



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Thursday 13 December 2012

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## Scottish Parliament

Thursday 13 December 2012

[The Presiding Officer *opened the meeting at 11:40*]

### Point of Order

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Good morning. We have a point of order.

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** I understand that the Scottish Government has received or will shortly receive reports from each of the 14 territorial health boards' internal investigations into the hidden waiting times scandal. I believe that the Scottish Government's intention is to publish those reports on 19 December, which is immediately before the Parliament's Christmas recess.

I am sure that there is no attempt by the Government to avoid scrutiny. Given the seriousness of the situation and reports of the scandal spreading beyond NHS Lothian to a number of other health boards, including NHS Tayside and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, it is essential that members have the opportunity to question ministers on the findings before the parliamentary recess. Presiding Officer, will you advise whether it would be possible for the Parliamentary Bureau to consider allowing for a ministerial statement on Thursday next week to enable members to properly scrutinise the matter?

**The Presiding Officer:** I thank the member for her prior notification that she was going to raise that matter. However, as a former business manager, she knows that it is not a point of order. As she quite rightly said, it is for the business bureau to determine business. I suggest that she raise the issue with her business manager, who may wish to bring the matter to the bureau's attention next Tuesday so that there can be a discussion and a decision can be made.

## General Question Time

11:41

### Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

#### 1. Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):

To ask the Scottish Government what information it has on any increase in calls and approaches to organisations that support survivors of childhood sexual abuse following the recent revelations about Jimmy Savile. (S4O-01608)

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Aileen Campbell):** The Scottish Government is aware that Children 1st, for example, is receiving increased approaches to its parentline service following the recent high-profile child abuse investigations. The Scottish Government does not tolerate any form of child abuse. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in Scotland are key priorities for the Scottish Government. All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected.

Over the past decade, the culture, legislation and policy around child protection have changed considerably. A greater level of awareness and vigilance operates across all public services. We have stronger arrangements for preventing children from being exposed to individuals who can perpetrate those offences, and we have introduced measures to improve standards and ensure that practitioners have the necessary skills and knowledge to protect children from neglect and abuse. I encourage anyone who is looking for support to visit the SurvivorScotland website, which provides details of a range of support services.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I thank the minister for that comprehensive answer.

Currently, a small number of agencies across Scotland run successful advice helplines for survivors. In view of the increase in approaches that organisations that work with victims of sexual abuse, such as Open Secret in Falkirk, have recorded since the Savile revelations, will the minister consider carrying out a scoping exercise to see whether there is a need for a national Scottish helpline for survivors?

**Aileen Campbell:** I thank Margaret Mitchell for raising the matter. I understand that she has a particular interest in it and has done a lot of work in the area, given her position as convener of the cross-party group on adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. I am always happy to engage with her on the matter.

Since 2007, we have allocated £5.1 million through the SurvivorScotland strategy to fund a range of support services for survivors, and we have successfully piloted a forum to give adult survivors an opportunity to talk about their experiences of residential care. We are now working to set up a national confidential forum, and we have established In Care Survivors Service Scotland to support adults who suffered childhood abuse in care. Furthermore—this relates to my particular brief as well—we have a range of measures in place to ensure that children are less exposed to incidences of harm and people who can perpetrate harm and abuse on them.

We must always remain vigilant. In engaging with stakeholders in the police and national organisations, we must ensure that we are constantly vigilant because we cannot become complacent about the issue. We must ensure that we always work together so that children are protected and safe, and that there is a safe environment in which people who have experienced historical abuse can disclose their experiences and get the help and support that they need.

#### **Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (European Funding)**

**2. Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what communication it has had from the United Kingdom Government regarding European funding available to small and medium-sized enterprises. (S4O-01609)

**The Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government has regular discussions with the UK Government on a number of issues, including the European funding that is available to small and medium-sized enterprises.

**Chic Brodie:** At a meeting with the relevant directorate in Brussels last week, it transpired that the SME loan and guarantee finance programme—SMEG—is one of two funds that have €1.2 billion available to provide financial assistance for such businesses through intermediaries. As the programme is to be refreshed next year, will the minister confirm that the Scottish Government will establish direct communication with Europe to ensure that Scottish SMEs are aware of and can benefit from the fund?

**Fergus Ewing:** Yes, I can confirm that we make all appropriate representations with the UK Government and with the European Union on ways in which we can help Scottish companies to access such finance. I am delighted that, to date, under the enterprise finance guarantee scheme, 1,164 offers have been made to Scottish companies involving £162.78 million. Many

Scottish companies, including the prosthetics company Touch Bionics and the wave energy company AlbaTERN have benefited from EFG assistance. We will carry on working hard to ensure that all Scottish companies receive the best financial help on the best terms that are available.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** What funds are available for SMEs in relation to the commercialisation of academic and scientific research in Scotland?

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** I am not sure that that is entirely relevant.

We move to question 3, from John Wilson.

#### **Public Appointments (Equality and Diversity)**

**3. John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has in place to ensure equality of treatment and diversity with regard to the public appointments that it makes. (S4O-01610)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The Scottish Government is committed to encouraging a diverse range of individuals to apply for regulated ministerial appointments to public bodies and to ensuring that all who apply are treated fairly and equally throughout the appointments process.

**John Wilson:** What measures does the Government intend to take, other than surveys of candidates who fail to be appointed, to ensure diversity in the public appointments process?

**John Swinney:** As Mr Wilson correctly says, the Government reports on these issues, but we also have a series of initiatives to encourage people to apply for public appointments. An outreach programme is currently being prepared on that and a number of specific actions have been taken. Recently, our team was represented at the launch of the Scottish Asian Women's Association to encourage public appointments from that group of the population. There was also a stand at the Scottish workplace networking event for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. There are close connections between the public appointments team and the Scottish Government's equality unit to ensure that the specific Scottish duties in the Equality Act 2010 are taken forward in relation to public appointments.

#### **Healthcare Improvement Scotland (Meetings)**

**4. Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government when the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing last

met Healthcare Improvement Scotland and what was discussed. (S4O-01611)

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** The cabinet secretary met representatives of Healthcare Improvement Scotland when he conducted the HIS annual review on 9 October 2012.

**Duncan McNeil:** I draw the minister's attention to Healthcare Improvement Scotland's recently published thematic report as part of its inspections of care for older people in acute hospitals. Although there are no doubt positive things in the report, I am sure that he will be as concerned and disappointed as I am that six out of eight hospitals inspected failed to screen patients for dementia; seven out of eight failed to put care plans in place; four out of four failed to screen patients for nutrition and hydration; and three out of four did not provide patients with the appropriate utensils for eating and drinking. What are the minister and his officials doing to ensure that action is taken to address the issues in all hospitals in Scotland?

**Michael Matheson:** The member will be aware that the purpose of thematic inspections is to identify areas where there is inadequate practice, to ensure that health boards and hospitals are taking action to address matters. The purpose is also to illustrate areas where good practice is being undertaken. The member will acknowledge that a number of the inspections to which he referred highlighted good practice in our national health service facilities, where staff are treating patients with compassion and dignity as they support and care for them while they are in hospital.

It is extremely important that when inspection reports have been completed, our boards take the necessary action to address issues of concern, to ensure that patients receive the appropriate care.

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** Why has the report into the acute care of older people at Ninewells hospital never been published? Why have more recent planned inspections been cancelled? Is the Scottish Government having second thoughts about a robust system of rigorous inspection and public reporting?

**Michael Matheson:** There are no second thoughts whatever. I understand that the draft inspection report for Ninewells went through a quality assurance process, which was undertaken by Healthcare Improvement Scotland. A number of issues to do with the report's content were raised, which are currently being worked through. Healthcare Improvement Scotland publishes reports as and when appropriate.

Some scheduled inspections have been reorganised to assist boards, given the pressures

that they are experiencing during the winter months, but the inspection programme will continue into the new year and thereafter.

**The Presiding Officer:** Question 5 has been withdrawn by Richard Lyle, who has provided an explanation with which I am not satisfied. I have discussed the matter with all business managers and I hope that members will take note for the future.

### Scottish Enterprise (Meetings)

**6. Gavin Brown (Lothian) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it will next meet Scottish Enterprise. (S4O-01613)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** I met Scottish Enterprise at a meeting of the national economic forum yesterday. Scottish Government officials meet counterparts in Scottish Enterprise regularly, on a range of subjects.

**Gavin Brown:** Last year, the Scottish Government said that the enterprise agencies would switch more than £200 million in two years from revenue to capital. It turns out that only £100 million will be switched. What is the economic rationale for the enterprise agencies switching less than 50 per cent of what was initially planned?

**John Swinney:** Mr Brown's question does not take into account the fact that the Government's approach is designed to address some of the loss of capital resources that has affected us as a consequence of decisions of the United Kingdom Government.

We have taken steps to shift resources from resource budgets into capital, and across Government we are sustaining that activity, to guarantee that we are able to fulfil the commitment that we gave. I hope that Mr Brown can understand that there must be sufficient flexibility in budget management to enable us to identify where such activity can be undertaken, across Government, to ensure that our strategic-level commitment to increase the amount of resources that we can shift from resource into capital is fulfilled, to help to meet the losses that we have suffered as a consequence of cuts from the United Kingdom Government.

### Road Markings (A75 and A76)

**7. Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab):** To ask the Scottish Government what action is being taken to replace substandard road markings on the A75 and A76 trunk roads. (S4O-01614)

**The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown):** Amey, the trunk road operating company, is responsible for the A75 and the A76 and carries out regular inspections to ensure that

road markings remain in good order, in accordance with its contract. Amey maintains and renews road markings and reflective studs routinely on the A75 and A76. During this financial year, approximately £150,000 has been spent and further works are expected; next year we anticipate spend of £250,000.

This year, we are investing £3.75 million in road lining across Scotland, including an additional £1 million from our strategic road safety budget specifically to tackle the condition of our white road lines.

**Graeme Pearson:** The minister may be aware of specific concerns raised in the Road Safety Markings Association study about the condition of the road markings on those roads and other roads in the area. I am sure that his commitment to road safety is well recorded and hope that he will further press the organisation to ensure that those markings are brought up to date as soon as possible.

**Keith Brown:** I have the commitment to road safety that the member mentions. It is worth pointing out that the other things that we do in relation to road safety have led to the lowest ever recorded levels of casualties and, in particular, fatalities on our roads. The member makes an important point, though. If he is aware of a specific incident, I ask him to contact me and I will get in touch with the performance action group, which independently assesses what the trunk road operating company does and takes further action on it.

I am happy to assure the member that more money is being spent in that area.

### **Scottish Budget (Autumn Statement)**

**8. Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what impact the chancellor's autumn statement will have on the Scottish budget. (S4O-01615)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth (John Swinney):** The Scottish Government will receive £394 million in capital consequentials between 2012-13 and 2014-15 as a result of the autumn statement. However, that will be partially offset by a reduction in the resource departmental expenditure limit of £63.5 million.

The Scottish Government has been calling on the chancellor to boost capital spending for a number of years. The consequentials announced in the autumn statement are therefore welcome. However, it is important to note that even with that additional funding, our capital budget still faces a 26 per cent real-terms cut.

**Stewart Stevenson:** Is the cabinet secretary aware that the autumn statement shows that over the next five years, the United Kingdom Government plans to increase tax take by reducing tax avoidance to the sum of about £270 million a year? If Scotland had full control over the taxation system, how would that help us to manage our Scottish budget?

**John Swinney:** Fundamentally, any tax system must deal effectively and comprehensively with any dangers of tax avoidance. That would, without doubt, be a core requirement of the taxation system of an independent Scotland. Indeed, it is a core element of the consultation document that I published earlier this week on tax management issues and the increased responsibilities that will come to the Parliament in relation to stamp duty, landfill tax and the Scottish rate of income tax from 2015 onwards. A rigorous regime for tackling tax avoidance will be at the heart of the measures that we take forward.

### **Residential Children's Care Services (Scotland Excel Consultation)**

**9. Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on Scotland Excel's consultation on a proposed national framework for residential children's care services. (S4O-01616)

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Aileen Campbell):** The consultation is being led by Scotland Excel in partnership with Scottish local authorities and follows lengthy engagement with providers and local authorities. The Scottish Government sees the framework as a necessary first step towards the implementation of strategic commissioning of residential childcare services at a national level.

**Stewart Maxwell:** The minister may be aware that service providers in the childcare sector have raised concerns about Scotland Excel's proposals. Some have suggested that the consultation is flawed and that the process has excluded key stakeholders. There are fears that it may result in fragmented services that are not partnership focused or driven by outcomes.

What steps can the minister take to address those concerns and what assurances can she offer that the interests of Scotland's vulnerable children and young people will continue to be put first?

**Aileen Campbell:** I am aware of the concerns that are raised by a small number of independent residential care providers about the consultation process. However, it is important to note that the involvement of providers and other stakeholders has been an essential element of the process. Officials have agreed to meet, on Monday 17



December, the small group of providers who have voiced concerns, and they will listen to what they have to say. That is absolutely correct and the right thing to do during a consultation process.

Stewart Maxwell is absolutely right that we need to ensure that the systems that we have in place protect some of the most vulnerable children in society. I know that Stewart Maxwell shares my passion to do better by that group of looked-after children, as is our responsibility as corporate parents. This is about improving the system, providing consistency and transparency and having in place something that has children and young people at its heart.

## First Minister's Question Time

12:00

### Engagements

**1. Johann Lamont (Glasgow Pollok) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister what engagements he has planned for the rest of the day. (S4F-01052)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Later today, I will be meeting the Orkney-based company, Scotrenewables Tidal Power Ltd, which I am delighted to announce has finalised details for an international investment package of more than £7 million in the company that will allow it to finance the design, construction, installation and testing of its new generation tidal turbine. I know that the whole chamber will wish to welcome that substantial vote of confidence in Scotland's offshore renewable industry.

**Johann Lamont:** I thank the First Minister for that reply.

Last week, *The Scotsman* reported that the European Commission had written a letter making it clear that an independent Scotland would have to apply to the European Union to be a member. Nicola Sturgeon's spokesperson accused the paper of "fabricating" the story. Indeed, the First Minister said that it had been "duped by anti-independence people". The paper was even forced to print a partial apology. We now know that the story is true.

A fortnight ago, I asked the First Minister when he last complained to a newspaper about its coverage and he answered me with an email today at 11.19. Does he now need to update that answer, and would he now like to apologise to *The Scotsman*? [Interruption.]

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Order.

**The First Minister:** I am sure that *The Scotsman* corrected its story because it implied that a letter had been sent when the Commission said that no such letter had been sent. That was the position. [Interruption.]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** A more interesting point might be how *The Scotsman* got sight of a letter by the President of the European Commission that had not been sent. No doubt we will be enlightened in the columns of *The Scotsman* newspaper as to how it arrived at that conclusion.

I am sorry that Johann Lamont does not appreciate my trying to answer her questions. I will try not to write to her and explain when the last time that I complained to a newspaper was. If I remember correctly, *The Herald* published a

correction. I think that it is a good idea to publish corrections when mistakes are made. No doubt at some point Johann Lamont will apologise and publish corrections for the many factual errors that she makes in the chamber.

**Johann Lamont:** I have been in this job nearly a year and I have worked out that the First Minister does not intend to answer questions very often at all.

To just keep saying something does not make it true. On the letter, the problem for the First Minister is that his defence seemed to be that it was not sent. We all know that it has now been sent and he has to deal with what that letter says.

In 2007, Nicola Sturgeon told this Parliament that

“Scotland would automatically be a member of the European Union upon independence. There is legal opinion to back that up.” —[*Official Report, European and External Relations Committee*, 11 December 2007; c 231.]

Not only do we now know that to be untrue, but it transpires that Nicola Sturgeon had not even asked for the legal advice that allowed her to make that assertion.

Of course, that ministerial habit of assertion is viral. On Tuesday, John Swinney told the House of Lords that he had been having a “very helpful dialogue” with the Bank of England on keeping the pound after independence. What does the bank say? It says:

“We have not entered a dialogue”.

What does—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Johann Lamont:** What does it say about the Scottish Government when the people of Scotland have to go to the European Commission and the Bank of England to hear the truth?

**The First Minister:** There were perhaps three points in that question.

First, the letter had not been sent last week. That much is clear. Therefore, to suggest that it had been sent was clearly wrong.

Secondly, Johann Lamont says that there is no legal opinion that supports the Scottish National Party position on continuing membership of the EU. Ample legal opinion from a range of sources has been cited. Emile Noël, the former secretary general of the European Commission, Lord Mackenzie-Stuart—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** A range of reports have been brought to this chamber.

Incidentally, I see that, in his blog last night, Aidan O'Neill QC says that that is a respectable

argument, so there is plenty of legal opinion that supports that position.

Lastly—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** Lastly, on Johann Lamont's point about the Bank of England, she has come along to this chamber on a number of occasions—I remember one specifically, on 31 May—and told me that there have not been discussions with the Bank of England. I rather helpfully—because the Bank of England had asked for confidence in these matters, and I respect that—pointed out that I had met the governor of the Bank of England on 16 February. I told Johann Lamont that in May.

The SNP Government has pointed out—and I quote exactly—that

“As indicated by Mr Swinney, the Scottish Government has engaged with the Bank of England to discuss factual and technical matters around proposals for a macroeconomic framework.”

That is exactly what has happened.

The Bank of England does not—clearly—take a position on the question of independence for Scotland; that is not its job. However, it has responded, as it should as a public body, to a request for factual information, and it has engaged with a fiscal commission that—I remind the Labour Party—contains eminent economists, including two Nobel laureates. In terms of preparing—[*Interruption.*] To get a Nobel laureate in economics is an important thing that should not be derided by the Labour Party.

Those preparations are made—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** The SNP Government engages with those who are willing to engage in discussions. We have engaged in requesting factual information from the Bank of England, and we are prepared to engage with the President of the European Commission, as the Deputy First Minister has made clear. We would engage with the United Kingdom Government to discuss these matters, but department after department has refused to engage in such discussions.

Perhaps Johann Lamont will help us by—just for a change—disagreeing with her Tory allies and suggesting that the United Kingdom Government now engages in the discussions that this Government is perfectly prepared to enter into.

**Johann Lamont:** I suppose that, in the fantasy world that the First Minister now inhabits, that is meant to be a stout defence of his position.

The First Minister's problem is that he claims that he wants to have dialogue with all those people, yet he asserted that we would be in

Europe and be part of a sterling zone without ever asking anybody and without ever having a conversation. When Mr Swinney goes to London, he says that we are having a dialogue, but the Bank of England says not—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Johann Lamont:** I am not sure if they are suggesting that the Bank of England is being misleading; perhaps we can clarify that later.

I go back to the interview in which the First Minister said that he had sought legal advice from the law officers when he had not. Members will remember that Andrew Neil did not ask the First Minister just about that. Andrew Neil asked him:

“Can we clarify whether an independent Scotland would have to reapply for membership of the EU?”

Alex Salmond said:

“Well, no we wouldn’t.”

However, we must bear in mind that that was the same interview in which the First Minister’s words “Yes, we have”, meant “No, we haven’t”—

“in terms of the debate.”

The man in charge of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, has told the BBC:

“if there is a new state, of course, that state has to apply for membership”.

What part of that statement does the First Minister not understand?

**The First Minister:** I will try to remember the start of that question; I think that it started on the question of the Bank of England.

The Bank of England, as is perfectly proper, has agreed to engage with the Scottish Government on technical advice for the fiscal commission. That is a perfectly proper thing for the Bank of England to do. It does not take a public position on the debate on Scottish independence, it has no reason to take such a public position, and one would not expect it to take such a public position.

The governor of the Bank of England has been perfectly proper in providing the resource for the technical advice that has been requested by the fiscal commission, and the Bank of England will engage with the commission once it is established. That seems to be a perfectly reasonable position for the Bank of England to take, and I hope that that will now extend to UK Government departments so that they take a similar wise position.

The Scottish National Party Government has never argued that we do not have to negotiate our position in terms of the European Union. I remember answering a question from Patricia

Ferguson on 25 January in which she said, on the publication of our consultation document in January, that we had changed our position to say that there would be negotiations. I pointed out to her on 25 January that:

“I say that it has never been our position that there would not be negotiations; the point is that negotiations would be held from within the context of the EU.”—[*Official Report*, 25 January 2012; c 5613-14.]

It was with some surprise that I saw a press release from Patricia Ferguson last Friday that repeated the suggestion that to say that there would be negotiations was a change in the Government’s position. We have maintained that there will be negotiations on the question of Scotland’s position within the European Union. The point is that we have said—and it is absolutely unambiguously the case—that those negotiations will take place from within the context of the European Union. That is exactly the position. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** I could quote a variety of Labour MPs and MEPs who accept that Scotland would not be excluded from the European Union. No serious person actually believes that to be the case. It is not the case, of course, because it is not just in the interests of Scotland to be a member of the European Union but overwhelmingly in the interests of the European Union to have Scotland as a member.

**Johann Lamont:** The First Minister really has to reflect that the President of the European Commission may have some authority in this matter, on balance. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Johann Lamont:** Mr Barroso has said that a new state would have to apply. I had thought that the aspiration of SNP back benchers and, indeed, front benchers was for Scotland to be a new state; otherwise, what is the point of what we are going to be debating for the next two years?

I do not want to dwell on private grief, but I would say this to the First Minister: does he not realise that he has a bit of a credibility problem when he comes to the Parliament and gives an answer that he describes as

“as exact an answer as anybody has given in any Parliament”—[*Official Report*, 15 November 2012; c 13513.]

and a few hours later has to admit that he was entirely wrong? Does he not see that when he says he has sought legal advice when he has not, people doubt the next words that come out of his mouth? When the finance secretary says that he is in dialogue with the Bank of England and the bank says that that is not so, what does that say about

the First Minister's Government? Is it not the truth that John Swinney, Nicola Sturgeon and Alex Salmond—all of them—are not leading Scotland but misleading Scotland?

**The First Minister:** As I explained at our meeting, the bank is committed to impartiality in that debate.

"We will, of course, respond to requests from the UK and Scottish governments for technical advice but on the condition that such advice is provided in strict confidence. The Bank will have no public position in the debate. Consistent with that, the Bank will engage with the Fiscal Commission that you have established."

That is from a letter from the governor of the Bank of England on 19 March this year, and it is exactly consistent with the position that the Scottish Government has put forward. I would have thought that when I suggested to Johann Lamont, without in any way breaching the governor's confidentiality request, that I had met the governor in February of this year, she might have come to the conclusion that the engagement that the governor speaks about was going on—that was the purpose of it.

It is entirely reasonable for the Scottish Government to seek to engage with important authorities in terms of preparing the ground for the independence referendum and in particular next autumn's white paper. It is not unreasonable for the Labour Party, which traditionally had the occasional difference with the Conservative Party, to say that it would be a good idea for UK Government departments to make preparations. Why is that not an unreasonable position? Because the Scottish Affairs Committee, which is Labour Party dominated, suggested that the Ministry of Defence should do exactly that.

The point is that we are perfectly prepared to engage, perfectly prepared to prepare the ground for the white paper and perfectly prepared to rebut the scaremongering of the Labour Party on each and every occasion. We stand on the ground that the country that has 90 per cent of the oil reserves of the European Union and 25 per cent of its potential renewable energy reserves, which is the second-largest gas provider in the European Union and which has 60 per cent of the territorial waters of these islands, is one that no serious person across this continent would try to exclude from the European Union.

### Prime Minister (Meetings)

**2. Ruth Davidson (Glasgow) (Con):** To ask the First Minister when he will next meet the Prime Minister. (S4F-01051)

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

**Ruth Davidson:** I, too, listened with interest to the performance of the Cabinet Secretary for

Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth at the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, particularly when he said that the Scottish Government had held informal dialogue with the European Commission about an independent Scotland's entry into the European Union.

The Scottish Conservatives revealed earlier this year that both the EU's enlargement commissioner, Štefan Füle, and President Barroso had confirmed in writing that, by March, there had been no discussions on this subject with the SNP Government.

Can the First Minister tell the people of Scotland what talks John Swinney was referring to? When—since March—did they take place? Who conducted them and at what level? What ground was covered? If we were to contact Europe, would we get the same answers that he is about to give?

**The First Minister:** Scottish Government ministers meet European commissioners on a regular basis and informal dialogue takes place with them across a range of subjects. We meet at official level as well.

I say to Ruth Davidson that few, if any, people who I have met across the world over the past few months have not asked me about the question of Scottish independence. Scotland is attracting a huge amount of interest in international terms. I know that that is not the favoured position of the Conservative Party. It would like to be in a position where nobody was interested in Scotland, or it would like to put forward a position that nobody should be interested in Scotland. *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** Scotland is a subject of great interest, and Scottish Government ministers will talk in informal terms with the European commissioners and anyone else in explaining why Scotland should be an independent country.

**Ruth Davidson:** Can I gently remind the First Minister that he is here to give straight answers to straight questions and that the people of Scotland deserve honest answers?

The First Minister cannot, will not or seems unwilling to tell us something as straightforward as precisely what discussions have been going on, if indeed there have been any. This all just adds to quite an unedifying week in which first the First Minister and then the finance secretary were spanked and sent to bed by President Barroso and the Bank of England for not doing their homework properly. *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Ruth Davidson:** Now, in a panic, the head girl, Nicola Sturgeon, has been dispatched to Brussels to sort this mess out.

I ask the First Minister whether Brussels shares his sense of urgency. Can he tell us who has agreed to meet the Deputy First Minister, when these meetings are due to take place and what questions she is due to ask?

**The First Minister:** It has not been unknown for politicians in these islands to have disagreements with the president of the European Commission. At Prime Minister's question time yesterday, David Cameron said that he did not agree with President Barroso. That seemed to me to be a perfectly reasonable statement. The only problem was that, when he was disagreeing with President Barroso, he was agreeing with Bill Cash.

Does Ruth Davidson not understand that Conservative politicians have been disagreeing with President Barroso for most of the past two years? The reason is that a substantial section of the Conservative Party wants to leave the European Union now and another substantial section of it wants to have negotiations. We are told that the Prime Minister will be announcing an in-out referendum after these negotiations. Apparently, he is going to do that next month—but then of course he said that he was going to do it last January, if I remember correctly.

Should we not therefore come to the conclusion that the only substantial threat to Scotland's position as a European Union nation is from the Conservative Party that has an undying hostility to anything European and which is preparing—a substantial section of it—for Scotland's exit from the European Union? If that is the feeling within Ruth Davidson's party, I can tell her that the amount of influence that she has over the London direction of the Conservative Party is next to zero. It ill behoves a representative of a Eurosceptical party to come to the chamber and cast questions on Scotland's credentials as a European nation.

### Cabinet (Meetings)

**3. Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** To ask the First Minister what issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet. (S4F-01053)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Issues of importance to the people of Scotland.

**Willie Rennie:** As the Government has finally admitted that it will need to negotiate Scotland's membership of the European Union, can the First Minister tell me whether the voters will know before the referendum what we could lose in those negotiations?

**The First Minister:** What voters in Scotland lose is having Liberals propping up the Conservative Party in Government.

**Willie Rennie:** I was not expecting that rather comprehensive answer.

The First Minister does not seem to understand that this is about not membership but the terms, and I am surprised that he does not seem to understand that very simple point. This is about the politics of other countries, and the First Minister seems to think that all 27 members of the European Union will just sign up to whatever he wants.

Now that, whether the First Minister likes it or not, people doubt what he says, they want to know before the referendum what they might lose. Can he therefore tell me when he plans to meet the other 27 members of the European Union to discuss Scotland's membership and to establish what they will want in return?

**The First Minister:** I think that, in contrast to the previous two party leaders, Willie Rennie has actually put his finger on something important. He is not questioning the fact that Scotland will be a member of the European Union but is taking the debate on to the negotiations.

I have already pointed out to the Labour Party the answer that I gave to Patricia Ferguson earlier this year, but I also remind Willie Rennie that when he has talked about terms in the past he has actually stated that Scotland could be forced to adopt the euro. That is one of the key aspects—*[Interruption.]* Well, I have a number of quotes—

**Willie Rennie:** I am not disagreeing.

**The First Minister:** The member says that he was not disagreeing. He was shaking his head, but he was not disagreeing.

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Nicola Sturgeon):** He's a Liberal.

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** It has been pointed out that the member is a Liberal Democrat. It must have been the Democrat part that time.

I have tried to point out that under the circumstances that we envisage of Scotland's continuing membership we will of course inherit the opt-out position. However, even if that were not the case, it does not follow at all that we would be forced into the euro.

If Willie Rennie wants an explanation of that, I suggest that he look at *The Scotsman*, which has been quoted so extensively by Johann Lamont, and the article by Daniel Kenealy from the politics and international relations department of the University of Edinburgh. Dr Kenealy goes through the whole range of European debate but makes one point that is virtually beyond argument. I will quote him exactly:

“one opt-out must be discussed here briefly and that is the euro opt-out. The euro is a genuine example of scaremongering within this debate. The notion that Scotland could be forced or compelled to adopt the euro is simply untrue.”

It ill behoves the politician in this chamber who was most in favour of the euro just a few years ago—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** When Willie Rennie became chief executive of the Scottish Liberal party just a few years ago, he said that Scotland would be leading the yes campaign for the euro. The yes campaign that is going to take place is the yes campaign for an independent Scotland, and for a Liberal Democrat to scaremonger over the euro not only defies the past record of that party but reduces the debate to a level worthy of a party that has five members.

If Willie Rennie will accept that his words are scaremongering—which is what he is doing by suggesting that Scotland could be forced into the euro—we can perhaps get the debate on to a level that I know the Liberal Democrats would really like to see.

### Employment

**4. Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister what impact the Scottish Government expects the additional capital resources announced in the autumn statement to have on Scottish employment. (S4F-01062)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Through the recent autumn statement announcement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has finally heeded the calls of the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to boost capital spending. That comes after four years of pressure, 15 calls on two United Kingdom Governments, eight letters to the chancellor and two joint declarations with the devolved Administrations in this year alone—a substantial degree of engagement.

The steps that have been taken are welcome, but they take us only halfway towards commonsense in terms of investment and there is still the lack of a coherent plan in London to return the economy to growth. The additional capital funding of £394 million in total over three years is expected to boost jobs and growth in Scotland. For example, the additional £160 million will support 2,000 jobs in that year. I am sure that Kenneth Gibson understands that that is only a partial return to the capital spending levels that were expected historically.

**Kenneth Gibson:** Does the First Minister agree that the belated Treasury decision to heed Scottish Government calls to reverse capital

spending cuts could and should have come much sooner? That would have made yesterday's positive news on unemployment—which Opposition party leaders have today ignored—even better. How many more people who are currently unemployed in Scotland could be in work if the UK Government restored its full 26 per cent cut to our capital budget that it continues to impose on the Scottish Parliament?

**The First Minister:** It is true that I try to anticipate the questions that might be asked at First Minister's questions. One iron law is that if unemployment in Scotland is falling, it will not be mentioned by any of the Opposition parties.

Kenneth Gibson is absolutely right. The savage cuts in the capital budget have been a major reason for weakness in the economy. We are delighted and pleased that there has been a partial resumption of a capital spending profile. It is only half of what we believe is needed over the next year, and it only returns us to a 25 per cent real-terms reduction. However, if the Conservative Party and its Liberal Democrat allies in London now agree that direct capital investment is essential for economic growth, perhaps they will realise that, having taken the first faltering steps, more should follow so that economic growth in this country can resume.

### Fiscal Control and Financial Regulation

**5. Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** To ask the First Minister, in light of reported comments by the chair of the independent fiscal commission, Sir Crawford Beveridge, what the Scottish Government's position is on fiscal control and financial regulation in the event of Scotland separating from the rest of the United Kingdom. (S4F-01069)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Any system that is put in place takes logical precautions against the problems of excessive indebtedness, poor fiscal controls and lax regulations that cause many of the problems that the global economy now faces. It is therefore clear that we should not make the same mistakes as the previous UK Government, with the ill-fated promise to end boom and bust that ended with the greatest recession since the 1930s. Under independence, control over the key economic and fiscal levers would be brought home to Scotland, providing opportunities to boost growth and to tackle inequality. We are, as is now I think generally agreed, in a stronger relative fiscal position than the UK to the tune of £2.7 billion according to the latest official statistics. The fiscal commission working group, to which I referred earlier, will publish its first set of findings and recommendations in the new year. I look forward to seeing that output.

**Ken Macintosh:** Will the First Minister clarify one point? Will an independent Scotland's future be supported by a fiscal stability pact?

I also ask the First Minister to clarify two quotes. One is from an interview that he had with Andrew Neil in March 2012, in which Mr Salmond said that a prerequisite for a functioning sterling area would be a fiscal stability pact. He followed that up in September 2012, in a lecture in Chicago, when he answered a question by saying that there would be no need for a "fiscal stabilisation pact". Which is his preferred option?

**The First Minister:** I said no such thing in Chicago. I pointed out that, if we look at the Government expenditure and revenue Scotland figures and have a borrowing limit arrangement with the Bank of England and the Treasury in that year, we would be £2.7 billion relatively better off than the UK fiscal position—the Institute of Fiscal Studies has confirmed that point in recent weeks.

That £2.7 billion seems to me to give a degree of flexibility that the United Kingdom does not have at present. It would mean that we could borrow less, spend more, and save for the future, or any combination of the three.

I will bring it down to everyday levels for everyone's benefit: £2.7 billion is approximately £500 a head for every man, woman and child in Scotland. Lots of people who look at the economic disaster that has been visited on this country by the Labour Party and is being carried on by the Conservative Party, and at the levels of poverty and deprivation in Scotland, and at the lack of growth in the economy, will say that some part of that £2.7 billion should be invested in the economy. They will also be wondering why Ken Macintosh seems to think that this country uniquely should not have the benefit of its own resources.

### Drugs (Legalisation)

**6. Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):** To ask the First Minister what the Scottish Government's position is on the legalisation of drugs given the potential impact on its justice and health policies. (S4F-01056)

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** In terms of the drugs debate, two things are important. One is to recognise the huge and serious problem that Scotland has faced and still faces to an extraordinary degree. However, it is also important to recognise that the recent statistics show some signs of improvement.

Self-reported drug use among the general adult population has fallen since 2006, from 12.6 to 9.1 per cent—that is for 16 to 59-year-olds reporting in last year's Scottish crime and justice survey. Drug

taking among young people is at its lowest level since 2002—that is among 15-year-olds reporting drug use in the last month, in the Scottish schools adolescent lifestyle and substance use survey.

Therefore, we should take an overall approach to tackling drug use in Scotland, as set out in the national drugs strategy, "The Road to Recovery: A New Approach to Tackling Scotland's Drug Problem", which focuses on prevention, enforcement, treatment and recovery. I commend that approach to the chamber. We should see those early signs of success not as a reason to be complacent, but as a reason to continue to pursue that approach, with the support of the chamber.

**Christine Grahame:** I welcome the fall in addiction, but it remains a substantial source of social problems. In relation to enforcement, does the First Minister see merit, as I do, in the idea of commissioning research into the potential impact of decriminalising drug usage? I stress that I am talking about decriminalising, not legalising.

**The First Minister:** We should always consider information, analyses and evidence and see what is justified.

The position that we have taken is, I think, the right one and I think that we should pursue it. Of course we should consider evidence, and that is what we will do. However, our current position and trajectory have the substantial advantage that they command cross-party support across the chamber. I believe that that is the course that we should continue to pursue, concentrating on the points that are set out in the road to recovery programme and recognising the indications of some success, as well as accepting the overweening nature of the drugs problem in Scotland.

If we consider Scotland's relationship with alcohol, and the measures that we have had to take and must pursue to address that imbalance, the fact that alcohol is a legal substance does not mean that we are removed from the extraordinary problems that are associated with the abuse of that substance. Christine Grahame should beware of seeing in a change of the law a solution to these matters.

We will consider the evidence, but I believe that the balance of the evidence suggests that the approach that we are currently taking is the right one.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I am sure that none of us wants to drag the First Minister back here at the end of the day to correct himself, so I offer him an opportunity to do so here and now.

In response to my question earlier, the First Minister did not say whether he supported a fiscal

stability pact or otherwise, but he specifically said that my quote was incorrect, saying that he said no such thing in Chicago. The full quote from Mr Salmond reads:

"I don't believe that a monetary policy restriction would have to have a fiscal stabilisation pact. I think we can have plenty of room for manoeuvre within a currency union."

Those words are as quoted by Tom Gordon in the *Sunday Herald* on 30 September.

Through your offices, Presiding Officer, I ask whether the First Minister made such a statement.

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Macintosh well knows that that is a matter not for me, but for the First Minister.

That concludes First Minister's question time.

12:34

*Meeting suspended.*

13:44

*On resuming—*

## Edwards Syndrome

### **The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):**

The first item of business this afternoon is a debate on motion S4M-04354, in the name of Richard Baker, on Edwards syndrome and support for babies with palliative care needs. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

*Motion debated,*

That the Parliament considers that there is a need to support families in Scotland affected by Edwards syndrome; notes the establishment in Aberdeen of the Caoimhe's Trust for Edwards Syndrome; understands that the majority of babies with the condition die before birth and those who are born are expected to survive for only a matter of weeks; believes that in those families where a child is born with Edwards syndrome there is a need for specific support and care; recognises the importance of early diagnosis of Edwards syndrome to inform parents as soon as possible; believes that there is a need for bereavement services for families who lose children because of it, and recognises the benefits of a framework for care in Scotland that meets the needs of babies requiring palliative care and supports their families and a care pathway approach to delivering care and support to these children and their families from diagnosis to end of life and bereavement.

### **Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):**

I thank members of all parties who supported my motion on the provision of support for children with Edwards syndrome and babies with palliative care needs, and I particularly thank the members who are here, given the change to the time of the debate.

We are here because of a baby called Caoimhe, who was born in Aberdeen royal infirmary and had Edwards syndrome. Caoimhe's parents, Patricia and Peter, are here with us in Holyrood, because they want more people to be aware of Edwards syndrome; they want people to be aware of what Edwards is and of its impact on families who have a baby with the condition.

Many members will not have heard of Edwards before today's debate; I had not heard of it before I met Patricia and Peter. Its effects are devastating. It is a genetic disorder that is similar to Down's syndrome but which has a much poorer prognosis for the child. It occurs in about one in 6,000 live births, so it is very rare. However, given that there were nearly 60,000 births in Scotland last year, there will be families in that situation every year, somewhere.

The majority of fetuses with the syndrome die before birth, and the median lifespan of children who are born is just five to 15 days. Caoimhe lived for 65 days. The condition is rare, but its effect on families could not be more profound, which is why



our health services must be ready with the information and support that families need if they are to make the best decisions for their children.

Patricia and Peter feel that lack of awareness of Edwards affected them in a number of ways. Many parents whose babies are diagnosed with a condition during pregnancy understandably choose not to continue the pregnancy. Of course, that is an agonising choice to have to make. Caoimhe's diagnosis was not finally confirmed until 31 weeks into the pregnancy, so Patricia felt that that was too late to make that choice. For her, that reinforces the need for early checks for Edwards in screening and for diagnosis as soon as possible.

From speaking to Patricia about her experience, I have no doubt that she came across health professionals who were very much committed to doing their best for Caoimhe, but her overall experience left her with a strong belief that the local health and care services were simply not well placed to deal with an Edwards baby. She thinks that Caoimhe and the family would have benefited from more advice and support and from care provision that was more focused on the specific situation of a baby with palliative care needs. In particular, the family think that more could have been done for Caoimhe in the short time that she had at home. Those were days that the family cherished, but which were hugely challenging for them and for Caoimhe herself.

There are charities and organisations such as Children's Hospice Association Scotland that do wonderful work with children and young people who have life-limiting conditions, but Patricia's experience with Caoimhe shows the need for a focus on support for families in the particularly difficult situation of having a baby who requires palliative care.

Caoimhe's family want families who find themselves in similar situations to have better support and care than they had. They have not been bowed by their experience, but have established a website and trust in Caoimhe's name, to make people aware of Edwards and the needs of families who have babies with palliative care needs. We also know that about 150 babies a year die during late foetal life, between 24 and 40 weeks of pregnancy, because of congenital conditions.

I have to say that, having had the chance to look further into this immensely challenging subject, I am in no way despondent; rather, I am confident that services will improve, because organisations such as CHAS and Together for Short Lives are working with professionals in the health service in Scotland, such as Edile Murdoch, who is a consultant neonatologist at the Royal infirmary of Edinburgh, to develop a Scotland-wide care

pathway approach to delivery of care and support for babies who have life-limiting conditions. The pathway is designed to cover the whole journey for baby and family, from antenatal screening and breaking the awful news to the family to planning for going home, with a multi-agency care plan, and dealing with bereavement.

The pathway is also designed to help professionals to engage with the child's and the family's needs and to ensure that everything is in place for families so that they can access the support that is right for them. Although the pathway will require provision of training and ensuring that the right staff are in place, it is not about more services or even about significantly more funding, but about the services that we have working better in partnership and following a nationally established pathway of care so that wherever the family is in Scotland, they can expect the same support and care, focused on their needs. All the professionals who are dealing with these difficult and rare situations will know what is expected of them and what steps they should take to support the baby and the family.

The draft perinatal palliative care pathway for the south-east Scotland and Tayside managed clinical network has been completed and put out to consultation with a view to refining it by the end of January. It is hoped that the pathway will be accepted as a pathway across all three managed clinical neonatal networks in Scotland and that it will be presented to the Scottish children and young people's palliative care executive as well. The establishment of a pathway of care is a commendable and logical step to take. When I discussed with Patricia the proposal for a pathway approach that Edile Murdoch had given us, Patricia said to me that if that had been in place for her family and for Caoimhe, it would have made all the difference to them. It would have made it easier to cope with the terrible situation that they faced.

I know that ministers support that work and I hope that they will continue to support and endorse the establishment of the care pathway. The progress that is being made with the Scottish Government is very welcome. I believe that it will allow the people in Scotland who have expertise in these difficult issues to ensure that throughout the country we are better prepared to support families in these most difficult circumstances. Caoimhe's family believe that putting those plans in place will, most of all, mean that there is better support for families who will in the future, unfortunately, go through what they have been through. I am sure that that is what ministers and the whole Parliament want, and I hope that ministers will continue to support families and professionals in creating a better care network for children who could not need our support more.

13:52

**Dennis Robertson (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP):** I thank Richard Baker for bringing this important debate to the chamber and offer my sincere condolences to Caoimhe's family, who are here today. I know about the loss of a child; I was fortunate that my daughter lived until her late teens.

Like Richard Baker, I had never heard of Edwards syndrome. Obviously, when it is diagnosed it is a very traumatic and distressing time for a family. Early detection is absolutely necessary to ensure that parents can make the right choice for them at the time.

I cannot comprehend what it must be like to know that one's child could be born stillborn or have a very short life. It is essential that we have the pathway of care to ensure that the parents and family of the unborn child understand what lies ahead of them. I understand that the Scottish child and young people's palliative care executive has come forward with a palliative care programme, which I hope will be adopted. I also understand that a bereavement pathway was signed off in February 2011—a month and year that I will never forget.

It is essential to ensure not only that the parents and families have that information, but that the right care is there at the time of their need, towards the birth and thereafter. It could be hospice care or it could be care at home, but the right people need to give that care. People need to have training to understand and appreciate the impact of Edwards syndrome. My understanding is that a small amount of money has been made available to ensure that appropriate training will happen.

A United Kingdom organisation called SOFT UK has been supporting people in relation to the impact of Edwards syndrome, sometimes known as trisomy 18—there is an additional chromosome 18—since, I think, 1979. However, if parents do not know that there is help and information out there, they cannot seek it. The pathway of care needs to ensure that parents are aware of that help and that they have the appropriate information and support at that very devastating time when the diagnosis is made and thereafter, when the child is born.

13:55

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** I congratulate Richard Baker on bringing this important subject to the attention of Parliament.

Edwards syndrome is an autosomal trisomy, caused by all or part of an extra 18th chromosome. Problems in cell division either in the egg or sperm cell prior to conception cause the

extra chromosome to be present. It is rarer and far less well known than trisomy 21, which is also called Down's syndrome. Patau syndrome, which is a similar condition, is caused by an additional 13th chromosome, and is very similar to Edwards syndrome in its progression and its prognosis.

I, too, was completely ignorant of the condition until I was contacted by Demi Powell, who lives in Dalbeattie, regarding the selection of this motion for debate. I met Demi last summer when she was an Olympic torch bearer in Dumfries. Demi lost her eldest son Connor to Edwards syndrome twelve years ago. She is a trustee of SOFT UK, which is a charity that supports families who are affected by Edwards or Patau syndromes. It was due to Demi's hard work for SOFT UK and her work supporting hundreds of affected families that she was nominated and selected as an Olympic torch bearer.

SOFT UK is delighted that Parliament is debating the motion, but it wants us to realise that the ways in which families can be affected can be complex, so the support that different families require needs to take account of their different circumstances.

The most recent statistics from England and Wales suggest that 9 out of 10 families will opt for termination after prenatal diagnosis of Edwards or Patau syndrome, and they need support through that. However, 13 per cent of babies with Edwards syndrome are not diagnosed before birth and those families are unprepared for what the condition entails and for the fact that their child may die at or shortly after birth. More than 70 per cent of those babies are likely to die within a month.

However, increasing numbers of children with Edwards syndrome are now surviving the neonatal period and have a variety of clinical needs. Recent research from Japan suggests that possibly a quarter of those infants are capable of survival for more than a year if they receive the appropriate medical interventions. There are variations of Edwards syndrome, including mosaic and partial forms. Children with those forms can enjoy relatively good health and attend mainstream schools and colleges if their longer-term health needs are properly supported.

SOFT UK wants us to understand that each family that is affected by Edwards syndrome is different; that they will need support after diagnosis, perhaps after termination or neonatal death; and that some whose children live longer will require support in caring for their child. Part of the SOFT UK website is dedicated to youngsters who have died of the condition. One of those young people lived to early adulthood and was living in supported accommodation when he died of apnoea. Interventions that prolong life and

support sufferers and their families are needed in addition to palliative care and bereavement support in helping each of those families and each of those children through their pathways.

The briefing that SOFT UK has provided for me also states that provision of antenatal screening varies across Scotland, and that figures on diagnosis of Edwards syndrome are not routinely collected. Therefore, there is no analysis of why antenatal screening is failing in 13 per cent of cases and those babies are born without their parents realising that they have the condition.

SOFT UK has been working actively in Scotland for more than 20 years—maybe longer, given what Dennis Robertson was saying—providing befriending support and collecting a wealth of information and research. It wants to work closely with Caoimhe's Trust in Aberdeen and I am certain that it would be willing to share its expertise with the Scottish Government to support families and those to come who will have the conditions.

13:59

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I commend Richard Baker for bringing this important and sensitive subject to the chamber for debate. There can be nothing worse than learning before term or very soon afterwards that a baby is suffering from a disorder that will result in either stillbirth or death within weeks of birth. Fortunately, such situations are relatively rare, but for the one in 6,000 fetuses with trisomy 18—or Edwards syndrome—and their parents, that is the very bleak outlook.

I admit that I did not know about Edwards syndrome until I researched it prior to the debate, although it is the second most common such genetic disorder after Down's syndrome, with which we are all much more familiar. Edwards syndrome has devastating consequences, with up to 95 per cent of affected fetuses dying before birth. The few—mainly female—who survive to be born show low birth weight and fairly typical abnormalities of head and face, and other skeletal abnormalities as well as congenital heart defects and a multiplicity of other serious physical problems.

To learn that one is carrying such a baby must be devastating news, and we can only begin to imagine how parents can face up to it. It is clear that there is a need for support—not just in coming to terms with the awful prognosis, but to be able to look after the baby if it is born alive, and at the same time to prepare for losing it just a few weeks after bonding with the new arrival. A third of the babies who are born alive will die within a month because of medical problems. Indeed, only 5 per cent to 10 per cent of babies with full Edwards

syndrome will survive beyond a year, and they will live with severe disabilities.

The few people who have lesser forms—which are known as the mosaic and partial forms—of trisomy 18 may well survive into adult life, but they are few in number. For most, sadly, the outlook is very bleak, and support is needed in providing palliative care for the baby and in sustaining the family physically and emotionally.

I pay tribute, as other members have, to Caoimhe's parents, who have set up a trust for Edwards syndrome in her name. I do not think that anyone could read Caoimhe's story, as presented on the trust's website, with a dry eye. It talks about the heartbreak of learning the diagnosis pre-birth, together with the depressing prognosis for the condition; getting to know and love a little baby girl while facing the certainty of her premature death and the uncertainty of when that would be; the ups and downs and serious illnesses of her short life; and the early celebration of a Christmas that she would never see. All those things are heart-rending.

Many parents in such a situation would withdraw from the world and grieve in private, but Caoimhe's parents, as we have heard, decided to share their experience with others and set up a trust with the aim of helping future parents in the same situation to get the support that they need. In my opinion, that was an extremely brave thing to do. I wish them well in their efforts, and if they succeed in helping—even a little—to ease the burden for families who are affected by Edwards syndrome in the future, they will have established a very fitting legacy for their little daughter.

I am not aware of what care and support is currently available in Scotland for people who are affected not only by Edwards syndrome but by stillbirth or early bereavement for any reason. However, it is obvious that there is a need for bereavement services for such families, and for a care plan for delivering care and support to affected children and their families all the way from diagnosis through to the end of life and bereavement.

I am encouraged to hear from Richard Baker that there are plans for a pathway of support to be developed. I look forward to hearing from the minister about the services that are available, and whether there are plans to improve such services in the future. I hope that the minister will support the proposed care pathway, and once again I commend Richard Baker for highlighting this important issue in Parliament.

14:03

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I add my congratulations to those of other

members to Richard Baker on bringing the debate to the chamber. Once again, Parliament is facing up to an issue of which it is not fully aware, as members have said. That has been brought about by the courage of parents who have been in the difficult situation of experiencing the birth of an Edwards syndrome child.

I will not reiterate the points that colleagues have made, but I will amplify one or two points. With regard to early screening and diagnosis, amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling would play a significant part, as would ultrasound screening to look for slow growth or underweight development, which should lead to amniocentesis and chorionic villus sampling where appropriate, and so should give parents the opportunity to seek an abortion, if they wish to do so.

In researching my speech, I drew first on my own experience. I practised paediatrics at the Western general hospital here in Edinburgh more than 40 years ago, and experienced a case that we did not know at the time was Edwards syndrome, which had some of the characteristic features that Nanette Milne spoke about.

I also looked at the web, as many of us do when trying to learn about subjects for which we do not have adequate information. I discovered the SOFT UK website, which I found interesting and which offers support for both Patau syndrome or trisomy 13, and Edwards syndrome or trisomy 18. SOFT UK obviously does an excellent job in providing information. I also found it interesting that on Mumsnet there is a current thread regarding a lady who is pregnant with what may be an Edwards syndrome baby. Her consultant has said that she has a one in three chance of having such a child, so she is looking for advice and support. I hope that someone will put her in touch with SOFT UK so that she can receive that.

One of the things that are transforming our society is the ability of those who have experienced such problems to come through them in a way that, in a sense, makes them stronger. They use their grief in order to do things such as setting up a trust, as Patricia and Peter have done. Their involvement through the social media in supporting others is something that we need to look at and encourage.

In the meantime, there is the establishment of the proposed pathway, with its five outcomes and 10 key objectives. I am sure that the Minister for Public Health and the Government will tell us how that is progressing. It seems to me that we have a good base to build on in Scotland. Our children's hospices, which were not the first hospices to be established in Scotland but arose from the hospice movement that developed in the 1970s, have already played an enormously important role in supporting parents in situations of palliative care.

That includes engaging with families with a child who has Edwards syndrome, but there is now a move to do that in a more formal way. CHAS's next big effort, in addition to the two residential hospices that have been established, is to develop community support across the country. I wish CHAS well in that. We need specialist support for parents like Patricia and Peter whose children suffer from Edwards syndrome.

I feel that we are making good progress and, as Richard Baker is, I am optimistic because although a cure cannot be found at the present time, the possibility for supporting parents exists. I am sure that the Government will be supportive in that respect.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I invite Michael Matheson to respond to the debate. Minister, you have seven minutes.

14:07

**The Minister for Public Health (Michael Matheson):** As others have done, I congratulate Richard Baker on securing time for the debate and on bringing to the chamber an important issue that a number of members have said has made them aware of a condition of which they were previously not aware. I became aware of the condition only about a year ago, when a friend's sister had a baby with Edwards syndrome, which led me to find out more about the syndrome.

As any parent would recognise, having a child with a life-limiting illness is hugely challenging for the parents and the whole family. The work of organisations such as Caoimhe's Trust provides an essential form of help and support to such families. I commend Caoimhe's parents for the way in which they have gone about that and have used their experience to try to help and support other parents and families.

Through the current antenatal screening programme that is offered to pregnant women, the majority of cases with Edwards syndrome will be detected halfway through pregnancy. A number of members have referred to the importance of early diagnosis. It may be helpful if I point out that the United Kingdom National Screening Committee is considering specific screening for Edwards syndrome and Patau syndrome in the first trimester. We expect to receive the conclusions of that work by spring next year; we will then consider how to take that forward as national policy.

I am sure that members will appreciate that maternity care for women should be person centred, safe and effective, that all pregnant women should have an initial assessment of their health, obstetric and social needs, and that they

should be offered appropriate screening referral and care options by 12 weeks' gestation.

We recognise that many babies who are affected by Edwards syndrome die either before or during childbirth. The death of a child is distressing for any parent, so every effort should be made to support parents through that difficult time and to ensure that they are treated with the appropriate dignity and the required care. We have provided some funding over two years to the charity SANDS—the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society—to enable it to work with NHS boards to ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate education and training to support parents during that painful time.

As a Government, we are also committed to ensuring that sick and vulnerable children receive the highest-quality care from the most appropriate professionals at all times, and we recognise the vital role of neonatal units in providing intensive and specialist care for sick and premature babies.

Through our neonatal quality framework, which will be published soon, neonatal services will be required to provide evidence of person-centred care, including palliative care. Families, including siblings, should be offered access to communication, information and advocacy services, including referrals for counselling and bereavement support. That is intended to support them in their participation around discussions, clinical care decisions, palliative care planning and end-of-life care, if that is required. Such planning should also take account of families' cultural and religious preferences, needs and values. Palliative care planning and end-of-life decisions should be made in partnership with professionals and parents, and care should be provided in an appropriate environment, whether that is a hospice or a home setting.

Children and young people have different needs from adults when it comes to palliative care. It has been said before and it is worth reiterating that children are not mini-adults in such situations. That is why Scotland's national action plan for palliative and end-of-life care recognises the need for a specific framework for children and young people.

Members have mentioned the children and young people's palliative care executive, which consists of experts in the field. It has produced a framework that aims to ensure that there are recognised pathways of palliative care within and among health boards for every child and young person from the point of diagnosis of a life-limiting condition through to living with their condition until the end of life. The framework has five key outcomes and they have been highlighted to all chief executives of NHS boards in Scotland. In advancing those outcomes, they will deliver the

palliative care services that children and young people need. I expect all boards to implement the outcomes as a matter of priority.

A managed clinical network for children with exceptional health care needs was set up in 2009 as part of the on-going work to improve specialist services for children and young people. It is an important way in which to develop the services that are provided for children who have exceptional health care needs while also helping to share good practice across Scotland and agree pathways of care. That should help practitioners to support children.

Dennis Robertson mentioned "Shaping Bereavement Care: A Framework for Action for Bereavement Care in NHSScotland", which was published in February 2011 to provide guidance and support to NHS Scotland on how to develop and deliver bereavement care. It sets out a framework of action for boards and recognises the need for better co-ordination and understanding of the needs of people who are bereaved. A national bereavement pack and information leaflet were developed to support health boards in implementing the guidance, and the series of modules that have been rolled out to help to raise awareness and provide further support for staff include a specific module on the death of a child.

I hope that I have given members some insight into the work that is being done to support individuals who have a child with a life-limiting condition, including those with Edwards syndrome. I am always happy to hear from members if they feel that further actions could be taken. Should members wish to raise any points with me, I will be more than happy to discuss them.

I wish Caoimhe's Trust continued success in the work that it does. I hope that all members will give it the support that it needs and help it to spread greater knowledge of Edwards syndrome.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Thank you, minister. That concludes Richard Baker's members' business debate on Edwards syndrome and support for babies with palliative care needs.

As the next item of business cannot commence until 2.30 pm, I suspend this meeting of Parliament until then.

14:15

*Meeting suspended.*

14:30

*On resuming—*

## Scotland and the European Union

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The first item of business this afternoon is a statement by Nicola Sturgeon on Scotland and the European Union. The Deputy First Minister will take questions at the end of her statement. There should, therefore, be no interventions or interruptions.

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities (Nicola Sturgeon):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to make a statement on an independent Scotland's continuing membership of the European Union and to respond to recent statements by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

First, let me be clear that the Scottish Government believes that Scotland should continue to be a member of the EU—a view that does not appear to be shared by a United Kingdom Government that is displaying ever-increasing signs of Euroscepticism. Indeed, in my view, it is the overtly hostile stance of the UK Government—or at least significant parts of it—that presents the real risk to Scotland's continuing membership of the EU.

This Government believes that Scotland benefits from EU membership and that the EU benefits enormously from having Scotland as a member. It is also our view that Scotland's interests would be better represented in the EU by an independent Scottish Government with a seat at the top table that was able to speak up for our national interest without having to seek the prior permission of UK ministers, and a Government that was able to work closely and constructively with partners across these islands and across the EU to advance our shared interests. That is our ambition for Scotland's future in Europe. It is positive and constructive, with Scotland's and Europe's best interests at its heart, and it stands in sharp contrast to the stance of the UK Government.

I turn to the recent statements of the President of the European Commission. As head of the Commission, Mr Barroso's opinion on this matter should be—and will be by this Government—treated seriously and with respect. That is why I have written to him seeking an early opportunity to discuss the particular process by which Scotland would become independent and the implications of that for our continued EU membership.

However, in doing so, it is important that I set out the following points. First, the European Commission, however important, is not the final arbiter of these matters. Mr Barroso's statements do not constitute a ruling, as some have suggested. Nor does the Commission even claim to be specifically addressing the particular situation of Scotland. Indeed, the President of the Commission himself made clear, in his letter to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, that

“the European Commission has expressed its views in general”.

Secondly, there is absolutely no provision in the EU treaties for the disapplication of those treaties or the removal of EU citizenship from a country and its people when they exercise their democratic right to self-determination. It would be extraordinary if anyone in this chamber—or, indeed, anyone else who is committed to the principle of democracy—were to suggest that there should be. Mr Barroso said, in response to a question on 10 November:

“There are no provisions in the Treaties that refer to the secession from a Member State.”

Therefore, what I would want to outline to the President and hear his views on is the specific process by which Scotland would become independent and the way in which we would seek to ensure that our intention to remain within the EU was achieved.

First, let me deal with the process of independence. As a result of the Edinburgh agreement, that process is democratic, agreed and consensual, and the result will be respected and implemented by both the Scottish and UK Governments. Following a yes vote in 2014, a process of negotiation will take place with the UK Government on the transfer of powers to an independent Scottish Parliament. As I said last week, it would be the intention of the Scottish Government to invite representatives of the other parties and of civic Scotland to contribute to that process. It is a process that we would intend to have completed in time for the next Scottish election, in 2016. However, in the period between autumn 2014 and May 2016, Scotland would still be in the UK and, therefore, by definition, still within the EU. In parallel to negotiations with the UK Government, it would be our intention to negotiate the terms of an independent Scotland's continuing membership of the EU.

Here, I should point out that the need for negotiations with the EU was made clear by the Government in “Choosing Scotland's Future” in 2007, in “Your Scotland, Your Voice” in 2009 and in “Your Scotland, Your Referendum” in 2012. It is worth remembering that these are matters that are likely to be about political negotiation more than they will be about legal process.

Let me pause here to reflect on the position of the UK in such negotiations. It would be interesting to hear those who argue that an independent Scotland would have to reapply for EU membership explain in some detail why that same argument would not also be true of the rest of the UK, given that the democratic process that we are engaged in would lead to the dissolution of the UK in its current political form. However, since I do not believe that we would be in a formal reapplication situation, I will not dwell on that point.

However, what will undoubtedly be the case is that negotiation on terms of continuing membership will be highly relevant to the rest of the UK, which will require to determine, for example, its own number of seats in the European Parliament and its revised financial contribution. I believe that Scotland and the rest of the UK would have a shared interest in concluding such negotiations smoothly and quickly.

I believe that such a sensible process of negotiation will result in Scotland's continuing membership of the EU on terms that are reasonable. By that I mean that, for example, just like Sweden, we would not join the euro until and unless it was in Scotland's interests to do so and we had satisfied the conditions for doing so. Just like Ireland, we would not enter Schengen but would instead look to co-operate with Ireland and the rest of the UK in the common travel area. Both those positions are practical and justifiable and would, I am sure, be supported by all parties here in Scotland. Given the approach that has been taken in other circumstances, the evidence suggests that those would be understood by our European partners.

I will cite two reasons for my view and, in so doing, I am very deliberately relying not simply on arguments of law or process but on arguments of common sense, reality and mutual self-interest. First, the EU is an organisation that welcomes new members. It wants others to join—it most certainly would not want to see existing parts of its territory leave. Let me quote, again, the words of Mr Barroso:

"I see no country leaving and I see many countries wanting to join."

The EU is also an inherently flexible organisation that adapts, as indeed it should, to the changing circumstances of its member states. To demonstrate that, we just have to look at how quickly and smoothly the former East Germany was integrated into the EU following reunification. Indeed, it is instructive to read the press release that was issued by the Commission about East Germany in 1990. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The Commission said:

"The community institutions have all done their utmost to bring about the integration of what was the German Democratic Republic as smoothly as possible and within the timescale allowed by the unification process."

There was no direct precedent for what happened with East Germany—just as there is no precedent for what might happen in Scotland—but the EU found a solution that is consistent with the principle of sincere co-operation that lies at the heart of the treaties. The EU adapted and it did so on the basis of common sense and accommodation of internal decisions taken by one of its member states.

My second reason for believing that Scotland would continue in membership of the EU is that it is overwhelmingly in the EU's interests for us to do so. By that, I do not just mean that to go through the complicated process of putting Scotland outside the EU just for us to be readmitted later would be, as Graham Avery, an honorary director general of the Commission, said, "not feasible". I mean that Scotland's vast assets—our fishing, oil and gas and renewables; our value as an export market to other member states; our education system, which is enjoyed by thousands of EU students every year; and our status as home to tens of thousands of EU citizens—mean that the economic, social and political interests of the EU would be best served by Scotland remaining in continuous membership.

Let us just look at some of that in more detail. We have around 90 per cent of the EU's oil and gas reserves. We accounted for around two thirds of EU crude oil and a fifth of EU natural gas production in 2009. An independent Scotland would be the largest producer of oil and the second largest producer of gas in the entire European Union. In 2010-11, there were more than 16,000 EU students enrolled at our higher education institutions and 150,000 EU citizens living here by virtue of the freedom of movement that comes with our being part of the EU.

In other words, we are an integral member of the EU and it is simply not credible to argue that the other nations of the European Union would not want to retain access to the vast array of resources and opportunities that Scotland brings to the EU table. Indeed, if the Opposition parties have Scotland's best interests at heart—notwithstanding their opposition to independence—they will accept that, in the event of a yes vote, the process that I have outlined would be in the best interests of Scotland, the UK and the EU.

As I said earlier, I have sought the opportunity to discuss the matter with Mr Barroso in the near future. I will be very happy to update Parliament following that discussion.

**The Presiding Officer:** The Deputy First Minister will now take questions on the issues raised in her statement.

**Patricia Ferguson (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab):** I thank the Deputy First Minister for advance sight of her statement.

In December 2007, at the European and External Relations Committee, in answer to a question from my colleague Irene Oldfather, the Deputy First Minister stated that

“it is the clear view of the Scottish National Party and the Government that Scotland would automatically be a member of the European Union upon independence.”

Ms Oldfather went on to ask:

“Do not all member states require to negotiate?”—*[Official Report, European and External Relations Committee, 11 December 2007; c 231, 232.]*

Ms Surgeon’s response to that was no. *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Patricia Ferguson:** On 13 September 2012, during First Minister’s questions, the First Minister said:

“There must be negotiations”.—*[Official Report, 13 September 2012; c 11407.]*

By 10 December 2012, the yes campaign was issuing press releases stating that it was “common sense” that an independent Scotland would remain in the EU. However, during the Deputy First Minister’s statement, she simply talks about a vague

“intention to remain within the EU”.

First, it was automatic, then we needed negotiation, then it was “common sense” and now it is an “intention”. Of course, all that—

**The Presiding Officer:** You must ask a question, Ms Ferguson.

**Patricia Ferguson:** Much of Ms Sturgeon’s statement is mere assertion.

**The Presiding Officer:** I need a question, Ms Ferguson.

**Patricia Ferguson:** During the five years—it is nearly six years—for which the Deputy First Minister’s Government has been in power, with which of the 27 EU member states has she discussed Scotland remaining in the European Union, given that all would have a say on that matter? What discussions to date has her Government conducted with any official of the European Union about the matters that she now feels are so urgent that they must be brought to the attention of President Barroso?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I make it absolutely clear to Patricia Ferguson—in case she did not quite get

the gist of this from my statement—that there is no doubt about this Government’s commitment to remaining part of the European Union. If only the same could be said of some of the other parties that are represented in the chamber.

I refer the member again—I mentioned this in my statement—to “Choosing Scotland’s Future”, a Government publication in 2007, which made clear the point that I have made clear again today about the requirement for negotiation. *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** The difference of opinion is that I do not accept that Scotland would be in the position of having to reapply and that those negotiations would be about reapplication. However, I agree that we would be negotiating the terms of our continuing membership. The key point that Patricia Ferguson and others must grasp is that, regardless of that, negotiations would take place within the European Union. I hope that Patricia Ferguson would accept that in Scotland’s interests, if for no other reason.

In relation to Patricia Ferguson’s point about engagement, as the First Minister made clear at First Minister’s questions today, this Government wants to engage with a range of organisations and interests about our plans for the transition to independence and what we would do with the powers of independence. We will engage with the European Commission; I have already said that I have sought early discussions with President Barroso. We will engage with other member states.

The question that Patricia Ferguson and others must answer—or, at least, the point that they must make clear—is this: is she really saying that Scotland would be kicked out of the European Union? *[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** If she is saying that, she should say so explicitly, because that is an incredible proposition and would undoubtedly and rightly attract the derision that it deserves.

**Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** I thank the Deputy First Minister for prior sight of her statement. It is a triumph of optimism and evasiveness over hard-headed fact and reality because it poses far more questions than it answers.

The Deputy First Minister says that the process of negotiating Scotland’s place in Europe will take just 18 months. How is that possible when the fastest-ever process—that for Finland—took nearly three years? Does she even know—*[Interruption.]*

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.



**Annabel Goldie:** Does she even know whether she will be granted a meeting with President Barroso? Does she even know when that meeting is likely to be? What questions will she ask him, or will she just tell him how it will be? I am afraid that that is the clear implication of this risible statement, because she actually says that she will outline the process to President Barroso. Poor man. [*Laughter.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Annabel Goldie:** If she knows exactly what the process is, why does she not share that with the rest of us?

Most laughable of all, we are expected to believe that an independent Scotland will be in the same position as a bankrupt failed state such as East Germany. That really will take—[*Interruption.*] It is in the statement. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Annabel Goldie:** That really will take some explaining to the people of Scotland.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Optimism is not something that I usually associate with the Scottish Conservatives.

It is incredibly amusing to hear such deference to the President of the European Commission emanating from the Tory benches. As the First Minister said earlier, it was only yesterday that David Cameron stood up in the House of Commons and stated clearly and unequivocally that he did not agree with President Barroso.

The statement that I made is based on common sense and realism. Most people, other than those who are gripped by the fevered imagination that grips the better together Tory-Labour-Liberal alliance, would recognise the realism at the heart of what I said. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Annabel Goldie rather demeans herself and her party with the comments that she just made about East Germany. I was not comparing Scotland to East Germany; I was using the example—[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I was using the example of a process that demonstrates the adaptability, flexibility and realism of the European Union. Annabel Goldie might want to reflect on the fact that reunification of Germany was agreed, I think, in September 1990 and, in October of the same year, East Germany became part of the European Union. Perhaps, when she makes comments about timescales, she might want to reflect on actual situations and precedents.

I return to my central point: is Annabel Goldie or anybody else in the chamber seriously saying that Scotland—oil-rich, renewable energy-rich and fishing-rich Scotland—would find itself ejected from the European Union? If they are arguing that, they should stand up and argue it explicitly and they will be laughed out of the chamber and laughed at across the country, as they would deserve to be.

**The Presiding Officer:** We move to questions from back-bench members. Many members want to ask questions. I ask those who are going to ask questions to make them brief. I would also appreciate brief answers.

I will say one more thing. The Opposition parties asked for this statement. It is important that we question the Deputy First Minister in the way in which she needs to be questioned and that she answers those questions. Therefore, I would appreciate it very much if I did not have to call order every 10 or 15 seconds. Let us get through the questions and let us conduct ourselves in the way that we should as a Parliament.

**Annabelle Ewing (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** Does the Deputy First Minister take the view—as I certainly do—that the claim that citizens of an independent Scotland would somehow be stripped of their rights as EU citizens simply for exercising their democratic right of self-determination is nothing more than scaremongering—

**The Presiding Officer:** Yes, but do you have a question, Ms Ewing?

**Annabelle Ewing:** Does the Deputy First Minister agree, moreover, that that claim is totally in contravention of common sense?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Yes, I do. It is worth focusing on the implications of what the other parties argue. If they are correct and Scotland would be kicked out of the European Union, not only would Scottish citizens be stripped of our EU citizenship, but the citizens of other European countries would be stripped of their rights vis-à-vis Scotland. Therefore, the fishermen of other countries—Spain or France, for example—would no longer have the rights that they enjoy. Businesses of other European countries would no longer have those rights, and their citizens who currently live in Scotland would no longer enjoy them.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** Or students.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Or students. That underlines how preposterous the position is that the Opposition is putting forward and why, as a result, it does not deserve to be taken seriously.

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** I am pleased that the Deputy First Minister has finally admitted that the terms of Scotland's EU membership are a matter of negotiation. In her statement, she went on to say that adopting the euro and entering the Schengen agreement would not be up for negotiation. Specifically, would Britain's European rebate, which is currently worth £90 to every Scot, be a matter of negotiation?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Ken Macintosh is always keen to pull up Scottish National Party members for alleged—usually inaccurately alleged—inaccuracies. I suggest that he should go and check some documents; he might then realise that his comment about me finally conceding negotiations is completely inaccurate. He should check documents from 2007, 2009 and 2012.

On the euro, I suggest that Ken Macintosh look closely and in detail at the situation in Sweden. As we heard earlier, the article in *The Scotsman* this morning makes it clear that no country can be forced to adopt the euro.

On the rebate, I am confident of an independent Scottish Government negotiating a good deal for Scotland. UK Governments have consistently failed to do that. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** In all seriousness, Scotland and the UK would have a shared interest in the issue. As I said in my statement, independence for Scotland means renegotiation of many of these matters for the UK as well. We would work together to get the best deal, and I am confident that an independent Scottish Government, in arguing for Scotland's interests in a way that UK Governments have failed to do, would get a much better deal than we have been used to in the past.

**Willie Rennie (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD):** I thank the Deputy First Minister for advance sight of her statement.

The statement at least answers the question that I asked the First Minister earlier today about whether he expects all 27 member states of the European Union simply to sign up to whatever the Scottish Government demands. The answer seems to be, "Yes, the Scottish Government does—to every single thing." It seems that the Deputy First Minister has some starry-eyed belief that an independent Scotland would never lose out in any negotiation, for the rest of time. Back in reality, can she answer Patricia Ferguson's question? When does she plan to meet the 27 members of the European Union to establish whether they agree with her claims?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I look forward to engaging with other member states, the European Commission and the UK Government—if it will

engage with us—on the arguments for Scotland being an independent country, because I think that those arguments are not just compelling, but unanswerable.

Willie Rennie has to answer a question about what he believes about other member states. Let us remember the context in which we would operate—it would be just after the people of Scotland had democratically voted for Scotland to become an independent country in a democratic referendum. I do not know, but perhaps in his world, people would not respect that democratic decision by the Scottish people. I believe that other countries across the European Union would respect it. I do not believe that just for that reason; I believe that because it is in the overwhelming interest of the rest of Europe to keep Scotland within the European Union.

Sooner or later, the Opposition parties, notwithstanding their opposition to independence, will have to stop arguing as if they are against the interests of Scotland, because that is how they are coming across in the debate.

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** When the Deputy First Minister meets Mr Barroso, will she raise concerns with the European Commission regarding the UK's withdrawal from the EU? Does she agree that the biggest threat to Scotland's EU membership comes from the Westminster Government and not from Scottish independence?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Yes, I do. That is a serious point; if it was not so serious, it would be utterly laughable to have to listen to Tories, and those Liberals who prop them up, wringing their hands about the continuing EU membership of an independent Scotland when, all the time at Westminster, large sections of those parties are conspiring to get the UK and, by extension, Scotland out of the European Union. I suggest to the Tories in particular that they put their house in order before they start giving lessons to anybody else.

**James Kelly (Rutherglen) (Lab):** Will the Deputy First Minister say whether the Government has received specific legal advice on the matter of EU membership? Will she also explain how the Scottish people can trust a Government that spent five years claiming that its position on EU membership was backed by legal advice, wasted public money to prevent the publication of that advice and then destroyed its credibility by denying that the legal advice ever existed?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** As the member knows, I said in my statement on 23 October that the Government had commissioned specific legal advice on the issue of Scotland's membership of

the European Union. That advice has not yet been received.

On the issue of trust, I do not think that a party that got the electoral hiding that Labour got in last year's election is in any position to come to this chamber and talk about trust. The people of Scotland demonstrated in the election which party they trust. Since then, Johann Lamont has done a U-turn on all the universal benefits that she once used to promise. I think that, at the next electoral opportunity, the people of Scotland will take the same decision all over again.

**Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** What effect does the Deputy First Minister anticipate the loss of Scotland as an EU member state would have on the EU? [*Interruption.*]

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Members of the Opposition parties can laugh all they like, but the fact is that they behave as if Scotland would be going to the European Union empty handed. Scotland brings vast resources and vast opportunities to the European table. I outlined the statistics on the wealth of our oil and gas resources, and our fishing resources are equally enormous. There are also the opportunities that students get to study here in our world-renowned education system. My constituency has thousands of people living in it from across the European Union. Is anybody seriously suggesting that the rights and responsibilities of all those people would be taken away overnight? That is not a credible proposition.

Let us have a robust debate about independence in the next couple of years, but let the Opposition stop insulting the intelligence of the Scottish people, because that is what they are doing. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Margo MacDonald, to be followed by Stewart Maxwell.

**Margo MacDonald (Lothian) (Ind):** Is it me?

**The Presiding Officer:** Yes, Ms MacDonald—you.

**Margo MacDonald:** There was so much noise, Presiding Officer.

**The Presiding Officer:** Sorry about that.

**Margo MacDonald:** Why does the Deputy First Minister insist on pursuing a line of argument that conflates the policy on Europe of the party in government with the principle? There is great confusion outside the walls of this place about the two. Why will she not meet the Governments of the European Free Trade Association, because that would be time better spent?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I know Margo MacDonald's position on the issue, which is perfectly respectable. My view is that Scotland is better served within the European Union and that the

European Union is better served with Scotland in it.

In response to the first part of Margo MacDonald's question, I say with the greatest respect that I am making this statement as a Scottish Government minister, so it is reasonable for me to articulate Scottish Government policy. At every opportunity, when I discuss the matter of Scottish independence, I make clear the distinction between the policy of this Government and the restoration of powers to this Parliament that would allow parties standing on other platforms, if elected, to implement policies that might not be the same as those of this Government.

That is a clear distinction, which Margo MacDonald is right to point out and which I will continue to make. However, as long as I am speaking for the Scottish Government in this Parliament, it is reasonable for me to articulate the policies of this Government.

**Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP):** At First Minister's question time, Willie Rennie said that the First Minister must set out what an independent Scotland would stand to lose from having a seat at the top table in the European Union. Will the Deputy First Minister set out the benefits of direct Scottish representation in the EU?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I am not just crawling and being über-loyal when I say that I do not think that I can better the First Minister's answer to Willie Rennie earlier today—

**Willie Rennie:** There was no answer! [*Laughter.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Maybe I could better it. Maybe on another occasion I will try.

On the serious point that Stewart Maxwell raised, we stand to gain a great deal, not just from continuing to be in the European Union but from having an independent seat at the top tables of the European Union. I am sure that Richard Lochhead would articulate clearly the benefits of being a minister of an independent Government when it comes to crucial talks on fishing.

I think that many people throughout Scotland want rigorous, assertive representation in Europe but would prefer Scotland not to be tainted with the increasing Euroscepticism that we see in Conservatives south of the border. A future in which we speak with our own voice and assert our own interest, while working as constructive partners with our friends across the European Union, is the right future for Scotland, and I think that that future for Scotland will win the day in 2014.

**The Presiding Officer:** There are still many members who want to ask a question. I intend to continue questions for a wee while, although I doubt that I will get to everyone. I intend to try to take time out of the debate later in today's programme.

**Helen Eadie (Cowdenbeath) (Lab):** I am grateful to you, Presiding Officer.

No member had better accuse me of ever wanting to withdraw from the EU. I have campaigned all my adult life for the EU—

**The Presiding Officer:** Yes, but can we have a question, Ms Eadie?

**Helen Eadie:** I have repeatedly raised with the Deputy First Minister and the First Minister the question of the Scottish Parliament having an inquiry and the Scottish Government facilitating such an inquiry. If the First Minister and Deputy First Minister believe so much in democracy and trust, why do they continually block their back benchers in the Scottish Parliament from allowing the Parliament to have an inquiry into membership of the EU and the impact of all that on the people of Scotland?

Fundamental issues are raised, which are key, and the people of Scotland must have answers, and an inquiry—

**The Presiding Officer:** I think that we get your point, Ms Eadie.

**Helen Eadie:** If I may just make—

**The Presiding Officer:** No. I think that we have got your point, Ms Eadie. Also, it is not the Deputy First Minister's responsibility to decide what committees of this Parliament do or do not do.

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** Can the Deputy First Minister say with confidence that if negotiations are successfully concluded, implementation of matters such as Scotland's representation in the European Commission and Parliament would not trigger, in other EU countries, domestic ratification procedures that relate to treaty changes?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** I am confident that the process of Scotland's continuing membership of the European Union, with Scotland and other member states acting in good faith, based on our shared interests, could be implemented smoothly. I cited a precedent—not a direct precedent but an example of the process taking place. I will be happy to discuss the matter with Patrick Harvie if he would find that helpful.

**Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP):** Given the Opposition parties' previous, rather obsessive concerns about the ability of the Scottish Parliament to hold a legally binding referendum, only for the Scottish and UK

Governments to resolve the issues by a process of negotiation, does the Deputy First Minister agree that an independent Scotland's continued membership of the EU will be assured by a process of negotiation, too?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** Yes, I believe that strongly. Rod Campbell is right to point to those people, including some in this chamber, who, at the start of this year, were saying that the UK and Scottish Governments could never sit down and negotiate an agreement that would lead to the referendum that he talks about. We have demonstrated that that can be done.

That takes me to a crucial point. We will have passionate, heated and noisy debates over the next couple of years. It is perfectly legitimate for people to argue against independence and it is legitimate for those who believe in independence to argue for it, but we must all recognise that, once the people of Scotland decide and if they decide democratically to become an independent country, the Scottish Government and the UK Government will work together to implement that decision. That is encapsulated in the Edinburgh agreement, but even if it was not, it makes sense because many of the things that will be in the interests of Scotland at that point will also be in the interests of the rest of the United Kingdom. I believe that that common-sense, mature attitude will prevail. We have the example of the Edinburgh agreement, which points to that.

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** The Deputy First Minister has failed to convince me why she is right and President Barroso is wrong. I therefore ask her a simpler question. What is her understanding of the word "automatic", and how does it differ from the term "after negotiation"?

**Nicola Sturgeon:** If I had set the test for my statement today as having to convince Drew Smith, I would have been setting myself up for a spectacular failure. If the member will forgive me, that was not the test that I had set for my statement.

I want to make a serious point. Mr Barroso is the President of the European Commission; that position brings with it a great deal of authority, and he deserves to be treated with respect. However, as I said in my statement, he is not the final arbiter of these matters. The difference of opinion between myself and President Barroso lies in whether the negotiations would be about a reapplication or about continuing membership. In any event, those negotiations would take place within the European Union, not least because over that period we would still be within the UK.

That takes me back to the common-sense point. Does anybody really believe that it is in the interests of the European Union to eject Scotland?

That is where the arguments of all the Opposition parties founder. They can come up with all the technical process arguments they like, but those arguments founder on that common-sense point and will always founder on it because the Opposition parties have got it wrong.

**Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP):** Does the Deputy First Minister agree that the prize for Scotland as an independent member state is the opportunity to be at the centre of decision making in the institutions of the European Union and that if Scotland votes yes she can look forward to the day when we will occupy the presidency of the Council of the EU, as other small nations have consistently and successfully done since the EU's inception? [*Interruption.*]

**Nicola Sturgeon:** It is outrageous to hear the guffaws from the Opposition benches. Independent Ireland will assume the presidency in January. Why should not Scotland aspire to be in exactly the same position?

I look forward to the day when we are represented by ministers of an independent Scottish Government. I would rather be represented in Europe by an independent minister from another party than by a Tory UK minister who, more often than not, will misrepresent the interests of Scotland. Roll on the day when we are an independent member of the European Union.

## NorthLink Ferries

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is a statement by Keith Brown on NorthLink Ferries. The minister will take questions at the end of his statement, so there should be no interventions or interruptions.

15:09

**The Minister for Transport and Veterans (Keith Brown):** I am grateful for the opportunity to make a statement setting out the Scottish Government's on-going commitment to ferry services serving our island and remote rural communities, focusing in particular on the NorthLink services and the possible disruption to those services over the festive season.

I am sure that members, particularly the local members who have quite legitimately raised these issues in the chamber and elsewhere, will share my hope that the employer and trade unions involved can work together to avoid the proposed industrial action. I hope that it will be helpful to members if I set out the background to the proposed industrial action and what is being done to try to avert it.

Scotland's ferry services make a significant contribution to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of our nation. Since 2007, the Government has allocated record sums of money to the ferry services in Scotland. In 2011-12, our support for ferry services totalled £118 million, including spending of £46 million on the northern isles ferry services—and that was as fuel prices continued to rise.

Earlier this year, we concluded our latest procurement exercise and secured a new six-year contract for ferry services to the northern isles. As members will be aware, tendering for our supported ferry services is a requirement under European law—indeed, under previous Administrations those services were also tendered. When we have to tender public services, we have an obligation to do so efficiently and effectively and to work within the current rules. That is the best means of ensuring the continuation of high-quality, sustainable ferry services, as well as ensuring best value for public money.

Following a lengthy tender process, we were delighted to have attracted four final bids from long-established and experienced maritime service providers—clear evidence of the strength of the procurement exercise. Even an initial challenge from one of the unsuccessful bidders only served to confirm the robust, transparent and fair manner in which the northern isles tender had been carried out.

Serco, which now operates on the northern isles routes as Serco NorthLink Ferries, emerged from the tender exercise as the successful bidder. The new contract commenced as planned on 5 July, after a well-managed handover period. The total value of the new northern isles contract represents a Scottish Government investment of more than £243 million over six years. Building on the good work of the previous operator, NorthLink Ferries Ltd, we have been able to secure commitments from Serco to take the northern isles ferry services forward. Passengers will see improvements to the journey experience, with improved ticketing arrangements and improved catering, hospitality and customer care facilities.

Following the announcement of Serco's success in the tender, there were those who were concerned about a new operator running the services. I received representations from the trade unions about the position of their members. However, the contract that we put in place with Serco ensured the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations transfer of all those employees who wished to transfer, with their terms and conditions intact.

Almost six months on from the start of the new northern isles contract, passengers and business customers have continued to experience good-quality ferry services, with more improvements to come. The same vessels serve the same routes and the Serco NorthLink staff continue to provide an outstanding service on board and onshore. The on-board facilities are excellent as well and the planned refurbishment of the vessels is now nearing completion, providing more—and more comfortable—seating for passengers who are travelling on the overnight route.

Members will be aware, however, that in October the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers balloted its members among the northern isles crew on strike action over Serco's planned revision of staffing arrangements. Following a ballot on 7 December, the RMT announced dates for a series of 24-hour strikes. The first day of strike action is due to take place tomorrow, 14 December, with further industrial action on five other days over the next couple of weeks, with the final day of action being 30 December.

Members will be aware that the dispute centres around Serco's plans to reduce staffing levels. In recent years, the three passenger and vehicle vessels that are used on the northern isles routes have been operating at staffing levels that are higher than is required for a large percentage of the year. A number of bidders for the contract, including Serco, indicated during the bidding process that they planned to reduce the permanent staffing complement to a more

appropriate level, in line with industry standards. Following a period of consultation with staff and trade unions, it has been possible to put in place a process for moving to the new arrangement in a way that means that there will be no compulsory redundancies. Agreement was reached with unions on the terms under which a number of staff have opted for voluntary redundancy.

In the current financial climate, I believe that it is entirely appropriate that we require major public contracts to be operated efficiently and cost effectively. Ensuring value for money for the public purse is a responsibility that the Government takes seriously. That said, it is entirely right that full account is taken of the interests of hard-working staff on our ferry services. Serco NorthLink, along with other ferry operators on our networks, has been able to offer favourable terms and conditions to its staff. It has committed to accepting the terms of a three-year pay deal that was made last year with the previous operator. That deal saw all seafaring staff receive a 4.25 per cent pay rise this year, nearly double the rate of inflation.

The resolution of the current dispute is rightly a matter for the RMT union and the ferry operator Serco NorthLink, and I expect both parties to work in partnership to do all that they can to avoid disruption. I have spoken to both parties in an effort to facilitate constructive engagement, and yesterday I discussed the matter with the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Even at this late stage, I urge the RMT and Serco to make every effort to find a solution with a view to minimising the disruption that will be caused by any industrial action, and I am aware that talks are continuing. However, if that should prove not to be possible, Serco has put in place comprehensive contingency arrangements, which include an agreement with another ferry operator to ensure that all Serco's customers can still travel across the Pentland Firth on any days that are affected by strike action. Serco has also ensured that there will be proactive engagement with passengers who are booked on the Aberdeen-Orkney-Shetland service to help them to reschedule their travel plans, and it has prepared a revised freight schedule that covers the planned strike period.

Serco has engaged extensively with all freight and haulage customers, particularly those who are transporting time-sensitive goods, which is an issue that local members have rightly raised. Serco has provided assurances to my officials that the revised freight schedule will fully address the likely demand and meet customers' needs.

It is worth noting that, under the Serco contract, the northern isles are served—in addition to the three passenger and vehicle vessels—by an additional two freight-only vessels. Those

freighters are unaffected by the dispute and will continue to operate as normal even if the action goes ahead.

At this time of year, the northern isles services are, of course, vulnerable to particularly bad weather. There is a yellow weather warning out for tomorrow, 14 December, which may impact on the northern isles services. NorthLink has been advising customers of the possibility of disruption for that reason.

I will say a few words about the context in which I am making my statement. Ferries are an essential part of Scotland's transport network. The quality of our ferry services impacts on us all and affects island and mainland communities. The Government is fully committed to delivering high-quality sustainable ferry services to our communities, which will stimulate social and economic growth throughout Scotland.

In recognition of that, we have carried out the first ever comprehensive review of ferry services in Scotland, the results of which will be published shortly. The ferries plan will provide communities with an update on the progress that we have made in taking forward issues around the level and type of ferry services that communities should receive; who is responsible for providing those services; and how we ensure that all communities can be certain about the future of their ferry service.

The ferries plan will include details of the conclusions that we have reached on how we will improve and strengthen the ferry services that are provided to communities. However, that will be only the beginning of the process, and we will continue to review our approach to providing ferry services and continue to reassess the needs of our communities.

With regard to the current situation with the northern isles services, it is disappointing that strike action is still possible, particularly given the RMT's successful campaigning for no compulsory redundancies, which is the issue on which the union balloted its members. I have previously spoken to Serco and to the RMT, and I spoke to the RMT again today. I again urge both parties to find a resolution to the dispute to avoid disruption to the services, particularly given that the proposed strike dates are in the run-up to and during the holiday period.

**Richard Baker (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I thank the minister for his statement. Of course, we are concerned about the impact of the situation on those who rely on the lifeline routes that are provided by the northern isles ferry service. I am sure that those concerns are very much shared by the workers, who feel that they have been left with little option but to take such action.

What further steps will the minister take to ensure that Serco engages properly with the RMT, and that a reasonable resolution is reached? What is his response to the RMT's concerns that, despite Serco's assurances in June that existing seasonal crewing arrangements would be maintained, it announced three months into the contract that it would reduce staffing levels, which means 35 job losses for RMT members, many of whom live on the islands?

Does the minister now regret the shambolic procurement process for these crucial services—the aftermath of which we are feeling now—which involved bids being marked 80 per cent on price as opposed to quality of service? Does he regret instructing the previous operator, NorthLink Ferries, not to appeal the decision to exclude it from the process on a technicality?

Why did the minister say that he was unaware of the value of the CalMac bid because it could not be considered, when we now know from a freedom of information request that the bid had indeed reached the final round of scoring? Has he misled Parliament on that issue? Is it time for a full investigation into the process, which I have asked the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look into and which the RMT has described as a “botched privatisation stitch-up”?

**Keith Brown:** Some of those statements belong in the realm of fantasy, to be perfectly honest, including the idea that the procurement exercise was “shambolic”, given that the previous procurement exercise for NorthLink Ferries had to be abandoned shortly after its conclusion. As Richard Baker knows, the recent procurement exercise was challenged in the courts and found to have been robust.

Richard Baker's accusation about misleading Parliament is a very serious one. I fully stand by my previous statement to Parliament that I did not see the price of the bid to which he referred, because it did not get to the final stage, as it did not satisfy the criteria.

On Richard Baker's points about what we can do regarding the two parties to the dispute, it is, quite rightly, my role to speak to the parties and to encourage further dialogue. There was a period during the past week when that dialogue was not taking place. I spoke to both parties, and that dialogue has now resumed. It is for those parties to resolve their differences. I recognise the interest of the local communities and local members in ensuring that the dialogue goes on, but it is right that it is for the parties to the dispute to resolve their differences.

If Serco's proposals, which are similar to ones that the previous operator considered, go ahead, they will result in increased employment in local

communities. As I said in my statement, it was a mark of the achievement of both Serco and the RMT that they managed to get to a conclusion in which there were no compulsory redundancies. I hope that that constructive process will continue and that we can still avoid the action that is proposed for tomorrow.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I think the minister for an advance copy of his statement. We look forward to the long-awaited ferries review.

My understanding of this issue is that consultation started in October, that some of the 36 volunteers who opted for redundancy, given the generous enhanced terms, have already left, and that all staff are receiving a pay rise of 4.25 per cent this year, which is almost double the rate of inflation. I regret that the bad weather that is forecast for Friday may result in the cancellation of ferries, but I am delighted that mother nature may on this occasion have outmanoeuvred Bob Crow. Serco NorthLink has stated that there will be no compulsory redundancies. Why, then, is the RMT persisting in punishing families and businesses in Orkney and Shetland at this festive time of year? How will the minister ensure value for money and a consistent and reliable service for passengers, businesses and taxpayers in the contract?

**Keith Brown:** I think that what I said in my statement regarding the process of voluntary redundancies and the fact that we have avoided compulsory redundancies addressed many of the points in Mary Scanlon's question. *[Interruption.]* I did not catch the last point that she made, but many of her other points have been addressed.

It is true to say that the current dispute is between the two parties involved and that they must resolve it. Mary Scanlon talked about the impact on local communities, but I have made that point to both parties in the dispute, and they have recognised it. We will continue to speak to the parties. As I said, I spoke in the past couple of hours to the RMT about the issue and I am seized of its importance. However, it is the two parties who will have to come to a conclusion on the matter.

It is worth the RMT side considering that it has achieved a great deal by avoiding compulsory redundancies. I am told by the Serco side that there is further room for discussion and negotiation in that regard. As I said, discussions are going on—perhaps even now—and it is still my hope that we will get a successful conclusion from them.

**The Presiding Officer:** I ask members to ask one question, and I ask the minister to reply as briefly and succinctly as he can.

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** The minister said that he has already had discussions. Will he remain available, even though it is coming up to the festive period, to discuss issues with Serco and the RMT in order to have the dispute resolved as quickly as possible?

**Keith Brown:** Yes. Both parties have my contact details and I will, of course, play any part that I can to help to avoid the dispute continuing.

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** In answer to an oral question from me on 5 September, the minister stated:

“the ferry service in the northern isles replicates the best elements of what we had before and will further improve them.”—*[Official Report, 5 September 2012; c 11061.]*

Prior to July 2012—

**The Presiding Officer:** Can we just get a question, Ms Murray?

**Elaine Murray:** —there was not an industrial dispute in the ferry services to the northern isles for 30 years. Does the minister agree that good industrial relations are essential to a good service and, if so, does he stand by his statement of 5 September?

**Keith Brown:** Yes, of course. I think that the ferry services are important and that the improved quality of service since the handover will continue. I cannot prevent industrial disputes, but I can try to facilitate their resolution. I have tried to do that for the current dispute and I will continue to do so.

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Liam McArthur. Mr McArthur, as you are one of the constituency MSPs and the matter concerns you greatly, my strictures about asking one brief question do not apply to you. However, do not test me too much.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** Thank you. I will try not to do that.

I start by thanking the minister for agreeing to my request for a statement and for advance sight of it. My and Tavish Scott's constituents face uncertainty, with many having to make costly changes to their travel plans over Christmas.

Does the minister accept that, despite the contingency arrangements, there will be reduced capacity and flexibility for those who are trying to bring goods into the islands? Is he aware, for example, that due to the appalling harvest, significant amounts of straw are being shipped in at present and that any disruption could badly impact on Orkney's farming community?

**Keith Brown:** I am aware of those points. It is to Serco's credit that it has done as much as it can—I think that both local members have been briefed by Serco on that—to try to mitigate any effects.



That is something that the company has given serious attention to. If there are further measures that the member believes can usefully be taken, I will be happy to take that up and broker that with Serco. However, I believe that it has done the right thing in what it has done so far to try to mitigate any effects. That might well have been beneficial in any event, even if there was no industrial action, given the bad weather that has been predicted for tomorrow. As I said, however, if there are further things that can be done, I am happy to discuss them with the member.

**Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** Does the minister agree that, if followed properly, the policy of no compulsory redundancies and the aim to meet seasonal demand from local and temporary labour could benefit the communities of Orkney and Shetland by providing more locally generated employment?

**Keith Brown:** Yes. That is a good point, and one that I tried to address earlier. I am pleased that, following the period of consultation with staff and trade unions, it has been possible to put in place a process for moving to the new arrangement in a way that means that there will be no compulsory redundancies. As I said, that demonstrates common sense and good will on both sides.

I entirely agree that it is a welcome development that Serco is now recruiting locally. I understand that the staffing changes will have an immediate positive impact locally in both Orkney and Shetland as Serco sets about recruiting both a seasonal and a temporary labour pool that can be used to provide core crew succession planning opportunities in the future.

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** In the light of NorthLink's reduction of winter sailings between Scrabster and Stromness from three to two a day, can the minister explain whether there is a drop in demand for winter sailings and whether that partly triggered Serco's move to have fewer staff?

**Keith Brown:** As the member will know, it has long been recognised that there are strong seasonal variations in demand for the services. On many winter sailings across the Pentland Firth, passenger numbers are very low. Serco's decision to reduce the number of off-peak sailings was based on a detailed analysis of demand and it carried out good local consultation before the decision was made. The change in shift patterns that Serco is introducing will allow the vessels to sail safely and efficiently according to the anticipated passenger complement.

It is worth noting that Serco was not the only bidder that recognised the need to introduce variable passenger muster lists, which are really

an industry standard and are more in keeping with the position of most other ferry operators.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** To many people, it seems ridiculous that we are having a strike at all, given that there is no requirement for compulsory redundancies and all 36 employees who are involved have applied for voluntary redundancy. I feel that passengers and people in the islands will blame the minister for not having brought about a settlement.

The minister talked about helping passengers to use other operators and about those who are booked on Aberdeen-Orkney-Shetland services. Can he give me some more details on that?

**Keith Brown:** On Jamie McGrigor's last point, I have already mentioned that provisions have been put in place as a result of discussions between Serco NorthLink and another operator to ensure that passengers can be served where that is possible. The arrangement has been made by the two operators.

It is perfectly possible that other people will blame me for this. That is one of the things that I have to accept. All that I will say is that I believe that the right role for the Government to play is to ensure that the two parties keep on talking, especially when it seems that they are not talking, and to try to encourage both parties to understand the impact on local communities of what is happening. I have done that and I will continue to do it. That is the right role for the Government in the process.

**The Presiding Officer:** I call Tavish Scott. Mr Scott, my comments to Mr McArthur apply to you, too.

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I thank the minister for the advance copy of his statement and I welcome his active involvement in the matter. Is he aware that a Shetland family who contacted me today now face £1,000 of extra costs because they were due to travel on one of the strike days? Does he understand the need for him to assess his role in the contract given that, at the time when it was signed, there must have been some indication that Serco costs were going to reduce and the potential therefore existed for the islanders to be held to ransom in this way?

**Keith Brown:** As I have said, many of the changes that are being made by Serco were proposed by other bidders; in fact, some of them had already been—if you like—signed up to by the previous operator and the workforce, and that process has continued. I therefore do not think that this has happened because of the contract. There is no doubt that there are questions whether there was overcapacity on the routes that are being served; indeed, almost everyone seems to

acknowledge that there was overcapacity in some respects and that the issue had to be addressed.

As I said in response to Jamie McGrigor, it is right that we encourage the parties not to do this. I very much regret the loss that Tavish Scott's constituents might incur and, again, my response is that we continue to encourage both parties to take action to avoid the strike action, even though it might not now avoid the expense that has been incurred by the family the member has mentioned.

**Adam Ingram (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP):** Will the minister comment on the timing of the strikes? Does he agree that it would be appropriate for both sides of the argument to set aside their differences at what is an important time of the year both for families trying to make arrangements to get together and for our communities?

**Keith Brown:** The member makes a fair point that I think underlines Tavish Scott's comments. The timing of the proposed strike action is extremely unfortunate and is another reason why I have urged both parties to continue the constructive dialogue that I understand is now taking place and to resolve their dispute. If we can achieve that—and I still hope that it can be achieved—others will be prevented from being inconvenienced in the period leading up to the festive holidays.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** Is the minister aware of the research carried out by the magazine *Ethical Consumer*, which criticised Serco for tax avoidance and its poor industrial relations record, not least in Plymouth's Derriford hospital and Cornwall's out-of-hours service, where staff numbers have been slashed? Will the minister support a full investigation into the awarding of the contract and, more important, ensure that future ferry contracts have a 50:50 balance between price and quality to protect the workforce and ferry users?

**Keith Brown:** I answered the member's question on the management of the process for awarding the contract when I responded to Richard Baker. I remain convinced that the process was robust and stand by it.

Richard Baker also suggested that this was privatisation. It would be useful to know the Labour Party's definition of privatisation, given that it went through exactly the same process for tendering these services that we did, which we have to go through under European law and the result of which we have to abide by. Is the Labour Party saying that it would have overturned the decision at the end of the bidding process and awarded the contract to someone else? It is a fatuous argument from the Labour Party, which should really be focusing on the implications of the current dispute

for local people instead of going back to issues that are largely irrelevant to the dispute.

**Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (Ind):** Given that there were no compulsory redundancies, is the minister surprised by the threat of strike action? Striking on the weekends in the run-up to Christmas is more likely to have a negative impact on the public's opinion of the RMT and will therefore be counterproductive.

**Keith Brown:** As I have said, I am disappointed rather than surprised in the decision to continue with the strike action, not least given the movement that I understand the employer has made to meet certain continuing concerns. For example, I understand that Serco has made a commitment that staff's terms and conditions will not be revisited in the forthcoming period. I hope that the RMT will take on board such reassurances to reach a positive conclusion with Serco and thereby avoid tomorrow's action.

## United Nations Climate Change Negotiations

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-05186, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, on the United Nations climate change negotiations. Members who wish to take part in the debate should press their request-to-speak buttons. At this point, I warn members that we are a bit tight for time and that the Presiding Officers will keep members very much to their time limits. As a result, if members can save a few seconds, we would be extremely grateful.

15:34

**The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse):** In rising to speak to and move my motion, I want first to signal that I intend to accept Claudia Beamish's amendment in the constructive spirit in which it was made. However, for the record, I do not agree with its use of "remedial".

Although we can all be proud of progress that we are making on tackling climate change in Scotland, I accept that we can and must do more. Early next year, we will present to the Parliament our second report on proposals and policies, which will look forward to our targets for 2023 to 2027 and will refresh the actions that we identified in our first report to address our emissions, to compensate for excess residential emissions that occurred in 2010 and—obviously—to keep us on track.

I assure members that we are working closely with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities—a point that Ms Beamish makes in her motion—and local authorities on climate change issues. Indeed, I have already met and next week will meet again Councillor Stephen Hagan, COSLA's spokesperson, to discuss how we can best work together on this most important challenge.

I move to the substance of the debate. Against a recent background of stark reports on climate change from the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Energy Agency, and Lord Nicholas Stern, around 200 nations, which are parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—UNFCCC—met during the past two weeks to continue negotiations on international action to tackle global climate change. Many will say that not enough was achieved at this year's conference, and I certainly share those frustrations in some areas. However, there was some positive progress that lays the foundations for more concerted action in the years to come.

I acknowledge the positive leadership that the European Union displayed at the conference because many of its member states were key players. I was pleased to be able to join UK ministers Ed Davey and Greg Barker alongside John Griffiths from Wales on the ministerial team as part of a highly effective UK delegation, which was ably supported by the UK ambassador.

The EU showed leadership by pledging with some other countries to a vital second period of commitment to the Kyoto protocol to run from 2013 to 2020. Keeping the Kyoto protocol's architecture in place is a crucial part of the transition to a new global treaty that will take effect in 2020. That second period of commitment by the EU and others will account for only 14 per cent of global emissions, and might cover only 10 per cent by 2020, which shows how important it is for the new global treaty to cover all parties.

The EU has promised to deliver a 20 per cent cut in emissions by 2020, but it will pass that target, perhaps to the extent of delivering a 27 per cent cut. In any event, the EU's offer to increase its 2020 target to 30 per cent still stands if other countries show equivalent ambition. It is time for other countries to match the EU's offer. We welcome the opportunity to review levels of ambition in 2014 and we will push for higher ambition. Not enough international action to limit global warming to 2°C has been pledged, and there are concerns that global warming will reach 4°C or higher. Lives are already being lost and the impact of a 4°C rise in global temperatures does not bear thinking about.

I turn to Scotland's contribution to the UN climate change agenda. Scotland's high level of ambition on climate change, our promotion of the jobs, investment, trade and growth opportunities of a low-carbon economy, and our commitment to championing climate justice all mean that Scotland has a strong and positive message for the international community. With Scotland's £3 million climate justice fund—hailed as a world first by Mary Robinson—climate justice is an area in which we can lead world thinking and action. Our approach truly illustrates Scotland striving to be a model of international best practice on climate change. It also helps to establish trust between developed and developing nations.

On 28 November, I was delighted to announce the first five successful projects under the climate justice fund. The successful projects will be based in Malawi and Zambia and will deliver a range of climate adaptation outcomes, with an emphasis this round on water management. They will particularly help the women of Malawi and Zambia.

I met Mary Robinson at the conference last week and, after a useful discussion, I was able to

announce that Scotland will host an international climate justice conference next autumn. That was warmly welcomed by Mrs Robinson and non-governmental organisations.

Having met the Malawian minister at last week's conference, I know that Scotland's work on international development is making a real difference to some of the world's most vulnerable people. Scotland has a real opportunity to bring together our leadership on climate change and renewable energy, and our expertise in research and development to assist developing countries.

The UN has been impressed with Scotland's leadership in the low-carbon economy, and, earlier this year, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon invited the First Minister to contribute to the UN sustainable energy for all initiative. My predecessor as minister met the UN's Assistant Secretary General in June and, last week, I met the director of the UN development programme's environment and energy group to forge an agreement on the next steps in Scotland's partnership with the UN on its sustainable energy for all initiative.

The Scottish Government has committed to developing a toolkit that will draw upon Scotland's experience in Malawi and in other countries to allow communities to develop community-based renewable energy schemes on-grid and, crucially, off-grid. For example, just 7 per cent of Malawi's population have access to electricity. Our partnership with the UN will help to empower communities, improve access to education and employment, and lead to a better quality of life. Those values are at the core of the UN sustainable energy for all initiative, and we are pleased to support the work.

While I was at the UN conference, I spoke on a panel with the Qatari energy minister at the world climate summit. As well as Mary Robinson, I met representatives of international NGOs including Christian Aid, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, the Third World Network, CIDSE—Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité—which is a group of Catholic development agencies that includes the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, and the UK Youth Climate Coalition. The response to Scotland's messages on domestic action, pushing for higher ambition from other countries and supporting developing countries through the climate justice fund was positive.

I met with the European Investment Bank and global Scots and heard of the opportunities for Scotland to strengthen links with the region. I also had bilateral meetings with ministers from Europe and around the world to share good practice from Scotland and encourage other countries in their efforts to tackle climate change. With Ed Davey, I

attended EU ministers' co-ordination meetings and kept in touch with the other UK ministers on the delegation, Greg Barker and John Griffiths.

I represented the UK at the launch of a solar power project by the Qatari Government and at the embassy at an event that focused on carbon capture and storage. The Gulf states made a positive presentation at the conference on their progress on carbon capture and storage initiatives, which was of considerable interest to me.

I have talked about the compelling moral, environmental, and economic reasons for acting on climate change. In fact, the low-carbon economy and, in particular, our renewable energy sector, has shown that it can deliver countercyclical growth, with a pipeline of £9 billion of future projects during these hard economic times. We can show countries that are not investing in low-carbon that they are missing out on valuable economic growth at the time when they probably most need it.

However, we must continue to try to persuade political leaders and the public to look beyond the economic rationale. The moral case for acting on climate change overrides narrow economic self-interest, and it is the moral case that is at the heart of climate justice.

Global emissions are at an all-time high and time is very short to agree actions to limit global temperature rises to 2°C, which politicians from around the world have pledged to do.

Domestically, Scotland is providing a strong case study of the potential of sustainable, low-carbon growth. By leading technology development, regulation and finance we are attracting major investment from leading international and Scottish companies. The low-carbon economy, which cuts across all sectors, could rise to 10 per cent of gross domestic product and 5 per cent of jobs by 2020. As the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee concluded, we can achieve our target of being able to meet 100 per cent of our electricity needs from renewables by 2020, and in 2011 we were ahead of schedule to achieve that.

We must not forget that we are already more than halfway to achieving our target to cut emissions by 42 per cent by 2020. Between 1990 and 2010, emissions in Scotland fell by 24.3 per cent.

It is clear that climate change and the need to adapt to our changing climate is not just an issue for developing countries, although they suffer disproportionate effects. At home, regular land slips and flooding cause massive and traumatic disruption to people's domestic and working lives, as I have seen in Comrie and Jedburgh. We must ensure that we adapt to our changing climate at

home and that our vulnerable communities have the support that they need in order to deal with the consequences of climate change.

My ministerial colleagues and I are clear about the scale of the challenge ahead. We are acting collectively across all areas of Government to deliver the emissions reductions within our powers. However, action does not rest with the Government alone, and I hope that we will continue to have the Parliament's support for this vital agenda at home, where I recognise that we too need to accelerate action, and in our efforts on climate justice and on moving the international community towards higher ambition.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes Scotland's participation in the 18th Conference of the Parties on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha; notes that participation at the conference was used as an opportunity to join other nations of high ambition in making the case for stronger global action on climate change; acknowledges that this case was made through promoting the evidence from Scotland on the jobs, investment and trade opportunities of the low-carbon economy and that it set out Scotland's commitment to clean energy, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, climate justice and international cooperation on climate change; values the cross-party commitment to Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions targets, and recognises that in order to meet stretching targets and maximise Scotland's contribution to this most important global challenge, the people, communities and the public and private sectors of Scotland must accelerate action to reduce domestic emissions and speed the transition to a low-carbon economy.

15:43

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity that the debate gives us to explore the long view, and welcome the minister back from the Doha deliberations.

I hope that the Labour amendment challenges us all to ask ourselves what we need to do by 2020 and by 2050, and how we can do it in a way that is inclusive and fair for the people of Scotland. This debate enables us to share views and work together to develop them beyond today. I am glad that the minister has accepted our amendment in that spirit.

The protracted Doha negotiations gave some grounds for optimism, tempered by the bitter sense of foreboding on many of the critical issues. As the minister said, there was agreement on the renewal of the Kyoto protocols, which were set to expire this month. As the only legally binding treaty on emissions reductions, it is welcome news that 194 countries have signed up. However, one cannot help but be disappointed by the omission of significant potential signatories.

Although the EU and a few additional countries, such as Switzerland, have reaffirmed their

commitment, it is disappointing that previous signatories, such as Canada and Japan, have decided to opt out at this stage. Although one can understand the reasoning behind this stance, considering that the largest emitters, such as the USA and China, have failed once again to ratify the treaty, the fact remains that the agreement of all of those nations is essential. It is also disappointing that the developing countries are exempt from the protocols.

I recognise—as we all do—that the emissions reduction demands must seem a bit rich to countries such as China and India, which have not enjoyed the historical benefits of industrialisation. However, the world is in a new technological age of renewable energy and other technologies, and developed countries must support those who are utilising those options. Omitting such vast and emissions-heavy nations from international accords is surely a dangerous game to play. Like the minister, I welcome the news coming from Doha that the developed countries, including the UK, have reaffirmed their commitment to the provision of long-term financial support to those countries that are still developing.

Also like the minister, I will mention the climate justice fund. The Scotland Malawi Partnership

“applauds the Scottish Government's commitment to climate justice in Malawi”

and states:

“The rural poor are most at risk of food insecurity due to climate change in Malawi. ... it is the poorest and the least complicit in causing such climatic shifts, that face the greatest challenge.”

My colleague John Finnie and I have just returned from a trip to Gaza. I ask the minister to consider Gaza City in any future climate justice fund round, to enable residents to put the power in their own hands with the support of small-scale renewables such as household solar technology.

I am sure that members will welcome the news coming out of Doha that, in the period leading up to the talks in Durban, governments will undertake a “robust process” to review the long-term 2°C goal. According to the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, approximately 20 to 30 per cent of species assessed will face extinction if the increase in global warming exceeds the 2°C target.

Too regularly, people ask me what they can do individually. Some ask whether there is any point and cannot see how their contribution could make a difference to the seemingly intractable problem—a problem that is occurring by land, sea and air. We can all make a difference in simple ways: by walking children to school, turning down the heat and wearing a jumper or switching off lights in empty rooms. I commend the

contributions of individuals, families, communities and businesses throughout Scotland and emphasise the necessity for the Scottish Government to continue to support their efforts—indeed, to develop further opportunities to help, both financially and with advice.

I am reassured that it is rarely a young person or a child who asks that question from a sense of feeling overwhelmed by the issue. As a former eco-schools co-ordinator, I might be tempted to say that the green flags that are flying over so many of our schools in Scotland might be the reason. It is in part about a culture change and a confidence issue, although I do not think that it is that simple. I believe that it is also about the sense of solidarity that comes from collective action and the sharing of information, which happens in each eco-school as projects such as energy and water assessments move forward and the children see the results of their actions.

Beyond the school context, Scottish Government support provides a very valuable seedcorn and kick-start mechanism for projects. Like-minded people in a wide range of groups from eco-congregations, small rural communities and ethnic minority groups to small towns and many more have been helped through the climate challenge fund to raise awareness and to develop strategies. I hope that the minister will consider the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee's request in its budget report to enable economic activity, which would enable so many projects to continue beyond their funding.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I am due to write to the committee in response to its report to point out that, in my recent refresh of the climate challenge fund, we have extended the opportunity for people to generate an income through climate challenge fund projects within the minimal rules. I hope that the member welcomes that.

**Claudia Beamish:** I do welcome that and thank the minister for that comment.

Business is also of vital importance. The minister recently visited a climate monitor farm in the Borders, near Jedburgh. The Scotch Whisky Association's actions and the green tourism business scheme also help. The Scottish Government missed the first annual emissions targets, and those must be put into the second report on proposals and policies if we are to have any chance of playing catch-up and retaining our position in the world's respect. That has been highlighted by many people in non-governmental organisations.

Today, I ask us all to reflect on how we can bring about the structural reforms needed to help hasten, at all levels of Government here in

Scotland, the changes that we need if we are to continue to be global leaders.

The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee took a significant step in the mainstreaming of climate change by asking all committees to report on climate change as part of the budget scrutiny process. How valuable that exercise is in reality remains to be seen. The committee also asked that the downstream spending of projects be assessed through the carbon assessment tool, so that we include, for example, not only the building of a road but the traffic that will travel on it. I know that the minister has agreed to look at that difficult assessment process.

All political parties, whether in or out of Government and whether at parliamentary or local government level, need to find a shift in spending, which is a challenge in straitened times when every penny is committed. At its simplest, few would say no to safe, segregated cycle routes, but how do we cut something else in a strategic way?

Given the challenges faced by local government and the need to meet the duties signed up to in the climate change declaration, it is imperative that we work together at local level, so I am glad to hear that the minister is in dialogue with COSLA.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** You should be drawing to a close, please.

**Claudia Beamish:** Perhaps the collective community action that I highlighted earlier can help us all to bring about an incremental change in the process across departments through the land use strategy, the national marine plan and—perhaps most important—the national performance framework, which will give us ways into policy that will be profoundly significant.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** You must close, please.

**Claudia Beamish:** Lastly, I hope that the possibility of a complement to GDP that reflects the environmental damage that can happen in Scotland will also lead to a way forward.

I move amendment S4M-05186.2, to insert at end:

“; commends the actions taken so far by many in this regard; calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that sufficient remedial action is taken in the next report on proposals and policies to compensate for missing its first annual emissions reduction targets under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and calls on the Scottish Government to work closely with local authorities to help them translate *Scotland's Climate Change Declaration* into robust and accountable action.”

15:51

**Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):**

I welcome the opportunity that the debate gives me and my party to reinforce the commitments that we made during the passage of the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill. We are determined to participate in the process of working towards a low-carbon Scotland. Although we had a number of serious concerns about the targets that were set in the bill, by voting for the bill we ultimately committed ourselves to that process.

That process has never been more vital. Although there are some among us, including within my own party, who are climate change sceptics, those of us who have ever tried to farm for a living—there are a few of us in the chamber—will realise that our climate is changing rapidly. Looking at the weather that we have experienced, we have seen radical change from one year to the next, with one year producing record rainfall after a previous year's record cold winter. In fact, those cold winters may have put us on the slightly depressed note that we are on today, given that the emissions in 2010, from the domestic sector at least, were significantly higher as a result of the demand from ordinary people trying to heat their homes. When the figures are fully available, I hope that they will demonstrate that the milder winter of 2011 has put us close to at least getting back on track.

Like the previous speaker, I commend the work that is going on in our schools, and at every level in Scotland, to ensure that our young people can understand and work with the demands that will be put on them in the future. Having visited a number of eco-schools, I am well aware of the eco-schools programme, but I would particularly like to commend the work that is done with the primary schools in the Montrose area. Over a period of several years, at the beginning of each February I have been lucky enough to be invited to Montrose Academy to address the primary 7 pupils about the cross-party determination that exists in the Scottish Parliament to achieve the objectives that we have set out.

However, those objectives are not easy to achieve, and I continue to have a number of concerns about how we will achieve them in the current environment. It is only right that, as a developed nation, we should take the lead in demonstrating how those achievements can be made. However, with so many of the world's biggest industrial countries outside the process, I worry that our objectives may not be achieved.

What can we do to ensure that we deal with these problems? I think that the Government needs to address some very difficult decisions. First, this country and others have demonstrated that gradually changing the fuel that we use from

coal to gas has a significant part to play, perhaps not in the longer term, but certainly in the interim period when we need to try to cut the carbon cost of our energy.

That is why, at this difficult crossroads, the Governments in Scotland and the UK must make difficult decisions about novel gas extraction techniques that may allow us to make significant steps towards achieving our interim objectives, if not our long-term objectives.

I make no apologies for repeating something that I have said many times in the chamber: the figures that are to be achieved before 2050 are very demanding indeed. I find it difficult to reconcile the pursuit of those targets with the idea that we should close down our nuclear power stations and not replace them. The Scottish Government has missed an opportunity to ensure that our low-carbon energy production is achieved within the timescale that we want it to be by failing to use appropriate technologies in the long term.

I will say a few words about what the minister said about the Doha conference. First, I back up what he said. I am pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm with which he spoke of the UK delegates at the conference. In fact, I am tempted to say that perhaps the union is safe in Paul Wheelhouse's hands. *[Interruption.]* Perhaps not. Scotland should be proud of the international work that he described in Malawi and Zambia.

We have a great many challenges in front of us; we must address them systematically. I look forward to the next available set of figures, which I hope will put us back on target to achieve our objectives. I close as I opened: I am delighted to give my commitment, on behalf of my party, to the challenging targets, which we will work to achieve with other parties.

15:57

**Stewart Stevenson (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP):** When we passed our Climate Change (Scotland) Bill in 2009 we did so unanimously. I am delighted to have heard excellent speeches from Claudia Beamish and, with the exception of his nuclear obsession, Alex Johnstone. I am pleased that we still seem to have a common view on where we should be going, because it is our ambition, engagement and contribution to this vital debate that will book our place in worldwide discussions.

Our attendance at various conferences of the parties predated this Government, with Ross Finnie previously attending. COP14 was my first conference of the parties, which was held in Poznań. I found such huge conferences an immensely puzzling experience—the Copenhagen conference was attended by more than 40,000

people—and they are initially quite intimidating. I congratulate the minister on the engagement that he achieved at his first COP.

**Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab):** Will Mr Stevenson advise us how the 40,000 people got to the conference?

**Stewart Stevenson:** Neil Findlay's Labour colleague, the Welsh environment minister, went by train, which took two days each way. Unfortunately the parliamentary arithmetic in Scotland meant that I was not allowed by the whips to make that same choice and I had to fly. I regret that, but that is the honest truth of the matter.

In 2009, the convener in Copenhagen said:

"This is the time to deliver. This is the place to commit."

Delivery and commitment remain bafflingly elusive; progress is snail-like, but it is being made. COP17, when we were in Durban, reached agreement on the timeline for a global climate treaty. How has Doha COP18 progressed matters? I am delighted that the damaging effects of climate change on gender issues, in particular on women, moved up the agenda. I am delighted that the Government has worked with Mary Robinson on the broader climate justice agenda, in particular how that affects women. I very much welcome the minister's announcement that we will host a climate justice conference.

We know that climate change is damaging farming in Africa and reducing access to water and firewood. That is no mere inconvenience to people in faraway countries. They are paying the price for what we have created for them through our emissions, so it is a moral issue for us all. However, it also represents a genuine economic, and perhaps wider, threat. Mass migration from areas of aridity to areas with water is inevitable. There is also the prospect of family dislocations and real conflict.

When the Kyoto protocol was first introduced, countries such as Russia and Poland signed up in good faith, expecting that the accounting units that they were allocated would lead to their having money to invest in dealing with the problem. The failure of the US, and Canada's subsequent withdrawal, have undercut that. If it is difficult to get those countries to re-engage, I understand that.

If the United States needs a warning, hurricane Sandy is one. The same thing will happen again and it will happen more frequently. There are states in the United States, such as California, that are engaged on the matter, but we need the big boys in the big pond to make a real commitment to real change.

I congratulate the minister on his work at Doha. I hope that we all support him.

16:01

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** It is a great pleasure to follow Stewart Stevenson on the subject of climate change, as he clearly deserves a great deal of credit for steering our historic legislation through the Parliament, albeit with our collective support and, sometimes, amendment.

His successor also deserves credit, in particular for his announcement about the climate justice fund two weeks or so ago. I am pleased that the Doha conference also agreed to establish an international mechanism on loss and damage. The details of that have still to be worked out, but it seemed to be one of the most significant achievements of the conference.

The Scottish Government collectively also deserves a great deal of credit for many of its actions on climate change. I highlight its drive on renewable energy, of which I am always a strong supporter. I was pleased about the First Minister's most recent announcement on marine energy, and I welcome all the developments in that regard.

However, we cannot afford to have a debate in which we just pat ourselves on the back. Over the past couple of weeks, two Government statements and documents have given me cause for serious concern.

The first was an official presentation that was posted online last week by the Scottish Government's director of energy and climate change, David Wilson. The presentation exposes a large gap between Scotland's planned and legally required carbon reductions. A graph shows a gap opening up between polluting business as usual and the statutory reduction target of about 18 million tonnes by 2027. The presentation has various scenarios, but even in the best-case scenarios, in which all the pollution-reduction policies are adopted, there is still a gap of 8 million tonnes. As Wilson himself says:

"Some of the scenarios we have been developing just show quite how difficult it is ... The longer you go out, the more and more challenging it gets."

The second document that recently gave me cause for concern was the Scottish Government's carbon account for transport, which revealed that the net impact of all Scottish measures on transport was an increase of 71,000 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The report says:

"This estimated increase in emissions is largely driven by a net increase in vehicle kilometres, which are anticipated to increase by 1.2% above a business as usual scenario in 2022 as a result of Scottish transport interventions."



In case anyone doubts what those interventions are, the report refers in particular to massive vehicle kilometre increases in Strathclyde and Aberdeen because of “large infrastructure projects”. In other words, the 40 per cent increase in the roads budget over the past five years is the key problem when it comes to transport emissions.

We should compare that with the advice given to Stewart Stevenson by the chair of the UK Committee on Climate Change in a letter of 31 January this year, in which he said that it was

“essential for the Scottish Government to ensure full roll-out of measures in devolved policy areas, such as demand-side transport”.

Of course, demand-side transport measures were removed in the late stages of the last RPP, so I hope that action will be taken on transport in particular in the forthcoming RPP.

Time is short, but I would like to mention briefly concerns about the change to the energy rating of new domestic and non-domestic buildings, which was announced this week. It is clear that the built environment and transport are the two biggest emitters in the areas of Scottish Government responsibility.

Our amendment refers to duties on local authorities. It took rather a long time for local authority action plans to be produced. Perhaps the minister could say more about that.

Fracking is very topical. Many experts say that it will increase climate change. We must take that into account, and I hope that there will be guidance on it, with a presumption against.

Finally, I was very struck by advice from the UK Committee on Climate Change that said that household energy bills would be about £600 higher per year by 2050 if the UK relies increasingly on gas, and only £100 higher if the country concentrates on renewable power generation, including wind. I am glad that the Scottish Government is strong in those areas and am pleased to end on that positive note.

16:05

**Rob Gibson (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP):** I was interested to read in the *Financial Times* an independent view of what happened at Doha. In an article entitled “Sleepless nights ahead on way to a binding climate treaty”, Pilita Clark said:

“Doha’s achievement was closing down older negotiations so work could start on this 2015 treaty. But Doha also agreed”—

as Malcolm Chisholm hinted—

“to look at compensating poorer countries for loss and damage from climate change, something wealthy countries have long resisted.”

We are making the moral case here for climate justice, and we must work harder on that. However, I hope that our minister did not sleep on the floor with his head propped up by crumpled photocopier paper as a pillow, as one European Commission official was spotted doing at Doha.

On the domestic effort, RPP2 certainly challenges us, but it is also notable that, in respect of meeting our targets, the way in which the world measures carbon includes one of our major carbon sinks. It would be unusual for me not to mention that the measurement of and means to include emissions from peatlands, which leach greenhouse gases as they decay, is now included. Our Scottish Government budget investment of £1.7 million in rewetting and in calibrating the measurement of greenhouse gas emissions, and the savings that we can make to mitigate greenhouse gases, will help. Through our peatland programme, Scotland is leading an international effort, with international scientists geared up with ours to achieve it.

People in my constituency are questioning what they should do. Tackling climate change and developing renewable energy are two sides of the same coin. The Government in London’s approach to future energy needs seems to ignore the warning of experts such as Nicholas Stern, author of the report “The Economics of Climate Change”, that reductions of carbon emissions are “recklessly slow” in the rich countries. I need point no further than the fast track for conventional and shale gas extraction and use to replace ageing nuclear and coal power stations in England, which is a signal to investors that the Tory-Lib Dem coalition favours short-term and inefficient gas-fired, carbon-emitting electricity production as opposed to long-term, clean, green and sustainable alternatives. Why do I think that? The UK Government’s latest positioning behind old technologies will harm the renewables revolution in Scotland and hit the economy of my constituency, which offers much of the great potential for renewable energy.

George Osborne’s dash for gas is backed to some extent by Vince Cable, who sees UK competitiveness as being impaired by strict carbon reduction targets. The argument on that has taken place in the coalition Government in the past year and put back the UK targets to a later date.

Those things affect us hugely, and we must get over them, because the huge potential of cutting-edge tidal, offshore wind and wave power development needs the boost of steady backing from the Government. The uncertainty stems from London decisions; the clarity of purpose in creating a low-carbon economy is rooted in Holyrood.

Those things cannot be ignored in the debate. Indeed, Doha points us to the moral argument about why the development of renewable energy and the tackling of the emissions that we create are central to our way forward and our being in the lead in the world in finding ways to tackle the biggest scourge of our times.

16:09

**Tavish Scott (Shetland Islands) (LD):** I reassure Rob Gibson that the Scottish minister, far from being asleep,

“worked tirelessly, including several times through the night, professionally and expertly across the range of issues, ensuring the UK played a leading role in delivering the outcome.”—[*Official Report, House of Commons*, 11 December 2012; Vol 555, c 27WS.]

Ed Davey, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, sent me his statement last night. I pay tribute to Paul Wheelhouse for playing what was clearly a constructive role.

I hope that Mr Gibson will give credit to the Green Investment Bank, which is already making investments in Scotland and across the UK and which is a massively important commitment to the renewables industry across the entire country. I hope that it will be a powerful body that can achieve much for that industry, which Malcolm Chisholm rightly mentioned as being one of the few economic growth points, not just in Scotland but across the UK. As Stewart Stevenson rightly observed in his 448th speech in Parliament—

**Stewart Stevenson:** It was my 443rd.

**Tavish Scott:** I apologise—I got mixed up between yesterday and today. He mentioned the issue in his most recent speech in Parliament. I join in the tributes to Stewart Stevenson for taking through the climate change legislation and ensuring that it was fit for purpose.

I have two points on the overall climate change approach. Rob Gibson rightly mentioned the Nicholas Stern report. For me, that was one of the most pioneering bits of work. I absolutely accept what the minister and Claudia Beamish said about climate justice and phraseology and how we present the arguments at school level and to other audiences—Alex Johnstone talked about the different audiences to which we present. However, at the crux of the way in which the world tackles the issues is ensuring that the argument on the economics of tackling climate change is understood and therefore accepted by policymakers and legislators in our Parliament and in Parliaments around the world. No doubt Mr Wheelhouse encountered some of them in his ministerial role in Doha. For me, the case that the Stern report makes for Governments of all political persuasions and none to ensure that changes to

programmes are made to deliver sustainable economic growth while tackling emissions still has enormous power.

My second broad point is on the importance of education at school level. Members have rightly referred to the eco-schools programme and the awarding of flags. That programme is just about one of the best things in schools. I take Alex Johnstone's point about going back to schools that have been awarded a first flag and are then awarded a second one and so on. I hope that the Scottish Government plays an increasing role in encouraging that to happen through the curriculum for excellence. The programme ensures that the younger generation, who have an understanding of the environmental arguments and are intensely committed to them—frankly, they sometimes make them better than we do—never lose sight of them.

Malcolm Chisholm talked about requirements on the minister. The gap that we must all deal with is between the climate change legislation that we all agreed to and passed, and making it happen. It is all very well passing legislation, but what are we doing to make it happen? Malcolm Chisholm's fundamental point about transport is right. I speak as a former transport minister, so I know that we all dash for more roads and that kind of thing. The minister and his colleagues need to get the right approach to what we put on the roads. Some in the environmental movement rightly have a target of there being 100,000 green cars—for want of a better expression—on Scottish roads by 2020, and I hope that that target can be achieved. Perhaps the policy mechanisms that are talked about in the RPP could be taken up in that area.

16:14

**Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP):** I will focus on one specific aspect of the Government motion, where it talks about people, communities and the public and private sectors having to

“accelerate action to reduce domestic emissions and speed the transition to a low-carbon economy.”

I acknowledge entirely the big picture, which is that nations must come together to combat climate change and must walk the walk, not just talk the talk. I do not duck the fact that we in Scotland missed our 2010 climate change targets. As a member of the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, I, along with Rob Gibson and Claudia Beamish, look forward to scrutinising RPP2 and examining how robust it is. However, we cannot and should not leave it to Government alone to tackle climate change. The private sector and the rest of the public sector must play a part. Just as important, we as individuals must take on responsibility.

That was acknowledged in evidence to the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee in September 2011, when Dr Andy Kerr, from the Edinburgh centre on climate change, said:

“we have moved beyond the stage at which a Government can simply say that it will spend money on the problem. We must get individuals, communities and businesses to buy into and invest in the measures.”—*[Official Report, Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, 21 September 2011; c 156.]*

Dr Kerr was right. We need to ask ourselves, as individuals, how our behaviour impacts on the environment. Sometimes that is not easy to quantify. Two years ago, when I was buying a car, three things influenced my thinking: the mileage that I would be doing; the environment; and the fact that my son, who is something of a petrol-head, had a list of cool cars and a clear idea of the type of vehicle that he would be embarrassed to see his father driving. I plumped for a diesel vehicle that had my son's approval, which has proved reliable.

The diesel vehicle is also kinder on the environment than a petrol alternative—or so I thought until earlier this year, when the World Health Organization reported that when the filters in modern diesel vehicles were trialled over long distances, in stop-start urban driving, modern diesels are less environmentally friendly than older models and might be spitting out particulates that cause lung cancer and increase the risk of contracting bladder cancer. Our understanding of how what we do as we go about our daily business impacts on the environment and contributes to climate change is evolving. We need the science to get better, so that we can be better informed.

That said, it is incumbent on all of us to take personal responsibility. Surprising results can be derived from the smallest of measures, as is illustrated by what I learned in a conversation with a fellow MSP yesterday. His regular commute to the Parliament is 171 miles, and he decided to see how much difference could be made to fuel consumption and emissions if he set the cruise control to cap his top speed at 5mph less than usual. That simple move, which added only six minutes to his journey, reduced his fuel usage and carbon dioxide emissions by 10 per cent. On an individual level, it can be as easy as that to make a meaningful contribution to tackling climate change.

Claudia Beamish and Tavish Scott were right to draw attention to work that involves younger people, but we need behaviour change across all age groups. I will be interested to hear from the minister how he thinks that the Parliament and the Government can get the message over. If, as a society and a nation, we are to respond effectively

to the challenges of climate change, we need people to understand how they can participate in meeting the challenges as they go about their daily lives—and we need people to feel inspired to participate.

There might be a role in that regard for organisations such as Stop Climate Chaos and WWF, given their membership networks and interest in the subject. If such organisations work with Government, the public and the private sector to explain to people how easy-to-implement behaviour changes, which do not impact greatly on our lives, can ensure that we leave a less damaging footprint on the environment, that will make a positive contribution to a cause that we all share.

16:17

**Margaret McDougall (West Scotland) (Lab):**

Last week, the climate change talks in Doha came to a close, with 194 countries agreeing to implement a second phase of the Kyoto protocol from 2013 to 2020. I congratulate the minister on his role in the talks.

The talks should have led to an historic agreement to tackle climate change, but many organisations argue that they fell short of what was needed. Tasneem Essop, head of low-carbon frameworks at WWF, said afterwards:

“These talks have failed the climate and they have failed developing nations ... The Doha decision has delivered no real cuts in emissions, it has delivered no concrete finance, and it has not delivered on equity.”

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland called the outcome of the talks disappointing and said that it fails to deliver the cuts to carbon emissions that are needed and does not commit enough money to helping the poorest countries to adapt to climate change.

However, I welcome the climate justice fund, which will provide £1 million per year for the next three years to support water projects in Malawi and Zambia, thus increasing communities' resilience to the impact of climate change. The fund will go a little way towards tackling issues that developing countries face as a result of climate change. It is such countries that will be hit the hardest if we do not tackle the issue effectively now.

As well as the destruction of landscape and ecosystems, there will be a high social and human cost from climate change. As the minister has said, that is why we need the whole world to play its part in tackling climate change. There is a suggestion that in some major developed countries there is no political will to tackle climate change. We are already seeing the effects of that. Christian Aid Scotland estimated in 2011 that just

a 2°C rise in average temperature by 2050 would lead to 250 million more people being forced to leave their homes, while 30 million people would go hungry and a further 3 billion would suffer water shortages.

We need to ensure that Scotland has a robust climate change policy. We are not off to a good start, having missed the first annual emissions reduction target. What remedial action is the Scottish Government taking to compensate for missing that target?

According to reports, we are likely to miss nearly every legally binding target from 2014 onwards. What is the Scottish Government doing to ensure that that does not happen? It is all very well to set ambitious targets, but we have to be prepared to take positive action to meet them.

For example, as several members have mentioned, the roads budget has risen by 40 per cent in the past five years, while the funds available for investment in sustainable transport have remained flat. This does not seem like a Government that is serious about tackling climate change. We should be investing in alternative means of transport and encouraging individuals either to take the bus or train or to car share.

Locally, we need to do more to ensure that councils are meeting their recycling targets, given that more than half of councils missed the 40 per cent target in 2010.

Our actions must match up to our words. While some sacrifices may need to be made now—our budgets need to reflect that—it will save our world resources in the long term. There is no quick fix to climate change, but time is running out and we must commit for the long term and develop a realistic climate change policy for the future. We must also have the political will and commitment to make that change happen.

16:22

**Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** I think that everyone in Scotland was proud when the Climate Change (Scotland) 2009 was passed—here was another area in which Scotland could be a world leader. The targets are ambitious and achievable and, most important, they are set at a level at which unintended consequences can be minimised.

Although some members might like us to make even faster progress, we must always exercise caution rather than force change too quickly, as change can bring hardships on people who least deserve hardship. We must practise climate justice at home as well as abroad. Nevertheless, it is no small achievement that we are already ahead of most of Europe in reducing our

greenhouse gas emissions, despite a small setback last year. The trend in carbon reduction is downwards and showing every indication that we will achieve and perhaps even exceed our targets.

Although achieving the targets presents challenges, we are demonstrating in Scotland that those same challenges offer opportunities, not least of which are the significant economic opportunities in our renewable energy sector. Once again, Scotland is leading the world, for instance in the field of marine renewables, with requests to the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney from the US, Japan and Korea to show them how to do it. What an amazing contribution to the rest of the world a small country such as Scotland can make in pioneering those exciting developments.

The great thing about Scotland's significant renewable energy opportunity—with 25 per cent of Europe's wind and tidal resource and 10 per cent of its wave energy capability—is that it will solve both our energy problem and our climate change problem. When we solve both of those problems, we do so not for a decade or even for a century—we solve them for ever.

In looking at the obstacles to achieving those targets, once again I have to confess to further frustration with the Westminster Government: with UK energy ministers squabbling among themselves about their energy policy and sowing doubt and uncertainty throughout the industry; with Ed Davey peddling patent nonsense about energy costs rising with Scottish independence; with the rapid decrease of the feed-in tariff for solar photovoltaics, ensuring that Scotland will not benefit nearly as well as it should from that technology; with the prevarication over the domestic renewable heat incentive; and with hugely excessive transmission charges for Scotland's islands, where much of the renewable resource is.

I suggest to the Opposition parties in the chamber that the UK Government is so terrified of—and so preoccupied with—the prospect of Scottish independence that it is taking its eye off the ball with regard to energy policy and other areas. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the single biggest impediment to Scotland achieving its climate change targets is the UK Government.

16:26

**Alison Johnstone (Lothian) (Green):** Climate change compels us to act globally, in a unified manner. We must act locally too and grasp the opportunities that we have to create healthy, resilient and truly sustainable communities.

It is important to recognise where we are. The international negotiating process is deathly slow

and even the most mainstream NGO networks are branding Doha as a failure. What was achieved was to prevent the process from breaking down, but no new emissions cuts were committed to—not even by Qatar, which was hosting the talks and which has the highest per capita emissions in the world.

PricewaterhouseCoopers recently released analysis showing that a massive six-fold increase in our rate of decarbonisation is needed to give ourselves a more than 50 per cent chance of avoiding a rise of 2°C in global temperatures. This week, the US National Intelligence Council identified climate change and its impact on food, water and natural resource supplies as a mega trend that will define the coming decade. Closer to home, thousands of people are facing the prospect of having no house insurance as climate change increases the risk of floods in the UK.

The voices calling for change have broadened—I have just cited a big four audit firm, the US intelligence community and the British insurance industry. They are all concerned about the impact of our continued reliance on a high-carbon economy. As more and more parts of the economy and society get behind change, the laggards, and those blocking international agreements, will become more isolated. I hope that we will see a workable, fair and enforceable deal agreed to replace the Kyoto protocol—one that actually works this time. In the meantime, it is our job as a country that has recognised the benefits of a low-carbon economy to help lead the way.

It is an exciting and challenging prospect. We must continue to show leadership, and I welcome the Government's recognition in the motion that all sectors in Scotland

“must accelerate action to reduce domestic emissions and speed the transition to a low-carbon economy.”

The Green amendment that was not selected for debate is more explicit in its call for the Government to take extra steps after missing the first of our climate targets, which was relatively easy. The Greens will vote for the Government motion and the Labour amendment.

I started by speaking of opportunities, and it is important to remember why we are striving for change. A low-carbon, sustainable society means a healthy society. I recently hosted a talk with a speaker from the Danish cycle embassy. He described the transformation of Copenhagen into a capital city where 37 per cent of trips are by bike. Analysis showed that, for every 10 per cent increase in the number of kilometres cycled, Denmark saves €9 million on healthcare and gains something like 61,000 years of extra life expectancy annually.

A low-carbon society is one where people can heat their homes affordably. Fuel poverty statistics published today remind us of the need to implement and fund a retrofit programme and fix an energy market that is dominated by the big six companies. A low-carbon, sustainable society means a more equal society. If we tackle the shocking inequalities that we see in the world, there are enough resources and wealth to allow a meaningful and fulfilling life for so many more. We must remember that those are changes and ideals that we should be striving for anyway.

At Doha, we saw the first, important recognition from rich industrialised countries that they should pay for at least some of the loss and damage that is already being felt in more vulnerable nations. Spreading Scotland's commitment to climate justice will be key to a fair international solution. To do that, Scotland must continue to fund projects overseas that target the most marginalised communities—for instance, the projects in Zambia and Malawi that the minister and other members have mentioned—and, as Stewart Stevenson acknowledged, projects that target women.

Most importantly, Scotland must demonstrate that it is seriously committed to delivering each and every one of our climate targets with domestic action here.

16:30

**Roderick Campbell (North East Fife) (SNP):** Scotland's participation and the minister's involvement—half asleep or otherwise—in the United Nations climate change negotiations are very welcome, and they cement Scotland's importance and growing reputation in global action on climate change.

I am sure that we all welcome the news that, despite the problems that the Kyoto protocol has had and continues to face, it was rescued as a result of the negotiations in Doha, aided by the European Union's work, to take on a new carbon-cutting target under the treaty that runs to 2020.

We now have a duty to ensure that the EU continues to press ahead with higher targets. Like other members, I welcome the grudging acceptance by richer, more developed nations of the need to provide funds to the smaller, poorer nations of the world for the losses and damage that have been incurred as a result of the ill effects of climate change. Although it is clear that further discussion is required, the acceptance builds on the agreement that was made in Durban, which adopted the green climate fund's management framework to oversee the gathering and distribution of \$100 billion of finance per year to

help the small, poorer countries to develop and adapt to climate change and its impacts.

Like other members, I welcome the fact that the fund is still a work in progress. We should not forget that, while Scotland may be pioneering clean energy and a climate justice fund—which, as other members have mentioned, stems from the most ambitious climate change legislation anywhere in the world—other, far larger countries are not yet following that example.

Developed countries such as the United States, together with China, are contributing excessive amounts of carbon emissions annually. In contrast, smaller countries such as Singapore and Tuvalu, with populations of 5.3 million and 10,000 respectively and a historically a weak voice on the world stage, are now making a significant contribution. Those nations share membership of the Alliance of Small Island States, which served as a driving force behind the Durban negotiations and once again came to the fore in Doha.

The world's smaller nations are tired of looking on as the world's largest carbon emitters refuse to take action and responsibility. They are tired of a lack of action and of not being listened to. Those small nations have now proved that they will be listened to on the world stage and that they will hold their own and get what is just.

Despite the tens of thousands of miles between our shores, there are a number of similarities between Scotland and Singapore. Each country has approximately 5 million inhabitants, and although there are numerous differences between the two nations—not least in their climates—Singapore achieved its independence from the UK in 1963. Although Singapore has undeniably had problems since then, its average GDP per capita has now risen to be higher than that of the UK.

Singapore is now having its voice heard on the world stage, among other small independent nations, and it is driving action on climate change forward. That is what Scotland could do, too. I fully accept that the Scottish Government was represented at the latest round of meetings, and I recognise that environmental charities in this country have praised its work, but we must ensure that our ambitious climate targets are met.

As other members have said, talking about climate targets is simply not enough. I fully accept the disappointment of many on hearing the latest statistics for emissions in Scotland. It is clear that more needs to be done, but there will, I hope, be better things to come.

It is the responsibility of every nation to ensure that what has happened in Doha and Durban and in other places previously can be carried on in Warsaw next year, when I am sure that the

smaller nations of the world will once again lead the way.

16:34

**Anne McTaggart (Glasgow) (Lab):** I am delighted to take part in this key debate on the outcomes of the UN climate change negotiations, and I welcome the opportunity for members in the chamber to consider carefully the impact of the international agreements in a distinctly Scottish context.

It is clear that the serious environmental challenges that we now face must be tackled by means of international co-operation, and that politicians must work together across borders in the interests of curtailing the devastating effects of climate change and global warming.

There is not a nation on earth that remains unaffected by those profound changes in our environments. It is therefore the responsibility of Governments to ensure the domestic implementation of international agreements, and the responsibility of Parliaments to hold their Governments to account for meeting those targets and delivering an effective climate change strategy.

It is therefore with regret that I acknowledge the Scottish Government's failure to meet its own statutory targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, which means that greenhouse gas emissions continue to exceed the levels necessary to achieve the overall aim of reducing emissions by 42 per cent by 2020. WWF Scotland has noted that emissions from homes and transport remain at a higher and more serious level than in 1990. That is not indicative of a successful climate change strategy, and it is now clear that much more needs to be done to ensure that the 2009 act does not become an uncomfortable reminder of an ambition long ago abandoned by the Scottish Government.

In October this year, I enjoyed meeting climate change activists for the get your act together mass lobby in the Scottish Parliament, which called on the Scottish Government to do more to meet the targets set out in the 2009 act. Many of the activists whom I met had been involved in the original campaign to introduce the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill and were committed to ensuring that the Scottish Government recognises the scale of the challenge and the urgency of the issues that climate change has brought to Scotland, the UK and the international community.

Many of those activists also felt that the outcomes of the UN negotiations in Doha were disappointing and did not respond sufficiently to the real and increasing human costs of climate change and global warming that are becoming

increasingly evident across every nation and in every continent of the globe. Although I welcome the decision to extend the life of the Kyoto protocol until 2020, I share the concerns of many campaigners that, in isolation, that may not be enough to make the kind of impact that is now necessary and unavoidable if we are to respond effectively to the real human costs of global warming and climate change.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** We turn to the closing speeches. Jamie McGrigor has five minutes.

16:37

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** As we have heard, there are mixed views on what was achieved at the Doha talks. However, it was nice to hear the minister talk of an “effective UK delegation”, and I thank him for that. The UK Government described the outcome of the Doha talks as a “modest step forward”, with the main points of the deal focused on extending the Kyoto protocol and on compensation for poorer countries that are affected by climate change. The UK is to be commended for helping to forge agreement among other countries and for leading by example in making firm commitments of financial support to assist developing countries with the transition to low-carbon development and growth, and with adapting to climate change impacts that cannot be avoided.

I acknowledge the Scottish Government's commitment to climate justice. However, more progress will be required in order to secure continuation of international funding after 2015. Although most Governments remain optimistic that momentum has been maintained towards achieving a new legally binding agreement for 2020 after the Kyoto protocol has expired, further agreement will need to be reached on that.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced in Doha that he would convene world leaders in 2014 to mobilise the political will that will be needed to ensure that deadlines are met. We know about the Scottish Government's failure to meet its annual target for 2010.

As WWF argues in its briefing, if the Scottish Government is to seek to set an example to other countries that aspire to low-carbon development, it must step up its efforts to implement our Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. That will involve cutting emissions from all sectors of the Scottish economy, but particularly from homes and transport, on which there is real concern because emissions are higher now than they were in 1990. Housing and transport emissions make up almost 40 per cent of our total emissions.

Just how challenging cutting emissions is going to be was clearly demonstrated again this week when Scottish ministers dropped their target to reduce emissions from newly built residential properties by 30 per cent and replaced it with a 20 per cent reduction target. That is a clear example of how the ambition to reduce emissions can be tempered by the reality of challenging economic conditions, and it illustrates the challenges that all governments face in striking a balance between achieving aims such as making our buildings greener and increasing the burden that is placed on industries such as construction.

As a Highlands and Islands MSP, I once again flag up the importance of Scotland's peatlands, which are of international significance. Healthy peatlands act as a sink for greenhouse gases. Ministers need to look continually at how they can help Scotland's land managers to preserve those vital assets.

We recognise the tough tests that lie ahead in building on some of the intentions that were agreed to at Doha. We are also aware of the challenges that the Scottish Government faces in reducing our own emissions, which is important if we are to influence other countries. I agree with Claudia Beamish's point that it is the poorest and least complicit who face the greatest challenge, and it is important that those who are more fortunate help with that.

I cannot remember who suggested walking children to school; I think that it was Claudia Beamish, again. That is okay in urban areas, but it is more difficult in the country. However, I note that the wearing of good Harris tweed that is woven in the islands provides me with heating that is most sustainable.

16:42

**Claire Baker (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** This has been an important debate about the recent international talks. We have attempted to cover many issues, but it is surely impossible to address in such a short debate the significant challenges that the world faces in climate change, climate justice and global poverty, and it is disappointing that today's debate had to be shortened and MSPs who wanted to speak have not been able to take part. Climate change is important to many members from all parties, and the quality of the debate has reflected that.

It is 50 years since Rachel Carson published “Silent Spring”—a seminal text on the environment that was a game changer that not only inspired a movement, but resonated with the wider public. In many respects, we have come a long way since then, but although the pollution and harmful substances that Rachel Carson highlighted have

largely gone from our economies, workers and environments in developing countries around the world are still being damaged by lack of regulation, protection and political leadership.

This year's UN framework convention on climate change conference was disappointing because it failed to deliver the necessary cuts to carbon emissions and did not commit enough to help the poorest countries to adapt to climate change. We can point to some positive initiatives, and the minister highlighted some of the announcements that were made, but that is not really what we hope for when it comes to international talks.

As some members highlighted, one of the biggest disappointments is surely the role of some of the big players. We know that the US is one of the richest and most advanced countries in the world. In the recent US elections, those who supported Obama—many of us from afar—recognised that US engagement with and co-operation in international action on climate change would be far more likely with an Obama presidency, but I also recognise the continuing disappointment with his Administration's work in the area. The US and other big emitters really must start to play their part.

We know that the negative impacts of climate change fall heaviest on the poorer countries, as Stewart Stevenson highlighted. Those countries are less equipped to adapt, they lack the resources and infrastructure that they need to recover, and in many cases they contribute least to the problem but feel the impact the hardest.

Even news from Doha that had at first looked encouraging, such as extension of the Kyoto protocol, failed to stand up to scrutiny. Without the commitment of countries including Russia, China and the United States, the limit on greenhouse gas emissions in the agreement will cover only 15 per cent of global emissions.

In one of the many commentaries on Doha, the human rights campaigner Bianca Jagger—I know who she was previously, but she is now better known as a human rights campaigner—summed up the frustrations of many when she said:

"Theoretically, the aims of the UN Conferences of Parties or COP are: to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, limit the global temperature rise to below 2°C, and avert catastrophic climate change.

What was accomplished at COP18? Perilously close to nothing. The talks limped 'listlessly' to the finish line."

The same sentiments were reflected in some of the quotations that Margaret McDougall used this afternoon.

Huge challenges remain after Doha. A great deal of disappointment is increasingly being expressed over what international talks can

achieve. Of course, formal international negotiations will always remain vital, but there has been more and more discussion about the view that national Government policy is the key to the accelerated action that is needed.

Although we are rightly critical about the lack of international agreement, we can point to more positive examples at national or subnational level; indeed, Alison Johnstone identified the increasing number of voices around the world that are recognising the need for action. South Africa has proposed a carbon tax, Mexico has passed a general climate change law and, in October, legislation to tackle climate change—the first such legislation in China—was passed in Shenzhen. Although such developments are not perfect, they might indicate a move towards nation-level action and responsibility.

Scotland's ambition has been recognised and the role of leadership should not be underestimated. However, it is easy to set targets but hard to meet them. The climate change legislation that was unanimously passed by Parliament has been hailed as a positive example to countries around the world, but unless we meet our targets our example risks losing its credibility.

The necessary change takes commitment and often courage. Alex Johnstone made the same point, although I have to say that I do not agree with many of his remedies. Our approach to public policy and resources will certainly need to change. As Anne McTaggart reminded us, it is only a matter of months since constituents from across Scotland lobbied Parliament and delivered the strong message that we had unanimously passed historic climate change legislation. We must work hard to ensure that those targets are met.

It is hugely disappointing to have failed to meet the first emissions target. If we fall behind now, it will be much more difficult to achieve future targets. As Malcolm Chisholm pointed out, the Scottish Government's director of energy and climate change recently admitted that the Government will fail to meet its targets even if it fully implements its own plan. The campaigners who have contacted us in advance of the debate have always been supportive of our targets, the Government's ambition and its international promotion of those targets. As a result, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland says,

"However, with one target already missed, and emissions from our housing and transport sectors higher now than they were in 1990, Scotland's climate leadership is in doubt"

and WWF says,

"the international standing of Scotland's Climate Act is being placed in doubt against the background of a missed 2010 target for domestic emissions reductions and an



apparent reluctance to implement world leading policies to match our targets”.

Those are calls for the rhetoric to match the reality.

**Rob Gibson:** How far short did Scotland fall and was not the shortfall much greater in neighbouring countries? Are the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland people overstating their fears about our meeting future targets?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Ms Baker, you can have time back for the intervention.

**Claire Baker:** The minister put forward the same argument in his statement, but even though he recognised that the target has not been achieved and suggested that there will be spikes in some years, the point is that if we fall back now we will find it much harder to recover ground. It just adds to the challenge in future years.

We recognise that it will not be easy for the Scottish Government to produce an RPP that meets those challenges, but if it does it will have the Scottish Parliament's broad and full support. However, if it continues to fail on targets because it is not taking the necessary action, it will face the criticism and scrutiny of the Parliament—and increasingly, I imagine, the public—as we continue to see the impact of climate change on our everyday lives.

16:49

**Paul Wheelhouse:** This has been a good debate. I appreciate Claire Baker's point about it being a short debate, but the quality has certainly not suffered.

Climate change remains one of the greatest threats of our time, and that has been reflected in the comments that members have made today. Forward-thinking nations such as Scotland must show leadership if we are to tackle it.

As Alison Johnstone stated, although the progress of the UN's process appears to be slow, it also appears to be the best means of achieving a legally binding and global emissions reduction deal in the longer term. Scotland has an important role to play in that and there are economic, environmental and moral reasons for acting, which a number of members have recognised.

The Durban platform agreement kept the major emitter nations at the negotiating table with a deadline to agree a global deal. There was agreement that all nations will be bound to reduce emissions, but there is still a gap to bridge between pledges on the table and the level of ambition that is needed to limit global temperature increases to 2°C. We went to Doha wanting to see clear progress towards a global legally binding agreement by 2015, with all countries playing their

part to the extent to which they are able, and there was strong interest in Scotland's low-carbon economy model and our work on climate justice. Scotland can have an influential role in encouraging other nations to match our ambition and in providing the evidence that low-carbon economies can make sound economic sense.

On the Doha outcomes, the EU and other countries that made further commitments under the Kyoto protocol are showing leadership on climate change and I will again be adding my voice to calls for a 30 per cent target for the EU. A number of speakers mentioned the other major emitters, and it is important to recognise that although the conference might have been somewhat disappointing in certain respects, the fact that that deal is now in place moves the spotlight away from the EU and points it at other major emitters. It puts the pressure on them to match the kind of ambition that the EU has shown. We should not lose sight of that point when we look at the conference outcomes.

**Claudia Beamish:** What Scottish and UK plans are in place to encourage and keep the pressure up on those other nations in the interim?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Minister, before you continue, I ask members whether they would mind ceasing their conversations.

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Between now and the next COP, the UK will take the lead role in negotiations, and we will play our part at the European level in the Council of Ministers to ensure that we secure a higher level of ambition from the EU, which will set a higher standard for other nations. The EU clearly has the prerogative to say that it wants other countries to match it. We will continue to do what we are doing in Scotland by putting forward a positive image and saying that moving to a low-carbon economy will be a positive thing for our country, which will set an example for other countries that might be fearful of the cost of doing so.

Tavish Scott made a point about the Stern report. He was absolutely correct that if we delay action now, the cost will be dramatically higher in future. We need to get that message across to countries that are holding back. They are doing themselves a disservice, as it will only cost them more in the long term to achieve emissions reductions in the future.

Another outcome that we have not reflected on is the timetable towards a global deal in 2015. That timetable maintains the momentum that was gained in Durban last year, and it will be vital to maintain that momentum in the coming years. Scotland remains committed to the UN process and to achieving an ambitious deal. Developing countries must be assured that developed

countries such as Scotland will provide financial and practical support as they adapt to the impacts of climate change. I certainly welcome the support from across the chamber for what we are doing, albeit on a limited scale and within our resources. We are showing the best commitment that we can to that objective.

The Scottish Government is providing additional resources for developing countries and I encourage all developed nations to scale up their financial support to those countries that have done the least to cause the problem but which are definitely suffering the most from the effects of climate change.

The low-carbon economy in Scotland is now growing strongly—

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Excuse me, minister. Could members please stop having conversations at the back of the chamber?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Scotland has a wealth of natural resources and expertise in developing renewable energy technology, and the low-carbon economy is worth up to £23 billion per annum in Scotland. That is something else that we can cite to encourage other nations.

I want to move on, because I want to leave enough time to address some of the points that members have raised in the debate. Scotland is, we hope, acting as an international model through the example of our world-leading climate change target of a 42 per cent reduction in emissions by 2020. Our targets go further than those of many other nations, including the UK, and even further than those of Germany and Denmark, which are widely regarded as being extremely ambitious. That should be recognised in the discussion on missing the annual target.

The reporting of targets is key to the UN process, and we are committed to setting a strong example for other nations. Exceptional weather conditions meant that our target for 2010 was not met. However, it is easy to meet unambitious targets. We have set stretching targets and are learning lessons as we strive to achieve them. In April 2013, we will launch our £200 million-a-year national retrofit programme to tackle fuel poverty, reduce emissions and support jobs.

In Doha, I learned of innovative action that is being taken elsewhere—that is one of the benefits of attending these events—including an electric vehicle programme in Quebec and the encouraging progress on carbon capture and storage in the Gulf. Of course, Scotland has huge potential to store CO<sub>2</sub> from across Europe in the North Sea.

As well as taking an active role in the UK delegation, I took part in a number of other

engagements to highlight Scotland's low-carbon economy and support for developing countries. The strength of the renewables industry in Scotland attracted significant attention when I spoke at the world climate summit, and the agreement to partner with the UN development programme on the sustainable energy for all initiative highlights the value of Scotland's expertise and our commitment to climate justice.

The evidence is clear that global action is needed now and, in the crucial years leading up to a global deal in 2015, Scotland has an important role to play as an exemplar in encouraging other nations to raise their ambition. The evidence is compelling and we hope that we can persuade others to make the same commitment that we have to this vital agenda.

In the time that is remaining to me, I will turn to some of the points that members have made. Alex Johnstone and Claudia Beamish made important points regarding links to eco-schools and the need to empower our schoolchildren to take forward these messages. I believe that that was picked up by other speakers. I encourage members to direct schools—particularly secondary schools—towards the junior climate challenge fund, which has just been launched. That is an important opportunity for people to learn team-building skills for work and to contribute to an environmental outcome. That should be beyond party politics and we should get all our schools—in Montrose and elsewhere—to engage in it.

Alex Johnstone was right to say that residential emissions were one of the reasons why we missed the 2010 target. I do not share his view about nuclear power—I am sure that he will forgive me for saying that. On my being a defender of the union, I merely point out that I was showing courtesy to the UK delegation. However, it was remiss of me not to highlight the fact that small countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and Finland all played a substantial role in the negotiations at Doha. The UK had a lot of influence, but so did a number of small, independent countries.

I agree with much of what Malcolm Chisholm said. When he spoke about the “business as usual” figures, he was referring to a chart that David Wilson presented to the sustainable Scotland network conference. That was a work in progress, and I assure Malcolm Chisholm that we have made a lot of progress since then. That set of figures was shared with stakeholders to inform the discussions and get ideas from them. We have picked up a lot of those messages.

It is worth highlighting that the new building regulations will result in a 75 per cent reduction in carbon emissions from buildings in comparison with 1990 benchmarks. Although the increment

has been more modest than the Sullivan report initially suggested, we are still getting a 75 per cent reduction, which should be welcomed across the chamber.

Rob Gibson is a strong advocate of peatlands and I recognise his contribution to that debate. He is absolutely right that the projects at Forsinard and elsewhere will help us to calibrate the impact that peatlands can have in addressing carbon dioxide emissions. The Scottish Government agrees with him about the dash for gas as well, which is why it is right to pursue renewable energy as a main plank of our energy strategy.

Graeme Dey was correct to highlight that we rely to a great extent on the impact of individuals' behaviour. I commend him for raising that point. I direct members to the climate challenge fund, the junior climate challenge fund and the work that the Carbon Trust can do for businesses. There are many ways in which we can support individuals, communities and businesses to make the right kind of decisions.

The Government has had a successful advertising campaign to address the 10 key green behaviours that all of us can follow in order to make an impact on the agenda.

**The Presiding Officer:** Could you bring your remarks to a close?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I will leave it there, Presiding Officer.

**The Presiding Officer:** You had another 15 seconds.

## Point of Order

17:00

**Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer. I would like to raise a further point of order following the question that I put to the First Minister at First Minister's question time earlier today and a subsequent question to the Deputy First Minister following her statement on European Union membership. I am in the unusual and, I have to say, unwarranted position of being accused of inaccuracy by both when I was neither. [*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Order.

**Ken Macintosh:** My supplementary question to Mr Salmond this afternoon was to ask whether he still supported the idea of a fiscal stability pact in an independent Scotland. Perhaps some of his back benchers may listen to find out whether we get an answer this afternoon. I believe that that is a fairly important point to establish ahead of the referendum, as such a pact would effectively empower someone else—

**The Presiding Officer:** Can you just come to the point, Mr Macintosh?

**Ken Macintosh:** —probably England, to place limits on Scotland's taxation and spending.

**The Presiding Officer:** Can you come to the point?

**Ken Macintosh:** I want to clarify why the First Minister is wrong and I am correct in this matter. If I may, I would like to explain the quote—if that is all right.

**The Presiding Officer:** Could you please come to the point of order, Mr Macintosh?

**Ken Macintosh:** I think that it will take me about a minute, Presiding Officer.

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Macintosh, please come to the point.

**Ken Macintosh:** Just to clarify, the First Minister said earlier in the year that he supported a pact. He then said, in September, at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs:

"I don't believe that a monetary policy restriction would have to have a fiscal stabilisation pact."

I have listened to the recording and can say that the quote is accurate. Members and others can read it in *The Herald* or on Tom Gordon's blog, or they can listen to the recording themselves. It was not given

"in terms of the debate",

yet the First Minister stood up at question time to reply:

"I said no such thing in Chicago."

The Deputy First Minister then followed that up with a rather more gratuitous remark about my inaccuracy which, in the context of her own rather far-fetched claims and her willingness—

**The Presiding Officer:** Your point is, Mr Macintosh?

**Ken Macintosh:** —to dismiss the EU rebate, is more ironic than offensive. Presiding Officer, I have checked the *Official Report*, and the First Minister has not yet made his weekly correction to alter what he said. It is one thing to muddy the waters around the Scottish National Party's plans for independence; it is quite another to disguise that bluff and bluster with an attack—

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Macintosh, is there something that you require me to do as Presiding Officer?

**Ken Macintosh:** There is, indeed.

**The Presiding Officer:** If there is, could you please get to it?

**Ken Macintosh:** I ask whether there is a standing order under which you or the First Minister can clarify that I was correct, Mr Gordon was correct, the quote was correct and the First Minister was wrong.

**The Presiding Officer:** Mr Macintosh, this is for you and for every other member of the Parliament. As I have said on numerous occasions—indeed, as recently as today's First Minister's questions—the Presiding Officers never have been, are not and cannot be responsible for the veracity of what is said in the chamber. This is a matter for the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister.

**The First Minister (Alex Salmond):** Perhaps I can help with my weekly affirmation—which is what I am going to do from now on with nonsensical points of order.

Tom Gordon's report missed out a sentence.  
[*Interruption.*]

**The Presiding Officer:** Order.

**The First Minister:** The point that I made in Chicago was that, in the context of a borrowing arrangement, Scotland would have a £2.7 billion relative surplus compared to the rest of the UK—£500 a head for every man, woman and child in the country. That is exactly the point that I made to Mr Macintosh at First Minister's question time.

What troubles me is that, as Mr Macintosh must know that that sentence was omitted from Tom Gordon's report, he cannot be under any misapprehension about that. Why does he pursue the point in full knowledge of that and not acknowledge that what I said to him this afternoon is exactly what I said in Chicago?

## Business Motion

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-05200, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a revision to the business programme for Tuesday 18 December.

17:04

**The Minister for Parliamentary Business (Joe FitzPatrick):** I confirm that the revision allows for a statement on Remploy on Tuesday.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees the following revision to the programme of business for Tuesday 18 December 2012—

after

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

insert

*followed by* Ministerial Statement: Remploy.—[Joe FitzPatrick.]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Decision Time

*Meeting closed at 17:05.*

17:04

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** There are two questions to be put as a result of today's business.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-05186.2, in the name of Claudia Beamish, which seeks to amend motion S4M-05186, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, on the United Nations climate change negotiations, be agreed to.

*Amendment agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-05186, in the name of Paul Wheelhouse, on the United Nations climate change negotiations, as amended, be agreed to.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to,*

That the Parliament welcomes Scotland's participation in the 18th Conference of the Parties on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Doha; notes that participation at the conference was used as an opportunity to join other nations of high ambition in making the case for stronger global action on climate change; acknowledges that this case was made through promoting the evidence from Scotland on the jobs, investment and trade opportunities of the low-carbon economy and that it set out Scotland's commitment to clean energy, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, climate justice and international cooperation on climate change; values the cross-party commitment to Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions targets; recognises that in order to meet stretching targets and maximise Scotland's contribution to this most important global challenge, the people, communities and the public and private sectors of Scotland must accelerate action to reduce domestic emissions and speed the transition to a low-carbon economy; commends the actions taken so far by many in this regard; calls on the Scottish Government to ensure that sufficient remedial action is taken in the next report on proposals and policies to compensate for missing its first annual emissions reduction targets under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and calls on the Scottish Government to work closely with local authorities to help them translate Scotland's Climate Change Declaration into robust and accountable action.



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