

Vol. 801
No. 3



Thursday
19 December 2019

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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The first time a Member speaks to a new piece of parliamentary business, the following abbreviations are used to show their party affiliation:

Abbreviation	Party/Group
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
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

No party affiliation is given for Members serving the House in a formal capacity, the Lords spiritual, Members on leave of absence or Members who are otherwise disqualified from sitting in the House.

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HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Priti Patel, MP
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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. Ben Wallace, MP
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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS—The Rt. Hon. Thérèse Coffey, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION—The Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT—The Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Julian Smith, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Alister Jack, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Simon Hart, MP
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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT—The Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT—The Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma, MP
MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO—The Rt. Hon. James Cleverly, MP

ALSO ATTENDS CABINET

CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak, MP
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL—The Rt. Hon. Jacob Rees-Mogg, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY AND CHIEF WHIP—The Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer, MP
ATTORNEY GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Geoffrey Cox, QC, MP
MINISTER FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY AND CLEAN GROWTH—The Rt. Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng, MP
MINISTER FOR THE NORTHERN POWERHOUSE AND LOCAL GROWTH—The Rt. Hon. Jake Berry, MP
MINISTER FOR HOUSING—The Rt. Hon. Esther McVey, MP
MINISTER FOR SECURITY AND DEPUTY FOR EU EXIT AND NO DEAL PREPARATION—The Rt. Hon. Brandon Lewis, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Zac Goldsmith

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Andrea Leadsom, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE—

The Rt. Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng, MP (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth)
Chris Skidmore, MP (Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation) §

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Kelly Tolhurst, MP (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility)
Nadhim Zahawi, MP (Minister for Business and Industry)
Lord Duncan of Springbank (Minister for Climate Change)

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MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO—The Rt. Hon. James Cleverly, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Jake Berry, MP (Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth)
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Chloe Smith, MP (Minister for the Constitution)
 Johnny Mercer, MP (Minister for Defence People and Veterans) §
 Jeremy Quin, MP

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MINISTERS OF STATE—

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 Baroness Goldie, DL

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 Johnny Mercer, MP (Minister for Defence People and Veterans) §

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Nicky Morgan

MINISTER OF STATE—Nigel Adams, MP (Minister for Sport, Media and Creative Industries)

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SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Gavin Williamson, MP

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The Rt. Hon. Nick Gibb, MP (Minister for School Standards)
 The Rt. Hon. Chris Skidmore, MP (Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation) §

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 Michelle Donelan, MP (Minister for Children and Families) (maternity cover) §
 Lord Agnew of Oulton, DL (Minister for the School System)

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SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers, MP

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George Eustice, MP
 The Rt. Hon. Zac Goldsmith §

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 Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity)

Exiting the European Union—

SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Stephen Barclay, MP

MINISTER OF STATE—Lord Callanan

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office—

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 The Rt. Hon. Dr Andrew Murrison, MP (Minister for the Middle East and North Africa) §
 Andrew Stephenson, MP (Minister for Africa) §
 Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Minister for the Commonwealth, UN and South Asia)

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Health and Social Care—

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 Caroline Dinenage, MP (Minister for Care)

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 Nadine Dorries, MP (Minister for Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Patient Safety)
 Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford

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Kevin Foster, MP

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Andrew Stephenson, MP §

The Rt. Hon. Zac Goldsmith §

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Marcus Jones, MP

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Mims Davies, MP (Minister for Employment)

Guy Opperman, MP (Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion)

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LORD STEWARD—The Earl of Dalhousie

MASTER OF THE HORSE—Lord De Mauley

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TREASURER AND DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP—Amanda Milling, MP

COMPTROLLER—Mike Freer, MP

VICE CHAMBERLAIN—Stuart Andrew, MP

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CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS AND CHIEF WHIP—The Rt. Hon. Lord Ashton of Hyde

CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD AND DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP—The Earl of Courtown

BARONESSES IN WAITING—

Baroness Berridge

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen

LORD IN WAITING—Lord Bethell

§ *Members of the Government listed under more than one department*

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LEGAL ADVISER TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE—E. Hourigan
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REGISTRAR OF LORDS' INTERESTS—T.W.G. Wilson

House of Lords

Thursday 19 December 2019

Queen's Speech

11.30 am

The Queen, seated on the Throne and attended by Her Officers of State, commanded that the Lady Usher of the Black Rod should let the Commons know that it was Her Majesty's pleasure that they attend Her immediately in this House.

When they had come with their Speaker, Her Majesty was pleased to speak as follows:

"My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, my Government's priority is to deliver the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on 31 January. My Ministers will bring forward legislation to ensure the United Kingdom's exit on that date, and to make the most of the opportunities that this brings for all the people of the United Kingdom.

Thereafter, my Ministers will seek a future relationship with the European Union based on a free trade agreement that benefits the whole of the United Kingdom. They will also begin trade negotiations with other leading global economies.

The integrity and prosperity of the United Kingdom is of the utmost importance to my Government. My Ministers will work urgently to facilitate talks to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland.

My Government will embark on an ambitious programme of domestic reform that delivers on the people's priorities. For the first time, the National Health Service's multi-year funding settlement, agreed earlier this year, will be enshrined in law.

Steps will be taken to grow and support the National Health Service's workforce and a new visa will ensure qualified doctors, nurses and health professionals have fast-track entry to the United Kingdom. Hospital car parking charges will be removed for those in greatest need.

My Ministers will seek cross-party consensus on proposals for long term reform of social care. They will ensure that the social care system provides everyone with the dignity and security they deserve and that no one who needs care has to sell their home to pay for it. My Ministers will continue work to reform the Mental Health Act.

A modern, fair, points-based immigration system will welcome skilled workers from across the world to contribute to the United Kingdom's economy, communities and public services.

My Government will bring forward measures to support working families, raising the National Insurance threshold and increasing the National Living Wage. To ensure every child has access to a high-quality education, my Ministers will increase levels of funding per pupil in every school.

Measures will be brought forward to encourage flexible working, to introduce the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers and to help people save for later life. New measures will be brought forward to protect tenants and to improve building safety. My Government

will take steps to support home ownership, including by making homes available at a discount for local first-time buyers. My Ministers will develop legislation to improve internet safety for all.

My Government is committed to a fair justice system that keeps people safe. My Ministers will establish a Royal Commission to review and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice process. New sentencing laws will ensure the most serious violent offenders, including terrorists, serve longer in custody. New laws will require schools, police, councils and health authorities to work together to prevent serious crime. My Government will ensure those charged with knife possession face swift justice and that the courts work better for all those who engage with them, including victims of domestic abuse. Legislation will be brought forward to support victims of crime and their families. Measures will be developed to tackle hostile activity conducted by foreign states.

My Ministers will bring forward measures to ensure that every part of the United Kingdom can prosper. My Government will invest in the country's public services and infrastructure whilst keeping borrowing and debt under control; maintaining the sustainability of the public finances through a responsible fiscal strategy. My Government will prioritise investment in infrastructure and world-leading science research and skills, in order to unleash productivity and improve daily life for communities across the country. It will give communities more control over how investment is spent so that they can decide what is best for them.

To support business, my Government will increase tax credits for research and development, establish a National Skills Fund, and bring forward changes to business rates. New laws will accelerate the delivery of gigabit capable broadband. To ensure people can depend on the transport network, measures will be developed to provide for minimum levels of service during transport strikes.

My Government will continue to take steps to meet the world-leading target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It will continue to lead the way in tackling global climate change, hosting the COP26 Summit in 2020. To protect and improve the environment for future generations, a bill will enshrine in law environmental principles and legally binding targets, including for air quality. It will also ban the export of polluting plastic waste to countries outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and establish a new, world-leading independent regulator in statute.

A Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission will be established. Work will be taken forward to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act.

My Ministers will continue to invest in our gallant Armed Forces. My Government will honour the Armed Forces Covenant, which will be further incorporated into law, and the NATO commitment to spend at least two per cent of national income on defence. It will bring forward proposals to tackle vexatious claims that undermine our Armed Forces and will continue to seek better ways of dealing with legacy issues that provide better outcomes for victims and survivors.

My Government will work to promote and expand the United Kingdom's influence in the world. An

Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review will be undertaken to reassess the nation's place in the world, covering all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy and development. My Ministers will promote the United Kingdom's interests, including freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law. My Government will work closely with international partners to help solve the most complex international security issues and to promote peace and security globally. It will stand firm against those who threaten the values of the United Kingdom, including by developing a sanctions regime to directly address human rights abuse, and working to ensure that all girls have access to twelve years of quality education.

Members of the House of Commons, estimates for the public services will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, other measures will be laid before you.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels."

11.44 am

The House adjourned during pleasure.

3.30 pm

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

Lord Speaker's Statement *Announcement*

3.37 pm

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, I begin by recalling the terrorist attack that took place on London Bridge last month, during which Saskia Jones and Jack Merritt lost their lives. I am sure that I speak for the whole House when I extend our prayers and condolences to their loved ones. I should also like to place on the record our continued thanks to the police, all those who work tirelessly to keep us all safe, and those ordinary members of the public who, on this occasion, displayed such courage and valour.

Select Vestries Bill *First Reading*

3.37 pm

The Bill was read a first time pro forma.

Queen's Speech *Debate (1st Day)*

3.37 pm

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, I have to acquaint the House that Her Majesty was pleased this morning to make a most gracious Speech from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament assembled in the House of Lords. Copies of the gracious Speech are available in the Printed Paper Office.

I have, for the convenience of the House, arranged for the terms of the gracious Speech to be published in the *Official Report*.

Motion for an Humble Address

Moved by **Lord Lamont of Lerwick**

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty as follows:

"Most Gracious Sovereign—We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the most gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."

Lord Lamont of Lerwick (Con): My Lords, it is my great privilege on behalf of the whole House to thank Her Majesty for delivering the gracious Speech from the Throne this morning. It is the second time that Her Majesty has done this service in a very short time. Her unstinting devotion to duty is an inspiration to all in public life and is admired all over the world. Over the decades she has been a rock of stability in times of great uncertainty, and we are profoundly grateful to our sovereign.

I also thank His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for his presence. I have had the privilege of being a trustee of one of his charities, closely connected with the Prince's Trust and the Prince's Foundation. I have been astonished and deeply impressed by his attention to detail and the work that he puts into those charities. I thank him, too, for his public service.

I also thank all the staff: the doorkeepers, caterers, police, cleaners and everyone who, under Black Rod, has worked so hard for this second State Opening in just a few months. It must have involved a lot of extra work, not just because it is the second but because it has had a slightly different format. Again, we are very grateful.

When the Chief Whip rang to ask me to propose this Motion, he must have been telepathic. I was about to phone him to ask whether, when speaking in the four-day Queen's Speech debate, he could not allocate me the very last position, as is his usual habit. I little imagined that he would make me the first speaker, which is a very great honour.

Our Chief Whip is a very courteous man and certainly a true gentleman. He gives the lie to Sir Robert Peel's view that the job of Chief Whip is one which requires all the qualities of a gentleman, but no gentleman would ever accept the post.

I understand that this speech is meant to be uncontroversial, but I hope people will understand that it is rather difficult to avoid all mention of a certain event a week ago today—the election—which indeed gave rise to the gracious Speech. I shall endeavour to be like the returning officer in an Irish election who declared that he was perfectly fair: he was half way between partiality and impartiality.

I will say only this about what the Prime Minister called his "stonking victory": he picked his moment, he risked it all and he won. He reminded me in his

boldness of the lines of the 17th century Covenanter, the Duke of Montrose, who wrote a poem about risk in politics and war. He wrote:

"He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small
That puts it not unto the touch
To win or lose it all."

Well, the Prime Minister put it to the test and he won.

Of course, everyone now says that they foresaw the result. I was certainly not so sure, but I have always been extremely bad at predicting elections. The only time I ever won a political bet was in 1997 when I bet Bob Worcester, the chairman of MORI polling, who did not believe his polls, that his polls were correct and the Conservative Party would be annihilated. I won £100. It was not a lot of consolation as I was also annihilated in the election, by the former Member for Harrogate, now the noble Lord, Lord Willis, with whom I must say I am on perfectly good terms today.

Of course, losing an election is a painful business. Many good, hard-working MPs lost their seats and will be missed. Being an MP is not an easy job these days and they should all be thanked for their public service.

Noble Lords: Hear, hear!

Lord Lamont of Lerwick: There were many remarkable results in the election. I spent my teenage years—as did my noble friend Lord Cormack—living in Grimsby, a town with dreadful social problems. I often fantasised, and still do today, that Grimsby Town Football Club, the Mariners, would one day win the FA Cup—but I never fantasised that Grimsby would ever have a Conservative MP. Of course, if you support a football team, you do so whether it is playing well or badly. Alas, that is no longer true of political parties.

My contribution to the election was extremely meagre: a little broadcasting and some canvassing, including some telephone canvassing. Most of my calls were replied to by a disembodied voice saying, "This number is no longer in use". It was difficult to get any sense of public opinion; one moment one was calling Scunthorpe, the next moment Exeter, the next Hull and the next Tonbridge. Early on, when not very conscious of where I was phoning, a voice said, "You don't sound very local. What's the name of the local candidate?" Bowled middle stump, I am afraid.

We were told to give our names when phoning. I decided to discard that advice and remain anonymous. I still remember an incident that was many years ago but lives on in my memory. I got into a taxi at Westminster. The driver said, "It's Norman Lamont, isn't it?" I said, "No, no, nothing to do with me. I do look a little bit like him. We're often confused." "Go on," he said, "I know it's you." "Okay," I said, "it's me." He said, "I saved your life once." "How is that?" I asked. He said, "I was driving up St James's Street with a passenger in the back of the cab. You were crossing the road outside the Carlton Club and he said, 'A thousand pounds if you run the bastard over'."

That was a long time ago, but voters can always be challenging. Gyles Brandreth has told some of my colleagues about how he was canvassing for his daughter in Kingston, and a voter asked him about the candidate's qualities. Gyles replied by saying, "She's very bright, hard-working, honest and committed to the public

good. She will be a very good MP. And, may I add, she's also my daughter." Back came the reply: "Are you sure she's your daughter?"

The important measure in the gracious Speech arises from the election: namely, the withdrawal Bill to give effect to our exit from the EU on 31 January. I made my maiden speech in the House of Commons in 1972 supporting our joining the EEC, as it then was. I never imagined that 45 years later I should find myself standing in this House supporting measures to reverse that decision.

The noble Lord, Lord Hennessy, once suggested that my own Euroscepticism came from the fact that I lived my early years in the Shetland Islands, which have close connections to Norway. Jo Grimond, the MP for Orkney and Shetland, once filled in a form that asked where his nearest railway station was, and wrote "Bergen". Shetland was the only place that voted against membership of the European Economic Community in the 1975 referendum, but this had less to do with links to the Vikings and more to do with the fact that the Government distributed to every house a leaflet detailing the claimed advantages of the Common Market. The government leaflet had a map of the UK on the front but left Shetland off the map completely—not even in the usual insulting little box in the top right-hand corner. But, of course, Shetland was ahead of its time.

My own doubts about the EU arose when, as Chancellor, I was negotiating our opt-out from the single currency. I saw that the EU was morphing from being an economic association into an increasingly centralised political entity, and I did not believe that this would ever be acceptable to the British public when they finally understood what was happening. In 1994 I ruined the Tory party conference by saying that I personally doubted the claimed economic advantages of the European Union but one day we might have to consider leaving it because of the political direction in which it was going. However, I must say I never really expected to see that happen.

In my opinion, remainers in both the election and the referendum made a mistake in assuming that the argument could be won on economic grounds. Many people were never going to be convinced by arguments about the possibility of GDP being a few points lower after 10 years. For many more, this was an argument about accountability, democracy and, above all, identity. This election was the second people's vote. My noble friend Lord Heseltine has said, very surprisingly, that the verdict should be accepted. Even Guy Verhofstadt, who once told an enraptured Liberal Democrat conference that the EU was an empire, said last week:

"Brexit will ... happen. The British ... have confirmed their referendum decision."

Quite so. Indeed, the war is over. Grass should now be allowed to grow over the battlefield. It is time for the process of healing and reconciliation to begin. Of course, we all understand that there will be continuing arguments about the nature of our relationship with the EU, for example, the precise foreign policy relationship. Many noble Lords in this House who supported remain have much to contribute to that debate.

Apart from the legislation on Brexit, there is much in the gracious Speech that will be widely welcomed,

[LORD LAMONT OF LERWICK]

most importantly the statement of the intention to ensure that every part of the UK can prosper and the emphasis on infrastructure—not just the money but giving more say over how it is spent back to communities. The intention to reach a consensus on care of the elderly is welcome as far as it goes, but I personally hope the Government will come up with a solution, because this is one of the most serious, pressing problems this country has—I am sure I carry all parts of the House on this. New sentencing laws to make sure that violent offenders spend longer in prison will be welcomed, as will the commitment to increase education spending per pupil. There will certainly be strong support on this side of the House for the repeal of the disastrous Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, which caused such unintended, unforeseen chaos.

Commentators have wondered how the Government will satisfy two different constituencies: the blue collar one in the north and a very different one in the south. This Speech shows exactly how, combining a strong social programme, a programme of renewal, a commitment to the unity of the UK and the restoration of UK sovereignty. This is the agenda of a truly one-nation Government. I beg to move.

3.52 pm

Baroness Finn (Con): My Lords, I second my noble friend's Motion. I am conscious of the great honour to do so and of the privilege to follow my noble friend Lord Lamont—a son of Shetland, a reforming Chancellor and a kind mentor to many, including me. While in office, my noble friend recruited a young special adviser called David Cameron, hired as his principal private secretary a fresh-faced civil servant called Jeremy Heywood and, during the referendum campaign of 2016, advised the new Back-Bench Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip on how to make his case. As a trainer of thoroughbreds, he is up there with the Earl of Carnarvon and Henry Cecil.

It is said that the key to success is to choose your predecessor carefully so that you are not outshone. The last humble Address was seconded just two months ago with a brilliant, witty speech by my noble friend Lord Dobbs—so I have clearly chosen my predecessor poorly. For the next leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, this is unlikely to be a problem.

It is also the custom for the Queen's Speech seconder in either House to be an up-and-coming young Member. The definition is rather looser in your Lordships' House. Contrary to his youthful appearance, my noble friend Lord Dobbs is in his eighth decade—admittedly only just—and was the architect of a previous landslide election victory in 1987, the year after I left my comprehensive school in South Wales. He is also of course the established author of the globally best-selling *House of Cards* novels, which outline how to succeed as a Chief Whip. I assume that my noble friend Lord Ashton will have read those novels—but, while I might think that, he could not possibly comment, ho ho.

Although none of us in this House had a vote in the election, many of us played a role. For some of the time, I was tasked with looking after Dilyn, the Downing

Street Jack Russell. I had to control a headstrong beast who created upheaval wherever he went, was jealous of his territory and flustered civil servants, but who won hearts with his joie de vivre. It was a role for which I was well prepared, having previously worked as a government special adviser.

I became a special adviser in the coalition Government because I believed, as we all do here, in public service. As an accountant with a background in business, I wanted to put myself at the service of my country. The progress that our country made during the coalition years would not have been possible without the tireless work of other advisers, including my noble friend Lady Fall and the noble Lord, Lord Oates. In so doing, I came more deeply to appreciate the sense of public service which animates us all. In particular, as an adviser charged with overseeing the Government's relationship with the trade unions, I came to admire the dedication of people such as Sir Brendan Barber, his predecessor the noble Lord, Lord Monks, and his successor Frances O'Grady, in standing up for working people. While we did not always agree, I was never in doubt that they sought to serve those whom they represented with passion and commitment.

As I have already noted, this is the second Queen's Speech in as many months. As with London buses, you wait ages for one and then two come along at once. This gracious Speech sets out an ambitious programme for the nation which I wholeheartedly support. It reflects the energy and reforming passion of our Prime Minister, and I congratulate him on the scale and breadth of his success. He, more than anyone, will understand that a great mandate imposes an equally great responsibility to meet the country's expectations.

What most people want of their Government is that they should be a moderate, pragmatic and competent Administration who get their business done and see to the well-being of the whole United Kingdom. Most voters are not driven in any way by ideology and do not run their lives according to great and complex political theories. They value above all else security, liberty and the rule of law, and the ability to get on with their lives and to do the best for themselves, their family and their community. They want to go to work and raise their family, and for their children to be taught in good schools. They want to take home as much as possible of what they work hard to earn, and they expect their public services to be decent, effective and accessible.

Most people do not think of themselves as Conservatives, but they voted Conservative in this election in extraordinary numbers. This new Government, with representatives elected from Bridgend—just down the road from where I grew up—to Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Burnley, Bishop Auckland and Banff and Buchan, have a responsibility to serve those working people who have placed their trust in them. That is why I am delighted to see in this Queen's Speech measures designed to reflect the priorities of working people across our nations: support for the NHS, measures designed to level up economic opportunity, and investment in the infrastructure that promotes prosperity.

One thing that has held back Britain's investment in infrastructure is an outdated Treasury methodology that too often gets wrong the economic costs and benefits. One casualty of this has been the Swansea tidal lagoon, a project close to my heart. This has the potential to be the prototype for world-leading exportable technology. We need to exploit every single one of Britain's competitive advantages, and our uniquely powerful tidal flow is one that it would be a crime to ignore.

Of course, the Queen's Speech will also allow us to give effect to the result of the referendum. Your Lordships' House has many expert voices on Britain's relations with Europe and, unlike some, I do not believe that the British people have had enough of experts, so the scrutiny that this House provides is vital. But the British people did signal in this election that they have had enough of delay. We in this House are here to serve the people and now we must move on.

Then there will be the hard yards of negotiating the most comprehensive agreement for Britain's future relationship with our closest neighbours. It will need to cover the security and intelligence relationship as well as trade and economics, and the Government should insist that there is no cherry picking by the EU. The future relationship should be suffused with respect, generosity, fellowship, our deep shared values and the recognition that, for any kind of foreseeable future, the economies of the UK and the EU 27 will be deeply interlinked.

This is a time of change, a time of disruption. For many, this brings anxiety, but change also brings opportunity, and this is a time of great opportunity for Britain. Ours is a great country, with decency and tolerance running through it and an instinctive desire for fair play that should, and will, see us through these times. To take pride in what we are is not to look inward and backward; it is the foundation from which we can look outward and forward.

As the daughter of a Czech refugee father and a Welsh mother, I will always be grateful for the immense honour of being able to serve in this place, where voices from so many communities, traditions and backgrounds blend in the pursuit of democratic harmony, and I humbly beg to second the Motion.

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by **Baroness Smith of Basildon**

That this debate be adjourned till Tuesday 7 January.

4 pm

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, as someone once said, this is déjà vu all over again. It is appropriate that your Lordships' House records our appreciation to all who have worked so hard to organise two Queen's Speeches in such a short period of time, especially with this one being so close to Christmas. If it all seems as smooth as a swan gliding over a lake, it is only because of the furious and energetic paddling underneath. Those who have seen the hive of activity taking place behind the scenes will know what a huge logistical operation this is, involving carpenters to carpet

layers, the Palace to the police, and indeed the hard-working staff and officials of Parliament. They have done a remarkable job. We are very grateful and, on behalf of the whole House, I think we should say thank you.

Although short by any standards, the last Session of Parliament cannot claim the record for being the shortest: that is still held by the Labour Government elected in 1945, which had a 41-day Session in 1948, albeit for the sole purpose of amending the Parliament Act to ensure that the nationalisation programme could progress. Last time, I was chastised by some for daring to suggest that the Queen's Speech was not a serious programme for government for the forthcoming year but the market-testing of a manifesto for a Prime Minister clearly preparing for an election. Was I wrong?

As we heard from the noble Baroness, Lady Finn, despite not being able to vote, many in your Lordships' House will have worked on the election campaign or watched with great interest. Given the weather, I really envied those watching from the comfort of a warm armchair as I plodded through puddles and gales. It was an election that has brought the Government great success. With his "Get Brexit done" slogan, Mr Johnson tapped into the public mood of frustration, disappointment and disillusionment. As is the convention of this House, I congratulate the Government on that success. A large majority is always welcomed by a Prime Minister, and it brings with it great responsibility—for the Government, for the Opposition, and indeed for your Lordships' House. We welcome the noble Baroness, the Lord Privy Seal back to her position on her Benches.

The speech of the noble Lord, Lord Lamont, illustrated his deserved reputation as an experienced parliamentarian for today's debate—though I have to say, he might have a second career as a stand-up comedian as well. He was first elected to Parliament in 1972 in a by-election where he trounced, among others, an anti-common market Conservative candidate. Later, in government, his ministerial roles included three top positions at the Treasury, with his time as Chancellor coinciding with one of the longest and deepest recessions that this country has ever known and the infamous Black Wednesday. When, after 14 years in government, he resigned after refusing a demotion, the noble Lord made a passionate speech, and part of that resonates today. He said that

"too many important decisions are made for 36 hours' publicity ... I believe that in politics one should decide what is right and then decide the presentation, not the other way round."—[*Official Report*, Commons, 9/6/1993; col. 285.]

Those are wise words; perhaps he might want to offer them to the current incumbent of No. 10 Downing Street.

The noble Lord's willingness to champion unpopular issues was evident when he first entered your Lordships' House. For two years, the issue on which he made by far the most contributions was that of General Augusto Pinochet of Chile. A somewhat lonely supporter of the general, his efforts were recognised when the Pinochet Foundation awarded him a medal for his extraordinary and valiant attitude in defending Senator Pinochet. The story he told today which I most enjoyed reminded

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me of some advice I received during my early interest in politics. He talked about the bet of £100 that he won. I was advised early on, "Always bet on the other side, because if you lose you have got the compensation of the financial winnings you will gain."

Appointed to your Lordships' House in 2015, the speech by the noble Baroness, Lady Finn, illustrates why she has already earned the high regard and respect of your Lordships' House. A former special adviser to the noble Lord, Lord Maude, when working on the then Trade Union Bill she was not in the least fazed, and was dubbed by some as the "silk and steel adviser." It is surprising that she is still speaking from the Back Benches, although that has possibly been through choice. She has earned her reputation as a thoughtful contributor to our debates and I congratulate her on her speech today.

This Session starts at a difficult time for our country. The mishandling of Brexit has toxified our politics and divided our nation. Many of the old certainties of conventional political wisdoms are being challenged. The nation, suffering from the politics of austerity, wants the uncertainty of the past few years to be over and done with. But even now, over three years after the referendum, there is still no clarity on our future relationship with the EU. As mentioned by the noble Baroness, Lady Finn, there is still no certainty around the ongoing security and policing arrangements, about what the Government mean by "divergence" from EU standards and regulations, or about the likely short and mid-term impacts on our economy. Everyone in your Lordships' House knows that we leave the EU on 31 January, but the ability of the Government to undertake and conclude the negotiations necessary in the truncated transition or implementation period will be a challenge. As always, this House will have a contribution to make, and we look forward to doing so within the usual conventions.

I have to say, I find it disappointing when Ministers and others, while purporting to welcome the role of a second, revising Chamber, then overreact with great excitement to any challenge or questioning. However, disappointingly, if rather predictably, the sabre-rattling has already started. We have learned to expect that from the previously ubiquitous—and more recently, invisible—Jacob Rees-Mogg. Having once described Members of your Lordships' House as "arrogant and condescending", he threatened to keep appointing Peers to pack this Chamber to get his own way. But Members of your Lordships' House, and indeed the Government, are usually more measured and understanding, recognising how we work.

We welcome the fact that there will be a second Cabinet Minister in your Lordships' House: Nicky Morgan. She is the first Cabinet Minister, other than the Leader, to serve in this House since 2010. The Labour Governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown appointed several Cabinet Ministers from this House, including my noble friends Lord Mandelson and Lord Adonis, and my noble and learned friend Lord Falconer, in addition to the Leader. That approach is useful to both the Cabinet, in understanding and appreciating our role, and to your Lordships' House. It is also helpful that our Procedure Committee, recognising

the value of a Secretary of State in your Lordships' House, provided new rules which allow for a special Question Time. It has not yet been used but I am sure that the new Culture Secretary and the House will welcome that opportunity.

The Government have announced in this Queen's Speech a constitution, democracy and rights commission. Given the comments that have been made by government Ministers and advisers, I want to put on record the two principles that should be a thread running through any such commission: first, the independence of our judiciary; and, secondly, that no one, not even the Government, is above the law. We have also been told that the new commission will consider an overhaul of the House of Lords, which is interesting when taken in conjunction with the new Lords' Secretary of State.

Some may recall my previous disappointments with the noble Lord, Lord Strathclyde, who, as he knows, I like and hold in high regard. However, back in the day when he was Leader of the Opposition, he was a mighty defender of the role of your Lordships' House, even on one occasion going much further than I ever would in declaring that the conventions were dead. Yet when the Government overreacted to this House and asked it to think again on George Osborne's tax credits cuts, I was sadly disappointed that the noble Lord's contribution was his report for David Cameron, seeking to reduce our limited powers on statutory instruments. I commented then that there were two versions of the noble Lord, Lord Strathclyde: one for opposition and his doppelgänger for government. However, I am pleased to note that the first noble Lord, Lord Strathclyde, is back. In a *Financial Times* story on the overhaul planned for this House he is quoted as saying that

"We need a stronger, more responsible second chamber, more directly accountable to people".

I am not a naturally suspicious person, but few Governments have ever called for a stronger second Chamber. However, taking the noble Lord's words at face value, I say to the Government: be careful what you wish for. I do not necessarily want to see a stronger House, although it would make being Leader of the Opposition here a lot more enjoyable, which the Government might not welcome. But I do want a responsible House, an effective revising Chamber, and reform.

We in this House supported, without opposition, the report by the noble Lord, Lord Burns, on reducing the size of your Lordships' House. If Mr Johnson's new majority Government are serious about reform, there is an opportunity to work across the House with all parties to reduce the numbers, and a plan is clearly laid out in the report for how we could quickly get on with that.

Secondly, we will give our full support to a Bill to end the hereditary by-elections, as previously and regularly introduced by my noble friend Lord Grocott. Indeed, I fully expect him to reintroduce his Bill, in what has become our very own parliamentary Groundhog Day. I know that he would welcome government support, and I look forward to discussing all his proposals with the relevant Ministers and the new commission. However,

the Government should not use Lords reform as a Trojan horse for a ministerial power-grab.

On an issue which came up in the last Queen's Speech, I welcome the admission that the Fixed-term Parliaments Act is not fit for purpose.

Whatever the outcome of the considerations, we on these Benches will continue to play our role in ensuring that the Government maintain their commitment to reversing the cuts they made in previous Parliaments. It is essential that the public see the rehiring of police officers and their visible presence in our communities.

We also welcome the admission that the scrapping of nurse training bursaries added to the long-term staffing crisis, and that there will be some reinstatement. We note from press briefings this week that the Government are starting to appreciate that their reforms and funding for the NHS have brought it to breaking point in some places and have not provided the basis for addressing future needs. Our NHS staff are unstinting in their efforts to provide a first-class service, and many of us have experience of their care, dedication and professionalism. However, too often we hear from those same staff that the pressures are intolerable. They are the people most qualified to address the problems facing this country's most treasured and valued institution.

Many in your Lordships' House have long advocated the reform of social care, and we can promise the Government that we will fully co-operate to ensure the necessary improvements. The Government cannot allow the search for consensus to delay progress and change; the issue has been kicked into the long grass too many times and the problem gets more acute. My noble friend Lady Pitkeathley has long called for better support for unpaid carers. I hope that the legislation will start to give these everyday heroes the credit and practical support they deserve, and we look forward to working with the Government on that. On a personal note, having spent a small fortune on hospital parking charges this year, I welcome plans to remove such charges from those in greatest need, and we look forward to seeing the detail of how that will work.

I had hoped to see something in the Speech that would provide clarity on the number of new hospitals being built and the increase in the number of nurses. Having heard the explanations that—I will try to get this right—the figure of 50,000 new nurses actually includes over 18,000 who are already employed, and that the figure of 40 new hospitals is probably only six, perhaps we should also have new legislation to ensure that we reintroduce the numeracy hour in schools.

The Queen's Speech rightly refers to ensuring that every part of the UK can prosper, recognising that the Government have to act in the best interests of the whole of the UK. Yesterday, nurses in Northern Ireland were on strike—the first time ever that the Royal College of Nursing has supported such action, and it did so with a very heavy heart. To whom do the people of Northern Ireland turn to address this shocking state of affairs? They have now been left without devolved government for more than three years, with no political decisions being taken. I do not want direct rule, but the current inertia is unacceptable. Mr Johnson's majority has brought the DUP's privileged position at

the heart of government to an end. That may well help

to kick-start the process, and I welcome talks having

started, but we must provide all the necessary support

and an ambitious timescale to ensure that the Assembly

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is reinstated. As the House knows, those on these Benches with experience of Northern Ireland will willingly offer assistance and co-operation.

There are clearly other proposals where your Lordships' House will support the principle and want to assist the Government by scrutinising the detail. While welcoming plans to support tenants, there does not appear to be anything to increase the overall availability of homes, and it is disappointing to see nothing about support for and working with local government. That is an issue that we can pursue further as we examine how some of the proposals can be implemented.

This is the last day on which the House will sit before Christmas. Tonight and tomorrow, we will return to our homes, families and friends. When we return in January, we will continue this debate and discuss the Bill on our withdrawal from the EU. Until then, I wish each and every Member of your Lordships' House and all our staff and officials a very restful and happy Christmas and New Year. I beg to move that this debate be now adjourned, until my birthday—7 January 2020.

4.16 pm

Lord Newby (LD): My Lords, it is of course a pleasure to congratulate the mover and seconder of the humble Address. The noble Lord, Lord Lamont, has been consistent and forthright in his support of Brexit, so I am sure that the election result will have been music to his ears. I wonder whether he broke into song in his bath on Friday morning. I think the nation should be told.

The noble Baroness, Lady Finn, made a polished and erudite speech. I hope we hear much more from her in the new Parliament—not least in respect of her support for the Swansea tidal lagoon. The noble Baroness gained a reputation during the coalition years as a reformer of the Civil Service and the processes of government. I therefore hope that she has volunteered her services to Mr Dominic Cummings as he seeks to revolutionise the processes of the Ministry of Defence.

It is an iron law of politics that most political parties are disappointed by most general election results. The Conservative Party today, however, is in the rare position of not only winning an election but, in doing so, I suspect, exceeding many of its private expectations. I must therefore acknowledge this spectacular election result for the Conservative Party and congratulate the noble Baroness the Leader of the House on her reappointment. While some may argue that the Prime Minister was presented with a largely open goal, given the weakness of his principal opponent, politics, like football, is full of examples of such open goals being missed. But the Prime Minister did not miss, and his healthy majority is his reward.

Anybody who plays any sport or takes part in any competition must accept and play by the rules, but this does not always mean that the rules are right or defensible. In this election, it took 38,000 votes to elect a Conservative MP and 51,000 votes to elect a Labour MP, but 336,000 votes to elect a Liberal Democrat and 866,000 to elect a Green. My party gained 1.3 million votes compared to the 2017 general election. The

Conservatives gained some 300,000 votes. We lost a seat; they gained 47. This is a rotten, rotten system. It makes a mockery of any claim that Britain is an exemplary democracy. It should be changed.

I was temporarily cheered to read in the Conservative Party manifesto that it wanted to ensure that “every vote counts the same”.

Sadly, this was a reference to implementing the constituency boundary review and not to the more fundamental need for electoral reform.

The composition of the Commons has changed but the principal challenges facing the Government and the country have not. It seems to me that there are three overarching dilemmas with which the Government must now grapple. The first is how to get Brexit done in a way that does the least damage to our economy, security and influence. The key trade-off, which now can no longer be avoided, is between taking back control of our trading and other relationships, and keeping access to EU markets and security systems. One thing is clear: the aspiration of having your cake and eating it is about to be dashed.

The second challenge is how to increase expenditure on the NHS, infrastructure and other areas of public expenditure while keeping taxes down or even reducing them. Again, the Prime Minister's preferred approach is to get the best of both worlds and do both, but that is simply impossible.

The third challenge is how to bring the country together. This is a particularly acute problem in respect of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

So, how does the Queen's Speech seek to address these three challenges? On Brexit, the Government are adopting a macho approach. There will be no extension of the transition period beyond the end of the year, and while a commitment by this Prime Minister is sometimes only an aspiration that dissolves under pressure, let us take the Government at their word. If successful, they can negotiate a Canada-style trade agreement. This means that we will have reached a free trade deal on goods, where we have a deficit, but no equivalent deal on services, where we have a surplus. This makes no economic sense. It will require customs forms and checks. If these are somehow to be avoided on the island of Ireland, they will have to be imposed down the Irish Sea. No sector of the economy can possibly gain from these arrangements and any offsetting gains from trade agreements with the US and elsewhere are, at best, much less beneficial and many years away.

On the public finances, as a Yorkshireman, I am delighted that the Government have just discovered that the north and the Midlands are in desperate need of new public investment. We welcome government promises that the north is about to enter a new golden age in which government largesse pours forth in unparalleled volumes, and I very much look forward to seeing its beneficial effects in Ripon.

The Government also promise large additional expenditure on the NHS and education, which is indeed overdue. But we have read the Institute for Fiscal Studies' conclusion that the Government's plans for funding such expenditure are literally incredible.

Either any pretence of fiscal responsibility must go, or taxes must rise. The Queen's Speech is silent on which it will be.

On bringing the country together, greater regional investment would clearly be helpful and welcome, as would reversing the growing prosperity gap between London and the south-east on the one hand and the further-flung regions on the other. However, even if the Government were to redirect significant investment northwards, I fear that Brexit will make narrowing the prosperity gap much more difficult because the kind of deal envisaged by the Government is likely to hit large manufacturers with integrated supply chains—companies typically situated many miles from London—particularly hard. It is also likely to suppress, rather than encourage, the level of investment needed to bring greater prosperity, particularly in manufacturing regions.

Beyond England, it is possible that the election results have jolted the DUP and Sinn Féin into action to reinstate the Northern Ireland Executive, which would of course be most welcome. But again, the Brexit deal, which is going to place a customs border somewhere, will inevitably increase the attractiveness of a single state in Ireland and will increase demands, possibly in the near future, for a border poll on the issue. Moreover, relations with Scotland and its people look set to become more fraught, rather than less.

The Prime Minister might portray himself as a one-nation Conservative, but I fear that the one nation he has in mind is England, not the United Kingdom. In the face of these challenges and the Government's response to them, how should we in the Lords react? We clearly must accept the result of the general election and not seek to thwart its outcome, but this does not mean that we should abandon our critical faculties or our constitutional responsibilities to hold the Government to account and to exercise our judgment in improving legislation where we think it is in the public good.

I wholly accept that with a large majority, the appetite in the Commons for accepting amendments that we pass may—initially, at least—be very limited. We will therefore have to choose our battles carefully, but in my view that does not mean that we should retreat entirely from the field. I suspect, for example, that your Lordships' House will wish to give very close scrutiny to any constitutional changes the Government may bring forward—in particular, any proposals to tilt the balance of power towards the Executive and away from Parliament or the courts. The Conservative manifesto talks of the need to

“come up with constitutional proposals to restore trust in our institutions.”

But that trust will be restored only if those who run these institutions are seen by the public to be worthy of that trust. As we enter this new Parliament, we must re-dedicate ourselves to doing everything in our power to re-establishing that trust.

4.26 pm

The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Evans of Bowes Park) (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow my noble friends Lord Lamont and Lady Finn in supporting

this Motion. I am delighted and honoured to stand here again as Leader at the start of this new Parliament. Your Lordships' House plays a critical role in making and shaping the laws of our United Kingdom. Scrutinising the legislation of the Government of the day is a great responsibility and one that the whole country benefits from, so your Lordships' experience and expertise will once again be vital in helping to ensure that this Government's legislation is the most effective it can be.

I know that, over the past six weeks, many noble Lords on all sides of the House have been campaigning up and down the country. Thousands of miles have been walked, millions of people spoken to, bad weather has been braved and shoe leather has been worn down. We have seen change. We now have 140 new MPs in the other place, our most diverse Parliament yet. Britain has elected more women than ever before, a record number of ethnic minority MPs and 45 openly LGBT Members. On a personal note, I would like to congratulate one new Member in particular: my husband James, who has been elected as the Member of Parliament for North West Norfolk.

As well as a new look House of Commons, the results of the election mean a new chapter for our country, and while much has changed in the other place, I am delighted to be joined once more by the noble Baroness, Lady Smith of Basildon, and the noble Lord, Lord, Lord Newby, with whom I worked throughout the last Parliament. I have mentioned on other occasions the many late nights and the challenging debates that we have had over the past three years, but once again I would like to thank them for the productive and respectful way in which we have always worked, and I am confident that we will continue to do so during the course of this Parliament.

It is a pleasure to add my congratulations to those already expressed to my noble friends Lord Lamont and Lady Finn for moving and seconding the Motion for an humble Address. My noble friend Lord Lamont has never been afraid of standing his ground and speaking truth to power. In the 1980s, our then Prime Minister, the late Baroness Thatcher, had been convinced by an American film producer to subsidise the construction of some film studios in Essex. It fell to the noble Lord, then Chief Secretary to the Treasury, to counsel against this as representing poor value for money. “That is the problem with you, Norman,” she said. “It is always ‘no, no, no.’ If you had been in my Government from the start, we would never have got anything done.” “I am sorry to contradict you, Prime Minister,” came the reply, “but I have been in your Government from the start.”

My noble friend Lady Finn's first political experience was canvassing for the late Baroness Thatcher as a teenager in the grittier parts of her native Swansea. Getting punched did not put her off; rather, it helped to develop the no-nonsense style which has served her so well during her period in Government and now in this House. When the Chief Whip called my noble friend to ask if she was free to do this speech, she tried to tell him that she would be busy washing her hair—but he was suspicious, as it is a well-known fact that if you want to track down my noble friend, you should head

[BARONESS EVANS OF BOWES PARK]

to the House of Commons hairdresser, where she gets the best gossip but also, of course, gets through a prodigious amount of paperwork.

I too put on record my thanks for the hard work of the House authorities and all staff across the House in making today's ceremony such a success. This year has required a great deal from House staff—as indeed it has from your Lordships—but they have always worked with the utmost professionalism and good spirits. I know that all noble Lords join me in thanking them all for everything they do.

Finally, I thank our emergency services for their brave and tireless work. As the Lord Speaker said, last month our country suffered a terrorist attack, which resulted in the tragic deaths of Jack Merritt and Saskia Jones. I know the House will want to express our sympathies to their families and friends and pay tribute to the emergency services, alongside the brave members of the public who were there to defend our freedom and way of life.

The legislative programme laid out in the Queen's Speech represents an ambitious agenda under the renewed leadership of my right honourable friend the Prime Minister. This Government are committed to delivering a deal with the European Union that works for the whole of the United Kingdom. Tomorrow, the House of Commons will have the Second Reading of the withdrawal agreement Bill that will enable the implementation of the Prime Minister's deal, ensuring that Britain leaves the EU on 31 January. Once we have left, we will seek a future relationship with our European friends based on a free trade agreement and begin trade negotiations with leading economies across the globe.

Responding to the public's priorities, we will also deliver a bold programme of domestic reform. At the heart of our programme is enshrining our NHS funding settlement in law while growing and supporting its fantastic workforce, helped by a new visa to fast-track doctors and health workers. We will seek a cross-party consensus on social care, as already mentioned, abolish car parking fees for those most in need and reform the Mental Health Act.

Once we have left the EU, we will introduce a fair, points-based immigration system that will encourage skilled workers to our great country.

This Government will continue to cut the cost of living by raising the national insurance threshold and increasing the national living wage, encourage flexible working and extend the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers. To spread opportunity, we will increase per-pupil funding for every school to ensure that each child gets the world-class education they deserve.

We also intend to spread prosperity across every part of our United Kingdom by investing in public services, research, skills, infrastructure and broadband, led by the priorities of local communities.

We will bring forward changes to business rates, introduce a new national skills fund and increase tax credits for research and development. We will also improve the dependability of the transport network and introduce measures to provide minimum service levels during strikes.

To support tenants and home owners alike, there will be new measures to improve building safety—critically important—and encourage home ownership.

To keep people safe, our programme includes measures for a fair and more efficient justice system that will deliver tougher and swifter sentencing for the most serious and violent crimes.

Tackling climate change will be a priority for this Government. COP 26 is being hosted here next year. We will ban the export of polluting plastic waste, take steps to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and enshrine our environmental targets in law—an issue that I know your Lordships' House will be particularly interested in.

A constitution, democracy and rights commission will be established and, as already mentioned, the Fixed-term Parliaments Act will be repealed.

Defence of the realm is the first duty of government, so we will invest in our Armed Forces, who work around the clock to keep us safe. We will honour the NATO commitment to spend 2% of national income on defence, tackle hostile activity conducted by foreign states and look after those who have served our country so valiantly.

As Britain steps on to the global stage as a sovereign nation once more, we will work hard to expand our influence in the world. Our Government will focus on everything from diplomacy to development to defence, while promoting our interests and values abroad.

Together, these measures will level up our United Kingdom, from the top of Scotland to the bottom of Cornwall, from North West Norfolk to Northern Ireland, from North West Durham to the Cities of London and Westminster, and to Wrexham. This is a one-nation Conservative Government who will repay the trust put in them by the electorate. We intended to unleash Britain's potential and to extend opportunity across our four great nations.

I finish by wishing all noble Lords and staff of the House a very merry Christmas and every best wish for the new year. I look forward to seeing you all on the noble Baroness's birthday, when no doubt we shall cheer her, but on that note, I support the Motion.

Debate adjourned until Tuesday 7 January.

Senior Deputy Speaker

4.34 pm

Moved by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park

That Lord McFall of Alcluith be appointed as Senior Deputy Speaker (Chairman of Committees) for this Session.

Motion agreed nemine dissentiente.

Principal Deputy Chairman of Committees

4.35 pm

Moved by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park

That the Earl of Kinnoull be appointed Principal Deputy Chairman of Committees (Chair of the European Union Committee) for this Session.

Motion agreed nemine dissentiente.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement

4.35 pm

Lord Ashton of Hyde (Con): My Lords, to allow those Members who have not yet taken the oath, we will adjourn until 5 pm when they will be able to do so. With the agreement of the clerks, I beg to move that the House do now adjourn during pleasure until 5 pm.

4.36 pm

Sitting suspended.

Oaths and Affirmations

5.01 pm

Lord Watson of Richmond and Lord Northbrook took the oath, and signed an undertaking to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Stoppages in the Streets

It was ordered that the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis do take care that the passages through the streets leading to this House be kept free and open and that no obstruction be permitted to hinder the passage of Lords to and from this House during the sitting of Parliament; or to hinder Lords in the pursuit of their Parliamentary duties on the Parliamentary Estate; and that the Lady Usher of the Black Rod attending this House do communicate this Order to the Commissioner.

Members of the House

It was ordered that a list of Members of the House, prepared by the Clerk of the Parliaments, be published. (HL Paper 1)

Hereditary Peers: By-elections

The Clerk of the Parliaments laid before the House, in accordance with Standing Order 10(5), a register of hereditary Peers (other than Peers of Ireland) who wish to stand in any by-election for membership of the House held in accordance with Section 2(4) of the House of Lords Act 1999; it was ordered that the register be published. (HL Paper 2)

Private Bills

The Chairman of Committees informed the House that, in accordance with Private Business Standing Order 90 (Division of bills between this House and House of Commons), the following Bill should originate in the House of Lords:

Highgate Cemetery Bill

and that the following Bill should originate in the House of Commons:

Monken Hadley Common Bill.

House adjourned at 5.04 pm.

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