



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT

Wednesday 20 August 2014

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# Scottish Parliament

Wednesday 20 August 2014

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

## Portfolio Question Time

### Justice and the Law Officers

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** Good afternoon. The first item of business is portfolio questions on justice and rural affairs and the environment. In order to get as many people in as possible and as many questions answered as possible, I would be grateful for short and succinct questions and answers.

#### Chief Constable (Meetings)

**1. Annabel Goldie (West Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met the chief constable, Sir Stephen House, and what issues were discussed. (S4O-03491)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** I regularly meet the chief constable and other senior officers from Police Scotland to discuss keeping people in Scotland safe. I last met the chief constable on 22 July and most recently met Deputy Chief Constable Iain Livingstone on 13 August.

Policing in Scotland is performing excellently. Crime is at a 39-year low, violent crime is down by almost half since 2006-07 and homicides are at their lowest level since records began. The risk of being a victim of crime is falling and confidence in the police is high and rising.

**Annabel Goldie:** I thank the cabinet secretary. The recent armed police controversy has confirmed the lack of any meaningful accountability to the Scottish public by Police Scotland. When will Police Scotland introduce a national crime mapping initiative to increase transparency and start tackling the issue of defective accountability to the general public?

**Kenny MacAskill:** I believe that the armed policing situation will disclose effective accountability. Derek Penman, in his capacity as HM inspector of constabulary in Scotland, was at the Justice Committee yesterday and has indicated that there will be a review into matters, and the Scottish Police Authority has also indicated that it is investigating them. This Parliament set up that situation to ensure that there would not be ministerial control or direction of the single police service. There has to be operational independence. Equally, in a democracy—especially with a single service—we

have to ensure appropriate accountability. That accountability, which is enshrined in statute, is provided by the Scottish Police Authority and HMICS, along with myriad organisations, including the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner.

#### Mental Health Nurses (Police Stations)

**2. Jackson Carlaw (West Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on police stations having mental health nurses assigned to them, similar to the pilot exercise being carried out in England. (S4O-03492)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** Responsibility for healthcare in custody has transferred to the national health service. A lot of work has been undertaken across Scotland on providing forensic nurses in police custody suites, culminating in the NHS establishing regional networks in April 2014. That work has proved extremely useful in providing quick and appropriate clinical care for a range of people in custody, including people with mental illness.

Evidence from extensive research and from pilot work in NHS Tayside, in partnership with Police Scotland, which is looking at improving how we respond to people who present in distress, shows that people seek a more compassionate response and are likely to achieve a more positive outcome when they receive such a response.

Work to improve how services respond to people in distress is being taken up by the suicide prevention strategy implementation group, whose membership includes representation from Police Scotland.

**Jackson Carlaw:** I am grateful to the cabinet secretary for that encouraging response. The police have been thought to spend between 15 and 25 per cent of their time dealing with suspects with mental health problems. Many people have been detained in police cells who would be better served by some sort of psychiatric intervention. I am grateful for the cabinet secretary's comments. Clearly, he agrees that early mental health intervention when a person first reaches the police may well reduce reoffending and save all manner of resources by diverting them away from costly prison sentences. I understand that he said that responsibility for healthcare has been diverted to the NHS, but is he personally backing such developments and initiatives?

**Kenny MacAskill:** Yes. Jackson Carlaw made an appropriate point. We all know that people who present at police stations, sometimes as victims but often having been detained as perpetrators, may have underlying mental health issues. They might have clear mental health issues; sometimes

those issues are masked by drugs or alcohol and sometimes drugs or alcohol have exacerbated the situation. Clearly that is a drain on the resources in police stations, but those people have a health problem that requires to be addressed.

It was appropriate to ensure that, in dealing with the issues directly, we separated the NHS from the police. The member is quite right that there is a significant drain on resources, especially given that police officers are not necessarily trained to deal with people with mental health issues, and police stations are not the appropriate places for them.

I give the member the complete assurance that that is the situation. When my colleague Alex Neil became the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, one of the first meetings that he and I had was with the chief medical officer and the chief constable of the new Police Service of Scotland.

We are aware that both services are required to take action. It is in the interests of both services to work together, as well as being in the interests of the individuals and the communities that are affected by them. The problem cannot be solved solely by law enforcement; it has to involve a partnership with health.

### **Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill (Stakeholders)**

#### **3. Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands)**

**(Con):** To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with stakeholders about the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill. (S4O-03493)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** The Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill is a wide-ranging bill that covers a variety of issues and licensing regimes. It creates new licensing regimes in relation to air weapons and sexual entertainment venues. It amends the existing regimes in relation to alcohol, metal dealers, taxis and private hire cars, and public entertainment venues. It also makes amendments across the range of licensing regimes under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. That has all been informed by consultation and engagement with the relevant stakeholders.

**Jamie McGrigor:** I continue to receive representations from many constituents in the Highlands and Islands who believe that the proposed new legislation on air guns is disproportionate and will prove costly and impractical. Given that 87 per cent of those who responded to the Government's consultation opposed the plan, that air guns are already regulated by law, with more than 30 offences on the statute book, and that offences involving air

guns have fallen by 75 per cent in recent years, where is the Government's hard evidence that the new legislation will have any effect on the tiny percentage of people who will always seek to misuse air guns in a criminal way?

**Kenny MacAskill:** The member is correct that the misuse of air weapons has, thankfully, been falling. However, such misuse is forming a greater proportion of firearms offences than ever before, so although we have a safer Scotland, we still have a legacy of tragedies—not least involving those who have seen their children slain by air weapons or animals that have suffered due to air weapons. Over recent months, I have attended events with the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is deeply concerned about the harm that is perpetrated on animals due to the misuse of air weapons.

The case has been proven: there is a requirement for legislation to ensure the safety of our citizens and to ensure that licences are available for those who have a legitimate reason to use air weapons—in particular, those involved in pest control and those whom Mr McGrigor will know and represent in the farming and rural community. A regulated licensing regime protects not just the general public from the misuse of air weapons but those who correctly and legitimately should be able to have them under such a regime.

**John Pentland (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab):** The bill also has a section on metal theft, which was tackled in England and Wales last year through the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. In my area, there has been a spate of thefts of drain covers and other metal. Is that indicative of a general rise in such criminal activity, and are we witnessing a transfer of criminal activity to Scotland as a result of our more lax legislation?

**Kenny MacAskill:** The member raises an interesting point. It was a matter of concern for many of the utility companies when we discussed the issue with them. Thankfully, that scenario has not arisen and action is being taken under the task force that is chaired by the British Transport Police but operated effectively on the ground by Police Scotland.

There are those who seek—as part of serious organised crime groups—to make money by harming communities through robbing from utilities, which poses great danger to communities. That is why appropriate action is being taken by the Parliament, with the bill going to committee later this year.

Thankfully, because of the vigilance of Police Scotland, we are not seeing any tourist traffic—if I can put it that way—of criminals in that regard. However, the police are ever vigilant to that

possibility and remain in discussion with all the stakeholders, in particular the utility companies.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Question 4, in the name of David Torrance, has been withdrawn. A satisfactory explanation has been provided.

### **Cashback for Communities (Glasgow)**

**5. Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how it supports community organisations in the Glasgow region in using funding from the cashback for communities programme and other money seized under proceeds of crime legislation. (S4O-03495)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** I had the great pleasure of announcing in Dennistoun yesterday a further £1.5 million in funding for Scottish Sports Futures as part of the further expansion of cashback for communities over the next three years.

We continue to hit criminals hard in their pockets through the use of proceeds of crime legislation, which has resulted in the recovery of more than £90 million in the past 10 years.

Since I announced the cashback scheme in 2007, more than £74 million of nefarious cash has been stripped from criminals and ploughed back into communities across Scotland. Glasgow's young people and communities have directly benefited from more than £5.3 million of the cashback investment through a wide range of sporting, cultural, youth work and community projects, which have created more than 160,000 opportunities and activities that simply would not have existed without cashback.

**Bob Doris:** I welcome the recent announcement of £1.5 million in funding for Scottish Sports Futures from cashback for communities, which the cabinet secretary outlined. That funding will be distributed by local partners in my region, such as active east.

I commend to the cabinet secretary the work of the Gladiator weightlifting programme for young people in Easterhouse, which has not so far accessed such funds locally but which I hope will benefit, given that it offers diversionary activities and sporting pathways to success for young people in a deprived community. In the months ahead, will he visit that excellent project with me to see the excellent work that it does?

**Kenny MacAskill:** I would be happy to do that, subject to diary commitments. I do not know the organisation, but I appreciate Mr Doris's testimonial for it. As I said, I was delighted to travel to Dennistoun yesterday to see the good work, which will continue. I am aware of the outstanding work by Glasgow Clyde College and Scottish Power, by Street Soccer Scotland and by Action

for Children, and a recent investment has been made in the Celtic FC Foundation.

Glasgow is benefiting not simply from cashback support but from the community organisations that cashback supports, which do a remarkable job. I would be delighted to meet the organisation that Mr Doris mentioned, just as I have met many other organisations. In particular, I was delighted to meet Scottish Sports Futures at Dennistoun yesterday.

**Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab):** Given that a recent assessment costed organised crime in Scotland at £1 billion a year, while this year's assessment of recovered assets stands at about £8 million, does the cabinet secretary have a programme in place to recover more assets, so that cashback can benefit accordingly?

**Kenny MacAskill:** Yes. The Administration established at an early juncture the serious organised crime task force to ensure not only that we minimise, address and tackle serious organised crime but that we take the assets of such activity. That is part of the on-going strands and the four Ds.

We always seek to improve. That is sometimes done by changing legislation here or, when there are reserved aspects, by changing it south of the border. The desire of the Government—ably supported by the Solicitor General for Scotland, who leads the civil recovery unit—is to maximise the harm to organisations that would cause damage in our communities.

### **Data Legislation**

**6. George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what consultation it has had with the United Kingdom Government regarding the implementation of legislation relating to data laws. (S4O-03496)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** As I made clear in the statement that I made to Parliament on Tuesday 5 August, the Scottish Government was not consulted on the Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Bill.

**George Adam:** If the cabinet secretary had full powers over the issue, how would he deal with it?

**Kenny MacAskill:** There must be greater discussion. We have made it clear that the matter is for Parliament and not for me as an individual, or us as a Government. Views in Parliament differ; when I made the statement, Patrick Harvie of the Green Party was clear about where he saw the balance being struck. There is a balance between protecting individual citizens from intrusion and protecting the wider community from harm that individuals might perpetrate. As an Administration, we have always made it clear that the powers are

necessary, but we must ensure proper scrutiny. We must protect the individual's rights and balance that with the community's needs.

I give George Adam the complete assurance that the issue will be for Parliament as a whole to decide. There will be proper investigation and review, and there will be discussion with appropriate stakeholders—not just the police, but those who speak for citizens' rights.

A major concern south of the border in Westminster was how we will, when we bring in such powers, ensure democratic scrutiny and oversight in the years to come. The legislation is one thing, but on-going supervision of things that will by their nature be covert and secret must be satisfactory to those who represent the democracy.

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** We know that the cabinet secretary is dissatisfied with the process of the legislation. Is he content with the content of the legislation?

**Kenny MacAskill:** No. The debate south of the border has been about how we were being rushed into the legislation. I do not have the precise quotations in front of me, but that view straddled the chamber in Westminster, from David Davis on one side to Tom Watson—I think—and Diane Abbott on the other, all of whom expressed concerns about the situation that they faced in terms not only of the timescale but of what they were being asked to sign up to.

I reiterate that the Scottish Government recognises that such actions require to be taken by Governments in the interests of protection not only of our citizens, but of citizens in other jurisdictions, whom we are obliged to protect. It is a matter of balance; there might be disputes south of the border about where the calibration is set, as there may very well be in future years in this chamber. However, we remain convinced—even Patrick Harvie is convinced, I think—that some change will need to take place.

We need to ensure that we have the appropriate legislation and the appropriate checks and balances. That is what is causing concern not just in this Parliament but south of the border.

#### **Justice-related Buildings (Innovation)**

**7. Dave Thompson (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on the need for innovative thinking when planning new justice-related buildings. (S4O-03497)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** The responsibility for justice-related buildings lies with the relevant bodies, but it is clear that we should work together to find ways to

continue to provide for the people of Scotland high-quality facilities that represent good value for money. The sheriff court in Livingston has shown how justice and related services can work together to provide an integrated service.

Although the question is about buildings, access to justice is not only about buildings, but about how we can take advantage of digital technology to provide our services. The Scottish Government has been working with justice organisations to develop plans and, at an event that I attended today, we announced the publication of the justice digital strategy, which outlines our work in this area.

**Dave Thompson:** Eric McQueen, who is the chief executive of the Scottish Court Service, Inverness Sheriff Principal Derek Pyle, former chief inspector of prisons Brigadier Hugh Monro, Highland Council and Police Scotland all believe that a Highland justice centre is the way forward for the north. Can the cabinet secretary provide an update on the situation with regard to a Highland justice centre and, in particular, on its being linked with a new prison?

**Kenny MacAskill:** As Dave Thompson might know, the Scottish Court Service set out its long-term vision for the court service in Scotland, which included the development of justice centres in key strategic population centres, including in the Borders, Fife, Lanarkshire and the Highlands. The chief executive of the SCS has stated that it will undertake in those locations feasibility studies that will include justice partners and relevant local bodies. The first of those was undertaken in the Borders and reported earlier this year.

Dave Thompson might also be aware that last week a working group was announced to consider alternative tourism opportunities for Inverness castle, which is currently home to the sheriff court. I believe that that is a welcome move. The SCS is examining how future business accommodation needs in Inverness could be met and funded in order to allow consideration of the court's moving to an alternative location. That will require detailed analysis and discussion with other justice organisations, the Scottish Government and Highland Council.

#### **Court Closures (Savings)**

**8. Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government how much the Scottish Court Service will save as a result of the closure of sheriff and justice of the peace courts. (S4O-03498)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Kenny MacAskill):** The Scottish Court Service estimated the following savings from the court closure programme: the annual savings in running costs



will amount to around £1 million, and there will also be one-off savings in backlog maintenance, which will now not have to be paid out of the public purse, of around £3 million.

**Nanette Milne:** Our justice system has already been impacted on by delays in cases being heard, and the many concerns that were expressed by campaigners about the unseen costs of the proposals to close 11 sheriff courts are now seen to be coming true. Along with that, there are issues such as lack of privacy for accused people and their lawyers in the Aberdeen court that are currently causing problems. Does the cabinet secretary feel any regret for the way in which the Scottish Government has handled the closures? Will he ask Audit Scotland to examine the closures to investigate whether Scottish taxpayers have seen the predicted level of savings?

**Kenny MacAskill:** No, I will not. I believe that the best people to account for that are in the Scottish Court Service. A few weeks ago, I was delighted to go to Aberdeen sheriff court to see the newly opened civil court buildings, which I think are outstanding. I pay tribute to Sheriff Principal Derek Pyle for his outstanding work and leadership.

There have been challenges to the court system because of an increase in some types of proceedings. The courts have to deal with that, and they are being given additional financial assistance, which I welcome. However, the Lord President has considered matters and has indicated that we require to get Scotland's justice system into the 21st century and in a better landscape. He has my full support on that.

## Rural Affairs and the Environment

### Independence (European Rural Development Funding)

**1. Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what assessment it has made of the level of pillar 2 funding for rural development that an independent Scotland could expect to receive from the European Union. (S4O-03501)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** As a result of the recent agricultural allocations under the common agricultural policy, Scotland will find itself at the bottom of the league tables for both pillar 1 and pillar 2 funding. However, with a seat at the top table in Europe, an independent Scotland would have the opportunity to negotiate itself a better deal in the next common agricultural policy post-2020.

Indeed, had Scotland been independent in the recent negotiations and been able to negotiate a

per-hectare deal similar to Ireland's, it could have secured around an extra €2.5 billion in rural development funding alone. That funding could have been used to support vital capital grants for our farms and crofters, support for new entrants, agri-environment schemes, climate change projects or community initiatives in rural areas.

**Colin Beattie:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that it is nothing short of scandalous that, in the recent CAP negotiations, 16 member states negotiated additional uplifts for rural development while the United Kingdom Government chose not to negotiate any uplift, resulting in Scotland having the lowest funding for rural development in Europe? With Scotland languishing at €12 per hectare while the European average is €76, is it not time that we took our seats at the top table in Europe as a matter of urgency?

**Richard Lochhead:** Colin Beattie perfectly illustrates why we should not ask other people who do not share our interests or priorities to negotiate on our behalf in international negotiations.

It is a fact that Scotland went into the recent negotiation with the lowest level of rural development funding in Europe, that 16 other countries already above Scotland in the league table negotiated an even better deal, and that, despite Scotland's requests, the UK Government refused to lift a finger to improve Scotland's position in the league table. Despite being a largely rural country with huge opportunities in rural communities if we could get the right investment in place, we suffered because UK ministers refused to stand up for Scotland or listen to concerns from this country.

That is indeed why we need a yes vote in four weeks' time so that we can speak for ourselves in Europe.

**Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** Will the cabinet secretary accept that it looks somewhat strange for him to call for any increase in any aspect of EU funding when his party's representatives at Westminster wanted an even greater reduction in the overall EU budget than was eventually achieved?

Will the cabinet secretary also accept that, whatever our constitutional situation, there will be no opportunity to renegotiate the CAP budget before 2020 and that any assertions that we would be better or worse off under different circumstances are nothing but idle speculation?

**Richard Lochhead:** Unsurprisingly, I profoundly disagree with both points that Alex Fergusson made. Indeed, on his first point, he misleads on the facts, given that the Scottish National Party MPs at Westminster did not argue for a reduction in the CAP budget, which comprises 38 per cent of

the overall European budget. Indeed, the SNP made suggestions for where some modest savings could be made in the overall EU budget and argued against David Cameron's proposals to increase the overall EU budget.

The second fundamental point is about our share of the CAP budget. The size of the CAP budget is one debate, but Scotland's share of it is what really matters here. We get the lowest share of that budget in the UK and the whole of Europe. A funding formula was adopted that applies to member states—all member states big and small—but that was not applied to Scotland because we are not a member state. Had it applied to Scotland, we would have qualified automatically for an extra €1 billion between 2015 and 2020.

On Alex Fergusson's point on the next common agricultural policy, the Government is not arguing that we can reopen the CAP for the spending period up to 2020. The yes campaign argues that, had we been independent for the recent negotiation, we would have been €1 billion better off under pillar 1. We also argue that the people of Scotland have a choice about who should be in the driving seat to represent Scotland in the next CAP negotiations, which will start within a year or two of Scotland becoming independent in 2016: an uncaring, disinterested UK minister from Whitehall or Scotland's farming minister, who will strike a much better deal for Scotland's farmers and crofters.

### **Marine Protected Areas (Impact on Recreational Boating and Tourism)**

**2. Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what impact marine protected areas will have on recreational boating and marine tourism. (S4O-03502)

**The Minister for Environment and Climate Change (Paul Wheelhouse):** The 30 new marine protected areas that we recently designated should help to protect the rich waters of Scotland that so many sailors and other marine tourists enjoy.

Recreational boating and marine tourism require a healthy marine environment, and for that reason the Scottish branch of the Royal Yachting Association has thrown its support behind the MPAs, which will protect the ecosystems and waters that people come from all over the world to enjoy. I believe that MPAs will potentially boost marine tourism and the economic value that derives from the sector.

**Stuart McMillan:** The minister will be aware of the economic benefits that the recreational boating and marine tourism sectors bring to Scotland. I know that the minister, as a former member of the

cross-party group on recreational boating and marine tourism, is very much aware of the issues that have been raised in that group.

Will the Scottish Government undertake research to monitor the social and economic benefits of marine protected areas and how they impact on the marine tourism sector?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** I recognise the interest that exists in the issue. During the evidence session on MPAs at last week's Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee, one of the stakeholders suggested that the statutory review of the MPA network every six years should include a revised impact assessment of the costs and benefits of the network. I am attracted to that proposal, and I intend to look at its feasibility and at the scope for including assessment of the economic effects and benefits of marine protected areas on marine tourism, given that there is a strong interest in the issue.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** As the minister knows, so-called blue carbon is captured and stored across a range of sea bed types such as seagrass. The new Scottish Natural Heritage report, "Assessment of carbon budgets and potential blue carbon stores in Scotland's coastal and marine environment", states that ocean acidification could affect the marine environment adversely.

In view of that, can the minister provide details on how those carbon-storing habitats could receive protection within the marine protected area network? The report came out just this morning, so if he cannot do so today, perhaps he could in the near future. Could those features be allocated before the review date of 2018?

**Paul Wheelhouse:** Claudia Beamish expressed a strong interest in the issue during consideration of the second report on proposals and policies. We are committed to looking at blue carbon in RPP3. It is a developing area of policy work, as the issue of peatlands was in the previous report on proposals and policies.

I assure Claudia Beamish and other members in the chamber that we are taking a considerable interest in the issue. I will reflect on the report in order to consider the issues we can work on in relation to those habitats and see what contribution they can make to our climate change targets.

### **British Veterinary Association (Meetings)**

**3. Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con):** To ask the Scottish Government when it last met the British Veterinary Association. (S4O-03503)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** Scottish Government officials are in contact with the British Veterinary Association at least weekly on a wide range of issues across the animal health and welfare portfolio.

The chief veterinary officer for Scotland formally met the BVA on 15 May and discussed a range of issues including veterinary surveillance, non-stun slaughter, regulation of the veterinary profession, dog tail docking and compulsory microchipping of dogs. She will meet the BVA again formally on 9 September.

**Alex Johnstone:** Has the cabinet secretary or his officials had specific talks regarding concerns about ritual slaughter? As a result, does he intend to bring forward any proposals to include labelling information on Scottish meat on whether stunning took place prior to slaughter?

**Richard Lochhead:** We have been looking at the issue in recent weeks and months. The religious slaughter of animals for food is a difficult, sensitive and complex issue. We must be very careful with regard to any debate about labelling and take on board the view of Scotland's faith communities.

It is widely accepted that animals should be stunned before slaughter to properly safeguard their welfare, but we must recognise the importance that Jewish and Muslim communities in particular attach to being supplied with meat from animals that are slaughtered in accordance with their religious beliefs.

I understand that the European Union is contemplating looking at the issue, and I will ensure that Scotland has a voice in those discussions.

#### **Independence (Rural Development Funding)**

**4. Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government how independence would support rural development funding in rural communities such as in Dumfries and Galloway. (S4O-03504)

**Richard Lochhead:** As I explained in response to Colin Beattie's question, independence will give a positive boost to communities across Scotland in many ways. Our rural communities in particular would stand to gain from potentially significantly increased budgets that would be brought by having our own voice in Europe in negotiating for Scottish priorities.

**Aileen McLeod:** The cabinet secretary will be aware that, just as Scotland received the lowest level of rural development funding in the European Union, Dumfries and Galloway has a disproportionately high reliance on agriculture and

related rural-based industry for employment and the lowest full-time wages in Scotland. What opportunities would an independent Scottish Government have to address that situation?

**Richard Lochhead:** Aileen McLeod has quite rightly raised the fact that Dumfries and Galloway, like the rest of Scotland, lost out significantly from Scotland not having her own voice in the recent negotiations on the common agricultural policy and the budgets that flow through pillar 1, which is direct farm payments, and those that flow through pillar 2, which is rural development funds.

In Dumfries and Galloway, it is not just the primary producers or farmers who have lost out; rural businesses, village hall committees, renewable energy projects and agri-environment projects—the list goes on—have all lost out, because we do not have our fair share of EU rural budgets.

Scotland can put that right in four weeks' time. We can get a fair share. The only way in which we will get a fair share of those budgets is by someone who represents Scotland's priorities and interests going to the negotiations and not negotiating against them.

#### **Independence (European Funding for Farmers and Crofters)**

**5. Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what benefit farmers and crofters would have through pillar 1 funding in an independent Scotland. (S4O-03505)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** I can detect an emerging theme in question time today.

An independent Scotland with a seat at the top table in Europe will have the opportunity to influence the next common agricultural policy negotiations and lift us off the bottom of the league tables for both pillars of the common agricultural policy budgets, as I have said. Had Scotland been independent during the recent negotiations, we would have benefited from the European Union minimum rate of €196 per hectare, which, as I have said, would have meant about an extra €1 billion of support over the next CAP period up to 2020.

**Mike MacKenzie:** Does the cabinet secretary agree that those are the reasons why no fewer than four former NFU Scotland presidents are publicly supporting the yes campaign?

**Richard Lochhead:** It is very significant that four former NFUS presidents declared for yes last week. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Richard Lochhead:** Those four former NFUS presidents are still active in farming affairs in this country and they still have their fingers on the pulse of the mood of farmers and crofters and the impact of public policy on these vital industries.

The fact that a formula was agreed by Europe that would have delivered an uplift to Scotland had we been a member state of the EU is surely very pertinent to the future of our rural communities, farmers and crofters, and of food production in this country. To rub salt into the wound, even though we lost out on our share of the budget, the United Kingdom was given £190 million because of Scotland's low payments to get the rate for the whole of the UK above the qualifying threshold for those funds. Despite the fact that Scotland already has the lowest level of funds in the whole of Europe and it was only because of Scotland that the UK got that cash, the UK Government then took the decision to deny Scotland the £190 million. That is scandalous, and that is why the four former NFUS presidents will be followed by thousands of farmers who will vote yes in the referendum in four weeks' time.

**Alex Fergusson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** I simply have to ask the cabinet secretary this question on the back of that reply: if four former NFUS presidents are a resounding endorsement for voting yes, are not 16 people—former NFUS presidents and vice-presidents and the former chair of Quality Meat Scotland—a four times more important and resounding backing for the no campaign?

**Richard Lochhead:** I respect the views of all farming leaders and former farming leaders in the debate, irrespective of which generation they represent or when they were vice-president or president of the NFUS. The decisions and views that people have to adopt and take in relation to Scotland's future are very serious. However, if someone had said several years ago that four former NFUS presidents were going to declare for yes in a Scottish independence referendum, I would have been pleasantly surprised. Here we are, and that is actually the case. More important, when I travel around the agricultural shows, as I have done throughout the summer, I have met hundreds—if not thousands—of farmers who have told me that they will vote yes in four weeks' time. It is one vote per farmer, and that is what matters for Scotland's future.

### **Agriculture (Regulation)**

**6. Gordon MacDonald (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to reduce red tape for agricultural industries. (S4O-03506)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** In 2012, I

commissioned Brian Pack to undertake an independent report into how best to reduce red tape for farmers and land managers. Following extensive consultation with the industry and stakeholders the report was presented to me at the Turriff show a few weeks ago.

The report contains 61 recommendations aimed at reducing red tape, and I immediately accepted one of the main ones, which was to establish an overarching advisory board to improve the strategic and operational alignment of our delivery bodies in Scotland. I will make announcements about the other recommendations in due course.

**Gordon MacDonald:** I am pleased that the cabinet secretary is considering setting up an advisory board to cut farming red tape, which will free up more time for farmers to farm by reducing on-farm inspections and bureaucracy. I am sure that that is welcome news. When will the advisory board be up and running?

**Richard Lochhead:** We have started to look at how the advisory board should be comprised and I hope to make announcements in the coming weeks.

It is worth saying that the recommendation is important because farmers, crofters and land managers have to deal with many agencies and bodies operating in rural Scotland. It makes perfect sense that the more aligned those agencies and bodies are, the better. Whatever steps are taken—whether it is that they use the same systems or perhaps have one point of contact—reducing bureaucracy and red tape can only benefit and free up time for our hard-working primary producers in rural Scotland.

### **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**

**7. Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether an independent Scotland would see an increase in funding from the European Union European maritime and fisheries fund and, if so, by how much. (S4O-03507)

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Oh dear.

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (Richard Lochhead):** Angus MacDonald asks a very good question and I detect that the Opposition MSPs do not like it. However, it is important to relay the truth to all parties in the chamber.

Scotland will receive the third lowest level of funding in the whole of Europe as part of the new European maritime and fisheries fund, which was recently negotiated by member states. We receive just 1.9 per cent of the EMFF budget, despite our

fleet landing 8 per cent—I repeat, 8 per cent—of fish caught in EU waters.

Once again, the United Kingdom Government has let Scotland down by not fighting for a fairer share of important budgets. As a member state in our own right, we would be able to negotiate a far better deal to help our fishermen, processors and aquaculture sector. Fishing is many times more important to Scotland than it is to the UK as whole, which is why with independence it will be treated with respect and as a much greater priority than it ever would be by a distant and uninterested UK Government.

**Angus MacDonald:** It is clear that Scotland's fishing industry has been just as poorly served by successive UK Governments as our agricultural industry has. As the cabinet secretary said, fish landings in Scotland account for 8 per cent of the EU's total landings—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Can we have a question?

**Angus MacDonald:** —and 12 per cent of EU aquaculture production, but we receive only 1.4 per cent of the EMFF allocation. Does the cabinet secretary think that that is fair?

**Richard Lochhead:** I will put the question into context. Scotland represents the fourth largest sea area in Europe—just think about that for a second. Another fascinating statistic is that 20 per cent of fish taken from European waters comes from Scottish waters. The fishing industry is many times more important to Scotland than it is to the UK as a whole. Despite that, we receive 1.9 per cent of the European maritime and fisheries fund.

For those who say that independence will not make things better, all I say is that independence could not make anything worse. We are in the worst possible position when it comes to sharing out the funding. We can only do better in getting a fair share of those vital funds by having our own voice in the negotiations.

**Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** It is interesting that the cabinet secretary told the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee that the UK Government and the Scottish Government work very well together on fisheries matters.

Can the minister enlighten Parliament about the implications for Scottish fishermen that would arise if the fisheries fund support were to be lost, especially as the majority of experts on the EU and EU officials have concluded that an independent Scotland would not automatically be admitted to the EU.

**Richard Lochhead:** Next Jamie McGrigor will accuse independence of not delivering a television

service for Scotland. The claims get more preposterous by the day.

There are some issues on which I welcome the work that we do with the UK Government on fisheries negotiations. We succeed in getting support from the UK in European negotiations when Scotland's interests coincide with those of the rest of the UK. The difficulty arises when Scotland's interests do not coincide with those of the rest of the UK; that is when we need our own voice in the negotiations. At the moment, when we get concessions from the UK Government, they happen to be on issues on which our interests coincide. In other words, they would be negotiated for in any case.

An independent Scottish voice can add weight when we agree, but when we have different priorities and disagree, we will have our own voice and the ability to secure a good deal for Scotland's fishermen.

## Point of Order

14:40

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

You will know that this afternoon's programme of business includes a statement from Mr Russell on innovation centres, and you will have seen this morning that the cabinet secretary invited the media to accompany him on a visit to Inchinnan, where he made a number of announcements concerning innovation centres. I have the report from *The Scotsman* here.

Presiding Officer, you and your predecessors have frequently taken a strong line when ministers choose to make announcements to the media rather than to Parliament. You rightly consider it a discourtesy to inform Parliament only after the media have been informed.

Is not this an occasion on which Parliament can take the cabinet secretary's remarks as read and move on to other business? If you are concerned that that might leave a gap in this afternoon's programme, I suggest that you invite the First Minister to come to the chamber later to make a statement on his currency mystery, which has deepened overnight given the remarks of Crawford Beveridge, which have largely hung the First Minister out to dry on the issue.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** Thank you, Mr McArthur.

The Presiding Officers have looked into the matter, following representations from Opposition parties. As Presiding Officers have said repeatedly, the Government must be very careful when pre-releasing details of announcements that are subsequently to be made to Parliament.

The Presiding Officers have studied the statement carefully and are satisfied that on balance the full details of the statement are not contained in the media release. Therefore, members should hear from the cabinet secretary directly and will then be able to question him.

However, before I invite the cabinet secretary to make his statement, I remind the Scottish Government of the importance of making announcements to Parliament before placing the details in the public domain.

## Innovation Centres (Economic Impact)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** We move on to the statement on innovation centres.

14:42

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell):** Thank you, Presiding Officer. I make it plain that the burden of this statement is not connected to the announcement of £14 million. I accept that that announcement should perhaps have been made on a different occasion. However, the burden of this statement is quite different and I am sure that members are looking forward to hearing it.

This is actually my first opportunity to brief members on the significant economic impact of the ambitious and ground-breaking innovation centres programme, and I welcome the chance to do so. Developed in partnership with the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, innovation centres are collaborations between universities, businesses and other partners to enhance innovation in and across Scotland's key economic sectors.

When it was launched, the initiative was widely welcomed as having the potential to greatly improve university-business engagement, by bringing together the people who are best able to resolve many of the challenges that face industry in Scotland, while harnessing many new opportunities. I want to share with the Parliament some indications of positive progress and what we are beginning to expect in terms of impact from our significant investment.

As members know, Scotland has five universities in the world's top 200—more than any other country per head of population. We have a track record of securing competitive research funding from a range of sources, which reflects the excellence and global reputation of our universities. Our universities excel when it comes to research; Scottish universities have more citations than those of any other country, relative to gross domestic product. We are disproportionately excellent at what we do.

The Government has shown its support for our universities and research through investments such as the global excellence initiative. In an independent Scotland we can and will do even more.

Our universities and research facilities are a core strength in our economy. They are an important growth sector, which is why we sought

to improve the links between our universities and public and private sectors, to increase the economic and social benefits of innovation. We start from sound foundations. Our research pools, for example, have embedded a collaborative approach across the university sector, to provide a critical mass of research excellence, which enhances our competitiveness on the world stage. We were the first country to develop such a strategy.

Our collaborative approach has been instrumental in attracting international research centres to Scotland, such as the Fraunhofer centre for applied photonics and the first international Max-Planck partnership in the United Kingdom. That is why the British Council said in a recent report that

“a joined-up and collaborative sector, helped by its modest size and a Scottish ethos of education as a public good”,

is one of five strategic assets of Scottish higher education.

Nevertheless, we are always ambitious to do more. Innovation Scotland epitomises our approach. Launched last October, it gives focus and impetus to improving the effectiveness of universities and businesses working together to increase innovation in the economy. That approach is assisting in developing collaborative approaches to spin-out support, supporting easy-access intellectual property and extending the role of Interface to better facilitate business and academic partnerships.

Innovation centres are a manifestation of that approach in action. Research pooling was about improving the quality of our research through collaboration across the university sector, and innovation centres build on that research quality and collaborative strength by promoting innovation in a commercial context. Innovation centres are large-scale, ambitious projects of excellence. They are about developing the best environment for businesses and academia to interact in, taking innovation to another level. They are part of a cultural shift that brings the innovation and creativity of our academic sector to the heart of our business life and puts business drive firmly into the heart of our academic sector. The centres help the research community to understand the needs of its particular industry and they help industry to understand the assistance that can be delivered through research.

Scottish Government investment in the overall programme is substantial through the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council providing up to £124 million over a six-year period. Around £80 million of that is already committed to the first eight innovation centres, including £2 million for MSc places to improve the connections

between businesses and universities. This morning, I announced £14 million from within the £124 million that will support major capital and infrastructure investment across the programme. For example, the stratified medicine Scotland innovation centre, which I visited this morning, will receive £4 million to help to secure national health service data sets and establish a next-generation genomic sequencing platform at its interim facility in Inchinnan.

We are under no illusion that these are large-scale ventures that will need time and patience for their potential to be fully realised, but the public investment that we are making is being more than matched by the innovation centre partners, who estimate their contribution to be around £200 million in cash and in kind. That reflects the strong support from industry, which recognises the potential ambition of the programme. Those partners all come with high expectations and high reputations. Time precludes my naming them all, but they include GlaxoSmithKline, Thales UK, Amor Group, Philips Healthcare, Cisco Systems, Thermo Fisher Scientific—which I visited this morning—and Aridhia Informatics. There are many others, and it is not only the major global players that are involved. Our small and medium-sized enterprises are playing an active part and there are strong plans to ensure that the innovation centres are incubators for new activity.

The first phase of the innovation centre programme was launched last year, with the digital health institute, stratified medicine and sensors and imaging systems. Since then, two further innovation centres have been launched—industrial biotech and aquaculture. Later this year, we will see the launch of innovation centres covering oil and gas, big data and construction. The centres have already begun to make their mark on the landscape, and we should not underestimate the benefits that the centres will bring to the people of Scotland and to wider society. Stratified medicine is recognised as the future for the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Tailoring treatment to those who will benefit most increases cost effectiveness. It is about getting the right drug to the right person at the right time.

The real burden of this statement is about what is happening now. Across the innovation centre landscape, we are seeing advances in skills, processes, collaboration and performance, leading to a significant longer-term impact on our economy. I can announce to Parliament today the first indication of the scale of that economic impact coming from the innovation centre programme. Based on the business plans for individual centres, the cumulative boost to the Scottish economy could reach a massive £1.5 billion and up to 5,000 jobs could be created across the wider economy. Those figures reveal the impact that our

world-class higher education sector working in partnership with business can deliver—more jobs, better jobs and a stronger economy. The figures illustrate the scale of the economic potential. We are now working on a comprehensive baseline economic impact assessment so that we can fully monitor and evaluate the success of the innovation centres as they all come on stream. That will confirm the considerable impact of the strategy.

There are opportunities—which we are now witnessing—for the innovation centres themselves to stimulate productive new collaborations. For example, stratified medicine is talking about working with big data, and the University of Edinburgh is leading a bid to secure the knowledge innovation centre on active and healthy ageing from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology. The aim is to develop new health and care goods and services with business and economic models that enable systemic change. The innovation centres will play a role in strengthening the bid. The bid is truly collaborative, with expert partners from Scotland, the international commercial community and other parts of Europe working together to secure the project. We support that and we wish the bid team every success.

We believe that we now have a community of innovation across Scotland that is in a strong position for attracting European Union investment. Indeed, some of the innovation centres are talking to Scottish Development International about their connection to the wider international community.

We are maximising the potential of university-business collaboration to support innovation and economic growth. However, we can do more. Independence can reinforce our global approach by providing access to more of the policy levers required to support innovation, including key financial tools. For example, “Reindustrialising Scotland for the 21st Century: A Sustainable Industrial Strategy for a Modern, Independent Nation”, which was published in June, highlighted how, with independence, future Scottish Governments would be able to develop an overarching framework that aligns innovation activity and considers new opportunities to support innovation. That could be through tax incentives such as allowances on research and development expenditure or reductions in payroll taxes for employees directly involved in R and D, such as the scheme in the Netherlands.

Independence would also allow us to better support a thriving internationally connected and competitive university sector through the removal of a damaging immigration policy that often prevents our universities from attracting and retaining talented researchers. Our priority must

be the reintroduction of the post-study visa, which will attract the best researchers from across the world to work in Scotland.

Innovation centres represent a major step forward in university-business engagement. They bring with them the opportunity for a wide range of social and economic benefits to Scotland. We can begin to quantify those and I hope that they will be welcomed by members across the chamber.

We should all support the initiative. The ambition and vision of the innovation centre programme is remarkable. I hope that the whole chamber will wish the partners every success over the coming months, years and decades as we work together to ensure an innovative, collaborative, independent Scotland.

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

The cabinet secretary will take questions on the issues that have been raised in his statement. I intend to allow around 20 minutes for questions. However, we are tight for time, so if members are not succinct that will, unfortunately, eat into other members’ ability to ask questions.

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab):** I thank the cabinet secretary for advance sight of his statement.

I welcome the investment in innovation centres and the fact that, this morning, the cabinet secretary visited a centre in Renfrewshire that will receive £4 million-worth of investment.

I praise the work of industry and our universities. It just goes to show that the Scottish Government has—right now—significant powers to help to improve education and the economy, and to show what can be done when the Government works closely with industry and our universities.

The cabinet secretary acknowledged that he is not announcing any additional money for innovation centres today, despite his press release this morning suggesting the opposite. We have known about the investment figure of £124 million over six years for many months.

The cabinet secretary said:

“We are disproportionately excellent at what we do”

in relation to university research and funding. He is absolutely right. Does he accept the fact that in 2012-13 Scottish universities received £257 million, or 13.1 per cent, of UK research funding, which is significantly more than our 8 per cent share of UK gross domestic product or our share as 8.4 per cent of the UK population? That is not to mention the 13 per cent of the £1.1 billion funding that our institutions received from UK charities which, again, is an above-average figure.

The cabinet secretary also mentioned attracting international investment. Does he not accept that



we benefit from having 270 UK embassies across the world helping to sell our universities and industry? How many embassies would an independent Scotland have?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Bibby, you are over time.

**Neil Bibby:** Finally, does the cabinet secretary not also accept that, as much as he tries to reassure industry and universities, the real threat to research and development funding in Scotland is his plan to separate from the rest of the United Kingdom?

**Michael Russell:** There was little that was surprising in those questions, but I am grateful that Neil Bibby welcomed the investment and the excellent work that is being done across the country.

I pay tribute to the work of academics for yes, which has very successfully—*[Interruption.]* I am sorry to hear Labour members jeering. It does not become them, I have to say. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Michael Russell:** I would like to pay tribute to the work of academics for yes, which has managed to illustrate very strongly that, far from being—*[Interruption.]* Presiding Officer, I am sorry, but—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Cabinet secretary, if anyone jeers in Parliament, I will deal with it. Please continue and answer the question.

**Michael Russell:** Thank you very much.

I hope that the work of academics for yes will be taken on board by those who are making so much noise, because the group has clearly illustrated and proved that academics who have real ambition know that independence will work for them and will allow them to go out into the world and sell their excellence. The decisions on what is funded in research are based on what is excellent; funding is not a charitable action by research councils or anyone else. We have the best in the world; that will not diminish the day after independence.

The power of independence will allow universities to be sold throughout the world as Scottish universities. Very often their light is hidden under a UK bushel, and I have to say that some of the embassies that I have worked with have not done the selling effectively. I am delighted at the prospect of our academics going out into the world and doing what they do well. I simply urge Mr Bibby to be as ambitious and confident as our Scottish universities are.

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I long for the day when we can do what we do

well: debate the issues that are important to the people in Scotland, instead of independence.

That said, Scottish Conservatives thank the Scottish Government for notice of the statement, which was issued to the media at 06:00 this morning.

We welcome that £14 million of the £124 million that has already been announced will be used as capital investment for Scotland's innovation centres to improve collaboration and innovation between industry, universities and our key economic centres. It is a mark of the success of devolved decision making in Scotland within the United Kingdom, and the money will be very welcome in finding new treatments for disease, new approaches to sustainable food and more energy-efficient homes.

However, given that further education was not mentioned either in this morning's Government press release or in the statement that we have just heard, will people in further education be given access to such opportunities equal to our universities?

**Michael Russell:** Mary Scanlon asks a good question, but I must reassure her that the statement is not just about the £14 million, which I think has been well accepted, but about the £1.5 billion by which this programme of innovation centres is expected to boost the Scottish economy. The member should think big, not small; the £14 million frees up further potential and the £1.5 billion is the potential that is being freed up.

Mary Scanlon's question about further education is very apposite on the very day on which we complete the reform programme that we started three years ago. After my visit to Inchinnan, I went to the further education strategic forum in Livingston, where I talked to many people about the opportunities and the excitement in the sector, now that it has been reformed and is focused on delivery. Indeed, the question that Ms Scanlon has asked is one that I discussed with the chairman of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council over the course of the morning.

There will, of course, be many opportunities for people in education, but I encourage Mary Scanlon to think about education as a joined-up, not divided, process. Further and higher education are now very close together—indeed, they are sometimes indistinguishable—and it is important that all members in the chamber catch up with that.

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** I welcome the cabinet secretary's statement and its ambition and vision for Scotland's future. Is he able to confirm that the innovation centres represent a massive step forward by bringing the academic and business worlds together, and by providing for

collaboration and innovation across both sectors? Furthermore, does he agree that the strength of Scotland's higher education sector is one of the reasons why Scotland can approach independence with full confidence?

**Michael Russell:** As ever, George Adam is absolutely right. The higher education sector is world-beating—we have the best higher education sector in the world. However, we have heard voices from Labour in particular that want to run that down, diminish it and underresource it. We hear it all the time, and Labour members cannot get away from that fact. *[Interruption.]* What we need to do is to continue to build and develop that sector—*[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, Mr Bibby.

**Neil Bibby:** He just makes it up.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Bibby! Order, please!

**Michael Russell:** We need to build that sector and the wider education sector to ensure that we get literally the best of both educational worlds.

**Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I think that the cabinet secretary would agree with me that research underpins innovation and our economy. Sir Philip Cohen is the world-leading researcher who set up the life sciences industry in Dundee, which accounts for 18 per cent of our local economy. What is the cabinet secretary's reaction to the statement in the published letter that Sir Philip Cohen signed that the creation of a post-independence common research area was

"an undertaking fraught with difficulty and one that is unlikely to come to fruition"?

**Michael Russell:** Sir Philip Cohen has undertaken many things in his lifetime that have been fraught with difficulty, and has succeeded admirably, so I urge him to continue with his confidence and his ambition.

I would put into the balance alongside that the statement that Sir Tom Devine made at the weekend—*[Interruption.]* It is unusual for anyone to laugh at Sir Tom Devine; I find Jenny Marra's attitude very strange. Sir Tom Devine is probably the leading historian in Scotland, and he is much feted by the Labour Party, including by Gordon Brown. He has come to the conclusion that independence is the right thing for Scotland, as has—because Ms Marra wishes to enter other worlds—Michael Atiyah, who is probably the leading mathematician in the world today.

Many academics welcome the opportunities that independence will bring and really want to make it work. I urge Jenny Marra to get out there and work with people of ambition to ensure that even those

who have some doubts are encouraged to deliver for Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** If questions and answers are more succinct, I might be able to call everyone who wishes to ask a question; if that is not the case, I definitely will not be able to do so.

**Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** I warmly welcome the Scottish Government's support for the LifeKIC bid, which the University of Edinburgh is leading and in which the digital health institute is a key partner. Does the cabinet secretary agree that, if successful, that bid offers considerable economic and social benefits to Scotland?

**Michael Russell:** I do. Dr McLeod has some experience of the university sector, and I know that she is familiar with the work that goes into such bids. I am certainly of the view that the more we encourage such ambition from our universities across Scotland, the greater the success that we will have.

In Dumfries, for which the member is a regional representative, considerable work is being done on ageing and end-of-life care. The further development of excellence in health and ageing in Edinburgh will help the work that is being done in Dumfries, so I think that there is a tremendous opportunity to join up work across Scotland.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** The assertions about independence aside, I very much agree with the content of the cabinet secretary's statement, particularly his point that Scotland is disproportionately excellent in this area thanks to collaboration. He will have seen the Wellcome Trust's observation that

"Differences in the regulations and governance systems that introduce additional burdens, or that are perceived to be burdensome, can restrict international collaborations and make countries less competitive."

Does he agree with the Wellcome Trust? If so, why is he determined to create borders in an area that gets its strength from being borderless?

**Michael Russell:** The reality is that research knows no borders and works across borders, so that is not a problem for the Wellcome Trust.

The Wellcome Trust and other trusts have been scrupulous in raising issues but not coming down on either side in the debate. I have met a range of charities that support research and all of them, without exception, have said, "Look, come and talk to us after 19 September." They will make things work, because they know about the excellence of Scottish research. The problem for the people who raise such barriers—such as, I am afraid to say, Liam McArthur—is that they seem to lack confidence in the excellence of Scottish research. I have no such lack of confidence.

**Stuart McMillan (West Scotland) (SNP):** In his statement, the cabinet secretary spoke about the opportunities of independence, as well as the economic and societal benefits. He will be aware that, in evidence to the Education and Culture Committee, the chief executive of the Economic and Social Research Council made it clear that, subject to discussions on the details after a yes vote, the ESRC would support a single research area for Scotland and the rest of the UK. Does the cabinet secretary agree that that blows a hole in the no campaign's scare stories on research funding?

**Michael Russell:** There are many things that blow a hole in the case that is put by the no campaign, because it has no merit whatsoever. Another thing that blows a hole in that case is the reality of research collaboration across Europe, including the way in which research councils are working with other countries and countries are opening their research funds to other countries for true collaboration.

We are in a global, connected world of research. Scotland is in an enormously strong position, and I think that we should think big and be ambitious rather than try and hide away, as the no campaign would force us to do.

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** As the cabinet secretary will be aware—Mary Scanlon has already made reference to this—colleges would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with the universities and industry on the skills agenda. The cabinet secretary said that the potential existed to do that, but is there scope for a more formal exercise to formalise the relationship between universities and colleges? Will funding be made available to make that happen, especially in light of the recommendations of the Wood commission?

**Michael Russell:** It is already happening. I am very happy to introduce the member to places where that is real—it is not theoretical. For example, five courses are now being offered by the University of Stirling and Forth Valley College for which students matriculate jointly. There are no barriers there.

Two weeks ago, I met some students from those courses in my office, having visited the University of Stirling to see what they were doing. All over the place, the barriers between further and higher education are breaking down. Further education now delivers between 20 and 25 per cent of our higher education in Scotland. There is a huge range of opportunities.

We must go with the flow on that and encourage more of it. We should also encourage a great deal more online learning, because online learning is undoubtedly where the future lies, even for

institutions in Scotland that teach conventionally. A huge number of exciting things are happening. I am really glad that the member is engaged with that, and I urge her to persuade her front-bench colleagues to stop looking backwards and to start looking forwards at education.

**Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP):** I very much welcome the announcement, and I was delighted that the cabinet secretary visited the stratified medicine Scotland innovation centre in Inchinnan in the west of Scotland. Will the cabinet secretary outline the potential economic impact of that particular innovation centre?

**Michael Russell:** The centre offers a range of opportunities and projects a range of positive outcomes. Anna Dominiczak, who is the head of the department of medical, veterinary and life sciences at the University of Glasgow, was present this morning, along with the people running the centre, including Mark Beggs, who is its chief executive officer. We went through their business plan, which projects the creation of an estimated 300 to 400 jobs. The additional gross value added is estimated at £68 million.

Much more excitingly than the figures, though, the people running the centre also went through the difference that its work will make to individual lives. They are doing tremendously exciting work on oncology and on issues such as arthritis, which we discussed in some detail this morning. It shows that it is possible to deliver the right drug, at the right time, to the right person, in a way that makes a huge difference to the individual patient and to the health service. Such work will attract many, many people throughout the world to come and see what is happening here and to emulate it. In every sense, the figures are good; the potential is even greater.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** If members are brief, I might be able to call everyone.

**Iain Gray (East Lothian) (Lab):** The innovation centres are undoubtedly a welcome initiative, but they are very reminiscent of and identical in purpose to the intermediary technology institutes, which were launched back in 2002 with almost four times the budget, even then. When the current Government inherited the ITIs, it first slashed their budgets and then killed them off a couple of years later. Why does the cabinet secretary think that he can make the idea work a second time round with a much smaller investment, when the Government failed so badly before?

**Michael Russell:** I wish that the member had been with me this morning in Inchinnan, where we saw enthusiasm, commitment and ideas. Even Iain Gray's dour approach would not have depressed the centre's staff. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Michael Russell:** Iain Gray is the main exponent of a view that everything was wonderful under the previous Administrations and it has all gone to pot. Fortunately, that is not what the people of Scotland think. They think the reverse of that. They look at what was happening then and realise how bad it was.

**Jenny Marra:** Was that an answer?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** The announcement today is warmly welcomed. The innovation centres are a testimony to the excellence of the Scottish universities. However, they are interested to know how much extra money would be available for academic research under the subscription form of academic funding if Scotland was to be independent, as opposed to what they get with the United Kingdom.

**Michael Russell:** They do not get it with the United Kingdom—that is quite an important issue. They get money from the Scottish Government and from the research councils, which is taxpayer funded by the Government as well—8.8 per cent of that money comes from us. The reality is that they would not only continue to have access to that but they would have a wider world to play in. They would be able to develop very positively their projection in that world. The potential is great.

It is wrong to see the research sector as simply beneficiaries of some UK largesse. Of course, Professor Bryan MacGregor of academics for yes points out that the real danger is that—as with health—the cuts that are well known south of the border, which are eating into research funding and science and technology south of the border, will eventually have their effect in Scotland.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I call Colin Beattie. Please be brief.

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** Can the cabinet secretary assure us today that the Scottish Government's commitment to higher education will continue after a yes vote?

**Michael Russell:** Yes, of course.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** That concludes questions on the statement.

## Increasing Opportunities for Women

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

The next item of business is a debate on motion S4M-10829, in the name of Angela Constance, on increasing opportunities for women.

15:10

**The Cabinet Secretary for Training, Youth and Women's Employment (Angela Constance):** This Government's ambition—to secure sustainable economic growth—has been consistent, and the current strength of our economy and labour market reflects the strength of our commitment to that ambition. Women are key to the strength and resilience of Scotland's economy and they have made a huge contribution to the recovery that we are seeing.

Women work in every sector of Scottish industry, but too often they do so on an unequal basis and, as reports from respected organisations such as the Fawcett Society show, they are not feeling the same financial benefits of the recovery. I and this Government are determined that women play the fullest possible role at all levels of our economy and, as they do so, I want to ensure that their valuable contribution is adequately rewarded.

Well-rewarded and sustained employment can be the best route out of poverty and the best way to tackle inequality. On Monday, I published "Unlocking Scotland's Full Potential: boosting skills, wages, equality and growth"—a clear statement on the great value that we place on sharing our economic growth equally. Through equality of opportunity, we can create at all levels and in all areas of our economy a more diverse workforce that maximises our skills, improves the productivity of our businesses and grows our economy at an even faster rate.

We can deliver those ambitions because Scotland has great strengths and strong foundations from which to achieve progress. There are 1.25 million women employed in Scotland, which is the highest number since comparable records began, and the female inactivity rate is lower in Scotland than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. More young women than men stay on at school and are in higher and further education, and Scotland has the highest percentage in the UK of females with national vocational qualifications of at least level 3.

It is unacceptable that those strengths do not combine to create higher earnings for women in Scotland. Our gender pay gap remains unacceptably high at 7.6 per cent, and women earn 17 per cent less than men when we take

hourly median earnings for full and part-time work together. Women's average earnings are lower, with men typically earning £90 a week more than women in full-time work.

The reasons for that are many, but, in short, too many women continue to face occupational segregation, greater job insecurity, higher levels of underemployment and pay inequality. That is not the type of labour market that can deliver the more equitable shares of economic growth, prosperity and opportunity that I believe Scotland must have.

The strategic group on women and work, which I chair, has, while engaging widely across the public and private sectors, played an important role in supporting our efforts to address those challenges, and our focus will be helped in the autumn when the Council of Economic Advisers publishes its report on maximising the economic potential of women in Scotland.

However, the reality is that this Government, with limited access to macroeconomic tools and legislative powers, is constrained in its ability to fully address the challenges. Instead of being able to share the benefits of growth, maximise our talents and unlock our potential, we have a position in Scotland today in which too many households struggle to meet their bills as wages are eroded and the cost of living increases. Around half of working-age adults and more than half of children in poverty live in working households and, despite the UK Government's stated commitment to support families, women are disproportionately affected by its welfare reforms through changes to child benefit, working tax credit and lone parent benefit conditionality, and that disparity will continue as universal credit is introduced. I believe that those inequalities create an inarguable case for Scotland becoming an independent country. Only independence can address those issues and create a Scotland that provides the opportunities to meet women's ambitions.

Too many women work in low-paid jobs, so the minimum wage impacts disproportionately on them. We understand and know the difficulties that that can create, and I believe that women deserve better. Therefore, with independence, the minimum wage will rise at least in line with inflation every year. If that had happened over the past five years, the lowest paid would have been £600 a year better off. With responsibility for equalities legislation, we would address the scandalous inequalities in pay that persist despite the current system and 44 years of equal pay legislation.

Independence will allow us to protect women from the worst effects of welfare reform. We will develop a welfare system that is fair, personal and simple and that provides women with the same incentives to work as men. Current plans for

universal credit mean that a higher level of partners' incomes will be taken into account as income when calculating the award. In "Scotland's Future—Your Guide to an Independent Scotland" we have committed to equalising the earnings disregard between first and second earners—who are more often women—under universal credit. It is estimated that doing so would benefit as many as 70,000 people by as much as £1,200 a year. Of course, the Government is committed to scrapping universal credit under independence.

I want women to contribute fully to the success of Scotland's businesses and its public and third sectors and to the continued strengthening of the Scottish economy, and I want that contribution to benefit women and their families equally. A lack of affordable, flexible childcare can be a significant barrier to many women accessing opportunities in employment, education or training. We are therefore investing more than £0.25 billion in the next two years to expand the provision for three and four-year-olds and we will also extend that support to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged two-year-olds.

The commission for developing Scotland's young workforce rightly sets out an ambitious agenda to improve access to employment for young people. Together with local government, we are working to implement the report's recommendations. We have already made £4.5 million of funding available, which includes support that will tackle gender segregation in training and employment programmes. In the autumn, I will set out more detailed plans for how we will work with schools, colleges, training providers and employers to ensure that existing stereotypes are challenged and barriers are removed.

Improving participation is one half of the challenge that we face in maximising Scotland's productivity; as important is creating an environment in which all of those in work, including women, can thrive and prosper more equitably than they have been able to do so far. Last week, I welcomed the recommendations of the "Working Together Review" of progressive workplace policies. The review suggests how we can, through a partnership approach, address labour market challenges and build on existing good practice in our industrial relations. We will work with businesses and trade unions in framing our joint response to that review. Together with the commission on developing Scotland's young workforce, that will provide Scotland with the opportunity to bring the right skills into the right jobs and to transform people's lives and our workplaces through more equal access to work and fairer treatment in work.

I will update the Parliament on progress in two important areas. The "Working Together Review"

recognised the value of a fair work commission, as envisaged in “Scotland’s Future”, as a means to support sustainable employment that pays fairly. Forty-four years on from the introduction of the Equal Pay Act 1970, it is clear that the current constitutional arrangements are not delivering for women in Scotland. I want early action so, with independence, the fair work commission will as its first priority begin to work collaboratively with unions, businesses and others to progress a review of the costs and benefits of mandatory equal pay audits.

We want women to be better represented at the highest levels of public authorities. On 30 April 2014, we launched the consultation “Women on Board—Quality through Diversity” to determine how a minimum quota of 40 per cent female representation could be introduced. The consultation closed on 4 July, and we received a range of views on how to address the gender imbalance on our boards, which has helped to focus our thinking on how best to address the barriers that women face.

Our commitment in that area makes it clear that this is not an issue on which we are prepared to wait any longer. Yesterday, Shona Robison wrote to the United Kingdom Government to request the transfer of legal competence in the equality field to the Scottish Parliament. We have made it clear that we believe that those powers should rest in Scotland as quickly as possible and in advance of full independence.

We will establish a short-life working group to develop a plan for the implementation of quotas, harnessing political support together with expertise around the appointments process to deliver truly gender-diverse boards with the highest calibre of men and women.

On 18 September, we have the opportunity to create an independent Scotland: a Scotland that is unconstrained in its ambition; a Scotland that will maximise opportunities for everyone in the economy, including women; and a Scotland that fully unlocks our potential.

The plans that I have outlined demonstrate that following a vote for independence we will use those powers to deliver a fairer and more equal society.

I move,

That the Parliament welcomes the growth in women’s employment to its highest ever level of 1,250,000 and the significant reduction in female economic inactivity; believes that Scotland must have even higher ambitions to further increase the opportunities for women to enter the workforce; further believes that the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce and the Working Together Review present important contributions to increasing opportunities for women; recognises however that significant powers to improve opportunities are

currently reserved, and agrees that, with independence, these powers will give Scotland the opportunity to remove barriers to women’s ambitions and increase female economic activity, employment and living standards.

15:21

**Jenny Marra (North East Scotland) (Lab):** I welcome the debate. I am clear, as are the other Labour members, that increasing opportunities for women is best achieved in this Scottish Parliament within the United Kingdom. The cabinet secretary talked about the Equal Pay Act 1970. I will take the opportunity to talk a bit about the Labour minister Barbara Castle and her role in fighting for the rights of women across the UK. She was the crusader for women’s rights and opportunities in the 1960s who broke the glass ceiling not just for women in politics but for women in society more widely. She fought for the cause of equal rights for men and women.

A crusade was led by women across the UK—including many unrecognised working-class women—that resulted in the equal pay act, which was introduced by Castle. The act began life not in the House of Commons, not in a Parliament building, but in an industrial dispute in Dagenham in Essex. Most of us know the story of the female car seat machinists at the Ford plant in Dagenham who took their industrial action to Downing Street to get their work recognised as skilled and equal to the work of their male counterparts. That created the impetus that led to the equal pay legal obligation that the cabinet secretary talked about—the obligation to pay both men and women the same.

However, those women in Essex were not solely concerned about their own rights in that Ford factory. They were motivated by the idea of securing rights for women across Britain, just as the suffragettes had been years before them. Across Britain—across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland—they led that progressive movement for equal pay. Those progressive movements and the trade union movement have always joined hands and forces with their brothers and sisters in the towns and cities of Scotland and across England, Wales and Northern Ireland because their aim has always been to tear down barriers and not to erect borders.

The United Kingdom is an economic union with a deeply integrated economy in which goods and services are traded, and being part of the large and diverse UK economy provides strength and stability to Scotland’s finances, as we know from all the economic analysis over the past year. It also offers Scotland protection from unexpected economic and financial shocks, which we have seen in our own lifetimes, for both men and women.

The rest of the UK is Scotland's biggest trading partner and at the core of the argument for economic union is the opportunity and security that it provides to women, families and businesses across this country. I do not believe that it is in Scotland's interests for the economic union to be torn apart. In the long term, an independent Scotland could not remain part of an integrated UK economy. The economic union means that we share a currency and can pool our taxes and spending in fiscal union, which ultimately benefits women.

That fiscal integration in turn necessitates and sustains a sense of social solidarity and provides security to Scotland's women through the sharing of risks, rewards and resources on the basis of need rather than on the basis of nationality, which the Scottish National Party posits.

It is convenient but not honest for the SNP to ignore the fact that it was a UK Labour Government, working with a Labour-led Administration in this Parliament, that made substantial inroads into expanding opportunities for women, by making work pay through the minimum wage, which SNP members were not present to vote for, and by instigating tax credits.

**Angela Constance:** Given that Ms Marra is a great believer in the power of Westminster to change our lives for the better, will she tell me why, if Westminster is such a success, the Equal Pay Act 1970—despite being as old as I am; that is how old it is—is still to be fully implemented?

**Jenny Marra:** The act was an ambitious piece of legislation, which has made great inroads in equalising pay between men and women. It has a way to go, but the cabinet secretary failed to explain exactly how she would immediately create equal pay in Scotland. I would be happy to take another intervention if she would like to tell me her yearly target for that, how quickly that would be achieved and how she would achieve it.

**Angela Constance:** If Ms Marra had listened to my speech, she would know that the first priority of a fair work commission will be implementing mandatory equal pay audits so that we can identify and address the problem as speedily as possible and not wait until I am in my dotage or my 80s.

**Jenny Marra:** I am surprised, because I listened carefully to the cabinet secretary and because she failed to do exactly what she has described in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill—she voted down amendments on exactly that issue. She has a commitment for the future, but why she did not implement it four weeks ago when she had the chance and the power to do so really confuses me.

It was Labour that rescued the apprenticeship system and created more than 250,000 places a

year. We will expand technician-level apprenticeships to ensure that Britain has the skills that it needs for the future.

Labour believes that, to improve opportunities for women, it is essential to have a world-class further education sector to provide the training and skills that are essential to meet the economy's long-term needs. The loss of 140,000 college places since the cabinet secretary's Government took power in 2007 completely undermines the achievement of that objective.

Since 2007-08, the SNP has slashed 84,099 college places for young women, while 56,000 fewer men are in college. Opportunities for women have been lost as college places for women who are returning to work have completely disappeared under the SNP.

**Angela Constance:** I challenge Ms Marra on that point. The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council has decided not to fund very short-term courses, but all courses that involve employability or progression into work remain in our college system. I remind her that the majority of college students—particularly full-time students who are studying for recognised qualifications—are women.

**Jenny Marra:** I have no idea how the cabinet secretary can contend that short-term courses have no economic impact and do not help people to get back to work. She does not want to face up to the reality that 80,000 fewer women have attended college since her Government took power.

The Wood commission recommended that we need to establish parity of esteem between the further and higher education sectors to secure the skills base that Scotland needs. The Scottish Government has accepted and endorsed the commission's recommendations. How does that square with the SNP cutting further education budgets and the disproportionate impact of that on women?

Angela Constance has committed to reducing youth unemployment—[*Interruption.*] I would be happy to give way if the Minister for Children and Young People wants to intervene. Angela Constance has committed to reducing youth unemployment by 40 per cent on the back of the Wood commission recommendations. What commitment can she give to ensuring that women will make up at least half of that target? Perhaps she will address that in closing.

I am still confused—I raised this with her last week—by the cabinet secretary's commitment to reducing youth unemployment by 40 per cent when John Swinney has announced that there will be full employment in an independent Scotland

and seems to have found jobs for 100 per cent of young people.

**Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP):** Will the member take an intervention?

**Jenny Marra:** No—I am sorry; I do not have much time left.

Why is the cabinet secretary's target of a 40 per cent reduction far less ambitious than John Swinney's promise of 100 per cent employment? Those figures are not even close. Have they discussed their employment strategy or their targets? Have they even chatted about that?

I welcome the recent publication of the "Working Together Review", its agenda for progressive workplace policies and the role of the STUC in taking that agenda forward. However, I want to know how much of that agenda will be taken forward in the event of a no vote, because many of the recommendations in the document can be implemented now. I urge the Scottish Government to give us details of that in the autumn.

I move amendment S4M-10829.3, to leave out from "recognises" to end and insert:

"recognises that the UK is a deeply integrated economy, which is underpinned by sterling, and that this provides the basis for the economic opportunities for women in Scotland; believes that a world-class further education sector is key to future Scottish productivity growth and that the decline of 140,000 college places since 2007, a reduction that has disproportionately impacted on women, is incompatible with this objective; considers the proposals by the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce to reduce youth unemployment by 40% to be insufficiently ambitious, and believes that the Scottish Government must do much more to encourage women into apprenticeships presently dominated by males, such as in construction and IT."

15:30

**Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** I thank the cabinet secretary for the opportunity to debate increasing opportunities for women, which has been a constant theme in this Parliament since 1999.

The briefing from Engender states:

"In the sectors of Construction and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, the percentage of women is only 17%, compared to 73% of women in Public Administration, Education and Health."

Although the Construction Industry Training Board has outlined some of the work that is currently in hand to address those issues, we can all agree that there is much more to do.

On a consensual note, we welcome recommendations 28, 29 and 30 in the final Wood commission report, which encourage more gender balance across occupations and an action plan to address gender disparities within college

education and modern apprenticeships. Those are sound policies, but it is the implementation that counts.

Engender's briefing paper states that Scotland's employability strategy recognises that gender is a key factor in shaping barriers to employment, but it goes on to say that

"to date, such an amalgamated policy tool has not been delivered".

It also states that the women's employment summit that was held in 2012 reflected the increased political will to engage with women and work but that substantial shifts in policy resulting from the summit remain to be identified.

On childcare, I can do no better than quote from the Scottish Parliament information centre's briefing, which confirms that the Scottish Government's figure of increased childcare bringing 104,000 women back into work is—to be polite—inaccurate. Its analysis concludes that, rather than 104,000 women coming back into work, there are 64,000 women in that group who are economically inactive, of whom 14,000 would like to work. The SPICe briefing confirms that the Scottish Government figures have been exaggerated by 90,000.

Childcare is a devolved issue. An increase in childcare entitlement is already happening, and there is nothing to prevent further increases from being implemented by this Parliament.

**Angela Constance:** Would Mary Scanlon accept that around 50,000 babies are born every year in Scotland, which means that, every year, women are lost from the labour market? We do not have to be economists to know that one of the biggest barriers to women getting into work is access to childcare. Will she therefore accept that the transformational impact of childcare policy over a period of time is a point that is worth recognising?

**Mary Scanlon:** I am familiar with the number of children who are born. The point that is worth recognising is that the Scottish Government's figures have not been modelled and the SPICe briefing figures have. SPICe has done a proper economic analysis, and I rest my case on those figures.

The figures that were released earlier this month on female participation in the Scottish and United Kingdom markets are very encouraging, with the unemployment rate down to 6.4 per cent for both and the employment rate up for both, as well as a reduction in the number of economically inactive women. All the indicators are moving in the right direction but, as I said earlier, there is still more to do.



To me, the issue is not just about getting women into work; it is about giving women the full career training and educational opportunities to make sure that their time at work pays and that career opportunities are open to them. I agree with the cabinet secretary's point that it is about ensuring that work is well rewarded.

The Scottish Government's record on women is well documented in the Colleges Scotland briefing paper for the debate. It states that, since the SNP came to power in 2007, there has been a small increase of 4,500 women in full-time courses in further education, which is welcome. That is against a background of a fall of 100,544 women in part-time courses. In total, there are 96,000 fewer women in further education than when the nationalists came to power.

The part-time courses are the type of course that I did as a single mum many years ago. My course gave me the qualifications to go to the University of Dundee and spend 20 years lecturing on economics in further and higher education, and here I am. I ask the Parliament and the Government ministers not to dismiss part-time courses. They are a way out of poverty and into a career for many women in Scotland, but that is now denied as a result of nationalist policy.

**Angela Constance:** Will Mary Scanlon give way on that point?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The member is in her final minute.

**Mary Scanlon:** I have 40 seconds left.

The UK Children and Families Act 2014 allows more flexible working, and the International Monetary Fund has stated that the United Kingdom will be the fastest-growing economy in the G7. Taxpayers in Scotland, including women, also benefit from the rise in the personal allowance, and public spending in Scotland is £1,600 per head higher than in England.

It is no wonder that the SNP is having problems persuading women to vote yes. Women know the differences between promises and action.

We will support the Labour and Lib Dem amendments.

I move amendment S4M-10829.2, to leave out from "and the Working Together Review" to end and insert:

"is an important contribution to increasing opportunities for women; acknowledges that women's employment has increased to its highest ever level as a result of the UK Government's economic and fiscal policy; notes that Scotland's economy is much stronger as part of the UK and that the IMF estimates that the UK will have the highest GDP growth out of the G7 this year, and considers that this progress should not be undermined by the potential risks and uncertainty over Scottish independence, especially the currency."

15:36

**Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD):** In seeking to appeal to women voters, the nationalists continue to tout uncostered plans and peddle myths on the currency, childcare and most recently the national health service—anything to distract from their record of failing women across Scotland.

The Scottish Government claims that it wants the powers to ensure that 40 per cent of public board members are women, but that does not stand up favourably to scrutiny. The Government had the chance to show that it meant business from the outset, but the representation of women among its nominations to the next body that was appointed after that announcement—the fiscal commission—amounted to only 33 per cent.

Two years ago, I supported Jenny Marra's amendment to the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill that would have required representation on national police and fire authorities to be at least 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men. The cabinet secretary's colleague the Cabinet Secretary for Justice dismissed the proposal, and SNP colleagues on the Justice Committee voted it down. Kenny MacAskill argued that it was not necessary to be prescriptive about that in the bill and that it was micromanaging.

I also recollect the Scottish Government defeating calls to establish a 40 per cent gender quota throughout Scotland's public bodies in a debate in the Parliament on 14 June 2012 that, again, Jenny Marra drove forward.

**Angela Constance:** Will Ms McInnes lend her support to the letter that Shona Robison sent to the UK Government yesterday calling for a section 30 order under the Scotland Act 1998 giving competence to the Parliament in equalities?

**Alison McInnes:** I will consider that.

Board membership should be broadly representative of our society, and I am frustrated by the lack of progress towards increasing women's representation in public life in Scotland. As I have said before, the pace of change here is glacial. Although the SNP's apparent conversion to the cause is welcome, its bona fides must be questioned given its record of inaction.

Elsewhere, as Mary Scanlon said, Scottish Government cuts to college places have greatly restricted opportunities to learn. Colleges Scotland tells us that the number of women studying part time has halved, plunging from 200,000 in 2007 to less than 100,000 today. Thousands of women who find it impossible to study full time have missed out. They are parents, carers and those with work or financial commitments. What thought

did SNP back benchers give to the ambitions of women when they voted through those budget cuts?

Strong and sustainable growth relies on our getting the best out of everyone: women and men. That is why it is so disappointing that a wealth of female talent is not retained or properly recognised, but diverted elsewhere or overlooked.

Nearly three quarters of women with science, technology, engineering and mathematics qualifications do not work in the STEM industries, but there is little evidence that the Scottish Government is providing leadership on driving the issue forward, despite the fact that the Royal Society of Edinburgh's report on the issue is now two years old.

Regrettably, the provision of free childcare has become another pawn in the Government's attempt to break up the UK. Liberal Democrats campaigned for 18 months for the extension of free childcare provision, as we know that it is one of the best ways to address the disadvantages that our most vulnerable children face and to enable more parents to remain in or return to work.

Again and again, ministers told us that they could not help more than 1 per cent of two-year-olds without additional powers. However, thanks to the persistence of my colleagues Willie Rennie and Liam McArthur, 8,400 extra two-year-olds from poorer backgrounds are today toddling through the doors of nurseries. That is 15 per cent, not 1 per cent, and next year it will be 27 per cent.

**The Minister for Children and Young People (Aileen Campbell):** Will the member give way?

**Alison McInnes:** No.

Action from Liberal Democrats in the UK Government to boost the tax-free allowance means that 160,000 families in Scotland will receive additional help with childcare costs from next year. However, it is essential that our children do not fall behind those south of the border, where 40 per cent of two-year-olds will benefit from free childcare thanks to the Liberal Democrats. The Scottish Government has opted to hold back—

**Angela Constance:** Will the member give way on that point?

**Alison McInnes:** I would like to make some progress.

The Scottish Government, rather than using the powers that it already has to help more families, is withholding further childcare as a bargaining chip for voters. It has absolutely failed to use all the powers at its disposal to break down social and economic barriers.

Of course, opportunities for women are as intrinsically linked to the success of our economy as they are to confronting cultural or social challenges. As my amendment notes, the

“lack of certainty around the Scottish Government's plan B on currency puts women's jobs and future aspirations on the line.”

The currency choice determines our mortgage rates, levels of trade with other countries and how much we can tax and spend—in sum, it determines the stability of the entire financial system.

Yesterday, the First Minister's chief currency adviser said that sterlingisation might only last six months. Every option that the nationalists put on the table is second best to what we have now.

**Chic Brodie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** The member is in her last minute.

**Alison McInnes:** Every option is second best to the stability that we are afforded by being part of the UK, and to being backed by one of the oldest and most successful currencies in the world.

Analysis has shown that 270,000 jobs in Scotland—approximately 10 per cent—are linked to the UK's single integrated market. The jobs of more than 100,000 women, in sectors from mining to finance, are intrinsically connected to trade with the rest of the UK. For goodness' sake, why would we erect an international border between Scotland and our largest trading partner, with whom our economy is so heavily integrated?

Those are the issues that will have the greatest influence in determining the opportunities for women in Scotland. As part of the United Kingdom, we can have the best of both worlds: significant decision-making powers here in this Parliament, together with the strength, stability and security that being part of the UK brings.

That is the compelling, positive case for saying no.

I move amendment S4M-10829.1, to leave out from “recognises” to end and insert:

“notes the new research that shows that 270,000 Scottish jobs are dependent on trade with the rest of the UK and that nearly 100,000 of these are held by women; believes that key issues such as the economy and the currency will determine the opportunities available to women in Scotland in the future; further believes that lack of certainty around the Scottish Government's plan B on currency puts women's jobs and future aspirations on the line; expresses disappointment at the Scottish Government's continued failure to stack up its costings for its plan to increase female participation through childcare, even after the First Minister's *New Statesman* lecture in March 2014, in which he asserted, without evidence, that the policy paid for itself; regrets the lack of explanation as

to why the Scottish Government continues to defy the will of SNP members and ministers in the Parliament that was expressed in motion S4M-05521 on 31 January 2013, which said that child benefit should be increased for people earning more than £60,000; regrets that the Scottish Government decided to follow up its professed policy that 40% of members of public boards would, in future, be women by making nominations to the next body, the Fiscal Commission, of just 33% women; believes that overcoming gender stereotypes across the board, but particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths, is in everyone's interest and will help Scotland thrive; further believes that the loss of highly trained women from the workforce is not only a loss of opportunity to individuals but also represents a major quantifiable loss to the economy and society; notes the report of The Royal Society of Edinburgh that concluded that the doubling of women's high-level skill contribution to the economy would be worth as much as £170 million per annum to Scotland's national income; welcomes the UK Government's measures to promote equal opportunities and working practices, such as shared parental leave; further welcomes the UK Government's increase in the income tax threshold to £10,000; considers that the increase in the threshold has supported people on low and middle incomes, many of whom are women, and believes that being part of a United Kingdom with broad economic shoulders and a stable currency is the best future for Scotland and for all of the people of Scotland."

15:43

**Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP):** I support the motion and reject the amendments, which in short say that the union is everything good and that independence is everything bad.

As for Alison McInnes's amendment—which I like; well, I like Alison, not the amendment—it is a bit like "War and Peace". I never got to the end of that and I never got to the end of her amendment. I have never seen such a long one in my life.

I must start by declaring that I have had careers as a secondary teacher, a solicitor and a politician, which flows from having a privileged background. I was privileged to have enlightened parents who made it clear from the start that, although I came from a working-class family with five children living in a council house scheme, I had the same rights to opportunities as the children in the bungalows round the corner who went to Edinburgh's fee-paying schools.

I was privileged not to pay tuition fees, and because of my family's circumstances I had a grant. I was also privileged to have a grant to live away from home—although I attended the local university—because there was nowhere to study in a house with so many children. Thanks to the SNP, tuition fees have gone, as they should, although parental encouragement, as always, remains vital.

I welcome the progress that has been made over the decades in erasing the image of women's place being—to put it crudely—in the home, by the

kitchen sink. However, the erasing is not complete, and that progress is far too slow. I, too, admire Barbara Castle, but we have to look to the progress of Westminster in bringing in equalities to know glacial progress when we see it. I do not have as much time as Jenny Marra has.

That image is not fully erased, of course. The image of the young woman or, indeed, any woman—their shape, size, dress sense and so on—still plays too large a part compared with that of the male species. Even politicians do not escape. Who cares about kitten heels? I dress for me and me alone.

The educational choices have not changed much, either. When I was at school, a girl who studied maths, physics and chemistry—which I did—was a rarity. Biology and botany were the much more frequent and, indeed, acceptable choices. Things seem to me to be much the same now. Engineering was a female-free zone and, decades on, change is not substantial.

For example, I note from the Engender briefing that far and away the greater percentage of women in the workforce are in public administration, education and health, as has been said. That may reflect the talents of women in those areas, but there is more at work there. Not all responsibility can be placed on Governments either here or at Westminster or, indeed, on the education system. From the very start—from education onwards—opportunities for women take a certain path.

There is also the issue of the constraints that are put on careers opportunities beyond that educational path. Many of those constraints—although they are not the exclusive constraints—are children, lovely though they are. Although a potential employer cannot overtly ask a female applicant a question about having children in the future, I have no doubt that that is a consideration at the back of the mind of some employers that will influence whether to offer the job.

For those with children, it is changed days from when women—myself included—were expected to and did stop work until the children reached school age. Things are much better now. There are statutory obligations on employers and, of course, the significant importance of free childcare hours. The situation could be better, but it is much improved under this Government and would be much improved if we had full control of our revenue and tax system and gave women in particular, although not exclusively, freedom to have a life with time for work and family.

At the end of the day, if a person has happy and contented children who are growing into responsible adults, whether that person has opted for full-time or part-time work or full-time parenting,

that is, for me, an achievement. That is a measure that really counts and which society will benefit from in countless ways.

The pay gap and the continuing glass ceiling on which many of us—myself included—have bumped our heads are, of course, inexcusable. I have twice changed career direction because women who were already employed told me of the limitations that were imposed on them. I am not in favour of statutory gender balance because I reject anything that approaches tokenism, but I refer to the dearth of women in high places. I really understand why many members are exasperated and feel that there must be a remedy for that.

**Jenny Marra:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Christine Grahame:** I do not have time. I am sorry.

What of the older woman and the women who are full-time carers? Some 62 per cent are unpaid. They step in, often unseen and unsung, and they often do not recognise that they are indeed carers who care for love, not the lolly. That does not exempt society from supporting them financially and physically with, for example, respite breaks.

My hope is that, with the rebirth of the Scottish nation, there will be the opportunity, whatever the results of the first Scottish general election in 2016, for Scotland to spread its compassionate wings further than it can under the current constraints. If we dispossess our young women of opportunities, we may dispossess their daughters, and if we take for granted the older women who provide support for generations on either side of them—the support in caring for grandchildren, their infirm partner or their ageing parents—we as a society fail to recognise that there are many more ways to contribute to society than by bringing home a pay packet. That is also a measure of productivity.

15:49

**Jayne Baxter (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I welcome the opportunity to discuss increasing women's economic opportunities, and I support aspirations to improve the chances of women who may find themselves far away from the labour market or from access to education and training, but it will come as no surprise that I disagree with the conclusion that is drawn in the Scottish Government's motion, as I believe that many of the aims that are set out therein can be achieved under the powers that we currently have through devolution.

We already have powers over education, training, employability and economic development. The levers to tackle unemployment,

underemployment and lack of training and educational opportunities are already available to the Scottish Government. We should ensure that we are using them all, because the barriers faced by women entering the labour market are varied and complex, and the Scottish Government has recognised that fact. I may not agree that it needs independence to improve women's life chances, but I agree that we must ensure that every woman has the chance to enter the labour market or education should she so wish.

For many women it is about childcare; for others it is about being able to find a place on a college course, in their local area, that will provide them with the skills that employers are looking for. The challenges to achieving that faced by women may vary depending on whether they live in an urban area or in the countryside.

Fife Gingerbread and the Poverty Alliance have carried out work on the challenges that are faced by single mothers in rural areas and I have previously highlighted their excellent report into poverty and lone parenthood. In that report, the women who were interviewed consistently referred to the challenges of finding suitable childcare and the barriers that that presented to them accessing not just employment but college courses.

Given the attention that has been given to childcare in recent months, that is not surprising news. Indeed, many of the issues that are relevant to increasing opportunities for women were explored during the passage of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. However, it is clear to me from the feedback that I have had from parents and childcare providers across Mid Scotland and Fife that the number of hours of childcare is not the be all and end all of the debate. If those hours are not available at a time that suits them, families will not be able to access the support that is required to enable women to participate in education, training or employment. Many families are forced to either juggle their local authority provision with support from a childminder or family members or use a private nursery that may be more able to meet their hours.

Interestingly, the report "Growing Up in Scotland: Characteristics of pre-school provision and their association with child outcomes" picked up on that point. It noted that the use of private childcare providers increased with income and that

"just 7% of children from households in the lowest income group attended a private provider compared with 24% of children from households in the highest income group. These differences largely reflect the different childcare needs of couple families with both parents employed."

For those who do not have an extended family network or are not in a two-parent family, it is vital that we see an increase in provision of more flexible, wraparound childcare—whether that is

breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, provision during school holidays or extended opening hours.

We have seen the same old argument time and again from the Scottish Government: post-independence, all will be well. That ignores the fact that many of the issues that it focuses on can already be addressed by the Government under powers that it already has.

The importance of college provision in increasing opportunities for women, especially those from our most deprived communities, is inarguable. That is why it is hugely concerning that the Scottish Government's cuts to college courses have disproportionately affected women. Warm words from ministers today are all very well, but in our communities the negative consequences of the Government's choices are all too clear.

Occupational segregation in vocational training and apprenticeships has been raised by the Wood commission and in a recent report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The EHRC found evidence of men increasingly moving into traditionally female apprenticeship programmes but no evidence of an overall increase of women entering traditionally male apprenticeships. Women make up 3 per cent of engineering apprenticeships, which is a shockingly small figure that shows that the problems are systemic throughout society. Girls' attitudes to STEM subjects and society's condoning of gender-stereotyped roles for young women is a huge problem that needs challenged.

The EHRC also found that there is a significant gendered spend on apprenticeships in Scotland, with spend per male apprentice being 53 per cent higher than that for female apprentices, which is deeply concerning. The Scottish Government has the power to act on that immediately, and I urge it to do so.

We may argue about how best to improve women's participation in non-traditional areas of education and employment and I welcome innovative ideas to target that problem. However, it is clear to me—and I hope many others—that constitutional change will not tackle the structural inequality of our society, which can hugely influence the economic opportunities open to women. It is therefore disappointing that the Scottish Government chose to bring forward this debate under its usual mantle of saying that independence will solve everything.

I fully support proposals to increase opportunities for women, but I want opportunities to increase throughout Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. I do not want the imposition of artificial barriers between people in the United Kingdom.

15:54

**Chic Brodie (South Scotland) (SNP):** This is an important debate, in that it calls for greater ambition for a significant element of Scotland's workforce and foundation of Scotland's future economy and growth—that is, women. I support the motion.

I draw the Parliament's attention to the significant progress that has been made, but I make no apology for saying that there is a need for a change in culture if we are to create and exploit opportunities for women. This is not just about women; there is a need for a culture change among men.

That need is epitomised by the words of the parliamentarian who said that women need to think about what they want to do

“as they do the ironing”.

The former Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, challenged such remarks by that crusader for freedom and justice, the current Prime Minister of Australia, Oxford-educated Tony Abbott, who is of course connected to the UK Prime Minister through the business relationships of the Prime Minister's adviser. If we are in the business of securing freedom and justice and promoting fairness and gender equality, such misogyny has no place in Scotland. We will never seek advice from that source.

In many areas, women are making a greater contribution, but we can further increase that contribution only when we have full powers over welfare reform and employment law and when we can safeguard human rights in the written constitution of an independent Scotland.

I make no apology for concentrating on opportunities for women in the field of business and entrepreneurship. Sometimes we arrive at a position as a result of personal experience. In my long experience in business, I have found that women are the best managers and business facilitators, whether they work in customer service, human resources or credit control, or indeed are involved in—as a woman colleague of mine was—setting up a subsidiary in Europe. Flexibility is required in such situations, and in my experience women managers invariably outperformed their male counterparts.

Yesterday morning, I listened to a programme on Radio Scotland about opportunities for women. I heard that women must work 14 more years than men do to achieve the same aggregate income and that women in their 40s earn as much as 40 per cent less than men. The earlier retirement age does not mitigate those circumstances.

During the programme, a comparison was drawn between men's ambitions and women's

ambitions. It appears that—and perhaps this is unsurprising—men put a higher salary and better benefits as their number 1 priority, whereas women's work priorities are location, sociability and flexibility.

If we are to secure opportunities for women and secure fairness and equality, as I am sure we all want to do, we need a seismic culture change, not least in the context of the man's role in the family. My stepson has been raising our twin granddaughters in the family home while his wife carries out an important international function—they live in Singapore, happily. Flexibility, fairness and equality of opportunity are paramount.

Research by the Hunter centre for entrepreneurship shows that increasing the number of women entrepreneurs to match the number of men would generate an extra £7.6 billion for the Scottish economy. That is not a small amount.

However, when we talk about setting targets such as 40 per cent female participation on boards or an equal number of women entrepreneurs, I caution against the perception that it is the norm for alpha males to take up such roles. At this morning's meeting of the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, members reflected on the great success of Edinburgh's festivals with a panel of witnesses that was 80 per cent female. Those women were the chair of the Edinburgh's festivals forum; the director of Festivals Edinburgh; the chief executive of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society; and a senior adviser at Creative New Zealand. They deserved to be there because the festival is, as we know, a jewel in the Scottish branding crown.

The Government's role is critical in establishing a level playing field for women in entrepreneurship, in establishing the women in enterprise network and in providing financial support for the women's enterprise ambassadors and the investing women initiative. Those are stepping stones to that level playing field, as will be the outcomes of the working together review and the developing Scotland's young workforce commission.

The culture among men must also change, so that we work towards the creation and promotion of opportunities for women—and, indeed, for men—and a wider sense of value and overall remuneration, based on merit and contribution, in more flexible working environments.

16:00

**Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** Gender inequality is in-built in Scotland and throughout most of the world. There are notable

exceptions, but those countries have worked hard to create an equal society.

In Scotland, the areas where power is wielded are male dominated and, without action, that will continue, because like appoints like. People exercise the power that they wield in a way that reflects their own experience. Not deliberately but naturally we all make decisions based on our knowledge and experience. To redress the power imbalance, we need to be brave and take positive action.

We need to look at equal pay not just for the same job but for jobs requiring similar levels of skill and experience. I often compare the salaries of a police officer, which is a male-dominated career, and a nurse, which is a female-dominated career. Both careers require a public service ethos and the ability to care for and assist others, and both have in-built dangers that can be life threatening. One requires three to four years of university study and job-based training; the other requires 12 weeks of college-based training followed by 20 weeks as a probationer.

After training, the staff nurse who has studied for three or four years earns just over £21,500 whereas the probationer police officer who has not finished their training earns over £26,000 at 31 weeks. That is gender-based pay. The same thing happens more widely, as jobs that pay the minimum wage are often female-dominated occupations. We need to deal with gendered pay segregation and place equal value on the work that is carried out, regardless of the gender domination of the profession.

A child's life chances depend on its mother's education and pay. Only by lifting women out of poverty will we tackle child poverty. That comes at a cost, but so does the alternative. What is the cost of a child growing up in poverty—not only the cost to that child but the cost to wider society when that child becomes more dependent on services because its life chances have been curtailed, because its health has been damaged and because its own children are born into poverty? If we are serious about tackling child poverty, we must first tackle the mother's poverty.

Sexual exploitation is also a result of gendered poverty and inequality. We can tackle sexual exploitation by giving women access to economic levers and equal pay. We can eradicate the desperation of poverty that pushes people into such exploitation. By creating a more equal society, we can make it unacceptable for people to be bought and sold because of their gender. To do that, we must have women in positions of power, and that will not happen naturally, because like appoints like. Because of that built-in imbalance, a built-in discrimination occurs. We see that in the lack of women in positions of power. We need

positive discrimination to correct the imbalance in order that we can have equality going forward. It is difficult to take those steps because of vested interests. Most people would say that they believe in equality, but the reality is not so palatable if they are the one who is being asked to step aside to allow it to happen.

The Scottish Labour Party made proposals to have positive discrimination on public boards, but they were rejected by the Scottish Government, as Jenny Marra said. However, the Government has promised to do that if Scotland votes for separation. Surely that is an election bribe. People would have more confidence in the proposals had the Scottish Government not used its majority to vote down the proposals in the past. Today's debate could have been about implementing the proposals. The Scottish Government could have said that, regardless of the result on 18 September, it will implement the policy on those boards to which it makes the appointments, taking leadership instead of passing the buck and engaging in constitutional wrangles. The Government will not do that. Actions speak louder than words. Does the Government believe that women are so gullible?

The Government has done the same with childcare but, in that case, it did not even bother to do the research or cost the policy properly. However, if we are to create opportunities for women, we need to make it easier for them to work. We need to provide affordable accessible childcare now. A pipe-dream promise is not good enough.

We must also share caring duties between the sexes. Men should have to share the responsibility for childcare, and both partners' employers should contribute to their employees' time off for childcare responsibilities.

Women who take career breaks to bring up children often struggle to catch up with the men in the workplace who have not had to do that. Were the role shared, it would provide equality in the workplace and create a more equal society.

We need to encourage women into male-dominated—and therefore more highly paid—professions, but we also need to value the professions and the careers pursued by women. Career choices are often hugely important to our society. Those choices include caring roles, such as looking after the young, the old and the unwell. We all depend on those roles. We have all been young, we all hope to be old and we will all experience ill health. However, we do not value the roles at all.

It is sad that we are still debating opportunities for women so many decades since the impact of inequality was recognised. We will get greater

equality by changing our society, not our country. We need to tackle the difficult decisions and step up to tackle the inequalities in our society. We should do that now rather than wrangling about our constitution.

16:07

**Christina McKelvie (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP):** The women of Scotland, across the centuries, have been drivers for change. In spite of the social and economic barriers that have constantly worked against them, we have testimony of some seriously impressive heroines who have blazed a trail that we are rightly proud of.

Let us take a brief look back—further back than Christine Grahame went in her speech—at a few of our historical sisters. St Margaret of Scotland was born in exile in Hungary. She arrived, via Northumbria, in 1068, at what we now know as St Margaret's Hope near North Queensferry, and married Malcolm III. Driven by her faith, she served the orphans and the poor every day before she ate. She established the Benedictine order's monastery at Dunfermline, as well as the ferries between Queensferry and North Berwick. She was the power behind the restoration of the monastery at Iona, too.

The opportunities for women to make an impact in Scotland in the 11th century were limited. My namesake, Christina, the sister of Robert the Bruce, moved matters along a bit a few centuries later. She commanded the garrison of Kildrummy castle and successfully held out against pro-Balliol forces led by David of Strathbogie, prior to their defeat by her husband, Sir Andrew Murray, at the battle of Culblean.

There is no lack of feistiness among our Scottish ancestors. Mary Slessor came out of the slums of Dundee and became a skilled jute worker before she decided to follow in the missionary footsteps of David Livingstone. She transformed the role of women in Nigeria, especially in her work with twins, who were regarded as an evil curse, rescuing hundreds of them. She adopted every pair that she found abandoned, taking a surviving twin—a girl—as her own daughter.

Elsie Inglis was an innovative Scottish doctor and suffragist who was not to be held back by tradition. Her dissatisfaction with the standard of medical care available to women led to her becoming politically active and playing an important role in the early years of the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies.

There are dozens more Scottish women worthy of mention, but I especially want to show how far forward we have moved and how much further we can travel in an independent Scotland.

Independence is about opportunity, prosperity and a mission for a sustainable economy. The word “mission” has broadened its meaning since Mary Slessor’s time but I am certain that she would understand the mission for equality that we are now striving for.

Professor Ailsa McKay, who died a few months ago at the age of only 50, taught me a lot about making a difference and about just how tenacious we need to be to succeed in making that difference.

Ailsa’s voice was crucial to the current SNP Government’s decision to commit to hugely extending childcare in Scotland in order to encourage more women to join or rejoin the workforce. She not only changed the culture at the University of Glasgow but worked very hard at helping to draw up Scottish Government policy on equality.

Westminster seems to take an entirely different view. Labour MP Austin Mitchell thinks that women prefer to discuss family and social issues rather than the big questions such as whether we should invade Iraq, and he does not think that there should be more women in Parliament because they would be preoccupied with family and social issues. Women MPs are, he says, “more leadable”, and the feminisation of Parliament will make MPs

“more preoccupied with the local rather than the international ... and small problems rather than big ideas and issues.”

If he seriously imagines that the big-ticket issues of the economy, austerity, jobs, investment, international affairs and future prosperity are of less concern to women than men, it would be a good idea for him to attend a few of the yes meetings that I have been at. Mr Mitchell is another glaring example of how Westminster is failing Scotland. More of that is what a no vote guarantees, and any woman in this chamber who does not see that is seriously kidding herself on.

Let us look at the previous and current generations of Scottish political women. I am talking about people such as Winnie Ewing, Margo MacDonald, Nicola Sturgeon, our very own Angela Constance and Roseanna Cunningham and, indeed, the rest of us MSPs—yes, I include all of us—who are determined to improve and are committed to improving the lives of our constituents and broader Scotland itself.

Earlier this week, I held in my arms a baby girl who was born in my constituency. Her name is Blair Archibald, and having been born on American independence day—4 July—she is truly an independence day girl. I especially want to commend her to our future Scotland, the one that recognises women and which, instead of seeing

them as also-rans, realises that we are in there fighting for the same causes as the men. We are not that different; we are all driven by the same issues of fairness and equality and the same belief in our right to make our own decisions for ourselves. I am confident that Blair, who will be just a few months old when her parents vote on referendum day, will be an icon for our new generation of independent Scottish women.

We must put women in the space claimed by our ambassadors—the women whom I highlighted in my 1,000-year history of Scotland—but we must do it with a yes vote. It will not happen otherwise. I certainly hope that the Westminster Government answers the call that the cabinet secretary Shona Robison made yesterday to devolve equality. However, I think that we should not devolve it, but make it independent.

The Scottish Government is committed to increasing the opportunities for women to enter the workforce. With the powers that we have, we have delivered real improvements in equality outcomes, but more can and must be done. A yes vote is the greatest opportunity that we will ever have to transform women’s lives for the better through transformational expansion in childcare; improving diversity in public and private institutions and targeting female representation on company and public boards.

For Blair and all our daughters of Scotland, we must put Scotland’s future—and Blair’s future—in Scotland’s hands.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (Elaine Smith):** I should tell members that we have a little bit of time in hand for interventions.

16:13

**Elaine Murray (Dumfriesshire) (Lab):** Of course, it is to be welcomed that the numbers of women in employment have increased and that the levels of female inactivity have fallen. However, it would be wrong to be complacent about the figures, and searching questions need to be asked about the detail. How many of those women are on zero-hours contracts? How many are underemployed? How many are on the minimum wage? How many are self-employed but are unable to make a living from what they earn? As recently as yesterday morning, a discussion on BBC Radio Scotland’s “Morning Call” centred on the statistic that the average woman in Scotland will have to work 14 years longer than the average man to earn the same across her working lifetime.

It is wrong—and, I think, naive—to imply that the barriers faced by women with regard to equality of opportunity are somehow the fault of Westminster and that they can be solved only by voting for Scotland to leave the UK.



Barriers such as gender segregation, whereby women are stereotypically found—as my colleague Rhoda Grant illustrated—in low-paid, so-called female occupations, and their underrepresentation in boardrooms or in senior management positions are not just a matter of constitutional responsibility; nor are the additional responsibilities that women tend to face that can interfere with their employment prospects, such as the likelihood that they will have primary caring responsibilities for children not just outwith the time that they are in nursery or at school, but when they are ill, and the fact that women are more likely to have to care for sick or elderly relatives.

Those barriers do not exist simply because the UK Government has failed to legislate. Jenny Marra described the genesis of the Equal Pay Act 1970. It was superseded by the Equality Act 2010, and the current UK Government, which I do not often have anything good to say about, included the sharing of parental leave and the right to request flexible working in the Children and Families Act 2014.

It may be that the legislation is not yet tough enough. Engender, which Mary Scanlon mentioned in her speech, noted that, over the past 20 years, UK Governments have advocated encouraging private employers to adopt best practice rather than requiring them to take action. Perhaps we need to be a bit tougher, and I would like the cabinet secretary to tell us whether, in the event of independence, the Scottish Government would take a statutory approach.

One of the contributors to yesterday's "Morning Call" was a 27-year-old woman who argued that sexism was worse today than it had ever been. As someone who is considerably older, I would not agree—I think that sexism was even worse when I was young—but we have not made the strides that I would have thought that we might have been able to make over the past 60 years. After all, 100 years ago, women did not even have the vote and had no right to employment after marriage. The fact that we still have a fair way to go is disappointing, but I agree with those who have said that society's attitudes to women are what matter, not who legislates and where. The issue is much deeper and more fundamental than that.

That is demonstrated in the report on women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, "Tapping all our Talents", which was commissioned by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2012 and chaired by the eminent astrophysicist Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell. That report advises that there are 56,000 female graduates in STEM subjects of working age in Scotland—including me—but only 27 per cent of them are using their qualifications to work in STEM subjects, compared with 52 per cent of male graduates in those

subjects. In 2009, some 11,000 female graduates in STEM subjects of working age in Scotland were unemployed or economically inactive. What a waste of talent—and of expensive training, because it is not cheap to educate people in the STEM subjects. If the cabinet secretary has more up-to-date information—that figure dates from five years ago—I would be interested to learn whether any progress has been made in reducing it.

The report also demonstrated—this parallels what Rhoda Grant said—that the further up the ladder in STEM subjects one looked, the less represented women were. At the top levels—I am talking about professors and heads of research institutes—women were even less represented.

The report made a number of recommendations for the Scottish Government, and I wonder whether the cabinet secretary could update us on those to which she has not already referred. At a meeting in April 2013, Shona Robison appeared to want to take on board the report's recommendations, and I would like to know what progress is being made on that. One of them was that there should be a national strategy for Scotland to address occupational segregation and, in particular, its impact on the STEM subjects. Another was on the use of procurement to ensure that contractors and suppliers met the public sector equality duty. I do not think that we quite did that in the recent legislation on procurement.

The cabinet secretary mentioned the introduction of statutory pay audits, which the report recommended. The report also wanted public bodies and agencies to be required to produce plans to close the gender pay gap within an agreed timescale, and it wanted more gender disaggregated data to be produced. It called for adequate resourcing for initiatives that had demonstrated success in tackling occupational segregation, and it wanted all Scottish universities to be required to bring their STEM departments up to the Athena scientific women's academic network silver standard within two years. It advocated the introduction of legislation similar to the legislation that was introduced in Spain in 2011 on gender balance, and it wanted universities and research institutions to be required to adopt a gender equality plan and the integration of gender issues into the curriculum.

All those recommendations could be taken forward now with the powers that the Government already has, so I hope that, when we return to Parliament after the referendum is over, the Government will show a determination not to blame others for the barriers that women in Scotland still face in employment, but to press ahead with the actions that we can take here and now to remove those barriers with our existing powers and with the further powers that will

indubitably be devolved to the Parliament in the future. I look forward to the further devolution of those powers.

16:19

**Willie Coffey (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP):** We are having this debate at a time when female employment in Scotland, at 1.25 million, is the highest that it has ever been. Probably more significantly, the employment rate is higher for women in Scotland than for women in the other countries of the UK, and the corresponding unemployment and inactivity rates are lower.

In the last year alone, female employment has gone up by about 36,000, meaning that the figures for women at work in Scotland are the best for more than 20 years. The figures are helping to push Scotland's gross domestic product to around £28,000 per person, which is about 10 per cent higher than the figure in the UK. That is fantastic news for Scotland, despite the gloom of economic depression that has prevailed for some years now.

If we take a look at the various reasons for that, we will see that a number of policy decisions and initiatives taken in Scotland all contribute to those very positive figures. The first ever women's employment summit, which was held in 2013 in partnership with the STUC, examined many of the barriers facing women who want to work. It is no surprise that occupational segregation, childcare and vocational routes for women into work, particularly in science and engineering, featured among the issues where some attention needed to be focused.

Funding projects such as Women Onto Work to examine progression routes and outcomes for women and extending the youth employment Scotland fund to help employers take on youngsters—particularly younger mums, who would otherwise find it difficult to get into work—are all helping.

There has been a huge jump in the number of women participating in the modern apprenticeship programme, with more than 40 per cent now being taken up by women, compared with less than 30 per cent in 2008—a very significant and positive change indeed.

Another issue that came out of the summit was that of encouraging more women to become entrepreneurs. There is quite a range of initiatives to encourage more entrepreneurship among women. According to the Hunter centre for entrepreneurship, if the number of female entrepreneurs matched the number of male entrepreneurs, another £7 billion could be added to the Scottish economy. The Scottish Government has put up £1 million towards schemes such as young EDGE—encouraging

dynamic growth entrepreneurs—Power of Youth and Investing Women. Hopefully, new businesses will emerge, led by women, to give Scotland's economy that additional boost.

Our Government is also tackling the occupational segregation that means that many younger women do not choose vocational pathways to work, particularly in engineering. In June, the cabinet secretary announced £4.5 million to help to encourage more women into the STEM subjects. We fund the Scottish resource centre for women in science, engineering and technology and careerwise Scotland, which are both aimed at attracting more young women into science. That work will be further developed by the recently announced engineering skills investment plan.

If we can intervene as early as possible, even at nursery and primary school level, to put an additional focus on encouraging younger girls' interest in science, we will reap the rewards later. By the time that youngsters get to secondary school, it can be too late. Gender stereotyping often reinforces the belief that science and engineering are oily rag activities—only for the boys. That is difficult for young women to overcome. If we intervene earlier and show the reality and rewards of careers in science and engineering, especially for women, we stand a much better chance and all those efforts will have been worth while. The Kilmarnock Engineering and Science Society, which has been up and running for a few years, offers specifically to school pupils lectures that are often delivered by women who have reached the top in the world of science and engineering and who have never seen an oily rag once in their working lives.

Perhaps the biggest factor in getting more women into work relates to how we support childcare and make it more flexible. The welfare and benefits system that we have in place for the poorest people in our society is also an issue. We know that women who are single parents are hardest hit if Governments get those things wrong. The Scottish Government has made significant improvements to childcare since 2007. From this month, all three and four-year-olds and vulnerable two-year-olds will get 600 hours of free childcare a year. That will benefit 120,000 children and save their families about £700 a year.

Delivery of the further transformation—the major change to 1,140 hours of free childcare in Scotland, which is equivalent to a whole primary school year—will require us to have control over our own tax and revenues. Make no mistake—this is not just about upping the numbers and grafting them on to our existing system, in which many women work part time and suffer pay discrimination. This is an offer to fundamentally

change how childcare works in Scotland and allow many thousands of Scottish women to fully participate in our economy on an equal footing.

We know that it is Scotland's women who bear the brunt of the cuts to the welfare system that are being imposed by the UK. Single female households lose out the most as a result of UK welfare reforms. Child benefit has been frozen, there has been a reduction in the childcare costs that are covered by working tax credits, the baby element has been removed from child tax credits—and on the list goes. That is why it was a total disgrace when Scottish Labour MPs such as Alistair Darling and nine female Scottish Labour MPs voted with the Tories to cap welfare spending, knowing that Scotland's women would suffer the most.

Scotland's women deserve better than what they have had to put up with in the UK for years. The Scottish Government has made significant improvements to the lives of women in Scotland, and with the additional powers of independence we can completely transform childcare and tackle gender inequalities, we can help more women into business and industry and we can protect the poorest women in our country by making sure that our welfare system is fairer and does not impoverish our families. That is the prize that is waiting after independence, and I believe that Scotland's women will back this positive change in Scottish society. All that they have to do is say yes on 18 September.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** We now turn to closing speeches.

16:26

**Alison McInnes:** I ask MSPs to reflect on something for just a moment. What if the cabinet secretary had spent even a fraction of the energy that she has expended over the years in railing against the UK Government on actually challenging her Cabinet colleagues to live up to her ambitions? If only. As is so often the case, the SNP prefers posturing to progress.

I will take a moment to further compare the SNP's dismal record on increasing opportunities for women within the powers that it already has with the positive strides that Liberal Democrats in the UK Government have made. We have given more than 2 million Scots on low and middle incomes a £700 tax cut, and 224,000 of the lowest paid, many of whom are women, have been lifted out of paying income tax altogether. The white paper revealed that taxpayers in an independent Scotland would pay £400 more each year compared with our plans to further increase the threshold to £12,500.

**Chic Brodie:** Will the member give way?

**Mike MacKenzie (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Alison McInnes:** I have a lot to tell members.

The Liberal Democrat pensions minister Steve Webb is overseeing the introduction of the new single-tier pension in 2016. It will address historical inequalities by improving state pension income for those with little or no additional state pension, who are again predominantly women. The Liberal Democrat employment minister, Jo Swinson, has championed shared parental leave. From 2015, parents will be able to mix and match their time off with their baby. They will be able to take leave together and both will be able to be around during the precious early weeks. Going back to work for a short time to maintain skills and confidence will also be an option.

That new flexibility will help to overcome outdated stereotypes about who does what. More important, it will enable parents to decide how best to share their responsibilities and manage their careers and family life. It is great news for mums and dads and even better news for the children who will have the chance of a better start in life.

Liberal Democrats have also worked hard to increase diversity at the top of our workforce and to promote gender equality on the boards of listed companies. Women now account for 21 per cent of total directorships, up from 12 per cent in 2010. In 2001, one FTSE 100 board in five was all male. Now, 99 per cent have at least one female director. I am sure that members will agree that that is quite a turnaround in a short space of time, although there is still much to do.

We are determined to make it a legal requirement for companies that employ more than 250 people to publish the average pay of their male and female workers. That will create pressure from staff and customers for companies to afford women the same opportunities as their male colleagues and to reward them accordingly, not with 20 per cent less. That is pressure to close the gender pay gap and deliver real equality in the workplace.

Those radical and progressive income and workplace policies have already made a real difference to the lives of millions of women here in Scotland. Furthermore, they remind us that Scotland has so much more to gain by continuing to work with the rest of the UK, not least because of the economic stability that we have secured, which underpins the positive employment figures that we are discussing today. Only four years ago we were teetering on the edge of a financial precipice, but now our economy is growing, we are making real progress on reducing the deficit and the outlook for growth and jobs is positive.

Why is that hard-earned progress so important? It is because prosperity is key to unlocking opportunities and because, when economies experience difficulties, it is consistently women who are hardest hit. That is why I worry about the impact of the £6 billion in additional cuts that the Institute for Fiscal Studies anticipates an independent Scotland would have to implement.

**Chic Brodie:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Alison McInnes:** I worry about the implications for women, as should Mr Brodie, as they are more likely to be low paid or in part-time jobs. *[Interruption.]*

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Mr Brodie.

**Alison McInnes:** I worry about the implications for women, who are more likely to be reliant on the support that the state can provide to pensioners, parents and carers. A strong Scottish Parliament within the United Kingdom gives us the best of both worlds. It enables us to spread the risks and share the rewards, and it comes with the guarantee of more powers without losing the back-up of being part of the larger UK economy.

I will end on a conciliatory note. During the referendum campaign, I have had the benefit of speaking to many women, on both sides, for whom the debate is their first foray into politics. They realise that this is the most important political decision that we will ever take—an irreversible decision. I hope that those women will continue to engage and enrich our politics and public life in future. I welcome the fact that the referendum has renewed the Parliament's focus on dismantling the stubborn archaic barriers that women face. I just sincerely hope that, regardless of the outcome next month, we can constructively and collectively tackle those barriers with the same level of passion and determination as has been displayed this afternoon.

16:32

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** Some interesting points have been raised in the debate. It is appropriate that, as we debate the politics of the referendum, the main focus is on the key policy issues that will not only boost the number of women in the workforce but raise the quality of their skill set and the attractiveness to them of the labour market. Those are the key things, just as much as the actual numbers that are involved. It goes without saying that women are a crucial part of the labour market because, in many cases, they bring specific skills, many of which can be offered on a more flexible basis when compared to their male counterparts.

Although there have been considerable differences of opinion, there are important areas of agreement. First, there is no question but that good-quality education and training are absolutely key. As several members have said, the value of apprenticeships is immense and many of the themes that underpin the Wood commission are important in driving forward policy. In particular, there is a growing need to address the STEM subjects. Christine Grahame, who is not in the chamber just now, and Willie Coffey both said important things about STEM subjects and the difficulties that the science and technology industries encounter in attracting sufficient women.

Notwithstanding the success of programmes such as girls in energy, which is sponsored by Shell United Kingdom, concerns remain about the Scottish Qualifications Authority returns in recent school sessions, which show a drop in numbers taking subjects such as physics, with which there has been a problem in the last five school sessions. In mathematics, the numbers remain largely unchanged for boys, but that is not the case for girls—again, there has been a significant drop in the last few sessions.

I want to flag up concerns about the Scottish baccalaureate exams, which I believe have the potential to do something about the trend. At present, the take-up rate for the baccalaureate is exceedingly low. Indeed, the figure has fallen, with only 136 entries across Scotland for the current session. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning said in a recent parliamentary answer to me that the Scottish baccalaureate was

“never intended to be a high uptake award”,

since it is primarily in place

“to meet the needs of ... our most able learners”.—*[Official Report, Written Answers, 19 August 2014; S4W-22291.]*

I question the wisdom of saying that, because the whole point about baccalaureate exams is their interdisciplinary approach, especially when it comes to the dissertation work and practical disciplines. Those are the exact skills that many employers are looking for in their STEM graduates. The whole premise of the baccalaureate discipline is to have added value on the interdisciplinary front. We need to think about that very carefully.

That fall in the take-up of the baccalaureate is happening at the same time as subjects such as geology are coming out of the SQA examination diet altogether, yet geology is one of the burgeoning disciplines when it comes to Scotland's thriving technology industries. There are serious issues there. We need to do much more on the training aspect that we all agree is so important to women in the labour market.

Secondly, there has been common agreement that many women are looking for much greater flexibility in the labour market. That, after all, is why there is cross-party agreement about the need to provide more and better-quality childcare. Of course, it would help if the Scottish Government's economic modelling had been factually accurate. Instead, it was based on a theoretical trend, not on the specific labour market circumstances that apply to Scotland. Rhoda Grant was quite correct to point out the problem with that.

Childcare matters in terms of availability and reasonable cost, but also in terms of flexibility. That is why it is important that we do something about that availability on the flexible level. Jayne Baxter referred to issues in Mid Scotland and Fife in that regard. A group of campaigners in Glasgow is making the point that we cannot have the Scottish Government policy on full childcare provision unless we also harness the private sector availability of the public-private partnership mixes in nurseries. That provision cannot be delivered by dependence on the state sector alone. We need to take on board the fact that some of the state-funded nursery places do not have that flexibility because the provision is for only up to three hours a day and in some cases the school holidays are not covered. There are a lot of issues that we need to look at.

The third area of relative agreement is the huge role that colleges play in tackling the problem. One of the great success stories of colleges since the changes that took place in 1992 is their ability to cater for a wide diversity of courses—full time and part time—many of which are particularly suitable for women. However, as has been made clear this afternoon, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the recent college cuts have disproportionately affected women. I do not want to hear any excuses about measuring part-time places against full-time equivalents. What matters is the trend against the same measure further back and, on that basis, the Scottish Government knows that the message is not a good one.

There are a lot of areas in which we agree on the principles behind the policies that we have to develop to ensure that women are not only much more available in the labour market but are available on a flexible basis that allows their individual skills to flourish in a way that perhaps has not been possible before.

The recent employment and GDP figures make it clear that Scotland is doing very well as part of the union and is benefiting from the combined economic policies of Holyrood and Westminster, as Jenny Marra and Alison McInnes said. It is essential to have those economies of scale that are important to investment and jobs and which

help to provide the economic security that allows local economies to develop.

The potential for a boost in female participation rates is huge, provided that the whole of that capacity can be stimulated. That is why we are fully supportive of the unionist amendments in the names of Jenny Marra and Alison McInnes.

16:39

**Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab):** This has been an interesting debate. I have always believed that, when women come together across the chamber, we can make a huge difference. I am of course reminded, as I see Angela Constance across the chamber, that she and Shona Robison were promoted to their current posts a mere four months ago. I congratulated them at the time and they are of course very intelligent and capable women, as all women in the Parliament are, but they have always been intelligent and capable women, so one cannot help but wonder why they were not promoted before then. The suspicion at the time was that the promotions were less to do with recognising talent and more about the referendum. Some cynical people in the chamber—not me, of course, Presiding Officer—believe that the timing of today's debate has more to do with the referendum, but I always welcome any chance to debate opportunities for women.

To be frank, however, we need to move away from debating the issues and the warm words, and towards coming up with action. That action needs to be taken on a wide range of issues that will start collectively to remove the barriers to women's participation, whether that is in education, training, employment, family life or civic life.

Scottish Labour has always been motivated by a deep and abiding belief in gender equality. We delivered the twinning of parliamentary constituencies to ensure that equal numbers of men and women stood as candidates. That was not easy, but we have delivered 50:50 representation for men and women as Labour MSPs in almost all Scottish Parliament elections. I will work with the other parties to encourage them to achieve the same figures. It is not enough for us just to be here; it is what we do that makes a difference.

Across the United Kingdom, it was Labour's progressive politics that delivered the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equality Act 2010 and much more besides. When we see that the gender pay gap remains persistently large, it is clear that there is more to do. However, that is not simply a constitutional issue; it takes political will.

Any progress to increase opportunities for women is absolutely welcome but, to be frank, I

have been frustrated because the past few years have been characterised not by increasing opportunities but by opportunities missed. The reduction in college places represents a missed opportunity. As many people have said, the loss of 140,000 college places since 2007-08 undermines the Government's objective of ensuring that we have the training and skills for our economy's long-term needs. As Jenny Marra pointed out, there is no doubt that that disproportionately impacts on women; 85,000 women have been affected.

Another missed opportunity concerns payment of the living wage. The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill could have delivered the living wage as part of the £10 billion that is spent each and every year on public sector contracts. The living wage could have been delivered to 400,000 low-paid workers in Scotland. Of them, 64 per cent are women, which means that the SNP said no to 256,000 working women.

No action was taken on zero-hours contracts or equal pay audits, which are all things that I know that the cabinet secretary would acknowledge would make a positive difference to women. They are all things on which the SNP said to women, "No—you can't have it."

In all those cases, the SNP had the power to do something. The cabinet secretary and other SNP members make great play of not having the powers to do things, as if that was an excuse for not delivering progress. However, progressive politics does not need constitutional change; it needs political will.

When the suffragettes fought for votes for women, those votes were delivered by political will and not by constitutional change.

**The Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages (Dr Alasdair Allan):** They got constitutional change.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order.

**Jackie Baillie:** The minister has only recently arrived in the chamber, but he insists on interrupting from a sedentary position.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I would prefer it if no one interrupted from a sedentary position, please.

**Jackie Baillie:** The minimum wage—the vote on which some SNP members slept through—helps low-paid women and was delivered by political will, not constitutional change. The creation of the national health service, which helps families across Scotland and the United Kingdom, was delivered by political will and not constitutional change.

Mary Scanlon raised childcare, which is an economic issue, not a women's issue. The SNP has power over childcare now. The Government focuses on hours at the expense of quality and flexibility and it does not deliver for working families. There is an inherent dishonesty about the SNP's policy when it gives no costings for its childcare proposals. The SNP does not appear to have done the modelling—it certainly has not published it—and it has delayed the date for providing childcare for vulnerable two-year-olds.

Further, of course, the Government relies on 104,000 mothers becoming economically active but—guess what?—there are only 64,000 mothers who fit the bill. It just does not stack up. Forty-thousand women posted missing. I look forward to the SNP policy that encourages more pregnancies to make its sums add up.

There is another area in which the Scottish Government has the power to act now. How about delivering more women in the boardrooms of Scotland's public bodies? About five or six years ago—I will be corrected on the timescale—the Scottish Government set a target of 40 per cent of applications coming from women. It failed to meet even that target, which, again, was for applications only. Less than a third of board members in Scotland are women. Some public bodies have no women on their boards at all. All those appointments are made by the cabinet secretaries, so why have they not delivered? I am much more ambitious than just wanting 40 per cent of applications coming from women; I want to see bums on seats—I will just check with the Presiding Officer that I am allowed to say that.

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I was just checking with the clerks, too. We should watch what we say in the chamber.

**Jackie Baillie:** Labour is committed to 50:50 representation on all public boards, and we will act to deliver just that. It takes political will, not constitutional change.

I have to say that Chic Brodie is a brave man. He was one of only two men who spoke in the debate. Mr Brodie talked about the alpha male. Off camera, he was pointing to himself. I say to him, as gently as I can, that that is probably a triumph of hope over experience. However, his admiration for the achievements of women was absolutely evident. I look forward to him supporting a female First Minister, whichever party she might be from.

**Chic Brodie:** Will the member give way?

**Jackie Baillie:** I think that I am in my final minute.

Women in Scotland are smart—I think that Chic Brodie would agree with me on that. However, we need to get beyond the warm words in order to

allow them to judge how they should vote in the referendum. They will judge the Scottish Government's record and see that it had the power to deliver for women but decided not to do so. What a missed opportunity.

Clearly, the SNP's priority is simply to win women's votes for the referendum. What we want to do is to win women's votes to actually change their lives.

16:47

**Angela Constance:** This has been a very consensual debate. In case anyone is wondering which debate I have been listening to, I mean by that that the majority of us agree on the destination. I suppose that the difference of opinion rests on the route that we take towards achieving equality.

I have always been of the view that there is nothing inevitable about gaining equality under any political system, but I think that some arrangements are more adept at delivering equality than others, and are inherently more democratic. There is a point about who makes decisions and where those decisions are made, as well as about how those powers of independence are used.

However, I am just not pinning my hopes on the right man being in number 10. First, I am—to be frank—too old for that and, secondly, that just has not worked very well for Scotland to date, because for more than half of my lifetime, Scotland has had a Prime Minister in number 10 who has not reflected the democratic will of the people of Scotland.

**Jackie Baillie:** That would be fine, were it not for the fact that the Scottish Government has the power to make decisions over things such as the appointment of women to public boards in Scotland. Given that it has that power and that it makes the decisions, why has the number of women in those positions not increased?

**Angela Constance:** The proportion of women on public boards in Scotland is at 38 per cent, but we need to be far more ambitious than that, and to achieve 40 per cent.

Also, this Government, unlike the UK Government, took on the public sector equality duty, applied it to the public sector—as we are able to do under the Equality Act 2010—and introduced a suite of measures. South of the border, the whole thing just remains voluntary.

We are doing what we can within our powers.

**Jenny Marra** *rose—*

**Angela Constance:** Not just now, Ms Marra.

**Jenny Marra:** Will the cabinet secretary give way?

**Angela Constance:** No. Sit down, please.

The fact is that inequality remains reserved to the Westminster Government. I hope that—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** Order, please. Can I stop you for a moment, cabinet secretary? If members are not taking interventions, other members should sit down, but they will be told to do so by the Presiding Officers if they remain on their feet.

**Angela Constance:** Of course, Presiding Officer.

I look forward to Jackie Baillie and Jenny Marra putting their shoulders to the wheel and supporting the letter that Shona Robison has sent to the UK Government asking for it to give us the powers over equality now. It will take only six months. That would allow us to make speedy progress after a yes vote because we are ambitious and impatient. I am sorry, but for Ms Marra to say after 44 years of the Equal Pay Act 1970 that it

“has a way to go”

is the understatement of the year.

**Jenny Marra:** If the cabinet secretary is so committed to having women on public boards, why did her Government appoint 10 men as regional college chairs out of 12 appointments? There are only two women. It is a matter of public policy and public appointment, so why are there only two women out of 12?

**Angela Constance:** Indeed. The important issue is the applications that we received from women; women outperformed men on the basis of those applications. However, I am sure that we are all united in thinking that there is much more to be done to ensure that talented women can progress, and so that they know about posts so that they can make applications and are supported in making them.

Nobody disputes that we can do more now. I am always up for a challenge and debate about what more we can do with our powers and resources now. I have no issue with that debate, but that does not preclude the need for more powers, more opportunities and more resources to come to Parliament for us to decide on our own terms how we pursue the equality agenda.

I am pleased to inform Jayne Baxter and Dr Murray that the number of Scottish universities with Athena SWAN charter membership has gone up from four to 14. They might want to examine the guidance letter from Michael Russell to the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council, which challenges it about occupational

segregation within courses and, indeed, within its senior workforce.

With regard to the Wood agenda, for the first time the Scottish funding council and Skills Development Scotland will have realistic but stretching targets, and will have to report annually on them. We will come back to Parliament and report more fully on that in the autumn, as we will with our consideration of the "Working Together Review".

I thank Rhoda Grant, Christine Grahame and others for mentioning—and plugging away for—carers and their contribution to the economy. We must remember that unpaid work makes a huge contribution to our economy and that that unpaid work, as many of the briefings point out, is provided by women.

It is important that we reflect on the gains of devolution. Successive Scottish Administrations have helped to narrow the historical gap in performance with the UK across a range of economic indicators, including output, productivity and employment. Our economy is strengthening, which is good news, but we need to ensure that women—

**Chic Brodie:** Will the cabinet secretary give way?

**Angela Constance:** No, thank you.

We need to ensure that women get their fair and rightful share of that economic growth because that is not only the right thing to do, but the smart and essential thing to do, if we are to grow our economy as much as possible. I agree with the close the gap project that women throughout Scotland are simply in the wrong jobs or the wrong level of job in terms of their skills and talents.

Of course, as well as doing more, we need to have the powers of independence. What I want in the Scotland that I seek is investment-led recovery as opposed to Westminster-led austerity.

We have responsibility for educating and training the current and future workforce, but our power has become far more limited with regard to getting people into work and how they are treated once they are in work. The UK has one of the most unequal and unbalanced economies. As I pointed out in the "Unlocking Scotland's Full Potential" report that I published a few days ago, we must ensure that we get the right type of growth and that everyone gets access to those opportunities.

We have spent much time today talking about transformational childcare, which is the game changer. It is good to know that we have the support of leading economists who have advised previous Scottish Administrations that had different political perspectives. However, it does

not take an economist to know that the biggest barrier to women getting into work and progressing once they are in work is lack of access to affordable and flexible childcare.

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

**Liz Smith:** Will the cabinet secretary give way on that point?

**Angela Constance:** I will take an intervention from Liz Smith.

**Liz Smith:** The cabinet secretary is quite right about the need for flexibility. However, would she agree that, on childcare, the most important thing is to deliver a policy that is predicated on accurate statistics on the number of women who will go back into the workforce? The Scottish Government's figures are simply not accurate.

**Angela Constance:** I absolutely do not agree; our figures are sound. As I explained to Liz Smith's colleague Mary Scanlon earlier in the debate, Opposition members repeatedly misinterpret or misunderstand, or fail to notice—I am sure that they have their reasons for that—the fact that every year 50,000 children are born in Scotland. We have to take that figure into account as we progress.

As things stand, women are being lost to the labour market for ever. The labour market participation rates for women in relation to the age of their children show that, even when those children are well into their school years, the participation rate does not pick up in the way that it should.

The key point is that successive Westminster Governments, despite having control over tax, welfare and the economy, have never delivered transformational universal childcare. I know that many members on the Labour side of the chamber are sincere in their aspiration for universal childcare and have campaigned for it all their political lives.

**Liz Smith:** Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

**Angela Constance:** No, thank you.

The issue is not just about campaigning—it is about delivering. We are committed to a managed expansion, and with the powers that we have at present, we have increased the provision of free childcare by 45 per cent. That is a good record. Of course, we will do more with independence because we will be able to pay for universal childcare, which is something that successive UK Governments have failed to prioritise and to fund.

Much of Scottish Labour's five-point plan for women is worthy, although it is far less ambitious



on childcare than what the Scottish Government has set out.

Jackie Baillie said that equality for women is about political will. That is true, but why does she insist on asking for permission from Westminster? Every point in Scottish Labour's five-point plan for women is currently a reserved power, and she—

**Jackie Baillie:** Will the cabinet secretary take an intervention?

**Angela Constance:** No, thank you. I am running out of time.

**Jackie Baillie:** On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

**Angela Constance:** Jackie Baillie would rely on the right man being in number 10, and I no longer—

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** Cabinet secretary, there is a point of order, so I need to stop you.

**Jackie Baillie:** Thank you, Presiding Officer. My point of order relates to the accuracy of what the cabinet secretary is saying. She has clearly not read the five pledges—

**The Presiding Officer:** Ms Baillie, sit down. You are well aware, as you have been here long enough to know, that what is said in this chamber is a matter neither for a point of order nor for me.

**Angela Constance:** Presiding Officer, I have examined Scottish Labour's five-point plan carefully—

**Jackie Baillie:** No, you have not.

**Angela Constance:** I am all for political will, but I am not for asking permission from Westminster. We need to look at the lack of progress—

**The Presiding Officer:** You need to wind up.

**Angela Constance:** We need to look at the lack of progress by the Westminster Government on low pay and unequal pay. Westminster has had its chance. At best, it is holding us back; at worst, it is taking us back in time.

**The Presiding Officer:** You need to wind up.

**Angela Constance:** I say to Alison McInnes that we should look at the worst aspects of welfare reform. We should look at the £4 billion of welfare reform cuts in Scotland, £2.8 billion of which affect women. Ms McInnes should hang her head in shame before she comes into Parliament and preaches to us about protecting—

**The Presiding Officer:** I think that you are finished, cabinet secretary. Thank you.

## Business Motions

17:00

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of business motion S4M-10833, in the name Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a business programme.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees the following programme of business—

Tuesday 23 September 2014

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Statement by the First Minister

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate on First Minister's Statement

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Wednesday 24 September 2014

2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
Health and Wellbeing

*followed by* Continuation of Scottish Government Debate on First Minister's Statement

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

*followed by* Members' Business

Thursday 25 September 2014

11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions

11.40 am General Questions

12.00 pm First Minister's Questions

*followed by* Members' Business

2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Scottish Government Debate: Assisted Tourism

*followed by* Business Motions

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

5.00 pm Decision Time

Tuesday 30 September 2014

2.00 pm Time for Reflection

*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions

*followed by* Topical Questions (if selected)

*followed by* Scottish Government Business  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 Wednesday 1 October 2014  
 2.00 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 2.00 pm Portfolio Questions  
 Infrastructure, Investment and Cities;  
 Culture and External Affairs  
*followed by* Scottish Government Business  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 Thursday 2 October 2014  
 11.40 am Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 11.40 am General Questions  
 12.00 pm First Minister's Questions  
*followed by* Members' Business  
 2.30 pm Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
*followed by* Scottish Government Business  
*followed by* Business Motions  
*followed by* Parliamentary Bureau Motions  
 5.00 pm Decision Time—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** Next is consideration of business motion S4M-10837, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, setting out a stage 1 timetable for the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill.

*Motion moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that consideration of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill at stage 1 be completed by 6 February 2015.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

*Motion agreed to.*

## Parliamentary Bureau Motions

17:01

**The Presiding Officer (Tricia Marwick):** The next item of business is consideration of three Parliamentary Bureau motions. I ask Joe FitzPatrick to move motions S4M-10834, S4M-10835 and S4M-10836, on the approval of Scottish statutory instruments.

*Motions moved,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Lanarkshire Colleges Order 2014 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Treatment of the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels as Specified Authority) Order 2014 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Scotland Act 1998 (Transfer of Functions to the Scottish Ministers etc.) Order 2014 [draft] be approved.—[*Joe FitzPatrick.*]

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

## Decision Time

17:01

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

I remind members that, in relation to the debate on increasing opportunities for women, if the amendment in the name of Jenny Marra is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Alison McInnes will fall.

The first question is, that amendment S4M-10829.3, in the name of Jenny Marra, which seeks to amend motion S4M-10829, in the name of Angela Constance, on increasing opportunities for women, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

### For

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McMahan, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)

Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

### Abstentions

Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 37, Against 58, Abstentions 4.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** I remind members that, in relation to the debate on increasing opportunities for women, if the amendment in the

name of Mary Scanlon is agreed to, the amendment in the name of Alison McInnes falls.

The next question is, that amendment S4M-10829.2, in the name of Mary Scanlon, which seeks to amend motion S4M-10829, in the name of Angela Constance, on increasing opportunities for women, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

**Against**

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)

Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**Abstentions**

Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 14, Against 81, Abstentions 4.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that amendment S4M-10829.1, in the name of Alison McInnes, which seeks to amend motion S4M-10829, in the name of Angela Constance, on increasing opportunities for women, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

**For**

Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)

Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

#### Against

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)  
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse)

(SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 18, Against 81, Abstentions 0.

*Amendment disagreed to.*

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motion S4M-10829, in the name of Angela Constance, on increasing opportunities for women, be agreed to. Are we agreed?

**Members:** No.

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

#### For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)  
 Adamson, Clare (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Allan, Dr Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)  
 Allard, Christian (North East Scotland) (SNP)  
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)  
 Biagi, Marco (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)  
 Brodie, Chic (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)  
 Burgess, Margaret (Cunninghame South) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Aileen (Clydesdale) (SNP)  
 Campbell, Roderick (North East Fife) (SNP)  
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)  
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)  
 Cunningham, Roseanna (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)  
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)  
 Don, Nigel (Angus North and Mearns) (SNP)  
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow) (SNP)  
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)  
 Eadie, Jim (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Annabelle (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)  
 Fabiani, Linda (East Kilbride) (SNP)  
 Finnie, John (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Kenneth (Cunninghame North) (SNP)  
 Gibson, Rob (Caithness, Sutherland and Ross) (SNP)  
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)  
 Ingram, Adam (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)  
 Johnstone, Alison (Lothian) (Green)  
 Keir, Colin (Edinburgh Western) (SNP)

Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)  
 Lyle, Richard (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 MacAskill, Kenny (Edinburgh Eastern) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Angus (Falkirk East) (SNP)  
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)  
 MacKenzie, Mike (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)  
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)  
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)  
 Maxwell, Stewart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 McAlpine, Joan (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McDonald, Mark (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)  
 McKelvie, Christina (Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse) (SNP)  
 McLeod, Aileen (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 McMillan, Stuart (West Scotland) (SNP)  
 Neil, Alex (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)  
 Paterson, Gil (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)  
 Robertson, Dennis (Aberdeenshire West) (SNP)  
 Russell, Michael (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)  
 Stevenson, Stewart (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)  
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)  
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)  
 Thompson, Dave (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)  
 Urquhart, Jean (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)  
 Watt, Maureen (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)  
 Wheelhouse, Paul (South Scotland) (SNP)  
 White, Sandra (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)  
 Wilson, John (Central Scotland) (SNP)  
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow) (SNP)

#### Against

Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)  
 Baker, Richard (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Baxter, Jayne (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)  
 Beamish, Claudia (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 Brown, Gavin (Lothian) (Con)  
 Buchanan, Cameron (Lothian) (Con)  
 Carlaw, Jackson (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Chisholm, Malcolm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab)  
 Ferguson, Patricia (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (Lab)  
 Fergusson, Alex (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)  
 Findlay, Neil (Lothian) (Lab)  
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Goldie, Annabel (West Scotland) (Con)  
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)  
 Gray, Iain (East Lothian) (Lab)  
 Hume, Jim (South Scotland) (LD)  
 Johnstone, Alex (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Lamont, John (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)  
 Macdonald, Lewis (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Marra, Jenny (North East Scotland) (Lab)  
 Martin, Paul (Glasgow Provan) (Lab)  
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)  
 McCulloch, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McDougall, Margaret (West Scotland) (Lab)  
 McGrigor, Jamie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 McInnes, Alison (North East Scotland) (LD)  
 McMahon, Michael (Uddingston and Bellshill) (Lab)  
 McMahon, Siobhan (Central Scotland) (Lab)  
 McTaggart, Anne (Glasgow) (Lab)  
 Milne, Nanette (North East Scotland) (Con)  
 Mitchell, Margaret (Central Scotland) (Con)  
 Murray, Elaine (Dumfriesshire) (Lab)  
 Pearson, Graeme (South Scotland) (Lab)  
 Pentland, John (Motherwell and Wishaw) (Lab)  
 Scanlon, Mary (Highlands and Islands) (Con)  
 Scott, John (Ayr) (Con)  
 Scott, Tavish (Shetland Islands) (LD)  
 Smith, Elaine (Coatbridge and Chryston) (Lab)

Smith, Liz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)  
 Stewart, David (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

**The Presiding Officer:** The result of the division is: For 58, Against 41, Abstentions 0.

#### *Motion agreed to,*

That the Parliament welcomes the growth in women's employment to its highest ever level of 1,250,000 and the significant reduction in female economic inactivity; believes that Scotland must have even higher ambitions to further increase the opportunities for women to enter the workforce; further believes that the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and the Working Together Review present important contributions to increasing opportunities for women; recognises however that significant powers to improve opportunities are currently reserved, and agrees that, with independence, these powers will give Scotland the opportunity to remove barriers to women's ambitions and increase female economic activity, employment and living standards.

**The Presiding Officer:** The next question is, that motions S4M-10834 to S4M-10836, in the name of Joe FitzPatrick, on approval of Scottish statutory instruments, be agreed to.

#### *Motions agreed to,*

That the Parliament agrees that the Lanarkshire Colleges Order 2014 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Public Appointments and Public Bodies etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Treatment of the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels as Specified Authority) Order 2014 [draft] be approved.

That the Parliament agrees that the Scotland Act 1998 (Transfer of Functions to the Scottish Ministers etc.) Order 2014 [draft] be approved.

## Department for International Development

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Scott):** The final item of business is a members' business debate on motion S4M-09923, in the name of Margaret McCulloch, on the future of the Department for International Development in Scotland. The debate will be concluded without any question being put.

### *Motion debated,*

That the Parliament recognises the contribution that the Department for International Development (DFID) staff based in East Kilbride make in administering the world's second largest aid budget; notes that approximately 600 people are employed at the Abercrombie House office, where work is undertaken on a wide range of areas, including development policy and research, African and Asian regional programmes and the eradication of world hunger and malnutrition in addition to key corporate services for the department; welcomes reports that the UK has at last become the first country in the G8 to spend 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) on overseas development assistance; considers that, while there are legitimate differences of opinion among political parties and between those campaigning on different sides of the constitutional debate about the future of international development, there is also a welcome consensus on the importance of Scotland and the UK's international obligations, including honouring the commitment to spend a minimum of 0.7% of GNI on overseas development assistance and enshrining this commitment in law; believes that the wider debate on independence would be enhanced by thoughtful, informed consideration of the implications of independence on international development; therefore notes remarks by Dave Fish, who, it considers, as a former head of DFID in Scotland and former director of DFID's Africa programme, can be regarded as an authority on international development, who warned that DFID jobs in East Kilbride would be "relocated back to the residual United Kingdom" in the event of a Yes vote in September 2014 and that "the suggestion by SNP ministers that the United Kingdom would continue to employ hundreds of people in what would be a foreign country is – like so much of the case for independence – simply not credible"; further notes the findings of the House of Commons International Development Committee, which expects DFID's aid budget to fall by around £1 billion as a consequence of independence; considers that the costs of establishing an independent Scottish development agency would likely require a greater share of development spending to be allocated toward administration instead of frontline aid; believes that the development policies set out in the white paper on independence could lead to the fragmentation of aid spending, which is overwhelmingly pooled and resourced across the UK at present, and believes that Scotland continuing as part of the UK is key to safeguarding civil service employment at Abercrombie House in East Kilbride and securing Scotland's role in shaping global development and supporting 28 countries across Asia, Africa and the Middle East through DFID.

17:08

**Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland) (Lab):** The Parliament is most united when showing solidarity with parts of the world in

poverty or distress. Nobody here could or should try to monopolise concern for the world's poorest: it is something that we share.

Whatever the outcome of next month's referendum, the challenge of poverty in the world will still be with us, and people of conviction and good conscience will keep on working, fighting and campaigning until the day that it is not. The purpose of my motion is not to snatch the moral high ground as part of a wider referendum debate, nor is it a blanket endorsement of the aid policies of the present United Kingdom Government—or even those of the previous one. It is to make sure that the Parliament does not adjourn tomorrow without hearing what the implications of the decision that we might make next month could be for our international aid effort and the people tasked with delivering it.

DFID's East Kilbride office at Abercrombie house supports a total workforce of 600, of which around 550 are UK-based home civil servants. That is 43 per cent—almost half—of civil servants who work for DFID in the UK. East Kilbride is home to the department's second headquarters, which is responsible for policy and research, supporting regional programmes for Africa and Asia and leading on Government priorities such as tackling hunger and malnutrition. Half of UK aid is delivered through DFID in East Kilbride.

The establishment of an international development fund in this Parliament was informed by DFID specialists. That is an example of what the best of both worlds means in practice.

In the event of a yes vote, DFID would review its presence in Scotland. The Secretary of State for International Development has said that there is "no logical reason" why DFID would remain in Scotland. The House of Commons International Development Committee expects the East Kilbride office, which contributes £30 million to the local economy, to close within five years of a yes vote. East Kilbride-based staff, many of whom are in valuable, specialist, high-quality jobs, could face relocation or redundancy. There is little to substantiate assurances to the contrary.

**John Mason (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP):** Will the member give way?

**Margaret McCulloch:** No, I do not have time. In any case, the member's questions should have been answered in his white paper.

In evidence to the House of Commons International Development Committee, the Minister for External Affairs and International Development, Humza Yousaf, guaranteed that there would be "ample opportunity" for staff who are based at Abercrombie house to continue in employment, either with the UK Government, if it

retains a base in East Kilbride, or with the Scottish Government.

That is not much of a guarantee. I will explain why. First, the idea that DFID would continue to run half its aid programme out of a foreign country is, as one of its former top civil servants Dave Fish said, “simply not credible”. There are examples of countries that pool expertise, and DFID staff work with multilateral agencies in Geneva and New York, for example, but there is no precedent for the UK employing almost half of a department’s home civil servants in a single foreign country.

Secondly, the headquarters of an independent Scottish development agency would require fewer than the 550 civil servants who are currently employed at Abercrombie house.

**The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf):** Will the member give way?

**Margaret McCulloch:** No. The Government had its opportunity in its white paper.

On the basis of a population share of 8.3 per cent—[*Interruption.*] Presiding Officer, will you ask Scottish National Party members to be quiet while I finish, please?

Our share of DFID’s 1,300 UK-based civil servants comes to around 110. That is more in line with the staffing figures of aid agencies in small independent countries such as Ireland, which the European Centre for Development Policy Management provided to the European and External Relations Committee.

If the remaining workers are to be offered jobs elsewhere in the Scottish Government, what will those jobs be? What will they pay? At what grade will they be? Where will they be based? Does the minister dispute the figures that I have given? If so, can he tell us—

**Humza Yousaf** *rose*—

**Margaret McCulloch:** Can he tell us later how many people will be employed in a Scottish aid agency—[*Interruption.*] Let me finish. Can he tell us why none of that has been set out or costed in the white paper? Is the minister really suggesting that an independent Scotland will need 43 per cent of DFID staff, to spend 8.3 per cent of the budget? He can answer that when he winds up the debate.

There is a month to go until the referendum, but the future of civil servants in my region remains unclear. That uncertainty is unacceptable.

Thanks to the work of DFID, the UK is now widely regarded as a global leader in development and has cemented its position as the world’s second biggest aid donor. The commitment to development index, or CDI, which the Scottish Government often cites, makes a balanced

critique of UK aid while placing the UK in the top third of its rankings and setting out some of our key strengths—high net aid volume, no tied aid and financial transparency.

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

**Margaret McCulloch:** No. Sit down.

Last year, the UK became the first of the G8 nations to meet the target to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on aid—[*Interruption.*] SNP members never answer our questions; we are not answering theirs. The current Government completed a journey that was started by the previous one. There is even a consensus in support of enshrining the target in law.

The white paper makes welcome statements about overseas development, although it has only three pages on the subject, but it also glosses over important facts. If Scotland were to become independent, DFID’s budget would be expected to fall by £1 billion and it is far from clear how Scotland and the UK would manage the transition period and minimise the impact on existing aid commitments.

A new, independent aid agency would face set-up and administration costs, as would a restructured DFID. The costs of fragmentation and duplication would inevitably eat into front-line aid spending.

Of course, it does not have to be that way. As part of the UK, we pool and share our resources and we can use our global reach, our influence and our combined wealth to shape the world around us. As the second largest aid donor on the planet, we have a powerful voice in the world, which we use best when making rich countries confront poverty and sustainability. The creation of DFID, the growth in the aid budget and our emergence as a global leader in international development would not be possible without the combined efforts of public servants working in Scotland, in London and around the world.

What we have achieved, we have achieved together. That, surely, is a positive, progressive, humanitarian reason for continued union between Scotland and the UK.

17:15

**Linda Fabiani (East Kilbride) (SNP):** Normally in a members’ business debate, I would thank the member for lodging the motion and support it. I could not do that today because there are things that are very wrong with the motion. Two statements in the motion, in particular, are completely erroneous; one is about the job losses in East Kilbride and the other is about the



fragmentation of aid spending. I will go on to say more about those.

For a couple of years, there has been an on-going campaign by better together in East Kilbride, telling civil servants both in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, which is also based there, and in DFID that their jobs will go if they vote yes. That is shameful scaremongering, and it has been going on for a long time. It is abhorrent to scare people like that—it is on a par with the advice that was given to civil servants at the Department for Work and Pensions by the permanent secretary, which emerged yesterday.

When the Scottish Government makes things clear, it tends to carry them through—I think that our record stands on that—and the Scottish Government has made it clear that it will offer continuity of employment and that it has a no compulsory redundancies policy in place. That is more than the UK Government has. Let us face it: Labour and Tory UK Governments have cut civil service jobs right across Scotland, so the real threat to DFID jobs in East Kilbride is a no vote.

The UK Government has been committed to cutting jobs in DFID from 2014. Westminster's International Development Committee—which includes Margaret McCulloch's friend in the no campaign Michael McCann—concluded in one of its inquiries that the number of DFID staff in East Kilbride will decline from 2014. Mr McCann himself has been asking parliamentary questions about DFID for quite a while. Speaking of a recent one, he said:

"I warned that ... the UK Government had drawn up secret plans to axe a third of the workforce at the Department for International Development in East Kilbride."

He said that he had heard that the UK Government

"was preparing to sacrifice staff in East Kilbride in order to protect the department's London HQ."

The threat to jobs at DFID in East Kilbride is coming from the UK Government. Yet again, the Labour Party is more than happy to tell one story down the road and another up here because it considers it more important to do down the SNP and the yes campaign. To do that, Labour will even cover up what the Tories and Lib Dems are doing. I find that absolutely appalling.

The motion quotes Mr Dave Fish, whom I met some years ago and had a lot of respect for. He has been writing for the better together campaign, on its website. He is entitled to do that, but a lot of holes can be picked in what he is saying, particularly about the fragmentation of aid. The evidence that is given by the non-governmental organisations in Scotland and by many respected people who have worked in international development for years is that it does not matter

what size an aid programme is; the important thing is how effective it is.

Let us face it, the commitment to development index, which ranks overall contributions to development and their effectiveness, has the UK in eighth place. The top three ranked countries are Denmark, Sweden and Norway—small independent countries that work together to deliver good international aid. Are we hearing from Margaret McCulloch that the UK cares so much about international aid and poverty world wide, but that it would refuse to work with its neighbour Scotland to make sure that countries in poverty were getting the best deal?

I want Scotland to be independent. I want our international development budget to be part of a wider international strategy. That means none of the illegal wars, such as the ones that the Labour Party took us into; that means no locking up asylum-seeking families, an approach that the Labour Party took us into and that the Lib Dems and the Tories have carried on. That is how we can transform poverty, development and fairness in our world.

17:20

**Malcolm Chisholm (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (Lab):** I congratulate Margaret McCulloch on securing this important motion; I also commend her for her concern for jobs in her constituency.

It is not terribly well known throughout Scotland—less well known than it is in East Kilbride, obviously—how many DFID jobs there are in East Kilbride. Nearly half of all DFID jobs are based there. That fact should be publicised to everyone in Scotland. I certainly understand Margaret McCulloch's concern for the jobs, particularly for the individuals involved, and her motion points out the massive contribution that those jobs make to the local economy more generally.

I hear what Linda Fabiani said. Clearly, there are a lot of promises in the white paper. Some of us have been saying that not all those promises can be delivered if there is a yes vote. I hope that that particular promise would be kept, but I think that it is a simple fact that not every promise in the white paper could be delivered any time soon after a yes vote, simply because of the fiscal difficulties that an independent Scotland would face.

Margaret McCulloch is certainly right to say that DFID jobs would not remain as UK Government jobs in the event of a yes vote. Dave Fish, to whom both previous speakers have referred, said:

"The suggestion ... that the United Kingdom would continue to employ hundreds of people in what would be a foreign country is ... simply not credible."

That just seems to me to be an obvious statement of fact.

To move on from jobs to the wider issues, Dave Fish made another interesting comment when he said:

“A Yes vote would massively reduce Scotland’s ability to impact and influence efforts to reduce world poverty.”

I am not dismissing what an independent Scotland would aspire to do and I hope that the Government would be able to keep its commitment on international development, although the same caveat about the fiscal difficulties applies. I certainly do not underrate what the Scottish Government has done when all is said and done.

I was a member of the Administration that started the devolved Scottish dimension to international development. However, it is a simple fact that the UK has achieved remarkable things in international development. Its work has been described as transformational change. There has been remarkable progress.

**Humza Yousaf:** I do not take away anything from the good work that the UK Government has done; indeed, I have always been fair in giving it credit where credit is due. However, why are eight of the top 10 countries in the CDI, which Margaret McCulloch mentioned, small and independent countries of Scotland’s size? If they can do well, why on earth could Scotland not do well and make transformational change?

**Malcolm Chisholm:** I do not take away from the contribution of small countries, and I indicated my hope that an independent Scotland would do that, too. I am just saying that Scotland cannot, in the nature of things, have the impact that a large country such as the UK can. We should praise the UK in that regard.

To be briefly party political, Labour tripled the health budget between 1997 and 2010. To the credit of the Conservative Party, it has also committed to contributing 0.7 per cent of gross national income on international development assistance, which most countries in the world have not achieved. The simple fact is that the UK is the world’s second biggest aid donor. When members remember that the top donor is the United States, which spends a massively smaller percentage of GNI, one can legitimately argue that the UK is the number 1 aid donor in the world.

The UK has played a massive part in the development of the international development agenda. It is that contribution to the big debates and decisions about international development that a smaller country simply cannot make. Obviously, we can, like other small countries, make a practical contribution, but we cannot have

that massive impact on the policy agenda or make the transformational change that many people talk about in relation to the UK.

Finally, I want to pick up Linda Fabiani’s point about international affairs more generally. As we know, the Scottish National Party likes to remind us of the negative side of that issue—I have been known to do the same myself in relation to Iraq and one or two other matters—but I think that there is a very positive story to tell about the UK and about the international development agenda as part of that, and it leads to the conclusion that, on potentially a whole range of issues, the UK can be a massive force for good in the world. An independent Scotland might be able to make a small contribution, but the reality is that, on many of these issues, it would be only an observer. We need to remember the positive contribution that the UK makes and might make for decades to come and not throw that away.

17:25

**Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP):** I must begin with an apology, Presiding Officer, because I will not be able to stay for the remainder of the debate. I have to leave at the end of my speech.

First of all, I find it unfortunate that the members’ business system has been used to shoehorn in this debate. Let us be clear that this debate has been designed not to highlight local issues but to be part of the wider referendum campaign.

I also find it rich that we are talking about the 0.7 per cent contribution to the international aid budget. After all, despite having this large economy that we keep hearing about, the UK failed to achieve that target in 43 years. Indeed, it did not manage to do so even when Malcolm Chisholm was a UK Government minister.

Moreover, that discussion misses the point that the 0.7 per cent target relates to the share of a country’s budget, not its actual monetary terms. The target recognises that economies across the world vary in size, and it is all about countries putting aside a specific share of their own budgets to help the aid budget across the world. I find it unfortunate that people are suggesting that, because Scotland’s economy is not of the same magnitude as that of the wider UK, our efforts to contribute to international aid and international development would be diminished. It is a very neat encapsulation of the “too wee, too poor” argument.

We should also be clear that, in the grand scheme of international populations, we are not small; we are mid-table, and I think that we should be wary of always referring to ourselves as a small nation. Undoubtedly we are smaller than some of the world’s nations, but we are still capable of

punching above our weight in a range of areas, including international development. The minister is on record as saying that, for him, 0.7 per cent is only the beginning of the aspirations that Scotland should have for its contribution to international development, and I find that goal pretty inspirational. I think that we absolutely should be aiming to achieve 1 per cent in very short order.

I am also concerned by this idea that we have to be either all in or all out—in other words, if we are not all for what the UK is doing in international development, we must be dead set against it. We on these benches are not saying that everything that the UK Government is doing or has done in international development is wrong; we are not suggesting that and are not seeking to characterise the issue in those terms. What we are saying, however, is that an independent Scotland might choose to pursue different priorities for expenditure and different priorities with regard to the way aid itself is defined.

The definition of aid is an interesting issue. A debate on the matter is currently taking place within the UK Government, with David Cameron suggesting the possibility of factoring in military expenditure to the contribution to the aid budget. I do not think that we should aspire to that sort of approach; indeed, we should be deeply troubled by and hesitant about accepting any notion that arms sales to regimes, for example, could count as aid.

On jobs, I do not have a local interest in the matter, as I do not represent East Kilbride or Central Scotland, but the idea that somehow we would not require jobs and expertise after independence is fanciful. It is not true to say that the international development budget would drop after independence because Scotland would be an independent country. Scotland would have an aid budget and an international development budget, which it would require to fund appropriately. The idea that nothing would be spent and no one would work in these areas in Scotland is fanciful, and it borders on being misleading.

We have the opportunity to put Scotland on the world stage, to advance the values that we hold and to pursue the priorities that we would have as an independent nation across the world. We could use the figure of 0.7 per cent as a starting point, and the minister has aspirations to go further, which I share.

In addition, we would be in a position to work with other countries. The one thing that really irritates me in the referendum debate is the conflation of independence with isolationism, and the idea that being independent means that Scotland would only ever do stuff by itself and would not work with others. The difference that independence would make is that we would work

together and collaborate with others on our own priorities and on our terms, which does not currently happen. If, after independence, we sought to work with the rest of the UK on a particular issue, that would be fine—we could do that—but we should also be able to take our own path and lead the way in other areas.

17:31

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** I welcome today's debate on the future of the Department for International Development in Scotland, and I thank Margaret McCulloch for lodging her motion.

I am extremely proud of the fact that DFID is based in East Kilbride, not least because last year it provided more than 43 million people in other countries with clean water, better sanitation or improved hygiene conditions, and it reached more than 11 million people with emergency food assistance.

The chair of the House of Commons International Development Committee has acknowledged that almost half the UK's aid programme is delivered from the department's headquarters in Scotland, where a number of senior DFID staff are based. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that, as the motion confirms, 600 people are employed at Abercrombie house in East Kilbride, almost 60 per cent of whom live within 10 miles of the office. That means that many local businesses not only benefit from but have—especially in these difficult times—come to rely on DFID's headquarters being in East Kilbride.

At present, as part of the UK, Scotland can be proud that the international aid budget is a staggering £11.4 billion and that the UK, with a population of 60 million, is the first country to honour the commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of its gross national income on overseas development obligations.

**Humza Yousaf:** Will the member give way on that point?

**Margaret Mitchell:** I would like to make some progress first.

In an independent Scotland with a population of just 5 million, that vital work in global development in some of the world's poorest countries with some of its most vulnerable people would be adversely affected by a fall of around £1 billion in the DFID aid budget.

**Humza Yousaf:** The member seemed to suggest, perhaps inadvertently, that the UK was the first country to meet the 0.7 per cent target. That is not correct, of course. Small independent

European countries met it before the UK. The UK is far behind in that respect.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I will take the minister's word for that, but the UK was certainly the first of the G8 nations to meet the target—that was confirmed earlier.

Worse still, if Scotland chose to separate from the rest of the UK, it is inevitable that the DFID headquarters would relocate south of the border, which, in turn, would have a devastating impact on the local economy. The Scottish Government's assertion that an independent Scotland would be able to protect and maintain those 600 jobs is simply not credible. Furthermore, the future of the lesser-known work that DFID supports, such as the international citizen service, would also be affected.

Earlier this year, I had the privilege of meeting two young people who had volunteered with the ICS when it held a photography exhibition in the Parliament building. The ICS programme helps 18 to 25-year-olds from throughout the UK to volunteer overseas and gives them the opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience, regardless of their income, qualifications or work history.

The ICS is led by VSO but funded through DFID, which recognises the positive impact that volunteering overseas can have not only on the communities in which the organisers are involved but on those who volunteer.

The Scottish Government's white paper is silent on whether such a programme would continue to be funded. There is therefore a legitimate concern that, in the event of Scotland choosing to leave the UK, young Scots would lose out on what is sometimes a life-changing experience and the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to fighting poverty overseas.

The UK is a force for good in the world, with a disproportionate amount of influence overseas for a nation its size. It makes no sense to seek to weaken that influence by fragmenting the UK and, in so doing, putting at risk 600 jobs and the viability of local businesses in East Kilbride, all of which rely on DFID's HQ being located there.

17:36

**Maureen Watt (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP):** I refer to my convenership of the cross-party group on Malawi.

I, too, am pleased to take part in the debate, although I am perplexed about why it qualifies as a members' business debate. I note that very few members have signed the motion.

The motion is just the latest part of project fear, which better together is running hard at every level

of the campaign—on the doorsteps, in the media and in here. It has no vision of how the UK can improve the lives of Scots at home or the people we help abroad.

As other members have pointed out, the workers at East Kilbride are civil servants and, as such, are often moved about and required to move. As others have noted, the rest of the UK—Westminster—does not have a no compulsory redundancy policy, as we have in Scotland. Indeed, DFID's annual report and accounts for 2011-12 stated:

"The numbers of staff in both locations increased from March 2011 and will increase to March 2013 and thereafter decline."

We know that UK civil service jobs in Scotland have declined under successive UK Governments. In 2005, there were 35,300 civil service jobs in Scotland. In 2010, there were 33,000, and in 2014, there were 27,000. There has been a decrease of almost 25 per cent, with more to come. We know already that Scotland in no way gets its share of civil service jobs. Successive Westminster Governments have said that we will get our share but, despite the promises, nothing happens.

I am sure that, rather than being fearful for their future, many of the civil servants in East Kilbride relish the prospect of using their skills and flexibility in the wider context of Scottish international development or international affairs, or in other departments of a new, exciting civil service.

I was interested in the European and External Relations Committee's inquiry into international development, during which many of the witnesses highlighted areas in which Scotland can take a leading role in international development, such as renewable energy, climate justice, governance or public finance management.

I attended the International Development Committee's evidence-taking session, here in this Parliament, on the implications of Scottish independence. The clear message that NGOs in Scotland gave Malcolm Bruce and his two committee colleagues was that they liked the type of international development work undertaken by the Scottish Government, even with its very limited budget. The committee's report said:

"Many Scotland-based NGOs think that the Scottish Government is more effective than DFID at engaging with them."

That is even with DFID staff in Scotland.

Having met so many NGOs and others through my involvement with Malawi, my experience is that very many relish the prospect of 0.7 per cent of an independent Scotland's budget being spent on international development. That has been SNP

policy since the beginning of the 1970s and it is one of the main reasons why I joined the party back then.

In contrast, the prospect with the union, as David Cameron has suggested and others have mentioned, is of international aid money being spent on overseas military interventions. Tobias Ellwood MP, the Prime Minister's envoy to NATO, has drawn up what he calls "detailed proposals" for Downing Street, suggesting that there is an overwhelming case for military spending to count towards the 0.7 per cent target. That fills me with horror. I am sure that it fills many other Scots with horror, too, and I am sure that it will influence many people's choice on 18 September.

17:40

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):**

I congratulate Margaret McCulloch on securing this evening's debate and on her thoughtful opening speech.

Presiding Officer, 1997 was a crucial year for international development. Labour was swept to power in the Westminster landslide victory and it was committed to a step change in both foreign aid and debt relief. The Overseas Development Administration was scrapped and replaced by the Department for International Development, and the UK Parliament was one of the first in the world to have a fully fledged Cabinet minister for international development at the heart of Government.

At the time, I was a young, fresh-faced back bencher, strange as that may seem now, and I was on the all-party group for international development. I knew the Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, well. She was passionate and committed to development, and she was very well served, I might say, by my friend George Foulkes, who was a very able deputy over the years at the Department for International Development.

The success and significance of those times can be measured by what was achieved. Between 1997 and 2010, the last Labour Government, as we have heard, trebled the UK's aid budget and committed the UK to spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income on official development assistance by 2013. More important, I think, it freed 28 countries from debt through debt cancellation and debt relief and untied UK aid so that developing countries were given more of a say on how to spend that aid.

Other members have touched on some of the successes. We provided 43 million people with access to clean water, better sanitation and improved hygiene, supported more than 10 million children to attend primary and lower secondary

education, ensured that 3 million births took place safely with the help of nurses, midwives or doctors, reached more than 11 million people with emergency food assistance and provided 45 million people with access to financial services to help them work their way out of poverty. The make poverty history campaign at the G8 in Gleneagles, which many members in the chamber would have been closely attached to, was a very important campaign.

By the time that Labour left office in 2010, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's development assistance committee had recognised the UK as a world leader in international development. I emphasise the breadth of DFID's operations around the world, including the regional programmes in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, the support for 28 countries across Africa, Asia and the middle east and the humanitarian assistance.

**Linda Fabiani:** Will the member give way?

**David Stewart:** I am really short of time. I apologise to Linda Fabiani.

The UK also hits above its weight in multilateral aid through global organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Food Programme.

On coming to this Parliament, I sustained my interest in our global aid effort. I was asked—and was proud—to become convener of the cross-party group on international development. I was extremely impressed by the work that the group had done in the past and the work that the Parliament had done, particularly triggered by Jack McConnell and parliamentarians across the party divide, to forge stronger links between Scotland and Malawi, with genuine cross-party support.

At that time, the Scottish Executive's international development policy was new. Today, our contribution to the developing world is even greater and our relationship with the countries that we partner is even stronger. It is worth reflecting on the role that DFID played in supporting the Scottish Government at that crucial time. Today, the two Governments' combined aid efforts are complementary. What we have achieved, we have achieved together.

17:44

**Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP):**

Like my colleagues, I would normally say that I was pleased to speak in the debate but, on this occasion, I am afraid that the debate that the Labour member has called, with the support of Labour's better together partners, is simply a cynical ploy to pour fear into the hearts of hard-

working civil servants. I take that personally, because my mother worked for the Inland Revenue for her entire working life and my brother has worked for the Procurator Fiscal Service for his. Both of them are Public and Commercial Services Union members, and my brother has served as a shop steward for PCS.

It would be helpful if, instead of brandishing copies of the white paper, members actually read it and the answers and information that are in it. Many of the workers in DFID and the HMRC office that has been put under fear today by the UK Government will be members of PCS. PCS has made some key demands for answers from people who are campaigning in the independence referendum. I cannot go through them all, but it is important that we look at some of the key issues.

One of the demands is to end austerity cuts. Alistair Darling has said that, if there is a no vote, we will have tougher and deeper cuts than those of Margaret Thatcher, and Ed Balls has committed to continuing the austerity agenda that the Tories have set. However, in the section entitled "Early priorities for action within sound public finances", the white paper states:

"This Government will ensure that Scotland has stable and sustainable public finances, underpinned by the discipline of a framework designed to ensure that Scotland's finances are appropriate for the country's economy, and able to withstand changes in economic circumstances."

PCS also says that public services should not be for private profit. In the section on "Gains from Independence", the white paper states:

"Public services can be kept in public hands. The Scottish Parliament has the power to keep the NHS in public hands but it could not stop other services such as the Royal Mail being privatised by Westminster".

The direction of Westminster is a reduced public service and a reduced civil service. We should not ignore the possible consequence of a no vote.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Will the member take an intervention?

**Clare Adamson:** No, thank you. Opposition members would not take interventions earlier.

PCS also wants us to invest in renewable energy. The white paper states:

"Scotland can also look forward to a further energy bonus from our green energy resources, with expected sales of £14 billion by 2050 from offshore tidal and wind energy".

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I suggest that you confine yourself to the motion. It is a broad motion, but I do not see renewable energy mentioned in it.

**Clare Adamson:** Well, I think that—

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** I am not seeking a debate on that, please.

**Clare Adamson:** I will take on board what you say, Presiding Officer, but to me the motion is an attack on civil service workers, many of whom belong to PCS, and I am talking about what PCS wants to hear in the independence debate. It was not the Scottish National Party that turned the issue into a debate about independence.

Taking on board what you have said, Presiding Officer, the final PCS demand is for a repeal of all anti-trade union laws and a charter of trade union rights. The white paper gives a commitment to work with the Scottish Trades Union Congress and companies for employee representation on boards. In 13 years of a Labour Government, we had a failure to repeal any of the anti-trade union laws that Margaret Thatcher brought in. Had we had a real Labour Government, that might have been different. I use that term appropriately, because Roy Hattersley used it on Radio 4 this morning in describing the Blair years and a Government that did nothing to improve international relations but simply damaged the UK's reputation in the world with its illegal wars.

Our civil servants demand our support. They do excellent work, and independence gives us the opportunity to continue that great work and to use their expertise. They must consider the future and how a no vote might impact on their jobs. Do the people in DFID want to support the inclusion of military intervention as part of the UN target, as the current Tory Government wants? We have a choice between two futures—one that is set out in the white paper, which gives commitments and answers the questions that PCS and the civil service have asked, or one that leads us down the road of Tory cuts, Tory austerity and a continuation of threats to the civil service in Scotland.

17:49

**The Minister for External Affairs and International Development (Humza Yousaf):**

The motion and the opening speech by Margaret McCulloch are nothing but an exercise in scaremongering, fear baiting and the politics of cynicism all rolled into one. However, the debate gives me, if nothing else, the opportunity to offer my assurances and reassurances once again on commitments that the Scottish Government has given in relation to the UK Government Department for International Development.

From what I have previously said in Parliament and from what I have said everywhere that I have spoken on the public record, people will be able to see that I have given fair credit to DFID for the good work that it does. I have also met the staff

who work in Abercrombie house on a number of occasions at various events. There is absolutely no question in my mind as to their commitment to the cause of international development.

My concern has always been that much of the good work that DFID has done, even when it has not met the 0.7 per cent target, has been undermined by the UK Government's other policies in foreign affairs and trade—some of which have been mentioned—whether it has been arms and defence sales to Saddam Hussein, Robert Mugabe, General Suharto and the Argentinian military junta, to name just a few, or foreign policies such as the illegal invasion of Iraq, which has been mentioned by members.

We have offered reassurances on jobs to DFID. I offered those reassurances when I was questioned by the Westminster International Development Select Committee during its inquiry on the future of development in the event of independence. I said then and I reiterate now that we would work with the UK Government to preserve continuity of employment of all civil service jobs in Scotland. We have said that before in terms of defence and jobs in other reserved functions, and we say it again in relation to the 604 jobs in DFID in East Kilbride. Those people make a massive contribution; I do not doubt that for a second. Their expertise is a great asset to a future Scottish international development function and even an external affairs function. They would be a fantastic asset.

Margaret McCulloch said that DFID in East Kilbride would not be the same size. She used Ireland as an example. The problem is that if we are to compare like with like, we must compare countries that have the same ambition as Scotland has for its international development function. We have said clearly in our white paper—which the member has on her desk, if she wishes to open it—that we have committed to spending at least the 0.7 per cent target and that we aspire to go beyond that target.

On countries that have a population the size of Scotland's, Denmark, for example, has a population of 5.59 million and meets the 0.7 per cent target. In fact, it exceeds that target. Denmark has 846 international development and external affairs staff. Sweden has a population of 9.52 million—which is, of course, bigger than Scotland's, but is still under the 10 million population bracket—and has 735 staff because it meets that 0.7 per cent target. When we look at countries that have the ambition that Scotland has and the number of such jobs that they have, we see that we could maintain those jobs. Not only would we be able to maintain and continue the employment of those people, but other

opportunities would be available, including an external affairs function.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Although I do not doubt the sincerity of the minister on what he hopes to do and the assertions that he has made, the difference is that at present we do not know what currency an independent Scotland would have, we do not know the start-up costs, we have fluctuating oil prices, and we have a defence policy that would see the loss of thousands of jobs. With that tally of uncertainties, I do not think that it is credible that the 600 jobs or the 0.7 per cent target would be protected.

**Humza Yousaf:** I will not go into set-up costs. I have here, of course, the figure that the UK Government came up with when it came up with set-up costs, which is 12 times the cost that was estimated by Professor Patrick Dunleavy. Of course, his figure of between £150 million and £200 million for set-up costs was well rehearsed. Also, it was mentioned that those costs would be recouped through efficiency savings.

The point about uncertainty is what I want to move on to. Although we have said that we will preserve continuity of employment and have cemented that by saying that we have a policy—as members are aware—of having no compulsory redundancies, no such commitment is forthcoming from the UK Government. That is where the uncertainty about the DFID jobs lies. In fact, even members in the Opposition parties have not committed to having no compulsory redundancies. Those in the Labour Opposition have not committed to no compulsory redundancies. Ed Balls has not committed to having no compulsory redundancies. If he has, please would members intervene and tell me otherwise? I did not think that he had.

When it comes to the threat to DFID jobs, that threat comes from the UK Government. Here are some of the things that Margaret McCulloch's good friend, Michael McCann MP, has said.

He has said:

"I have also made it clear that compulsory redundancies should be avoided at all costs"—

he does not realise that his party has not quite made a commitment to that—

"and have asked the Minister to keep me updated with any developments.

It seems to me that the Government isn't doing all it can to protect British jobs."

Margaret McCulloch's very good friend Michael McCann has also said:

"Today my worst fears have come to pass, despite the department's previous denials. Staff"

at DFID

"were called to a meeting and told in excess of 140 jobs will go ... But more than that"

Andrew Mitchell

"owes it to the staff to reverse this crazy decision."

If Margaret McCulloch does not believe me, perhaps she will believe Michael McCann, and if she does not believe her very good friend Michael McCann MP, perhaps she will look at DFID's accounts, as other members have. The International Development Select Committee examined and scrutinised those accounts, which show clearly—in the graph that I am holding up—that the number of staff will reduce in 2014-15. The threat to jobs comes not from a yes vote but from the status quo.

The Scottish Government has an ambitious vision of the role that Scotland could play as a good global citizen. We have committed to the 0.7 per cent target that the UK has finally met—I have been fair in commending the UK Government on eventually getting there. It took a Conservative Government to get us there; in her motion, Margaret McCulloch says that the UK Government has "at last" reached the target.

It is important to realise that the 43 years for which the target was missed represent £87.5 billion of missing aid. That is not something to be proud of. In the 1970s, Sweden was the first country to reach the target, in 1974. In 1975, the Netherlands met it. In 1976, it was Norway and in 1978, it was Denmark. All four of those countries have consistently met the target. What do they have in common? They are of course small independent European nations.

Malcolm Chisholm said that there is no way that Scotland could have the same impact as the UK; he almost questioned the audacity of Scotland even to think that it could have the same impact as the rest of the UK. My point is simple—we should look at contributions to development according to the CDI, which is the index that his colleague Margaret McCulloch mentioned. On that index, the UK is in a commendable eighth position, but the other nine of the first 10 countries on the index are small independent nations. That index does not rank countries by their size in monetary terms; it ranks them by their impact—their contribution—and what they have achieved on the world stage in tackling poverty.

Our vision for international development goes above and beyond what some members have suggested a small country should seek to do. We want to legislate for the 0.7 per cent and we want to do aid better. We will of course work with the UK Government to do that, and with any Government that wishes to achieve that.

I am disappointed that a members' business debate has been used for such a distasteful

motion, which is intended to scare hard-working civil servants across the country. I give the absolute assurance again that, in the case of a vote for independence, we will preserve continuity of employment for not just DFID staff but hard-working civil servants across the country.

*Meeting closed at 17:58.*



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e-format first available  
ISBN 978-1-78457-908-1

Revised e-format available  
ISBN 978-1-78457-919-7