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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
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**HOUSE OF LORDS**  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Party/Group</b>
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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# House of Lords

Thursday 14 April 2016

11 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Coventry.

## Retirement of a Member: Lord Renton of Mount Harry

### Announcement

11.06 am

**The Lord Speaker (Baroness D’Souza):** My Lords, I notify the House of the retirement, with effect from today, of the noble Lord, Lord Renton of Mount Harry, pursuant to Section 1 of the House of Lords Reform Act 2014. On behalf of the House, I thank the noble Lord for his much-valued service to the House.

## Marine Litter

### Question

11.07 am

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty’s Government what action they are taking to reduce marine litter and plastics pollution.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Con):** My Lords, we are bearing down on the scourge of litter and plastics pollution that threatens the marine environment. The UK’s *Marine Strategy*, published in December 2015, sets out a comprehensive list of actions we are taking. Most recently, these include action on plastic bags and microbeads, and work to develop a litter strategy. Given the transboundary nature of the marine environment, we work closely with other countries to tackle litter and pollution.

**Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab):** I thank the Minister for that reply. He will know that there are an estimated 5 trillion pieces of plastic afloat in the world’s oceans. They are frequently toxic and are being eaten by aquatic life at all stages in the food chain, from plankton right through to marine mammals. Inevitably, they are therefore finding their way into the fish that we eat. Obviously, we need to take action on this on a number of fronts. One thing the Government could do now is to ban the millions of plastic microbeads found in everyday cosmetics that are flushed through the sewerage system and into the sea. Countries such as the USA and Canada are already doing this. Can the Minister confirm that the Government are prepared to take this crucial first step to clean up the world’s oceans?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** My Lords, I am aware of the volume of pollution and litter in the oceans. The US ban will be phased in gradually, with the final bans

not coming into effect until 2019. We are currently working with industry on a voluntary phase-out, which we believe will have the same effect. Indeed, this approach is yielding results and it is predicted that the majority of microbead use in UK cosmetics will cease by the end of 2017. I emphasise that should this approach not work, we support other countries in calling on the European Commission to develop proposals to ban the use of microbeads in cosmetics and detergents by 2020.

**Lord Marlesford (Con):** My Lords, although marine pollution is a global problem and a global disgrace, litter on Britain’s roads is a British problem and a British disgrace. What does my noble friend have to say? Parliament authorised, in the anti-social behaviour Bill, which got Royal Assent in March 2014—over two years ago—the changing of the rules so that the keepers of vehicles could be subject to a civil penalty if they threw litter. Nothing has happened. The regulations have not been made. Why not?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** My Lords, I should say first that the marine issue is so important because 80% of marine debris comes from land-based sources. My noble friend rightly raises the issue of land-based litter and what we should be doing. We are developing and will be implementing the strategic approach to the problem of litter through our national litter strategy. This will include work dealing with littering from vehicles and we expect to make significant progress on this. I shall certainly keep my noble friend informed.

**Baroness Parminter (LD):** My Lords, given the contribution of plastic bottles to marine litter, the success of deposit-return schemes around the world and the plastic bag levy here in the UK, what consideration are the Government giving to introducing a bottle deposit-return scheme here?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** I would not want to pre-empt anything and I am afraid that I do not know of the final discussions, if any, on this matter within the national litter strategy. However, I will specifically mention that the noble Baroness has raised this at Question Time today.

**Lord West of Spithead (Lab):** My Lords, steaming across the Southern Ocean some 50 years ago as a young officer, it was pristine but in the mid-1990s, while I was there with a battle group, the amount of plastic there was already disgusting. Going around Cape Horn a year ago, I was appalled to find that there was plastic even there. As a nation, we are responsible for more areas of ocean than almost any other country in the world, because of our dependencies. I understand that we have done quite a lot to look after them. What is being done to make sure that that pollution is not there? I add as a proviso that to enforce things, you need ships—and we do not have any ships. I have a view on that.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** I must observe that the noble Lord is most tenacious in his support of the senior service. The United Kingdom works closely with the Governments of the British Overseas Territories

[LORD GARDINER OF KIMBLE]

to ensure effective marine management, and the record on marine conservation zones is very strong indeed. Beach-littering monitoring and data-collection programmes are being carried out around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. This was expanded last year to cover the British Antarctic Territory but clearly, there are other overseas territories. The MOD's vessels have a long history of prohibiting the disposal of plastic waste into the seas.

**Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Con):** My Lords, further to the noble Baroness's Question in respect of microbeads in cosmetics, why does my noble friend have to wait for the European Commission?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** My Lords, we are not. I do not think that my noble friend quite understood what I was saying. We are working with industry on a voluntary basis to phase out microbeads, and that is working. All I said was that because pollution is a transboundary matter, it is not just for the UK but for the whole world to deal with it. We will deal with it with whichever organisations and whichever communities we can.

**Lord Hunt of Chesterton (Lab):** My Lords, which United Nations agencies are the Government working with on this question? Is there a plan for working with these agencies to have some targets for the future about cleaning up the oceans? I declare an interest as president of ACOPS, which deals with these matters.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** My Lords, because this is a serious problem we are working at national level, Oskar level, EU level and international level through the G7 and, as I say, with overseas territories. There is a lot going on.

**Baroness Jenkin of Kennington (Con):** My Lords, I declare an interest as a trustee of WRAP and a borderline obsessive when it comes to litter-picking, especially of plastic off beaches. Can my noble friend tell us how British products compare with those of the rest of the world?

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** My Lords, I think I am permitted to say that Unilever, Boots and Colgate-Palmolive have already phased out microbeads. The L'Oréal group will phase them out by 2017. There is a website which shows which products have microbeads. I very much encourage people to go for the microbead-free products.

## Regional Schools Commissioners

### Question

11.14 am

Asked by **Lord Shipley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make Regional Schools Commissioners democratically accountable.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Lord Nash) (Con):** My Lords, within an increasingly school-led system, the responsibility for school performance lies with the academy trust. There is a clear line of accountability from the trust to the Secretary of State. RSCs exercise the powers and duties of the Secretary of State on her behalf, meaning that the Secretary of State remains fully accountable to Parliament for decisions made by regional schools commissioners. They are civil servants and take decisions within the scope of their responsibilities and within a defined set of criteria, governed mainly by funding agreements and, in maintained schools, by statute.

**Lord Shipley (LD):** My Lords, I thank the Minister for his reply. Could he explain why the Government plan to end local oversight of schools, abolish parent governors and hand power to a small number of unelected officials accountable only to Whitehall? Could he say how all this relates to the Government's localism agenda?

**Lord Nash:** As I think everybody knows, we are not planning to abolish parent governors. We greatly value the role of parent governors in schools, and I pay tribute to the many thousands of parent governors that we have. Indeed, we want to increase the role and involvement of parents in their children's education. We will exert a new expectation on every academy to put in place meaningful engagement arrangements for all parents, but we must focus governance on skills. On the localism point made by the noble Lord, four members of every head teacher board are elected. They are local professionals who are well steeped in their local communities and local issues.

**Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Lab):** My Lords, we should not lose sight of the fact that we are talking about public education here, paid for from public funds. That should mean that public accountability is a given—real accountability, not just accountability to the Secretary of State. In its report published in January, the Education Select Committee, which has a Tory majority and a Tory chair, called for greater transparency and accountability for regional schools commissioners. Will the Minister say what action he intends to take in light of that recommendation, particularly since the White Paper was published?

**Lord Nash:** The noble Lord makes a very good point. We will publish the following information on the GOV.UK website this month: a high-level outline of the regional schools decision-making framework; each regional schools commissioner's regional vision; a description of the national schools commissioner's role; and the terms of reference for head teacher boards.

**Lord Addington (LD):** My Lords, does the Minister agree that if a political decision is made in a region that affected, say, a third of the primary schools in that region, the only way you can get an answer under the current arrangement would be to go directly to the Minister in charge—the Minister who is answering the

question? What preparation has his office made for receiving inquiries from a third of the primary schools in any one of these regions?

**Lord Nash:** I think that it is unlikely that any particular decision would affect so many schools, but if the noble Lord is referring to small primaries, we are very conscious of the issues facing them and are very keen to support them. We believe that they will be more sustainable as part of groups working together in MATs. As Lucy Powell said in the other place only yesterday, it is acknowledged that schools work better in local regional clusters, and we are keen to see them be able to do that.

**The Lord Bishop of Coventry:** My Lords, I declare my interest as the president of a diocesan board of education and a member of a multi-academy trust. Can the Minister explain the factors that influence RSCs in their decisions about the capacity of sponsors for new schools, and the extent to which those factors are objectively determined?

**Lord Nash:** The right reverend Prelate makes an extremely important point. It is all about capacity. Regional schools commissioners, along with head teacher boards, use performance data, Ofsted reports, intelligence from academy visits and their own expertise to ensure that a robust decision is reached. They will look at the geographic focus of the sponsor, whether they have brought into their group recently many failing schools, and the management capacity and skill set of the MAT board.

**Lord McFall of Alcluith (Lab):** My Lords, last week the Scottish Sunday newspaper the *Sunday Post* brought together a former pupil of mine and myself after 40 years. He told me that he is now a leading research scientist in Manchester University dealing with the Zika virus. In contact with me this week, he stated that he was grateful for the support, mentoring and engagement that his parents had, and that he would not be in that leading position if it had not been for such a fine state school. Given the great work that goes on in state schools, will the Minister not listen to some of his colleagues in the House of Commons, such as Graham Brady, who described this as a madcap proposal? Will he ensure that parental engagement and parental governors are the centrepiece of any initiative that is going to be taken forward—otherwise it will be nothing other than a disaster?

**Lord Nash:** I agree entirely with the noble Lord about the importance of parents, who provide absolutely vital feedback. Governing bodies will be free to have many, if not a majority, of governors who are parents, and many will continue to do so. But, as I have said, they must be chosen for their skills.

**Baroness Sharp of Guildford (LD):** My Lords, could the Minister explain how these arrangements fit in with the new devolution agenda? In particular, will London and Manchester take over responsibility for the regional schools commissioners?

**Lord Nash:** As I said, regional schools commissioners and their head teacher boards are local people immersed in their local areas. They are professionals who bring consistent high expectation and responsiveness to their role. They have all been directly involved in helping turn around failing schools and have no truck with an excuses culture. So I feel that they are the right people. As we all know, sometimes petty local adult politics gets in the way of the right decision for children.

**Lord Grocott (Lab):** My Lords, under the system that most of us grew up with and have got accustomed to, parents who are dissatisfied with the way in which their local school was operating had a number of local bodies to which they could go. The most obvious one, ultimately, would have been the local authority: the local councillor, or maybe even the person who chairs the education committee. Is the Minister really saying that the capacity of parents now to see as their ultimate, democratically accountable person the Secretary of State is in anything other than words a meaningful point of access for parents seeking to find out what is going wrong with their school?

**Lord Nash:** As I have already said, we think that parents should be more involved in their children's education. It is the case that many academy trusts have found when they have taken the school into their group that parent engagement has been very lacking, and they have, in particular, brought attendance at parents' evenings up dramatically. As I have said, we will put in place new arrangements whereby all multi-academy trusts and single trusts must engage on a meaningful and consistent basis with parents. Also, we will put in place a process whereby parents can bring complaints and concerns directly to the regional schools commissioners.

## Apprenticeships: Women Question

11.23 am

Asked by **Baroness Prosser**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many apprenticeships have been created since the Prime Minister's announcement of their target of 3 million apprentices; how many of those apprentices are female; and what percentage of those female apprentices are in non-traditional occupations for women.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Baroness Neville-Rolfe) (Con):** There have been 366,000 apprenticeships since this Government took office in May 2015; 190,000 of these were taken up by females, 52% of the total. Data on apprenticeship starts are held by sector. In 2014-15, of the 74,060 apprentices in engineering and manufacturing technologies, 6.8% were female; in ICT, the figure is 17.5%.

**Baroness Prosser (Lab):** I thank the Minister for that reply, but the figures that I have show that only 4% of engineering apprenticeships go to women, and that figure has declined over the last 10 years. How is the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills working with the Department for Education to encourage more girls to study the appropriate subjects that will give them access to STEM-related apprenticeships? Secondly, while more young women than young men take up apprenticeships, they are employed in a narrower range of sectors, earn on average £1 per hour less and are less likely to find employment at the end of their training. Does the Minister agree that a positive action programme is needed to enable young women to work to their full capacity?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My Lords, that was a lot of questions. The figure for engineering and manufacturing technologies in 2014, as I said, was 6.8%. The latest apprenticeship pay survey estimates that the median hourly pay across England for level 2 and 3 female apprentices, who comprise about 95%, is £6.38. That is higher than for males, for whom the figure is £6.16. However, schools have to do more, as do we all. Schools are legally required to provide the independent advice and guidance that young people now need when making career choices, and apprenticeships have to be part of that offer. We are launching a new £10 million apprenticeship campaign in May aimed at young people, their influencers and their employers because role models matter so much. We need to let people know about the breadth of employment opportunities through the apprenticeship route.

**Lord Cormack (Con):** My Lords, I declare an interest as the founder and chairman of the William Morris Craft Fellowships, which have been given to men and women over the last 30 years. How many of the 366,000 apprentices to which the Minister referred undertook true craft apprenticeships of real duration?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** My Lords, I have talked to my noble friend about craft apprenticeships. I do not have the actual number for them but I share his enthusiasm for ensuring that we have apprenticeships in those areas, and I think our new system will help with that. Apprenticeships now are all of a decent quality: they have to be paid jobs; they have to involve substantial training of the kind you need in, for example, filigree gold or artwork; they have to last 12 months, on top of school; and they have to lead to full competency in occupations. That is the kind of change we need in this country, building on the sort of experience that you see in Germany, Switzerland and so on, where apprenticeships have been more successful.

**Baroness Corston (Lab):** My Lords, my father left school and did an apprenticeship of a duration of five years. The Social Mobility Select Committee of your Lordships' House took evidence from young people who have completed apprenticeships in the last couple of years, who said that they were of a duration of six weeks in skills such as wrapping vegetables and arranging flowers into bunches. We also took evidence about the

number of young people doing apprenticeships. The figure that the Minister gave us must include people over the age of 21. That used to be called "adult training". I know that the apprenticeships of which she is talking are to be of a duration of one year, but can she assure us that they are to be in proper skills and for people leaving school?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** Thanks partly to work done in this House by a series of committees, we are moving in that direction. Of course, people stay at school for longer now, so you would not necessarily get apprenticeships that lasted for five years. However, often you need an apprenticeship of more than one year to pick up all the skills that you need. In the end, you need a proper qualification that allows you to take your portfolio elsewhere. That helps flexibility in our economy, which obviously does a lot better than many other economies because of that very strength.

**Baroness Burt of Solihull (LD):** My Lords, from the Minister's response, it seems that the target of 3 million is quite a way off yet. However, is that missing the point somewhat? Should we not be concentrating on high-quality apprenticeships across the board? Otherwise we will run into the scenario of "Never mind the quality, feel the width". On female apprenticeships in non-traditional occupations, what are the Government doing to encourage role models to inspire girls and women to bring their talents into these non-traditional areas?

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** As I have said, our new campaign will focus on role models, including female degree-level apprenticeships in engineering. We have Tomorrow's Engineers Week, which responded to the Perkins review of engineering skills. The Your Life campaign, which I think the noble Baroness is well aware of, helps to ensure that the UK encourages women to move into maths and science in schools in a much more fundamental way. There is also the STEM Ambassadors programme, which I hope many noble Lords can help with. Some of us were not lucky enough to study science in school. We have to move forward and change the dynamics in our schools.

**Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab):** My Lords, I was surprised to hear the Minister talk about the payment made to female apprentices because she will be aware of the Young Women's Trust report which says that female apprentices receive, on average, £4.82 per hour, compared to £5.85 per hour for their male counterparts. However, I should like to ask her about what is happening in her own department; surely there she could show the way. I understand that, according to the latest figures, only 26% of apprentices in the department were women.

**Baroness Neville-Rolfe:** We could certainly do better in the department. One of the changes we are making is to require government departments to make a good contribution to apprenticeships, and I think that can be extremely helpful. I have looked at the latest figures and am very happy to have a conversation with the

noble Lord about them, because I was surprised and pleased to see that we seem to be moving in the right direction. People must have career choices. It is about freedom: people should be able to do what they want to do. I have a female apprentice involved in my team.

## Planning: Trees

### Question

11.31 am

Asked by **Lord Scriven**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have any plans to amend the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Part VIII, in particular in relation to trees.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government (Baroness Williams of Trafford) (Con):** My Lords, the Government have no plans to amend Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**Lord Scriven (LD):** In light of the Answer from the Minister, will she agree to meet me and a few people from the city of Sheffield who are fighting the felling of 18,000 trees by the city council? They feel both powerless and not listened to and have some suggestions about how communities could have a bigger voice and more power in trying to save tree-lined streets from what has been dubbed in Sheffield the "chainsaw massacre" of trees.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I would have thought that that was a matter of highway trees rather than coming under the Town and Country Planning Act that the noble Lord refers to. I also understand that the Streets Ahead initiative, which perhaps he is talking about, was implemented under his administration.

**Lord Blunkett (Lab):** My Lords, is it not an extraordinary reformulation of localism from the Liberal Democrats to demand that national legislation be used to settle a local dispute? Would the Minister reflect on whether she has ever received a Question in this House from the leader of a city which was responsible for drafting the contract and service-level agreement, who then, when his party was in coalition, continued to claim credit for the deal signed off in 2009, and who now comes to ask your Lordships' House to intervene on something that is deeply sensitive—and for which I have a great deal of sympathy—but which requires to be settled locally as part of democratic local procedures?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I agree with the noble Lord.

**Lord Framlingham (Con):** My Lords, although this is very much a local matter in Sheffield, it raises the question of the value of trees and how much we care for them. The situation there is that a civil engineer is being asked to look after trees that he does not properly

understand. I think the very least that the Minister could do is think about encouraging every local authority to put the issue of trees much higher on their list of priorities than they are at the moment.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I agree with my noble friend: trees are incredibly important. They are important not only for the well-being of the environment and the communities who live in it but also in recent months we have seen how important trees and good tree planting are in guarding against flooding.

**Lord Clark of Windermere (Lab):** My Lords, I declare an interest as chairman of the Lake District National Park Partnership. Does the Minister appreciate that there is a real problem in the national parks when people come and buy houses for the view? Although the local authorities and national parks spend a lot of money planting trees, these individuals then often chop down the trees so that they have a nice view. Will she give extra powers to the national parks to try to rectify this problem?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I am not sure I can undertake to give extra powers to national parks today, but I have a lot of sympathy with what the noble Lord said. It is precisely why TPOs were instigated in the first place. I used to get very angry as leader of a council when a tree mysteriously died in the middle of the night in order for a development to go ahead.

**Baroness Parminter (LD):** My Lords, there is a statutory register for nationally significant features such as scheduled ancient monuments, protected species and listed buildings. Given what my noble friend Lord Scriven said about how easy it is for trees to be neglected, damaged or lost, do the Government accept that there is a case for similar recognition and protection for trees of national special interest?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, councils expend an awful lot of time and effort in maintaining their highway trees, which I think is what the noble Lord was referring to, and it is important that they continue to do so, particularly where some of those trees that were planted perhaps 70 or 80 years ago have grown far too big for the environment in which they sit.

**Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab):** My Lords, I think that we have all twigged why the noble Lord asked his Question: he is standing for election to the council in Sheffield next month. He is of course hoping that people will not see the wood for the trees and realise that he was leader of the council. Does the Minister agree with me that matters relating to that election should not be brought into the Chamber?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I have to say that I agree with the noble Lord. It is also worth noting that today is the first day of local election purdah.

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD):** My Lords, does the Minister think that democratic local engagement on trees is much more important than democratic local engagement on schools?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I think that they are both important. Democratic local engagement is important full stop.

## House Committee: First Report

### *Motion to Agree*

11.37 am

*Moved by Lord Laming*

That the Report from the Committee *Access and use of facilities by retired members* (1st Report, HL Paper 115) be agreed to.

**The Chairman of Committees (Lord Laming):** My Lords, this report recommends that access privileges may be withdrawn from a retired Member by the House Committee or a successor senior domestic committee. Colleagues will recall that the House has previously agreed that Members who lose their membership as a result of non-attendance or a sentence of imprisonment for more than a year should not have access privileges. Likewise, any Member who is expelled under the House of Lords (Expulsion and Suspension) Act 2015 will not have access privileges. Agreeing this report would mean that the House Committee could decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether a retired Member should have access privileges rescinded. I beg to move.

**Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale (Lab):** My Lords, the past week has shown how important transparency and dealing with any perception that there are different rules for different people in society are for rebuilding trust in public life. Earlier this year, your Lordships' House discussed the fourth report of the Committee for Privileges and Conduct. A key paragraph in that report stated that the strongest sanctions—expulsion, suspension and denial of access to House facilities or financial support—would be unavailable should someone who was being investigated continue to be investigated following their retirement from the House. The report before us today from the House Committee makes it clear that it is possible for retired Members to retain their parliamentary pass, to sit on the steps of the Throne and to use the Library and certain catering facilities and therefore to have access to facilities that could be withdrawn should an investigation be continued following a retirement.

I would like to ask the Chairman of Committees three questions. First, does he believe that it would be possible at some point in the future to revisit the previous decision, given that it will now be possible to have a sanction against retired Members? Secondly, will the House Committee minute discussions where it has been proposed that the access privileges be withdrawn but the House Committee decides not to withdraw those privileges? The report mentions at the moment only that there will be a minute of any decision to

withdraw the privileges. Thirdly, will there be a public record of those who have retired from the House but who have had their privileges withdrawn?

**The Chairman of Committees:** My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord McConnell. Noble Lords will know that colleagues in this House who decide that they want to retire, whatever the circumstances, do not make a request: they simply give notice to the House. Therefore it is clear that no sanctions in future could be used in respect of them. It is therefore absolutely right that, for all who have the honour to serve in this House and are given access privileges when they retire from it, the House should have the powers, should they be needed, to withdraw those privileges; I hope they will not be needed very often, if ever. Certainly if a proposition of this kind in respect of an individual comes before the House Committee, it will be reflected in the minutes. The minutes of the committee are readily available and on the internet, so the deliberations and the outcome will be communicated more widely.

*Motion agreed.*

## High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Bill

### *Second Reading*

11.41 am

*Moved by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon*

That the Bill be read a second time.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport and Home Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con):** My Lords, our railways are key to our country's future prosperity and yet, if we look back in time, it is 123 years since we built a main line north of London and 183 years since Parliament approved the west coast main line. Although not intended to be a major artery, the west coast main line has evolved into one. Today it is the busiest mixed traffic railway in the world. Although it continues to serve the country well, it is almost full. We have already upgraded it and seen the benefits, but improvement to what exists, on its own, can no longer provide what the nation needs. Patchwork and sticking plasters will work for a period but are not the answer; it will not help us to create the capacity we need on the railways. It will not improve our country's connections. It will not maximise the opportunities for our northern cities and cities in Scotland to grow and prosper. To allow our economy to grow and to compete on an international level, we need a step change in capacity. That is why this Government are committed to delivering High Speed 2, a project that will bring our economic centres closer together, allowing the whole country to benefit.

Now is really the time to do it. As I have said, the west coast main line is essentially full and yet more and more people want and need to use the railways. Over the past 20 years passenger journeys have doubled. Demand will continue to rise. Even on moderate forecasts, services will be increasingly full by the mid-2020s.

The digital age may have created new ways to interact across distance and made the world smaller, but it has not replaced the need to travel—indeed, it fuels it. We need to deliver the capacity to meet this growing demand. HS2 will do exactly that.

From day one, phase 1 will not only provide additional capacity between London and the West Midlands but also to Manchester and Glasgow via through-running services. It will free up capacity on the west coast main line that can be used for local services or freight. That is only phase 1. HS2 will ultimately be a national network that will create even more capacity and even better links. It will connect our great northern towns and cities, including Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester, with services travelling on to Edinburgh and Glasgow. This is the capacity the country is crying out for. That is why we have brought forward phase 2A to Crewe, so that this can open three years' earlier.

The full HS2 network will connect eight of the UK's 10 most populous cities with direct links. The freed up capacity on the existing railway could help to provide improvements in regional connectivity. Combined, these provide a major uplift in the connections of our railways and the options for passengers, and help to rebalance our economy.

But, as the name suggests, High Speed 2 is not just about capacity. We will also see significant reductions in journey times, with phase 1 alone reducing trips between London and Birmingham and London and Manchester by around 35 minutes. These faster journeys will bring our country closer together. They will make travel easier and more efficient, and give businesses and workers access to new markets and options. These are just the transport benefits, but the true benefits of HS2 go well beyond them—the delivery of jobs, skills, development and economic growth.

As announced by the Secretary of State on 23 March, HS2 Ltd has started the procurement process for £11.8 billion-worth of civil engineering contracts. These contracts alone will create more than 14,000 jobs and we will ensure that people have the skills to take up these new opportunities through the HS2 skills college in Birmingham and Doncaster, which will open next year. These are jobs created to deliver the new railway, but the railway will also support wider development opportunities. Planning is already under way by cities and areas—such as through the Mayoral Development Corporation at Old Oak Common and the Birmingham Curzon master plan—to make the most of the opportunities that HS2 will bring. We will support them in their aspirations to make this scheme a success. This is the ultimate value of HS2.

While the benefits of HS2 are significant, this does not mean that I do not understand those who are concerned about the cost or worried that HS2 will divert investment from other transport. I understand those concerns and I wish to respond to them. HS2 will not come at the expense of the existing transport network. As noble Lords will know, we are investing more than £38 billion in the existing rail network between 2014 and 2019, including delivering Crossrail, Thameslink, new Intercity express trains and the electrification of the trans-Pennine, Great Western and Midland main lines. We are trebling the budget for major road schemes to £15 billion between 2015

and 2021, and we are investing £12 billion in local transport between 2015 and 2020. This is all in addition to HS2.

With regard to costs, we are committed to delivering value for money. Noble Lords will know that the November 2015 spending review confirmed a budget for the whole of HS2 of £55.7 billion at 2015 prices. The budget has not gone up, it has simply been updated in line with inflation. To put this in context, the cost of HS2 equates to around 0.14% of UK GDP in the spending review period. HS2 is a major commitment of public money, but it is an investment which Britain must make; we cannot afford not to.

Community and environmental impacts have also been raised, and I understand those who are concerned about HS2's impact on the environment. It is not possible to build a railway without having some impacts on the environment and communities along the route, and it is clearly essential that we strike the right balance between delivering and operating the railway, and being sensitive to its surroundings. We believe we have struck the right balance. We have undertaken detailed environmental assessments to ensure that we understand and can mitigate the impacts of the railway. The environmental statement which accompanies the Bill is the largest ever undertaken in the United Kingdom.

But these assessments are not the end of our consideration of the environmental effects and impacts on communities. We have continued to listen to communities, environmental groups, statutory bodies and other stakeholders to try to reduce the impacts where reasonable. In addition, the Select Committee in the other place received more than 2,500 petitions against the Bill and additional provisions. Even with many deals made with those impacted and the withdrawal of others where we have provided assurances or clarified issues, the committee sat for 159 days to hear more than 1,500 petitioners and consider their issues. I wish to put on record the Government's commendation for the dedication, commitment and fair approach undertaken by the members who served on the committee in the other place and those who worked tirelessly in representing their constituents in front of the committee. All their efforts in this area were exceptional.

Through this process and the continued development of the scheme's design, we have made numerous changes that have led to even greater protections for communities and the environment. We have extended the bored tunnel under the Chilterns area of outstanding natural beauty by 2.6 kilometres, producing significant improvements for the village of South Heath, and we have removed impacts on Mantles Wood. We have lengthened the green tunnels at Wendover and Burton Green. We have lowered the line in Lichfield from viaduct to cutting, and moved it 200 metres to avoid the Trent and Mersey canal. We will deliver the new HS2 station at Euston in a phased approach to reduce disruption to the existing railway and help better manage impacts on the wider area.

This is but a sample of some of the changes we have made. The result of all of this work is a railway, more than half the route of which is in tunnel or cutting, and for which 75% of the line's surface sections will be insulated by cuttings, landscaping and noise barriers.

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]

This is why we are not demolishing any grade 1 listed buildings; why no grade 1 excellent quality land is affected; and why the scheme has been designed to withstand a major flooding event, the likes of which we would expect only once every 1,000 years. I know there are those who want more—longer tunnels, deeper cuttings, taller noise barriers, and so on. However, we must remember that our duty to protect the environment must be balanced with our duty to protect public money. We believe our work to date has done just that and balanced these two responsibilities appropriately.

Turning to the content of the Bill, while the issues the railway raises are complex, the Bill is actually very straightforward. It is very similar in content and form to the Crossrail and Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bills, which were the last hybrid Bills to be considered by this House. The Bill provides all the powers needed to construct, maintain and operate phase 1 of HS2. It is essentially the planning permission for the railways, and therefore includes the power compulsorily to acquire land for the railway; undertake the works and nominate a person or organisation to do so; undertake modifications to existing legislative controls that are not designed for works that have already been approved by Parliament; provide a framework for the interaction of phase 1 with the classic railway network; and allow persons representing the Secretary of State to gain access to land for surveys relating to future HS2 stages. The Bill also allows the compulsory purchase of land for business relocation and regeneration purposes, so as to minimise business extinguishment and provide a backstop power to ensure that development opportunities created by HS2 are taken up.

Turning to procedures, should this Bill be given its Second Reading, it will move to a Select Committee process in this House. The role of this Select Committee is to hear petitions from those directly and specially affected by the Bill. The period during which petitions can be submitted began on 23 March and will end on 18 April. Noble Lords may want to understand the powers of the Select Committee. Its role is to hear petitions and make recommendations on what, if any, changes are required to address the issues they hear. The process of engagement between the promoter and petitioner means that in many cases, the petitioner's issue is addressed and there is no need for them to appear before the Select Committee.

For those petitioners who do appear, the committee has wide powers and can, if it thinks fit, seek changes to the scheme that are within the scope of the existing Bill powers. For example, the committee can push for changes to the railway or use of land, within the limits of deviation set out in the Bill and within the environmental limits set out in the environmental statement. This could include changes to the railway itself or the mitigation provided as part of the scheme. The committee could also recommend changes to the way the promoter plans to construct the scheme—for example, how it plans to control noise or dust. It can also make recommendations on matters of compensation and property acquisition. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it gives an idea of the importance and authority of the committee, and its scope to hear petitions and consider the facts.

HS2, as I am sure many in this House and beyond recognise, is greater than the sum of its parts. It is not just a railway with fast trains. It is not just about capacity and connectivity. It is truly about potential. It is about creating opportunities. It is about what is needed to produce a better and brighter future for our country, our economy and connectivity across the UK. This is what is required if we are to deliver a better, more integrated Britain. I beg to move.

11.54 am

**Lord Rosser (Lab):** My Lords, we support the Bill. As the Minister said, HS2 is the project to build a high-speed rail line from London to Manchester and Leeds via Birmingham and the east Midlands, with operation due to begin in 2026 and to be completed by 2032-33. At the beginning of 2009, then then Labour Government set up HS2 Ltd, with the principal aim of advising the Secretary of State on the development and proposals for a new railway from London to the West Midlands and, potentially, beyond. The scheme taken forward from 2010 was based on the outcome of the work conducted for the then Government by HS2 Ltd and was initially proposed by the Labour Government in a March 2010 Command Paper. This was subsequently taken up by the incoming coalition Government.

In February 2011 it was confirmed that phase 1 would take the line from London to the West Midlands by 2026, while phase 2 would take the line from the West Midlands to the north of England by 2032-33. It was not until January 2013 that a decision was taken on the configuration of the route from Birmingham north to Manchester and Leeds. Then, in November 2015, the Government announced their intention to bring forward the route to Crewe before the remainder of the route to Manchester and Leeds, with the expectation that this part of the route would be operational by 2027. The Government were due to confirm the phase 2 route at the end of 2014, but that did not happen, prolonging uncertainty and delaying private sector investment decisions. When will the Government confirm their plans for high-speed rail in the Midlands and the north?

HS2 is a Labour project, in which my noble friend Lord Adonis, as Secretary of State for Transport, played a key and vital role. I look forward to his speech, as well as to the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Mair. Our high-speed rail Command Paper, published in March 2010, set out the urgent need for increased capacity on our rail network. Since then, passenger numbers have grown by a third. Our case for HS2 was based on the assumption that passenger demand would grow by just over 2% a year. As the reality since then has proved to be an average increase of some 5% per annum, the case for HS2 has grown stronger and more urgent over the last six years. Our existing main trunk north-south rail routes face capacity issues today that have to be addressed if they are not to have an adverse impact not just on the ability of an increasing population, and increasing freight, to move within the UK, but on future economic development and expansion, on which our prosperity as a nation in the years ahead depends.

The line from London to the east Midlands and Sheffield has been officially designated “congested infrastructure”. The train operator on the main line from London to Leeds and Newcastle has said that the route “faces track capacity limit”. The existing route with the most pressing shortfall capacity, though, is the west coast main line from London to Birmingham and Manchester. We have reached the practical limits of the existing infrastructure on a route where intercity commuter and freight services all compete for scarce train paths and where commuter services are already at less than the required level in the West Midlands and on the approaches to Manchester because of lack of track capacity at key points.

The money for HS2 might, of course, be spent instead on a further conventional modernisation programme of the existing west coast main line. However, leaving aside the years and years of weekend and other closures, diversions, misery and extended journey times for passengers and freight services, and very significant compensation payments for the train operators, a conventional upgrade would deliver less than half the additional capacity of a new line, which will also enable the integration of high-speed rail services with existing lines and thus significantly improve journeys and journey times not only between cities on the new route but beyond it. That improvement is reflected in the support for HS2 from local government and other leaders of not just Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds but also Liverpool, Newcastle and Glasgow. Strategic planning decisions are already being made or considered based on HS2.

A number of recent major rail transport projects have been located in London and the south-east, such as Thameslink, High Speed 1 and Crossrail. HS2 is also about improving our rail transport infrastructure in the Midlands and the north, as well as in London and the south-east. HS2 has the very public backing of both the CBI and the TUC because of not only the favourable impact it will have on economic development and growth—inadequate, overstretched links retard growth and expansion—but the many thousands of additional skilled jobs that will be created directly and indirectly from the construction and operation of HS2.

At Third Reading in the Commons, the Secretary of State said that HS2 was about not only jobs but also materials. He said that HS2 would need approximately 2 million tonnes of steel over the next 10 years and that the Government were already holding discussions with UK suppliers to make sure that they were in the best possible position to win those contracts. Quite a lot has been happening in and to the steel industry since Third Reading in the Commons and that statement by the Secretary of State. I want the Minister, when he responds, to be a bit more specific. Will the steel for HS2 come from the UK steel industry or is it in whole or in part to come from outside this country?

Not surprisingly with a major project of this kind, real concerns have been raised, not least before the special Select Committee in the Commons, about the impact of the construction of the new route when it is opened on those communities and areas through which it will run. In many cases the new high-speed line is likely to bring little or no direct benefit to them since

there will be no station anywhere near their locality. There are concerns, for example, about the impact on the Chilterns, through which the new line will pass. There is also the disruption for residents and businesses, including demolition and loss of homes, around the Euston area, and the need for a comprehensive rather than piecemeal redevelopment of Euston station that will be consistent with the plans and objectives of the relevant authorities, including the London Borough of Camden. The redevelopment of the existing station at Euston is unfunded and unplanned. What action do the Government intend to take to address this issue—and when?

I am resident in a community that will certainly be affected by the construction and operation of HS2. It was depressing to read in the very helpful briefing pack prepared for this debate by the House of Lords Library that the Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, in a report published last month, said in reference to HS2 that the,

“continuing existence of a culture of defensive communication and misinformation within a public body, responsible for the delivery of such a large and highly controversial project, is not acceptable”.

Since the Department for Transport is the promoter of the Bill, what action do the Government intend to take to address the point made by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee about HS2 Ltd?

The Minister made reference to the special Select Committee process. The special Select Committee of the Commons heard more than 1,500 petitions during 160 sittings, lasting more than 700 hours and with more than 15,000 pieces of evidence. There will be a similar—though I understand much shorter—special Select Committee process in this House following Second Reading. The Crossrail Bill took approximately 21 months in the Commons Select Committee and only three months in the Lords equivalent, and the HS1 Bill—which became the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act—took approximately 12 months in the Commons Select Committee and less than two months in the Lords equivalent. That suggests the special Select Committee in this House will not have the same powers and role as the Select Committee in the Commons.

I know that the Minister has already addressed this issue in part, but it would still be very helpful if he said in his closing speech whether or not this is the case—in other words, that the committee in this House will not have the same powers and role as the committee in the Commons—and, if it is, what powers and role the special committee in the Commons had which will not be available to the committee in this House; and, likewise, what powers and role available to the special committee in the Commons will be applicable as well to the special committee on this Bill in your Lordships’ House. I do not think that that was an issue to which the Minister referred in the comments he made about the special committee process.

Coming into the Lords on the London Underground, I see a poster, to which the Mayor of London is a party, on some of the stations which states that Transport for London does not make a profit because it reinvests all its income on running and improving its services. That seems a pretty sensible approach, bearing in

[LORD ROSSER]

mind the enormous benefits an efficient and reliable Underground system delivers to the London economy and London residents. The case for HS2 that the Government—and, indeed, we on this side—are making is also based on the benefits it will deliver to the economy of this country and to economic growth and development in the Midlands and the north.

The London Underground, under a hardly left-wing mayor, is in the public sector and reinvests all its income in running and improving its services. So, too, should HS2. Public ownership delivered record passenger satisfaction and punctuality scores on the east coast main line, and that successful model should be extended to HS2. At the very least there should be an option to run HS2's services under public ownership, reflecting the provisions made in the Crossrail Act, which had cross-party support.

I conclude by reiterating our support for the Bill. We want to see HS2 built for the reasons I have set out. However, there is also a continuing responsibility on the Government to listen to the concerns being expressed by communities affected about the impact on them of the construction and operation of HS2, and to ensure that everything that can reasonably be done to address those concerns is done.

12.07 pm

**Lord Bradshaw (LD):** My Lords, I start by declaring my non-pecuniary interests: I have been responsible three times in my career for the management of Euston station and three times for Old Oak Common, so I am familiar with the area, particularly as regards the things to which I shall refer.

I reiterate what the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, said about taking more capacity out of the existing west coast main line being a vain hope because the estimates that Virgin Rail has published this week show that the demand will grow even faster than it thought would be the case a few years ago, and any spare capacity that is available on the west coast main line will be needed just to keep the service going in the interim before HS2 is open.

I will talk about the London end of the proposals as many other noble Lords will talk about other places and issues. First, on the rolling stock proposed for this line, HS2 initially proposed to use trains on the London to Birmingham route that are wider and higher than will fit on to any existing BR lines. It would be possible to build them to be compatible with British rolling stock but HS2 has considered this larger size. I suggest that the Bill committee probes this decision very thoroughly, or perhaps the Minister can provide assurances when he replies to the debate, because it is not sensible to build rolling stock that will not fit on to the classic lines or is not fit to be cascaded to other services later in its life.

I believe that through services to London are extremely difficult to bring about, particularly now that much stricter border controls are in operation and are likely to remain so. Instead of clinging on to the slender hope of through trains, the matter is best resolved by undertaking the building of a satisfactory link between Euston and King's Cross and St Pancras. It is no good

expecting people to go out on to the street in the rain with heavy luggage and make the journey along Euston Road; they want something much more akin to a modern airport terminal, equipped with travelators, to make the easiest possible transition between HS2 and HS1. I know that this will be expensive but, looking to the future, I think it is necessary and I hope it will be given proper evaluation.

I now turn to the biggest issue with which I am concerned and that is what happens when the railway reaches London. The first terminal in London will be Old Oak Common. It will give access to Crossrail for travel towards central London, the City and Docklands, as well as to Heathrow, and London Overground is proposing a link to Old Oak Common. I suggest that this work should proceed as quickly as possible to cater for the London market. Plenty of space is available at Old Oak Common to turn the trains around there. I call this work phase 1A. I believe it is essential to provide early cash flow and to see how Old Oak Common works out as a London station. I do not think anybody really knows, and it might prove to be a more popular destination than Euston.

My major concern is the proposed extension to Euston. I do not doubt that it is necessary to have an extension to Euston but I believe that what is now proposed is unnecessarily expensive and very disruptive. One question is: could an adequate terminal be housed within the curtilage of the existing Euston station? In my experience, this station is used much less intensively than any other London railway terminal. When it was rebuilt, it was laid out to deal with Motorail services and a lot of Royal Mail traffic. Those who know the station will know that big spaces are available between certain platforms, and they could be made available for HS2 platforms. That is one point that I believe the Bill committee must address at an early stage.

The second issue is whether some existing trains on the west coast main line could be diverted on to Crossrail. I believe it is feasible for trains from, say, Milton Keynes to go on to Crossrail, and that would alleviate the current enormous overcrowding as people arrive at Euston and transfer to the Underground. I have been told that the cost would be very large, but I have also been told that HS2 is praying in aid a great deal of the cost as a reason for not doing it, as it wants disabled access to be provided at all the stations served by Crossrail. However, this could be solved simply by having trains going from Northampton, Milton Keynes and Watford on to Crossrail, because they will pick up enough people to relieve Euston substantially.

I want to turn to the question of the link between Old Oak Common to Euston. I suggest that the committee examines an alternative approach to Euston station from around Queen's Park; this should necessitate a much shorter tunnel between Old Oak Common and Queen's Park. Euston would then be approached along the existing lines—there are three tracks each way into Euston, which is quite generous. This will necessitate some upgrading of the infrastructure, but will not lead to the demolition of property in Camden and will reduce much of the work around Euston. Some platform extensions will be needed south of Euston station in any case.

I would almost beg the Bill committee to recommend that a respected engineer, independent of HS2, be appointed early to examine this scheme and advise the committee. As far as I am concerned, HS2 has dismissed this scheme with what I regard as an absolutely inadequate response—it has not given any valid reasons. These issues should be settled very early in the consideration of the Bill. I say very early, because the Commons committee started, I believe, in the north and came south; it would be a good idea if the House of Lords committee started examining the London end so that any studies that are thought necessary could be put in hand so as not to delay the scheme.

Another issue that requires early attention is the impact that lorries will have on the roads around London and on road safety and air quality. I suggest that the committee immediately recommends that work be put in hand to establish how maximum use could be made of the railway both for the delivery of material and removal of spoil. I am very impressed by what Crossrail has achieved in this respect at Paddington, where most of the material that arrived dropped straight from a conveyor into railway wagons and did not find its way on to the highway at all.

Nothing that I have suggested will delay the project. I am certain that, if the areas I have highlighted were considered early and seriously, the revenue streams could be enhanced and the costs substantially reduced.

12.17 pm

**Lord Adonis (Non-Afl):** My Lords, I declare an interest as a non-executive director of HS2. It is almost exactly six years since, as Secretary of State for Transport, I presented the plans for HS2 to the House. HS2 is the biggest infrastructure project in Europe; it is remarkable how rapid the progress has been from conception to the verge of construction, thanks to effective policy and project planning and strong cross-party support. At 25,000 pages, this is the biggest Bill ever presented to Parliament. In fact, I believe that it is equivalent to the entire legislative output of Parliament in its first five centuries. A Select Committee of the House will subject the Bill to thorough scrutiny and we are grateful in advance to the noble Lords who are heroically taking on that onerous task.

HS2 is on course for enactment at the end of this year and the start of construction next year, with the first phase from London to Birmingham to open in 2026, just 16 years from conception. For a scheme of its size and complexity, this is a phenomenal achievement and a striking counter to the notion that we cannot execute big, essential infrastructure projects in Britain in a timely manner. I pay tribute to all concerned, not least the Ministers—led by Patrick McLoughlin as Secretary of State—David Prout and his excellent team of officials in the Department for Transport, Sir David Higgins and Simon Kirby and their highly professional staff at HS2, and Robert Syms and the members of his Select Committee in the House of Commons, who appear to be an army of insomniacs.

It is not just the rate of progress that stands out from the past six years but the integrity of the case for HS2, which has withstood fierce debate and cross-examination. From the outset, the central argument

for HS2 has been the need for extra capacity between Britain's major conurbations. It is sometimes said that HS2 started as a project simply to cut journey times and then changed tack to capacity but this is not true. The 2010 Command Paper began by saying that,

“the Government's assessment is ... that over the next 20 to 30 years the UK will require a step-change in transport capacity between its largest and most productive conurbations, both facilitating and responding to long-term economic growth ... alongside such additional capacity, there are real benefits for the economy and for passengers from improving journey times and hence the connectivity of the UK”.

From the outset, the central argument for HS2 has been about capacity, with speed and connectivity as significant additional benefits. I see the noble Lord, Lord Darling, who was Chancellor at the time, in his place. There is no way he would have agreed to the scheme on any other basis.

Since 2010 the imperative for more capacity has become greater still, which is essentially why HS2 has withstood scrutiny and controversy. HS2 links the four largest cities and city regions of the UK, centred on London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, while also providing direct services to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Newcastle and key destinations in south Yorkshire and the east Midlands. It could not be more vital to our economic future. As the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, said, the long-term trend growth rate is 5% a year. Rail demand has doubled in the past 15 years alone. HS2 does not just meet this demand for intercity travel; by freeing up substantial capacity on the existing lines, it provides a major capacity boost for freight trains and commuter and regional passenger services into and between the major conurbations of the country.

From the outset, the big question underpinning HS2 has been: if not HS2, what? The only alternative to HS2 for dealing with the capacity crunch is massive further upgrades of the existing Victorian main lines—or in the case of the west coast main line, pre-Victorian. The west coast main line, of which only four miles are straight between Manchester and London because it was built around the ancestral estates of many Members of your Lordships' House, was opened for the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1838. This realisation has served to keep HS2 on track, and it does not require a crystal ball.

The last upgrade of the west coast main line cost £9 billion, £1 billion of which was simply to pay train operators for not running trains due to the disruption in a decade of constant upheaval—quite apart from the huge cost borne by passengers and businesses, for which they got no compensation. Upgrading a busy mainline railway is like conducting open-heart surgery on a moving patient. To put this in perspective, the present Government identified an upgrade alternative to HS2 from London to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds in their 2013 strategic case. This upgrade cost nearly half as much as HS2 but provided only a quarter of the extra capacity. Moreover, that capacity increase would have been insufficient by the late 2020s, even to keep pace with the lower of the growth projections for intercity traffic in the 2013 strategic assessment. Further upgrades of conventional lines—or, more likely, HS2 reinvented—would have been required thereafter.

[LORD ADONIS]

Even carrying out those upgrades would have been hugely disruptive, involving the equivalent of 14 years of continuous line closures every weekend to carry out work, including a new 30-mile stretch of tunnel and surface line to get the east coast main line out of King's Cross, avoiding a series of acute existing bottlenecks, including the Welwyn Viaduct; the rebuilding of most of the major stations on all three major lines going north from Euston, St Pancras and King's Cross, including those three termini, to accommodate more platforms and longer trains; and four-tracking a lot of two-track sections of lines, including in urban areas. Indeed, the original assessment of alternatives published when I was Secretary of State included the four-tracking of the entire Chiltern line; many of your Lordships gave me the benefit of their advice on that proposal. It is hardly a compelling alternative to HS2, let alone a cheap one.

There has also been a long-running argument over the last six years about benefit-cost ratios, which to my mind are helpful but should not dictate projects because they are essentially artificial in their inputs. One artificial input has been the great weight given to the benefit of time saved by business travellers, as if they were not able to work on trains. That is true. Equally artificial, though, and more significant because it goes to the heart of the capacity argument for HS2, is the fact that the benefit-cost methodology caps traffic growth for rail in 2036 on this project. It does so on the grounds that further growth thereafter is too speculative, but 2036 is only three years after the line opens. If Brunel had adopted the same approach to the building of the Great Western Railway, he would have capped its growth in 1870 and there may well have been a better economic argument for upgrading the canals. Nor did we build the M25 thinking that traffic growth would stop in 1995, or the Victoria line on the basis that passenger numbers would stop growing in 1970. One cannot of course predict the future but we have to provide for it as best we can. In my view, it would be a reckless disregard of the national interest on all the most likely scenarios to fail to provide critical transport capacity between our major conurbations going through to the middle and later parts of this century.

The argument on faster journey times has also become clearer over time, as the case for HS2 has extended beyond the Midlands to include the north of England and Scotland, which will be served directly or indirectly by trains after the second phase of HS2 is completed. As HS2 proceeds further north, the time savings become steadily greater: an hour off every journey between London and Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, while journeys will be further shortened by the proposed interchange between HS2 and Crossrail at Old Oak Common, just west of Paddington, as was referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw. This will give an 11-minute direct connection to Heathrow and fast underground trains direct to the West End, the City and Docklands without going via Euston and its congested Victoria and Northern lines. I happen to agree with the noble Lord; once people realise the huge efficiency and connectivity of the interchange at Old Oak Common, it may turn out to be more popular than Euston itself.

Critically, however, HS2 also dramatically improves connections not only between London and cities in the Midlands and the north but between the cities of the Midlands and the north, and between cities within the north itself. The Victorian railway companies built mostly separate main lines from provincial cities to London, which is why rail links between most of our provincial cities remain very poor. Birmingham and Manchester are only 67 miles apart, yet the rail journey time between them takes one and a half hours. It will be 40 minutes by HS2. Sheffield to Manchester could be reduced to 30 minutes by HS2 if it were incorporated as part of the second phase, making this a key part of what is now being called HS3—the proposed upgrading of rail links between the northern cities, a good part of which will build on the work of HS2 in the north.

Finally, there is the international context. High-speed rail between major cities is well established internationally. It is a key part of the transport systems in Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and many other countries. The first major project has now started in the United States between LA and San Francisco, which is roughly the distance between London and Glasgow. I am not aware of a single country that has introduced high-speed rail between its major cities and now thinks that this was a mistake. Of course there are major challenges ahead, not least in keeping HS2 to time and to budget, but we are right to be taking HS2 forward. It will change the country for the better and it cannot come soon enough.

12.29 pm

**The Lord Bishop of Coventry:** My Lords, it is not easy for a jobbing bishop to follow the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, but I am glad at least that my purpose in these few words is not to assess the wide-ranging economic and environmental arguments that have been set out on this project, either for or against. Clearly, there are others much better qualified to do so than me, and many are speaking in this debate—I particularly look forward to the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Mair, which I know will be the sort of contribution to your Lordships' House that we would expect from such an eminent mind and the sort we will hear more of on other occasions. However, as someone who tries to keep close to my local ground, I can focus on the people who live on or near the proposed line and on the great importance—indeed the moral imperative, as we have already heard—of continuing to engage with them as the project is implemented.

A good number of those people affected by the line live in my diocese, which extends over most of Warwickshire. Already, before the big money is spent, another serious, human cost is being paid in the villages, farms and homes of the people I meet. Many of the arguments surrounding this massive project have to do, quite rightly, with the legacy we leave to future generations. Alongside a strong and sustainable economy, a vital part of that legacy must be lasting relationships of good will and trust between those responsible for such a project—or those benefiting from it—and those whose lives are made more difficult by it.

There is an especially sensitive matter on which the legacy of trust for the future depends, and that is the burial grounds of those who lived in the past. I am very grateful that the Bill includes careful provision for situations in which the exhumation and reburial of the dead must take place, but I would value the Minister's assurance that those involved with this project will work closely with churches and others, including the Church of England, to ensure that the issue of exhumation and reburial is dealt with sensitively when it occurs.

Moving from the dead to the living, but also to other forms of grief, there is a sense of trauma among the farmers of Warwickshire I have spoken to—understandably when one of those farmers stands to lose 125 of his 800 acres from a farm that has been held in the family since 1842. There are high levels of anxiety among the farming community, much of it fuelled by the continuing uncertainty over the details, such as the specific design and timings of construction works on their land. This uncertainty is a blight upon the careful planning that farmers must do well in advance about the use of their holdings.

For some projects, such as that at Stoneleigh Park—formerly the National Agricultural Centre—which I visited recently, this uncertainty is causing serious delays in inward investment. I would be happy to provide details of specific cases to the Minister in writing. I appreciate the painstaking work of the committee to which the Minister referred and the response to the specific cases that have been made and welcome the Minister's words about the role of the Select Committee, but I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, on the need for more clarification. That would be helpful. In addition to those processes, what plans do the Government have to keep in contact with local communities and businesses as the project is implemented to alleviate their anxiety, decide on solutions and enable better planning for the difficult years ahead in very practical ways?

A recurring concern among those I have met is that they are finding it difficult to resolve concerns with representatives of HS2, especially when complicated by the necessary involvement of other bodies, such as the Highways Agency over the massive traffic of heavy vehicles through the area during construction, very often through small country lanes. I doubt whether the suggestions from the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, for the removal of spoil in London will work in Warwickshire. Even when a good relationship exists, progress in such discussions seems slow and often financially costly. For some, trust that their concerns will be heard is, I fear, being taken over by scepticism and frustration—a reality already referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Rosser.

I cannot help but feel some real unease at this. The level of good will and trust of these communities along the line is a major part of the legacy which this project will leave. For this to be maintained throughout this project's long construction phase, it is important that the Government take steps to ensure that HS2 is not only accountable but clearly seen to be so. The Government have made it clear that they believe that the appropriate accountability structures are present. However, in the debate in the other place, an amendment

was put forward that went a step further and created the office of independent adjudicator, a body of independent experts in a variety of relevant fields with power to hold the project to account and so bring reassurance to those communities that feel they are being unfairly treated. As we know, the amendment was defeated but, in the light of the concerns still being raised by local communities and businesses about how HS2 is implemented, can the Minister set out why such an independent adjudicator would not be a helpful solution? Could this proposal not be revisited to answer the real concerns of local communities and ensure justice is seen to be done?

I draw to a close by moving from rural areas in the path of HS2 to cities that are bypassed by the line, Coventry being one of them. Coventry is more fortunate than many cities further from the HS2 route; we are accessible from Birmingham International, and could benefit from the greater connectivity of HS2, even though we do not directly sit on its line—as long, of course, as direct connections between London and Coventry are not reduced. But even for Coventry, and certainly for many other cities and towns, the massive investment in HS2 must surely go hand in hand with a focused strategy to integrate it with our country's existing transport network. When France invested in high-speed rail, that integration proved vital to the economic benefits of the project. What steps are the Government taking to connect HS2 with existing road, rail and other transport links, to ensure that its benefits are experienced as widely as possible?

It cannot be doubted that those living on or near the line face hard and testing years ahead. The Government have an important responsibility—and this is my main point—to continue to listen to their concerns, seek to work with them, and prove worthy of their trust. I said earlier that that is a moral imperative. They also have a great responsibility to see the benefits of this project extend as widely as possible. Alleviating the pain compassionately and fairly, and sharing the gain imaginatively should drive government policy and the final shape of this Bill.

12.37 pm

**Lord MacGregor of Pulham Market (Con):** My Lords, I am tempted to try to contribute to some of the very important issues that have already been so expertly dealt with, in particular in the speech from the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, who demonstrated his clear knowledge, commitment and persuasiveness on the whole subject. I want to concentrate on an issue to which the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, referred, and which will be relevant for the Select Committee that the Minister and others have mentioned. That issue was debated in the Select Committee in the House of Commons, and it was unable to reach a conclusion on it, so it will be important for our own Select Committee to deal with it.

First, I must declare a non-financial interest. One of my lifelong hobbies has been conjuring. I think I am the only magician to have performed in No. 10 Downing Street, No. 12 Downing Street and the Speaker's Chambers in the House of Commons—all three. My main claim to fame is that I appeared once in the television

[LORD MACGREGOR OF PULHAM MARKET] appeal programme “Children in Need”, hosted by the sadly late Terry Wogan. The final episode was so and so’s revenge—and I was put up to do the politician’s revenge, which was to persuade John Humphrys to have his head cut off by me, and for a lot of people to contribute charitably for me to do so, or for him to agree to it. He was a great sport and did agree to it. He was, rightly, highly nervous, as was I. I should say that my colleagues in the House of Commons criticised me the next day for putting it back on again.

I am, therefore, a member of the Magic Circle, one of the premier organisations in the world for magicians and a Mecca for magic, with a large number of members both here in the UK and internationally. It is not a wealthy organisation. Some years ago, after a stupendous fundraising effort, the Magic Circle found an ideal location for its new headquarters in Stephenson Way, adjacent to Euston Station and where much of the works to accommodate HS2 at Euston, including underground, will take place. The Magic Circle building was substantially renovated in the 1990s to provide a library, a museum to house all sorts of magical treasures of historic interest, a dining room, a club room, bars, and so on. Its location is ideal, not just for magicians amateur and professional here in the UK but from across the world. Its continuation is heavily dependent on substantial commercial contributions from running events and hiring out the facilities, all of which could be severely at risk as the construction work takes place at Euston.

The Magic Circle is not alone in facing this problem, as the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, has already said. There are six other organisations, which are—dare I say it?—much more prestigious, significant and well known, located in the same area. They are all similarly affected and have formed the Stephenson Way Group to voice their concerns and seek safeguards. They are the Royal College of General Practitioners, the Wellcome Foundation, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Religious Society of Friends—the Quakers—and the Methodist Church. The members of the group are all charities and pre-eminent bodies in their respective fields, delivering considerable public benefit. They are a unique cluster of like-minded organisations devoted to research and promoting knowledge in the spheres of health, well-being and the arts.

I want to give an indication of the kind of problems that its members face in this context. Their buildings are all put to sensitive uses; they house uniquely bespoke facilities; they are all used for training, conferencing and learning; and several have residential accommodation associated with their primary functions. Group members also rely on hiring out their facilities in order to sustain their core purposes. Their location greatly assists the national and international work. Their work should not be jeopardised or impaired by the HS2 project, yet no adequate solution to their plight has yet been provided by HS2.

Among the problems that HS2 building works will create are utilities diversions, demolitions, deep excavations, ground works and construction works. Access to the properties will be impeded. The noise, dust and vibration, the impeded access and the likely need to carry out

protective works or alterations to the buildings may result in group members having to vacate their buildings for some or all of their very important functions for lengthy periods. I could go through a number of the issues. Without adequate safeguards, among them are: building damage; water ingress; damage to highly important equipment, surgeries and so on; damage to nationally and internationally important archives; impaired access; disruption of teaching and examinations vital for the medical profession, and so on, all resulting in reduced public benefit.

It is fair to say that when developing and introducing these proposals, the Government and HS2 had so many issues to deal with that they failed to recognise the severity of the impacts on the Stephenson Way Group. In May 2014 the group therefore petitioned against the Bill, setting out its concerns. Even then, HS2 was slow to acknowledge the extent of the huge potential detriment to the group. By December 2015, when it was the group’s turn to appear before the Commons Select Committee, little progress had been made. HS2 has now offered some assurances but they fall far short of what is needed. It has set up a business mitigation group in order to discuss these issues further. The Commons Select Committee looked at all these issues and had this to say as a result in its report:

“Businesses, hotels and professional and academic organisations in and around Stephenson Way will be severely affected by construction. They need proper notice of when works will commence so that they can organise their activities. We believe a minimum of three months’ notice is appropriate—preferably more”.

The key point is this:

“The Promoter has agreed to establish a business mitigation user group to discuss problems and solutions. These will be helpful. We urge the Promoter to respond positively to the needs of petitioners from this area in the period between our report and the Lords select committee stage. The activities of several of the organisations we heard from are noise and/or vibration sensitive. We would like the Promoter to pay the reasonable costs of risk assessment and surveying to determine sensitivity to construction effects such as vibration”.

It now falls to the Lords committee to follow this through, as the Commons committee specifically urged it to do. One or two of the points that the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, made would be very helpful in this context. I hope, therefore, that the committee will monitor closely the work of the business mitigation group, with a view to getting a satisfactory detailed plan to deal with these issues by the conclusion of the committee’s deliberations, and, if not satisfied, will make further recommendations as to how they can be dealt with.

12.45 pm

**Lord Prescott (Lab):** My Lords, I hope my contribution will not be seen as negative. It is a different view. It is not the Government’s view or the Opposition’s view, which has been ably presented by my noble friend Lord Rosser: it is a northern view—a different perspective on what we are doing with this investment in HS2. To show that I am not hostile to Europe, in 1987, as the Opposition spokesman, I delivered a document on the route to Europe called *Moving to Europe*. It was a different route from the one that we have now got, avoiding the whole London complication, and had a different form of financing. I then went into government

in 1997 and was faced with the collapse of HS1. It wanted £2 billion more—having got £3 billion of assets—and the private sector was not prepared to fund it or even to believe in the number of people who would be travelling on it. It is now successful and up for sale by the Government, after the taxpayer saved it from collapse. I learned certain lessons from that, which brings us to HS2.

I am delighted to see my colleague, who shared a lot of views with me in a Labour Government, sitting on the other side of the House. I agreed with some of the things that he had to say, particularly on infrastructure, which perhaps at the end he will, I hope, look at. What I learned from those arguments is that there was controversy—the same as there is at the moment—about the route, the compensation and many other things. There was not felt to be a fair distribution of the transport investment between the north and the south. That is an issue again. We have heard again today about compensation; it is constantly a problem. Also, it was not considered to be value for money in those circumstances, and it was followed by financial collapse.

I do not know whether this project will have the same problem, but it is due to go right through until 2033, with the north not getting anything until 2020. In a sense, we are being told to hang on because something is coming to us in the north. I have to tell the House that with HS1 it was exactly the same—they even built the trains that were to go to the north and convinced the north to shout for it. We shouted for it and they cancelled it. That was the reality: it collapsed. So we never got the northern trains that were built; we had to sell them to Canada. But I will leave that aside.

What about the financial problems at the heart of it? Look at the scale of the increase: from £30 billion to £50 billion. That is in a few years, at almost £4 billion a year, and it will continue for the next 20 years. In this period of austerity, I wonder whether the second part of this investment might be called into question. Will we be told that it cannot be completed beyond Birmingham? Stand by for the message; we will see what will happen. But I believe in the European fast trains—there is no doubt about that—and I welcome David Higgins's report. He has taken a more realistic look at the route, but there are still big issues to be sorted out on the timetable and the route.

To that extent, the Economic Affairs Committee of this House reported on the economics of High Speed. That report was very interesting, and it came to some of my conclusions that I am discussing today. First, it is not economically viable. The committee stated that it doubted its economic justification and put forward reasonable arguments for that, which the Government dispute. Secondly, it is not value for money. One recommendation I particularly like is the suggestion that the route be changed to start in the north so that there would be less controversy to begin with and it can be connected to the rest of the rail system in the north—euphemistically called HS3: these trains are not going to be running around like HS2. There are issues about connectivity but, nevertheless, the committee made a very good argument.

To that extent, a lot of the arguments are shared. As for HS3, it is suggested that we will have trains running at 250 mph between Leeds and Manchester.

Franky, you would not get them up to full speed before you had to stop. But there is still an argument for connectivity and important transport, and the north has been ignored constantly when it comes to transport. If noble Lords think it is any different now, I ask them to look at the fact that they are planning and giving money to develop Crossrail 2 and we have not even finished Crossrail 1. It is billions compared to hundreds in the north, and the timetable is to start now in the south but not in the north. My point is that, basically, you could do something, and I want to suggest—perhaps the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, might take it on board—that we look at the regional strategy that is necessary.

The real problem at the moment in trying to deal with these things is that we have “northern devolution”—which is neither northern nor hardly devolution but local government reform. But it is something that authorities have agreed with and is the game at the present time. We have local enterprise bodies that do not have the money, the resources or the powers to deal with the regional thing. All that, by the way, was in the Northern Way, which I launched as a Minister in 2006, working with the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, to look at how we would do it in the north. We put it forward. It was a structure and was regionally based. This is basically local government reform; it is a different system. It does not have the powers to make regional decisions. Let me give noble Lords a good example.

I was in Liverpool yesterday. I travelled up on the Pennine train. It was quite an experience—it was a bit like the Rock Island line—but, leaving that aside, I got to Hull at 11 pm and caught the train back at 6 am this morning. Basically, if you look at the regional dimension and if we are concerned about the north, why do we not develop the two greatest assets that it has got: the port of Liverpool and the port of Hull and Humber? They are the two gateways between a corridor that is going into Europe from the growing global development on the other side. To that extent, they are major assets. We are discussing access to Europe. I attended their conferences. They want the motorways of the seas argument to strengthen the arguments of the ports. Those two big super-ports, on different sides of the UK, represent a real strategy which we will need. We all know that trying to force the traffic through Dover is a mess. Congestion costs are terrible. Let us have a Northern Way solution.

The other assets are our estuaries, both the Humber and the Mersey. If we put those two things together, we can see that these are energy estuaries; they will be very important in dealing with climate change and energy. They are different sides of the same coin. We need to develop our estuaries. Therefore, when we come to the strategy of communication, it is a regional one; it is right across the north and it is what we have to do. We are now meeting across the two sides, in Merseyside and Humberside, looking at how we might strengthen that. So if you look at the present system which the high-speed link is connecting to, you see that it is a north-south project. I am not saying, “Don't have it”; the Government have decided they are going to have it. I could have the argument about where it starts; I will continue to argue that you will

[LORD PRESCOTT]

get higher growth in the north than you will get in the south with this investment. But one is an industrial policy and the other is an urban policy.

The Government appear to be linking what is really Manchester and Leeds. They are becoming the London of the north and the Government are concentrating on that. It is urban, city development; it is not a strategy for industrial development of the north. But if we take the east-west strategy, which gives us Liverpool and Humberside, and then put them both together, we would want to say to the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, who will be dealing with the infrastructure problems, “Yes, not just the Pennine link; look at the freight and the road and we can start doing that now”. It is not heavy expenditure. The Government say that they are agreed on it. Why do we have to wait until 2035 before we get any movement on these things?

The Government have promised to do something with Transport for the North. The trouble with Transport for the North is that it is controlled by the authorities of Sheffield, Newcastle, Merseyside, Manchester and Leeds; they are the ones with limited powers given to local government. We need a regional aspect here, a regional strategy. So you will get north-south, which is about urban connectivity, and an east-west, which is an industrial strategy. That would strengthen the economic growth in the north. It could start now—it does not need the kind of money that is needed for the development in the south—and we could start reducing the inequalities that exist in transport expenditure and other things between the north and the south.

The north has got to get itself together. Quite frankly, speaking as a politician from the north, we have not had much influence on the Government on this occasion. I think that we did on our Government, but I shall leave that aside. The northern economy has more people in it than Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland put together. We have a bigger population and are a bigger wealth creator but we do not make our mark. They get devolution and we get a co-ordinated or combined authority. It is time the north began to recognise that if you want something you had better shout for it and you had better get organised. We are a big force but we tend to be divided off between little bits of towns and cities. That is a political problem that I need to work on and shout about. It is not for the House of Lords.

I want to make these points about the north because, at the end of the day, when the infrastructure committee is considering infrastructure in the north, it should look at whether the timetable could be changed to take into account the regional concept. The Government do not agree with it or like it—Northern Way was about regions—but the committee, which I know is considering the matter, should look at how our roads and our railways could be developed in a quicker timetable to help maintain growth.

We need a strategy not only for north to south but also for east to west. One of the biggest industrial assets in the north will be maximised through the development of our super-ports and our estuaries. Put them together and you have a greater chance of a model of economic growth than the one that will be given to us by High Speed.

12.56 pm

**Lord Mair (CB) (Maiden Speech):** My Lords, it is a great honour and privilege to join your Lordships’ House and to be speaking in this debate. I must first thank noble Lords on all sides of the House and all the officials and staff for the very warm welcome that I have received. I also thank my two distinguished supporters, the noble Lords, Lord Oxburgh and Lord Rees of Ludlow.

I have been an academic engineer in Cambridge in more recent years, after almost 30 years as a practising civil engineer, but I continue to have a close involvement with industry. I have given expert evidence to various Select Committees in both this House and in the House of Commons, most recently—and here I must declare an interest—on HS2 on behalf of the promoter.

My only previous experience of the Parliamentary Estate has been making sure that Big Ben remained vertical during construction of the new Westminster station and associated tunnels for the Jubilee line extension. It was no mean feat to build a very large station extending to a depth of around 40 metres—almost the height of the Big Ben clock above ground level—close to Big Ben itself. This was in the mid-1990s, when I was running an engineering consultancy and advising London Underground. I remember alarmist press headlines such as the Evening Standard’s: “Tunnel may give Big Ben that Pisa Tilt”. The “Leaning Tower of London” might have become a tourist attraction, but a damaged tower—or worse, a collapsed tower: no Big Ben at all—would have been catastrophic. The fact is that the foundations of Big Ben, constructed in the 1840s, are challenging. The Victorian engineers, wonderful in so many ways, were rather adventurous with Big Ben’s foundations—some would say brave. Modern geotechnical engineering means that we know a lot more about difficult ground conditions and ground behaviour.

HS2 will use the same methods for estimating settlements caused by tunnelling and the same innovative technology used to protect Big Ben. They are now well established and have been widely adopted on projects all over the world. They have recently been used very successfully to protect hundreds of buildings from damage during construction of Crossrail.

As we consider the case for HS2, we should look at it in terms of the economy of the country and the challenges we face. We must remember that modern engineering and infrastructure are crucial, as is money spent on research in science and technology. Even in these stringent times, investment in new infrastructure such as HS2, and money spent on research into new technology, is money very well spent. It is vital for our economy to invest in the future.

We are in some sense a victim of our own past success. As founders of the Industrial Revolution, we are now living with old infrastructure, much of it Victorian and no longer fit for purpose. In 2014, the Institution of Civil Engineers published a report—and here I should declare an interest: I am currently a vice-president of that institution—which concluded that not one of the UK infrastructure sectors analysed was what it termed “fit for the future”. Those sectors were: energy, strategic transport, local transport networks,

flood management, water and waste. It reported that only two of the six sectors, strategic transport and water, were “adequate for now”. Only adequate for now, not fit for the future.

The World Economic Forum ranks the UK’s quality of infrastructure 28th in the world, and that is for a country with the world’s fifth largest economy. It is not a happy state of affairs. The construction of HS2 would very significantly modernise and increase the capacity of our rail network system, which is much needed as demand for rail transport steadily increases. HS2 would also strengthen connectivity between key city regions and create economic and regeneration opportunities. It must be seen in the context of a wider national transport strategy rather than as a single project developed in isolation. I particularly welcome the recent recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission, chaired by the noble Lord, Lord Adonis. These include the integration with HS2 of the proposed HS3, which would provide further modernised rail connections between our major northern cities, referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Prescott.

We are all rightly concerned about the cost of HS2. It will be expensive, but I suggest that using the very latest engineering innovations to streamline construction and reduce costs, building on the example of Crossrail, will ensure that HS2 proves good value for money. I have personally been involved in Crossrail as a member of its engineering expert panel. It is currently Europe’s largest construction project and its tunnels are all now substantially completed. It is also on time and on budget. The point is that Crossrail has a very strong innovation programme and collaborates with universities. Working closely with partners in industry and financed in part with government research money, at Cambridge we have developed new sensor techniques for use both in new construction and on our ageing infrastructure. These novel fibre optics and wireless-sensor technologies have been tested and proved in the Crossrail tunnels and stations. I mention this because the research, funded by EPSRC and Innovate UK, has provided clear evidence of where very significant savings can be made in the future. Crossrail 2, recently recommended to go ahead by the National Infrastructure Commission, is already taking account of these potentially substantial savings. HS2 can do the same.

The digital revolution affecting all areas of our lives brings dramatic changes for infrastructure. This means much smarter infrastructure. We will be able to understand exactly how a building, a tunnel, a bridge or a railway line is actually performing during construction and throughout its lifetime. Also, we will know how to prioritise what needs to be replaced and when, and how to manage it all much more efficiently. This will lead to more economic design, reduced costs and greater efficiencies both in the capital cost of construction and in the subsequent operating costs. All of this will be of great benefit to HS2.

To conclude, the economy of this country vitally depends on having modern, fit-for-purpose infrastructure such as HS2. This needs to be underpinned by government-funded university research in science and engineering. Implementing the latest innovations from such research in its construction and operation will be highly beneficial

for HS2, as it will be for other large infrastructure projects. I welcome the Government’s recently published *National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 to 2021*, which includes a £138 million investment in UKCRIC, a consortium of leading UK universities doing research in infrastructure and cities.

The sooner construction begins, the sooner the full HS2 network can realise the creation of more than 25,000 jobs, including 2,000 apprenticeships. HS2 will transform the way in which we deliver infrastructure, enhancing Britain’s world-class capability to export innovative engineering around the world. Its workforce will develop new skills in the latest design and construction techniques. Its suppliers will be able to develop exportable products and services of great benefit to our economy. There is a rapidly growing global market for high-speed rail, as has been referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Adonis. HS2 will bring huge export potential for the UK.

Much, of course, depends on the continuing ingenuity of our engineers. I finish with the recent words of His Royal Highness Prince Philip in an interview in December for BBC Radio 4’s “Today” programme:

“Everything that wasn’t invented by God was invented by an engineer”.

I hope that construction of HS2 will proceed rapidly and prove to be an outstanding showcase for UK innovative engineering at its very best.

1.07 pm

**Lord Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab):** My Lords, I start by welcoming the noble Lord, Lord Mair, to full membership of the House. A number of us will have noticed that he has been around our premises for some time because he was introduced a few months ago. That speaks too of the careful way in which he has allowed himself to understand our procedures and our processes and thus to fit in better with how we operate, and indeed that has been very well brought out in the excellence of his maiden speech. I congratulate him on it and I think that it might become a model of the genre for those who come after him.

As we know, the Cross Benches play an enormous part in our work. Many of us can justify our existence by saying, “Look at the quality of the debates we have here”, but of course we rely heavily on those who are sitting opposite me to be able to justify that claim. But it is a sincere measure of what I say because the gravitas and experience that come with the sort of people who are appointed to the Cross Benches is important to the way in which we look after the responsibilities we have been given in terms of making sure that the Government are held to account and that scrutiny is done in the public interest.

The noble Lord’s curriculum vitae, which I am afraid I picked up only early this morning because I did not realise that I would make the response—I apologise if there is anything I may have missed—is quite large, if I may put it that way. It runs to five closely typed pages and that does not count the 160 periodical and other publications that he mentions modestly but does not actually list. I will check those later and I am sorry that I have not had time to read them. The noble Lord was right to mention his academic experience,

[LORD STEVENSON OF BALMACARA]

and we value that. I think that he was a bit modest about his industrial experience because as well as saving Big Ben, over the past few years he seems to have had a hand in just about every other major infrastructure project all across the world, not just in the UK. He is clearly an extraordinary Renaissance man, if that is not too high praise, and he will surely enrich our discussions. He ended his speech by quoting a slightly unusual person to go to for a reference, His Royal Highness Prince Philip. But he is absolutely right that we have far too few engineers in our Chambers, and we welcome him.

The fact that we are welcoming today somebody with such a wide range of experience, both academic and industrial, suggests that we do not always cherish those who have that particular formation and background. For example, the *Companion* teaches us how to refer to our colleagues: there are special words and phrases for those with military and legal experience, but we do not treat our academics in the same way. I wonder whether we ought to change that. I had a bit of difficulty thinking up what to say, but we could try it out for a bit; when the noble Lord rises to speak again, as I hope he will, we should refer to him as the “noble and expert Lord”. What do your Lordships think? Shall we give it a go? In any case, we welcome the noble Lord and look forward to his further contributions.

I was very reassured to hear the Minister speaking about the wide powers that will go to the Select Committee. I will be listening very carefully to the answers he gives to the questions asked by my noble friend Lord Rosser when he responds.

In a representative democracy, there are limited opportunities for individual citizens to be engaged in the parliamentary process. The hybrid Bill processes in Parliament provide an important and valuable opportunity for ordinary citizens to protect their private interests when these are being engaged by powerful private and public organisations. However inconvenient for the Government, Parliament must never abuse the trust placed in us by so many people.

I declare an interest as my family and I live in Little Missenden, a village within the Chilterns AONB. I am also a member of the Chiltern Way Federation academy school in Wendover. I do not oppose the Bill but I wish it could be improved. I hope that, before it starts hearing from petitioners, the Select Committee will visit the planned route to get an impression of the issues which are still causing such concern in places such as the Chilterns. I also hope it will get expert advice not just from the promoter, but from others who have expertise and knowledge about the plans.

It will also be important to reflect on the experiences of the Commons Select Committee, and learn from them. Listening to the sessions in the other place and reading the transcripts, one is left with a feeling that what the Commons Select Committee described as the “heavy burden of petitioning”, was a chore it had to endure and not an opportunity for finding a resolution. The fact that so many petitioners raised similar points and sought the same mitigation—in the case of the Chilterns, a bored long tunnel—was seen as a problem and not a rather obvious clue about where the solution to the petitioners’ concerns lay.

I have to say that the mood at present in the Chilterns from those who tried to engage with the Commons Select Committee is very negative about the experience and there is considerable disenchantment from many people who felt frustrated and patronised. This is not good for democracy, and it is important that the Lords Select Committee can recover some of the ground lost, in the public interest.

Secondly, I hope that the Lords Select Committee will ensure that it considers the wider public interest issues raised by the decision to take the line out of a deep tunnel at South Heath in the middle of the Chilterns, and to continue at surface level to Wendover. There were more than 800 petitions from individuals and action groups about the Chilterns tunnel. All the local councils called for a long tunnel through the Chilterns, and recommendations from the statutory bodies concerned with the Chilterns that a deep, long tunnel was the only possible mitigation to the potential damage caused were framed in as strong a language as is permissible by bodies that receive grant in aid these days.

While the volume and intensity of the petitions surely pointed to the need to give very careful consideration to a bored long tunnel through the Chilterns, the Select Committee appeared at all times, almost to the point of perversity, to be dismissive of that approach. It seemed as though the sole purpose of the committee was to narrow the arguments down to the harm that the project would cause to an individual, and how that might be ameliorated by sound barriers and the like, rather than exploring ways in which this harm could be prevented in the first place—by a tunnel. It was this unwillingness to engage in the wider public interest in the Chilterns that caused so much distress and disillusionment among the petitioners, to which I have already referred.

Thirdly, what is missing at the moment—and it is a very glaring gap—is an independent analysis of what additional costs might be incurred by making provision for a long bored tunnel through the whole of the Chilterns AONB, the benefits which would accrue from preserving nearly all of the AONB if a tunnel were provided, and what the losses would be if the scheme goes ahead in its current form.

When he introduced the Economic Committee’s report on HS2 last September, my noble friend Lord Hollick said, perhaps a little unfairly, that HS2 was, “a project of faith ... supported ... by overblown rhetoric”.

He pointed out the need for,

“a rigorous, independent and transparent appraisal of the costs and benefits of this huge undertaking”.—[*Official Report*, 16/9/15; col. 1850]

The Commons Select Committee expressed “scepticism” of the costs of tunnelling bandied about by all parties, including the promoter, but took no action to expose what these costs actually are. The Lords Select Committee must ensure that this information is made available in the public interest, either directly or by commissioning an independent analysis. Not to do so will further erode people’s faith in the democratic process.

Finally, I hope that one of the key debates in the Committee stages of the Bill will be whether this country values its designated areas of outstanding

natural beauty. What should we do when the need for infrastructure improvements impacts on our natural environment and, in particular, our national parks and AONBs? This argument, to protect areas of national importance, is not one against the building of infrastructure as such—it is an argument in favour of ensuring that such developments are sustainable and do not damage irretrievably the quality of our natural environment—an environment that, once gone, cannot be replaced.

We have heard much about the economic case for HS2 but rather less about the case for the natural environment. In all this, the case for the long bored tunnel through the Chilterns seems to have been ignored. So I want to set it out now briefly, for the record, and as a basis for amendments that I hope to move in later stages.

Under the Bill before us today, approximately 8.5 kilometres of the Chilterns AONB will have a major twin-track railway line built on it, running at surface level. It is proposed to have 18 trains an hour each way, which will cause noise and vibration. Large infrastructure projects going through relatively unspoiled countryside will effectively urbanise it. Maintenance activity will take place all night. The trains will cause light pollution, and parts of the route will have fixed lighting. There will be security fencing and sound proofing baffles, maintenance roads, balancing ponds, power lines and gantries, planting and huge earthwork bunds to mitigate the noise emanating from operations, and the soil from cuttings will be deposited right across the Chilterns.

The materials being introduced are not natural; the scale is grotesque and the overall impact is to introduce alien, cityscape elements into a predominantly rural environment. The attempt by the promoter to minimise the impact of these intrusions into the AONB, for example, by arguing:

“It’s really only a very, very small percentage impact, less than 1% impact”,

is as demeaning as it is misleading.

The clue is in the title: the Chilterns is an area of outstanding natural beauty. It is an irreplaceable resource. We can put the earth back on a cut-and-cover tunnel; we can grass it and grow some new trees. But we will not have what age and interaction with people and their dwellings over centuries have produced in the rich patina of a landscape that is largely unchanged since pre-Saxon times, and which is the key reason why it has merited an AONB designation.

Designation as an AONB brings with it a statutory requirement on Ministers to do what they can to conserve and enhance our higher quality English landscapes and protect their scenic beauty. Is it really in the national interest to destroy 8.5 kilometres of outstanding natural beauty, when for a small additional cost, the AONB can be protected for the long term?

How can the Secretary of State say that he is fulfilling the Government’s statutory obligation “to conserve and enhance” when he proposes to build two substantial viaducts, four kilometres of cuttings, 1.7 kilometres of embankments, a green tunnel, six compounds with hard standing and seven bridges? It is just ridiculous.

The *National Planning Policy Framework* says that major development should not take place in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances, and after appropriate tests have been made. HS2 itself has accepted that a Chiltern long tunnel would provide overall environmental benefits compared to the HS2 proposed scheme during operation and construction. It also confirms that such a tunnel would not adversely affect the programme for the completion of HS2.

Time and again, petitioners to the Commons Select Committee made it clear that they wanted to discuss how and under what conditions the committee would agree to a tunnel through the Chilterns. Every time the committee was unable or unwilling to engage. It took the view that the case for the bored long tunnel “had not been made”, before it had heard any of the individual petitions, and without ever having defined what might constitute such a case.

I suspect that HS2 will always be, “a project of faith supported by overblown rhetoric”. People might be much more willing to support HS2 if they knew that the only AONB on the line had been preserved by a Government who were open and transparent about what they wanted to do, comfortable about discussing the costs of the project, and determined to preserve our natural heritage.

1.19 pm

**Baroness Valentine (CB):** My Lords, I declare that I am a non-executive director of HS2 and chief executive of London First.

I begin by congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Mair, on his excellent and interesting maiden speech. I am delighted to have someone who knows about tunnels in the Lords, in the case of both HS2 and, possibly, Crossrail 2 in the future. World-class institutions, with their very sensitive scientific instruments, were referred to earlier. I would welcome the noble Lord’s expertise on how we can deal with vibrations in the area around Euston. I also hope that we in the Lords will have more tunnels to consider as we sort out connectivity in the north, and, I fear, in London as we sort out our current roads gridlock, where we may need to turn to tunnels.

I move on to say why I have always supported HS2. First, it adds capacity on the congested lines coming into London and provides opportunity and connectivity further north. Secondly, as can be seen in London, investment in big infrastructure projects provides development potential. For example, there is the Northern line extension to Battersea power station, the Olympics and the development of Stratford and Crossrail and the opportunity to the east of London.

HS2 is one of the biggest infrastructure investments in the world. It is both complicated and potentially game-changing. But, to maximise the opportunity, HS2, transport authorities and wider government need to grasp nettles rather than accept lowest common denominator solutions. We need to act with strategic intent. So what is the opportunity? HS2 needs to provide a 21st century passenger travel experience and contribute to the country’s economic, environmental and social development.

I start with the passenger. We know that there is more to do to sort out end-to-end passenger journeys. Why are rail tickets still on bits of paper? If I am

[BARONESS VALENTINE]

elderly and carrying luggage, how do I feel about the walk from King's Cross St Pancras to the Victoria line, or through the cattle pen beneath Waterloo? More specifically for HS2, will my onward journey from Euston to my meeting in London take as long as my journey from Birmingham? Will I feel uplifted by my experience of Curzon Street station? Can my children rag around on the train? Will my luggage fall over? Will the mobile phone and wi-fi have dead spots? Will I be able to make a videoconference call without being annoying or annoyed? Will there be a business lounge at every station? What about a crèche? Will someone take my luggage from me and deliver it straight to the hotel? How do I get the few yards from Euston to King's Cross at surface level? Will my driverless car or Uber be there to pick me up?

I hope that HS2, with the help of its excellent design panel, will be a model for how to start with the passenger experience and finish with stations and trains, rather than the other way round. In sync with that, I urge our long-lived Secretary of State for Transport to batter away at those interfaces where Network Rail meets HS2, or a train-operating company meets Transport for London, where the passenger is too often, in practice, last on the list.

But there is the yet-larger challenge of delivering the wider benefits. In the current spirit of devolution and regeneration, what can the Government do to help local authorities—including with money—develop plans for how to make the most of our stations? There is opportunity for hotels, offices and leisure facilities around all the stations. And, if we are aspiring to highest common factor, how can it be that we are developing the HS2 station at Euston like putting lipstick on a pig, rather than planning the overhaul of the whole station area, including Crossrail 2? Could the Department for Transport, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Treasury not step up to the plate and turn this sow's ear into a silk purse—if I do not overmix my metaphors?

I finish on a topic close to my heart. HS2 is both an opportunity and an irritation for the immediate community along the line. It is beholden on HS2 to treat that community with respect, but more than that, HS2 needs to get ahead of the game and offer solutions. If we need to remove someone's playground, make sure we offer a better one elsewhere. If we need to cut down trees, create a linear park along the railway instead. HS2 should enhance, rather than hinder, the world-class institutions around Euston. I know that the organisation has taken to heart criticism of its community engagement and it plans to do better. When we move from phase 1 to phase 2, I encourage all of government and HS2 to learn from the push-back in the phase 1 petitioning. Across government, we have signed up to a set of principles for wider benefits. Let us use these to guide our response to petitioning and, as a result, be sure of investing not only in a railway but in the communities around it.

1.24 pm

**Lord Fowler (Con):** My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness. I pay tribute to her knowledge. I am stilling trying to visualise lipstick on a pig, but

apart from that I go along with almost everything she has said. I congratulate my noble friend on the way he introduced the Bill, and the House generally on the way this Bill and this project has made progress, in particular the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, for his outstanding contribution and speech. I also congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Mair, on a first-class maiden speech. We should take note that this country is, I think he said, 28th in the world on infrastructure. We might also take note of the fact that this House continues to attract to it people of his expertise, which is a tremendous attribute to the House and something we should make rather better known to the outside world.

My first reaction to the Bill is how things have changed: how we are now planning ahead for railway use 20 to 30 years in the future. That contrasts—I see the noble Lord, Lord Faulkner, agreeing with me—quite strongly with the position I encountered when I became Transport Secretary in the first Thatcher Government. The advice coming in then was anything but for expansion. Railways were rather the National Health Service of the transport world: all the problems were there, together with some fairly hairy solutions. I remember that one of the Prime Minister's advisers, Alan Walters, was asked to look at the industry. One of his propositions to Cabinet was that “many experts” believed that the Government should examine the options for reducing the rail network. He never quite said who these experts were, but that was his proposition. Another fashionable proposition was that, as most people used cars, we should convert the closed lines to roads. One or two of us remember that debate as well. I am glad to say, with the help of my friends not just in government but on the other side of the House, such as the noble Lord, Lord Snape, and with one or two outside at that time, such as the noble Lord, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, we saw off all these rather silly propositions.

Personally, I am delighted to see the development in demand that has taken place since then. Far from being consigned to some scrapheap of transport history, railways are now so popular that they face the severe capacity problem we have heard about. Whatever decision we take, that issue needs to be faced, as the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, so rightly said. Twice as many people travel by train every day than did so 20 years ago. Most forecasts show that the trains will be increasingly full by the mid-2020s, with the prospect that, in some areas, people will queue up to get on to the train to get to work. That is a pretty fearsome prospect.

There is a problem and it will only get worse. The Government have rightly proposed an ambitious and, I admit, expensive project. The only trouble is that we in this country do not have the greatest record on such projects. I think back to Maplin, which might at this moment have saved us a lot of debate on the future of airport capacity, and to the Channel Tunnel, which took 100-odd years to come to fruition. Indeed, it was half accidental that the project got the final green light at all, because at the beginning of the Thatcher years President Mitterrand and some of his Ministers came over to London and to No. 10. As it happened, we were not exactly soulmates: my opposite number was a communist. In fact, it was a very good and civilised meeting. There was only one problem: we had to issue

a communique at the end but it was difficult to know what to say about what we had agreed upon. It was then that Lady Thatcher remembered that I had been pressing the case for the Channel Tunnel. She adopted the policy, put it into the communique and the issue was agreed. Perhaps the lesson of all this is that we are always delighted to have the Department for Transport pushing forward projects—that is right—but it is even better to have No. 10 behind you as well.

Of course, we have waited a very long time for this new railway line. We are way behind countries such as France and Germany in high-speed rail. It is 120 years since we built the last mainline railway north of London. For a whole range of reasons, building it is exactly the right step to take. I was a Birmingham Member of Parliament for almost 30 years. In that time, I saw the transformation—backed in a bipartisan way—into a modern, attractive city with all the attributes you would expect: two excellent universities, a world-famous orchestra, and financial and legal centres. It is already a dynamic city but it can only improve its prospects with this high-speed line. Modern transport links make it possible for the city—indeed, for the whole West Midlands region generally—to attract new business and help develop the many good businesses already there. This is another way of saying that it is good for business and jobs. Perhaps not always recognised in quite the same way, it is also where people have the chance of relocating to a quality of life they do not necessarily get in overcrowded London or the south-east.

I make one proviso: I do not want to suggest that this one line, however important, should crowd out all other development spending. In the West Midlands, there are other, vital cities and towns. For example, the right reverend Prelate pointed out the position regarding Coventry and the surrounding area. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Prescott, that we should share the advantages of rail development. However, it takes me as long to travel to Portsmouth, for example, as it does to get to Birmingham, although it is about half the distance. That is not a satisfactory position.

As far as my other bit of travel by rail is concerned—on underground rail—I thought the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, was rather kind about transport in London. I point to the District line and the Wimbledon service, for which I hold the Minister personally and absolutely responsible. There, you see people struggling down iron staircases with enormous suitcases. You see young mothers with their buggies. There is not a lift or an escalator in sight. To my personal knowledge, that situation has been going on for the past 30 or 40 years, and there is still no prospect of change. When the annunciator system says that the next train is going to Victoria, you can bet your bottom dollar it will go to Edgware Road. I make one proposition to the Minister—it is the easiest pledge he will have to make today. I know that he will agree to accompany me one morning on one of these journeys down the District line from Wimbledon. I look forward to that.

Lastly, there are already calls for public ownership of the railways, including in the context of this line. Frankly, I am not an entirely uncritical supporter of the present structure but I say as gently and objectively as I can that people should be careful exactly what they wish for. For two and a half years, I was Secretary

of State in charge of a nationalised industry: the railways. The actual position was that British Rail had Ministers and transport department civil servants peering over its shoulder, and then it had Treasury officials debating constantly and usually refusing every request for investment. Try getting electrification past the Treasury. We did that in the end, but we waded through blood to do so. That is not the ideal way to run an industry. Whatever else, I hope we can agree that the last nationalisation model was not a perfect example.

There are obviously important issues to sort out, not least the connections in London—a point rightly emphasised by the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw. However, I totally support the concept generally. It will mark the beginning of a transformation in the railway links in this country to the benefit of industry, commerce and jobs. I look forward to discussing my ideas further with my noble friend on our journey down the District line.

1.36 pm

**Lord Faulkner of Worcester (Lab):** My Lords, it is a real pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Fowler. His modesty prevented him from describing perhaps his greatest moment as Minister for Transport, which was to resist, quite early on in his term in office, a very crazy plan from the British Railways Board and his Department for Transport officials to embark on a programme of closures of rural railway lines. I think about 40 lines were involved. He made quite clear that he would not stand for that, and more or less from that point the option of closures has gone off the political agenda. The noble Lord, Lord Fowler, deserves a great deal of credit for the fact that we have a railway network of the size it is, which we are now going to build on.

I should start by declaring my various railway interests, which are on the register, particularly my chairmanship of the Great Western Railway advisory board. Other noble Lords spoke about the phenomenal increase in demand for rail travel. I will not go over those figures again but those of us who worked in the industry in the 1970s and 1980s, when cost-cutting, contraction and decay were all too frequent a feature of life on Britain's railways, rub our eyes in disbelief at how great the transformation in the past 20 years has been. That growth has been achieved even when, for some of that time, the economy as a whole was in recession, or, as more recently, fuel prices at the pump made car travel cheaper.

Your Lordships will have seen the consequences of this doubling in the number of passenger journeys from 750 million a year to 1.5 billion in terms of overcrowding on the existing services. Each working day, 3,000 people must stand in the trains arriving at Euston, and a similar number in Birmingham. The west coast main line does not have enough train paths to accommodate the numbers wishing to use it. The railway tried to respond to the continuing increase in demand by fitting more trains on to the network, lengthening trains and reclassifying some coaches from first to second class to increase seat numbers, and so on. On the east coast, the new Azuma train fleet will add 28% more seating capacity at peak times for long-distance trains from King's Cross. That may

[LORD FAULKNER OF WORCESTER]

accommodate some years of demand growth, but on the even busier west coast main line the Pendolino fleet has already been lengthened, the busiest commuter trains operated by London Midland have had a 50% seating capacity increase, and extra commuter trains have been squeezed into peak periods by increasing the top speed of commuter trains to closer to 125 miles an hour.

That a limit would be reached by these kinds of measures has been evident to the Department for Transport for some time. In the competition for a long-term franchise for the east coast intercity service run in 2000, a bidder had suggested building a new high-speed line to accommodate an expansion of services. While the idea of a long-term franchise was abandoned on that occasion and it was let for just two years instead, the experience prompted the first serious examination of the case for high-speed rail in Britain. The study, which was carried out by Atkins, Ernst & Young and others for the Strategic Rail Authority and subsequently published by the Department for Transport, found that there was a business case for a north-south high-speed rail because the existing trunk lines—the west coast, the midland and the east coast—would all be approaching capacity limits, starting with the west coast by the mid-2020s. It took the imagination and foresight of the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, as the then Transport Secretary, to get hold of a high-speed rail project idea and make a reality of it, and then, crucially, win cross-party support, so that when the Government changed the policy did not change with them.

I have to tell your Lordships that the problem of overcrowding on the west coast main line is not a new phenomenon. I came across this letter published in the *Times*, which said:

“Sir, I left Rugby yesterday by the 12.45 pm train which is due at Euston-square at 4 o'clock pm. We arrived at Euston-square at 5.50 ... The cause of our delay was the breaking down of a luggage-train ahead of us. There is such an enormous traffic carried on what used to be called the London and Birmingham Railway that such delays (to say nothing of the danger to passengers) are constantly occurring. Would it not be a great improvement if the company were to lay down two additional lines for the sole use of luggage-trains?”

The date of that letter, my Lords, which was signed:

“Your Obedient Servant, A Cockney”,

was 30 December 1846.

I come back to today's situation. A number of noble Lords have talked about the impracticality of adding to capacity by further upgrades of the main line. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, referred to that, as did my noble friend Lord Rosser. There are other more radical solutions, two of which would be familiar to the noble Lord, Lord Fowler. One is to discourage the number of people travelling by train by pricing services up so that only the wealthy could travel and by making them less attractive. You would have to accompany that with a huge new programme of motorway construction, the environmental consequences of which would be horrendous.

We have heard a bit about the Chilterns today. One has only to look at the website of the M40 Chiltern Environmental Group, which represents 25,000 people who live along the M40 corridor from junction 3 to

junction 8, to understand how appalling life is for people living close to motorways. I quote:

“Day and night we all suffer from intolerable noise pollution”. Years on after the M40 opened, they are still campaigning for noise barriers.

The third option—and the sensible option, of course—is to build a new network of high-speed railways, as has been done in many other countries in the world. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, made the point that I was going to make—namely, that no national system which has embarked on a programme of high-speed rail has regretted it or said that it would take those services out of use. Instead, they are constantly adding to the networks that they have. Compared with Japan, which opened its first Shinkansen line in 1964, we in Britain have been rather slower in realising the potential of high-speed rail travel. We have tended to assume that because the Victorians left us such a fine network of main line and secondary railways, we could somehow get by without building new ones. Perhaps that made sense when the demand for rail travel was static or even falling, as it was in the 1970s, but that is not, of course, the case now.

In November 2007, the nation's first high-speed line was fully opened with a launch at a transformed St Pancras station, which was attended by Her Majesty the Queen, and High Speed 1 was born. After all the tribulation and all the objections to that programme, it was delivered on time and to budget. Once the Eurostar trains had to operate over the old Southern Region tracks into Waterloo, but once the new line was opened, they could run at much higher speed over the new Channel Tunnel rail link. One consequence of that was that complaints from residents about train noise ceased altogether. People in that part of the world now protest about noise from the M20 motorway.

The environmental standards to which High Speed 1 was constructed were stringent and of high quality, and the extensive consideration that has been given to these matters in the design of High Speed 2 will, I am sure, ultimately have a similarly good outcome. When the construction of High Speed 1 was planned, it was thought that only the Eurostar services would use it. However, Eurostar demand has grown to more than 10 million passengers a year, and rail now dominates the London to Paris and Brussels travel markets, where once air traffic was dominant. However, other domestic high-speed services have materialised and Kent's Javelin services now carry a further 10 million passengers a year. Taking the two service types together, the 20 million-plus annual passenger levels are similar to those originally forecast for the Channel Tunnel rail link. Forecasting has inevitable uncertainty, but, as the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, said, to assume that the growth in demand will miraculously stop two years after the line is opened, is, of course, nonsense. That demand will continue and we have to plan for it well into the future. High Speed 2 has had the support of successive Governments. The Bill before us is the first part of what should be regarded as a national high-speed rail network.

Before I finish, I would like to stress a little-understood but important aspect of High Speed 2. Once it is built, the need to try to fit together “paths” for non-stopping express passenger services alongside those for freight

and local and regional passenger services over the same railway is removed. Part of the capacity gain that High Speed 2 delivers arises from the new tracks it provides and from the services with longer trains they can accommodate. Another part comes from the narrowing of the speed range of services operating on the parallel routes—initially with High Speed 2, that will mean the west coast main line. This is the “capacity release” effect and it means that intermediate places on this line such as Coventry, Northampton and Milton Keynes and smaller places, too, will be able to get better services in the future. And it should be possible to accommodate more freight off our congested motorways and on to rail, especially container traffic to and from the major ports and major distribution centres. So High Speed 2 is not just a foundation stone for the national high-speed network, and for improving the links between our major cities, but it is also an essential device to overcome constraints on today’s network and allow the expansion of services at smaller towns and cities and create better pathways for freight.

I believe that High Speed 2 is very much a project for our times. I congratulate the Minister on the way that he introduced the Bill, my noble friend Lord Rosser on the way that he responded, and all the other speakers in this debate. The fact that there is so much support in this House for this Bill is remarkable and perhaps mirrors the experience in the other place, where the Third Reading of the Bill received 90% of the vote with a huge majority. I am sure that the Bill will have the same support in this House.

1.48 pm

**The Earl of Glasgow (LD):** My Lords, it is a great honour to follow the noble Lord, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, whose knowledge of railways is second to none. I, on the other hand, will speak simply because I am a great enthusiast for HS2. It is the most exciting engineering project since Crossrail and it is expected to benefit the Midlands and north of England as much as, if not more than, London and the south-east. As the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, also said, it shows that our country can commit itself to ambitious projects that are not expected to be fully operational for 20 years or more. Most importantly, it demonstrates that we are committed to the railways as our main form of transport for the foreseeable future, or that is the way I see it.

The railways—potentially, anyway—are by far the most civilised and pleasant method of travel. It is also the one that least pollutes the atmosphere. We must stop building more and more motorways and releasing those aircraft into the skies that go only from one part of Britain to another. HS2 will eventually connect most of our major cities, and I see it as part of a new railway revolution. At least, that is what I hope. It is so important that the Government do not lose their nerve and get swayed by those, particularly on the right of the Conservative Party, who regard HS2 as an unacceptable waste of money and are still campaigning to have the whole project aborted.

However, my enthusiasm for HS2 is tempered by a few concerns on which I need government assurance. First, I want an assurance that HS2 has its own ring-fenced budget and that essential improvements to the rest of the network will not be compromised.

I need to be sure that HS2 is not a vanity project, as many of its detractors like to put it, but an integral and essential part of a greatly improved railway network for the future.

Secondly, I want to be assured that the Government see the completion of building HS2 not as an end in itself but, rather, as the beginning of a greater scheme for the future of railways in Britain. I should like to know that the Government are already planning HS2’s extension into Scotland, presumably with the Scottish Government contributing their share of the cost. I would like to think that HS3 is also on the drawing board. As has already been said, this is the new proposed east to west line joining up Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds, and on to York and maybe Hull. Or is this just some vague aspiration associated with the northern powerhouse concept? Is the proposed link with Heathrow still at the planning stage or is it ready to go ahead? And are the Government still working to resolve the problem of joining HS2 and HS1? Surely we do not want to have to change trains and stations, as my noble friend has suggested as a possibility.

Most of us here will be dead by the time all this has been realised, but I like to think we are planning for the distant future. The high-speed element of the project will prove its full potential only on a journey of over 250 miles. We Scots would much prefer to come to London every week by train than go through the hassle of airports, but the journey from Glasgow to London needs to take at least an hour less than it does at present to get us to change our ways.

My third concern—a point flagged up by my noble friend Lord Bradshaw—is the rebuilding of Euston station and HS2’s approach into London. This is as yet far from resolved. Although High Speed Two Ltd prides itself on its consultation with interested parties and its success in coming to arrangements with hundreds of interested parties, it has resolved nothing with the people of Camden. It has not even firmed up the line’s route into Euston station, so the anxious people of Camden do not yet know what they are objecting to, and they are certainly going to object. This issue must be resolved quickly, otherwise the whole project could be seriously delayed. I would like to know that the Government are fully aware of this danger and intend to give it urgent attention.

To recap, I would be grateful for an assurance that the essential improvements to the existing network will not be affected by HS2. The Minister, the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, has said that it will not, but he must understand that there is quite a lot of scepticism about this. I would also be grateful for an assurance that the Government are, even now, planning a more effective railway service for Britain well into the future, and that they will waste no time in resolving the problem of the route into Euston station and the reconstruction of Euston station itself, or, as has been suggested, possibly the abandonment of Euston station altogether as the London terminus for HS2.

1.54 pm

**Lord Rooker (Lab):** My Lords, it was a privilege to be present for the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Mair. I hope that he will much enjoy his membership of this House.

[LORD ROOKER]

This is my fourth public show of support for HS2. I spoke in the take note debate in October 2013 and in the Second Reading of the preparation Bill in November 2013. Then in 2015 for some reason I got a bit annoyed at a very home counties-centric, anti-HS2 essay in the *Financial Times* from one of its contributing editors, and it published my response in its columns. I was not alone in my view. Of course, those contributions and this one today disqualify me from being a member of your Lordships' committee on the Bill. Indeed, only anyone without a view ever expressed need apply. That is an absolutely crazy way to legislate. We are all disqualified if we have expressed an opinion at any time. We are all fingered—whether you are for or against, it does not matter; you cannot serve on the Bill. I do not think that that is a very good way to legislate.

In some ways, I sometimes feel that I live in a country which has lost its nerve on serious projects, whether they be roads, railways, airports or indeed the potential for new factories on green fields. England has, at most, 12% to 13% of its land area built on. We are not short of land.

I just want to make a general point before I go into a little detail on one aspect. I take second place to nobody in supporting proper health and safety rules, regulation on the right to trade union representation, equality in the workplace, and equal pay and training opportunities, but I think that we have gone mad on consultation throughout the whole of society. That was one of the biggest shocks I had when I came into government after being an MP for more than 20 years; we are consultation mad, especially on planning.

On major projects we are even worse. As someone has just said, in the main those major projects are for the next generation and the ones to follow. They are not for today's generation. We set the decision-making at the lowest level nearest the project, which means that nothing happens for years and years. Those wanting to invest walk away, the orders are not made, the factories shrink, industries decline and the rot sets in. Does steel ring any bells? That is the pattern of what has happened in the last few decades.

I know that there are exceptions, and of course we are dealing with one today, but there are urgent projects on energy and transport which are needed for the future and on which we have lost decades as they get shunted into a cul-de-sac. The nation and its people are the losers, because these projects are for future generations, not today's vested interests; it is tomorrow's people's interests that we have to look at.

After listening to 1,500 petitions in the Commons—the elected House—substantial additions have been made to the Bill and, in any event, I understand that massive changes have been made outside the Commons Select Committee process. Tunnelling has gone from less than 9% to 20% of the route, and it is on the record that the elected House voted 399 to 44 for the Bill. So why does this unelected House have to go through the same process? Ours should be the secondary Chamber aspect—the big-picture view. We should be looking at what has been done in the House of Commons and whether it has ticked all the key boxes. Has it made sure that all the key issues are being dealt with? We in this House do not represent anybody—we do not

boast of doing that—but collectively we represent the nation as a whole, and I think that we should take that much wider view. I do not think that our focus should be on the specific field boundaries and hamlets, nor indeed on individuals. It was the role of the elected House to do that. We should ask whether the key issues have been taken care of.

There is a list of several key issues. I shall not go into detail on any of any of them but they include capacity, costs, jobs, skills, growth opportunities, compensation for those affected and connectivity—all of which are very important. I just want to mention the environment. Two hundred and eighty hectares of new woodland will be created, seven major rivers will be diverted, there will be 7 million square metres of landscape planting and 17 million square metres of habitat will be created. I had to smile when I saw the next one on the list. There will be over 300 kilometres of new replacement hedgerow as a result of HS2. I was reminded that in the 1990s there was a six-year period when farmers grubbed up 25% of the hedgerows in England. I do not recall any rows or moans from the NGOs at that time. Two hundred kilometres of noise barrier are planned. All phase 1 stations will receive a BREEAM excellent rating and there will be no net loss of biodiversity from phase 1.

If I have one comment on the list provided by HS2 in its briefing, it relates to the BREEAM rating for the stations. “Excellent” sounds good but it is not the top rating; it is only the fourth out of five. “Outstanding” is the top BREEAM rating. We can be proud of BREEAM assessments, which were invented in the UK by the Building Research Establishment more than 20 years ago and are used in more than 70 countries. More than 2 million buildings in the world have now been assessed under BREEAM. My view is: why are none of the stations outstanding? Why have we settled for the fourth grade, not the fifth? That is my one minor criticism. It is a world standard and we ought to aim for the top of the ratings.

Around the country, business leaders, the CBI, the chambers of commerce and local government leaders can see plans being made now due to the Government's determination to press ahead. This is a reality in many parts of the country. It is becoming clear that they do not have to be located on the line or at the station to see and reap the benefits; there is a genuine widespread benefit to infrastructure and investment in the country.

It is unusual for Governments of both major parties to have grabbed the issue and seen it through, and I obviously welcome that. It is a surprise to some—and very good to see, let us make no bones about it—that the flakiness once present on my side seems to have disappeared altogether, because there was flakiness both in this House and the other place. This genuine joint effort on an all-party basis will have a genuine effect, and has had already, on investment in capacity in skills and training. That can provide a massive boost for the country, which has in some ways lost its nerve on other big issues. Crossrail is there, but it is buried, it is not in the public psyche at present, and in any case it is a London-centric thing. But this one could capture the imagination and give a boost to confidence in other big infrastructure projects, for which we are crying out and which have been lost for years.

I am not at all critical of those who oppose or who use the process for delay. As I said, I criticise the process, but my view is that as it is there, use it. I think it should be changed. Some people want to delay or even thwart the project. It will be for the committee to assess, for example, local authorities who arrive with more demands on detail but, when you check their top line, it is, “We are opposed”. The other day, I was looking at the computers working away on all the stuff that has come in in the past week. One of the first things I saw was: “We are opposed to this in principle”, followed by a big list of demands in detail. It is for the committee to look at that.

I have read all the material, and, in the main, the NGOs say that they are not opposed or, indeed, that they accept the case. But then they make a whole list of demands which would make the project—I will not say impossible, but the Commons has already looked at this. That is the point: the Commons has looked at this already. Something else that jumped out of my file was that, two years ago now, in February 2014, we all received the Institute of Directors’ quality flagship policy journal, *Big Picture*, with a very anti-HS2 cover story. The article inside stated that members were against, but, as far as I could see—and I checked yesterday—it did not quote a single named member of the IoD. But it was a massive propaganda piece against HS2.

I think that we have to get away from some of the excessive consultation, which reduces everything to the lowest common denominator. That will always encourage reaction against the process and pressure for inaction. I am not in favour of riding over people’s views—I do not mean that at all—but, nevertheless, we have gone over the top, to the detriment of the national aim for future generations. Although this will not go down well with some people, the losers are not today’s adults but today’s children. They are the losers by the way we are operating at present.

I wish the Bill well. I hope that the committee will get on with it under the crushing procedures it has to work to. In my view, the line should already be half way up or down the country.

2.04 pm

**Lord Framlingham (Con):** My Lords, I have been sitting here feeling increasingly isolated, and I am very sorry to introduce a discordant note, but I suppose that someone has to, otherwise it is terribly one-sided. I am delighted that the noble Lord, Lord Rooker, is not going to be critical of those who oppose the idea, because I totally oppose it. Just one word on his speech: it is all very well to plant new things, and I know a bit about that, but they are not the same as established landscapes, old trees and old things. That is what people are concerned about. New is good in many ways, and we are all for it, but old has an awful lot going for it as well.

I do not know whether we will give the Bill an unopposed Second Reading. It did not get an unopposed Second Reading down in the House of Commons. Traditionally, we do, so I suppose that we will, but I am sorry about that, because I am always anxious to register my concern about this sort of thing and it is sad not to be able to.

I have not spoken to anybody outside the Westminster bubble who is in favour of the scheme, when it is put to them. The reasons for it are, perhaps, to do with capacity, although that is uncertain. The idea of spending all this money just to get quickly to Birmingham seems ridiculous to most people. There is a touch of the Emperor’s new clothes about the whole thing. HS2 fantasises about the advantages it will bring and the huge disadvantages it will smoothly overcome. It is ridiculously expensive in time, money and potential damage to the environment. I believe that it is really ill-conceived at this time.

It will cost £55 billion, with the first phase finishing, it is hoped, in 2026 and the second phase in 2034—a total of 18 years’ disruption. All to get from London to Birmingham a little more quickly, which I do not think is a particularly good idea. We are not France; we are not Germany; we are not a big country. We do not have to sprint from here to there. The noble Lord, Lord Prescott, said earlier that by the time the train had got up speed from Manchester to Leeds, I think it was, it would be slowing down again. How ridiculous can one get? It will have a potentially disastrous effect on the countryside, on the Chilterns and the precious area of outstanding natural beauty there.

So far, there have been 21,833 responses to the proposals, and it does not speak well for HS2’s handling of them, or its future operations, that the parliamentary ombudsman stated in a report that,

“overall HS2 Ltd’s actions fell below the reasonable standards we would expect, so much so that they constituted maladministration”.

We have heard today from several speakers who support the Bill in principle, but then went on to worry about it, including the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry and the noble Lord, Lord MacGregor. Those worries have been magnified and multiplied from one end of the country to the other. Inexplicably, and sadly, no consideration has been given to sensible and professionally produced alternative schemes, such as High Speed UK, which is cheaper, provides much better connectivity to stations throughout the country and avoids sensitive landscape areas. Why have those not been considered? Perhaps the Minister can tell us in his response.

So many issues do not seem to have been resolved. The trains may well not be able to travel at the speeds predicted. I cite a report from some time ago:

“In the research, completed last year, Prof Peter Woodward, one of the world’s leading experts in the geo-engineering of railways, found that the speeds proposed by HS2—faster than any other high-speed line in the world—would create ‘critical track velocity effects’ and ‘significant issues’ with track instability ... He said that speeds as high as those planned by HS2 could cause ‘rapid deterioration of the track, ballast and sub-ballast, including possible derailment and ground failure’”.

The report continued:

“The disclosures are the latest blow to the scheme, viewed by many even in the rail industry as unnecessary. Last week, it emerged that the National Audit Office, which has been fiercely critical of HS2, was to begin a third review”.

I have already briefly mentioned connectivity. It appears that HS2 will extend to a number of major centres, but will leave out many of our existing stations that people currently use. If you live near one of these new stations, fine, but if not you will have to get to

[LORD FRAMLINGHAM]

them, or suffer the service you are left with at your local station. I feel that I am missing something somewhere.

The House of Commons voted the Bill through with a massive majority but, in Committee, barely looked at its 69 clauses and 32 schedules—I am sure that noble Lords have all seen the Bill. They were barely touched on. That leaves quite a job for your Lordships' House to do. It is a mystery to me why that happened.

How far would £55 billion go in other ways—in lengthening platforms, extending and improving trains, upgrading existing lines, or doing sensible things with the connections in the north? The noble Lord, Lord Prescott, talked about Liverpool to Hull; how much good could that kind of money do? There are so many ways in which that kind of money could be spent. We must remember that our own House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee reported just a year ago that:

“The Government has yet to make a convincing case for proceeding with the project”.

Yet proceeding it is.

If the Government do proceed with this scheme, we must insist that they do so with minimum detriment to the landscape through which the route passes. Everything possible must be done to preserve and protect the countryside, particularly the Chilterns and the area of outstanding natural beauty. If a long tunnel is needed to protect this area, a properly constructed tunnel of necessary length must be provided. Whatever the cost—taken in the context of this total spend of £55 billion, and for the sake of future generations—this must be insisted upon. Perhaps the Minister can reassure us on this point. There is no point doing half or three-quarters of a job; let us do a proper job for future generations.

I conclude by repeating that I simply cannot believe that a sensible nation is embarking on such an ill thought out and foolhardy scheme. If it succeeds in getting through this House, I wish it well, but I fear the worst. Whatever happens, the environment and the people on its route must not be made to suffer for such a venture.

2.12 pm

**Baroness Young of Old Scone (Lab):** My Lords, I declare an interest as chairman-designate of the Woodland Trust, president of a local wildlife trust and chancellor of Cranfield University, a foremost international seat of engineering learning, in which context I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Mair, and welcome him as a distinguished engineer to our gatherings here today.

I am not against HS2 but I am in favour of ancient woodland. I recognise the need to improve the infrastructure of the UK as a fundamental contribution to economic development for the future, but we surely ought now to be better at it, without trashing our environment. We have got better; when I first joined the environment movement 25 years ago, about 15% of our sites of special scientific interest were being damaged each year, mostly—might I say—by publicly funded infrastructure projects. Over the past 25 years, that figure has reduced to less than 1% of SSSIs being damaged. Crossrail was a controversial project but

real accommodation was made between the promoters, the contractors and the environmental movement and there was real delivery on the ground of environmental benefit. It is therefore rather mystifying how on earth HS2 Ltd has made such a hash of this project and is planning to drive the route through 34 ancient woodland sites.

Does that matter? The Minister said that he was proud that HS2 had not demolished a single grade 1 listed building. Ancient woodlands are the grade 1 listed buildings of the environment. They are the richest terrestrial habitat for wildlife. It is not just about the trees, it is about birds, plants, butterflies, beetles and, most distinctively, those undisturbed soil communities of fungi, mycorrhizae and micro-organisms that have been maturing away for between 400 and 10,000 years, and it is about the lost fragments of the wild wood that once covered our entire country after the last ice age. To qualify as ancient woodlands, they need to have had continuous tree cover and largely undisturbed soils since at least 1600. They are therefore the equivalent of grade 1 listed buildings. They are the cathedrals of conservation, but they have been reduced to a fragment of their former extent. Only 2% of the land area of the UK is now covered by ancient woodland and it is heavily threatened by a range of threats.

Ancient woodland is not just important, it is irreplaceable. It is acknowledged as such in planning guidance and the *National Planning Policy Framework*, although it is not strongly enough protected by that document. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have also clearly stated in their guidance that ancient woodland is irreplaceable. The Government's strategy, *Biodiversity 2020*, includes the statement:

“We are committed to providing appropriate protection to ancient woodlands”,

and the Government's policy statement, *Keepers of Time*, said:

“The existing area of ancient woodland should be maintained”.

Yet we still have 34 irreplaceable, ostensibly protected ancient woodland sites being damaged by HS2. They are equivalent to the size of 49 football pitches and some of them are being damaged not by the permanent railway but by temporary works of its creation. In such cases, 1,000 years of complex ecosystems, history and heritage are being swept away, for example, for a temporary haul route. We clearly have not got the balance right—I thought that, as a Government and as a nation, we had already cracked it. I ask the Minister for assurance that some really key issues will be addressed both in Committee and at subsequent stages of the Bill, so that we can have a world-class project that also delivers world-class environmental outcomes.

What are the issues? First, HS2 was very slow in identifying the ancient woodlands along the route. Only half had been identified by the time the environmental statement was finished. That is not good enough. We need to make sure that in the very early stages of designing the route, everything is known about these protected sites that needs to be known, so that measures can be taken to avoid as many of them as possible and to put in adequate mitigation where possible. It may be too late now to change the route because of the constraints of the hybrid Bill system, but we still have phase 2 of HS2 and HS3 coming

forward and we need the methodology to be revised and published as a matter of urgency so that, when phase 2 of HS2 and HS3 come along, we do a better job of identifying these very precious, irreplaceable sites.

The second issue is the bored tunnel. The extension of the tunnel through the Chilterns AONB is very much welcomed. The fact that it will be lengthened will save a number of ancient woodlands, but it is not enough; we need further lengthening. The further lengthening that is being called for by the AONB authorities would save more ancient woodland and protect the AONB. I do not believe that there has been adequate scrutiny of the costs of the full tunnel to ensure that its rejection on cost grounds is legitimate. There is still the possibility of other tunnel solutions for the protection of irreplaceable ancient woodlands, which should not be dismissed on cost grounds and should be examined properly. We need to heed the warnings of the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, about the tyranny of cost-benefit.

As I said, the constraints of the hybrid Bill process mean that it is very difficult at this stage to challenge the route selection and consider alternatives, but HS2 Ltd could do a better job on providing so-called compensatory habitat for ancient woodland lost. When HS2 Ltd was questioned by the special Select Committee in the other place, it was unable to provide a figure of how much woodland planting would be required in direct response to the ancient woodland loss. There is published Defra biodiversity off-setting methodology which says that for the highest-quality habitats there should be a 24:1 ratio in terms of replacement habitats. That is for replaceable habitats and in the case of ancient woodland we are talking about irreplaceable habitats, so we certainly will be pressing for at least 30:1 for these irreplaceable habitats. That will not be a replacement but it will be a significant biodiversity and habitat gain. HS2 Ltd says it is constrained by the amount of land available for compensation inside the area covered by the Bill. We believe that HS2 could be far more innovative, as suits a flagship project of world stature, and that it could find compensation outside the Bill area through a variety of voluntary but none the less legally and financially binding schemes, such as conservation covenants.

Perhaps I might deal with a red herring. One of the proposals from HS2 Ltd is translocation—digging up the whole wood and its soils and toddling it across to somewhere else. I certainly believe that this technique should continue to be tried but it is not yet proven to be effective and it certainly will not recreate ancient woodland. What makes it worse is that any wood created this way has no statutory protection at all. If this desperate measure is deployed, the Bill should be amended to give legal protection to woodlands planted on translocated soils.

Of course, as well as the 34 ancient woodlands directly affected by phase 1, a further 29 are indirectly affected due to their close proximity to the construction works. The Bill needs to be absolutely clear that buffering arrangements should be provided against impacts on ancient woodlands from the construction works—dust, noise, nitrous oxide deposition, light—all of which threaten ancient woodland species.

The project is aiming for “no net loss of biodiversity”. HS2 Ltd has tried to demonstrate that there will be no net loss of biodiversity. Ancient woodland is irreplaceable so there will be a net loss, whatever happens, and I advise and urge HS2 to give up trying to pretend that there will be no net loss of biodiversity. I also believe that ancient woodland should be removed from the no net loss calculation because including it within that calculation implies that the loss can be compensated for and sets a precedent for future assaults on ancient woodland of all kinds, including in phase 2 and HS3.

This is a totemic project in the UK. It is very visible to the world. It is a shame that HS2 Ltd has not done a good job on the environmental protection case. It has failed to take expert advice on compensation, methodologies and translocation, but keeps on saying that it has exercised its professional judgment, in spite of the fact that both statutory agencies and expert NGOs have been telling it otherwise. That is a real shame for a project of this nature. I believe the Government are sincere in wanting to deliver the best possible environmental outcomes from this project so they must insist that HS2 does better, including taking up some of the more innovative solutions that organisations such as Natural England and the Woodland Trust have offered.

We must not set a poor precedent for the mass of future development in infrastructure, housing and commercial development that we hope to see with the growth of our economy and that we anticipate will move the UK forward. This is a seminal project and will set many precedents. At the moment the precedent it is setting is not a good one. I urge the Minister to take account of that in the further stages of the Bill and in listening to the outcome of the Select Committee, and I hope that the special Select Committee will also do so.

Briefly, I support my noble friends Lord Rosser and Lord Stevenson in their concerns about the powers of the special Select Committee. It will be very bad for democracy if many people submit petitions and they are not adequately considered by the Select Committee. It is important that right at the beginning of the Select Committee’s work it is absolutely clear what its powers are so that people can know what expectations to have.

We have an opportunity to deliver world-class infrastructure in HS2 but if it is not to tarnish its reputation, it must deliver world class for the environment, and in my view that remains to be grasped.

2.25 pm

**Lord Birt (CB):** My Lords, I strongly support HS2 and the Bill, albeit from a position, as your Lordships will hear, of agitated frustration. In doing so, I entirely recognise the importance of everything that the noble Baroness, Lady Young, just said in her notably eloquent speech.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Britain led the world in building infrastructure. Almost 200 years ago, for instance, the “Rocket” was commissioned for the new line from Liverpool to Manchester. Later, London constructed by far the best underground and overground rail network of any major city in the world, from which London and the wider nation have

[LORD BIRT]

benefited mightily ever since. Yet in the last 50 years or so, as a country we have drifted shamefully behind the rest of the developed world in every category of infrastructure, as the noble Lord, Lord Mair, underlined in his truly authoritative maiden speech.

When I worked at No. 10, I led a team from the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit and the Department for Transport to look at the UK's transport networks. We established that the UK had by far the worst transport infrastructure in the developed world. We also analysed the causes: the persistent failure by Governments of both major parties to maintain their commitment to invest, resulting in far lower investment in infrastructure as a share of GDP than any other developed country. Anyone who travels can experience the yawning gap between the UK's and other countries' infrastructures that has emerged over these past 50 years. I well remember, as may other noble Lords, travelling in France in my 20s on run-down roads and shabby, slow-running trains. Yet for decades now France has had a comprehensive motorway network and a superb system of high-speed rail.

Some see infrastructure spend as a huge cost. There have been echoes of this today. It is not. It is an investment and its benefit—its payback—spreads over many decades, perhaps even centuries. Yes, we need infrastructure that minimises the impact on the environment and on the people and communities affected by it. We must invest in that as well, in the Chilterns and elsewhere. But modern infrastructure is a necessity which not only underpins the economy but promotes a better travel experience and enhances individual lives, as a bypass does when it takes long-distance strategic traffic out of villages and towns—an all-round gain.

We are indeed a crowded island, although we have a far inferior infrastructure than other countries just as crowded as we are. Moreover, and no one has mentioned this yet, we are experiencing the most rapid growth in population in our history; and that growth is forecast to continue. In 20 years, we are likely to be a country of 75 million people. That is an argument for more, not less, infrastructure if we are to avoid gridlock and chaos, and protect our wonderful countryside.

In the UK, as many have touched on, we move at a snail's pace. More than 10 years ago, when I was at No. 10, the decision was made in principle to proceed with a high-speed rail network and, incidentally, new nuclear build. Yet more than 10 years later, construction on neither has yet begun. At the same time we crawl towards a decision, or possibly more procrastination, on expanding the world's most strategic airport at Heathrow. While we slumber, in the past seven years China has built 6,000 miles of high-speed rail in that populous, mountainous country. When HS2 is complete, we as a country will be at a puny 200 miles, so that is 6,000 against 200. For HS2, from a decision in principle to cutting the ribbon, it will be 30 years. Our politics is severely inhibiting good government, as the noble Lord, Lord Rooker, reminded us a moment ago.

There are many reasons for our low productivity as a nation but the lack of a fit-for-purpose transport infrastructure is certainly one. Beyond rail, our road network—which I remind the noble Earl, Lord Glasgow, who is not in his place, facilitates over 90% of journeys

and is far more important economically than rail—is chronically congested, as we all know and experience. There appears to be no prospect at all of our investing in what we most need as a country: a strategic road network designed for long-distance strategic travel, linking our cities, ports and airports. The infrastructure commission is a highly welcome step in the right direction and with his breezy optimism the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, is its greatest asset. It might eliminate some of the opportunistic politics, cowardice and lack of vision, to which the noble Lord, Lord Rooker, also referred, which have plagued our major infrastructure projects for half a century. So full steam ahead for the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, please.

I conclude with two specific points. First, it is a false economy and deeply foolish not to connect Heathrow from the off to HS2. Just a few months ago, I was in Cologne when my plane was cancelled. I took a high-speed rail journey from Cologne to Frankfurt, which took an hour. The train arrives at the terminal in an airport which, by the way, serves Germany's fifth-biggest city and has—guess what?—four runways. I stepped off the train into the terminal.

I make my second point as a Liverpudlian. The failure to build out HS2 to the city of my upbringing is a massive reverse for that city, which is still trying to overcome the adverse forces of history. When HS2 is built, Manchester will be 1 hour and 7 minutes from London while Liverpool will be 1 hour and 32 minutes from it—in round figures, an hour to Manchester but an hour and a half to Liverpool. This is a huge psychological difference for investors and business travellers, and a nail in the coffin of the Liverpool economy. It needs a fast connection to London as well as to the proposed new fast link to Manchester, Leeds and Hull, to which the noble Lord, Lord Prescott, referred, if Liverpool is again to thrive.

Can the Minister say in his concluding remarks whether Liverpool and Heathrow will, in his view, ever be connected to HS2? Also, what percentage of GDP do the Government believe should be invested in national transport infrastructure over the next two decades? That is a not unreasonable question, given that that is exactly the kind of span implicit in the Bill. How does that figure compare with the investment of other leading European nations over the past 40 years? If the UK is to compete on a global stage, we need to create a cross-party consensus on infrastructure and to identify what a fast-growing country needs over the longer term. We need to increase our investment greatly and speed up significantly our decision-making. But, for this one small step that is HS2, let us be grateful.

2.35 pm

**Lord Berkeley (Lab):** My Lords, first, I join other noble Lords in congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Mair, on a wonderful maiden speech. One thing he may not know is that his appearance has increased the number of civil engineers in this place by 25%. I would argue that it means there are not enough civil engineers here in the first place. He is very eminent—much more eminent than me, anyway, but I cannot speak for my colleagues—and it is wonderful to have him here. Perhaps a few more will come in later years to boost the engineering expertise in your Lordships' House.

Many speakers have spoken to support the line. I support HS2 and I declare an interest as chairman of the Rail Freight Group. I have been helping to promote an alternative scheme for Euston station, which the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, has outlined, and I will speak a little more about that later. Some of your Lordships have questioned what are, for many more people, important details and the attitude of HS2 in responding to them. While I am sure that we should be building a high-speed line, there are high speeds and high speeds. One or two other noble Lords have asked whether we should be designing something for 400 kilometres an hour or 300 kilometres an hour, when the cost of the trains may go up by 50%.

Then there are the higher operation costs. You would probably have to slow down in the long tunnels—we have already debated how long they are. How should we link that with getting in the first instance, to Birmingham 20 minutes quicker but then spending 20 minutes walking from the new station to New Street if you want to go on to Wolverhampton or other stations? We need to look at overall journey times, which many noble Lords have spoken about. At the other end of the spectrum the Euston express scheme, which I shall talk about, would reduce the walking time to the Underground quite significantly. I think there are still debates going on about stations for Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham in phase two. We need to look at all these things to see the most cost-effective solution to getting extra capacity, which I think we are all agreed should happen. So far, I have some serious doubts about the performance of HS2, particularly in respect of its approach to and performance at the House of Commons Select Committee.

Perhaps I may speak briefly about the Euston express scheme. As is normal in France, Germany and Italy, most, if not all, their stations on high-speed lines are not out of town. The high-speed lines do not go into the centre because it is very expensive to demolish inner-city properties. They go on to the classic lines for the last few miles to go into the mainline station, which is often refurbished. This can be seen in France and Germany; I accept that Frankfurt airport is a slight exception but that is the normal trend and it is much less disruptive.

What we can do is put all the trains—HS2 and west coast main line—into the existing bit of the station, by building extra platforms where there are those wide bits and diverting the tunnels on Old Oak Common to pop up near Queen's Park station, and run down the existing lines. That would involve extending the station southwards towards Euston Road and putting a deck over the whole lot to get an integrated station for all the platforms, which really would enhance the station quite dramatically. More importantly, it would reduce the costs—which I will come back to later—could be done in about half the time and would solve some of the problems that the noble Lord, Lord MacGregor, mentioned earlier for the charities. It is part of a petition by Sam Price to the Commons, and I am sure he will be presenting it again in the Lords. Most importantly, discussions with Network Rail, Transport for London and HS2 have demonstrated that there are no show-stoppers, either during the construction or the operation.

I want to concentrate on the process of using the Select Committee to give permissions. I was involved in the committees for the Channel Tunnel, HS1 and Crossrail, and I briefly chaired a Private Bill Committee on a Norfolk Broads Bill. One thing I learned is that committees must act in a judicial capacity when hearing petitions and listening to promoters' responses. They must listen, and they do, certainly in your Lordships' House. Having heard the petitions, the committee then forms a view on the issues. It may request further studies from the promoter and publishes reports.

I know that is what our House of Lords committee will do, but sadly my experience hearing the petitions and discussions from many residents' groups in the Camden area to the Commons committee was that it fell far short of the independence and fairness which I believe is so important for a promoter to get agreement to enhance the credibility of a scheme and its own work. I am not being critical of the decisions that the committee took, but I am critical of the way it appeared—at least when it neared the end of its work and was considering petitions towards the London end—to have more or less given up, lost interest and taken everything that the promoters said or asserted without question. Maybe it is under pressure from Ministers—I do not know—but it should have resisted. My noble friends Lord Stevenson and Lady Young hinted at similar things.

I will give the House one or two examples. Two days before my friend, the petitioner for Euston Express, appeared, HS2 wrote him a letter saying the scheme would not work:

“The EE proposal does not envisage providing the European GC gauge which is a legal requirement”.

Two days later, under cross-examination, HS2 admitted that that was not the case. You cannot change the law in two days. I knew it was not a legal requirement, so why did HS2 write a letter saying it was? It is absolutely fundamental to any scheme that you get the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Then HS2 said that the Euston Express scheme was more expensive than its scheme. It could not provide any evidence and was challenged in cross-examination. Even after several meetings, it still cannot substantiate the cost of its AP3 scheme at Euston. I do not believe it knows what the costs are, and I suspect that Ministers in the future will be approached by HS2, which will say, “We have a bit of a problem, Minister. Can we have another £10 million or so?” “I don't know, I'm working on it”. It is not good.

It is not just me and my petitioner friend complaining. Many residents have said to me that the construction will be massively disruptive to their properties and lives in Camden over 20 years. Eventually, HS2 gave them a chart of monthly noise forecasts—which, incidentally, last for 20 years—which arrived the day after the Camden cutting group had appeared in front of the committee. That is not the right way of doing it. They also said that the Euston Express scheme would require a high level of night-time noise due to the need to rebuild some of the tracks. The committee included that in its report without it ever appearing to have been debated.

Finally, those who live in the grade 1 listed buildings beside the track in Camden were told on several occasions by HS2 that they could get double glazing to keep the noise out. I think most of us know that if

[LORD BERKELEY]

you have a grade 1 listed building, you cannot put in double glazing that easily—certainly not the plastic type that will probably be wanted.

The recurring theme from HS2 is to give as little information as possible, delay as much as possible and then later on say, “We have not got enough time to do anything, so you have just got to accept our scheme”. The plan that seems to be going through is full of assertions. That is why I have put down these Motions, which I will come to. I hope that Ministers in the mean time will review the whole policy of how HS2 behaves and relates to petitioners, because it is in Ministers’ interests to get it right. As my noble friend Lord Rooker said, he may argue that we need only one Select Committee hearing between the two Houses, but it has to be the right one. I am confident that our one will be, but I am not very happy about the way that the Commons one was done.

I turn now to my two Motions on the Order Paper. The first one suggests that the committee hears evidence from London at an early stage. There are two reasons for this. First, sadly, it is a well-known fact that committees get bored eventually and Ministers put pressure on them to hurry up. Secondly, there is also uncertainty about the plans for Euston, and early consideration of petitions would enable the committee, if it so wished, to instruct HS2 to do further work.

There are a couple of examples of the problem, which Camden is very concerned about—I had an email from it this morning. I have not had anything to do with the rail freight side of this in this petition, but HS2 is saying that it cannot do spoil by rail and is still working on it. At the moment, it is 2,000 trucks a day out of Camden, every day for three years. Can your Lordships imagine that? This was petitioned against two years ago, but they only started talking six months ago and then said it would take nine months or something to produce a report. That is nice, because by the time it has produced a report and it has gone to the committee, and there has been a decision, it will be too late to order rail wagons or get the rail companies involved. They will say it is too late and it has to go by road.

Camden is in the same position over its plans for Euston, which involve having a level deck above and shortening the time. HS2 has promised Camden a report, but it has not come. So it is a question of when the best time is for Camden to petition. It will be speaking to the committee, but there is a whole policy of delay, delay and delay until it is too late. I will not of course press this Motion to a vote, but it is important that your Lordships’ committee understands the problem.

I will just quote one comment from the chair of the Commons Select Committee last year, on 7 July 2015, about Camden and what is happening. The chair said:

“Literally on a number of occasions, we’ve kept saying, ‘When are we going to hear what’s going to happen at Euston?’ Because I would quite like to have dealt with the plans for Euston early in the process, in case they need to be changed, with additional provisions, and if they’re right at the end, then if they’re not right, then it will delay the whole Bill”.

Your Lordships know that we cannot have additional provisions here, so because HS2 has delayed this and been criticised by the committee, it has still not come

up with a report. I hope that the committee will look at these very carefully, decide on the best way to do it and then go for it. I do not know whether it is to have two bites of the cherry, but I know that many of the local individual petitioners would like to come on early for those reasons and that it is something to talk about.

Finally—and I apologise for detaining the House for so long—I address what I believe is the need for the committee to have a special adviser on technical and railway matters. I thought that it would be useful to have one, given the comments about no specialists in your Lordships’ House on these issues being allowed on the committee—although I am sure that it will be a very objective and professional committee. In the Commons, it got to the stage when the promoter, HS2, was advising the committee on the merits or otherwise, technically, of promoters’ views. The chair, Robert Syms MP, winding up, said that thanks were extended to HS2 for its helpful advice on the technical interpretation of petitioners’ evidence. He might have added that the committee accepted without challenge much of this advice. That is not how the Select Committee should work, in my view—but that is a matter for the House of Commons. I know that the committee here will not do that, but it might just want to have a special adviser. I am advised by the clerks that if it wants a special adviser there has to be a Motion from this House allowing it to have one.

I shall leave it there. I shall support my noble friend’s petition in the House of Lords. To conclude, I wish the committee well, and am very confident that it will uphold the high reputation that this House has for dealing with things properly, fairly and thoroughly.

2.51 pm

**Baroness Pidding (Con):** My Lords, I start by declaring an interest in that my home is very close to the proposed route of HS2, albeit at a point that is firmly in a tunnel. I am sure that few will disagree that investing wisely in modern infrastructure is essential to the long-term prosperity of the United Kingdom. By investing wisely, this Government have the opportunity to lay the foundations of tomorrow’s economy and leave a legacy just as important as that of the great Victorian builders. By better connecting the mills, mines, ports and factories of Britain, the Victorians managed to spread wealth to new parts of the country and turn cities such as Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow into some of the greatest and wealthiest in the world, much as the northern powerhouse seeks to do today. But while we may admire the scale of their achievements, we must never forget that the Victorian lust for industry ignored the environment, throwing up slag heaps and smoke which have taken generations to clean up. It is much cheaper and easier in the long run to make sure that new projects are environmentally friendly when they are built than to try to patch up the mess afterwards. Like my noble friend Lord Framlingham, I am therefore deeply concerned by the way that HS2 Ltd has handled such matters.

The new railway enjoys strong support in the other place, and offers great opportunities, yet many Members have understandably complained about its impact on their constituents and constituencies. As we have already

heard from the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, in our home patch of Chesham and Amersham, HS2 proposes to run 8.8 kilometres of the new line above ground through the Chiltern area of outstanding natural beauty, which has been a designated landscape for more than 50 years. My local MP, the right honourable Cheryl Gillan, has fought vociferously to prevent what she calls a “permanent scar” on the landscape. She is right to point out that few countries are as expert in tunnelling projects as Britain is, and that we are already building a major new subterranean railway in London. Why can we not use the same techniques to preserve our countryside?

I hope that noble Lords will join me in supporting all those MPs who are trying to protect ancient woodlands, pasturelands, and other irreplaceable natural treasures. Once lost, there will be no bringing them back. The legislation underpinning HS2 should provide for the strongest possible environmental mitigation. We must also make sure that we do not neglect the human cost of new development, and ensure that all affected are treated promptly and fairly. Many MPs whose constituencies lie on the route claim that compensation issues are causing much worry and stress to their constituents. There are serious concerns about the valuation process, and many residents are apparently receiving “unacceptably low” offers for their property. These problems cut across party lines, and opposition MPs have spoken about the impact on urban businesses, and of the decades of disruption which threaten if the redevelopment of Euston station is not handled with care.

Advocates of HS2 are right to point out the potential of the new line to unlock economic growth and spread prosperity. However, it is no good if this is accomplished only at great and unfair cost to many thousands of residents and businesses unfortunate enough to be in its way. If HS2 is to be the long-term success that we all want it to be, the Government must ensure that they do not store up problems for later to cut costs today. Fair treatment for those affected by construction, and environmental mitigation that matches the Prime Minister’s commitment to run the “greenest Government ever”, must be set into law and properly enforced. I hope that this Chamber will make further positive changes to this Bill, building on the changes made in the other place. It would be far better to solve these problems today than to be cleaning them up for years to come.

2.57 pm

**Lord Lea of Crondall (Lab):** My Lords, one has to be selective at this stage in the debate, and I begin with the theme picked up by the noble Lord, Lord Prescott. There are two aspects of the north-south question. The first has not been made much of today, but I shall say one word about it—the idea that the Great Wen will draw everything to London and that this scheme will even make it worse. I do not accept that, and it would be useful if the Minister could say a little more than he did in his opening about why it is a fallacy. I would say this, possibly, as a Lancastrian by birth, but I do not think that the civic officials in Lancashire are all mad as a hatter in saying that this proposal will be good for the north, because there will be much more

integration of a great regional area, call it what you like—not only in the northern powerhouse or estuary to estuary, Mersey to Humber, but also for Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield, Birmingham and so on. That idea should really be knocked on the head.

One way in which to help to knock it on the head would be if we gave a bit more priority to getting HS3—an informal term at the moment, I think—into focus and into a timescale as a matter of some urgency. We cannot just do it at the drop of a hat, but it would be essential for the credibility of the northern powerhouse infrastructure body if as much as possible of east-west—HS3—could be integrated into all public policy and speeches about the northern powerhouse and HS2. That would underpin the credibility of the northern powerhouse idea.

Secondly, I would like to say an additional word, if I may put it that way, about capacity. We have 20 extra paths for freight trains that are able to go up the west coast main line, with significant environmental benefits. I must say that I am rather sad that some single-issue environmental pressure groups seem to have very little to say about some of the environmental benefits of HS2. We have heard speeches about forests, tunnels, the Euston area and so on. I suppose there is no perfect answer to building anything. I say to the noble Lord, Lord Mair, apropos his excellent maiden speech, that civil engineers have to be lauded for the contribution that they make. Let us look at the last 200 years. What about the Ribbleshead viaduct? Everyone admires it and goes sightseeing to look at it, but would it have been built today? I think not. It would have been thought to have been absurd by all environmentalists. What about Brunel’s bridges? Most of them would not have been built. What about many viaducts, lines skirting beauty spots and so on? They would not have been built. Also, the intermodal benefit of rail as opposed to motorways is hugely positive in terms of noise and air quality, so let us hear that from some of the environmentalists. I do not think they are very courageous in what they say to their own pressure groups. I am not saying they do not have a case; I am saying that they look as if they just want to address their own single-issue pressure groups, not to help to fit into the wider picture.

With regard to the towns and villages going up towards Stratford and Birmingham through the Chilterns and so on, I convened a meeting with the National Association of Local Councils a couple of years ago to introduce it to the villagers of the north Kent HS1 line. As my noble friend Lord Berkeley will agree, they had a very highly successful and productive set of discussions, 15 or 20 years ago now, with the people who were then planning to build HS1. I am sorry to hear that the people in the area do not feel as if they have had a good relationship with HS2. In some respects, HS2 has surely leant over backwards. As I understand it, it has been announced that the amount of tunnelling will double from 10% of the whole line to 20%—20% of the whole line to Birmingham will be in a tunnel.

Everyone in this House and indeed in the country wears different hats; they have different roles on different days of the week. Sometimes we are listening to a train going by the back of our garden—I must say I think trains are easy to get used to, relative to motorways—but

[LORD LEA OF CRONDALL]

the next day we are on a train, and we like to look out of the window at the countryside. I had a day not so long ago on a train in the Upper Rhine Valley, or at least one of the Rhine valleys, going up to Andermatt in Graubünden. It was a joy to look at the views from the train. We cannot have trains in tunnels the whole way—I am making this point semi-seriously—but it is necessary to balance a number of factors when it comes to tunnelling. If I have my arithmetic right, 20% of the distance of HS2 is the best part of 20 miles of tunnel. Is that roughly right? That is a lot of tunnel. It is a distortion for some noble Lords to say that somehow this has all been badly handled.

I turn to the problem of capacity. It has been announced only recently that we cannot have direct train services using the west coast main line from Shrewsbury to London or from Blackpool to London, because of capacity. There is an idea that these problems will be solved in 10 to 20 years' time and it is all nonsense to talk about capacity, but it is here and now that people are not able to use trains, which are environmentally friendly compared with motor cars. In terms of balance, again, we need to recognise that people use motor cars.

I come to the question of parkway stations versus in-city stations. To slightly pick up a point from my noble friend Lord Berkeley, it all depends on the geography. In the case of Nottingham and Derby, not only is it pretty obvious that you need a parkway station half way between the two but there are some advantages to parkway stations. When you go towards south Wales, there is Bristol Parkway station, where there is very good parking—there is no problem about parking a car—and it has a jolly good service from Paddington. We have got used to what we now call parkway stations. I am not so sure that everyone wants to get to the part of London, Birmingham or Sheffield where the railway station is. They still have to go somewhere when they get to the railway station. That is to do with urban planning, trams and all the rest of it.

Lastly, I want to make a point that has not been made. I am echoing what has been said about one aspect of Euston: as I understand it, the distance between Euston and St Pancras/King's Cross is the same sort of distance as between terminals 1, 2 and 3 at Heathrow—it is not a lot different. It requires modern travelator arrangements. That is the answer to those people who, rather sadly, have said that they wanted HS1 to be part of the connection with HS2.

I used to work at the TUC, and I am very glad to note—this should be put on the record, and I think the Minister will confirm it—that recently there was an announcement about a framework agreement between the TUC and HS2 on the construction period. I pick up a point from the noble Lord, Lord Adonis: this all has to happen in 16 years, which is pretty challenging. However, the framework agreement is very similar to the one for the construction of the Olympics. It requires a lot of principles of employment, health and safety and so on, but it augurs very well for the progress of the scheme that people are aware of this. I hope that the Minister might say something about the TUC agreement with HS2 covering construction, engineering, transport and so on in the 10 years ahead.

3.10 pm

**Lord Rowe-Beddoe (CB):** My Lords, I rise to express my concern and great disappointment that the unanimous conclusions of the Economic Affairs Committee of this House, published just over a year ago, largely remain ignored by this Bill. Some of your Lordships may recall that we entitled the media release:

“The Government has yet to make a convincing case for a £50 billion investment”.

We were not satisfied, as the detail of our report illustrates. I regret that I am the only member of that committee here today, but I remain dissatisfied, not with the objectives of the Bill, which I strongly support, but with the amount of money being spent. It has not been proven to my satisfaction that a case has been made.

I endorse some of what the noble Lord, Lord Prescott, said about the planned sequence, for example, of the construction of HS2 and HS3, which the committee also made reference to. Further, I agree with my noble friend Lord Birt that Liverpool must be included, and a very strong representation was made by the elected mayor of that city to such effect to the committee.

We really must be satisfied that such a capital sum of proposed investment is appropriate and is better value than any modification or alternatives to the route proposed. Your Lordships' committee commenced deliberations in October 2015—I point this out just so the House knows that time has been spent on this; I know the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, had great experience of this with committees in the other place—and spent some six months in the close examination and questioning of both written and oral evidence. We received the Government's response in July—I assume that the general election intervened—and the report itself was not debated until September, some nine months after we started to take evidence.

In my opinion, nothing in this Bill takes on board or responds to the concerns we raised at that time—or indeed in the subsequent letter from our chairman, the noble Lord, Lord Hollick—with the Government following their response. The noble Lord raised 10 issues, which received no response at all. This suggests to me that, on HS2, the minds of officials and government Ministers have been firmly made up for some time and that they are determined to proceed with this enormous investment in the form this Bill proposes. Sadly, I must repeat what I said in last September's debate. The attitude is:

“Here is your answer; what is your question?”.—[*Official Report*, 16/9/15; col. 1876.]

I know from some of the remarks made by the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, that he has experience of such obfuscation.

Let me be clear: I am greatly in favour and supportive of much-needed infrastructure projects and, indeed, the objectives behind this specific project. However, I am not satisfied that a less expensive alternative has been fully examined and quantified.

**Lord Lea of Crondall:** I am most grateful to the noble Lord for giving way. I have in my hand a copy of the Government's response to the House of Lords

Economic Affairs Committee on the economics of HS2, which I thought was very well analysed indeed. Has the noble Lord in turn studied that response? Can he give chapter and verse as to where he disagrees with or faults the analysis? I have no axe to grind with the Economic Affairs Committee, but it seems to me that the noble Lord ought to acknowledge that it received a very full reply.

**Lord Rowe-Beddoe:** I have the report in my hand and, obviously, I have studied it. I repeat my words: it did not address the recommendations that our committee made.

I was asking whether the alternatives had been fully examined and quantified. I refer to the work, for example, of the organisation High Speed UK. This company believes that it has a credible proposal to achieve connectivity and provide the higher capacity, on a like-for-like basis, at a lower cost of some £20 billion. If that is make-believe, somebody say so; if it is not, should it be looked at? Environmentally, this proposed route entirely avoids the Chilterns—that is quite interesting, and certain Members of your Lordships' House have talked about that today—and would reach Birmingham by building a 12-kilometre tunnel. Further, it is believed that through comprehensive intercity connectivity and increased capacity, there would be a major change in the road-rail relationship, which could significantly reduce transport CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Finally, let me turn to the Euston station rebuild. I acknowledge the remarks made by the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, and his expertise in this area. There appears to be no strategy to divert commuter flows away from Euston. This central part of London will be greatly affected by the current plans, which will have an enormously adverse impact on the travelling public and the community during a lengthy period of construction—the demolition of some hundreds of homes; the relocation of thousands of graves, as alluded to by the right reverend Prelate; and the closure and complete disappearance of a street. However, there is no apparent plan to divert commuter flows. Your Lordships' committee was interested in the Old Oak Common solution, which was referred to again by the noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw. It would connect Crossrail to the west coast main line, thus enabling more commuter services to be moved from Euston, which could enable the current footprint of the station to be maintained while all the work is going on, without the necessity to expand into Camden.

I realise that this Bill was passed without amendment last month in the Public Bill Committee of the other place, and subsequently on the Floor of the House without Division. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that if a cost differential of some £20 billion—remember, these are 2011 prices—can be tested rigorously and verified independently, we should pause for a moment and request the Treasury to do so.

3.19 pm

**Lord Young of Cookham (Con):** My Lords, you wait for ages for a Transport Secretary and then five of them come along at the same time. I am but a humble people carrier compared with the fleet of previous Secretaries of State who have gone before, but I want to do what some of them have done, which is to put

this Bill in a slightly broader context of previous transport infrastructure projects. I say that having announced just over 20 years ago that London & Continental Railways was selected as the winning consortium for HS1.

HS2, as the numbering implies, was a lower priority at that time. The capacity problem on the west coast main line was not what it is now—as we have heard, there has been a tremendous boost since privatisation. At the same time, we were committed to Crossrail, to Thameslink and to a number of light-rail schemes in Manchester and Croydon. To have gone along to the Treasury at the same time and asked for HS2 would have been to test its patience.

However, 20 years later, with most of the heavy lifting on Crossrail and Thameslink behind us, and with the capacity problems on the west coast main line acute, there is now not just the need but the capacity for another major transport infrastructure, extending HS1 to the north to improve connectivity with the north of the country and addressing the capacity on the existing network. So I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Bill. If I have a slight doubt, it is about the interface between Euston and King's Cross St Pancras, which a number of other noble Lords have referred to.

I am, however, aware that the Bill has its opponents. It is instructive to look back and see what was said about HS1. Were the same criticisms made and were they in the light of hindsight justified? I spent part of the Easter Recess going back through the debates on HS1. There was a Second Reading in another place on 16 January 1995. The MP for Dover asserted that the CTRL was “economically unjustified”, that the public sector was being asked for a blank cheque and that the subsidies could be unlimited. Another MP described himself as a long-standing Chunnel and rail link sceptic. The debate was dominated by MPs from Kent and east London raising, wholly legitimately, issues of inadequate compensation for blight, the impact of noise and environmental concerns. There were repeated requests for tunnelling, and requests for conditions on working hours and removal of spoil.

That debate to some extent puts this one in context, in that I have met no one who, 21 years later, argues that we were wrong to go ahead with HS1, despite the problems that confronted the Government and the contractors at the time. I believe that, in 2036, our successors will say we were right to go ahead with HS2 despite the objections that were made, some of which I hope may still be dealt with by the Select Committee.

The problem in the UK is not that we rush into ill-considered infrastructure projects but that we prevaricate too long about essential ones. To those who have doubts about the wisdom of this investment, I would just say this as someone who has served both in transport and the Treasury. We are living through the most intense downward pressure on public expenditure in my lifetime, particularly intense for those departments, like Transport, whose budgets are not protected. Against that background, to have got this item of expenditure through the Treasury and to have got its commitment to expenditure beyond the normal three-year envelope shows that even the most hard-nosed and sceptical men and women who guard public expenditure have recognised the value and importance of HS2.

[LORD YOUNG OF COOKHAM]

On top of the direct transport benefits of HS1, it led to regeneration of the area around Stratford and King's Cross. I believe that HS2 will have the same regenerative impact on the stations along the route, crucially this time not located in London and the south-east but north, helping to move the centre of gravity of the country to the north. HSBC has already cited the impact of HS2 as a factor in its decision to locate its head office in Birmingham.

Many changes have already been made to the Bill. More than 20% of the total route length is now in a tunnel, up from an initial 8.9%, including nearly all the route through London and through the Chilterns to South Heath, as well as several cut-and-cover "green tunnels" further north, together with caps and restrictions on traffic in urban areas affected by construction.

As a former Housing Minister, I commend the introduction of the rent back scheme, one of the innovations here, whereby homeowners who are affected by the scheme can continue to live in their homes as tenants, having sold them to the Government, until such time as they want to move out. I also commend the extension of the exceptional hardship scheme, whereby those living some way from the line, but not covered by the statutory scheme, can none the less sell to the Government at pre-bligh price. I hope that promoters of future legislation, be it HS3, Crossrail 2 or any airport expansion scheme, will learn from and build on these initiatives to smooth the passage of such crucial projects.

That brings me to the second and final point I want to make, which relates to reducing the gestation period between the conception of a project such as this and its delivery. I refer to chapter 8 of the report of the Select Committee on this Bill in another place, which identifies the problems with the current hybrid Bill process, virtually unchanged since Gilbert wrote "Iolanthe". As Chief Whip in the last Parliament, it was my job to invite colleagues to serve on the Select Committee. I pay tribute to their work, but it required exceptional powers of persuasion. The task may be more challenging in your Lordships' House, where a higher percentage of Members have outside interests than is the case in the other place—I make it clear that I am not volunteering for a place on this committee. I think that there is a case for looking at our procedures on hybrid Bills and seeing whether they might be brought into the 21st century. They place an unreasonable burden on legislators and create unnecessary delays for the promoters, and there may be a better way of dealing with them.

From the point of view of the promoter, the Department for Transport, the time the current parliamentary procedures take before progress can be made will be nearly three years in the case of this Bill—and, of course, that is after all the preliminary work and preparation of the financial case have been done. From Parliament's point of view, the amount of time that had to be spent by six MPs in this case was 160 days of sittings spread over nearly two years and over two Parliaments. Those serving on such committees typically sit on Monday afternoons, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings and afternoons, and Thursday mornings, inevitably crowding out some of their other parliamentary commitments.

Chapter 8 of the Select Committee report is, unusually, devoted to a critique of the current process and to suggestions for improvements. At the end of the chapter, the committee says:

"We leave it to others to determine the means by which the kind of reforms we have outlined ... might be implemented ... We urge the House, and Ministers, to consider such changes in good time before the next hybrid bill is introduced".

The promoter, the Department for Transport, responded to the Select Committee report in these terms:

"In chapter 8 of the report, the Select Committee makes some recommendations in relation to the procedure for dealing with hybrid Bills. The Government is considering whether there should be a review of how the hybrid Bill process works, and of the Standing Orders for Private Business that apply to hybrid Bills, and is discussing with the House Authorities how such a review could be taken forward. We would expect that the Select Committee's recommendations would be fully considered within any such review".

I believe that any initiative should come from the Houses rather than the Government because Parliament is adjudicating between the Executive and the petitioners in the hybrid Bill process, and a review at the behest of the Executive might not be seen as impartial. It is important to keep if we can the key components of the process, particularly the rights of petitioners. If, as the Select Committee suggests, changes are to be made before the next hybrid Bill, HS3, coming down the track next July, we may need to make progress.

In the mean time, I hope that the signals remain at green, the track ahead remains clear and the Bill reaches its destination in good time.

3.28 pm

**Viscount Simon (Lab):** My Lords, I am certain that no one doubts that the United Kingdom and the future economy need a more efficient and speedy transport structure, whether it be our roads, our airports or our railways. We have heard some very interesting speeches today, including the excellent maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Mair.

The question we have to address is whether HS2 is the correct solution to our railway problems. Is it financially viable and will it deliver the Chancellor's dream of growing his much-vaunted northern powerhouse? The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, in his fantastic speech, mentioned that the Bill is 25,000 pages long. I suspect that I am not alone in admitting that I have not read it.

There may well be Members here today who have studied logic. That particular skill seems to have deserted the champions of HS2, and some noble Lords have raised some concerns today, including my noble friend Lord Berkeley, who is an expert in these matters.

Many people to whom I have spoken have formed the extremely logical conclusion that this faster rail link will inevitably carry certain people to their businesses in a very timely fashion. But will it carry business people from London to the north? I suggest exactly the opposite will happen. There will be a rush of businessmen and women from the north going to the City of London, where they will invest, do deals and then go back to Birmingham for supper. Who benefits from this? London. The line will certainly be used by many passengers.

I do not understand why little consideration has been given to an alternative scheme that has been developed, I am told, by two eminent railway engineers with decades of service between them. The facts and figures provided by HSUK, to which the noble Lord, Lord Framlingham, referred, indicate a lower cost on a like-for-like basis. It avoids the Chilterns in its entirety and has a vastly reduced overall environmental impact, and it would also have a far greater effect in reducing transport CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Many people believe that there has been a failure in due process in arriving at the present proposals for high-speed rail in Great Britain. This has resulted in the HS2 scheme apparently failing every test of network performance. However, the Bill cannot be changed to take advantage of the major changes—such a pity.

These proposals were virtually nodded through by all Members involved immediately before the Easter recess, which, to me, is unbelievable considering the obscene costs involved during a period of austerity, as mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Young of Cookham, and the misery for thousands of citizens from Camden to the Chilterns. It is imperative that we consider what we are putting in place for the future, including modernising parts of the country, which some noble Lords have mentioned. This is not like a country across the water, where trains travel long distances at fast speed. This is the United Kingdom—totally different.

3.32 pm

**Lord Turnbull (CB):** My Lords, like many, I welcome the arrival of the noble and expert Lord, Lord Mair, to this House. We should also congratulate the House of Lords Appointments Commission on its foresight in appointing an eminent civil engineer and one of the world's leading experts on tunnelling just as this Bill arrives here. Cometh the hour, cometh the man.

My view on the Bill can be briefly stated. I strongly support the objectives of the project as a whole, but I have doubts about some aspects of it—in particular the question of speed; I have never quite understood the 400 kilometres per hour proposal—and it is plain that the London approach has not yet been satisfactorily resolved. The Bill should be amended to require a full comparative study of the alternatives for Euston before any final decisions are taken and any deemed planning approvals are granted. In the mean time, Old Oak Common should be planned as an interim terminus and, as a number of noble Lords have pointed out, full disclosure should be made by the promoters, the Department for Transport, HS2 and the Treasury of the research, if any, on alternative options. I shall deal with each of these in turn.

The HS2 project was examined by the Economic Affairs Committee before I joined it and the committee reached a rather sceptical view of the economic justification, as expressed by the noble Lord, Lord Rowe-Beddoe. From a historic perspective, I take a rather more positive view. The history of major railway projects is that they have had a major transforming effect on the economy and on society. Look at the impact of railway building in promoting the expansion of London into one of the world's great cities, opening

up south London in the 19th century, the development of Metroland in the 1920s and 1930s and the regeneration of the docklands in the 1990s.

The impact can also be seen from the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. When we were bidding for the 2012 Olympic Games, the IOC was very sceptical about the proposed transport links. The turning point was when the panjandrum of the IOC were driven through CTRL tunnels in a fleet of Range Rovers, reaching the site from central London in under 10 minutes. The rest is history: we won the bid and you can see the legacy in the development of the Stratford area today.

It is claimed that around £2,000 per head has been spent in London on transport infrastructure in the past 25 years, contributing to its success as a major world city; but less than £200 has been spent outside London, and it shows.

Despite my favourable view of the project as a whole, it is clear to me and many others that the London approach from Old Oak Common into Euston has not been satisfactorily resolved.

First, there is the impact of the very lengthy construction period in the Camden area, where the current proposals are, quite frankly, horrific. A huge canyon is to plough through this area; millions of tonnes of soil need to be removed but they have not worked out how to do it; thousands of homes, businesses and some schools will be affected by dust, noise, heavy traffic and vibration. No reasonable person could regard that as acceptable. As is evident from the petitions from Camden residents and from the speech of the noble Lord, Lord MacGregor of Pulham Market, no satisfactory plan of mitigation has yet been devised. Nor, in my view, will it ever be with the current design.

Secondly, there is the issue of Euston itself. The Bill simply refers to “Euston” in its Long Title, but does that mean the neighbourhood of Euston or the new station? In fact, as has been pointed out, there are two Euston stations—the old one owned by Network Rail, which badly needs to be refurbished, and the new one, roughly half its size again, to be built by HS2 alongside to the west. There is also the alignment with the new Crossrail 2 station. At present it seems that HS2 would be to the west of the old station and the Crossrail station would be to the east, about half a mile apart, thereby cancelling out most of the savings in journey time that you have made in getting there.

The debate in the other place has highlighted the fact that these elements are not being handled as a single, integrated project, as was done at King's Cross St Pancras. The land take and the sacrifice of existing buildings in the current plan would be immense and a huge area of central London would be blighted for two decades and more. There is an elementary error in the planning to treat this only as a railway station project. A comprehensive urban plan is needed for what the neighbourhood of Euston will look like when the station is built.

Despite the shortcomings of the existing plan, the motto of the promoters seems to be TINA—there is no alternative. However, there are alternatives, in particular: better use of existing tracks and the redevelopment of Euston station without the need to extend its current footprint to the west, as proposed by the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, in his Euston Express proposal; and a

[LORD TURNBULL]

double deck rather than a side-by-side alignment of the platforms at Euston. People have also spoken of the HSUK proposal, which is a more comprehensive alternative which uses the M1 corridor and avoids the Chilterns AONB altogether but may at its southern end give us some insight into how better to do it.

We have been through all this before. For many years, the plan for CTRL, now HS1, was for it to reach the M25 and then plough its way through the densely populated suburbs of south-east London. Arup, the consulting engineers, proposed a different scheme. Instead of damaging already well-developed areas where there would be huge opposition, the line should be diverted north of the Thames and run through areas such as Stratford, where development would be welcomed. Fortunately, the noble Lord, Lord Heseltine, had the foresight to see the sense of this and to overrule British Rail's engineers.

Last night I attended an event to launch a new book by Professor Simon Taylor of the Judge Business School at Cambridge University called *The Fall and Rise of Nuclear Power in Britain*. Leaving aside the obvious comment that he was a bit premature in agreeing with his publisher what the title should be, it is a very interesting read and I commend it to the House. At one point he discusses the reasons why big infrastructure projects go wrong, drawing on the work of the Danish Professor Bent Flyvbjerg. The latter identified a number of characteristics which make big projects go wrong. Many of these are applicable not only to nuclear power stations but also to HS2, and they include the long time horizons, the many players involved, and changing views and objectives over time. We have also had this constant battle as to whether its capacity or time.

Significantly, Flyvbjerg identified a particular failing. There is often a:

“Lock-in or capture of a certain project concept at an early stage, leaving analysis of alternatives weak or absent”.

That, I contend, is exactly what happened at CTRL until the intervention of the noble Lord, Lord Heseltine, and that is exactly what is happening here. Railway engineers can be a stubborn lot who are reluctant to concede that their first ideas might not be the best and reluctant to concede that someone else may have a better idea.

It may be argued that it is too late to start looking at different schemes for Euston. That simply cannot be true. The full scheme with the arrival of trains from the north of Birmingham will not be completed until around 2033. Crossrail 2, which Euston will certainly need to disperse all the arrivals, will not be completed until around 2027. In the mean time, Old Oak Common will shortly be connected to Crossrail 1—or whatever they are going to call it—and could be used as a temporary terminus much as Waterloo was for CTRL. I strongly agree with the insight of the noble Lord, Lord Rosser, that we should start at the southern end, because this is where the problems are, and sort them out before we start moving north.

The final requirement is greater transparency. Critics, including some in this House, have been consistently fobbed off with anodyne replies. Requests for sight of research on alternatives have been resisted, perhaps because the promoters would be embarrassed to reveal just how little has been done.

In conclusion, my advice to this House, and in particular to those lucky or unlucky enough to be appointed to the committee is this: do not be bullied or patronised by the promoters, and certainly do not patronise the petitioners. Do not be fobbed off and do not accept TINA; stand your ground and insist that no decisions are taken on the London approaches and no deemed planning consents are given until a full technical, economic and social analysis has been done comparing HS2's current proposal with the alternative options. In particular, there should be an examination of an integrated approach bringing the existing station and the new platforms into a single project, and an examination of what the new Euston neighbourhood would look like. Finally, a scheme of mitigation must be produced which the people of Camden can live with for many years, possibly a decade or more.

3.42 pm

**Lord Liddle (Lab):** My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Mair, on a maiden speech of great distinction and quality. I am sure that he is going to add a lot to this House. I also congratulate the noble Lords on both Front Benches on their robust opening speeches. I am a strong supporter of this project, although not without reservations, and I thought that they both put their case very well.

I suppose I ought to declare a personal interest as a very regular user of the west coast main line, travelling up and down to Carlisle virtually every weekend. I am grateful for the modernisation of the line which took place about a decade ago because the journey now takes three hours and 20 minutes. When I first made the journey as a little boy about 63 years ago, I think that it took six hours and 40 minutes—so we have seen progress. But in the 1950s and 1960s when I was growing up in Carlisle, progress was thought to be the motorway. Well, the last time I tried to drive up to my home in Cumbria during the day, it took me 10 hours. In the old slogan of the 1980s, we do truly live in the age of the train—and therefore this project seems to be the right one.

I will concentrate my remarks on how the project relates to something else that I am concerned about, which is the rebalancing of the British economy and the northern powerhouse agenda. Connectivity in this rebalancing exercise is extremely important. We have a generation of new entrepreneurs in Cumbria, but often their clients and businesses are located outside the county. They need rapid connections if they are going to base their activities up north. I am the Pro Chancellor of Lancaster University, and a lot of our research depends on partnerships with other institutions and interaction with people in universities elsewhere—so, again, connectivity is of great importance. Of course, if we are to benefit from tourism to the Lake District and Hadrian's Wall, again connectivity is of great importance. Speed does matter, and that is why we need to continue to improve the quality of the railways.

What I am rather put off by is the idea that a cheaper and better way to improve the quality would be more of the kind of piecemeal improvements to the west coast main line that we had to go through a decade or so ago. I used to enjoy some lovely trips on the Carlisle to Settle railway when we were diverted from the main line, but I have some rather less happy memories of windy Sunday afternoons on Newcastle Central station waiting to use the east coast main line. I have no great enthusiasm for this concept of piecemeal improvements. It seems to me that HS2 is on the right track in that respect. Transport can make a vital contribution to the rebalancing of the economy.

One thing that worries me about this project is whether it will actually happen or whether the Treasury will take fright half way through. It is a concern that this is the London to West Midlands Bill, not the London to Manchester and Leeds Bill. In terms of rebalancing the economy, there is no doubt that the high-speed line will contribute greatly to integrating Birmingham and the West Midlands into the booming London and south-east economy. But if that was all that happened, it would have a very adverse effect on the north. In fact, it would be a case where half a loaf was worse than nothing. We must fight very hard to prevent that.

There is also a big question as to whether HS2 will be accompanied by the investments we need to improve the transport system in the north, particularly in east-west communications. Of course, the obvious east-west communication is HS3 and that can easily be linked into HS2, as other Members have pointed out. Further north, in my part of the world, the Carlisle to Newcastle railway was built in the 1830s—and when you go on it, it still feels like it. The Cumbrian Coast Line is a disgrace when it should be a tremendous attraction and a way of linking west Cumbria and Sellafield to Carlisle, with regular fast connections to London. It should be a tourist route with the highest potential.

So there is a lot of work for the new Rail North to do, and a lot of investment is needed if the full benefits of HS2 are to be realised. I suspect that the problem is that we need to change our strategy as a country. We need to develop a national strategy in favour of much larger public investment than we have seen in the past two decades. If we are limited to the total level of public investment that we have now, it is very unlikely that the money we need to create a real northern powerhouse will be forthcoming; Crossrail 2 is likely to take higher priority. We must get the public finances right and our expenditure and income into balance so that we can spend the money on investment, which is truly important.

My third and final point is a very parochial one. It concerns what is now being said about how the benefits of this scheme will cross the north. I was rather appalled, when I looked at the forecasting of the economic benefits of HS2, to see from the service model of what would flow from the thing when it is fully introduced, that there would be one HS2 fast train to Glasgow an hour that would stop at Preston and then would not stop again until it got to Glasgow. That seemed to me to be pretty appalling for the far north-west of England. I know that this is only a kind of planning assumption; it is not a timetable. But it is

very important, rather as the noble Lord, Lord Birt, said, that we have to find a way of connecting Liverpool into the HS2 plan. It would be absurd for the fastest trains not to make a stop in the far north-west at Carlisle. In the 19th century, it was such a railway junction and such a transport centre for the Scottish border northern region that seven railway companies operated out of the station.

These are my concerns. Will it ever go beyond the West Midlands? Will investment be available for the improvement of the rest of the transport in the north, and will the benefits be spread across the whole of the north? I think that they should be. Hesitation on these matters has been a national disease, as the noble Lord, Lord Mair, said. We have to be decisive here and I fully support the Bill.

3.52 pm

**Baroness Randerson (LD):** My Lords, I firmly support HS2. From these Benches, we are supporters of the railways because they are environmentally preferable to the roads, which, as the noble Lord, Lord Liddle, has just pointed out, can be remarkably inefficient. Railways are also very much more environmentally friendly than air travel. It is clear that the existing railway line is at virtually maximum capacity. Squeezing the occasional extra train into the train slots available or adding a few extra seats will not create the extra capacity needed. Some argue that the capacity problem lies with the commuter routes rather than with the long-distance services. However, this argument ignores the fact that a new, long-distance rail line will free up capacity on the existing line, which can then supplement existing commuter services.

There are others who believe that the problem can be solved by upgrades to the existing line, or with double-decker trains. I live in Cardiff and travel on the Great Western line. We are delighted that it is being subject to electrification, but anyone who has suffered the prolonged disruption of that process, with signals being changed, bridges being raised and so on, will realise that it is very disruptive, not just to passengers, but to the communities through which the line travels. I can recommend to your Lordships the alternative route that we are always sent on via Gloucester; it is very beautiful, but I know it far too well.

Forecasts of passenger numbers on the existing line have repeatedly underestimated demand in the case of the potential HS2 route, so we accept the need for a new line. If we are to build a new one we should build it to the highest specifications. I believe we should build to the standards of the future, not the past. As several noble Lords have pointed out, high-speed rail is now the norm. We are lagging internationally and we need to catch up.

So the concept of HS2 has our support and we believe that the economic case for it has underestimated the situation, rather than exaggerated it. But that does not mean that we should be uncritical; we on these Benches are definitely not uncritical cheerleaders for the project. We have serious concerns, shared across the House today, about some aspects of the scheme. My noble friend Lord Bradshaw outlined our doubts about existing plans for Euston, which we believe

[BARONESS RANDEKSON]

threaten to disrupt the lives of Camden residents, travellers to Euston station and visitors to that area for almost two decades—a whole generation. As my noble friend explained, we do not think that this level of disruption is necessary. The footprint of Euston station is very generous and there is space that can be utilised there that is not planned to be.

We are also concerned that attention should be paid now to a swift, convenient and weatherproof link between Euston and King's Cross St Pancras from HS2 to HS1. Only this week the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, and his commission raised the issue of the length of time the Crossrail interchanges with existing infrastructure will take. That sort of problem needs to be avoided when possible in the plans for HS2. That is just one of a number of unanswered questions about HS2 plans. I urge that these problems are resolved now, because, taken together, they could undermine the success of the scheme.

I move on to connectivity, which is a key concern. HS2 and future phases must link well with enhanced services on existing lines, connecting the cities and towns of the Midlands and the north. The Chancellor has made much of the northern powerhouse project, but it will not succeed on the basis of HS2 alone. The bread-and-butter, daily commuting from one town or city to another is essential. It has to be easier and quicker than it is now in the Midlands and the north. The Government must commit to that additional investment and get on with it, as my noble friend Lord Glasgow said. HS2 cannot be allowed to suck in all capital investment. There must instead be a stimulation of additional investment as a result of HS2. To have good connectivity, we must have compatibility. The trains must be classic-compatible, as my noble friend Lord Bradshaw said.

I turn to finance. The figures are eye-wateringly large. That does not deter our support; they are to be taken over decades rather than years, and the process of building the new line and stations will create jobs, skills and regeneration, and be of lasting benefit to the economy. Our country's economy has for many decades been held back by inadequate infrastructure and Governments lacking the foresight or political courage to commit to long-term investment on an ambitious scale. However, there has been cross-party support for this project. Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative Ministers have consecutively supported and endorsed this project. Yet we still need to ensure that the money is well spent and that the project delivers on the promises made. Good cost control and project management will be fundamental. How do the Government intend to sharpen up HS2's approach so that it performs as well as Crossrail in this regard?

It is inevitable with any major infrastructure project such as this that there will be objections to the detail. The line will run near someone's home—or indeed it will not—or stations will not be nearby, or it will intrude on areas of great beauty or environmental value. It is important that those arguments are heard and that we take them seriously. I hope that some of the fears expressed in the petitions prove unfounded or can be dealt with by HS2 Ltd. The Select Committee in the other place dealt with these aspects in detail

and addressed the concerns of many but there is more to be done. I remain concerned that some areas will be disrupted by construction for years but may not be properly compensated for that.

A number of major issues were not resolved in the Select Committee report from the other place. For instance, there is Euston, which the Select Committee dealt with at the end of its deliberations. I support the sentiments behind the Motion of the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, stipulating that the Lords Select Committee should start with Euston to redress the balance of attention, if we can put it that way. I am told that there would be a problem with that from the point of view of Camden Council because it will be waiting for a report from the Government. However, the Select Committee must find a way to address the issue of ensuring that enough attention is given to the Euston area.

A scheme as technically complex as HS2 also requires expert advice to be available to the Select Committee. I am told that there is no precedent for this. While our procedures have existed for a long time, as the noble Lord, Lord Young, pointed out, they need perhaps to adapt. This is a very modern and technically complex Bill. The Select Committee needs to find a way to get expert advice on this complex set of issues.

We will soon appoint the Select Committee. I wish its members well. They will have a very onerous but absolutely vital task if this project is to be successful. The sooner HS2 is built the better. From these Benches, we remain firm but critical friends of the scheme, which I hope marks a step change in our country's approach to major and ambitious infrastructure projects.

4.03 pm

**Lord Tunncliffe (Lab):** My Lords, I thank the Minister and all noble Lords who participated in this debate for an interesting afternoon. I will resist the temptation to cover all the contributions because I recognise that it is getting late and noble Lords want to listen to the Minister rather than to me.

However, noble Lords will forgive me a little anecdote in my welcoming of the noble Lord, Lord Mair. We had an intimate professional relationship although we have never met each other. Between 1988 and 2000, I was the managing director of London Underground, and then its chairman. During this period, I was responsible for the creation and delivery of the Jubilee line extension and was in receipt of the reports that the noble Lord and his team wrote on this building and its clock tower. I particularly recall one occasion when the report said that if we carried on creating the station in the way that we were planning, the clock tower might move some 300 millimetres away from the rest of the building. As I said to my project director, "Somebody would notice". In fact, the reports from the noble Lord's team managed to make me so neurotic that my first task every morning when I came into my office during the construction phase was to look out of the window and make sure the clock tower was still standing. However, I am very pleased to welcome the noble Lord and meet him in the flesh at last.

In many ways this is an historic moment because this will be the last occasion when the general principle of the line will be debated. Unless something goes

wrong, when we give the Bill a Second Reading this afternoon—as I feel we should and must—that will be the key political moment that will create a railway. Having created a railway myself in a modest way, I know that you do something very special because railways, if they are well done, last for ever in human terms. This railway will be here in hundreds of years' time unless there is some great discontinuity in society as we know it. If you go on the Terrace and look at the skyline, I guarantee that some of those buildings will go; they will not last for hundreds of years. However, the impact of this railway on society will be profound. In giving this Bill a Second Reading, we will play our role in that historic event.

The Labour Party—these Benches—unambiguously supports this project. I have studied the case. The transport case is okay. I have looked at the other benefits prayed in aid and see that the analysts have had exactly the same trouble as we had of predicting what we might loosely call the generative effects of the railway. They in fact put quite a modest proportion of the benefit down to it.

When we developed the extension case, we had only a relatively modest transport case. I have to tell noble Lords that as construction costs went up, the actual ratio between the benefits and the cost dipped close to one—in fact, it dipped slightly under it. Yet that modest 10 miles of extra railway have had a spectacular effect on this city and the benefits are overwhelmingly clear and great. I believe that this railway will have the same effect on the Midlands and the north. I do not believe the modest figure in the document in respect of the regenerative effect: I believe that it will be much greater and will add to the economic, social and cultural life of the Midlands and the north in a way far beyond what we can predict. We could not predict what happened in east London but we could dream about it. We cannot predict what will happen in the Midlands and the north but we can see it as a vision. I believe that that vision will become a reality. But the word here is “belief” when you go away from the sums and try to envisage the future. That is what the role of politics is all about. At the end of the day, this is not about giving a technical report a tick but rather looking at this project and having the courage to make a political decision that it is worth pressing ahead with it to give the opportunity for an outstanding and spectacular change to occur to the whole shape of the relationship between the south-east and the Midlands and the north.

It will get the political go-ahead today because it was in the manifestos of both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party, and it is supported by the Liberal Democrats. It was of course originally a Labour project, introduced, as we know, by the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, with debates in 2009 and a Command Paper in 2010, so it has had support. Today, roughly 20 of the speeches have been in favour of HS2, with some against and some don't-knows, but 20 out of 27 have been in favour. Therefore, very properly the Bill will get political backing, and it got overwhelming support in the House of Commons.

However, if our vision of HS2 is valid, we must not lose sight of its prime purpose, which is to dramatically enable the development of Birmingham, Manchester

and Leeds, and the regions around them and beyond. It is no good just stuffing a railway into those cities; what we do in those cities must complement the railway, and the stations and the railway infrastructure are just part of that. The transport system—not just the railway transport system but the bus transport system and how HS2 integrates with all those facilities—will have to be concentrated on, as well as giving the regions the freedom and the economic regulation to allow the flowering of development. Over the lifetime of the project, we must take a holistic approach to how this railway is complemented by government and local government.

There are also one or two things that we have to get more right than we have done so far. In order to be a success both at this stage and in the construction stage, this project needs proactive and regular engagement from the sponsor. People keep talking about changes, and the sponsor must be involved. HS2 Ltd is the agent rather than the responsible body. There needs to be proactive and regular engagement with communities, stakeholders and special interest groups—environmental interest groups, industry groups and TU groups—right across the spectrum. I do not believe that you can overconsult in these situations. You can misconsult but you cannot overconsult. When we extended the Jubilee line, my experience was that the more you consulted the local communities, the more smoothly things went.

I have read some of the things that HS2 Ltd says it is going to do. I may be being unfair but it seemed to me that it is saying that it is going to employ many more PR people. However, our experience was that if you want to get people on side, you have to deliver the decision-makers. If you are building a station, you want the station project manager to talk to the local communities. People do not want to hear smooth words; they do not mind if the words are not very smooth if they believe that they are talking to the people who can make decisions and do the tweaks to make their lives better, taking their concerns on board. Therefore, I hope that the sponsors improve their game.

We must not lose sight of whose project this is. This is government's project. The Government are responsible for it and, in the final analysis, they must recognise that they have to deliver it. In these circumstances, you can subcontract execution, which is effectively what has been done, but you cannot subcontract responsibility. Wherever anything is not going satisfactorily, it is the responsibility of the Government to intervene and improve things. The Government should remember that they are not only responsible for this project but own, are responsible for and control Network Rail, and control other parts of the infrastructure. When it comes to those parts of the infrastructure working together, the Government have to take on their responsibility and make sure that there are proper relationships between those public bodies and that we get good, integrated answers.

I ask the Minister one question: do the Government unambiguously accept their ultimate responsibility? Do they unambiguously accept that, although there are arm's-length bodies, when they fail to work together properly or fail to have proper relationships with the community, it is the Government's responsibility to step in to change things?

[LORD TUNNICLIFFE]

I listened to the debate, and a lot of issues have been raised, but the key one seems to be the environment. We must get this as right as possible. It is a difficult balance. I am not going to offer any views now as to where we will come down on that debate: we must, first, leave that to the Select Committee. I hope that we can bridge some of these gaps in understanding of the environment that we save in construction and delivery. We will have issues after the Bill comes back to the House, when it will effectively become a public Bill. We are concerned about embedding qualifications in the community; there are issues of ownership, where we may not entirely agree with the noble Lord, Lord Fowler. We need a way to ensure proper integration of Euston, and we probably need rather more reporting to government on the financial aspects, but those are relatively small details.

My final query is on the role of the Select Committee. We thank the Minister for his first statement—it was a real step forward in understanding—but we still have the key issue of what powers the Select Committee will have as compared with the powers of the Select Committee in the House of Commons. If the Minister is unable to give us clear answers on that today, I hope that he will get them to us as quickly as possible and share them with everyone who has spoken in today's debate. The more clarity we have as to the role of the committee and its powers, the more efficiently it will work and the more that petitioners will understand what they can reasonably expect the committee to do, and not expect it to do things that it cannot do.

On these Benches, we support this project and believe that the Bill should be given a Second Reading today.

4.17 pm

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, first, I join other Peers in thanking everyone for their most interesting, detailed and expert contributions to the debate. I will seek to answer all the questions that have been raised, but, in the interests of time, in respect of those that I am unable to cover, I will of course review them and write to noble Lords.

I acknowledge, first and foremost, the widespread support across the House for this important project. In his concluding remarks, the noble Lord, Lord Tunncliffe, said that ultimately it is the Government's responsibility and that the Government need to have vision and leadership. I assure him and all noble Lords that that is exactly what the Government believe. The project requires accountability and, ultimately, the Government remain accountable to your Lordships' House and to the other place for ensuring that this project proceeds on track—excuse the pun.

I also acknowledge that this has evoked great passion and emotion in certain respects, both for and against the Bill's provisions and progress on HS2. My noble friends Lady Pidding and Lord Framlingham, the noble Viscount, Lord Simon, and the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, among others, raised concerns about the environment, and I will come to them in a moment. It is understandable and right that they raised those concerns but, equally, it is promising to see such support for HS2 across the House.

I am indebted to my noble friends Lord Fowler and Lord Young for their strong support and also to others—I notice the noble Lord, Lord Faulkner, has now taken up a different position in his capacity as Deputy Speaker, but I thank him for his support. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, has an important role on the National Infrastructure Commission. I pay tribute to his work in securing the progress that we have made on HS2 and thank him for his expert—as ever—contribution today.

I am sure that other noble Lords will not mind me singling out the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Mair. I listened very carefully to his contribution and various people have been passing me notes about the current status of Big Ben. I am sure that the last time I looked, it was standing straight and erect as a great beacon of our democracy, our capital city and country. I think that we all acknowledge and greatly appreciate the efforts and expertise of the noble Lord in ensuring that that remains the case. I know that all noble Lords will have been encouraged by his contribution today. His knowledge of civil engineering and of underground construction will provide great insight into and scrutiny of this project, and his broader expertise will be of great value to your Lordships' House going forward.

We have heard various contributions from noble Lords about how we are progressing on infrastructure. One thing I briefly share is that through projects such as HS2, the development of other catalyst issues, such as the HS2 college and—a few noble Lords alluded to the completion of Crossrail 1—the tunnelling academy that has emerged through Crossrail 1, demonstrates to me the expertise that we are developing in infrastructure, and transport infrastructure in particular. This was a point recently acknowledged by Ministers in Singapore who are currently embarking on a project with Malaysia to build the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore link. We are exploring how we can share common practices and expertise in these areas, and that is something that we should all be encouraged by.

The lack of engineers was also noted. The Government recognise this; indeed, I have a particular responsibility within the Department for Transport as a Skills Minister. In two years' time, 2018 will be the year of the engineer, but there is much to be done across the board and we all share the responsibility for ensuring that we have the engineers not only to meet our challenges but, as the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, said, to export our expertise in years to come.

I turn now to the questions that were raised. Various noble Lords raised the issue of the Select Committee process. The noble Lords, Lord Rosser, Lord Berkeley, Lord Stevenson and Lord Tunncliffe, raised the issue of what the responsibilities of the Select Committee will be. It is important to note that the powers of the committee are not set by the Government; they are set by the conventions of the House. I was asked a specific question about the difference between the Houses. The convention is that the Commons Select Committee can hear additional provisions but the Lords committee does not. This is because the procedure follows that of an opposed Private Bill.

For your Lordships' information, an additional provision is effectively a mini hybrid Bill; it is a change that requires additional land to be taken or changes to

the Bill's powers. The difference in powers is, I think, entirely in keeping with this House's role as a revising Chamber. An additional provision—again, to remove any doubt and to provide greater clarity—is a change that leads, as I have said, to additional land being required and/or breaches of the environmental envelope for the project set out in the environmental statement. I trust that that provides the greater detail that noble Lords have requested on this, but if further details are requested of course I will be pleased to write in this respect.

The noble Lord, Lord Rosser, also asked when we will outline our plans for HS2 in the Midlands and the north. As I mentioned, we have brought forward the planned opening of phase 2a by three years to 2027. In terms of phase 2 as a whole, the Government consulted on the proposed route between July 2013 and January 2014.

**Lord Tunnicliffe:** I understood that a resolution of the House could enable the committee to consider additional provisions. That is quite an important point. Would the Minister be so kind as to investigate that and share with us by letter the product of his investigations?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Of course. As I said, if there are additional questions, I will be pleased to write to noble Lords.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Randerson, for her support. She said that the Liberal Democrat approach would be that of a critical friend to the Bill. It is right that in the revising nature of our Chamber we would hope that the discussions we have are always friendly, albeit a tad critical, but I understand the concerns that the noble Baroness has raised. She raised, rightly, connectivity with the rest of the network. As she will know, we are undertaking one of the largest programmes of investment in the railways. That is important. I have previously said from this Dispatch Box that the Government are investing £38 billion in the railways in the next five years.

The noble Lord, Lord Birt, raised the issue of investment generally over the next 15 or 20 years. I can certainly give him the detail that in the next five years the overall transport investment is in excess of £60 billion, in addition to the money we are spending on HS2. I hope that that underlines the Government's commitment to the importance of transport infrastructure in the United Kingdom.

**Lord Stevenson of Balmacara:** I checked with the Deputy Speaker to see whether I could come in after the completion of the Second Reading but he advised that I should interrupt now and ask my question. Therefore, I am following on from my noble friend Lord Tunnicliffe. The description the Minister gave before he got to the alternative provision arrangements was that that was a matter for the House to determine, not the Government. I would be grateful if, when he writes to my noble friend Lord Tunnicliffe, he could specify exactly where the precedent is that he is relying on for that. Presumably these words are not his but words of the House and the House authorities, and obviously we would like to check chapter and verse.

I might well wish to return to this later but it is my understanding that there are several precedents which suggest that what he read out was not correct; that previously in two major Bills—the Crossrail Bill and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Bill—additional provisions were considered by the second House; and that on occasions, although intimations about the powers have been made, the general position appears to be that it is possible, as my noble friend Lord Tunnicliffe suggested, that with an instruction the committee could consider and recommend an alternative provision. It is such an important point because the more the Minister narrows the position, the more difficult it will be for those who have suggestions to make to the Select Committee to be able to do so within the petitioning process as he has described it.

In addition, this does not seem to accord with what has been said to the public. He might wish to reflect on this when he replies. The clerks of the House have done a very good job in reaching out to those who wish to petition your Lordships' House. There is a petitioning kit, which is a novel innovation, but it is certainly worth looking at because it is very informative. It says that,

“individuals, businesses and organisations specially and directly affected by a hybrid bill are given the opportunity to ‘petition’ either or both Houses of Parliament to seek to mitigate the effects of the bill on themselves, their business or their property”.

There is no qualification in that. That is a straight statement that mitigation can be provided. The kit explains what a petition is and says:

“A Select Committee ... will be appointed to consider your petition and any other petitions deposited against the Bill ... They have the power to amend the Bill, but not reject it”.

I do not understand how he can arrive at the position he has just articulated, given that and what has been said publicly. Without wishing to prolong the proceedings of the House, a lot of what has been said today has been about the confidence that people have in the House. We are in great danger of losing that.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Part of what I am seeking to do is to provide greater clarity but, in the interests of time and of ensuring that we get a comprehensive position, I will be writing to noble Lords to detail the position exactly. I hope the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, is satisfied with that. He is right to raise this important issue, as the noble Lord, Lord Tunnicliffe, did, which requires—

**Lord Adonis:** If the Minister will forgive me, I am anxious to say this for the record because the record of this debate will now proceed. The noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, clearly declared an interest in these matters. It is very important that proper attention is paid to precedence and it would be deeply damaging to the public interest if issues which had been considered by the Commons committee, in the context of additional provisions, were then reopened in this House. That would not only be contrary to precedent but, as he rightly said, lead to a big issue about this House seeking in a fundamental way to second-guess critical strategic decisions on the nature of the project that have already been taken by the House of Commons. So, in the interests of balance and for the record of

[LORD ADONIS]

this debate, it is very important, regarding those who have a clear interest in this matter—the noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, has a very clear interest—that that is fully taken into account before any decisions are taken to breach established precedent in the consideration of hybrid Bills.

**Earl Attlee (Con):** My Lords, my counsel on this matter is that we are pushing the Minister a bit far from what he should comment on. These are matters of procedure and of how we manage the business. We should be satisfied with what the Minister has already undertaken to do for us.

**Lord Birt:** Before the Minister moves on, the figures he quoted on investment are extremely welcome. I recognise that it may be difficult to respond to the question I asked earlier, but will he agree to provide an analysis of the investment not just in HS2 but in other forms of transport infrastructure as a share of GDP? Manifestly, the figures he quoted will be a very small percentage of GDP over the span of the project.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** I will be pleased to provide that. As I said in my opening comments, the actual HS2 figure was 0.14% of GDP, but I will of course write on that. I thank my noble friend Lord Attlee for his intervention. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, is right to point out the importance of conventions and the key role of this House as a revising Chamber. The best thing I can suggest is that it is right that we provide the detail requested. I say again that I will write to noble Lords to clarify any pending issue on this. Perhaps I may move on. I will add the caveat now that I added at the start: in the interests of time, I certainly will not get through all the questions put but, as this is such an important issue, I will write to noble Lords.

The noble Lord, Lord Bradshaw, and the noble Baroness, Lady Randerson, raised the issue of rolling stock. I assure them that no decisions have yet been made on the form of rolling stock that will be run on HS2 but I will keep the House informed in this respect. The noble Lord also raised links between Euston and St Pancras. I refer him to the study that the Government published on this very subject on 30 November last year. It set out the plans for a pedestrian link between the two stations.

The noble Lords, Lord Bradshaw and Lord Berkeley, raised the issue of the Euston express. I respect their passion for this idea—a concept presented to the Commons Select Committee but rejected by it. The key issues raised by this proposal were its detrimental impact on existing rail services on the west coast main line, that it does not provide the same level of capacity and that it would extend the construction period by around two years and add further costs to the scheme.

The noble Lords also referred to the order in which the petitions will be taken. I am grateful that the noble Lord, Lord Berkeley, spoke to the Motions in his main contribution. For completeness, if I may, the Committee of Selection will appoint noble Lords to the HS2 Select Committee. It is for that Select Committee itself to determine the order in which to hear petitions. Given the scale of the task before it, it is only right

that the Select Committee has the opportunity to consider how it wants to organise its business. I do not think it appropriate for the House to dictate the order in which the Select Committee hears petitions. That said, although it is for the committee to determine such matters, we would propose that petitions relating to Camden, for example—something which came up a number of times—should be taken following the Summer Recess. My understanding is that the London Borough of Camden does not currently want to be heard until the issues it has raised have been fully discussed.

The second Motion relates to independent advice on railway issues. I come back to a point that has been raised about the role of the two Select Committees. It is important again to put on record that we must acknowledge the distinction between the role of a Select Committee for hybrid Bills and a departmental or topical Select Committee. The latter has a broad remit and carries out inquiries usually on its own initiative. It is therefore normal and accepted that it would request independent advice and opinion from experts. A hybrid Bill Select Committee has a different purpose and acts in a quasi-judicial capacity, hearing evidence from both petitioners and promoters to reach a decision on the information presented. It is the responsibility of both promoters and petitioners to present their evidence, including that of expert witnesses on the subject where they feel it necessary, in a way that is readily understandable to the committee. To grant the HS2 Select Committee the power to appoint independent experts for advice would go against this convention. It is an important principle that the committee, like a court, considers the evidence presented to it in public, in accordance with the rules of the House, and this should not change. I trust that provides further detail on the Government's view on the two Motions that have been tabled and are in front of us today.

I also thank the noble Baroness, Lady Valentine, and other noble Lords for their support of HS2. I have already talked about the importance of moving forward on this. The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry, among other noble Lords, raised issues around the environment. In particular, the right reverend Prelate raised the issue of burial grounds. I accept it is one of great sensitivity, and of course any human remains affected by phase 1 will be treated with dignity, respect and care. Two undertakings have been concluded in respect of the treatment of and approaches to human remains and monuments, which include a requirement to consult with the Archbishops' Council. I of course fully understand and agree with the points on community and business engagement which the right reverend Prelate and others raised. We have undertaken extensive consultation and continue to do so through community events and direct contact where and when appropriate.

My noble friend Lord MacGregor brought some of his own personal magic to the debate. I assure him that HS2 is in discussions with the Stephenson Way Group and is aware of its issues, which I hope will be addressed without much further recourse. The noble Lords, Lord Prescott, Lord Lea and Lord Liddle, raised issues of northern devolution and connectivity. I will just summarise the Government's position: investment is clear in the northern powerhouse, and we want to correct the

historical underinvestment and imbalance which has occurred. That is why, as well as devolving power to the north, we are investing a further £13 billion in northern transport, including on improving road access to our ports in both Liverpool and the Humber.

The noble Lord, Lord Stevenson, and my noble friends Lord Framlingham and Lady Pidding all raised issues concerning the environment. In the interests of time, I will write specifically to them on that. Other noble Lords raised similar issues and I assure them that I will cover those in detail in a letter. The noble Baroness, Lady Young of Old Scone, talked about woodlands and was of course right to point out that once ancient woodlands are gone, they are irreplaceable. She talked of some innovative practices which are being undertaken. Those are certainly being encouraged further to reduce any impacts, and mitigation of environmental issues is being looked at extensively. Again, in the interests of time I will write to her to pick up on the outstanding questions.

I thank the noble Lord, Lord Lea, for his supportive comments. He responded to the noble Lord, Lord Rowe-Beddoe, about the Government's response to the issues raised by the Lords Economic Affairs Committee. I remind noble Lords that the committee reported on 25 March last year, and the Government responded in July. Certainly every issue that the committee raised was taken point by point. After reviewing his comments, I shall write to him if I can provide any other detail. I assure all noble Lords that the cost of the full HS2 network, revised at 2015 costs, is £55.7 billion. As I said earlier to the noble Lord, Lord Birt, that is equivalent to 0.14% of GDP in 2016. We believe that our plans have the right balance in terms of journey times and delivering value for money, and a full HS2 Y network will deliver the benefit-cost ratio that we have set out.

The noble Viscount, Lord Simon, pointed to certain concerns he has about HS2, particularly about the benefits beyond London. Some 60% of the benefits of the full HS2 network are generated by trips that originate outside London and the south-east, and he will also be aware that many of the jobs created will relate to HS2 outside London and the south-east.

The noble Lord, Lord Turnbull, raised issues about additional provision 3, as proposed by the promoter in the other place, which dealt with construction impacts in Camden and Euston station. Again, in the interests of time, I shall write to the noble Lord about that.

I once again thank all noble Lords for their contributions this afternoon to what has been an extensive and expert debate. It is important, as noble Lords have requested, that clarity is provided on the detail of the Select Committee. That is an important point for us all to consider. Equally, although there are some reservations that I take on board, the general sense within your Lordships' House is of supporting a project that the Government believe is important in tackling capacity and other issues that our railways face, to ensure that they are brought into the 21st century. This project will create jobs, support growth and help to rebalance our economy. As many noble Lords have acknowledged, the Bill is not just about delivering a new runway—I mean, a new railway. That was a

Freudian slip. That is what happens, four and a half hours in. I am reminded that I have a Question coming up on that very issue, and the noble Baroness, Lady Valentine, may well contribute to it. Let me put it straight for the record—I mean a new railway. It is an investment towards a better future and now is the time to secure it.

On a final point, because it would be remiss of me not to, I would be delighted to take up the invitation of my noble friend Lord Fowler, who said that we could travel down to Wimbledon together. I shall be travelling up and then travelling down with him. I assure him that, given the challenges that people face, not just in Wimbledon but throughout our networks, whether they require disabled access or are young mothers with children, young fathers with children, or families with young children, as I have myself, it is important that we provide and facilitate access to our stations network.

I thank noble Lords once again for their extensive and expert contributions, and I commend the Bill to the House.

*Bill read a second time and committed to a Select Committee.*

#### *Motion*

*Tabled by Lord Berkeley*

That it be an instruction to the Select Committee to which the Bill is committed that it consider petitions from the London area at an early stage.

**Lord Berkeley:** My Lords, before I decide whether to move this Motion, first I should say that I am very happy with the Minister's answer to the first Motion. I think that it is perfectly reasonable that the Select Committee should be able to decide itself the order in which it considers evidence. However, could he clarify in respect of the second Motion, if the committee subsequently wanted to have a special adviser, whether it would need an instruction from the House or whether it could do it on its own initiative?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I hope that the noble Lord will agree with me, as I am mindful of the previous questions about the role of the Select Committee, that if I can cover that matter I shall include it in my response in writing. I trust that that will satisfy him for the time being.

**Lord Berkeley:** On the basis that I can always put this same Motion down another time, I shall not move it now.

*Motion not moved.*

#### *Motion*

*Tabled by Lord Berkeley*

That it be an instruction to the Select Committee to which the Bill is committed that it appoint a special adviser to provide independent advice on railway and engineering issues.

*Motion not moved.*

*House adjourned at 4.44 pm.*





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