, which is fairly concentrated but nevertheless must not be underestimated, is presented by the levels of poverty and deprivation that we have in Scotland. If I may say so, legislation emanating from south of the border, particularly if benefits are frozen, will add to that challenge and make it even greater. If

benefits are frozen, that will drive more people into poverty and create even more demands not just on the national health service but on a range of our public services in Scotland.

My attitude to the job will be to have an open door. With a £12 billion budget and a total staff of more than 150,000 people plus all the people who are, in effect, indirectly employed by the health service, I am under no illusion that we will not have areas of pressure and difficulty. Of course we will. If people come to me, as they have done, I will behave in the same way as my predecessor did. I will listen to what people say and, if there is a problem that needs sorted, I will work with the relevant people in the health service to sort that problem.

Dr Simpson: Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

Alex Neil: I do not have much time and I want to finish what I have to say.

In my area, I have identified a number of issues that need to be tackled. By no means every issue is a result of a shortage of resources. Sometimes, issues are due to other factors that are not directly under the control of the NHS.

One thing that I intend to do is to make some unannounced visits, not just to go to the health boards and meet the chief executives and the chairs but to talk to practitioners such as the nurses, the doctors and the porters—people who are on the factory floor in the health service—to find out their opinions and their views on how we can do things better, with better quality and in greater quantity.

There are areas for improvement—of course there are—and my priority will be to look at them. Top of that list, I believe, is the need to integrate adult health and social care services to get more of a continuum and better-quality services for that category of people.

Jackie Baillie: Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

Alex Neil: I do not have time, I am afraid. I want to cover this.

As everyone knows, we are totally committed to the national health service. We will face up to areas where there are particular challenges and we will do what we can to rise to those challenges and find solutions to the problems. I say this, though, and particularly to Jackie Baillie: when a member comes across a difficulty in an area, they should not generalise from the particular and exaggerate, using phraseology such as, “The NHS is crumbling.” That is a total insult to everybody who is committed to the NHS. I say to the Labour Party, “Be responsible and be grown-up.” The fact of life is that a great deal of good is happening in

the health service. One of those good things is the record spending. Despite the financial pressures, we are spending a record amount in the health service.

Let me comment on some of the particular issues that have been raised. Duncan McNeil, fairly, raised the issue of dementia. We are one of the world leaders in the treatment of dementia. Our work in Scotland is internationally recognised, and with Alzheimer's Scotland we are jointly funding a nurse consultant for general hospitals in every health board area. There is a total of 300 dementia champions to work in general hospitals, and more will be appointed as the years go by.

The Presiding Officer: Cabinet secretary, I ask you to bring your remarks to a close.

Alex Neil: When it comes to waiting times in accident and emergency departments, had Labour's plans to close A and Es been implemented, those waiting times would be far longer than they are today. We should recognise Labour's failures. South of the border, it cut the health budget by £20 billion. It has no entitlement to lecture anyone about the future of the health service. Presiding Officer, let me tell you this—the NHS is safe in our hands and only in our hands.

16:50

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): I join others in welcoming Alex Neil to the challenges of the health part of his portfolio. He has a hard act to follow. However, he will also have to overcome what Jackson Carlaw correctly referred to as the raw complacency illustrated by Michael Matheson in his opening speech today—it was one of the worst that I have ever heard in the chamber, matched only by the repetitive, recycled speeches from back benchers.

I welcomed the initial tone of Alex Neil's speech, which, for the first time, admitted that the health service is under severe pressure. That glimpse of reality gives me some hope that we might move forward.

This has been an interesting debate. The motion reflects a reality that is the opposite of the hyperbole of the SNP and the self-congratulation and the self-deception contained in its amendment.

I welcome the minister's initial remarks about some of the realities. The issue of demographics will really confront us in the future—it is already happening.

Let us consider the speeches that were given. On Health Improvement Scotland inspections—we called for them and I was delighted when the previous health secretary announced them—as Duncan McNeil said in his excellent analysis, there

are now ten reports. I have been calling for a thematic report that brings together such reports—as used to be done for care inspections—and is sent to health boards so that they can respond proactively. Jackie Baillie and Duncan McNeil are right that boards are waiting to be inspected before making changes; they are not making the changes that we all want to see and they are not showing improvement. The issue is vital in relation to cognitive impairment, so I hope that the minister will agree to ensure that HIS produces a thematic report.

As there have now been ten announced reports, my second request is that the cabinet secretary ensures that we now move swiftly to unannounced reports, because once a thematic report is produced, the board should be able to address the issues.

Delayed discharges are a linked problem. When patients are moved, it is commonly because they are ready—or nearly ready—for discharge. Labour tackled the problem by reducing delayed discharges from 3,000 in 2001 and promising that they would be at zero by March 2008. The SNP Government indeed achieved that, but Shona Robison and Nicola Sturgeon chose to make a further promise that the number would be kept at zero. In not a single quarter since 2008—except at the annual review in March—has that promise been kept.

Tonight, there will be 1,000 patients occupying beds, 630 of whom are on the delayed discharge database, fit to be discharged. My FOI request last year resulted in only one clear, honest and unambiguous response. That came from Fife NHS Board, which revealed that 90 patients who had been declared fit to go home had died while on the delayed discharge database. The delayed discharge situation has other effects such as increasing the number of cancellations of operations, which itself has a significant knock-on effect.

The SNP 2007 manifesto promised that the number of beds would not be reduced. The number has been reduced by just under 1,000, which is a 5 per cent reduction in staffed beds. We all agree that the debate should be put to bed. Bed numbers can be reduced by removing delayed discharges for example, so we should do that. However, we must be very careful about how closures are handled; it must be done well.

Let us turn to waiting times. A family member of mine was recently referred for possible cancer. It was diagnosed rapidly, but he then had to wait well over the target period for admission for his operation. When he was finally admitted, some 35 days after the target, his operation was cancelled due to an emergency in the preceding operation. That is entirely understandable and the entire

family accepted it, but he was then offered another appointment a month further on, although he was already beyond the target date.

The 10 per cent of patients who are not being admitted in line with the referral-to-treatment-time guarantee are human beings whom we are treating badly. It is a great target, but in Wales—Michael Matheson used a Welsh comparison but is speaking at this point, Presiding Officer; perhaps he might like to listen to this—cancer targets are being achieved to a far higher degree and far more quickly than elsewhere. Cancer operations are critical.

Do we know what happens to the 10 per cent of patients for whom the target is not achieved? Does the cabinet secretary know? Do we have the statistics to understand? We do not, except in some cases. I suggest that that needs to be examined closely.

We had the waiting times scandal in NHS Lothian. Does anyone really believe that that is the only place where game playing occurred? I await Audit Scotland's report with great interest.

I praise NHS Lothian not simply for coming clean but for its subsequent decision to establish a whistleblowers line. What happened there with waiting times was interesting in that, almost two years before I raised the subject in the Parliament, a bed manager raised it within NHS Lothian and was told not to raise it externally because an internal review would be carried out. She was refused sight of that internal review, and she eventually resigned from the health service because her complaints were not being taken—*[Interruption.]*

The Presiding Officer: One moment, Dr Simpson. It would help if the three members on the front bench would listen to the debate.

Dr Simpson: The individual whom I mentioned resigned because she was gagged. We are getting consistent reports of that from clinicians up and down the country. I was previously a doctor, so I still have many contacts among clinicians and am repeatedly being told that health boards are gagging them—stopping them talking to MSPs and, indeed, the Health and Sport Committee, as I said in that committee yesterday. I hope that the new cabinet secretary will issue a very clear instruction to health boards that if they are caught gagging any clinician from talking to MSPs about the pressures that the health service is under, they will be dealt with extremely severely.

I turn to the workforce, which every SNP back bencher raised in a recycled way—they said that there was more, less or whatever. The fact is—Margo MacDonald will want to know this—that there are 2,500 fewer nurses. That is the reality. When the reduction occurred and who had more

at which point in time are completely irrelevant points. Can we lose 5 per cent of our clinical workforce without it having any effect on the health service? I find the idea that we can unbelievable, but that is the truth that has been peddled in the chamber for the past two years. I am glad that the cabinet secretary is adopting a new tone on that and I look forward to it being maintained. We are not scaremongering; we are referring to the truth.

If Kevin Stewart wants comparisons with England, I tell him that *Hansard* for 12 June reports Simon Burns as saying that there were 3,700 fewer nurses in England. The statistics may be somewhat different, but a tenfold difference in cuts in Scotland is highly significant. England also had 934 more midwives.

I do not have time—

The Presiding Officer: The member needs to wind up.

Dr Simpson: I have to conclude rapidly and have left the most important bit almost to last—the ambulance service. Jackie Baillie and Rhoda Grant illustrated graphically the problems in that service. It is another service under pressure. I ask the cabinet secretary to respond in the way that he suggested and to meet the trade unions from the ambulance service about that. I hope that he will do so. I would take an intervention even at this late stage.

The Presiding Officer: No, you will not. You are finished, Dr Simpson, I am afraid. You need to sit down.

Dr Simpson: I will end by saying—

The Presiding Officer: Dr Simpson, you do need to sit down, please.

Business Motion

16:59

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-04189, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 25 September 2012

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Public Consultation on the Carloway Report (Reforming Scots Criminal Law and Practice)

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 26 September 2012

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Health and Wellbeing

followed by Scottish Government Debate: Green Bus Fund

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 27 September 2012

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Debate: Common Agricultural Policy

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 2 October 2012

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

followed by Topical Questions (if selected)

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Wednesday 3 October 2012

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions
Infrastructure, Investment and Cities;
Culture and External Affairs

followed by Scottish Government Business

followed by Business Motions

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

followed by Members' Business

Thursday 4 October 2012

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

12.30 pm Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.30 pm Scottish Government Business

followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

Motion agreed to.

Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): The next item of business is consideration of two Parliamentary Bureau motions: motion S4M-04190, on committee membership; and motion S4M-04191, on substitution on committees. The question on the motions will be put at decision time.

Motions moved,

That the Parliament agrees that Iain Gray be appointed to replace Jackie Baillie as a member of the Welfare Reform Committee.

That the Parliament agrees that—

Jackie Baillie be appointed as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Welfare Reform Committee;

Claire Baker be appointed as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee;

Mark Griffin be appointed to replace Hanzala Malik as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Education and Culture Committee;

Jenny Marra be appointed to replace Claire Baker as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee; and

Malcolm Chisholm be appointed to replace Jenny Marra as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Equal Opportunities Committee.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

Decision Time

17:00

The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick): There are six questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that amendment S4M-04165.2, in the name of Keith Brown, which seeks to amend motion S4M-04165, in the name of Elaine Murray, on rail, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (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)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (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)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 McAlpine, Joan (South 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)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)

Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (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) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 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)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Abstentions

MacDonald, Margo (Lothian) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 64, Against 55, Abstentions 1.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-04165, in the name of Elaine Murray, as amended, on rail, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (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)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (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)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 McAlpine, Joan (South 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)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (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) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 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)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Abstentions

MacDonald, Margo (Lothian) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 64, Against 55, Abstentions 1.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament welcomes the substantial increase in the number of people using rail; recognises that punctuality and reliability are currently at record levels; notes the record investment in rail since 2007, including new lines between Airdrie and Bathgate and Stirling and Kincardine; also welcomes the announcements of 21 June and 4 July 2012 by the Minister for Transport and Veterans of a £5 billion programme of future investment in rail, including the new Borders Railway, and details of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP); further recognises that EGIP will bring faster journeys, new trains, enhanced capacity, a new station at Edinburgh Gateway, improvements to Edinburgh Haymarket station and previously unplanned improvements to Glasgow Queen Street; further welcomes the commitment to future electrification of the network through EGIP and the High Level Output Specification, and believes that this announcement is fully consistent with the Scottish Government's stated aim of investing in infrastructure to stimulate the economy and that, as a result, businesses, passengers and areas will benefit.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that amendment S4M-04161.1, in the name of Michael Matheson, which seeks to amend motion S4M-04161, in the name of Jackie Baillie, on patient care, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (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)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (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)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)

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)
 McAlpine, Joan (South 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)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (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) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 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)

McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

Abstentions

MacDonald, Margo (Lothian) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 64, Against 55, Abstentions 1.

Amendment agreed to.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-04161, in the name of Jackie Baillie, as amended, on patient care, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

Members: No.

The Presiding Officer: There will be a division.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (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)
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (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)
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (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)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 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)
 McAlpine, Joan (South 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)
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Salmond, Alex (Aberdeenshire East) (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)
 Walker, Bill (Dunfermline) (Ind)
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)
 Davidson, Ruth (Glasgow) (Con)
 Dugdale, Kezia (Lothian) (Lab)
 Eadie, Helen (Cowdenbeath) (Lab)
 Fee, Mary (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)
 Kelly, James (Rutherglen) (Lab)
 Lamont, Johann (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab)
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 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)
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)

McLetchie, David (Lothian) (Con)
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 McNeil, Duncan (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)
 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)
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Simpson, Dr Richard (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Smith, Drew (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Abstentions

MacDonald, Margo (Lothian) (Ind)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division is: For 63, Against 55, Abstentions 1.

Motion, as amended, agreed to,

That the Parliament shares the Scottish Government's commitment to the NHS; recognises the benefits of the health budget being protected; commends NHS staff for their dedication and hard work, which has provided patients and families with high quality care, including the lowest waiting times on record, lowest infection rates and substantial improvements in patient safety; further recognises that the NHS workforce in Scotland has grown since 2006, including an increase in emergency services staff; notes the value of the inspection system brought in by the Scottish Government that both highlights high quality patient care and identifies where there are problems to be addressed, and welcomes the new Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing's continued fundamental support for the efforts of NHS staff, including nurses, doctors and allied health professionals, and the Scottish Government's clear and unbroken commitment to safe, sustainable and person-centred patient care.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-04190, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on committee membership, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that Iain Gray be appointed to replace Jackie Baillie as a member of the Welfare Reform Committee.

The Presiding Officer: The next question is, that motion S4M-04191, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on substitution on committees, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that—

Jackie Baillie be appointed as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Welfare Reform Committee;

Claire Baker be appointed as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee;

Mark Griffin be appointed to replace Hanzala Malik as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Education and Culture Committee;

Jenny Marra be appointed to replace Claire Baker as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee; and

Malcolm Chisholm be appointed to replace Jenny Marra as the Scottish Labour Party substitute on the Equal Opportunities Committee.

Great Polish Map of Scotland

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):

The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-03061, in the name of Christine Grahame, on the great Polish map. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

Motion debated,

That the Parliament recognises the historic significance of The Great Polish Map of Scotland in the village of Eddleston in the Scottish Borders, designed and built as a labour of love by a group of young Polish geographers from the Jagiellonian University of Krakow in 1975 at the request of General Maczek, former Polish wartime Commander of the 1st Armoured Division, and the war veteran, Jan Tomasiak; notes that this commemorates the vital role of Polish forces in the defence of Scotland in the Second World War and is a token of thanks to the people of Scotland for the hospitality and friendship given to the Polish people not only during the war years but also in the decades that followed; considers that this 50 x 40 metre, three-dimensional outdoor 1:10,000 scale model of Scotland, complete with mountains, landscape, flowing rivers, estuaries, coasts and seas located is a remarkable example of topographic landscape modelling of a complete country, with a design and layout involving pioneering survey and construction techniques with dynamic representation of major river basins using a gravity-driven water supply; further congratulates Mapa Scotland, a voluntary group established to protect and restore this unique three dimensional representation, reminding Scots of the historical heritage linking Poland with Scotland, and considers that this project deserves support.

17:07

Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): Szanowna Pani Przewodnicząca, z wielką przyjemnością przemawiam na temat Wielkiej Mapy Szkocji.

Presiding Officer, it is a great pleasure to speak on the subject of the great Polish map of Scotland.

It is also a great pleasure that the debate is being simultaneously translated into Polish—a first for a language other than Scots or Gaelic. I said those few faltering words in Polish with thanks to our many Polish colleagues in Parliament—I thank Maria, Waldi, David and Monika—for pronunciation lessons. I apologise for unintended errors, despite their best endeavours.

I welcome the people in the public gallery, including the Polish consul, and I remind all that there is a reception afterwards in TG.20 with the Polish consul, Mapa Scotland and representatives from the Barony hotel.

I thank all the members who signed the motion but, most of all, I thank Mapa Scotland—which is now a charity—which comprises a band of enthusiastic volunteers who have secured funding of £20,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and listed status for the map from Historic Scotland.

Added to that is an agreement from the new owners of the Barony hotel in Eddleston in my constituency, where the map is located, on match funding of £20,000 together with an access route to the map. When we think that some £60,000 will secure materials, with free labour from volunteers, Mapa has come a long way.

But—to the beginning. Constructed in 1975, the great Polish map of Scotland is reputedly a globally unique example of topographic landscape modelling of a complete country. It is a very large—50m by 40m—three-dimensional outdoor scale model of the Scottish landscape, with mountains, rivers, estuaries, coasts and seas. It is located in a walled oval excavation that is 1.5m deep. I know that it is large because, before health and safety officials stepped in, I jumped down and stood on the Scottish Borders. Well, I would, wouldn't I?

The map's design and layout involved pioneering survey and construction techniques and it incorporates a unique dynamic representation of major river basins that uses a gravity-driven water supply. The map may commemorate a defence strategy map that was used in the 1940s when Barony castle housed a Polish military staff training college.

It was designed by young Polish geographers from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow in 1975, at the request of war veteran Jan Tomasiak, who owned the hotel at the time and who financed the project, provided the ground, procured materials and recruited local labour for its construction. One of the labourers was Kazimierz Trafas and the current Polish consul general is Dr Tomasz Trafas. Yes—he is a close relative.

The map is a reminder of the vital role of Polish forces in the defence of Scotland in the second world war, and of the hospitality and friendship that was given to the Poles by the Scots, not only during the war years but in the decades that followed and up to the present day.

Many Poles were unable to return to their homes because of political persecution and border changes in Europe, so they remained in Scotland. One such person was the great General Stanisław Maczek, who settled in Edinburgh after the war and became a close family friend of the Tomasiaks and a regular guest at Barony castle. Maczek was known as the most accomplished Polish tank commander of world war 2. After the fall of France, he and many of his men made their way to London and formed the nucleus of a Polish armed force that was based in Scotland and which defended our shoreline between Montrose and Dundee. Maczek had long years of exile and was deprived of his Polish citizenship by the post-war Stalinist regime. His life and Scottish connection are worth

commemorating. He lived to be 102 and died in Edinburgh.

The focus of work on the great map is the full restoration of the structure to its original appearance, including, eventually, surrounding sea, flowing rivers and lochs. The historic themes are the second world war on the British home front and the relationship that developed between Polish citizens and communities in Tweeddale and Midlothian.

The map was neglected and almost forgotten, as were the ties from wartime to today. It is time to change that. As is the Italian chapel on Orkney, the map is a symbol of our past—in this instance, it is the shared history of Poland and Scotland. It deserves our attention and deserves to be restored.

There are at least 60,000 Polish people in Scotland. The map represents our Polish and Scottish ties.

W Szkocji mieszka przynajmniej 60,000 Polaków. Ta mapa reprezentuje polskie i szkockie więzy.

Now, wi ma heid birlin with my Polish endeavours, I look forward to the rest of the speeches—and, indeed, to the Polish translation of “wi ma heid birlin”.

17:12

Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab): I am delighted to speak in the debate and I thank Christine Grahame for securing it. I apologise to the people who have attended Parliament today, because I will not be able to attend the reception after the debate, as I have to chair the cross-party group on China. Such are the challenges of being a member of the Scottish Parliament.

The great Polish map of Scotland and its restoration deserve more attention. The project will surely benefit from the debate, as the volunteers seek to bring the attention of local people, as well as people further afield, to that remarkable model. I declare an interest, in that in a previous life it was a pleasure for me to meet Jan Tomasik, when he was in business in Glasgow. I found him to be an honourable man, who was committed to his home in Scotland while always being mindful of his Polish origins. It is no surprise to me to hear that he was whole-heartedly committed to the project.

We recognise the efforts of Dr Trafas, the Polish consul general, and the incredible efforts of the young Polish geographers from the university in Krakow who contributed so much to the design and build of the map in 1975.

The map serves to commemorate not only the crucial role of Polish forces in helping to defend

Scotland during the second world war, but the warmth and hospitality with which Polish troops were greeted and with which a new generation has been greeted. It also reflects the warmth that Poles have brought to Scotland and the friendships that have been built here.

I have been pleased to meet Graham Russell and Keith Burns of Mapa Scotland, and I went to see the map on several occasions in June and July, during the terrible rains. I could see the effect of the dampness on the map then.

Mapa Scotland's work is to be commended. The restoration of the great map is a significant project. The map is huge by any description—it is 50m by 40m—and it is a three-dimensional scale model of Scotland that includes its mountains, rivers, estuaries, coasts and seas. It has a gravity-driven water supply, and there is plenty of water supplying it.

The project is large and daunting, but the map has fantastic potential. When it is restored, it could play a significant role in increasing tourism to the area. It could be used in an educational context to honour the historic links to which my friend Christine Grahame alluded. The project is therefore worth backing.

I am very glad, as other members clearly are, that Historic Scotland has awarded the map B-listed status for its contribution to Scotland's built heritage. That will help the restoration project as it moves forward, and I know that the volunteers who are involved in Mapa Scotland are delighted with the decision. The decision will also help to protect the map from any change of ownership at the Barony hotel in the future. That is a real concern, given that the hotel was recently on the market. The fact that it has now been sold and, under the auspices of an Edinburgh-based group, will be branded with Mercure signage by the end of next month is some comfort to all in South Scotland. I trust that the new owners will co-operate with the Polish community, Mapa Scotland and others to deliver a future for the map and the memories of all those involved.

17:17

Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP): I congratulate Christine Grahame on securing the debate, which is timely, as it was announced on Monday that the great Polish map has been awarded listed status. The map is undoubtedly worthy of protection, and I am delighted that future generations will be able to admire the attention to detail in that unique structure, which looks extraordinary. The use of gravity-driven water to recreate our rivers and lochs is truly magnificent.

I am sure that all members who will speak in the debate will concur on the map's historic importance, not only as a feat of architecture and a reminder of the sacrifices that Polish soldiers made during world war two, but as a symbol of the long-standing links between Poland and Scotland that were forged in that era and which have remained strong ever since. I want to concentrate on that connection, which has continued to the present day.

A number of years ago, Ross and Cromarty District Council twinned with the region that is known as the "Polish Highlands". Sometimes people wonder whether civic twinning has any real purpose, but that twinning did have real purpose for our education—we learned a number of things. We learned about the thousands of Scots who went to Poland and settled there in the previous two centuries, and about a pipe band from there, which marched all over Ross and Cromarty on several occasions. Its bagpipes were fantastic and they looked quite unlike ours. They had no tartan, but they were made of sheepskin. That stayed in my mind. The band played as beautifully as ours do.

All of Scotland has benefited from the special relationship with Poland—I think particularly of the Polish food shops that can now be found in any city in Scotland and our supermarkets' dedication to providing Polish produce. The Highlands and Islands in particular have attracted a large number of Poles. As late as 2004, the Highlands and Islands were threatened with yet further depopulation, but the situation has changed dramatically. Inverness is still one of Europe's fastest-growing cities. That growth is concurrent with economic regeneration and is attributable in part to Inverness's active and dynamic Polish community, which now forms roughly 10 per cent of its population. Across the Highlands and Islands, approximately 69 per cent of all immigrants come from Poland, which shows the strong ties that exist between our two nations.

The mutual benefit of those ties is evident. They contribute hugely to civic life in Inverness and the surrounding region. I was privileged to have the chance to recognise that when I was able to invite Zosia Wierzbowicz-Fraser, the chair of the Inverness Polish Association, to be my local hero at the opening of Parliament last summer. Among other activities, Zosia has organised translation services and accommodation, and the Inverness Polish Association has acted as a welcoming group that helps Poles to settle and to feel welcome in the city.

In contributing so much to society, Zosia is typical of the Polish community in Scotland. I am sure that all of us in this chamber recognise the value to future generations of growing up in towns,

cities and villages in which many cultures are known and celebrated, and in which an awareness of our place in the world and that of others helps to inculcate a sense of internationalism and global citizenry. I am sure that that will be all the more beneficial when Scotland regains its place in the community of nations.

Once again, I welcome the continuing restoration of the map.

17:21

Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP): I congratulate Christine Grahame on securing this debate and Mapa Scotland on its campaign for the restoration of the map.

The story of the great Polish map of Scotland in Eddleston embodies much more than the important structure itself. It is a story with meaning and it is a story of history, romance and friendship. Some of that remarkable history has already been recounted. As has already been referred to, the map is claimed to be the largest outdoor relief map in the world, and I believe that it is the totem for a drama-documentary or even a film. The map was the vision of General Maczek—a true Polish military hero—and his friend, Jan Tomasik, which was realised in this 2,000m², three-dimensional model of our nation.

The history of the map encompasses a friendship that involves the fall of France and the 10th armoured cavalry brigade of Polish forces being stationed at Barony castle. Those Polish forces were befriended by the Scottish people and were entrusted by the War Office to plan a defence of Scotland's east coast during world war two. That defence was based on a map of the Scottish landscape that they developed.

At that point, history turns to romance. Under the command of the hero, General Maczek, the courageous Polish soldiers, including Maczek and Tomasik, played a significant part in the Normandy landings and the liberation of Europe. However, that was only the start of the romance. Due to the post-war political situation in Poland and the fact that he was a great leader and hero of the people, Maczek found himself—along with many brave Polish soldiers—in exile in Scotland.

Jan Tomasik, who had been billeted at Barony castle, eventually bought the hotel in 1968—I believe that there is no such thing as coincidence. He then found his friend and wartime commander, the non-pensioned Maczek, working as a barman in Edinburgh. À la Eisenhower and Culzean castle, he took Maczek home and installed him in a suite in Barony castle, and there the two planned a way of ensuring that their wartime strategy map could be remembered in a more permanent form, which resulted in the great Polish map of Scotland that

we have today and which we wish to be fully restored in all its glory—not just as a tourist attraction, but as a testament to the relationship between the Scots and Polish peoples.

Four minutes can never do justice to the history—real or romantic—of the mapa. What the mapa does is confirm the friendship and the strong bond between two soldiers—two men—and between our two countries.

The Polish consul general, Tomasz Trafas, is a brother of the person who designed the mapa—as I said, there is no such thing as coincidence. In a recent interview, he said that the map is

“a rare symbol of the broader heritage and a symbol of the cultural links between Poland and Scotland”.

We could not have put it better.

Dla przyjacieli. Dziękuję.

17:25

Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con): I, too, thank Christine Grahame for securing the debate. The great Polish map of Scotland that was conceived by General Maczek and Jan Tomaszik is a remarkable and enduring tribute to the warm relationship between exiled Polish forces and the people of Scotland that was prominent during the second world war. It is also a tribute to the skills of the young geographers from the Jagiellonian University of Kraków who, in 1975, created the map on the site of the former wartime tactical map that their Polish predecessors had designed on the putting green of the hotel.

It would be regrettable if this unusual tribute and memorial were to risk sustained deterioration. It is encouraging that, in 2010, the Mapa Scotland group was formed to restore the map fully to its original condition and to promote it as a heritage monument, educational resource and visitor attraction. The £20,000 grant from the UK Heritage Lottery Fund is a welcome boost, as is the co-operation of the hotel owners, to which Christine Grahame referred. I congratulate them and Mapa Scotland on their endeavours. The recently conferred listed status should afford further protection.

Of course, the great Polish map of Scotland is just one development that reflects the long-standing relationship between Scotland and Poland. I will broaden out the debate to explore and comment on that.

Polish immigration has enriched Scotland's culture and has strengthened our economy over many years. If I may be permitted a little self-indulgence, I note that one of my favourite composers is Frédéric Chopin. He is widely regarded as perhaps the greatest Polish composer and is among the greatest composers of all time

for the piano. An important influence on Chopin's life was his Scottish pupil, Jane Stirling. With her encouragement, he visited Scotland in 1848, staying at Calder house, near Edinburgh, and at Johnstone castle in Renfrewshire, my home area. While he was in Edinburgh, he spent time residing at the home of a Polish doctor, Adam Łyszczyński, by whom he was being treated. By contrast, Renfrewshire must have seemed slightly forbidding, as Chopin wrote to his friend, Wojciech Grzymała:

“The weather has changed and it is dreadful outside.”

Some things do not change very much.

The connections between Poland and Scotland are of long standing. In 2012, although not a lot has changed about the Renfrewshire weather, the social climate for our Renfrewshire Polish community is very positive. In February, the Renfrewshire Polish Association was established to bring support to the Polish community living in Renfrewshire and to promote Polish culture in the area. The association's activities are directed at various age groups, and it aims to provide access to the widest possible part of the Polish community but with a focus on Renfrewshire. Its objectives are to organise events for children, encouraging their development and integration with peers and teaching them the Polish language; to organise events related to Polish traditions and culture; to hold events that allow the Polish minority to integrate with the Scottish community and other national minorities in Renfrewshire; to encourage self-development and improve self-confidence within the Polish community; and, importantly, to assist with the acquisition and improvement of work-related qualifications and language skills.

Given that Polish immigrants face many challenges, the Renfrewshire Polish Association, with its committed volunteers, is doing excellent work both to support my local Polish community and to enhance Renfrewshire. I thank the association for that invaluable work. Given the abundance of musical talent in Renfrewshire, perhaps the Renfrewshire Polish Association would like to consider a Frédéric Chopin celebratory event in memory of his visit to Johnstone 164 years ago. Without doubt, any problems of weather would be more than eclipsed by the beauty of his music.

I thank all our Polish residents, wherever they are in Scotland, for enriching our Scottish communities.

17:29

Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP): Thank you, Presiding Officer, and dzień dobry—I hope that that has successfully communicated my greeting to you of good

afternoon, in Polish. I, too, welcome the Polish consul to the public gallery. I have had the pleasure of meeting the consul on many occasions in Perth.

I congratulate my colleague Christine Grahame on securing this important debate and thank her for giving us the opportunity to highlight not just the considerable achievements of those who were behind the great Polish map of Scotland, but the wider and deeper connections between our countries that that wonderful endeavour represents. We have heard something of that already in the debate. The efforts to ensure that the map is restored and preserved, which have been described, are to be welcomed.

Before I turn to the deep connections between my home patch of Perthshire and Poland, I will briefly mention my personal links with Poland. I had the privilege of attending a summer school at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in July and August of 1982, some months after martial law had been declared and after trade sanctions had been imposed. I was there as part of a student exchange programme that was, uniquely, allowed to go ahead in those particular circumstances. It was a formative experience and led to my participation, some months later in December of that year, with some pride, in a march in support of Solidarność, in Amsterdam where I was studying at the time. I was keen to participate in that march of solidarity, having had those personal experiences in Poland. I have maintained a deep affection for and interest in Poland since that time.

The same applies to Perthshire, whose connections with Poland run deep. For example, the links can be seen in the fact that Perth and Kinross Council has been twinned with the Polish city of Bydgoszcz for many years and, more poignantly, that a special section of Wellshill cemetery in Perth is set aside for Polish war graves from the second world war. Indeed, 381 members of the Polish forces lie at rest in Wellshill, which is about half of all the Polish war graves in Scotland. Many Polish forces were based in Perthshire and, after the war, a great many stayed on, marrying locally, bringing up families and becoming an important part of the local community. That is one reason why a quick perusal of the local telephone book in Perth shows that many people with Polish surnames live in the area.

As part of the year of homecoming in 2009, Horsecross Arts, a multi-award-winning arts organisation in Perth, staged “Scottish Tides-Polish Spring”, which was a three-month-long cultural feast celebrating centuries of close connections between Scotland and Poland. As we have heard, the relationship is a special one that began with the relocation of tens of thousands of

Scots to Poland in the late 16th century and the creation of trade links with the Baltic. The relationship has carried on through the centuries, including through the awful events of world war two and the dramatic emigration of Polish people to Scotland in recent years. More than 22,000 Polish people now make their home in Scotland, many in Perthshire.

In recent years, they have been joined by a new wave of Perthshire Poles, with Polish shops and cafes being established in Perth. We also have the Frederick Chopin Saturday Polish school in Perth and the Perth Polish support group, which provides a meeting place for advice and support where members can access resources and information to help them to cope with issues that are related to living and working in a new country.

I am proud that so many Poles have chosen to make a home in Scotland, and particularly in Perthshire. It is absolutely right that we should mark, strengthen and celebrate the links between our two countries, and supporting the work of Mapa Scotland is one important way of doing so. Dziękuję, or thank you, Presiding Officer.

17:33

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

Given my well-known skill at languages, I will duck any attempt to pronounce anything in Polish, but I am glad that we have an opportunity to discuss this important issue. As usual, when I am this far down the batting list, I have no intention of repeating what has already been said, except to thank Christine Grahame for securing the debate.

I am grateful to Christine Grahame for pointing out that, although the Poles came—and were welcomed—here as a result of their retreat from Europe, they took it upon themselves to defend parts of Scotland. That includes in my patch, up to Montrose.

For many Poles, home was in Forfar, which is an ancient town in Angus. To this day, there are two plaques in Forfar that commemorate the presence of Polish forces. A plaque on Market Street, by the sheriff court building, commemorates a royal visit by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, along with General Sikorski—he, of the famous helicopters, I think—on 7 March 1941.

The other plaque, situated on the wall by the Forfar cross in the middle of town, commemorates the 10th Polish reconnaissance group’s stay in Forfar during the war. That group, as was mentioned, went on to take part in the Normandy campaign. The following words are engraved on the plaque:

“To commemorate the sojourn of the 10th Polish reconnaissance group in the royal and ancient borough of

Forfar. 18 October 1940—3 April 1942. Gifted to the town by the unit on their departure.”

The unit was obviously grateful, and I can tell members why. The troops were not billeted in barracks, but were placed with local families. I suspect that that was typical of what happened around Scotland, and it is probably the reason why there is a great bond of friendship. The Poles formed a band and a choir in the town, and apparently performed regularly in the Pavilion picture house on a Sunday, giving concerts to locals to raise money for the war effort. Later, the 10th Armoured Cavalry Brigade, the reconnaissance unit, three signals companies and a grenadier battalion stayed in Forfar, too.

I am told that one abiding memory is that the troops, when not training, helped with the tattie harvest—I am not sure how tattie will come out in the interpretation. Apparently they did so in pressed uniforms and white gloves, which must have been quite funny to see. That just goes to show how professional they were and how loved they were when they left. They clearly enjoyed their time in Forfar.

I am grateful to Christine Grahame for lodging the motion for debate. I have to say that Mapa Scotland is a wonderful model—I wish that I had one in my constituency because, boy, would we make something of it.

17:36

Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP): Like Nigel Don, I was impressed by the Polish words spoken by Christine Grahame and others but I, too, will not attempt to replicate them. I wish to thank Christine Grahame and congratulate her on bringing the debate to the chamber. I congratulate everyone involved in Mapa Scotland's restoration work and, of course, General Maczek and Jan Tomasiak for working so hard on developing the 2,000m² map of Scotland.

As others have done, I want to touch on Scotland's wider links with Poland. There are links to Poland in my constituency—every year, we celebrate the Largs Viking festival to commemorate the 1263 victory of Scotland over the Vikings. Walomin, in Poland, has a Viking festival every year, too, so links are being established between Ayrshire and Poland as a result of the shared history in that area.

In the early modern period or the later middle ages, there was a tremendous emigration of Scots to Poland. We think about the 60,000-plus Poles who now live in Scotland, but think about bygone days—between 1600 and 1650, some 50,000 Scots emigrated to Poland at a time when Scotland had a population of fewer than 1 million people. Most of those emigrants came from

Aberdeenshire, Dundee and the east coast of Scotland. They had a tremendous impact on Polish culture and society. Of course, in 1610, when the Poles captured Moscow, there were many Scottish mercenaries in the Polish forces. In 1683, when King John Sobieski of Poland defeated the Turks outside Vienna, once again Scots participated. The Sobieski Stuarts are, as we know, a pretender family to the throne of the United Kingdom.

We also think that Poland has often had a tragic history. A century ago, there was no Poland as we now know it—it was divided between the emperors of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. Yet, in being divided among those three empires, the Polish nation was reborn at the end of the first world war, even managing to resist a Soviet invasion led by General Tukhachevsky in 1920. I understand that Ed Miliband's great-grandfather took part, on the Soviet side, in that invasion.

In the second world war, many thousands of Poles came to Scotland and fought to defend Scotland and the UK. They hoped, at some time, to go home, but because of the Stalinist rule of Poland, it was not safe for many of them to do so. Many Poles settled in Scotland, married Scottish people and became very much a part of our culture. Growing up, I had Polish friends and friends who had one Polish parent. Polish people have certainly made a great contribution.

Poles are famous for their hard work and determination to look after their families, make a success of life and make the best of what Scotland has to offer.

One famous Scot who went to Poland was Alexander Chalmers, who was four times elected mayor of Warsaw in the 17th century. A tombstone for him, with a lengthy Latin inscription, was erected in 1703 in the cathedral of St John. The cathedral was utterly destroyed during the heroic Warsaw rising of 1944 when the Poles rose up against the Nazis, failed to get any help from their erstwhile Soviet allies and were crushed as a result.

There is much to celebrate in the cultures of Scotland and Poland and their friendship and shared history. While Poland is no longer the America of the day that it was to Scots in the 17th century, there is still tremendous sympathy for Poland among many Scottish people. I have no doubt that many Poles in Scotland today have ancestors from Scotland who settled in Poland all those centuries ago.

17:41

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Dziękuję Wam, cieszę się że mogę zakończyć tą debatę.

Thank you, I am delighted to close this debate.

I am particularly grateful to Christine Grahame for securing a debate on the great Polish map of Scotland and indeed challenging us all on the basis that this is the first time that we have had a simultaneous interpretation into Polish in the Parliament. I welcome the Polish consul general and our Polish friends in the gallery.

In closing what has been a fascinating debate, I add my support to Parliament's recognition of the great Polish map of Scotland. The map represents a significant contribution to the cultural life of Scotland and is an opportunity to enhance our continuing strong cultural and economic links with Poland. I was struck by the passionate testimony of Graeme Pearson, Jean Urquhart, Chic Brodie, Annabel Goldie, Annabelle Ewing, Nigel Don and Kenny Gibson, who recognised the historic and modern connections between Poland and Scotland.

I add the Government's voice to the congratulations expressed by members to Mapa Scotland's volunteers. Those dedicated individuals have campaigned tirelessly to protect and restore this unique three-dimensional map of Scotland.

This is a timely moment to show our appreciation of the contribution that has been made to Scotland by Polish people who have settled here.

I welcome the decision by Historic Scotland earlier this week to list the map. It reflects the wide interest in the map and showcases Scotland's and Poland's shared history, culture and creativity, and the unique contribution to Scotland's defence during the second world war.

Recently, the director of conservation at Historic Scotland met senior staff from the Polish Ministry of Culture, the Polish Ministry of Energy and Poland's National Heritage Board to discuss our climate change work on heritage and traditional buildings. Together, we have started a journey to raise the profile of cultural diplomacy, with the potential to produce a global impact on how nations relate to one another and build trust and understanding between nations.

It is appropriate to explain why the map has been recognised by Historic Scotland. As we have heard, it is a vast three-dimensional concrete representation of Scotland, which is found in the grounds of Barony castle hotel near Eddleston in the Borders. It is one of the largest of its kind in the world. The map was constructed in 1975 by five imaginative Polish geographers from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków using a range of unorthodox cartographic methods. The completed structure is a combination of precise survey technique and intuitive handcrafting to create a convincing three-dimensional representation of

Scotland. The map is an incredible thing. Ben Nevis is easily identifiable at a glance, and the map originally had water flowing through it to represent Scotland's main lochs and rivers.

Following the annexing of Poland by Nazi Germany in 1939, Polish forces made their way across Europe to Scotland to reconvene at a number of lowland locations. Those included Barony house, where a staff college for Polish army officers was established. Part of their role was to create defences for large sections of Scotland's east coast. As Scotland was largely undefended, Polish forces were deployed to aid in the building of defences. Many examples of those defences survive in the landscape today, including pillboxes and anti-landing obstacles, many of which are scheduled or listed in recognition of their place in our military history.

It was at the request of General Stanisław Maczek, the former wartime commander of the First Polish Armoured Division, and the war veteran Jan Tomasik that the great Polish map was commissioned in the 1970s. The conception, commissioning and execution of the giant map were quite remarkable and inspired. It was conceived to commemorate a wartime strategic map that was originally laid out in the grounds of Barony house by Maczek as commanding officer. We owe a debt to those courageous Poles for their great legacy, and we recognise the vital contribution that they made not only to the defence of Scotland during the war years, but in the decades that followed.

Of the 50,000 service personnel who were based in Scotland, 10,000 decided to stay and settle. We have heard stories about some of them during the debate. In more recent times, links with Poland have continued, with the accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004, and there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Polish people making a new home in Scotland. More than 61,000 Polish migrants have registered to live and work in Scotland, and Poles make up the biggest percentage of nationals from the accession states who have settled in Scotland.

Polish migrants came to my constituency 150 years ago to work in the mines, so in West Lothian we talk of three waves of Polish immigration. This year, we saw the largest ever Polska arts programme at the Edinburgh international festival, which included a modern interpretation of "Macbeth" that was wholly performed in Polish with English subtitles. I met the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage when he attended the international culture summit and had the pleasure of attending the opening performance of the Polish "Macbeth" with him and the Polish consul general, and representatives of the Adam Mickiewicz institute of culture.

Although the contribution of Poles in Scotland in the modern era is one that has been stimulated by a new Europe—one that is no longer hindered by the destructive forces of war but held together by the common goal of peace and prosperity—there are lessons to be learned from the past. Scotland and Poland continue to maintain strong links in the present, but it is important to recognise the efforts of those committed individuals and organisations that bind the Scottish-Polish community. We have heard many examples of such efforts across Scotland.

I congratulate the Mapa Scotland group of volunteers, who formed a charitable trust to bring the great Polish map of Scotland into focus. In 2010, they began their enthusiastic campaign to have the map protected and repaired for the benefit of future generations and to reinforce Scotland's heritage links with Poland. The campaign to restore the map is now well under way and the Mapa Scotland group has secured heritage lottery funding to advance its plans.

I have been very pleased to confirm that, as a creative nation that is rich in heritage and which contributes to the world, Scotland is open to vital cultural exchange. It is appropriate to celebrate the great map of Scotland in the Scottish Borders as an important and unique memorial that commemorates the achievements of two countries working together. In securing the debate, Christine Grahame has allowed us to celebrate the work that the volunteers have done. More importantly, we have had an opportunity to remember, commemorate and celebrate the heritage that led to the map's creation and, vitally, to continued dialogue, exchange and friendship between the people of Scotland and the people of Poland.

Meeting closed at 17:49.

Correction

Paul Wheelhouse has identified an error in his contribution and provided the following correction.

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse):

At col 11598, paragraph 3—

Original text—

As Stewart Stevenson explained when the data was published in July, the extreme cold weather at the start and end of 2010 was a significant factor, as it resulted in an additional 2.2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide being emitted by residential heating.

Corrected text—

As Stewart Stevenson explained when the data was published in July, the extreme cold weather at the start and end of 2010 was a significant factor, as it resulted in an additional 1.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide being emitted by residential heating.

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

Available in e-format only. Printed Scottish Parliament documentation is published in Edinburgh by APS Group Scotland.

All documents are available on
the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

For details of documents available to
order in hard copy format, please contact:
APS Scottish Parliament Publications on 0131 629 9941.

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
Email: sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

e-format first available
ISBN 978-1-4061-9580-4

Revised e-format available
ISBN 978-1-4061-9594-1

Printed in Scotland by APS Group Scotland
