

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

## PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS (RESTORATION AND RENEWAL) BILL

*First Sitting*

*Tuesday 4 June 2019*

*(Afternoon)*

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Programme motion agreed to.  
Written evidence (Reporting to the House) motion agreed to.  
CLAUSE 1 agreed to.  
CLAUSE 2 agreed to.  
Adjourned till this day at half-past Seven o'clock.

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**not later than**

**Saturday 8 June 2019**

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**The Committee consisted of the following Members:***Chairs:* DAVID HANSON, † SIR GARY STREETER

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| † Afolami, Bim ( <i>Hitchin and Harpenden</i> ) (Con)                       | † Jones, Mr David ( <i>Clwyd West</i> ) (Con)                 |
| † Brake, Tom ( <i>Carshalton and Wallington</i> ) (LD)                      | † McLoughlin, Sir Patrick ( <i>Derbyshire Dales</i> ) (Con)   |
| † Bryant, Chris ( <i>Rhondda</i> ) (Lab)                                    | † Matheson, Christian ( <i>City of Chester</i> ) (Lab)        |
| † Churchill, Jo ( <i>Bury St Edmunds</i> ) (Con)                            | † Prisk, Mr Mark ( <i>Hertford and Stortford</i> ) (Con)      |
| † Elmore, Chris ( <i>Ogmore</i> ) (Lab)                                     | † Robinson, Mary ( <i>Cheadle</i> ) (Con)                     |
| † Foster, Kevin ( <i>Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales</i> ) | † Snell, Gareth ( <i>Stoke-on-Trent Central</i> ) (Lab/Co-op) |
| † Graham, Luke ( <i>Ochil and South Perthshire</i> ) (Con)                  | † Tami, Mark ( <i>Alyn and Deeside</i> ) (Lab)                |
| † Gray, Neil ( <i>Airdrie and Shotts</i> ) (SNP)                            |   |
| † Hair, Kirstene ( <i>Angus</i> ) (Con)                                     | Joanna Dodd, Mike Everett, <i>Committee Clerks</i>            |
| † Hillier, Meg ( <i>Hackney South and Shoreditch</i> ) (Lab/Co-op)          | † <b>attended the Committee</b>                               |

# Public Bill Committee

Tuesday 4 June 2019

(Afternoon)

[SIR GARY STREETER *in the Chair*]

## Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill

4.30 pm

**The Chair:** Welcome, everyone. Please switch electronic devices to silent. I remind colleagues that teas and coffees are not allowed in the room—unless you are offering me some.

Today we will begin line-by-line consideration of the Bill. Our first item of business is to consider the programme motion on the amendment paper. We will then consider a motion to enable the reporting of written evidence for publication, before beginning line-by-line consideration of the Bill itself. In view of the time available, I hope we can take those matters formally, without debate.

I call the Minister to move the programme motion standing in his name, which was discussed by the Programming Sub-Committee for the Bill.

*Ordered,*

That—

- (1) the Committee shall (in addition to its first meeting at 4.30 pm on Tuesday 4 June) meet—
  - (a) at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 4 June;
  - (b) at 11.30 am and 2.00 pm on Thursday 6 June;
  - (c) at 9.25 am and 2.00 pm on Tuesday 11 June;
- (2) the proceedings shall be taken in the following order: Clauses 1 and 2; Schedule 1; Clause 3; Schedule 2; Clauses 4 to 8; Schedule 3; Clause 9; Schedule 4; Clauses 10 to 15; new Clauses; new Schedules; remaining proceedings on the Bill;
- (3) the proceedings shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at 5.00 pm on Tuesday 11 June.—(*Kevin Foster.*)

**The Chair:** That means that the deadlines for amendments to be considered at the Committee's line-by-line sittings today and on Thursday have passed. The next deadline is the rise of the House on Thursday for amendments for consideration at our final line-by-line sitting next Tuesday.

*Resolved,*

That, subject to the discretion of the Chair, any written evidence received by the Committee shall be reported to the House for publication.—(*Kevin Foster.*)

**The Chair:** Copies of written evidence that the Committee receives will be made available in the Committee Room.

We will now begin line-by-line consideration of the Bill. The selection list for today's sitting, which is available in the room, shows how the selected amendments have been grouped for debate. Amendments grouped together are generally on the same or similar issues. Decisions on amendments take place not in the order they are debated but in the order they appear on the amendment paper. The selection list shows the order of debates. Decisions on amendments are taken when we come to the part of the Bill the amendment affects. New clauses are decided

at the end. In this instance, that means new clause 1 will be debated early on in proceedings with the existing clauses to which it is connected, but a decision on it will not be taken until later.

### Clause 1

“THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDING WORKS”

*Question proposed,* That the clause stand part of the Bill.

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Kevin Foster):** It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Gary. You and I go back some way in our political journeys, having first met back in 1992, when you were still Councillor Streeter. It is safe to say that we also have to look back over a long period of time—decades—as we start to look at the Bill and the maintenance and repair works that need to be done.

Clause 1 defines what the Bill is about: looking to tackle the numerous problems with the Palace of Westminster, including falling masonry, fire risks, water leaks, sewage leaks and toilet closures. We all agree—the Bill's Second Reading was approved unanimously, without a Division—that the restoration and renewal of this Palace is an urgent and pressing requirement that needs to be progressed. Following the passage of motions on R and R by both Houses in early 2018, the former Leader of the House made swift progress, publishing a draft Bill in October 2018 for pre-legislative scrutiny. The Joint Committee on the draft Bill published its report in March 2019, and we took on board many of its recommendations before introducing this Bill on 8 May.

This is a short, sensible Bill, which will put in place the necessary governance arrangements with the capacity and capability to oversee and deliver the restoration and renewal of the Palace. The Bill will also put in place a number of financial safeguards to ensure that the R and R programme represents the best value for money for the taxpayer.

Clause 1 outlines the parliamentary building works to which the Bill relates. It sets out what works the Sponsor Body will be responsible for as part of the R and R programme. We know the Sponsor Body will be responsible for the works to restore the Palace, as well as certain works connected with the restoration of the Palace, such as the arrangements for decanting the House of Lords. However, the clause also allows for the scope of the works the Sponsor Body is responsible for to be widened if the House Commissions decide, with the agreement of the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority, that it should be. Crucially for many Members, the clause also requires this work to be undertaken with a view to Parliament returning to the Palace of Westminster “as soon as is reasonably practicable”,

in line with the resolutions passed by both Houses.

For the reasons outlined, I recommend that the clause stand part of the Bill.

**Christian Matheson (City of Chester) (Lab):** What a great pleasure it is to see you in the Chair today, Sir Gary. I do not wish to delay the Committee much longer, and certainly I do not have time to pay tribute to

the fraternity of MPs from Devon, much as I would love to be a part of what is presumably a beautiful county.

Obviously, we very much support the terms of the Bill, and we have already made that clear on Second Reading. Clause 1 sets out the basis and the terms of reference for the Bill. We recognise the intrinsic value of this historic site, and there is no question that there is a long overdue need for restoration and renewal. Indeed, a constituent contacted me over the weekend who had been involved in surveying the building and some of the utilities attached to it 20 years ago. He told me that his report at the time, which obviously was not acted on, indicated that there was an urgent need even then to undertake works. Those works have not taken place and therefore we are where we are now.

The project will clearly cost money; we are talking, after all, about a UNESCO world heritage site, which in part has stood continuously since the middle ages. We cannot reasonably ignore this issue any longer. We support clause 1, and we do not seek to amend it. It lays out clearly the scope of the parliamentary building works, and we would hope to see that progress through to the next stage.

**Mr Mark Prisk** (Hertford and Stortford) (Con): Naturally, one of the concerns about this building—we saw this in Paris, of course—is about what would happen if there was an emergency and the building was badly damaged in the interim. Who, once the Bill becomes law, will be responsible for dealing with remedial works before the restoration commences?

**The Chair:** Does the Minister wish to respond to that question? There is no obligation for him to do so; it is up to him.

**Kevin Foster:** Certainly our intention would be for the Sponsor Body to take responsibility for the full process of the works on the estate, and, again, the way that clause 1 is drafted allows that to be extended if necessary.

The overall push of the Bill is to create the legal mechanism for delivery of the project, and I will be clear that the alternative to not having clause 1 stand part of the Bill, and indeed to not having this Bill, would be that the House Commissions would try to deal with things separately, in a way that would neither deliver value for money nor provide clear accountability.

**Chris Bryant** (Rhondda) (Lab): I think that what the Minister was probably moving towards suggesting is that there is no intention to hand the building over until such time as a full set of plans has been produced, the House has approved a budget and all the rest of it. In other words, that is some considerable way down the line. In the meantime, surely we have to do what patching and mending we still need to do to make sure that our staff are safe and that we can continue to do our work as effectively as possible.

**Kevin Foster:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his timely intervention. He is absolutely right that passing the Bill does not hand over the Palace of Westminster immediately to the Sponsor Body. That will happen after a further stage of parliamentary approvals, when

we will look to approve estimates and budget plans, and also make choices, bluntly, about what we want to spend and what we want to get from the Sponsor Body. That is when the Sponsor Body will take responsibility for the building, subject to the plans to bring us back to it in due course.

I will make one point, and I know the hon. Member for Rhondda will agree. He talks about our still having to spend money to patch and mend, and, yes, money is still being spent every day. I am very clear that doing nothing is not a choice. The choice is either to do something that might put this building into fit use for the future, or to continue to patch and mend, knowing that we are not mending the building and that it is getting worse every day.

In particular, the potential for a serious fire, or a disastrous fire at the level that we saw at Notre-Dame, cannot now be ruled out. Although the building is life safe—we can make sure that we can keep people safe—we cannot give any great guarantees about what would happen. If anyone takes a visit down to the basement, they only need to look at the many decades of wiring, pipes and other things passing over, plus some of the voids within this building, and the design of it from the Victorian era, to know that that would not be how we would build a fire-safe building today.

With that, I recommend that the clause stand part of the Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 1 accordingly ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

## Clause 2

### THE PARLIAMENTARY WORKS SPONSOR BODY

**Christian Matheson:** I beg to move amendment 2, in clause 2, page 2, line 16, at end insert—

“(f) to require the Delivery Authority to ensure that contracts for construction work in connection with the Parliamentary building works must not be awarded to construction companies who have been found to have blacklisted construction workers from employment and who have subsequently failed to enter into a Trade Union Recognition Agreement with a registered UK trade union.”

We fully support the creation of a Sponsor Body as a single client body working on behalf of each House with overall responsibility for the programme. The body will make strategic decisions relating to the carrying out of the works and consult with Members of both Houses when performing their duties.

The Bill requires the Sponsor Body to form a company limited by guarantee, the Delivery Authority, to formulate proposals relating to the Palace restoration works and to carry out the parliamentary building works. With the inclusion of the Delivery Authority, these two independent authorities are able to operate effectively in the commercial sphere, bringing the expertise and capability needed for a project of this scale. This two-tier approach was used successfully to deliver the London Olympics.

**Tom Brake** (Carshalton and Wallington) (LD): On a point of order, Sir Gary. I wish to seek clarity on whether there will be a clause stand part debate separate to the debate on the amendment.

**The Chair:** It partly depends on how the debate unfolds, but if it is of particular interest to the right hon. Gentleman, I am happy to give him that guarantee at this stage. Is he looking for that?

**Tom Brake:** There are a number of points that relate to interesting evidence provided from outside sources that I would like to refer to during a clause stand part debate.

**The Chair:** We will have a stand part debate on clause 2.

**Chris Bryant:** On a point of order, Sir Gary. Rather than several of us making four speeches, might it not be better to have just one debate on all the amendments to the clause and vote on them at the end? Might that be a little briefer?

**The Chair:** That is a very good point. We have a number of amendments tabled by different individuals. I look to Meg Hillier. Are you content?

**Meg Hillier** (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op) *indicated assent*.

**The Chair:** Why don't we do that? Let's be grown up about this. We will discuss all amendments to clause 2 at the same time. Christian Matheson, are you happy with that?

**Christian Matheson:** I am.

**The Chair:** As well as amendment 2, we will therefore consider:

Amendment 14, in clause 2, page 2, line 21, at end insert—

“(h) to require the Delivery Authority to ensure that opportunities to bid for contracts for the Parliamentary building works are promoted across the United Kingdom and that a yearly audit is carried out of the location and size of the companies awarded contracts, with the aim of ensuring that the economic benefit of the Parliamentary building works is spread across the United Kingdom and across companies of different sizes.”

New clause 1—*Report on construction contracts*—

“(1) The Delivery Authority must publish a report once every six months setting out the construction contracts awarded or let as part of the Parliamentary building works.

(2) The report under subsection (1) must include—

- (a) the number and type of contracts awarded;
- (b) the location of the firm awarded the contract; and
- (c) anything else the sponsor body deems necessary.

(3) The Delivery Authority must lay each report under subsection 1 before both Houses of Parliament”.

Amendment 3, in clause 2, page 2, line 44, leave out “desirability” and insert “need”.

**Christian Matheson:** Thank you, Sir Gary.

Clause 2 gives some directions to the Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body about the way it might exercise its functions. Amendment 2 is on the subject of blacklisting and I remind the Committee of my entry in the Register

of Members' Financial Interests, which is that I am proudly a member of the Unite and GMB trade unions and have received support from both in the past. I bring forward this amendment on blacklisting not at the behest of any trade union but on my own initiative and that of hon. Members on this side of the Committee, because it is the right thing to do.

Blacklisting is pernicious. It destroys lives and it is dangerous, and I must tell the Committee that it is still going on. Skilled tradesmen, electricians, plumbers, heating and ventilation specialists, steel erectors, mechanical and electrical contractors, all with full qualifications and experience, suddenly find that they cannot get taken on for work on any construction site, or they are given a job, they turn up to start and are suddenly told they are not needed anymore. The secret network of the blacklisters has kicked in and a worker's card is marked. They are marked down as a troublemaker or a militant.

I have represented construction workers and, sure, some are difficult or what might be termed less than politely in the industry as arsey. I challenge hon. Members to look around the Committee. Here too, on both sides, we have our own awkward squad. In every walk of life we find people of different types. Let us be clear: this is not what blacklisting is about. That is simply a cover.

The people who are blacklisted may have done nothing at all to deserve to be ostracised. A site manager might simply dislike an individual. The result: he is blacklisted. More likely, though, they are people who stood up for decent conditions, fair pay and, critically in the construction sector, for strong health and safety standards. Construction is a dangerous business and corners cut might mean costs cut, but it also means lives put at risk or even lost. Too often, the men who have been willing to stand up for their fellow workers and challenge lax health and safety regimes are the ones who have been marked down as troublemakers, when the truth is that, in many respects, they are doing their employers a service.

Earlier blacklisting bodies included the Economic League and the Services Group. The Consulting Association is the most recent example of an organised blacklist that we know of; its offices were raided in 2009 by the Information Commissioner's Office, and it was found to have been running an organised blacklisting operation with 3,300 names. An idea of the scale of operation can be judged from the fact that in the 2008-09 financial year subscribers spent £87,749 on name checks. That means that, at £2.20 for each check, 39,886 names were checked.

4.45 pm

**Tom Brake:** I know that the hon. Gentleman has pursued the matter assiduously, and I commend him for that. He has rightly set out the scale of the problem. He will be aware that if a policy of employing no companies that had blacklisted workers had been followed, there would have been difficulties delivering contracts. Does he know how many of the largest players in the construction sector have entered into a trade union recognition agreement?

**Christian Matheson:** The right hon. Gentleman is right. The problem is that blacklisting was prevalent in the industry for many years, and the danger is that it is still prevalent. The truth is that I am not quite sure.

Most of those companies will not have done that at this stage, but this measure is a way of encouraging that. I will come back to that point.

In the decade since the 2009 raid on the Consulting Association, trade unions fighting for their members would have found it easier to get blood from a stone than to get justice for their members. Compensation was received from only some of the culprits, after lengthy legal battles. One such construction company was Sir Robert McAlpine. Last December at the commencement of yet another legal action, the company said that

“Blacklisting in construction was, until 2009, an industry-wide issue...most of the largest British companies in operation today were involved in the past when there was no legislation in place to outlaw the practice.”

In other words, they would still be at it now if the minimal legislation had not been in place, which incidentally is mostly to do with data protection laws. Since the founding chairman of the Consulting Association was a director of Sir Robert McAlpine, we can hardly be surprised. Yet many firms are still at it now, and many have not admitted their guilt or paid compensation. Parliament cannot be allowed to be associated with the practice, or with firms that have undertaken the practice and failed to make good their crimes and misdemeanours.

First, the reputation of Parliament is at stake. We cannot be seen to be enriching businesses that carried out these crimes and have not been held responsible or admitted liability. Secondly, this is a prestigious contract, and these will be prestigious contracts. It is not just about the money. The companies will win new business on the back of this globally high-profile work. Thirdly, it is also about the type of culture we want working on projects on this estate: one in which safety is paramount and where concerns are listened to; one in which workers are respected; and one in which discrimination is not permitted. We need to be clear that blacklisting is a form of discrimination. If such a culture is permitted, and if workers are too scared to raise concerns for fear of losing not just their job but their ongoing livelihood, then the reputational damage to Parliament should someone suffer injury or death on our site would be horrendous, not to mention, of course, the responsibility we would bear for the victim and his or her family.

The amendments before the Committee instruct the Delivery Authority not to consider applications for contracts from firms that have been found to be involved in blacklisting, and that have not subsequently entered into a trade union recognition agreement. To touch on the point made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carshalton and Wallington, Members on this side have considered different forms of words to encapsulate the demonstration of progress away from blacklisting made by construction firms. We considered whether it would have been sufficient to have paid compensation arising from the court cases. I remind the Committee that some implicated firms have not even done that—I cannot name them yet because they are involved in ongoing legal cases, but there are several of them.

We decided that it was insufficient, as it did not clearly demonstrate a change of behaviour. The amendment calls for the Delivery Authority to proscribe any of the firms found to have been involved in blacklisting, for example through the loss of a court case, reaching an out-of-court settlement, or having been a member of a

blacklisting body such as the Consulting Association and having not since entered into a recognition agreement with a UK trade union. A recognition agreement is a way of demonstrating a change of culture: a determination to work together to resolve problems and a commitment to treating employees and their representatives with respect. In other words, it is about not just apologising for blacklisting in the past but taking clear and concrete steps not to undertake it again. I am sure that workplace safety would be at the heart of any such agreement, with which no hon. Member could disagree. If we insist on the measure in this place, it will send a signal to the industry for the first time, and we may see the beginning of the end of this dreadful, mean, discriminatory practice that has downright dangerous consequences. We missed the chance in offering the Elizabeth Tower and Big Ben contract to McAlpine, which had previously been up to its neck in blacklisting; we cannot miss it again. Above all, it is right to make a stand against blacklisting, so I urge the Committee to support the amendment.

Following your guidance, Sir Gary, I will move on to new clause 1.

**The Chair:** Yes, please do.

**Christian Matheson:** I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch, who has also tabled amendments on the subject. The project is of national significance and is relevant to every part of the UK. Regions and nations across the United Kingdom should have the opportunity to benefit economically from the parliamentary building works. Work should be spread across the United Kingdom and across companies of different sizes.

The project provides us with a wonderful opportunity to invest in people's futures by upskilling them and by working with small and medium-sized enterprises as well as larger businesses. It is incumbent on the Sponsor Body to ensure that all areas of the country benefit from the programme, including businesses outside London and the south-east. Market engagement and involvement must begin early and reach as widely as possible to include geographically diverse companies.

In particular, the project gives us the opportunity to work with people in the heritage and conservation sector, with the potential to create training opportunities in that sector. Those skills may have been lost or might not exist in some areas of the UK economy, so this is an opportunity to bring them to the nation for the first time, or for the first time in many years. There is a real risk of a skills shortage in this niche sector. The Joint Committee recommended that the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority consider how apprenticeships and other training schemes could be delivered as part of the R and R programme to increase capacity in the area and to provide a lasting legacy of skills from the programme.

The new clause asks the relevant body to provide a regular report that details its work and how it has met the requirements of spreading the work, wealth and skills around, so that can be scrutinised and progress can be monitored. I commend the new clause to the Committee.

**Tom Brake:** Has the hon. Gentleman considered making that information available online when the contracts are signed, rather than in a six-monthly report?

**Christian Matheson:** The new clause does not seek to prescribe how the Sponsor Body or Delivery Authority spreads those benefits around, although the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion is more than sensible. It seeks to lay out a regime in which the scrutiny of the success of those proposals can be undertaken, so we can make sure that progress is being made. In this day and age, it would be absurd not to put those contracts and work opportunities online. I would also like to think that the bodies concerned would be proactive in going out and finding skills.

**Mark Tami** (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab): We need to do more than just say, "It's online", and think we have somehow ticked a box. We need the equivalent of roadshows, or whatever, to go out and speak to the companies, and make them aware that this project is for the whole country and not just for London.

**Christian Matheson:** My right hon. Friend is absolutely correct. In many respects, this is an opportunity to promote the work that is being done in Parliament. There has been criticism of the programme in the past—the Minister and other hon. Members referred to it on Second Reading—but it would also be an opportunity to promote exactly why the work is needed and would promote the benefits as well as the actual contracts themselves.

Amendment 3 is about the Joint Committee's recommendation concerning the renewal of Parliament's education centre, which the Government have so far overlooked. Under clause 2(4)(g), the Bill states that there is a need to confirm

"the desirability of ensuring that educational and other facilities are provided"

in the restored Palace. However, the Joint Committee recommended that the Sponsor Body should take account of the need rather than the desirability of such facilities. The current wording of the Bill does not provide a concrete commitment to guaranteeing refurbishment of the vital education services. I am sure all hon. Members would agree that the education centre has been a huge success in bringing the work of Parliament alive to the many schools that visit. I pay tribute to the staff who work in the education centre for the fantastic work that they do.

As I say, the current wording of the Bill does not provide a concrete commitment to guaranteeing refurbishment of vital education services. The Opposition strongly support mandating the restoration of those services. Our education facilities are a core part of the parliamentary estate. Everybody has a right to learn about their parliamentary democracy, and educational facilities form the background of parliamentary engagement. The programme provides us with an opportunity to renew and enhance the education centre to allow for wider engagement, particularly with younger audiences. The education centre should be part of the legacy of the programme of restoration and renewal to encourage greater awareness of an involvement in Parliament. Such engagement with parliamentary politics is perhaps more important now than ever.

Although the cost of renewal will be high, the benefits will be great. We could create a newly refurbished education centre with accessible modern resources for

those wishing to visit the building and engage with the work of the Houses. The new facilities that are built could be used for educational purposes once the House no longer needs them when the decant is finished. The restoration and renewal process is a project of national significance and it will be a mistake to overlook the opportunity to create a new and innovative education and learning centre and the wider educational facilities across the estate that are at the heart of Parliament.

Furthermore, the amendment links closely with the Joint Committee's recommendation for consideration of public engagement in the restoration and renewal to be included in the Bill. It recommended that the Sponsor Body should promote public engagement with and public understanding of Parliament. The Sponsor Body has an important role to fulfil in engaging the public with its work and the ongoing works. The process should involve full and open engagement with relevant national and local bodies and with individuals. In that way the public are involved in their Parliament at all stages and are aware of the progress.

The former Leader of the House stated that it would not be

"appropriate that this should be part of the Sponsor Board's role",

and that responsibility should lie with Parliament. However, it seems that public involvement should be intrinsic to the process of renewal, as Parliament belongs to the people and should adhere to their input.

**Mr Prisk:** I agree with much of the sentiment expressed by the hon. Gentleman, but, without wanting to appear a pedant, would it be better not to have the word "need" and simply delete the first three words of clause 2(4)(g) so that the clause would read, "the Sponsor Body must have regard to ensuring that educational and other facilities are provided", rather than having regard to the "need"? Might that be a little stronger and more effective?

**Christian Matheson:** It is now a matter of sadness—it sounds facetious—that I did not consult the hon. Gentleman when I tabled my amendment, because his proposal is a lot simpler. I often wonder about the simpler the wording, the better the wording, but I am most grateful to him for that. Perhaps we can return to his proposal at some point.

The education centre provides a crucial lifeline for public engagement with parliamentary activities. We have a duty to protect and renew this UNESCO world heritage site, but we also have a duty to ensure that it connects with the next generation and future generations in a way that is exciting, attractive, vibrant and entirely relevant. I hope members of the Committee will bear that in mind when considering voting on the amendment.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*—

**The Chair:** Before I call Meg Hillier to speak, for clarity I remind Members that we are debating amendment 2 to clause 2, with which it will be convenient to discuss amendment 14, new clause 1 and amendment 3. Because we are taking the group of amendments together, I will reverse my previous ruling on the clause stand part debate: now is the time to make your most excellent speeches. I call Meg Hillier.

5 pm

**Meg Hillier:** It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Gary and finally to be here debating this Bill. I pay tribute to the Joint Committee that produced its excellent report in 2016; it is just a shame that it has taken so long to get this far, but we are here now with a common purpose.

I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for City of Chester for the blacklisting amendment that he has tabled; it is an excellent opportunity to enshrine in law something that will change habits. In the Committee that I have the privilege of chairing, a challenge when looking at Government contracting is often that Government are a big purchaser of services, but they have power that they do not choose to use to set parameters. This is an opportunity for a project of this size—many billions of pounds—to set the parameters and establish and push a better method of practice in a sector that has had problems in the past. Certainly, any business that wants to take part should behave in the way that my hon. Friend suggested.

My amendment stems partly from my experience as a Member representing part of the Olympic site. When the 2012 Olympics were proposed, one of the things that excited my local residents was the opportunity for them and their friends and family to get jobs on the site. Despite much pressure for that to happen, we discovered during and after the Olympics that there were a number of issues with local businesses and individuals getting work on the site. A lot of promises were made, and sometimes they were genuinely made but people found ways of getting around them. For example, a local resident could be somebody renting a room for a few weeks, who therefore became a local resident and qualified in the resident targets for those jobs, but they were not local. Local businesses did not get enough of a look in because the contracts were very large.

In preparation for the 2012 Olympics I visited New South Wales—not on the taxpayer's pound as I was on holiday—and I met the Culture Minister for New South Wales. In preparation for the Sydney Olympics, they went through every contract that was going to be let in the Olympics and broke it down to every single item that they might need to procure—every chair was broken down into its nuts and bolts. If there were companies that produced something in not quite the way required for the Olympics, they were given the advice and opportunity to learn to produce something different to meet the needs of the Olympics. Those contracts were laid out clearly. Added to that, the Government of New South Wales made a concerted effort to work with their local businesses to make sure they were contract-ready, so they could bid for the scale of contracts that the Olympics might require.

**Mark Tami:** Does my hon. Friend agree that in the tendering for those contracts, costs must be kept down? If it costs £5,000 or £10,000, a lot of small and medium-sized enterprises will not risk that massive amount of money. That is a problem in some big projects.

**Meg Hillier:** My right hon. Friend is absolutely right, and I will come on to that.

The point of that experience is that it is not for us to prescribe how the Sponsor Body might do this, but a body managing a project of this size, with this range

of work, can seek out and assist and support others to do it. My right hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside talked about having roadshows; there are Members in this House who will be the best advocates for their local businesses. I am sure that people who know that we are on this Committee and have an interest have come and told many of us about how their constituency provided elements of the existing building and could provide them again.

**Gareth Snell** (Stoke-on-Trent Central) (Lab/Co-op): Tiles.

**Meg Hillier:** I think we will hear from the ceramics sector in a moment. There are an awful lot of opportunities for our local businesses. I am sure that local authorities and business organisations in different areas will be champing at the bit to prove that their organisations can do it.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside made a valid point about contracting. The Government have moved on with things like G-Cloud to make it easier for smaller businesses to contract, but the rules can be challenging. I would not want to prescribe anything in the Bill because I think it is challenging to prescribe in law, but I hope that the Sponsor Body—I will put it on the record, and I hope it will read or hear this—makes sure that the contracts are broken down into the right size. Often, for those procuring large contracts, it is simpler to secure one big one and to let the subcontractors to the big contract take up the work. The danger with that is that they are not subcontractors.

One of the things that we need to have in place is an audit system. With the Olympics, after the event no proper audit was done of the jobs that were supposed to be created locally. The National Audit Office could have direct access to those companies, which would be a great way forward, or the Sponsor Body could commission its own audit. As we have a National Audit Office serving Parliament, however, I think it would be an excellent place to do that. The outgoing Comptroller and Auditor General and his team were keen on that. I have not had the chance to speak to the new incumbent, who started his job—very nobly—on Saturday. It is early days for him, but I am hopeful that the NAO team is still willing to take that on, as I had that reassurance from them.

Unless we measure and monitor what is happening, games can be played—people and businesses can lose out. This measure does not need to cost more if the preparatory work is done, so that such businesses can apply. Think of the skills that this place could use—stonemasons, wood carvers and a huge range of other skills and niche businesses—some of which we might not have in the UK, but if we start planning now and thinking about what we might be doing, some businesses could adapt their production processes to provide some of the things that this House needs. The prospect of a big contract might make it worth their while to take that risk. Of course it is a risk—we cannot just give those companies a contract; they will still have to bid for it—but if they are willing to do that, we should give them every opportunity.

That yearly audit is vital, and the benefits will not happen otherwise. If the Sponsor Body goes down the route of having subcontractors, we have to have a way

[Meg Hillier]

to ensure that the big companies really subcontract to specialists, not just to subcontractors they already know and work with, but opening things up more widely. The risk is that that will not happen, but I do not want to prescribe it in law because it is challenging.

If the amendment is adopted it would require the Sponsor Body to think about big project integration. Often with big projects—most recently with Crossrail—the challenge is to integrate the smaller contracts at the time just before delivery. Some of the bits of work will have to finish at around the same time, or in sequential order, to work properly, so the Sponsor Body would be required to think that through carefully in the early days. That is why I would like to get this in the Bill, so that the body has no excuse—in law, it would know what it has to do.

**Mr Prisk:** I envisage that this will be a digital project and that building the information modelling will be at the heart of the way in which it is done. That naturally undertakes what the hon. Lady just described. Is that her expectation of how this contract will be delivered?

**Meg Hillier:** The hon. Gentleman makes an important point. That is one of the things that could happen, but as we have seen—I had the privilege of visiting Crossrail a couple of times, most recently in the past few weeks—sometimes nothing beats having eyes on the ground, seeing what is happening and checking with contractors what is happening. That is a skill of project management, which of course uses digital tools to deliver. Who knows, but let us hope that a British business delivers such tools and will be able to help the Sponsor Body and win such a project. A good project manager will still be needed on the ground to ensure that all the smaller businesses work together.

This measure does not need to cost more money; it just needs to be planned from the beginning. The process cannot be added at the end, suddenly, when someone says, “Oh, we have had a lot of noise from MPs who are concerned that their companies have not got the business.” It must be planned from the beginning. The Minister is very committed to his region, and he was a great advocate for Devon when he served nobly on the Public Accounts Committee, so I am sure that he is with us in spirit. I hope that the Government are willing to accept the amendment. I will accept a change of wording if they feel that the drafting is amiss, although I had good advice from the Clerks.

**Tom Brake:** I am in some difficulty in asking questions, given my role on the House of Commons Commission, but I have established that I am allowed to speak and to express views. As the hon. Lady knows, the northern estate programme is very large and is already under way. Contractors can email that programme to express an interest in the works. That seems to me to be a good testbed for what she is arguing for—all the work that she wants to happen to audit the restoration and renewal project.

**Meg Hillier:** The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. We need to start now and make it a mission of this place to set a tone for how other large projects should be run, to ensure that we support our thriving and exceptional small business sector, which, even with

Government attempts to try to send more money in its direction, sometimes still feels cut out of large Government contracts, which are not broken down to a small enough scale. I hope the Minister will take that on board.

I want to comment on the education centre. The hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford suggested an elegant manuscript amendment—I am not sure what the procedure would be, Sir Gary, or whether that would be accepted—but the general principle raised by my hon. Friend the Member for City of Chester is right. We must not forget that the current education centre is a temporary building. It had planning permission only for a decade, it did not get built straightaway, and where it is now will have to be a space for heavy plant, so that building will be gone during—if not before—the restoration.

With the prospect of a new temporary Chamber or facility in the northern estate, there is every opportunity to plan in education from day one. It should not be an optional extra. I am often in and out of that building with schoolchildren from Hackney South and Shoreditch—it is very close by and easy to get here—and the building has had a major impact in helping them to develop their political understanding and skills. I will have plenty of successors from Hackney South and Shoreditch, and there will be heavy competition when I hang up my shoes and move on, because they have been inspired by coming here.

I pay tribute to the education team. In fact, I have also looked at their value for money, and pound for pound they provide extremely good value for money in what they deliver. We must ensure that education is a definite part of the future, not an optional extra. The danger is, if there is a budget problem—with proper audit we hope there will not be, and we will consider audit later—it could be dropped if we are not careful. I hope the Minister agrees that it needs to be written in more firmly. The Government did not accept points on this in the Joint Committee’s report, but I hope that, in the light of the debate, the Minister, who is a reasonable fellow, will consider a change of heart. In the end, it does not affect Government; it affects this House, this country and all the young people of the UK who come through it in future.

**Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con):** I want to speak briefly about amendment 14 in the name of the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch, with whom I served on the Joint Committee. The amendment is on all fours with the Joint Committee’s conclusions. She is right that the restoration and renewal of the Houses of Parliament will be one of the biggest and most important public works projects in the country, and it should, as the Joint Committee’s report mentions, emulate what was done for other large public works. She mentioned the Olympic park, and its aquatic centre was partly constructed by Welsh companies. Similarly, when Heathrow had two terminals either constructed or reconstructed recently, its owners went out of their way to ensure that companies throughout the country benefited from such large-scale public work. Again, I was pleased to see that at Heathrow a number of Welsh companies had the opportunity to contribute.

The restoration of this Palace will require a huge number of diverse skills, which may already be possessed right across the country. It is important that the Government remember that this is the restoration of our national

Parliament building, so it is entirely appropriate that each and every part of the United Kingdom should have the opportunity to benefit.

The hon. Lady's amendment accords entirely with the Joint Committee's conclusions, and I very much hope the Government recognise that this is an issue for this House rather than for them. There is much support across the House for the proposition that companies right across the United Kingdom should have the opportunity to tender for the work and benefit from it, with skills and businesses created that will endure long after the restoration of the Palace of Westminster has been completed. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to give serious consideration to the amendment.

5.15 pm

**Tom Brake:** It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Gary. I rise first to express my support for the amendments set out so far. The point I raised with the hon. Member for City of Chester was about whether adopting his approach would preclude any substantial work being done, because of the number of companies that, unfortunately, were involved in blacklisting and that might not have taken the action that he rightly wants, so far. I hope that the Minister will give us some clarity on that.

The main point that I wanted to make was about the written evidence, which Members will have seen, submitted by Professor Flinders, Alexandra Meakin and Dr Alexandra Anderson, principally regarding clause 2. The evidence addresses the Sponsor Body's duties, which were referred to earlier, with regard to ensuring perhaps a greater degree of public involvement, and having a public conversation about the future of the building. I would certainly welcome that. I do not know whether it would have to be done through the Sponsor Body, or whether Parliament could do it, but clearly it must happen.

We must ensure that there is proper engagement and public understanding, as the writers suggest, especially with regard to the regions of England and the devolved nations. Clearly there will be people around the United Kingdom who, looking at how much money is being spent on the Palace of Westminster as well as on other things such as infrastructure in London and the south-east, will feel that at the very least an explanation is needed for such a level of investment. Therefore, engaging the regions and the devolved nations—including ensuring that they get involved in the project and the large amount of work that will be available—will be very much part of the process.

The contributors of the written evidence also suggested that there is a need to look at the relocation accommodation to test alternative ways of working. That would mean using the temporary Chamber in Richmond House—which may indeed end up not being temporary, if it is decided to retain it as a permanent Chamber—as an opportunity to test alternative ways of working, which presumably could include electronic voting. Clearly, that is not the direction given by the Joint Committee, but I certainly hope that there may be scope to investigate it. The Scottish National party has, in questions, pushed hard on the issue. Clearly, if it were to be successful in a trial in the alternative Chamber it could perhaps be rolled out more permanently in the new Chamber, when the restoration and renewal project is completed.

The amendments also highlight the need for a diversity and inclusivity-sensitive Parliament, which is essential. I know that work is already starting on that, particularly in relation to accessibility. That is not just from the point of view of mobility. It also relates, for instance, to accessibility for people with autism. As I understand it, people with autism would not feel particularly comfortable sitting in a room like this one. I know that those issues are being addressed. I think that the Minister has cooled down after his exchange with a number of Members of Parliament, including me, on the urgent question on EU citizens' voting rights, and he will clearly get a much gentler ride here as I think there is broad consensus on where we will go, but I would like to hear his assessment of the written evidence I have been discussing. There are some good concrete proposals in there.

**Mr Prisk:** When I first intervened I should perhaps have drawn the Committee's attention to the fact that I am a fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

I very much welcome, as a number of Members have, the principle underlying amendment 14, tabled by the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch. It is right that this Parliament should, in its restoration, benefit the whole UK and the smallest of firms. It is absolutely right as a point of principle, and in the debate about the restoration of the building we have naturally been concerned that the public will worry about the amount of money we are spending on our workplace. Yet it could and should be seen as an investment opportunity of several billion pounds in future trades and crafts—I am sure Opposition Members will spell those out in great detail; ceramics for example—that benefit every part of the United Kingdom and every firm, large and small. Those sentiments are very welcome.

**Mark Tami:** The public are perhaps unaware of the millions of pounds that we spend now—and have done for many years—to patch up and make do, while not actually addressing the real issues.

**Mr Prisk:** The right hon. Gentleman speaks about one of my particular frustrations with all public buildings, which is that we throw money at the capital cost, never put in money for the long-term maintenance, and wonder why the damned thing costs as much as it does—if “damned” is an acceptable word, Sir Gary.

I draw the Committee's attention to my two concerns about the amendment. First, as worthy as the amendment undoubtedly is, as for any condition that we set, there will be some form of cost, whether in expression of time or in process. In this instance, I happen to think that we should establish that cost at the start. The hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch is absolutely right to say that if one does that at the beginning and then has the discipline not to tinker and meddle thereafter, one can avoid the spiralling costs of other public projects.

Secondly, there is the nature of the audit envisaged in the amendment, which the hon. Lady addressed to a degree. Going by what she said, she does not wish to have a strict audit in the sense of trying to have a rigid quota, in which one part of the country must have a certain percentage and so on.

**Meg Hillier** *indicated assent.*

**Mr Prisk:** The hon. Lady is nodding. That is extremely encouraging, because my worry is that we might get into a game between the Sponsor Body, the Delivery Authority and hon. Members from across the House about who gets what quota, which would then ratchet up the cost and distract from the central purpose.

Those concerns notwithstanding, the principles underlining the amendment are good. There may be a good argument for tweaking it, about which I am sure that the Minister will respond. It is crucial that we talk about and show this to our constituents as something for the whole of the United Kingdom, for every trade and craft, and for every business, large and small. That is why the sentiment of the amendment is commendable.

**Chris Bryant:** I wholeheartedly support the fact that the Bill is finally before Committee, and regret that it has taken so many years, not only under this Government, but under previous Governments, to get to this point. I wholeheartedly support the idea in the clause of handing the work over to a Sponsor Body, which in turn has an arm's length body—a Delivery Authority—because that is probably the only way to stop us lot from continually meddling with the project.

Every building contractor always says that they want a good client. A good client could mean one of two things. Either it is someone who continuously changes their mind about what they want, which means that the price goes up and up—that is good for one end of the equation—or it is someone who makes up their mind at the beginning, decides what they want and sticks with it right through to the end, and ends up with a project delivered on time and on budget.

I desperately hope that we will end up as the latter and not the former. I fear that we, both individually and as a House, may find it far too tempting to keep on meddling with the project, which is why it is really important that we do it this way. If someone ever wanted to know why handing over to an arm's length body is particularly important, they would simply have to look at what happened after the fire in 1834. Caroline Shenton's book on that is masterful in showing how terrible self-opinionated and self-aggrandising MPs can be, of which I am glad to be a fine example.

I warmly congratulate my hon. Friends the Members for Hackney South and Shoreditch and for City of Chester on their amendments, which are important for different reasons. I will address only amendment 14. I completely agree that, in delivering the work, which will be one of the most important infrastructure projects in the country for many decades, costing many billions of pounds, we need to ensure that there is a benefit for every part of the country. I am not denigrating the pros—I think it important that the project goes ahead for all sorts of different reasons, which have been referred to elsewhere.

However, the single biggest difficulty will be having enough people with the skills to be able to do the work. I simply do not think that, if we just hope that that will happen, these people will materialise from nowhere. I am not going to use the B-word in this debate, but I simply note that the building industry in this country has been heavily dependent over the past 15 years on workers from other countries in the European Union. We will want to make sure that we still have access to those people in future.

The bigger point is that when Wembley was rebuilt, large numbers of workers from the Rhondda worked on the project. Crossrail has large numbers of people who travel up every week. They come up very early on a Monday morning and go back on a Thursday evening. I want to make sure that that happens on this project as well, but that means several things.

First, some kind of parliamentary building academy is needed in many different parts of the country to make sure that we have the specific skills that we need for this project, especially considering the fact that Buckingham Palace will be going through a similar project at a similar time. Some of the skills that we will need simply do not exist in the main in this country any longer. If you want somebody to build a drystone wall—we will not need them here—you will pay over the odds because very few people now have that skill and it will take a long time to get 100 metres done, unlike 100 years ago. *[Interruption.]* I am not sure whether the right hon. Member for Clwyd West is offering to come and mend my drystone wall for me, not that I have got one.

**Mr Jones:** I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there are any number of drystone walls in north Wales.

**Chris Bryant:** They are not very useful for this project, but there may be stonemasonry skills that could be very important for this building. It is interesting that the recent work on the cast-iron roofs and the stone courtyards has drawn in pretty much all the skilled labour in this field in the country. If we are to deliver this project on time and move out in 2026 to 2027, we will have to train people by that time. That is why the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch is as important as any other tabled today.

My final point on the clause relates to the education centre. One of the problems is not only that the building has to come down in a couple of years—it has permission for only 10 years and that piece of land will probably be a major part of the building site that will be needed for the project—but that Victoria Tower is no longer fit for purpose for the Archives centre. The photography room in the Archives centre has never worked, which is why a lot of the really valuable photographs are now in danger of decaying—because they are a fugitive technology. We are not keeping the historic rolls well. They are in the right order, but they are not kept separately, which is why they are jumbled on top of one another.

All that is a good reason why there must be a serious legacy at the end of this project. I very much hope that that is an education centre, which retains the Archives here on site so that people from our constituencies and from around the world can fully understand how democracy has been advanced on this site since 1258.

**Neil Gray** (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): I am pleased to represent the SNP on the Committee. It is also a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Rhondda, with whom I served on the Joint Committee. He eloquently put forward some of the arguments that we heard in evidence and that were reported on three years ago in relation to the warnings about access to skills. I hope the Government will look at that at this late stage and take heed as the project continues.

I wish to be brief this afternoon—particularly on this group. I should say that I am also a member of the shadow Sponsor Body. I support the amendments. I will not reiterate the fine words that have been spoken in support of them, particularly by the hon. Member for City of Chester, who put forward the case on blacklisting very strongly, except to say that the parliamentary authorities took some heavy criticism on the letting of the Elizabeth Tower contract, because of that particular company's history on blacklisting. Parliament should not be seen to condone such despicable employment practices again.

5.30 pm

Amendment 14 and new clause 1 are very similar. I agree with both and am happy to support them. The amendment I proposed would have gone one step further, although I understand why it was not selected. The right hon. Member for Clwyd West spoke of the opportunities for different parts of these isles to benefit from this project. My amendment would have provided a nations and regions capital investment fund to allow physical examples, in every area, of capital projects linked to this project. That would have meant that we had not just the less tangible links that come through employment contracts, but physical links to this project as well. I hope the Minister will be able to speak to that in summing up, and I look forward to working constructively with him in that regard at further stages.

Amendment 3 also makes perfect sense, and I am happy to support it as well.

**Sir Patrick McLoughlin** (Derbyshire Dales) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Sir Gary. I very much welcome the move forward that this Committee represents.

I want to address amendment 14. As a country, we are getting better at large infrastructure projects—that may seem an odd thing to say, but I truly believe it. I look at Crossrail. In terms of its tail-end, we await the report that the Committee chaired by the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch is about to publish, but the early stages were a model of the way in which we see development. The construction was basically done to time, but things were done to time in another way as well—in terms of promoting what the project was across the country and getting many companies involved.

My only fear about amendment 14 is that the hon. Lady talks about a yearly audit being carried out. My worry is that that is too late. This should really be in the roots of the project; it is not something that happens once the project has gone above ground. It must be part of the project right from the very start, not from the time the work starts.

I was involved in the early stages of High Speed 2. We ran a number of conferences around the country showing businesses what would be involved and telling them how to start to apply to be considered for that work. That has got to be the way, and that work needs to be done right now. It should be part of the very early work of the Sponsor Body. I am sorry—I forgot to declare my interest: I am currently serving on the shadow Sponsor Body. I know everyone there will be following the words spoken here in Committee closely.

We should be talking about that aspect now. It is of great pride to me that, whenever I have constituents down and show them Portcullis House, I can show them the stone from Birchover quarry—the Ann Twyford quarry—in my constituency. That sort of work was done on that project, and it has to be part of these projects. It is also a way of selling why we have to do this work. We are not doing it out of some desire to improve the facilities here. Yes, we want to make them better, but it is also a matter of restoring one of the premier buildings in not just the United Kingdom but the world. That is why I am slightly concerned about the yearly audit, because by the time we get to that stage, it will be too late. It has to be part of the work of the Sponsor Body and one of its early jobs.

**The Chair:** We can wait no longer for ceramics. I call Gareth Snell.

**Gareth Snell:** Thank you very much, Sir Gary. It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship.

Before I touch on ceramics, as predictable as I am becoming in this place, I want to lend my support to amendment 2, in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for City of Chester. We know that trade union-recognised bodies tend to be safer and that their staff tend to be happier and to get jobs done more quickly and on time, because they have a reputation to work with. We also know—this is linked in part to new clause 1 and amendment 14—that where trade union bodies are involved in the construction industry, modern-day slavery is less prevalent.

I mention that because the construction industry will freely admit that it still has a problem with tackling modern-day slavery through gang labour. The best intentioned commissioning and procurement cannot guarantee what the layers of sub-procurement down the chain will deliver. A trade union-recognised employer would be able to work with supply chains to ensure that we do not unwittingly propagate modern-day slavery through the procurement and commissioning of large-scale infrastructure works linked to this place. There are already recorded instances of public bodies, without prejudice, finding themselves receiving services from people in modern-day slavery because of the way contracts are subcontracted out.

I support my hon. Friend's amendment 2 because, by involving trade unions with employers at an early stage of large projects, we can ensure not only that we put our money into the fabric of the building, but that we put our values into the building. That has to be an important part of how this building moves forward.

I turn to the ceramics industry. My right hon. Friend the Member for Alyn and Deeside mentioned the sums that are already being spent to keep the building going. Many hon. Members will have seen that the Minton tiles in Central Lobby, which were originally made in my constituency—in fact, by one of my predecessors, the Member for North Staffordshire in the 1870s—are being replaced, one at a time, by a wonderful company called Craven Dunnill. Where we already have skilled people on site doing remedial work, they ought to be involved in conversations now so we can work out what skills they can bring forward and how the procurement and commissioning process can be best placed. I do not

[Gareth Snell]

mean that in the sense of helping them on a commercial basis, but they will be able to tell us what they can and cannot do and what the scope of the industry is. Because we already have a contractual working relationship with those companies, we have nothing to fear about the credibility of the advice they give.

That is why amendment 14 in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch is so important. The ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent can make us pretty much anything we ask for, but I would wager that very few people know that. Yes, it can make tiles, teapots and tableware, but advanced ceramics is now a wonderful way of replacing metalwork—not that I have anything against metalwork, but ceramics are longer standing and have a greater tolerance for stress. There is an opportunity to build in—[*Interruption.*] Well, I am not quite on commission—if I were, I would declare it.

My point is that there are sectors of the UK economy doing wonderful work that many of us do not know about. Unless we ask them up front what is possible through the procurement process, we may end up doing what, I am afraid to say, often happens with the military: they decide they want something, so they buy that something. What they actually want is something that can do a certain thing, but they do not think about what else is available. Considering what we hope to achieve at the end rather than what we want to buy may create greater scope—

**Chris Bryant:** My hon. Friend makes a good point. One of the problems in the building is that nobody has yet managed to count correctly the number of brass windows we have—it is either 4,800 or 7,200, depending on who we believe. Nobody makes those windows today, so somebody is going to have to start training people soon to try to replace them. It is the same in ceramics.

**Gareth Snell:** My hon. Friend makes a fair point. If we want something in the wall that will let in light, and that will let in cool air when it is hot and keep out cool air when it is cold, does it have to be a brass window of that design? Is there some other way of doing things? [*Interruption.*] We could do it in ceramics, but that might be slightly dark in daytime. We have not quite got transparent ceramics yet. The way we think about the outcomes will be important in shaping the procurement process. That is something that the Sponsor Body ought to be considering now, but with the industry alongside it, because nobody is better able to tell us what it can do than the industry itself.

I want to make a brief comment in support of amendment 14. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 is a wonderful piece of legislation. It started as a private Member's Bill, and it has allowed procurement and what we are actually paying for to be revolutionised. I urge the Government, when it comes to the point of working with the Sponsor Body, to frame how procurement should work. Yes, the cost—the value of the things that we are buying—is important, but the additional value that we can derive through the Act in the procurement process, in terms of opening up this vast investment to skills, new technologies, and research and development in different parts of the country, may have a lasting

legacy beyond the jobs and employment contracts, which are very transactional. It may genuinely root changes in communities, which will benefit from this place. I will therefore be supporting the amendments.

**Kevin Foster:** This has been a fascinating debate, and a number of right hon. and hon. Members have made passionate points. The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central strongly endorsed the ceramics industry, as always, and spoke about the quality of its products.

Yesterday, I had the joy of having a tour of the basement. If any member of the Committee has not yet had the opportunity to do so, I would strongly recommend it; they would be helping to make progress with this project. I saw the innovative sewer ejectors, which were put there in the 1880s. They have “Chester” on the side of them. The hon. Member for City of Chester will be delighted to hear that they have been such a functional part of this place for so many years.

**Christian Matheson:** Will the Minister give way?

**Kevin Foster:** Absolutely. This must be the hon. Gentleman's expert subject.

**Christian Matheson:** I am most grateful to the Minister for giving way. I am delighted that Chester is represented here, even if it is only in the sewers.

**Kevin Foster:** Of course, Chester is not just represented in the sewers; it is represented by the hon. Gentleman, who is sat here in the Committee doing his job, as always.

It was useful to hear the comment about putting our values into this place physically. Certainly, that is one of the things that the Sponsor Body will need to do. It was also interesting to hear from my right hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire Dales about the quarry in Derbyshire that provided the stone for Portcullis House. Again, that shows that, although this is a project in London, we do not want it to be a London-centric project. With all respect to hon. Members who represent Greater London constituencies, we want it to be a project that reflects the entire Union that this Parliament serves, and we will seek to spread the prosperity.

**Kirstene Hair (Angus) (Con):** I want to build on a point that my right hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire Dales made about having not just contractors but materials from across the United Kingdom. In Scotland, Chinese and European steel was used for the £1.3 billion Queensferry crossing. This is not simply about cost, although we need to keep within budget; we must also look at the jobs, skills and businesses that we are supporting.

**Kevin Foster:** I recall my hon. Friend referring to that bridge project in a couple of debates in the Chamber about the UK steel industry. It is important that we use materials from across the United Kingdom, and create jobs and skills. The steel casting on the Elizabeth Tower—a project that has already been referred to—came from Sheffield, and the encaustic tiles in Central Lobby were produced in Shropshire, so there is already a spread across the country.

**Gareth Snell:** Three-quarters of the encaustic tiles were made in Stoke-on-Trent. Unfortunately, the top quarter—the bit that everyone sees—was made in Telford, but it is rooted on a solid foundation from the ceramic city.

**Kevin Foster:** I am reassured, knowing the quality of the product that comes out of the Potteries. I still have a set of plates made in Stoke-on-Trent that I won in a raffle. I have had them for about 25 years, but they are still doing their job to this very day. That speaks to the quality of product from the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

5.45 pm

It may be helpful for me to go through the amendments in order, starting with those tabled by the shadow Minister before moving on to the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch. On amendment 2, in the name of the hon. Member for City of Chester, let me be clear that blacklisting is a scourge in industry. It undermines the protection of workers' rights and it is completely wrong and immoral. I am very clear that any company thinking of engaging in such behaviour should very quickly think again.

On whether the amendment should be added to the Bill, I have listened carefully to the right hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington, who said that, sadly, blacklisting is relatively prevalent in the construction industry. We have to ensure that there will be some competing objectives to make sure that we have a wide range of bidders, to get best value for the taxpayer, and at the same time think about what statements we make. That will not be the only area where we want to look at what might be a legal practice but not a practice that the Houses of Parliament would necessarily wish to be associated with.

The Sponsor Body will have to engage, and I think we can be reassured that the three members of the shadow Sponsor Body here today will be active participants in the debate about what to include in contracting and how contractors are selected. For example, we would not want to use unsustainable timber supplies and we would want to make sure that when going to the market for products to be used in this building, we would not necessarily always go for the lowest price if things were produced using environmentally unsustainable practices, or production methods that might be legal in other jurisdictions but not here on environmental grounds.

I suggest to the hon. Member for City of Chester that when we get towards the parliamentary relationship agreement between the corporate offices of both Houses of Parliament and the Sponsor Body, and the programme delivery agreement between the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority, that will be the appropriate time to start having those sorts of considerations. That will be when we start to move towards contracting—when the body is established and is taking oversight of this project, rather than in a piece of primary legislation. Partly that is because this is a framework Bill that creates a legal body to deliver this project.

Some Members made comments about what the Government should remember when delivering; this Bill is the Government facilitating Parliament's will. This is not strictly a Government project; this is not something that a Government Minister will directly be

the client for, as perhaps in other major projects that we may look to have. This project would be one where the Sponsor Body, having been established under this legislation, will engage with the Government but where Parliament is driving the project overall. I want to be clear about that.

**Chris Bryant:** I am afraid that the Minister's argument may be strongly supportive of the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for City of Chester. Clause 2 already lays out several things that we consider to be so important that we put them in the Bill, such as disabled access and the fact that we will return to the building. Why should this not be one more?

**Kevin Foster:** Most of the things in the Bill are statutory, but we do not go through in detail each piece of environmental legislation or health and safety practice that we would expect. That is where the statutory obligations need to be complied with.

I am conscious of the comments about the ability to secure contractors; at this stage, this amendment is not one to put in the Bill. We believe there are other more appropriate ways to ensure, via the Sponsor Body and with strong parliamentary representation through the three members present in this Committee, that these areas come in. Again we could look at, for example, subsection (4)(b), which stresses having

“a view to ensuring the safety and security of people who work in Parliament”,

but does not go on to specify individual areas.

I suggest that this would be better picked up through the parliamentary relationship agreement and the programme delivery agreement, with other areas that may be items where Parliament might not necessarily have statutory responsibility, but would not wish to see the works associated with it, given the obvious impact—I accept that if Parliament was engaging with contractors who were engaging in blacklisting, that would have a strongly negative impact on Parliament and its reputation.

I come on to new clause 1, requiring a report once every six months. The Government consider that unnecessary. Under schedule 1, the Sponsor Body is required to produce for Parliament, at least once a year, a report on the progress of the parliamentary building works. Ultimately, the content of those reports would be a matter for the Sponsor Body, but we would expect them to include details on what contracts had been awarded.

As with the previous amendment, we feel that the programme delivery agreement would be a better place to specify such requirements, rather than the Bill. Not only the parties to that agreement, the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority, but I am sure hon. Members across this House—in terms of how we hold to account the parliamentary members of the Sponsor Body—will be interested in how that process works and in ensuring a regular flow of information.

The Bill puts in place the necessary governance arrangements to undertake the parliamentary board works. Given that the governance arrangements create a stand-alone body, we consider that matters such as the reporting of contracts should be for the Sponsor Body

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and the Delivery Authority to consider, rather than being prescribed by Parliament in primary legislation at this stage.

Moving on to amendment 3, I share the hon. Gentleman's passion for having good educational facilities on this parliamentary estate. They are part of what we are and part of ensuring that a future generation can find out about Parliament. We will not necessarily prescribe in this project that we rebuild exactly the same facility as we have now; there are some incredibly exciting opportunities to create spaces, for example for the Youth Parliament, which at the moment can only realistically meet on the estate when we are not sitting in one of the Chambers. What opportunities might be provided by having had a decant period that creates a new facility that the Youth Parliament and other citizens might be able to use, and by generally having a better facility?

However, while I hear suggestions of future amendments that I would not reject the Government's considering on Report, the way the thing is structured is that "need" relates to those things for which there are statutory responsibilities, such as health and safety, security or disabilities. There is no concept of Crown immunity applying to this project. The project will be required to make reasonable adjustments for disability access—again, within the confines of working within a building that is Grade I listed and where virtually every corner has a moment of history associated with it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bury St Edmunds and I were reflecting earlier on the cupboard where the suffragette hid in 1911, which, it is safe to say, is not in its greatest setting at the moment and does not allow for any particular use of it for educational purposes, despite its significant role in history.

**Chris Bryant:** You can't move it.

**Kevin Foster:** We can't move it, but I understand it has a computer server in it; it is hardly the most fitting compliment to shove a computer server in the room. Those are the sorts of areas where we can look at how we expand the wider role in education.

I cannot imagine that Members of either House would endorse a programme of works or an estimate that did not include a clear provision for educational facilities in the final building and in the decant option. In the wording of this particular clause, however, by using "desirability" for this and other facilities, it is the Government's perspective that the Sponsor Body has a direction, but also some flexibility. The other facilities that we might have considered sensible 30 years ago may not necessarily be the other facilities that we consider sensible today. For example, 30 years ago it would have seemed sensible to put in a large number of public phone boxes, but a facility to charge a mobile phone would have been completely irrelevant to all but the wealthiest of people visiting the House. Now, we would take the view that the balance would be the other way round.

**Meg Hillier:** The Minister is making an eloquent argument against the word "need", but we have an elegant amendment proposed by the hon. Member for

Hertford and Stortford, which talks about taking out the words "the desirability of". My concern—I think some other hon. Members input their concern too—is that if it is not on the face of the Bill, we will have already lost the education centre and there will be a risk that it might fall off the edge, at the end of the project. I think it is important to have it on the face of the Bill.

**Kevin Foster:** That is why the face of the Bill is balanced. While these are not statutory obligations—there is no statute saying or implying that we have to have it—having it down as desirable reflects that. I am looking in Sir Gary's direction, but the amendments before me are the ones on the amendment paper and the ones we are considering. There is no manuscript amendment or any other proposed amendment at this stage, but I would not rule out looking at this issue again on Report, if a proposal is brought forward. We would be happy to work with colleagues if there is a feeling that this provision should be strengthened.

To respond to the question about relevance, it is on the face of the Bill—it reflects desirability. I accept that ultimately some of the facilities—not the educational ones—will depend on balancing many competing priorities, including the very pressing need to preserve the heritage of this building.

**Chris Bryant:** I think the Minister is saying that if the amendment that was suggested as a potential manuscript amendment were available to us, then he would be in favour of it. Can he commit to bringing that amendment forward himself on Report?

**Kevin Foster:** While I thank the hon. Gentleman, I am clear that this is a parliamentary project. The Government will seek to defend their interest as this Bill goes through, but it would not be our intention to bring forward Government amendments, except to deal with matters specifically relating to the Government's role. However, we would look kindly at something a bit later. If a Back-Bench amendment were brought forward—particularly if Parliamentary Counsel were involved—we would not inherently move to object, but that is something upon which to take advice.

At this stage, the wording of the Bill as it stands gives Members what they are looking for; the desirability of ensuring that education and other facilities are provided for people visiting the Palace of Westminster, after the completion of these works, is clearly on the face of the Bill. The Sponsor Body must have regard to that and it would be on the front page of primary legislation. We are all clear about the goals we wish the Sponsor Body to achieve, despite our discussion on wording.

**Meg Hillier:** I seek some guidance from the Minister. He is the Minister presenting the Bill. The law was drafted by Government, because that is the way that Bills are drafted and the Sponsor Body cannot draft the Bill itself. Therefore, the Minister is the custodian of what this Bill will say. Yet he has just said that it is not the Government's role to add to the use of the Bill because it is not ultimately a Government responsibility. Is he saying that he will go away and talk to the Sponsor Body about what it would like to see, and then he might consider a Government amendment, or is he saying he

would only accept a Back-Bench amendment but he would seriously consider one along the lines proposed by the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford, amending the amendment proposed by my hon. Friend the Member for City of Chester?

**Kevin Foster:** The Government have been clear in their wish to facilitate Parliament in its desire to complete restoration and renewal; that is the position we have strongly adopted. If a Member wished to engage with Government, before Report, about particular wording then obviously we would wish to make sure we had had advice from Parliamentary Counsel. We do not want to find that the Bill has an unintended consequence, or that an amendment has been made that will make the Sponsor Body's job more difficult; I am sure the hon. Lady does not want that either. I say again that I do not think that anyone reading the face of the Bill would take it to mean that there is not a clear and strong push towards having educational and other facilities in this building. That would be on the face of primary legislation.

6 pm

**Mr Prisk:** I feel slightly embarrassed by being called elegant on two occasions; that is something that my former rugby colleagues would not necessarily recognise. The Minister is right to say that he needs to take careful consideration with Parliamentary Counsel and he is absolutely right to want to talk to the Sponsor Body. I am guided by that. I have not heard anyone on the Committee say that they do not believe that educational facilities should be there. The answer is to find a truly elegant solution, and I have confidence that the Minister will do so.

**Kevin Foster:** I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention. We have outlined the position and, as I said, although we are not prepared to accept the amendment today, I am happy to have further conversations before Report. What is on the front page of the Bill is obvious, and few would doubt that that gives a clear indication of our intentions.

I turn to amendment 14, tabled by the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch. It is clear that we want the project to be delivered across the entire United Kingdom, with all companies and those who can bring skills and talents to the project able to do so. The clause establishes a Sponsor Body for the purpose of having overall responsibility for the parliamentary building works and sets out the duties placed on the body and a number of factors that it needs to have regard to in exercising its functions.

It is important to remember that the clause, as well as the Bill as a whole, establishes the necessary governance arrangements and accountability to oversee and deliver the parliamentary building works. While we wish to see such delivery, we ultimately believe that it is for the Sponsor Body to look at how best to achieve that, again with representation from Members who represent seats across the United Kingdom. I can look for example, at how we are doing other projects. There was a reference to Heathrow holding roadshows around the United Kingdom; I wish to see the Sponsor Body doing such engagements.

I guess that every Member of this House will be only too keen to let the Sponsor Body, and particularly its parliamentary members, know about opportunities for development of skills and creation of new crafts. We will have to balance that against some challenges. There is only a limited number of suppliers of certain heritage products; in some cases, there may be only one or two. I was given the example of bronze windows, which only two suppliers make today. I suggest that, at this stage, accepting the amendment would not be appropriate, but the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority will need a strong regard to the desire that the project reflects the entire United Kingdom when contracts are being let. The Bill is about setting up the framework and the legal body that will look to deliver the contracts; it is not about agreeing those contracts and the programmes of work, which will be voted on by the House at a separate time.

**Neil Gray:** Is this not exactly the point at which we should be ensuring that this is a UK-wide project? I say, as a current member of the shadow Sponsor Body, that if this issue is left until further down the line, other cost or time pressures may be applied to the project, and the Sponsor Body may, for whatever reason, see this as being superfluous. Unless we do this right now at the outset, we may lose that element of opportunity.

**Kevin Foster:** While I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention, I do not agree. I have every confidence that the Sponsor Body will look for good value, and that will mean contracting with companies across the whole United Kingdom. We see this in the experience of other projects and major events. Of course, we can have confidence that the hon. Gentleman will be a strong voice in pushing the Sponsor Body, as he has been on the shadow body, to look at working across the United Kingdom. I suggest it is not appropriate to put such a requirement into the Bill at this stage.

**Meg Hillier:** I thank the Minister for giving way; he is being generous. However, I refer to what my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda said. The clause already sets out specific criteria. Although the amendment may not be so elegantly worded, I was careful in drafting it to ensure that it would set the principle in train at this early stage, while not prescribing how the Sponsor Body would go about things. Members of the Sponsor Body are here, and others will no doubt be watching. As the Minister knows, they are only on for three years at a time, so it is important that this issue is enshrined in the Bill and not lost in the mists of time. Many of us will not be here when we actually move out of the building, by which point many of the contracts will already have been let. I urge the Minister to give us some comfort that he will at least go away and consider this. I am minded to press the amendment to a vote, on the basis that we need to set down a marker in the Bill for the principle that we should make this a UK-wide project. I need more words of comfort from the Minister before I will consider withdrawing the amendment.

**Kevin Foster:** We would be happy to take this away and look at how we can provide further reassurance to Members. The intention is that the Delivery Authority will look for work across the United Kingdom, but I am

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afraid that if the amendment is pressed to a Division, the Government will have to resist it at this stage, despite the fact that we all seem to have the same objective.

Things such as the yearly audit of the works will mean that the Delivery Authority remains accountable to Parliament, and parliamentary members will be on it. There will be appropriate discussion to be had about exactly how they face questions and how they can be held to account on a day-to-day basis, including by the Public Accounts Committee, which I cannot believe for one minute will not take the opportunity of regular reports and examinations of how the authority is spreading its work, contracting and making sure that this a project for the entire Union.

**Mr Jones:** I have heard what my hon. Friend has to say, but as he will know, subsection (4) provides steers as to how the Sponsor Body shall exercise its functions. If my hon. Friend is not willing to allow the amendment, is he prepared to consider, maybe on Report, moving this provision into subsection (4), so that the Sponsor Body has to have regard to the need to spread the work around the United Kingdom? That compromise may be of assistance.

**Kevin Foster:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his suggestion. Given that it is constructive, I would be quite happy to offer to do that. We could look at this, perhaps on Report, if an amendment was brought forward. Again, if Members wish to work with Parliamentary Counsel to deliver something, we will be happy to consider that and to see if we can reach an appropriate compromise on Report and insert it. However, the way my right hon. Friend suggests may be a better option.

**Chris Bryant:** I am getting a bit confused. The Minister seems to say that this is not a Government project, so the Government will not table amendments. However, they will resist amendments, so they clearly have some kind of Government view. I presume that, as on Second Reading, this is un-whipped business, because it is business of the House, unless the Government Minister tells me differently.

**Kevin Foster:** Obviously, whipping arrangements are for each party. Again, I make the point that this project is being fundamentally driven by Parliament, for Parliament. The Government are facilitating the Bill to provide the legal framework for that, via the mechanisms that we can use, in terms of time and support. I am entitled, as the Minister, to take a view on amendments that are brought forward; the shadow Minister is bringing amendments forward and taking a view as well.

At this stage, my advice to the Committee is that we do not believe that this amendment should be put in. I am happy to pick up on the suggestion from my right hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd West and other Members of constructive engagement before Report, as I have offered on the other area, to see if we can find a form of wording that is acceptable and that Parliamentary Counsel would also be comfortable with, in terms of its not having unintended consequences for the Bill.

With that, I think I have concluded my response to the amendment, and I thank hon. Members.

**Tom Brake:** I am sure it was not a deliberate omission on his part, but the Minister will be aware that I quoted from the written evidence supplied to the Committee—evidence PBB01—which made a number of suggestions, including, for instance, ensuring that the public are fully engaged in the process and that the relocated accommodation or temporary Chamber is tested for alternative ways of working. I was hoping for a ministerial view on that submission, which I am sure the Minister would like to give the Committee now.

**Kevin Foster:** I thank the right hon. Gentleman for prompting me back to his query; the contribution from the Department of Politics at the University of Sheffield was a welcome one to read, with a number of thoughts, suggestions and ideas on how the project could be enhanced. I would not necessarily propose that the amendments suggested in its contribution be made—the right hon. Gentleman has not tabled those amendments, so I suspect he takes a similar view about not amending the Bill to reflect them—but it is certainly welcome to see that positive engagement and thought in terms of what could be done.

I hope that, as the Sponsor Body is established, it will look to those types of submissions in thinking about how we can make this a project that reaches out and hopefully changes people's perceptions of Parliament, as well as one that restores and renews this building physically. It was a welcome piece of correspondence to receive, and one that the Sponsor Body could well read and learn from.

**Christian Matheson:** Listening to the debate on this first group of amendments, and having come somewhat late to this party, I am reminded of the expertise among hon. Members on both sides of the House on the detail of the work to be done and the challenges we must face. I am most grateful to hon. Members for their contributions.

I will respond to the debate in reverse order. First, on amendment 3, relating to the education centre, I confess that I was not quite sure whether the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford had tabled a formal manuscript amendment, and had to seek advice, but, in a saner sense, of course he had not. He made a straightforward suggestion, and the Minister was positive in his response not only to my amendment and to the case for maintaining educational facilities, but to the suggestion that we might look at this again on Report, perhaps with a simpler amendment that would nevertheless still embed into the heart of the legislation the importance of the educational facilities. I would like to go down that route, if I may.

Although I would never look a gift horse in the mouth and would not like to turn down the opportunity, I am not quite clear why we would need the Parliamentary Counsel's advice on an amendment that would simply delete two words; that might be a bit of overkill. However, I am grateful to the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford and to the Minister for providing support for the amendment on the educational facilities. I do not intend to test the views of the Committee by putting it to a vote at this stage.

Let me move to new clause 1 and to amendment 14, tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch, which were considered together.

By the way, I hope the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central are aware that he is known so well throughout the House that even before he stood up we all knew he would talk about ceramics, such is his dedication to representing that great industry in that great city. The hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford made a fantastic point that this is not necessarily an investment just in a UNESCO world heritage site, but in the future of the country. That is certainly the message that I shall be using and taking out—if he will permit me, of course—whenever I talk about this.

I urge hon. Members to look around the room: we know that there is some work that can only be undertaken in situ, but I ask them to look at the wallpaper, the wood panelling, the brass windows and the electronics. All those materials and components can be sourced and produced elsewhere, so the work does not all have to be done in London, only the installation. The Minister talked about where there might only be one or two suppliers, and the effect that would have on cost. He is of course right, but there is a responsibility incumbent on those one or two suppliers to grow the skills base, and hon. Members have talked about that.

What I would say about new clause 1, and particularly the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch, is that this is not a complicated proposal. It is a fairly innocuous suggestion to ensure that we monitor that the work is going out and about across the country. It is not prescriptive. It is not saying to the Delivery Authority or the Sponsor Body, “You must allocate so many contracts to so many parts of the country.” All that the new clause and the amendment do is to suggest that we should be able to monitor just how well those bodies are spreading the work around. They are not directing them in a particular way, and I cannot see why the Minister would not want them, other than the general concern—which I understand—about not wanting to put too much in to the Bill.

6.15 pm

I will finish on the blacklisting amendment, which was amendment 2. I welcome the Minister’s condemnation at the outset of blacklisting, which he said was a scourge. The problem is that we do not get many opportunities to do something about it. We do not get many opportunities to put our revulsion at this practice and our determination to do something about it into legislation. This would set a standard that would apply to this project and across the rest of the country. My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent Central spoke about values, which was particularly appropriate.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda said, clause 2 is not without prescription itself, so the amendment would not stand out as unusual within the Bill. Blacklisting and safe standards in construction are so important. I do not believe we will have many other opportunities in this project to specify that blacklisting is unacceptable. There will be few, if any, opportunities to put our opposition to it into legislation. Therefore, I am keen to put this amendment to a vote and test the Committee’s support.

I say with great sincerity to the Committee that I am grateful for the recognition given, particularly by the Minister, to our revulsion of blacklisting, a practice

which does continue, but we have to put our money where our mouth is. If we are genuinely opposed to it, this is one of the few opportunities we will have in this House to demonstrate our opposition to it, on construction contracts that we have some level of control over, even at one or two steps removed. Therefore, my intention is to put the amendment to a vote.

*Question put, That the amendment be made.*

*The Committee divided: Ayes 8, Noes 9.*

#### Division No. 1]

#### AYES

Brake, rh Tom	Hillier, Meg
Bryant, Chris	Matheson, Christian
Elmore, Chris	Snell, Gareth
Gray, Neil	Tami, rh Mark

#### NOES

Afolami, Bim	Jones, rh Mr David
Churchill, Jo	McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
Foster, Kevin	Prisk, Mr Mark
Graham, Luke	Robinson, Mary
Hair, Kirstene	

*Question accordingly negated.*

*Amendment proposed: 14, in clause 2, page 2, line 21, at end insert—*

‘(h) to require the Delivery Authority to ensure that opportunities to bid for contracts for the Parliamentary building works are promoted across the United Kingdom and that a yearly audit is carried out of the location and size of the companies awarded contracts, with the aim of ensuring that the economic benefit of the Parliamentary building works is spread across the United Kingdom and across companies of different sizes.’—(*Meg Hillier.*)

*Question put, That the amendment be made.*

*The Committee divided: Ayes 8, Noes 9.*

#### Division No. 2]

#### AYES

Brake, rh Tom	Hillier, Meg
Bryant, Chris	Matheson, Christian
Elmore, Chris	Snell, Gareth
Gray, Neil	Tami, rh Mark

#### NOES

Afolami, Bim	Jones, rh Mr David
Churchill, Jo	McLoughlin, rh Sir Patrick
Foster, Kevin	Prisk, Mr Mark
Graham, Luke	Robinson, Mary
Hair, Kirstene	

*Question accordingly negated.*

**The Chair:** We now come to clause 2. As I have indicated previously, I am not minded to allow a stand part debate, so I will put the question immediately.

*Clause 2 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Ordered, That further consideration be now adjourned.—(Jo Churchill.)*

6.20 pm

*Adjourned till this day at half-past Seven o’clock.*

