

**Tuesday
13 June 2017**

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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

Tuesday 13 June 2017

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 13 JUNE 2017]

SIXTY-SIXTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES

VOLUME 626

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 2017-2019

House of Commons

Tuesday 13 June 2017

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

The House met on the first day of this Parliament, pursuant to Proclamation. DAVID NATZLER, Clerk of the House of Commons, JOHN BENDER, Clerk Assistant, and PHILIPPA HELME, Principal Clerk of the Table Office, attended in the House, and the other Clerks attended, according to their duty.

CERI KING, Deputy Clerk of the Crown in Chancery in Great Britain, delivered to the said JOHN BENDER a book containing a list of the Members returned to serve in this Parliament.

MR KENNETH CLARKE, the Member for Rushcliffe, took the Chair (Standing Order No. 1).

MESSAGE TO ATTEND THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

The House went up to hear the Commission for opening and holding the Parliament, and the Lords Commissioners directed the House to proceed to the Election of a Speaker and to present the Speaker-Elect in the House of Peers for the Royal Approbation.

The House returned.

Election of Speaker

Mr Kenneth Clarke (in the Chair): Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 1A, I am now required to ascertain whether John Bercow is willing to be chosen as Speaker. I call Mr John Bercow.

2.48 pm

John Bercow (Buckingham) (Ind): Thank you, Mr Clarke. What a pleasure it is to welcome you back to this place, as you add the accolade of Father of the House to the many achievements of your long and distinguished career. Next Sunday you will mark 47 years' continuous service to your constituency of Rushcliffe, to this Chamber and to our country as a whole. You are held in great affection and esteem on both sides of the House, and I am sure that I speak for all colleagues in wishing you well in your new role.

If the House so permits, I shall be honoured to serve as Speaker in this Parliament, which, thankfully, across the parties is more richly diverse and representative of modern Britain than any of its predecessors. I will strive to ensure that all parts of the House are heard fully and fairly, and, as always, I will champion the right of Back Benchers to question, to probe, to scrutinise and to hold to account the Government of the day.

Finally, Mr Clarke, I referred admiringly to your 47-year tenure. It may come as a relief to colleagues to know that I have no pretensions to seek to serve for anything like so long, either as a parliamentarian or, indeed, in the Chair as Speaker. That said, we appear to be destined for testing times, and I offer myself to the House as a tested Speaker.

Mr Clarke: I thank you, Mr Bercow, for those kind and flattering remarks, and particularly for referring, as you repeatedly did, to my longevity, which is about the only non-controversial fact that you can assert about my parliamentary career.

I call upon Mrs Cheryl Gillan to move the motion.

2.51 pm

Mrs Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham) (Con): I beg to move, That the right hon. John Simon Bercow do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

I start by adding my belated congratulations to the Father of the House. He took over earlier this year, when we sadly lost another member of the 1970 intake, the very well respected Sir Gerald Kaufman, of whom the Leader of the Opposition said:

“He loved life and politics.”

I can honestly say that that can be said of you, too, Mr Clarke. As Mr Bercow said, you have served in virtually all the Departments of State and the great offices throughout your long and distinguished career, and it is a tribute to your record of public service and to your resilience that you preside over the opening proceedings of our Parliament today and over the election of a new Speaker.

While I welcome all my colleagues who are returning to the House—they are naturally familiar with the Speaker’s role—we are all pleased to welcome the new Members on both sides of the House. They might not realise that the Speaker’s Office, under that name, goes back a mere 640 years. The Speaker was then the agent of the King, and was afforded little protection. If the agent of the King offered bad news, he suffered the monarch’s wrath, and no fewer than seven Speakers were beheaded between 1394 and 1535—[HON. MEMBERS: “More!”] Let that be a warning to you! Fortunately, the job description has changed since then, and our modern Speaker protects us and our rights as Back Benchers without fear of losing his head—except, I have to say, when Members misbehave in the Chamber.

Compared with the Father of the House, with his 47 years of experience, I am just a youngster in this place. However, I have seen many changes over the 25 years I have served in Parliament. The wigs have gone, except for the one that I see being worn for a state occasion—[*Interruption.*] Sorry, the wigs have gone except for one or two. The hours have changed, the Committees have increased, the technology has advanced, the media never sleep, and the challenges of the job of the Speaker continue to multiply.

As the right hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) has been our Speaker since 22 June 2009, I have seen him rise to those challenges and grow in this job. He

“has shown himself to be utterly impartial and fearless in defending the House of Commons from all comers whether it be over mighty Ministers or a raucous media.”

He is

“a determined champion of opening up our democracy”, bringing in reforms that have made Parliament accessible to over 100,000 schoolchildren each year. He is an

“effective Speaker... who has used his office to reach out to people across our country”,

and

“an energetic ambassador for Parliament throughout the UK and around the world, and is also a devoted and hard-working champion for his constituents in Buckingham.”

Those are not my words, but endorsements from my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), the right hon. Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper), the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister, but my

favourite endorsement is from the right hon. and learned Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman), who is standing by the Chair, who said, on the Speaker’s reappointment in 2015:

“He may be small in stature, but make no mistake: in this office, he is a giant.”—[*Official Report*, 18 May 2015; Vol. 596, c. 6.]

Perhaps it is true that good things come in small packages.

Let me say in proposing the right hon. Gentleman for Speaker that, for my part, I have always found him to be scrupulously fair; he never allows his views to compromise his impartiality, although I think that Members in all parts of the House can agree that he is no stranger to controversy. I think he annoys Members on all the Front Benches from time to time, which is probably testament to his even-handedness. He fosters a sense of community among those who work in the precincts, and applies himself with vigour to all the many and varied tasks that fall to the role. He also has qualities that many of us wonder at. There is his ability to recall obscure information on Members, which I warn new Members about; his loquaciousness and command of the English language; and, in particular—please note, Father of the House—his ability to remain in the Chair for inordinate lengths of time, the record being an 11 hour and 24 minute uninterrupted stint during the Syria debate, which caused much admiring comment about the strength of his bladder.

Camel-like qualities aside, the right hon. Gentleman’s performance in the Chamber is matched by his record outside it. He has hosted over 1,000 events for charities in Speaker’s House, and presides over the administration of this place with great patience and good humour, to which I can attest.

This Parliament, like all that have gone before, will have its own character and present its own challenges. Over the next few years, our country will go through the great changes that peoples’ democratic votes have presented to us in this House. At the same time, we face very real threats to freedom, democracy and our precious way of life. That has been brought starkly into focus with the cyber-attack on our NHS, the two unspeakable acts of violence during the election campaign, the death of PC Keith Palmer, and, of course, the loss of our colleague Jo Cox, who was taken from us all a year ago this week.

As Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman has always acted swiftly to join others with words and acts of reassurance, and I was proud to see him in Manchester, standing shoulder to shoulder with the community who had come under such lethal attack. In times like this, and in all our deliberations in the House, we need the experience, maturity and commitment to our Parliament that I believe is shown by the right hon. Gentleman. His devotion to this House and this country cannot be disputed. He has served this House, and us as Members, with strength and fortitude, and I have great pleasure in commending him to the House to serve as our next Speaker.

Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 1A), That John Bercow do take the Chair of this House as Speaker.

Question agreed to.

MR KENNETH CLARKE *left the Chair*, and JOHN BERCOW *was conducted to the Chair* by SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY, MRS HELEN GRANT and ALISON MCGOVERN.

Mr Speaker-Elect (*standing on the upper step*): Colleagues, before I take the Chair as Speaker-Elect, I wish to thank the House for the honour it has again bestowed upon me. I am aware that it is the greatest honour it can give to any of its Members. I pray that I shall justify its continuing confidence and I propose to do all within my power to preserve and cherish its best traditions.

I want, if I may, to say two other things. First—yes, it is a repetition, but I think it is a justified repetition—is it not marvellous to see the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) as Father of the House, and back here in rude health?

Secondly, in welcoming the presence of all colleagues, and congratulating all those in all parties who have been re-elected, I hope that experienced Members will understand if I pay particular tribute to the 87 Members, I believe, who are newly elected for the first time. Whatever else you have done or will do in the course of your career, there will be no greater honour than that which you have just attained as elected Members of Parliament. I am sure that each and every one of you will be very conscious of your responsibility to your constituents. Rest assured: the Speaker will look out for you and be very keen, sooner rather than later, and more frequently rather than less frequently, to hear from you.

The Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May) *rose—*

The Speaker-Elect sat down in the Chair and the Mace was placed upon the Table.

Mr Speaker-Elect: It is not the Prime Minister's fault—I gave her the nod.

3.3 pm

The Prime Minister (Mrs Theresa May): I was going to say, Mr Speaker-Elect, to all those who are new Members, that you can be in the House for 20 years and still not always know what the protocol is going to be.

Mr Speaker-Elect, on behalf of the whole House, may I congratulate you on your re-election? At least someone got a landslide. May I also congratulate you on becoming the first Speaker since the second world war to be re-elected three times? In your tenure so far, you have been a great champion of Back Benchers, ensuring that every Member of this House has the opportunity to speak and to be heard in representing the people they serve. This is such an important part of the way our democracy is upheld in the House, and I know that you will continue this vital role in the future, just as you have in the past.

Let me also thank my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) for assuming the Chair for this election and welcome his return as the Father of the House. As you and others have said, Mr Speaker-Elect, he has had a long and distinguished career in his service to his constituents and to this country. It is very good to see him back here, where he belongs.

It may not surprise my right hon. and learned Friend that I intend to be difficult today and break with tradition by welcoming not only him as the Father of the House, but the returning Mother of the House. The right hon. and learned Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman) has been a great advocate for increasing the number of women in Parliament. I am sure she will join me in celebrating the fact that there are now more women MPs than ever before.

As we welcome new Members on both sides of the House, we should also celebrate the fact that we now have a record number of MPs from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, including the first ever female Sikh MP, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Preet Gill). We also have more disabled MPs and more LGBT MPs, and I hope that together we will continue to build on the progress we have made in previous Parliaments to fight against discrimination in all its forms and to make our politics more representative of all the people we serve. Although there is further to go, if there is one outcome from this election that we can all welcome, it is surely this: today we have the most diverse and representative Parliament in our history.

Members across the House will also want to pay tribute to their predecessors. We will all miss former Members not returned to this House, but we welcome our new colleagues. Being a Member of this House is a great privilege that requires dedication and often personal sacrifice, and everyone in this Chamber does it because they want to serve the public.

Whatever the result, general elections are above all an exercise in democracy and our values—the very democracy and values that the recent terror attacks sought to undermine. This is the first opportunity that Parliament has had to reflect on the despicable terrorist attacks in Manchester and at London Bridge. I am sure that Members on both sides will want to join me in sending our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of all those who lost their lives in the attacks. I know that the House will also want to express admiration for the extraordinary work of all our police and emergency services, whose courage and speed of response saved many lives.

As we begin this new Parliament, it is clear that our country faces some of the greatest challenges of our time: the challenge of keeping our nation safe, including by defeating the perverted ideology of Islamist extremism; the challenge of securing the best possible Brexit deal and delivering the will of the British people in taking the United Kingdom out of the European Union; and the challenge of spreading opportunity and prosperity to every part of our United Kingdom, so that no one and no community is left behind.

In meeting these challenges, what we have seen from the election is that parts of our country remain divided—divided between young and old, rich and poor, and those for whom the future offers a sense of opportunity and those for whom it brings worry and concern. Some people blame politics for these divisions or say there is too much politics. But politics can be an incredible force for good. Conducted in the right way, it can be how we resolve our differences, how we deal with injustices, and how we take, not shirk, the big decisions. It is not always glamorous or exciting but, at its best, the duty we share as politicians—to serve others in confronting these challenges—is a truly noble calling for us all.

The test for all of us is whether we choose to reflect divisions or to help the country overcome them. So let us choose in this Parliament to conduct ourselves in a manner fitting to this moment—to debate, to disagree, but in doing so to recognise that we all want to see a Britain that is stronger, fairer and safe and secure for our children and grandchildren; and that our shared values, interests and ambitions can, and must, bring us together.

As we face difficult challenges ahead, let us come together in a spirit of national unity to keep our country safe, and build a stronger, fairer and more prosperous future for everyone in every part of our United Kingdom.

3.9 pm

Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab): I follow the Prime Minister in her remarks about the importance of the work we all have to do in this Parliament, and I will come back to that in a moment.

First, I congratulate the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) on becoming Father of the House. To me, he seemed a very well-established MP when I entered the House 34 years ago. I have never quite forgotten the image of him in the Tea Room wearing Hush Puppies, eating bacon sandwiches, drinking super-strength lager and carrying a cigar while taking a break from a debate on healthy living. He has had a very long and distinguished career in the House, punctuated this year by his speech in the Brexit debate during which he lamented that his party had become “mildly anti-immigrant”. How new a development that might be is open to debate, but I am sorry to note that the party is also at best—to put it generously—mildly anti-worker, anti-disabled people, anti-pensioner and anti-young people. I am sorry to be so divisive today—[*Interruption.*] It is all right.

It is customary on these occasions to congratulate the returning Prime Minister and I absolutely do so. I am sure she will agree with me that democracy is a wondrous thing and can throw up some very unexpected results. I am sure that we all look forward to welcoming the Queen’s Speech just as soon as the coalition of chaos has been negotiated. I will just let the House and the rest of the nation know that, if that is not possible, the Labour party stands ready to offer strong and stable leadership in the national interest.

I warmly welcome all new Members to this House. As you and other Members have said, Mr Speaker-Elect, there is no greater honour than being elected here. It is an amazing day for Members when they first come to take their seat here. It is an honour to represent our constituents and take decisions that will help people’s lives. That is why we are elected here: to represent those who have put us here to try to make their lives better. As you and the Prime Minister quite rightly pointed out, Mr Speaker-Elect, we now have over 200 women MPs—more than ever before in the history of this Parliament. That is excellent. I join the Prime Minister in congratulating my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman) on all that she has done to promote women in Parliament and women’s careers in general.

This weekend marked the anniversary of the election of four black MPs to the House of Commons 30 years ago—the first black MPs for more than 60 years in the British Parliament. In particular, I welcome my right hon. Friends the Members for Hackney North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott) and for Leicester East (Keith Vaz). They were two of the four elected in 1987, and they are now Members of the most diverse House of Commons ever. They paved the way and I have to say that they have put up with an awful lot as pioneers in taking their seats in 1987. It is vital for our democracy that all voices are heard and represented.

In the 30 years I have been here, Mr Speaker-Elect, there can have been no better Speaker than you for always ensuring that Back-Bench voices are heard, and for the way in which you have presided over our Chamber at all times—the good, bad, tragic and difficult—particularly after the horrors of what happened on Westminster bridge. Those horrors came almost to the door of Parliament. Parliament has obviously not been in session for the past few weeks, but we also remember the awfulness of what happened in Manchester and at London Bridge. We have to stand together as communities, strong and united against those who would seek to divide and destroy the democracy in our society. I also congratulate you on the way in which you have conducted yourself and on the inclusive debates with which you have made sure that Back Benchers are fully involved over the years that you have been Speaker.

We have at least two things in common, Mr Speaker-Elect. First—this is very divisive—is our love for Arsenal football club. [HON. MEMBERS: “Shame!”] I realised that that would bring that sort of comment, but I can cope; it is all right. Secondly, we both came to this place having been local councillors. Serving communities on local authorities is very important, and I am delighted at the number of former or serving councillors who were elected to this House on Thursday night, because they bring a special expertise and knowledge to this House.

We have to speak up for our constituents—that is why we are here—and I know that you, Mr Speaker-Elect, will make sure that those voices are heard. I want to thank you, in your role as Speaker, for facilitating exhibitions in this House—I took part in one commemorating the end of the slave trade—and for the many receptions you have held for charities in Speaker’s House. I thank you also for travelling around the country, reaching out and spreading the whole idea of democracy, in schools and colleges; these places were not necessarily famous or well known, but you have reached out to people in a way that has never been done before, and we should all be very grateful to you for that.

You will not be troubled by party politics, because you are in the Chair, but it is a great tradition—and you stand in that tradition—that a Speaker stands up for democracy. In Speaker’s House, there is a commemoration of Speaker Lenthall and many other Speakers. Your job—like his—is to protect democracy and rise above party debate. I hope we can have that real debate in the future—whenever those on the Government Benches are in a position to take part in it.

We look forward to this Parliament—however short it might be—and to being the voice for change in our society. More people—particularly young people—than ever before took part in the recent general election. They took part because they wanted to see things done differently in our society; they wanted our Parliament to represent them and to deliver change for them. I am looking forward to this Parliament, like no other Parliament ever before, challenging things and, hopefully, bringing about that change.

3.16 pm

Stewart Hosie (Dundee East) (SNP): I associate myself with the words of the Prime Minister in her condolences to those who lost their lives in Manchester and London.

I also pay tribute to the emergency services. It is right that we do that, as our democratic process was affected twice in a short campaign.

We will miss many of those from all parts of the House who have lost their seats, but we welcome all the new Members from all the parties. Some big beasts have gone, and I suspect we will miss them all sooner rather than later.

I agree with the Prime Minister on one other thing she said: politics is not divisive, and that is important. We may take a different view on the constitution, Brexit, social policy, or tax and spend, but those are simply the different opinions of political opponents, not of enemies. If we can reflect a little more respect across all the parties, that would do this House and politics a great deal of good.

Mr Speaker-Elect, may I congratulate you? We in the SNP have always seen you as a champion, ensuring that all the voices across, and indeed within, the parties are properly heard. I can also say, having sat and worked with you on the House of Commons Commission, that you have shown yourself to be incredibly diligent, with an attention to detail, when it comes to the way this building and this House of Commons are run outwith the Chamber. I am sure that those who join you on that Commission in this Parliament will find exactly the same thing.

In congratulating you—and we do—may I make one final comment? The Leader of the Opposition referred to a coalition that is as yet undefined and a programme for government that appears to be as yet unwritten. Given that there is no absolute majority in this House, we are in for interesting times, so with my congratulations, Mr Speaker-Elect, I also wish you all the very best of luck.

3.18 pm

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): Many congratulations to you, Mr Speaker-Elect. I associate myself with the remarks that have been made so far, especially in the light of the outrages that took place in Manchester and London during the general election campaign. Those outrages were meant to divide us, and our response is to be united and to show love and respect as well as immense gratitude to those who came to our aid, who came to help those who were stricken and who keep us safe. We were attacked in this place a few months earlier and saw the death of Keith Palmer, and we are reminded in the most utterly visceral way of how safe our police and our security services keep us. We are immensely grateful to them.

Let me associate myself with the generous remarks made, correctly so, about the right hon. and learned Members for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman) and for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke), and with the remarks made by the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Mrs Gillan), who did make one mistake—she said that we have got rid of nearly all the Whigs. May I say that there are 12 of us now—a 50% increase? *[Interruption.]* Thank you very much. *[Interruption.]* Come on—I'm here all week! *[Interruption.]* Actually, if you are quiet, I will take about 90 seconds.

Mr Speaker-Elect, congratulations on your re-election, which is of course utterly well deserved. You had the privilege of serving and presiding over one of the most interesting Parliaments in recent years. I think you are

the first Speaker, certainly in any modern times, to preside over not one but now two balanced Parliaments. Between you and me, we really have to do something about the chaos and the absolute instability caused by the first-past-the-post electoral system. We have every right to expect, and every confidence, that you will continue with characteristic good grace and humour to preside over this place. You are known for your fairness and willingness to ensure that voices right across this place, from every corner of the United Kingdom and from every party, are heard.

I am sure that my colleagues returned here in greater numbers will look forward to speaking up very clearly for their constituents, particularly as we embark on the critical Brexit negotiations. After this recent divisive period, it will be our intention to seek unity in the national interest and common purpose across this House, and where we disagree with other parties, to seek to disagree well and with grace. We shall also speak out in favour of restored investment in schools, health and social care, and our police force, believing that a Parliament that does not invest in those public services is no servant of its people.

Once again, Mr Speaker-Elect, many congratulations from me and all of my colleagues.

3.21 pm

Mr Nigel Dodds (Belfast North) (DUP): I begin by congratulating you, Mr Speaker-Elect, on your re-election. I wish you very, very well indeed for the post that you now reoccupy. You have always been highly assiduous in ensuring that those in smaller parties, the regional parties, and those with little influence in this House have had their voice heard. While some things may have changed, it is good that you remain in place and that some things have not changed.

We look forward to this Parliament. I commiserate with all those from all parties who failed to be re-elected or who left us, and congratulate all Members who have joined us. I particularly pay tribute to those from Northern Ireland from other parties who have not been re-elected. I thank them for their service. We bear a heavy responsibility now in this House, along with the hon. Member for North Down (Lady Hermon), the Independent Member, as the only representatives from Northern Ireland, and we intend to carry out that responsibility very carefully indeed. We hope, of course, for the restoration as soon as possible of our devolved Assembly and Executive in Northern Ireland, where everybody can play a part in the government of Northern Ireland.

So, Mr Speaker-Elect, we have interesting times ahead. I look forward to playing a full role in the proceedings of this Parliament over the course of the next five years, and I wish you well in your office during that time.

3.23 pm

Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC): May I begin by associating myself and my party with the Prime Minister's remarks and the remarks of others about the outrages in Manchester and in London? These sorts of horrible acts have absolutely no place in our democracy, and we all join together to condemn them.

You will forgive me, Mr Speaker-Elect, if I begin by welcoming my new hon. Friend the Member for Ceredigion (Ben Lake). The good people of Ceredigion will be represented by a Plaid Cymru Member once again, and we look forward to his contributions.

On behalf of my hon. Friends, I would of course like to congratulate both you, Mr Speaker-Elect, and the Father of the House. I am sure that right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House look forward to the incisive, knowledgeable and supremely confident interventions of the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) during what is likely to be one of the most lively and important Parliaments of recent years—not least because the main matter before us, the UK's place in Europe, has been one of his central political concerns for so long.

I congratulate you, Mr Speaker-Elect, and hope that you will continue in your positive attitudes towards the working of this place, the modernisation of that working and the rights of Back Benchers, and in the very fair treatment that you have always provided to the smaller parties.

3.25 pm

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): May I associate myself and my party with the comments made by the Prime Minister and others about the atrocities in Manchester and London Bridge? Our hearts go out to all those who were affected by them.

I am delighted to congratulate you, Mr Speaker-Elect, on your well-deserved re-election. When you were last re-elected in May 2015, you said that you would like to be immortalised on your tombstone as the Back Bencher's champion. As the Member of this House with perhaps the least chance of ever becoming a Front Bencher,

I think I can say that you have that ambition safely in the bag. May I say that you are also a champion of the smaller parties in this House, for which we are very grateful, and a pioneer when it comes to the urgent issue of parliamentary reform? That, too, is much appreciated.

I congratulate the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr Clarke) on becoming Father of the House, and I echo the well said words about the right hon. and learned Member for Camberwell and Peckham (Ms Harman) in her role as Mother of the House, and particularly her role in getting more women elected. I echo the comments of others about the pleasure that we have in seeing a record number of women represented in this place. At the same time, I note that 32% remains some way off 50%. Slow progress is better than no progress, but we still think there is some way to go. Who knows, perhaps we will not have to wait a full five years before having a chance to improve on 32% of the House being women and on our still shameful rating of 38th in the world when it comes to women in Parliament. I look forward to improvements in diversity right across the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn until tomorrow at twenty minutes to Three o'clock. —(*Guy Opperman.*)

3.27 pm

House adjourned.

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**not later than
Tuesday 20 June 2017**

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