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Tuesday  
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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)

# HOUSE OF LORDS

## OFFICIAL REPORT

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The following abbreviations are used to show a Member's party affiliation:

<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
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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MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO—The Rt Hon. Amanda Milling, MP

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CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt Hon. Stephen Barclay, MP  
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The Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan, MP (Minister for Business, Energy and Clean Growth)

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Will Quince, MP (Minister for Welfare Delivery)  
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CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD AND DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP—The Earl of Courtown  
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Baroness Scott of Bybrook, OBE  
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist  
LORDS IN WAITING—  
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay  
Viscount Younger of Leckie

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

# HOUSE OF LORDS

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THE  
PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF THE  
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND  
COMMENCING ON THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF DECEMBER IN THE  
SIXTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

FIFTH SERIES

VOLUME DCCCXII

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 2021-22

House of Lords

*Tuesday 11 May 2021*

**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 a national recovery from the pandemic that makes the United Kingdom stronger, healthier and more prosperous than before.

To achieve this, my Government will level up opportunities across all parts of the United Kingdom, supporting jobs, businesses and economic growth and addressing the impact of the pandemic on public services.

My Government will protect the health of the nation, continuing the vaccination programme and providing additional funding to support the NHS. My Ministers will bring forward legislation to empower the NHS to innovate and embrace technology. Patients will receive more tailored and preventative care, closer to home. Measures will be brought forward to support the health and wellbeing of the nation, including to tackle obesity and improve mental health. Proposals on social care reform will be brought forward.

My Government will build on the success of the vaccination programme to lead the world in life sciences, pioneering new treatments against diseases like cancer and securing jobs and investment across the country.

My Ministers will oversee the fastest ever increase in public funding for research and development and pass legislation to establish an advanced research agency.

Following the unprecedented support provided to businesses during the pandemic, proposals will be brought forward to create and support jobs and improve regulation.

My Government will strengthen the economic ties across the union, investing in and improving national infrastructure. Proposals will be taken forward to transform connectivity by rail and bus and to extend 5G mobile coverage and gigabit capable broadband.

Legislation will support a lifetime skills guarantee to enable flexible access to high quality education and training throughout people's lives.

Measures will be introduced to ensure that support for businesses reflects the United Kingdom's strategic interests and drives economic growth. Laws will simplify procurement in the public sector. Eight new freeports will create hubs for trade and help regenerate communities.

My Government will ensure that the public finances are returned to a sustainable path once the economic recovery is secure.

Measures will be brought forward to ensure that children have the best start in life, prioritising their early years. My Ministers will address lost learning during the pandemic and ensure every child has a high quality education and is able to fulfil their potential.

My Government will help more people to own their own home while enhancing the rights of those who rent. Laws to modernise the planning system, so that more homes can be built, will be brought forward, along with measures to end the practice of ground rents for new leasehold properties. My Ministers will establish in law a new Building Safety Regulator to ensure that the tragedies of the past are never repeated.

Measures will be brought forward to address racial and ethnic disparities and ban conversion therapy.

Legislation will support the voluntary sector by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and releasing additional funds for good causes.

My Government will invest in new green industries to create jobs, while protecting the environment. The United Kingdom is committed to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and will continue to lead the way internationally by hosting the COP26 Summit in Glasgow. Legislation will set binding environmental targets. Legislation will also be brought forward to ensure the United Kingdom has, and promotes, the highest standards of animal welfare.

My Government will strengthen and renew democracy and the constitution. Legislation will be introduced to ensure the integrity of elections, protect freedom of speech and restore the balance of power between the executive, legislature and the courts. My Ministers will promote the strength and integrity of the union. Measures will be brought forward to strengthen devolved Government in Northern Ireland and address the legacy of the past.

My Government will introduce measures to increase the safety and security of its citizens.

Legislation will increase sentences for the most serious and violent offenders and ensure the timely administration of justice. Proposals will be brought forward to address violence, including against women and girls, and to support victims. Measures will be brought forward to establish a fairer immigration system that strengthens the United Kingdom's borders and deters criminals who facilitate dangerous and illegal journeys.

My Government will lead the way in ensuring internet safety for all, especially for children, whilst harnessing the benefits of a free, open and secure internet.

My Ministers will provide our gallant Armed Services with the biggest spending increase in thirty years, taking forward their programme of modernisation and reinforcing the United Kingdom's commitment to NATO. My Ministers will honour and strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant, placing it in law. Measures will be introduced to provide National Insurance contribution relief for employers of veterans.

Legislation will be introduced to counter hostile activity by foreign states. My Ministers will implement the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

The United Kingdom will host the G7 Summit and lead the global effort to secure a robust economic recovery from the pandemic. My Ministers will deepen trade ties in the Gulf, Africa and the Indo-Pacific.

My Government will continue to provide aid where it has the greatest impact on reducing poverty and alleviating human suffering. My Government will uphold human rights and democracy across the world. It will take forward a global effort to get 40 million girls across the world into school.

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.*

4 pm

*Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Durham.*

## Arrangement of Business

### *Announcement*

4.14 pm

**The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith):** My Lords, the Hybrid Sitting of the House will now begin. I ask all Members to respect social distancing. If the capacity of the Chamber is exceeded, I will immediately adjourn the House.

I would like to say what a great honour it is for me to preside over the House today, for the first time as Lord Speaker. There are numerous challenges ahead, not least the task of emerging from the grip of the pandemic. As I have said before, I am committed to working in a collegial and collaborative manner, and I look forward to engaging with as many noble Lords as possible in the coming weeks and months to tackle those challenges together.

## Select Vestries Bill

### *First Reading*

4.15 pm

*The Bill was read a first time pro forma.*

## Queen's Speech

### *Debate (1st Day)*

4.15 pm

**The Lord Speaker (Lord McFall of Alcluith):** 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 on the Printed Paper Office table in the Royal Gallery.

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 Bates*

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 Bates (Con):** My Lords, this is my 17th Queen's Speech but Her Majesty's 67th. It is staggering to think that her first Speech was delivered when Winston Churchill was Prime Minister and Dwight D Eisenhower was elected President of the United States. During that entire time, Her Majesty has been a supreme example of selfless devotion to her duties as sovereign and an inspiration to all who are privileged to be called to public service. We are especially grateful that Her Majesty has graced us with her presence today, so soon after a deeply personal loss—one that as a nation we share. As we have drawn strength from her, we hope that she will draw strength from the warmth and affection in which she is held, both at home and abroad.

This has been a State Opening like no other and a Queen's Speech like no other. When my noble friend Lord Lamont so ably took on this role following the last Queen's Speech, in December 2019, it seemed like a different age and a different world. In many ways, it was. Since then, more than 127,000 of our fellow citizens have lost their lives to the Covid virus, a disease that has touched every family and every community in the land, and every nation on earth. The loss here would have been far greater were it not for the heroic actions of our NHS and care workers and our scientists in developing vaccines and setting guidelines. We owe them so much and we honour them all.

Times of crisis do not create leadership; they reveal leadership. We have been fortunate that the leadership we have had in your Lordships' House, guiding us through the past year, has been so strong. As the 16 perfectly socially-distanced statues of the Magna Carta barons look down on our proceedings today, we recall that we have probably seen more changes in our practices over the past year than over the previous 800. What they would make of cries of "Unmute!", and Members being asked to sanitise their desks and chairs before leaving, we shall never know—although perhaps they might wish that somebody gave them a dust from time to time.

That we have managed to change so rapidly and yet retained our effectiveness as a Chamber is a tribute to the Leader of this House, the noble Baroness, Lady Evans, and the Leader of the Opposition, the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, along with the noble Lord, Lord Newby, and the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge; to the work of the usual channels, so ably managed by the Government Chief Whip, the noble Lord, Lord Ashton; and to the House administration, clerks, *Hansard*, broadcasting, the doorkeepers and all staff working together tirelessly, finding solutions and keeping us safe.

We are especially grateful for the work of the noble Lord, Lord McFall, and Simon Burton, and welcome them to their new roles as Lord Speaker and Clerk of the Parliaments. We express our gratitude today for the service of the noble Lord, Lord Fowler, and Ed Ollard. It has been a year of great challenge, and we have risen to it because we were well led and we did so together.

I also pay tribute to the leadership of our Prime Minister in guiding us through the greatest challenge our nation has faced in peacetime. To provide that leadership, despite almost succumbing to the virus himself and facing many setbacks as the crisis developed

overseas, shows a level of personal resilience and commitment that is, quite frankly, astonishing. Given the election results of last week, there can be no doubt of his mandate from the people of this country to lead us at this time and to present us with such an ambitious legislative agenda as is before us today. I also welcome the Prime Minister's invitation to the First Ministers of Scotland and Wales to meet and discuss—recognising their electoral success too—because, if we are to build back better, we must do so together, as one United Kingdom.

The first Queen's Speech I attended was in 1992, in the House of Commons. It was proposed by Kenneth Baker—now the noble Lord, Lord Baker—and seconded by Andrew Mitchell, who memorably described the selection criteria for these roles as

"proposed by some genial old codger on the way out and seconded by an oily young man on the make".—[*Official Report, Commons, 6/5/1992; col. 56.*]

This is clearly only partially true, as no one could describe my noble and able friend Lady Sanderson as either oily or male. I recall congratulating Ken Baker on his speech, and he asked how I was settling in. I replied, "I'm feeling completely out of my depth." He smiled, patted me on the shoulder, and said, "Oh, that's quite normal. You spend the first five weeks in this place wondering how you got here and the next five years wondering how everybody else got here." My experiences in your Lordships' House have led me to believe that here it is very much the other way around.

This is an optimistic Queen's Speech. It sets out the ambition of a national recovery plan to create a stronger, more prosperous nation than before the pandemic. It aims to level up opportunities across the United Kingdom. It sets our sights on building back better. I believe that these two central themes of levelling up and building back better can be strengthened by adding a third: building back together.

I have always been an optimist—even my blood group is B positive. It is a trait I share with all supporters of Newcastle United Football Club, and it is much needed. It was optimism that led me to join the Conservatives in Gateshead in 1979, when the red wall was actually red. Optimism is an essential ingredient for human progress. Pessimists see problems; optimists see solutions. Pessimists point out where people fail; optimists show how they might succeed. Cures for disease are discovered by optimists; new businesses are started by optimists; inventions and discoveries are made by optimists; records are broken by optimists.

I am not alone in my optimism. The Governor of the Bank of England said that, although Britain had suffered its greatest economic crisis for 300 years, the economy would return to pre-Covid levels in little over a year. This year, we are forecast to grow at our fastest rate for 70 years. That forecast for economic recovery is an incredible reflection of the resilience of the British people and of British business. We are world leaders in education, finance, science and technology—the raw materials of the new industrial revolution, just as iron, steel and coal were of the first.

I am also optimistic because of the quality of our young people, who have sacrificed most in this pandemic while statistically being the least at risk. They are no

[LORD BATES]

snowflake generation; they have demonstrated a steely resolve and discipline every bit the equal of older generations. They deserve our gratitude, and we should strive to build back better for them. They remind us that, as we rebuild, we do so on strong foundations.

But building back better does not mean building back the same. We cannot hope to meet the challenges of the future if we waste time and energy refighting the battles of the past. We cannot pour new wine into old wineskins; we must embrace the change that circumstance has forced upon us. Winston Churchill remarked:

“If you don't take change by the hand, it will take you by the throat.”

We need new ways of working, thinking, teaching and learning, of legislating and governing, and of co-operating, at home and around the world.

We live in an interconnected, interdependent world. A virus from the other side of the planet can be carried here on an airline in a day; climate change is triggering an unprecedented movement of people across the globe, seeking safety and survival; a financial crisis can be triggered across interconnected markets within minutes; a ship blocking the Suez Canal for days disrupts global supply chains for months; a computer virus can disable critical infrastructure around the world in seconds. We must stay engaged. We must keep working with others, no matter how great our differences. We must struggle to keep building bridges when it seems oh so much easier to build walls. We are, whether we like it or not, all in this together.

The past five years have been some of the most divisive in our history, both domestically and internationally. We seem to have lost the ability to see the other person's point of view, to hold out the possibility that it is we who might be wrong and that we may not see the full picture—too quick to see the bad in others, too slow to recognise the good. Over the past 10 years I have walked through 25 countries on four continents and all four nations in the United Kingdom. The people I meet are kind, hospitable and helpful. They love their families and want the best future for them. They work hard. They love their country, their community, their culture and traditions and find comfort in their religion or belief. What always strikes me most are our similarities, not our differences.

We are not called to be spectators, screaming at the shortcomings of the players from the comfort of the stands; we are all players on this pitch. Victory will depend on us all playing our part and playing it to the full. As we prepare to host critical meetings of the G7 in Cornwall and COP 26 in Glasgow, we must not let our separate identities obscure our shared humanity and our national interests obscure our common interests. There is an old walking proverb that says, “If you want to go fast, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together.” This Queen's Speech has set out a bold plan for our long road to recovery and to a better future, but it is a future that none of us can reach on our own. We need to come together, work together and stay together because in this United Kingdom and in this world we will always build back better when we do so together. I beg to move.

4.27 pm

**Baroness Sanderson of Welton (Con):** My Lords, I second my noble friend's Motion for an humble Address. It is an honour to do so and a particular honour to follow my noble friend Lord Bates, a true gentleman whom I first met when he was at the Home Office and I began working as an adviser to Theresa May. It was a relatively short acquaintance, for in 2016 he resigned to walk 2,000 miles from Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro to raise awareness of the Olympic Truce. At the time I remember being impressed, not just by that act of charity but by the sheer scale of the task. Now I realise the lengths that someone will go to in order to avoid Oral Questions in your Lordships' House, particularly when they are the Home Office Minister. Truthfully, though, as we all know, that walk was only one of many: my noble friend has in fact trekked more than 9,000 miles through 25 different countries, raising more than £1 million for a whole host of charitable causes. It is an achievement to be proud of, although he is far too modest for such things. I for one am very proud to share the privilege of speaking with him today.

I am also pleased to follow in my noble friend Lady Finn's footsteps. As the last person to second such a Motion, she pointed out that this job is usually given to someone deemed up and coming. I note that she has set rather a high bar in that respect, having upped and upped and now gone to No. 10 as deputy chief of staff to the Prime Minister. As in all places of great renown, what goes on behind that front door is often more prosaic than people imagine but, having worked there myself for a while, I can tell your Lordships that all the rumours are true: the real power behind the throne is indeed a woman and, yes, you cross her at your peril. Her name is Alison and she runs the Downing Street canteen with a rod of iron. An early adopter of the Government's obesity strategy, which has been further developed in the gracious Speech, she banned me from eating sausages because she said I was becoming too podgy. She is a woman who tells it how it is, whether you are a lowly adviser or the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. For as long as she is there, there will always be a strong seam of common sense running through that building.

Likewise, it is good to see my noble friend Lady Finn at Downing Street. Always thoughtful but also forthright in her opinions and dealings, she will be a perceptive voice at the heart of government. In her contributions in this place, she always speaks for many and, while I have no doubt that she will continue to do just that, I am probably not alone in hoping that she might also, on occasion, have a chance to speak for us. For after working in Fleet Street for 17 years and then going on to work for a Conservative Government, I am no stranger to jobs which do not exactly court popularity.

However, I must admit to feeling a particular dismay about the public reputation of the House of Lords. Look: I understand the charge sheet and am immensely conscious of the privilege we have in being here. It ill behoves us to complain too much but I will admit to being deeply frustrated as we came under attack in the media recently. There is of course nothing new in this;

noble Lords who have served here longer than me will know that too well. But I was frustrated, as someone who still looks at this place with new eyes, and at that time was looking at how your Lordships were debating and improving the then Domestic Abuse Bill.

Were you to ask anyone whether it was a good thing that, thanks to my noble friend Lady Morgan of Cotes and others, we had now outlawed the threat to share intimate images, they would surely say yes—just as they would be pleased to know that, thanks to the noble Baroness, Lady Lister of Burtersett, we continue to lead the world in combating coercive control and that, thanks to my noble friends Lady Newlove and Lady Bertin, non-fatal strangulation has become an offence in its own right. This will not only help thousands of domestic abuse victims but help to guide a generation of young boys as to what is and is not acceptable in a relationship.

These things may have happened eventually but they would not have happened now, as was so essential, were it not for the work of noble Lords across this House. I am of course biased so I will instead refer the House to the words of the independent domestic abuse commissioner:

“I have been so deeply in awe of the process as the Bill has passed through the Lords. The issues have been passionately and cleverly debated with so much crossbench support. It has opened my eyes to the power of the second chamber to shape the law.”

I hope your Lordships will forgive this backward glance to previous legislation when today is about our forthcoming agenda. I do so because the then Domestic Abuse Bill really demonstrated the difference we can make. I am sure we are all grateful to the new Lord Speaker for his commitment to helping others better understand the work that we do. I also do so because it was a Bill which showed the House and the Government at their best. Even the noble Baroness, Lady Jones of Moulsecoomb, said so, so it must be true.

I hope that it is not naive of me to hope that we will engage in a similar fashion on many of the issues contained in this gracious Speech. I am delighted to see that, as promised, there will be further measures to address violence against women and girls, and to address racial and ethnic disparities. A new building regulator will be established; anyone listening to the truly shocking evidence emerging from the Grenfell inquiry will know that this is a matter of the utmost urgency.

There are, as ever, many difficult matters to tackle. We will work to secure a safer online environment, particularly for our children. One area that I know this House is keen to address is social care, not just in terms of provision but also on better recognition for all those working in this field. The commitment is there but I am sure we all look forward to more detailed proposals, doing so in the knowledge that the only way to solve a problem as intractable as this one is through cross-party consensus—and find a solution we must. For if any good has come from the pandemic, it is a greater appreciation of the fundamental role that social care plays in protecting many of our most vulnerable.

It is not the only lesson to be learned from coronavirus. We hope we have now been through the worst; certainly, we have endured much over the last deracinated year.

But as we emerge, blinking into the sunshine, we have a legislative programme that will take us forwards, support the NHS, get to grips with the obesity crisis, and build on the brilliant successes of our life sciences sector. Life has been somewhat on hold in recent times but these measures, together with those outlined by my noble friend Lord Bates, give us cause to look to the future and to do so with optimism. It is in that spirit that I humbly beg to second the Motion.

#### *Motion to Adjourn*

Moved by **Baroness Smith of Basildon**

That this debate be adjourned till tomorrow.

4.35 pm

**Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab):** My Lords, I beg to move that this debate be adjourned until Wednesday 12 May. I first concur with the comments, particularly from the noble Lord, Lord Bates, thanking Her Majesty the Queen for opening our proceedings today. In her long reign she has seen this country weather many peaks and troughs: peace, war, economic highs and lows, national optimism and pessimism. Through it all she has remained steadfast and discreet. In doing so, she has earned the gratitude and affection of the entire nation.

As is tradition, the proposers and seconders—as we have heard—are usually a noble Lord I would call a “respected long-serving colleague” but whom the noble Lord, Lord Bates, called a “genial old codger”, and a “rising star”. I have to admit I am not entirely happy today that the “genial old codger” is younger than I am.

As a proposer of the humble Address, the noble Lord, Lord Bates, showed why he is held in such high regard in your Lordships’ House. He once told me—he is going to get nervous here—that he thought he was boring. As his friends know, and as he has shown today, nothing could be further from the truth. I think his generosity in his opening comments about your Lordships’ House and those who have seen us through the pandemic shows his generosity of spirit.

He is, as we have heard, perhaps best known for two things. First, walking—but not a gentle stroll for the noble Lord; it is usually a few thousand miles at a time to promote good causes. As we have heard from the noble Baroness, Lady Sanderson, he has raised over £1 million for charity—and indeed, he told me that on one of those walks he met his wife.

Secondly, he is well known for having resigned from the Government four times—each time, it must be said, with honour and dignity. On one occasion it was because he considered he had insulted your Lordships’ House by being just one minute late to respond to a Question. I can understand why he is not a Member of Mr Johnson’s Government, where nobody ever seems to step up and take that kind of responsibility.

The noble Baroness, Lady Sanderson of Welton, is relatively new to your Lordships’ House but has played a full and active role since she joined. She has clearly been in training as the up-and-coming rising star for the Government Whips Office because, while I was reading her contributions in *Hansard*, I found several along the lines of—it is a sign of the times—“May I remind the noble Lord that the advisory speaking time is just three minutes?”

[BARONESS SMITH OF BASILDON]

She made her mark, as she said, in debates on the then Domestic Abuse Bill, with thoughtful contributions showing her genuine commitment to the issue. Her comments today show her willingness to work cross-party, which is how this House does its best work. Also, she showed her pride in being a Member of your Lordships' House and her respect for the work we do. I hope she can convey that to some Members of her Government who are not quite as enthusiastic. She is clearly a welcome addition to this House and will greatly help our proceedings.

Generally, when a Government lay out their programme for the Queen's Speech, they set the tone as well as the policies and proposed legislation for the forthcoming Session. That is not always the case, as we saw in the Queen's Speech of October 2019, when the Government's programme lasted only a few days before—following the unlawful attempt—Parliament could be prorogued for the election, which led to a further Queen's Speech in December 2019.

When we look back at previous Queens' and Kings' Speeches—I have gone back roughly to Queen Victoria's time—we see that many have been made at times of great change and following momentous events in our nation's history. In outlining their forthcoming legislative programme, a Government define their values and vision. In fact, they define their moral purpose.

On 15 August 1945, VJ Day, the State Opening was very different from today's scaled-back proceedings. The King and the Queen, buoyed by massive, cheering crowds, arrived at Westminster in an open carriage. The UK had emerged from the horror of war virtually bankrupt and with a massive financial debt to the United States. So much of our national infrastructure, including homes, factories and schools, was rubble and ruins.

The King's Speech on that day was hopeful, ambitious and visionary, and, despite some of the most difficult challenges and obstacles imaginable, the Government's vision was courageous, optimistic and determined. Our country could not just go back as if time had stood still since 1939: too many people had paid too high a price for life to return to what it had been before. As the nation prepared for peace, there was a sharp focus on the need to build—not just rebuilding what had been but building what should be. It created homes and jobs, and our National Health Service was born.

That Government were also confident and ambitious about our relationships with other countries across the world. They knew that peace was to be treasured and nurtured and that collaborative relationships were essential. Outward looking, those leaders were committed to playing a positive, leading role on the international stage. That speech remains inspirational to read, not just in relation to the scale of ambition and achievement against the backdrop of the greatest challenge that our country has ever faced, but for providing the confidence that politics was a force for good.

The greatest challenge leading up to this Queen's Speech has of course been the Covid-19 pandemic. Although less violent and shorter than the war that preceded the 1945 speech, it has also had a profound

effect on our nation. Next week will mark the first time in over a year that many of us will be able to hug family members and friends outside our own household. We have had to adjust—drastically—to the new behavioural norms of social distancing, mask wearing and a daily diet of meetings on Zoom and Teams. At the worst end of the scale, almost 130,000 of our fellow citizens have died. Many others are suffering from ongoing physical and/or mental health conditions, and there have been huge economic consequences for both businesses and the workforce alike. It has been a really tough year.

The parallel with 1945 is that the courage, ambition and preparation for the future that was shown then are the step change that is needed today. There has to be a post-pandemic vision that does not lead to political apathy or cynicism but again sees the value of political engagement and offers an optimism grounded in providing the jobs, services and opportunities that our country needs.

If there are two significant lessons for this generation of leaders, they are these: first, as the noble Lord, Lord Bates, commented, the world is now more interconnected than ever before. My grandparents left the UK only once in their lives, and their parents never left these shores. My great-grandfather never travelled on the ships that he worked on in the east London docks, but—until the pandemic—their descendants would fly the Atlantic with the same ease with which their great-grandparents took the bus into central London. So when the virus struck, it swiftly travelled the world and changed our lives.

Part of this lesson comes back to the moral purpose of government. The global co-dependency of nations increases rather than reduces our international responsibilities. I welcome the fact that the Queen's Speech appears to recognise this in relation to our commitment on defence matters—although, as I am sure my noble friend Lord West would point out, some of the promised funding for our Armed Forces makes up lost ground from the past. But the recent proposals to cut UK aid to some of the poorest countries is so misjudged—in relation not just to their interests but to ours.

The Queen's Speech says that the Government “will continue to provide aid where it has the greatest impact”, but the noble Baroness the Leader will recall the concerns of your Lordships' House about the Government reneging on their own legislative commitment to 0.7% of GNI. There does not seem to be a Bill mentioned in the Queen's Speech to legalise that cut, so can we take this absence as a recognition, finally, that the Government will stick by their own legally binding commitments?

The second lesson for today's leaders is one that must have challenged those in government who are ideologically wedded to the notion of a small state. It is that, in order to effectively tackle a national crisis, major state intervention is essential, and the foundations for that must be in place before the crisis actually happens. The UK was woefully underprepared for the pandemic, so, in building for the future, we must develop national resilience to threats both known and as yet unknown.

I turn to some specific proposals in the Queen's Speech. The year in which the Queen came to the Throne, 1952, saw London's worst ever pollution.

That December, a combination of weather, coal-fired heating and exhaust fumes caused a thick smog over London which led to the deaths of thousands. It took four years for the new Clean Air Act to be passed and the decades since have seen massive improvements. Continued consideration of the Environment Bill therefore gives us an opportunity to revisit an issue which the noble Lord, Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, has described as

“the single greatest environmental risk to human health”.

Ministers will, I am sure, be aware of the recommendations of the coroner following the death of nine year-old Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah after finding that air pollution was a significant factor in her death.

I welcome the plans to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, a consequence of the 2010 coalition agreement which has been honoured more in the breach and lost any value it might have had, but other legislation affecting our democracy and constitution will have to be examined carefully.

The proposed electoral integrity Bill feels more like a voter suppression Bill of which the state of Georgia would be proud. There is no evidence that this legislation will be proportionate or even necessary. I have checked with the Electoral Commission, which clearly states that the evidence of proven electoral fraud is low. In fact, overwhelmingly, most complaints appear to relate to false allegations against candidates or—horror of horrors—inaccurate imprints on leaflets. Insisting on photo ID and making it harder to vote will not enhance our democracy. I had hoped that the Trump playbook was no longer required reading at No. 10.

Who can be anything but suspicious when the Government say that they want to

“restore the balance of power between the executive, legislature and the courts”?

We know what is behind this. It looks, sounds and smells like a power grab. Obviously, all Governments have the right to get their legislative programme through. We in this House play a useful role in scrutiny and revision, but the House of Commons has primacy and MPs, rightly, get the final say. Similarly, the courts, when asked, have a role in upholding the law and the constitution. At times—it is why I was so pleased to hear the noble Baroness's comments—the Government have had an almost hysterical reaction to anything that suggests that absolute power should not lie exclusively with the Executive. Back in 2015, in my first week as Leader of the Opposition, the now Leader of the House in the other place threatened 1,000 new Peers to stop the Lords taking a different view from the Commons. Our unwritten constitution is based on a system of checks and balances, so we will examine these proposals with care, as any significant constitutional change merits.

I hope that the procurement Bill, to give SMEs greater opportunities to secure government contracts, will provide for greater examination of how contracts were awarded during the pandemic to ensure that better protections are in place in the future. Time and again, noble Lords across the House have raised concerns about how some contracts were awarded—fast-tracked or agreed on the back of a fag packet with the pub landlord next door. Time and again, we were told that this was just responding to a moment of national

crisis. At times, that could have been true, and it is why inquiries into the handling of the pandemic are essential to ensure proper transparency regarding the roles of Ministers and advisers, if only to learn the lessons for the future and to inform policy. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on whether the relevant ministerial and advisers' codes are fit for purpose.

The NHS reform Bill appears to be another top-down reorganisation, this time to undo much of the coalition Government's so-called Lansley reforms. I am sure that my noble friend Lady Thornton will have more to say about this tomorrow, but surely the greatest priority, as outlined today by the noble Baroness, should be to build up our NHS following the pandemic and to bring to social care the reforms needed. On the latter, I am not sure I really understand what the Government are committing to—if anything. All those involved, including providers and users, have called for something as ambitious as the 1945 Government's establishment of the NHS. In a nutshell, social care needs its post-1945 moment now; it should not be back-heeled into the long grass when no one is looking.

Professor Wessely and his team reported on modernising the Mental Health Act in 2018 and the Government have now committed to implementing many of the recommendations, but, even with this being Mental Health Awareness Week, it is not clear how and when. We want to work closely with Ministers to ensure essential and urgent improvements in this area.

The Government also say that they want to promote the “integrity of the union”. As someone who is half-Scottish and committed to our union of nations, I have to say to the Leader that I have not seen enough evidence of that to date. Too often, the Prime Minister has made belligerent attacks on those from other parties and shown a lack of interest in the whole of the UK. That shows little respect for the union. He needs to embrace better engagement and to value the differences and strengths of the UK nations within the union. As the noble Lord, Lord Bates, said, we hope that the meetings about to start between the four nations will lead to progress in that area.

The commitment to strengthen devolved government in Northern Ireland is welcome, but it means that Mr Johnson and his Ministers really do need to up their game. Both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown would meet Northern Ireland's political leaders and travel there, particularly when times were difficult, and we would like to see that same commitment from the Prime Minister.

I hope that the commitment to enhance renters' rights means that Ministers will finally act on their promise to ban unfair evictions, which we will support, as they cause enormous distress to thousands of tenants. It would be helpful if the noble Baroness could confirm that this means primary legislation and pre-legislative scrutiny to ensure that the Bill is fit for purpose.

The proposals on animal welfare are welcome, although I am concerned about a story that was leaked to a press on a proposal on importing so-called trophies, which may have a loophole through which a herd of elephants could escape. We would be very grateful if the noble Baroness could look at that.

[BARONESS SMITH OF BASILDON]

We welcome the online safety Bill, despite the long delay since it was first promised. The noble Baroness understands that this House is impatient for progress on that issue.

The Government make much of their lifelong learning and training Bill, and we on these Benches share the belief that first-class education, training and skills are the foundations on which our economy is built and in themselves bring huge benefits to society. Those commitments must come in parallel with measures necessary to create the economic climate and investment in future jobs that are open to all.

When reading the previous King's and Queen's Speeches, I was struck by how important it was to successive Governments that our relations with other countries were cordial and positive. As an outward-looking, forward-facing nation, that was important to us, so I had hoped to see something in this first post-Brexit speech about our relationship with our nearest neighbours. It is disappointing that references to our role overseas were so limited to the embrace of an interconnected world and what that means for us at home.

That brings me back to the scale of ambition needed for a post-Brexit, post-pandemic UK. I welcome the words in the speech about delivering a national recovery, but it really has to be more than political rhetoric, with politics and legislation that really deliver. We have heard a lot about levelling-up, but it needs the powers and funding to make it happen.

Within all the promised legislation, there were measures that we will support, some that we will not and others that we will work with the Government to improve. Over the coming days and weeks, we will debate this speech, embark on the process of scrutinising legislation and fulfil our responsibilities with care and diligence. But judgments on this Queen's Speech will not be in tomorrow's newspaper headlines or in interviews but in the months and years to come, on whether the Government have met the challenge and test and been ambitious enough to ensure that our country is offered a greater opportunity and the optimism that genuinely saves lives.

5.52 pm

**Lord Newby (LD):** My Lords, I join other speakers in expressing my thanks to, and admiration of, the Queen for delivering the speech today. Her sense of public duty is an example for us all.

I congratulate the mover and seconder of the humble Address. I first met the noble Lord, Lord Bates, on his appointment as a Minister in the coalition Government, when I briefed him on how to prepare for questions from the Dispatch Box. Despite my advice, he became a most accomplished performer in your Lordships' House, as his very thoughtful speech today so ably demonstrates. On this side of the House, we miss him from the Government Front Bench; perhaps one day he will return.

The noble Baroness, Lady Sanderson of Welton, in her short time in the House, has already shown herself to be warm hearted, well informed and constructive, not least in her contributions on the Domestic Abuse Bill. Her speech today underlined those credentials, and we look forward very much to hearing her further in your Lordships' House.

At the time of the last Queen's Speech, in December 2019, most of us could not even spell coronavirus, much less imagine that the pandemic would utterly dominate our lives and political debate for the next 18 months. For many in our society, coronavirus has been a tragedy; many have died or been left with the debilitating effects of long Covid, and many families have had to face the consequences—and our thoughts are with them today. But for many more people, the complete dislocation of normal life that the pandemic has brought has led them to re-evaluate their priorities. What is most important to them? What might they change so that the way they live their lives reflects their readjusted priorities?

We have seen the outcome of this re-evaluation in many ways. The majority no longer want the daily commute. Living outside the capital has gained a new attraction. More people want to work for the NHS. More people want to volunteer in their local community. More people have a greater understanding of their local environment and want to enhance it—and we all now more fully appreciate the value of family and friends. In a nutshell, more people are more concerned about their overall well-being and that of their family and their local community, and realise that while a good job and a decent income are crucial, there is more to a full life than that.

These impulses have been felt wherever the pandemic struck, and some Governments have sought to use the terrible experience of the past 15 months as a spur to do things differently. We see this perhaps most notably in the US, where President Biden has seized the moment to think big and provide extra help for the poor, minorities and women, while creating jobs, rebuilding infrastructure and improving the provision of education and childcare—and he is proposing to pay for it by raising taxes on those who can best afford it. Such a vision is completely lacking in today's Queen's Speech. The Queen's Speech contains many Bills of second-order importance but none offering fundamental change. To the extent that more public expenditure is planned, the Government are completely silent as to how it might be financed. Promising to return the public finances to a sustainable path is fine as far as it goes, but if the Government are to meet their stated public spending aims, this will, as in the US, require tax rises. What are they to be? We have no idea.

I readily accept that the Government had some successes in last week's elections, principally on the back of the success of the vaccination programme, and allegedly the Prime Minister is to follow up today's speech with a speech about what the Government plan to do to stop the brain drain to the cities. But this smacks of a tactical move to try to consolidate Conservative gains in some northern and Midlands seats. It does not amount to a vision for the country. In any event, speeches are only so much hot air unless they are followed up by effective action, and here, the Prime Minister's track record is poor. I will take just three examples: social care, historic fire safety defects, and Brexit.

On social care, the Government yet again promise action but no legislation. They clearly have no plan. The Prime Minister claims to be interested in adopting the approach proposed by the Dilnot report, but the



coalition legislated to implement a version of Dilnot, and it was dropped in 2015 by the Conservative Government. It is not exactly new. The ostensible problem now, unsurprisingly, is funding, but this is a classic case where you cannot have your cake and eat it. If you want a fair, workable and durable solution, you have to pay for it, but there is clearly no agreement within government about how to do so.

On historic building safety defects, the Prime Minister has said:

“We are determined that no leaseholder should have to pay for the unaffordable ... defects that they did not cause and are no fault of their own.”—[*Official Report, Commons, 3/2/21*; col. 945.]

Yet the Government simply are not proposing anything to prevent hundreds of thousands of people having to pay unmanageable bills. On a daily basis now, individual leaseholders are receiving massive bills which will force some into bankruptcy or homelessness. Many more will not be able to sell their houses, and the housing associations will have to curtail their building programmes because all spare funds will have to deal with fire safety issues on existing blocks. The debates on the Fire Safety Bill showed that the Government have no proposals that even begin to match the scale of this impending crisis, and the building safety Bill, whenever it comes, promises to offer too little, too late.

On Brexit—the most infamous case of the Prime Minister wanting to have his cake and eat it—we now see the consequences. Whether it is the problems around trade across the Irish Sea, the failure to protect the fishing industry, or the inability of musicians and other creative artists to travel freely to work in the EU, the costs are clear but the benefits remain elusive. Partial trade deals with countries with which we do a small fraction of our trade compared to that with the EU simply do not cut it.

If the Government were alive to the post-Covid opportunities facing the country, they would start measuring well-being alongside GDP. They would be transferring greater powers and resources to regions and cities. They would have a long-term fix for the funding of health and social care. They would be providing enhanced funding for education and training provision, which is so inadequate in many of our poorer areas. They would have a comprehensive plan for decarbonising homes. They would be making it easier for people to participate in elections, rather than requiring photo identity at polling stations. They would be honest with people about the cost of providing the public services they expect and deserve. They would be giving NHS staff a proper pay rise, not the prospect of another great reorganisation. They would be reinstating our commitment to 0.7% of GNI for international development. They would be encouraging the 750,000 people who volunteered to help in the Covid crisis to continue supporting community activities in the places where they live. If they do want to build 300,000 houses a year, they would be setting about training the workforce needed to make this possible, not making potentially damaging changes to planning law. But they are doing none of these things.

There is an old adage about not wasting a crisis, but the Covid crisis gave this Government a massive opportunity to change for the better the way we do things as a society, and they are wasting it.

5.03 pm

#### **The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Evans of Bowes Park)**

**(Con):** My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, and the noble Lord, Lord Newby, and I join them in congratulating my noble friends Lord Bates and Lady Sanderson. Like all of them, I pay tribute to Her Majesty the Queen.

Over the past 17 months, this House has passed more than 40 government Bills, and with each one, your Lordships demonstrated the expertise in scrutiny for which we are rightly known. I am confident that the House will continue to perform its important role as we examine and debate legislation through this Session.

I have spoken in previous Queen's Speech debates, and I thought that legislating for our withdrawal from the European Union would be the most challenging task your Lordships' House would face for many years, but little did I know what was to come. The Covid pandemic has had a huge impact on all our lives and, of course, on our ways of working, and over the past 14 months, this House has risen to the challenge of working remotely and—largely successfully—navigating the now all too familiar mute and unmute buttons. Despite these immense challenges, we have continued to pass and debate the legislation that we needed to, to help the country deal with the pandemic: putting in place measures to protect millions of jobs, through the furlough scheme; supporting the most vulnerable; and investing record amounts in the NHS. I pay tribute to all the front-line workers who have played such a vital role in tackling the pandemic. I know, as we have already heard, that the House will join me in remembering all those who have, sadly, lost their lives.

However, we could not have done our job without the support of the staff of this House: from the clerks to the catering team, from the doorkeepers and cleaners to the broadcasting team. I know I speak for us all as I thank every member of staff for their professionalism and commitment to making sure that the House has been able to function under these exceptional circumstances. On a personal note, I am very grateful to Victoria Warren, Ben Burgess and Anishaa Aubeeluck in the Government Whips' Office; to Phil Lloyd, Isabelle Tombs, Max Bull and Johnny Bland in my private office; and to my special advisers, Annabelle Eyre, Yasmin Kalhori and Hannah Ellis. Without their incredible work and resilience over the past year, I certainly could not have done my job.

I thank the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, the noble Lord, Lord Newby, and the noble and learned Lord, Lord Judge, for their co-operation and help in setting up and working within our temporary arrangements. During a time when all norms seemed to go out of the window, it was only thanks to their willingness to work together and find a way through an unprecedented situation that we have just about, I think, managed to keep the show on the road. For that, I am extremely grateful to them all. As we continue along the Covid recovery road map, I look forward to working with them, and indeed the whole House, to restore our pre-pandemic ways of working and, I hope, return to the normal that we have all missed so much. Finally, it is a pleasure to congratulate and welcome the new Lord Speaker to his place for the first time.

[BARONESS EVANS OF BOWES PARK]

I am delighted to add to the congratulations others have expressed to my noble friends Lord Bates and Lady Sanderson, who have so ably proposed and seconded the Motion for the humble Address. We heard from my noble friend Lord Bates an uplifting speech in which he drew on his experiences of growing up in the north-east of England and attending a comprehensive secondary school in Gateshead at the same time as my noble friend Lord Callanan. I suspect their then headmaster, who also happened to be a Labour councillor, would not have predicted at the time that his school was producing two Conservative Ministers, nor indeed that they would be Members of this House, but we are delighted that they are, and I am sure he is too.

My noble friend's enthusiasm for campaigning is legendary and has remained undimmed for the 30 years he has been involved in the party, no matter how good or bad the prospects. Of course, he applies that same enthusiasm to his other passions: walking and raising awareness of the biggest issues of the day. Striding across Latin America, China and Europe, as we have heard, he has raised over £1 million for charity, which is incredibly impressive.

I also congratulate my noble friend Lady Sanderson, who has had a very productive lockdown. In addition to helping out regularly on the Government Benches as a Whip, she has been busy training her new puppy, Tess. Your Lordships would have to ask her whether she draws any parallels between those two experiences. I shall leave them to decide that for themselves, or perhaps they should talk to her afterwards.

However, on a more serious note, noble Lords know of the important work that my noble friend does supporting those affected by harrowing experiences—from working with the families impacted by the Grenfell tragedy to the survivors of sexual abuse and those affected by the contaminated blood scandal. As she has already mentioned, she brought her compassion and desire to give people a voice to the recently passed Domestic Abuse Act—an Act that was strengthened, as she rightly said, during its passage in your Lordships' House.

In the last Session, this Government delivered on their manifesto commitment to implement the 2016 referendum result and leave the European Union. This has now paved the way for us to move forward in this Session to deliver on the domestic priorities we promised in our manifesto. As we recover from this pandemic, the Government will build back better across our four nations by investing in the public services we all rely on. We will support the NHS through the health and care Bill; give police the powers they need to protect vulnerable victims through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill; and help increase opportunity with the skills and post-16 education Bill. We will create a new domestic framework for asylum claims that strengthens our borders; improve animal welfare through the animal welfare sentience and kept animal Bills; and create a subsidy framework that reflects our strategic interests and national circumstances with the subsidy control Bill.

The remarkable work of the Vaccine Taskforce has given us renewed hope and optimism, and the basis of that pioneering work has been that of our scientists. That is why we are determined to support our world-class

science sector by creating a new agency through the Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill to pursue transformative research.

When it comes to tackling global challenges, the Government lead by example. Our commitment to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 will be enshrined in the Environment Bill, and, looking forward to COP 26, this will be a landmark piece of legislation symbolising global Britain.

At home, as a Government we are committed to levelling up and have already started to transform communities through the £3.6 billion towns fund. In this Session we will provide access to home ownership for millions by creating a simpler, more modern planning system through the planning Bill, and we will introduce rigorous safety standards for the construction industry in the building safety Bill.

Throughout the country, children and young people have had an immensely challenging year trying to keep their learning and academic progress on track. We will support these hard-working students by providing the help they need to fulfil their potential through the education recovery plan, and we will provide increased opportunities for young students. Through the Turing scheme, young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, will have the chance to study globally and expand their horizons.

We have an ambitious programme that will improve the lives of citizens across our four nations, and I know that noble Lords across the House will work assiduously to scrutinise and improve the legislation before us while respecting the mandate of the Government and the will of the elected House.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to all the Ministers and Whips on the Government Front Bench. They have carried out their work under the most challenging of circumstances, both in their departments and in this House, and I am very proud to lead such an excellent team. I also put on record my sincere thanks to my noble and learned friend Lord Keen and my noble friend Lady Sugg, who stepped down in the last Session. They served their departments, the Government and this House with distinction and we are fortunate to have their experience on our Back Benches.

Since March 2020, in unusual times, we have welcomed to our Benches my noble friends Lord Grimstone, Lord Greenhalgh, Lord Wolfson of Tredegar, Lord Frost and my noble and learned friend Lord Stewart of Dirleton, as well as many Peers across the House. As we return to our normal way of doing business, I very much look forward to seeing noble Lords across the House again in person soon.

I support the Motion.

*Debate adjourned until Wednesday 12 May.*

## Senior Deputy Speaker

5.11 pm

*Moved by Baroness Evans of Bowes Park*

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

*Motion agreed nemine dissentiente*

## Examiner of Private Bills

*In accordance with Private Business Standing Order 69 (Appointment of Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills), Ché Kieron Diamond was appointed an Examiner of Petitions for Private Bills in place of James Joseph Cooper.*

## 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.*

## 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.*

*House adjourned at 5.13 pm.*

